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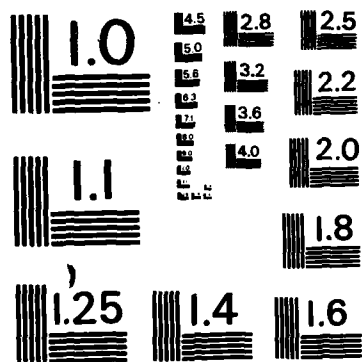
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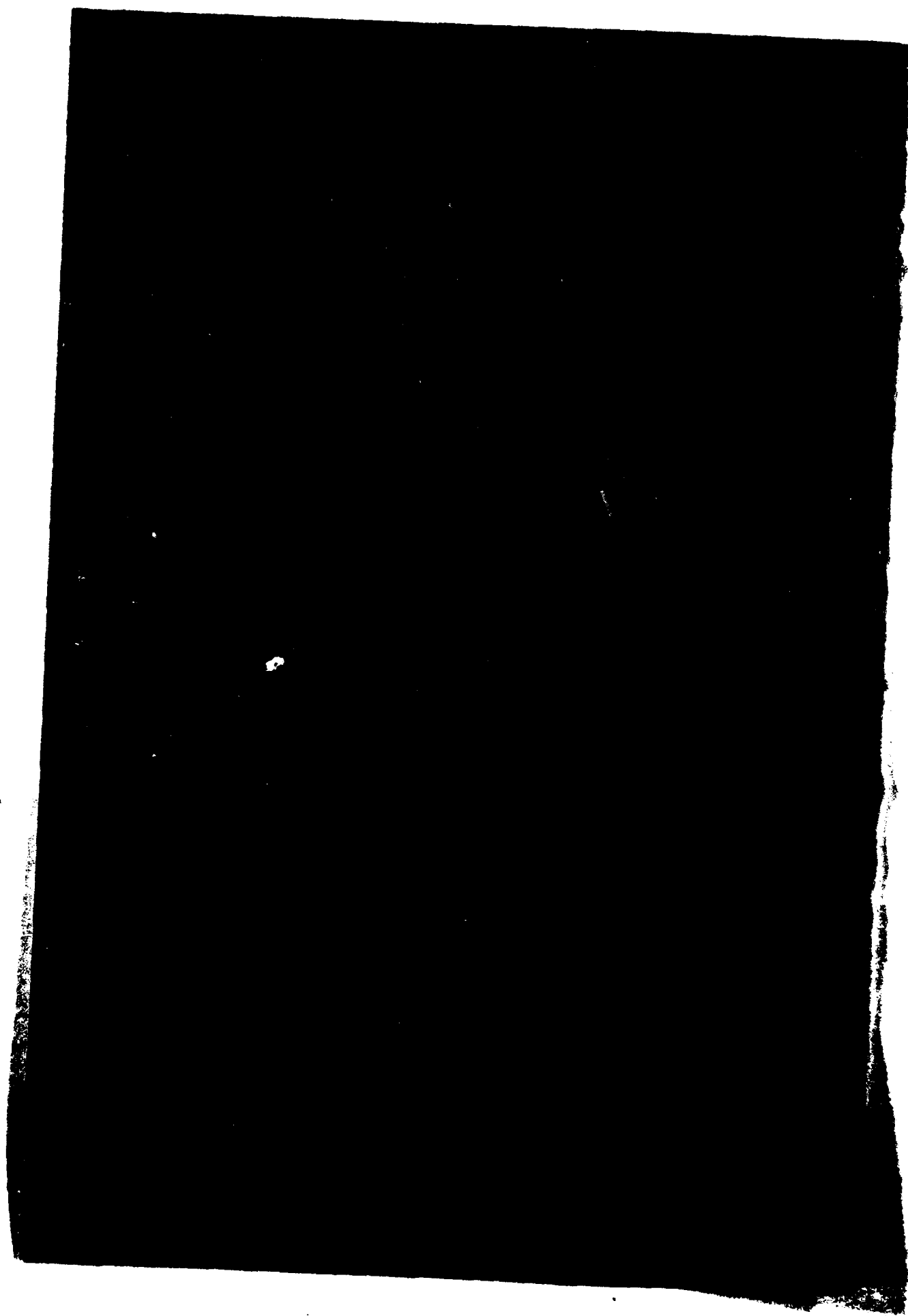
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Examines the evolution of Baltic dissent and nationalism in the 1970s and early 1980s, focusing on their determinants, significance, and potential for generating political instability in this important region of the Soviet Union. This is the region most directly affected by developments in Eastern Europe, and in turn it is the one most likely to affect Soviet policies in the area. The report focuses on Soviet policies and practices that are perceived as generating dissent and nationalist unrest in the Balkan republics and analyzes the scope and nature of, and constraints on, political and religious dissent there. Research for this study has included an extensive review of Western and Soviet literature and in-depth interviews with a number of recent emigres from the Balkans.

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Dissent and Nationalism in the Soviet Baltic

Alexander R. Alexiev

September 1983

A Project AIR FORCE Report
prepared for the
United States Air Force



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PREFACE

This report was prepared as part of the Project AIR FORCE study, "Soviet Vulnerabilities in Eastern Europe," under the direction of A. Ross Johnson. This project seeks to illuminate the security issues posed for the United States by the problems and opportunities the USSR will face in the 1980s in Eastern Europe. The project addresses economic, political, and military dimensions of the challenge to Soviet interests in Eastern Europe.

The report examines the nature of dissent and nationalism in the Baltic region, which, though part of the Soviet Union, exhibits many similarities with Eastern Europe in its historical, cultural, socio-economic, and political circumstances as well as popular attitudes. This is the region most directly affected by developments in Eastern Europe, and in turn it is the one most likely to affect Soviet policies in the area. The report focuses on Soviet policies and practices that are perceived as generating dissent and nationalist unrest in the Baltic republics and analyzes the scope, nature, and constraints on political and religious dissent there. Research for this study has included an extensive review of Western and Soviet literature and in-depth interviews with a number of recent émigrés from the Baltic.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This report examines the evolution of Baltic dissent and nationalism in the 1970s and early 1980s, focusing on their determinants, significance, and potential for generating political instability in this important region of the Soviet Union. The study begins with a discussion of the unique historical, cultural, and political traditions of the Baltic peoples within the Soviet multinational state and the legacy of the Soviet annexation policies as a background to the analysis of dissent.

Three major types of policies are seen as contributing to Baltic alienation and discontent:

- The mechanics of Soviet control, designed to ensure central control over local affairs, create the impression in the eyes of many Balts of a Russian-dominated, quasi-colonialist political system.
- Under conditions of relative economic stagnation and food shortages that have not been experienced before in the region, the existing economic system, which is also based to a considerable extent on direct control from Moscow, contributes to a suspicion of economic exploitation.
- The dramatically deteriorated demographic situation, particularly in Latvia and Estonia, coupled with aggressive Soviet Russification policies, has convinced many that the regime may be pursuing denationalization.

Baltic dissent, which has steadily intensified over the last decade, differs from dissent in Russia proper in that it is first and foremost a struggle for national rights. As such, it enjoys broad support and has the potential for a mass movement. Russian dissent, in contrast, is based almost exclusively within the intelligentsia and has minimal appeal outside it.

Two major categories of dissent are analyzed in detail: religious dissent and political-nationalist dissent. Religious dissent, centered almost exclusively in the Lithuanian Catholic church, has become the dominant and best-organized form of dissent in Lithuania, and perhaps in the Soviet Union. In its struggle to defend the constitutionally guaranteed rights of believers, the Catholic church has openly challenged the regime and has been able to win some concessions. Helped and encouraged by Pope John Paul II, religious dissent in Lithuania has acquired mass character and has transcended the "dissent"

framework and evolved into an opposition movement. There is increasing evidence, however, that under Andropov, the Soviet regime may be adopting a policy of administrative repression of religious dissent.

Among the various forms of political dissent, open public protests are particularly prevalent; these protests usually take the form of mass demonstrations and are seldom totally spontaneous. Participation in Baltic protest demonstrations bridges the generations and cuts across socioeconomic lines, resulting in a true representation of the population and therefore a potential for mass unrest.

The highest incidence of organized dissent and *samizdat* (underground publishing activities) in the Soviet Union occurs in the Baltic region. Though Baltic dissent has a strong nationalist dimension, it is neither exclusivist nor chauvinistic, and cooperation across national lines, particularly with other Baltic groups, is commonplace and effective.

Baltic dissent is therefore more similar to East European dissent than, for example, to the Russian human-rights movement. However, it operates under a number of severe constraints that make a Solidarity-type challenge to the regime very unlikely. To begin with, the combined Baltic population is miniscule compared with the Soviet population, and it is politically fragmented, with a strong non-native admixture that may be hostile to native dissent. There are also different levels of antiregime and nationalist sentiments within the different republics, e.g., Latvia is much more quiescent than either Estonia or Lithuania in this respect. Further, the Soviet regime has at its disposal in the Baltics a vast and effective array of political and security controls that are essentially immune to dissent, including the KGB, the internal security forces, and the military, which it will not hesitate to use, in however brutal a fashion, if the need arises.

In the early 1980s, Baltic political dissent was influenced by the rise of Solidarity in Poland, which, along with other indigenous factors led to the intensification of dissent activities and attempts to organize a strike movement in Estonia. An assessment of the current political atmosphere in the Baltic republics reveals widespread alienation and discontent among large segments of the population above and beyond dissident elements, especially among Baltic youth.

This situation also has a number of implications relevant to Western military-security concerns, particularly in the event of a conflict. The Baltic military district, for instance, is both the home of the Soviet Baltic fleet and a vital *place d'armes* for any Soviet military effort against NATO. Given the possibility of widespread unrest and even open disloyalty on the part of large segments of the Baltic

population, Soviet military assets there may be vulnerable to disruption of mobilization efforts and logistic lines and the unreliability of Baltic reservists. These and other vulnerabilities stemming from internal weaknesses of the Soviet system in the Baltics and elsewhere deserve much greater attention in future research.

Since coming to power, the Andropov regime seems to have chosen a hard-line course of confrontation and repression for dealing with political-nationalist dissent. Given the declining economic conditions in the region, continued aggressive Russification measures, and the resulting nationalist backlash, it is not likely that the regime's hard-line policies will be successful in eradicating dissent. Thus, despite the present limitations to Baltic dissent which probably preclude its evolution into a system-threatening movement, it remains a potential source of domestic instability in the area, and under certain conditions—such as a general crisis in the Soviet Union—it could serve as the catalyst of mass unrest.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am indebted to Frank Fukuyama, A. Ross Johnson, V. Stanley Vardys, and S. Enders Wimbush for their insightful comments and critique of the entire manuscript. Sergei Zamascikov provided invaluable research assistance, linguistic expertise, and advice throughout the project, which I gratefully acknowledge here. My Rand colleague Lilita Dzirkals also generously placed her knowledge of Baltic affairs and advice at my disposal. I am especially grateful to Vladas Sakalys, Sergei Soldatov, and my other émigré informants who wish to remain anonymous, for sharing with me their first-hand knowledge and impressions of Baltic dissent and life in the Baltics under Soviet rule in general. Last but not least, I would like to thank my secretary, Helen Barnes, who produced this report in her usual highly professional and cheerful way.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The unprecedented challenge to the Communist regime by a Polish working-class movement, regardless of the ultimate outcome of the continuing struggle in Poland between Solidarity and the military regime that was imposed in December 1981, has provided analysts of Communist systems with clear lessons. It has proven beyond any doubt the inability of the Polish regime to acquire even a modicum of genuine political legitimacy, despite close to forty years of uninterrupted rule; demonstrated vividly the inherent instability of the system; and confirmed the continuing vitality of nationalism and religion. Moreover, Solidarity has shown that under certain conditions, a massive organized challenge to the power structure can arise from below, a possibility that until recently would have been dismissed as unrealistic by many experts on Communist affairs. While it is now generally acknowledged that Eastern Europe is undergoing a major crisis and is subject to serious internal upheavals, the possibility of destabilizing internal dissent in the Soviet Union itself is usually denied, despite the presence of East European-like conditions in some Soviet regions. This study examines the nature of systemic discontent in one such region, the Baltic, where both nationalism and dissent have sharply increased in the past decade, and examines the potential (or lack thereof) for serious domestic instability and unrest.

This section briefly reviews the historical background of the Baltic nations and the record of Soviet policies in the area after World War II. Section II analyzes present Soviet policies and considers trends and developments that are perceived as contributing to Baltic nationalism and dissent. Section III describes how Baltic dissent is distinguished from Russian dissent and probes the determinants, methods, and objectives of religious and political dissent in the area. It also examines the influence of the Polish events on the Baltic, including the significance and impact of the election and policies of Pope John Paul II in the evolution of religious dissent, and the Soviet regime's reaction to Baltic dissent, particularly since Andropov's rise to power.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Baltic area and its inhabitants differ from the rest of the Soviet Union in some key cultural and historical aspects which give the area a unique character. An appreciation of this uniqueness both before and during the Soviet period is essential for an understanding of present trends and developments.

The Baltic nations evolved historically as part of the Western cultural, spiritual, and economic sphere and as a result developed traditions different from those of their Russian neighbors and the other Eastern Slavic nations.¹ Western cultural and economic influence was transmitted primarily through German and Swedish invaders, and in the case of the Lithuanians, through the Poles. The German Teutonic Order established itself in the area in the early 13th century and eventually, following the Reformation, converted Estonians and Latvians to the Lutheran faith. Although the Teutons governed as foreign conquerors, they also opened the area to Western trade, and considerable development followed. Riga, for example, joined the Hanseatic League in 1282 and promptly achieved remarkable economic prosperity and cultural progress. After the decline of the Teutons, the Latvian and Estonian lands fell under the control of Sweden, which established, for the times, a fairly liberal rule. By the 17th century, an extensive educational system had been established in the countryside, and the peasants of Latvia and Estonia were allowed to study at Tartu University, founded in 1632. In what was an unheard-of practice at the time, peasants were even granted the right to sue their masters at courts of law.

Lithuania, which had received Christianity from Poland and had become Catholic, has the most distinguished history of the Baltic nations. It gained statehood in the mid-13th century and achieved considerable power and prestige, both independently and as part of the Polish-Lithuanian kingdom. Under the field command of Vytautas the Great, who continues to be revered as a hero and a national symbol, the Polish-Lithuanian army inflicted a stunning defeat on the Knights of the Teutonic Order at the Battle of Tannenberg in 1410 and thus effectively checked further German expansion in the East. The Lithuanian empire, which sprawled over some 350,000 square miles, also provided an insurmountable barrier to westward expansion by the Mongols of the Golden Horde who ruled Russia in the 14th and 15th centuries.

¹Perhaps with the exception of the Western Ukrainians, who are Catholic (of the Eastern rite) and were incorporated into the Soviet Union as late as World War II.

By the beginning of the 19th century, however, all three Baltic countries had been incorporated in the resurgent Russian empire, and this marked one of the most difficult periods in their histories. In the second half of the 19th century, the Baltic nationalities were subjected to increasing political oppression and massive Russification pressures. Russian was often introduced as the only legal language in the schools, and religions other than the Orthodox, especially the Catholic, were severely circumscribed. In Lithuania, between 1864 and 1905, all publications not printed in the Cyrillic alphabet were outlawed.

These crude attempts at denationalization and Russification by the Czarist regime engendered active opposition and the strengthening of the Baltic peoples' will to self-determination and political independence. It also left bitter political memories and a tradition of Russophobia, which were nurtured in the ensuing periods.

The opportunity to achieve the long-sought objective of self-determination arrived in the aftermath of World War I, with the collapse of the Russian monarchy and the simultaneous defeat of Germany. Independence was finally proclaimed by all three Baltic republics in 1918. Attempts by the new Bolshevik regime to install Communist governments with the help of the Red Army were frustrated by hastily organized Baltic militias.

INCORPORATION INTO THE SOVIET UNION

The hard-won independence of the Baltic nations was to last only 22 years. But despite this historically very short period and the legacy of centuries of political and cultural oppression, the Baltic states were able to establish political systems that proved remarkably viable and generally liberal. The three republics also fared rather well economically, and standards of living in the Baltic during the period of independence were vastly superior to those prevailing in the Soviet Union; indeed, they compared not too unfavorably to those of the Scandinavian countries.²

The fate of the Baltic republics was sealed in the secret protocol of the Nazi-Soviet Pact of August 1939, according to which the Baltic area was included in the Soviet sphere of influence. In the following months, the Soviets first won the right to keep large military bases in Baltic territory; then in June 1940, they occupied the Baltic republics outright, despite the fact that the Soviet Union had friendship and

²For a detailed study of the period of Baltic independence, see George von Rauch, *The Baltic States: The Years of Independence, 1917-1940*, London, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1974.

non-aggression treaties guaranteeing Soviet non-interference in domestic affairs with all three countries.³ Two months later, the Baltic states were formally incorporated in the Soviet Union as Union republics.

Immediately after the annexation, the Soviet regime embarked on a course of relentless Sovietization and restructuring of the traditional societal forms of the Balts. The importance and priority given this task could be deduced from the appointment of some of Stalin's most trusted lieutenants, including Zhdanov in Estonia and Vishinsky in Latvia, as the executors of the policy. Faced with the universal hostility of the indigenous populations, the Soviets engaged in brutal political oppression, purges, and deportations designed to crush any real or imagined opposition. To prevent the emergence of any organized opposition or dissent and to intimidate would-be opponents, Moscow conscientiously proceeded to neutralize and eliminate the Baltic intelligentsia and political elite. In one single night, on June 13-14, 1941, at least 48,000 members of the Baltic elite, including women and children,⁴ were deported to Siberia. The great majority of the victims of this and subsequent deportations perished, with less than 20 percent eventually returning to their native lands after Stalin's death. The total number of victims of the Soviet regime during the year-long occupation has been estimated to be 60,000 Estonians, 35,000 Latvians, and 34,000 Lithuanians, including many women and children.⁵

Following the German invasion of June 22, 1941, the NKVD organs in the Baltic summarily executed as many of the political prisoners they were holding as the hasty Soviet retreat permitted. About 5,000

³A concise account of the circumstances and events leading to the Soviet annexation of the Baltic republics is contained in Boris Meissner, "The Baltic Question in World Politics," in V. Stanley Vardys and Romuald J. Misiunas (eds.), *The Baltic States in Peace and War, 1917-1945*, Pennsylvania State University Press, 1978. Exhaustive documentary evidence concerning the annexation is provided in Bronis J. Kaslas, *The USSR-German Aggression Against Lithuania*, New York, 1973. The Soviet version of these events can be found in P. Grishchenko, et al., *Borba za Sovetskuiu Pribaltiku v Velikoi Otechestvennoi voine, 1941-1945*, Riga, 1966. The United States and most Western democracies have refused to recognize Soviet sovereignty in the Baltics de jure or de facto. See Lawrence Juda, "United States' Nonrecognition of the Soviet Union's Annexation of the Baltic States," *Journal of Baltic Studies*, Vol. VI, No. 4, 1975.

⁴Exact figures on the deportations are understandably difficult to obtain. The total cited here, which comprises 21,000 Lithuanians, 16,000 Latvians, and 11,000 Estonians, is based on Vilis Skultans, "Fortieth Anniversary of a Night of Infamy in the Baltic," *Radio Liberty Research*, RL 238181, June 12, 1981. Alexander Shtromas, in *The Baltic States* (unpublished paper presented at the Conference on Soviet Nationalities, the Hoover Institution, Stanford, California, April 13-14, 1983), basing his estimate on several sources, arrives at a figure close to 60,000 for the week between June 14 and the outbreak of war on June 22, 1941.

⁵See Romuald Misiunas and Rein Taagepera, *The Baltic States: The Years of Independence (1940-1980)*, Berkeley: University of California, 1983, p. 41.

Balts suffered this fate.⁶ As the German troops neared the Baltic area, the almost universal hatred of the Soviet occupiers led to spontaneous and mass uprisings in all three republics. The most effective one took place in Lithuania on June 23, where some 100,000 insurgents drove the Red Army out of the country, at the cost of 5,000 casualties, before the Wehrmacht arrived.⁷ Large-scale revolts also broke out in Latvia and Estonia, where 60,000 and 50,000 participants, respectively, took up arms against the Soviet regime.⁸

Not surprisingly, given this record of the first year of Soviet occupation, the invading German forces were accorded a friendly reception and were viewed by many as liberators from Soviet tyranny. The hopes of the Baltic peoples to reestablish their sovereignty under German auspices, however, were soon dashed by the realization that the Nazis had no intention of allowing any Baltic self-determination, but instead planned the annexation of the entire area as a Reich province and the forced Germanization of the indigenous population. German policies during the years of occupation were characterized by brutal political oppression, racial intolerance, economic plunder, and total lack of sensitivity for the national aspirations of the Balts, and the Germans managed to alienate the overwhelming majority of the population. Nonetheless, for most Balts, as the Soviet army again approached the Baltic territories, Germany represented the lesser of two evils. Many Balts therefore chose to fight on the German side in what they perceived as a struggle for their national interests.⁹ The retreat of the German army precipitated an exodus of close to 200,000 Latvians, Lithuanians, and Estonians to Germany, Sweden, and Finland.

The reoccupation of the Baltic lands by the Red Army ushered in a new period of Soviet repression which far surpassed the first occupation in its ferocity. According to reliable sources, 20,000 Estonians and 105,000 Latvians were deported in 1945-1946.¹⁰ Lithuania was hit

⁶For details, see R. Misiunas and R. Taagepera, *The Baltic States*, p. 276. Also see Joseph Pajanjis-Javis, *Soviet Genocide in Lithuania*, New York: Maryland Books, 1980, pp. 63-67.

⁷The uprising of June 1941 is detailed in Algirdas Martin Budreckis, *The Lithuanian National Revolt of 1941*, Boston, 1968.

⁸See J. A. Sweetenham, *The Tragedy of the Baltic States: A Report Compiled from Official Documents and Eyewitness Stories*, London, 1952, pp. 23-26.

⁹For an exhaustive account of German policies in the Baltic, see Alexander Dallin, *German Rule in Russia, 1941-1945*, London, 1957, especially Chapter X. Also see Alexander Alexiev, *Soviet Nationalities in German Wartime Strategy, 1941-1945*, The Rand Corporation, R-2772, November 1982.

¹⁰These figures are extracted from the account of the events contained in *Encyclopedia Britannica*.

hardest. Immediately after the reestablishment of Soviet control in the fall of 1944, 60,000 Lithuanians were deported to Siberia, to be followed by 145,000 more in the next two years.¹¹ The final wave of deportations took place in all three countries in the spring of 1949 in connection with the forced collectivization campaign. Its victims were the so-called "kulaks." Sixty thousand Lithuanians, 70,000 Latvians, and 80,000 Estonians were deported, and their property and assets were confiscated.¹² Overall, some 600,000 Balts were deported—a figure which, given a total population of about 6 million, approaches genocidal proportions.

Part of the explanation for the inordinately harsh Soviet policies in the postwar period may be found in the fact that the Baltic peoples did not submit docilely to the Sovietization of their countries, but put up a heroic, if hopeless, armed resistance to their Soviet oppressors. The active resistance of the Balts to Soviet power was organized in all three republics immediately after the arrival of the Red Army in the fall of 1944 and was not completely suppressed until 1952. Latvia and Estonia each had organized units of up to 15,000 guerrillas who fought the Soviets in 1945.¹³ Despite extremely unfavorable conditions, such as inadequate armaments and lack of large forests in which to conceal their movements, the partisans were highly effective until the late 1940s and were able to deny control of the countryside to the regime and delay the collectivization of agriculture. It was in Lithuania, however, that partisan resistance to the Soviets achieved the highest intensity and assumed the character of a full-scale guerrilla war.

Reliable figures are, understandably, difficult to obtain, but even sketchy Soviet sources indicate a prolonged and embittered struggle. Until the early 1950s, there seem to have been about 30,000 fighters in partisan ranks in any given year.¹⁴ Soviet officials have reportedly admitted that regime losses amounted to 20,000, with a much higher

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid. An excellent account of the deportation of the "kulaks" in Estonia is provided in Rein Taagepera, "Soviet Collectivization of Estonian Agriculture: The Deportation Phase," *Soviet Studies*, Vol. XXXII, No. 3, July 1980, pp. 379-397.

¹³Cited in A. Shtromas, *The Baltic States*; also see Imants Alksnis, *Latvijas Sapsnis*, Lund, Sweden, 1967, p.51.

¹⁴See, for example, V. Stanley Vardys, "The Partisan Movement in Postwar Lithuania," *Slavic Review*, Vol. XXII, No. 3, September 1963, pp. 499-522; Thomas Remeikis, *Opposition to Soviet Rule in Lithuania, 1945-1980*, Chicago, 1980; and "The Armed Struggle Against Sovietization of Lithuania, 1944," *Lituanus*, Vol. VIII, No. 1-2, 1962. Also see K. V. Tauras, *Guerrilla Warfare on the Amber Coast*, New York, 1962. For an account by a participant, see Juozas Daumantas, *Fighters for Freedom: Lithuanian Partisans Versus the USSR*, New York, 1975.

number killed on the partisan side.¹⁵ For several years after 1944, the partisans evidently controlled the countryside and Soviet authority was restricted to the cities. The seriousness of the situation for the Soviet regime is also evidenced by the formation of a special bureau for Lithuania at the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), designed specifically to deal with the insurrection and headed by Mikhail Suslov, who became the de facto ruler of Lithuania. To cope with the partisan challenge the Soviets fielded two elite NKVD "OSNAZ" (special-purpose) divisions, the forces of the Lithuanian border district (equivalent to another full division), and seven independent regiments.¹⁶

The armed resistance of the Baltic nations to the Soviet regime was finally subdued in the early 1950s. The memories of this violent, if futile, effort to defend national independence and its even more violent suppression, along with the experience of previous Soviet and Russian policies in the area, undoubtedly continue to influence and shape the attitudes of many Balts toward regime authorities and the Soviet Union in general.

¹⁵See Thomas Remeikis, *Opposition to Soviet Rule*, p. 40. According to a *samizdat* publication, 30,000 partisans were killed in 1944-1945 alone (*ibid.*, p. 267). Joseph Pajanjis-Javis claims in *The Soviet Genocide in Lithuania* that the Soviet toll may have been as high as 80,000.

¹⁶Details on the Soviet forces are provided in an article in the Lithuanian underground publication, *Varpas* (The Bell), 1975, entitled "Soviet Measures to Break National Resistance." The article is reproduced in Thomas Remeikis, *Opposition to Soviet Rule*, pp. 262-274.

II. SOURCES OF BALTIC NATIONALISM AND DISSENT

In the years following the final suppression of overt opposition in the Baltic region, the Soviet regime continued and accelerated the pursuit of policies designed to ensure the irreversible consolidation of Soviet power and the diffusion of Baltic nationalism. The most important among those were rapid industrialization and collectivization of agriculture (fully achieved by the early 1950s) and the gradual socialization of Baltic society into Soviet political values and socioeconomic norms. Yet many of the policies pursued with the aim of enhancing Soviet control often proved counterproductive to the parallel regime objectives of establishing a certain level of acceptance, legitimacy, and popular support. By the late 1960s, these policies, coupled with other trends and developments, combined to produce a visible backlash and a revival of dissent and nationalism which has intensified and continued to the present. The most relevant of these policies are examined briefly below.

MECHANICS OF SOVIET POLITICAL CONTROL

Throughout the postwar years, the paramount political objectives of the Soviet regime in the Baltic have been to ensure undisputed control by the Moscow Party hierarchy and to prevent any nationalistic deviations. To achieve these objectives, Moscow has relied on an elaborate system of checks and controls and the penetration of the local Party organizations by Russians and Russified members of the respective nations. The Baltic nationalities, in general, are underrepresented among Party members in comparison to the Russians and some other ethnic groups. If one assumes an index of 100 for the Soviet average, Party membership for the Latvians, Lithuanians, and Estonians is 72, 60, and 72, respectively, while the corresponding figure for the Russians is 117.¹ Russian overrepresentation is much higher in the Baltic Parties than in the CPSU organization as a whole. For example, while Russians represented 29.8 percent of the population in Latvia in 1973, they provided 54 percent of the Party members. In Lithuania and Estonia, the respective figures were 8.6 vs. 27.0 and 24.7 vs. 41.0.²

¹Edward Allworth, *Nationality Group Survival in Multi-Ethnic States*, New York: Praeger, 1977, p. 131.

²Ibid., pp. 129, 132, 134.

A more important tool for assuring the reliability of Party organs has been the appointment of Russified Balts to important positions of power. Most of these people, especially in the case of the Estonian and Latvian leadership, either were born in the Baltic but spent most of their lives in Russia or were raised and educated outside their ethnic areas. The majority of these people were highly assimilated into the Russian milieu, had little or no knowledge of their national language and culture, and were completely loyal to the Soviet cause. In the period immediately following the Soviet takeover, this stratum constituted the backbone of the Party and state organs,³ and it continues to play an important role. The case of Latvia is particularly indicative in this respect. The First Secretary of the Party (Augusts Voss), the Chairman of the Council of Ministers, and four of the five Deputy Chairmen are either Russified Latvians or Russians of Latvian origin.⁴ In the Presidium of the Central Committee, only two of the eleven members are native Latvians.⁵ All Party business in Latvia is conducted in Russian.⁶

In Estonia, the same principle is followed, although to a lesser degree. The present party boss, Karl Vaino, like his predecessor, Ivan Kabin, is a Russian Estonian, as are a number of other key leaders.⁷ Lithuania represents an exception in this respect, with very few Russified nationals among the Party elite.

Another traditional method of ensuring Moscow's direct control over republican organizations is the appointment of Russian "watchdog"

³This was understandable and indeed imperative from the Soviet point of view, given the marginal strength of the indigenous Communist Parties and the pronounced reluctance of the vast majority of Balts to join the Party. At the time of the annexation of the Baltic republics, their Communist Parties consisted of 1,500 members in Lithuania, less than 1,000 in Latvia, and only 130 in Estonia, according to official Soviet sources cited in Shtromas, *The Baltic States*. In 1946 the indigenous nationalities represented less than a third of the membership in all three parties. See Misiunas and Taagepera, *The Years of Dependence*, p. 77.

⁴See "Report on the Implementation of the Helsinki Final Act of August 1, 1975," in *Soviet Latvia*, Rockville, Maryland, 1980, pp. 66-67. Also see Bruno Kalnina, "How Latvia is Ruled: The Structure of the Political Apparatus," *Journal of Baltic Studies*, No. 8, 1977, pp. 70-78.

⁵*Ibid.*

⁶A former high official of the Latvian *komsomol* interviewed by the author recalled that ethnic Latvians were seldom represented in the *Komsomol* Central Committee and, indeed, this important political body often was unable to find even a Latvian-speaking Secretary. Another informant with first-hand experience in high Latvian Party circles said that the use of the Latvian language in the Central Committee of the Latvian Communist Party is tantamount to an ideological deviation.

⁷See *Soviet Analyst*, Vol. 8, No. 17, August 1979. For a discussion on the makeup of the Estonian Party elite, see Jaan Penaar, "Soviet Nationality Policy and the Estonian Communist Elite," in Tõnu Parming and Elmar Jarveo (eds.), *A Case Study of a Soviet Republic: The Estonian SSSR*, Boulder, Colorado, 1980.

functionaries as Second Secretaries of the republican Parties. All three Baltic organizations have such "watchdogs" in residence at present. The Second Secretary exercises tremendous power in the Party apparatus, since he is in charge of the key "cadres" department and can influence not only the Party appointments but, through the system of *nomenklatura*, all important positions in the republic.⁸ Moreover, in his "watchdog" function, the Second Secretary represents the Secretariat of the CPSU in the republic, which gives him an additional and extremely influential power base. Although the Second Secretary can and does influence personnel decisions, the actual promotion decisions for all Party officials, starting with the District Secretary, are made in Moscow. Thus, by essentially denying republican functionaries the key political tool of patronage, Moscow hopes to prevent the building of native power bases and loyalties.

The elaborate structure of central controls of the Baltic Communist establishments suggests a continuing lack of complete trust on the part of Moscow in the commitment and dependability of indigenous Party members to carry out prescribed policy without regard to specific national desiderata.⁹ Such excessive and heavy-handed external control is undoubtedly a source of irritation and alienation for the more nationally conscious of the Communist elites; on the other hand, it reinforces the widespread perception among the general Baltic population that the local Parties are little more than Moscow's reliable tools for the perpetration of its political hegemony.

⁸The functions and jurisdiction of the Second Secretary are discussed in Yaroslav Bilinsky, "The Rulers and the Ruled," *Problems of Communism*, Vol. 16, No. 5, September-October 1967.

⁹It should be noted that the wariness of the Soviet leadership is not totally without foundation. In the years since the Soviet takeover, a number of deviations from the official line have been sponsored by Baltic Communists. In 1950, the Estonian Communist leadership was accused by Moscow of having failed to stem "bourgeois nationalism," and the First Secretary and other leading officials were purged. See Tonu Parmin and Elmar Jarvesoo, *A Case Study of a Soviet Republic*, p. 116; R. Misiunas and R. Taagepera, *The Baltic States*, pp. 77-81. In Latvia, where the most serious nationalist deviation took place, top Party officials under the leadership of Eduards Berklavs, Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers, attempted to counteract Moscow-initiated economic policies that threatened to result in increased Russification of the country. A wide-ranging purge in late 1959 claimed Berklavs, the Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, along with six ministers and deputy ministers, two Secretaries of the Central Committee, the editor-in-chief of the Party daily, and others. See "Dissent in the Baltic Republics: A Survey of Grievances and Hopes," *Radio Liberty Research Bulletin*, No. 496/76, December 14, 1976; also see A. Berzins, *The Unpunished Crime*, New York, 1963. In Lithuania, the long-term Party boss, A. Snieckus, from the late 1960s until his death in 1974 evidently sought to advance Lithuanian republic interests in a variety of ways within the system. For an analysis of Snieckus' career, see Thomas Remeikis, "Political Development in Lithuania during the Brezhnev Era," in George Simmonds (ed.), *Nationalism in the USSR and Eastern Europe*, Detroit, 1977. For Snieckus' alleged evolution into a more nationally minded functionary, see Alexander Shtromas, "Dve statii T. Zhenklysa," *Kontinent*, No. 14, 1977.

The composition and institutional characteristics of other state organs also leave no doubt as to their essential control objectives. The all-powerful KGB organization is represented at all levels of Baltic government and society but functions largely independently of the local leadership and reports directly to Moscow.

The system of control in the KGB is akin to that in the Party. While all of the Baltic republics now have a native as KGB chief, his deputy is invariably a Russian. And it is the deputy who has a direct connection with Moscow center, which makes him both independent of and more powerful than his nominal boss. Within the Central Committee of each Baltic party, there is a security department that is formally in charge of the republican KGB. In fact, however, this department serves merely as a liaison office and is not empowered to issue instructions or supervise the work of the KGB. Further, a majority of the senior KGB operatives are Russian, as are most of the department and section chiefs in city residencies.¹⁰ The border troops in the Baltic, which are also under the jurisdiction of the KGB, are, as a rule, staffed with non-Baltic recruits and officers. The internal security forces, which are under the Ministry of Internal Affairs (*Ministerstvo vnutrennykh del-MVD*) and are designed specifically for internal policing functions, consist primarily of Central Asians and Slavs, with an almost exclusively Russian officer corps.¹¹ The MVD forces that are present in all larger cities in regimental strength have their own chain of command and communication to Moscow, which can completely bypass the republican leadership. Finally, the Soviet army, which is very much in evidence in the Baltic region and which, in the final analysis, also has an internal policing function, is manned on the principle of extraterritoriality, which means that local recruits almost never serve in their native areas. The exclusion of Baltic nationals from units deployed in the Baltic military district, coupled with the fact that the Soviet officer corps is almost homogeneously Slavic and overwhelmingly Russian, must make it difficult for Balts to identify with the Soviet armed forces in a positive way.¹²

¹⁰According to a quantitative study of Soviet elites in 1955-1972, 73.9 percent of the republican KGB chiefs were non-native (Grey Hodnett, *Leadership in the Soviet National Republics, a Quantitative Study of Recruitment Policy*, Ontario, 1978). Interviews conducted by the author with former Lithuanian and Estonian dissidents who had considerable experience with the KGB organs indicate that Russians dominate in the more responsible positions in both republics.

¹¹The MVD forces should not be confused with the regular militia, which is a more traditional law-and-order organ. For details on the ethnic composition of the MVD and the regular Army, see S. E. Wimbush and Alex Alexiev, *The Ethnic Factor in the Soviet Armed Forces*, The Rand Corporation, R-2787/1, May 1982.

¹²One of the consequences of the generally negative Baltic attitude toward the army and military service is the extreme reluctance of Baltic youth to embrace a military career. Although this subject is generally taboo in the Soviet press, a recent speech by a

Overall, the mechanics of Soviet control, as practiced by the Party and the other organs of state power, though evidently effective from the regime's point of view, have created the impression of a political system dominated by outsiders and maintained in a quasi-occupational manner. Such a negative assessment of their political situation has been and continues to be a major source of dissent for the nationally conscious Balts.

ECONOMIC POLICIES

At first glance, Soviet economic policies in the Baltic and the economic conditions obtaining there seem to be the least likely factor promoting dissent. The Soviet Baltic region as a whole enjoys the highest standard of living in the Soviet Union, with the possible exception of some parts of Georgia and Armenia. In most categories of consumption, the Balts are incomparably better off than their fellow citizens in other republics—a fact which, coupled with the cultural and historical uniqueness of the area, explains why the Baltic is often referred to somewhat enviously as "Sovetskaya zagranitsa" (the "Soviet abroad").¹³ Yet despite the comparative prosperity of the Balts, certain economic practices and trends are contributing to growing alienation from the system.

The Soviet economic blueprint for the Baltic after the war called for rapid and large-scale industrialization under the strict central control mechanism typical of the Stalinist period. This policy was intended to achieve a degree of integration of the Baltic economy with the Soviet economy that would facilitate control and central planning. During the Khrushchev period, a certain decentralization took place which allowed greater decisionmaking leeway and economic initiatives at the republican level. Of particular importance was the establishment of National Economic Councils (*Sovnarkhozy*) in 1957. Under the *Sovnarkhoz*

high-ranking Estonian Communist functionary dwells on the need to improve "military-patriotic" indoctrination and contains the remarkable admissions that "draftees have been prepared poorly for service in the armed forces" and that "there are still not many young men of Estonian nationality choosing to be career officers" (speech by Reyn Ristlaan, Secretary of the Central Committee of the Estonian Communist Party, "Shaping Communist Conviction," *Kommunist Estonii*, No. 9, September 1981, translated in *USSR Report, Political and Sociological Affairs*, No. 1191, JPRS 79399, November 9, 1981, p. 18).

¹³A recent Soviet admission of the differentials in consumption—in this case, in Estonia—appeared in an article by M. Bronshteyn, Chairman of ESSR Academy of Sciences Commission for Economic and Social Problems of the Development of the Republic Agrarian-Industrial Complex, in *Sovetskaya Estoniia*, September 1, 1981. Curiously, the article mentions that the officially set optimal level of consumption of at least some products is higher for Estonia than for the non-Baltic areas.

system, the republics were allowed to operate administratively as independent economic entities to a far greater extent than was the case during the Stalin period. As a result, considerable decentralization occurred, with local republican managers enjoying freedom from excessive interference by Moscow. A large number of industrial enterprises were subordinated to republican control, while former all-Union ministries relinquished authority to republican agencies. In all three Baltic republics, more than 80 percent of industrial output passed under republican administrative jurisdiction—a dramatic reversal from the pre-*Sounarkhoz* period, when Moscow ministries directly ran 90 percent of Latvia's industry.¹⁴ Under these conditions, the Baltic republics—especially Estonia and Latvia—which had well-established industrial and transportation infrastructures even before the war and were endowed with a skilled labor force and considerable managerial talent and technological know-how, achieved considerable progress. By 1968, per capita income in the Baltic exceeded the Soviet average by 44 percent in Estonia, 42 percent in Latvia, and 15 percent in Lithuania. With 2.8 percent of the Soviet population, the area produced 3.6 percent of Soviet gross national product, and net exports exceeded imports by 10 percent.¹⁵ This situation, if left unchecked, threatened to result in the accumulation of significant economic power in some republics and great developmental disparities. Such an evolution, of course, portended serious political implications and could not be tolerated in the long term. Soon after the fall of Khrushchev in 1964, the model was scaled down and then abandoned in favor of a slightly less centralized form of the Stalinist model.

Autonomous economic decisionmaking in the Baltic republics is presently severely circumscribed. The most prevalent method of effecting central control appears to be the direct subordination of Baltic industrial enterprises to Moscow ministries and economic authorities. All key enterprises and a majority of the larger plants and factories thus fall outside republican economic jurisdiction. Moscow exerts direct control, for example, over all plants engaged in defense production, all heavy industry plants, and factories producing primarily for export to other parts of the Soviet Union or abroad. Together, these

¹⁴R. Misiunas and R. Taagepera, *The Baltic States*, p. 179. For a detailed account of the implications of the *Sounarkhoz* system and other Soviet economic strategies for the Baltic republics, see Endel-Jacob Kolde, "Structural Integration of Baltic Economies into the Soviet System," *Journal of Baltic Studies*, Vol. IX, No. 2, Summer 1978; also see Benedict Maciuika, "The Role of the Baltic Republics in the Economy of the USSR," *Journal of Baltic Studies*, Vol. III, No. 1, Spring 1972.

¹⁵R. Misiunas and R. Taagepera, *The Baltic States*, p. 177-178.

enterprises probably represent more than half of the Baltic industrial capacity.¹⁶

Another Soviet economic policy that has antagonized sizable parts of the Baltic population is that of building on Baltic territory industrial plants for which neither raw materials nor labor nor adequate markets are readily available locally.¹⁷ Due to an extreme labor shortage, particularly in Estonia and Latvia, this policy has led to a massive influx of Russian and other Slavic workers, which is seen by many—perhaps not totally without reason—as the real objective of the regime.

In the past few years, a new economic organizational model has been introduced which is also likely to meet with disapproval by the nationally conscious Balts to the extent that it appears to further undermine the national character of the individual Baltic economies. This model involves the setting up of industrial associations that may transcend republican boundaries operationally and create direct inter-republican economic linkages. The negative consequences of such an arrangement for the Balts, from a national point of view, include the further degradation of the national languages, since the working language of multirepublic associations would obviously have to be Russian, and the potential for a serious drain of Baltic managerial talent.¹⁸

Among the economic trends with perhaps the greatest potential for generating widespread dissatisfaction and discontent is the general worsening of consumer conditions—particularly with regard to food supplies. Since the mid-1970s, the Baltic area has experienced with increasing frequency food shortages which, though endemic to other parts of the Soviet Union, were seldom experienced in the Baltic region. While the Baltic population continues to enjoy a standard of living much higher than that of most other Soviet citizens, a visible deterioration or even a stagnation of their standard is likely to give rise to political dissatisfaction for several reasons. The most salient of these is the perception shared by a majority of the Balts that economic shortfalls—and food shortages in particular—are caused by economic exploitation of the region by the Moscow regime. The Balts generally consider themselves highly skilled and industrious people, and the Communist system and Soviet domination are seen by many as the only barrier to economic prosperity for their nations.

¹⁶According to a knowledgeable informant, all industrial enterprises with more than 3,000 employees are also subordinated directly to Moscow. According to this informant, 60 percent of Latvian industrial output is centrally controlled.

¹⁷For example, according to an interviewee with direct knowledge, the giant textile mill in Ogre near Riga gets most of its wool and cotton from Soviet Central Asia or from overseas and sells its products primarily outside of the Baltic area. Reportedly, almost all of its workers are non-natives imported from the Slavic areas.

¹⁸See Endel-Jacob Kolde, *Structural Integration of Baltic Economies*, pp. 169–175.

Such convictions are not totally unfounded. Prior to the Soviet takeover, Estonia, Latvia, and—to a slightly lesser degree—Lithuania had achieved living standards that compared favorably with those of the Scandinavian countries. By some indexes, such as consumption of meat and dairy products, they were among the leading countries in the world. For example, in 1937, meat consumption in Latvia amounted to 170 pounds (89 kilograms) per capita, and milk consumption per capita was 566 liters. The figures for the United States in the same year were 124 pounds and 368 liters, respectively.¹⁹ The Baltic republics have continued to lead in the production of foodstuffs per capita in the Soviet Union by a wide margin. In Estonia, for instance, per capita production of meat, dairy products, and eggs is more than twice the Union average, despite the fact that only 12 percent of the able-bodied population is engaged in agriculture, compared to the Union average of 24 percent.²⁰ Latvia and Lithuania are also far ahead in most categories of agricultural production.

Despite such superior achievements vis-à-vis Soviet agriculture as a whole, the Baltic agrarian economy has also experienced stagnation in the past few years and appears to be declining in some key sectors. Since 1977, production of meat, dairy products, and grain in all three republics has declined. In the key meat and dairy sectors of Baltic agriculture, which account for some two-thirds of total agricultural output, the combined Baltic production since 1977 has decreased by about 5 and 12 percent, respectively.²¹ The problems experienced by Baltic agriculture have in themselves contributed to marked deterioration in the supply and availability of food to the population. In most cases, however, local production would easily be able to meet demand if it were not for substantial deliveries outside of the region.²² Although figures on such transfers are not published in the Soviet Union, circumstantial evidence suggests that despite declining output, deliveries to the state have not been curtailed and, if anything, may have been

¹⁹See "Economic Conditions in Occupied Latvia," in *Report on the Implementation of the Helsinki Final Act of August 1, 1975*, in *Soviet Occupied Latvia*, Rockville, Maryland, 1980, p. 101. Such rates of consumption, it should be noted, are yet to be achieved in Soviet Latvia.

²⁰*Radio Liberty Research Bulletin*, No. 404/81, October 9, 1981.

²¹See "Baltic Agricultural Results, 1982," *Radio Liberty Research*, No. 110/83, March 16, 1983. Soviet data on shortfalls in Baltic agriculture are given in *Sovetskaya Litva*, July 15, 1981, p. 1; and *Pravda*, July 20, 1981, p. 2. Also see "Lithuanian First Secretary on Economic Problems and Abuses," *Radio Liberty Research Bulletin*, March 2, 1982; and "Animal Husbandry in Estonia Shows Little Progress," in *Radio Liberty Research Bulletin*, October 9, 1981.

²²Annual per capita meat production in Estonia, for instance, is 130 kilograms, while consumption is about 80 kilograms. See M. Bronshteyn, "The Food Program: Problems and Solutions," *Sovetskaya Estoniya*, September 2, 1981.

increased to alleviate critical food shortages in other areas. In a speech to the republican Party *aktiv*, Lithuanian Party leader P. Griskevicius, while admitting that the grain harvest in 1979 had been one-third smaller than that in 1978, claimed that the republic had fulfilled the 1979 grain delivery plan to the state.²³

As a result of these problems, the general standard of living seems to be stagnating and, at least in terms of food consumption, shows signs of decline. According to published Soviet data, none of the Baltic republics has achieved the officially set "healthy nutrition" consumption norm of 88 kilograms of meat and 442 kilograms of dairy products per capita.²⁴ According to the same source, even in Estonia—the republic with the best-fed population in the Soviet Union—only 70 to 80 percent of requirements for protein intake are met.²⁵ Soviet officials increasingly admit that the problem they are facing is a serious and long-term one and is not subject to easy solutions. Some have even openly speculated that proposed solutions, such as decreased food price subsidies, would result in an "appreciable drop in the living standard and consumption."²⁶ A *Pravda* article discussing food problems in Lithuania ended on a starkly pessimistic note: "It is not easy to reduce the distance between supply and demand and to drive out of use the habitual word, 'scarce.'"²⁷

Continuing deterioration of the food situation is likely to exacerbate the political volatility of a region where economic dissatisfaction is easily transformed into political protest. As one example, a demonstration by Estonian high-school students in October 1980, which started with a demand for better food in school cafeterias, soon evolved into an openly anti-Soviet protest demanding freedom for Estonia.

DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS AND RUSSIFICATION

The most disturbing Soviet policies, from the point of view of the native Balts, are those that are perceived as aiming at the denationalization and Russification of the Baltic peoples. These are the policies

²³*Sovetskaya Litva*, February 1, 1980, p. 83. An émigré informant, a former official of the Latvian Ministry of Meat and Dairy Products, claimed that as of 1977, republican delivery quotas for meat and milk were significantly raised, resulting in serious disruption of the local supply system.

²⁴*Rahva Haal*, Tallinn, July 14, 1981, p. 2, translated in *USSR Report, Political & Sociological Affairs*, JPRS No. 79272, October 22, 1981, p. 100.

²⁵*Ibid.*

²⁶M. Bronshteyn, "The Food Program: Problems and Solutions," *Sovetskaya Estoniya*, September 2, 1981, p. 1.

²⁷M. Poltoranin and D. Sniukas, "From Demand to Supply," *Pravda*, July 19, 1981, p. 2.

that are most likely to serve as a catalyst for revived nationalism and unrest. Baltic fears on this score have been intensified lately by troubling demographic developments in the national composition of the population, particularly in Estonia and Latvia. The last Soviet census, conducted in 1979, revealed a marked proportional decrease in the titular nationalities and a significant gain for the Russian and other Slavic elements.²⁸ Between 1959 and 1979, for example, the native share of the population in Estonia decreased from 75.6 to 64.7 percent, while the Russian share increased from 20.1 to 27.9 percent.²⁹ In the past ten years, the Estonian population has grown by about 2.3 percent; the Russian, on the other hand, has grown by 22.1 percent. Between 1959 and 1979, the Estonians increased by 6.2 percent, compared with 70 percent for the Slavs in the republic.³⁰ In the same time period, the Latvian proportion has shrunk from 62 to 53.7 percent, while the Russian increased from 30.9 to 40 percent. The Latvian population increased by only 250 persons per year during this period, which contrasts with 4,000 per year in the previous intercensal period, from 1959 to 1970.³¹ Only in Lithuania has the indigenous population managed to keep its share at about 80 percent of the republican total.³²

Part of the problem stems from the fact that the Balts have extremely low reproduction rates—among Latvians and Estonians, the rate is close to zero. Indeed, as a result of the low birth rates and the tremendous losses these nations have suffered from emigration and deportations, their populations are still below their prewar levels.³³

²⁸An excellent analysis of Baltic demographic changes since 1950, including the results of the 1979 census, is found in Rein Taagepera, "Baltic Population Changes, 1950-198," *Journal of Baltic Studies*, Vol. XIII, No. 1, 1981. Also see by the same author, "The Population Crisis and the Baltics," *Journal of Baltic Studies*, Vol. XII, No. 3, Fall 1981. A valuable bibliography on demographic studies of the Baltics is Tõnu Pärming, "Population Processes and the Nationality Issue in the Soviet Baltic," *Soviet Studies*, No. 32, 1980.

²⁹Data from "Census of 1979 on the Estonians and the Estonian SSR," *Radio Liberty Research Bulletin*, May 22, 1980.

³⁰These percentages are calculated on the basis of data provided in *Naselenie SSSR. Po dannym Vsesoiuznoi perepisi naseleniya 1979 godu*, Tsentralnoe Statisticheskoe Upravlenie, Moscow, 1980, p. 29; and Jaan Penaar, "Demographic Trends in Estonia," *Soviet Analyst*, Vol. 10, No. 1, January 7, 1981.

³¹See "Precipitous Decline in Rate of Growth of Latvian Population in Latvian SSR," *Radio Liberty Research Bulletin*, March 19, 1980.

³²An analysis of the Lithuanian demographic situation is to be found in "Lithuanians Retain their Share of the Population in the Lithuanian SSR," *Radio Liberty Research Bulletin*, March 25, 1980. The Lithuanian share in 1970 was 80.1 percent of the population; in 1979, it was still 80 percent.

³³In 1934, there were 992,500 Estonians and 1,472,000 Latvians; there are 948,000 and 1,344,000, respectively, today. See Juergen von Hehn, "Das Vordringen des Russentums in die baltischen Laender," *Osteuropa*, April 1981, p. 330.

However, the dramatic increase in the Slavic, especially Russian, component of the Baltic population cannot be explained by the natural increase of Slavs already resident in the region, since their reproduction rates are also extremely low. The growth of the non-native populations thus must be attributed almost exclusively to immigration. Since migration to the more desirable areas in the Soviet Union, such as the Baltic, is strictly controlled and requires a special permit (*propiska*) in each individual case, many Balts believe that the influx of Russians is the result of a conscious policy by the Moscow regime to achieve their gradual denationalization. Whether or not this is truly the government's objective, the strongly negative demographic trends have contributed to a nationalist backlash. One indication of the authorities' concern with popular reaction to these trends is the careful exclusion of detailed nationality breakdowns in the popular media.³⁴

The fears of the indigenous Baltic nationalities that they are being subjected to a long-term denationalization strategy have been intensified by a concerted campaign to aggressively promote the use of Russian at the expense of the native languages, beginning in the late 1970s. The campaign, which was designed for the Union as a whole, was signaled by the adoption of a decree by the USSR Council of Ministers on October 13, 1978, legislating measures to improve the teaching of Russian in non-Russian areas.³⁵ The following year, at an important all-Union conference in Tashkent on "The Russian Language—the Language of Friendship and Cooperation Among the Soviet Peoples," many additional steps were outlined that signified the regime's commitment to policies of linguistic Russification.³⁶

In the Baltic, where the Russian language already enjoys a dominant position in some areas, the new measures have generated massive resentment. Particularly unpopular have been the introduction of Russian at the kindergarten level, the transformation of many national schools into the so-called "integrated" schools where Russian dominates, and the language policies pursued in the area of higher education. Throughout the educational system, Russian is clearly given preference. Even in national schools, more time is devoted to the

³⁴For instance, the report on the 1979 census in the Latvian Party organ, *Cina*, February 27, 1980, dwelled at length on all aspects except the national composition of the population, which was always indicated in previous census reports.

³⁵See "Sovershenstvovat izuchenie i prepodavanie russkogo iazyka," *Russkii iazyk v natsionalnoi shkole*, No. 1, p. 2, 1979. For a detailed analysis, see "New Measures to Improve the Teaching of Russian in the Union Republics," *Radio Liberty Research Bulletin*, April 17, 1979.

³⁶*Ibid.*

study of Russian than to the native tongue.³⁷ On the other hand, non-native students attending Russian schools are seldom required to seriously study the native language.³⁸ The preponderance of Russian is particularly pronounced in the universities, where it is virtually impossible to achieve an educational objective without fluency in Russian. This is particularly true of the sciences: Many of the scientific courses are taught in Russian, and most textbooks and other materials are available only in Russian. Presently, even Ph.D. dissertations dealing with native literature have to be written and defended in Russian. The penetration of Russian in Latvian society and culture is especially disturbing. Three of the four television channels in the republic broadcast in Russian, and the fourth broadcasts in mixed Russian and Latvian.³⁹ Eighty-eight percent of all books published in 1935 were in Latvian, whereas 52 percent are in Latvian today; and the proportions are similar for journals and magazines.⁴⁰ The number of publications in the Latvian literature category has dropped from 455 in 1935 to 164 in 1977.⁴¹

The fears caused by the unfavorable demographic picture and the cultural Russification policies of the regime in the past few years are likely to be further intensified by what appears to be a renewed emphasis on the "internationalization" of the Soviet peoples under Andropov. The traditional and declared objective of Soviet nationalities policy since Lenin has been the achievement of *sliyanie*—the fusion or merging together of all nationalities into a new Soviet nation—a goal which theoretically will be achieved after a prolonged period of drawing together (*sblizhenie*). This theoretical postulate has been universally seen by the non-Russian nationalities as a thinly disguised euphemism for Russification, and it is bitterly resented.⁴²

³⁷In Latvian national schools, 55 percent of the time earmarked for language studies is allotted to the study of Russian language and literature, while Latvian language and literature merit only 30 percent. See *Report on the Implementation of the Helsinki Final Act*, p. 78.

³⁸A frank admission of official lack of concern in this area is provided in A. Zaytseva, "Estonian Lessons," *Molodezh Estonii*, January 8, 1981, p. 2. For the Soviet Union as a whole, only 17.2 percent of the Russians residing outside the RSFSR were conversant in the local language, according to the 1979 census (*Radio Liberty Research*, No. 3, January 20, 1983, p. 3).

³⁹In Estonia, where Estonians make up 64 percent of the population, 74 percent of all television programs are in Russian. See R. Misiunas and R. Taagepera, *The Baltic States*, p. 209.

⁴⁰*Index on Censorship*, No. 2, 1981, p. 59. Also see *Narodnoe Khoziaistvo SSSR v 1977 Godu*, Moscow, 1978, p. 524.

⁴¹*Report on the Implementation of the Helsinki Final Act*, p. 84.

⁴²For an insightful critique of the concept of *sliyanie* by a non-Russian Soviet dissident, see Ivan Dzyuba, *Internationalism or Russification?: A Study in the Soviet Nationalities Problem*, London, 1968.

Indeed, realizing that even the mention of the theory and policy of fusion of nationalities engenders considerable consternation among the non-Russians, Soviet leaders during the Brezhnev period consciously avoided discussing it. Brezhnev himself seems to have addressed the issue only once and then only in order to deny that fusion was taking place.⁴³

This official reluctance to forcefully advocate and propagandize the goal of internationalization of the Soviet nationalities was cast aside with Andropov's coming to power. In his first major address on the nationalities issue, some six weeks after assuming power, Andropov stated unequivocally: "Our final goal is clear. It is, in Lenin's words, 'not only the drawing together of nations, but their merging,'" and, while noting that the road to this goal is long, Andropov warned that "one must not allow a reining in of processes that have already matured."⁴⁴ Andropov's unambivalent endorsement of the objective of *sliyanie*, together with the implied belief that the present stage of development is conducive to its determined pursuit, may point to an even more aggressive Russification policy in the future. Soviet propagandists and Party theoreticians have already begun to propagate the virtues of internationalization in the Soviet polity in a much bolder manner than was done during the Brezhnev period. The desired outcome of this internationalization is clear to the Baltic and other small nationalities. Occasionally, it has been glimpsed even in official Soviet publications. For example, a recent article by the well-known Soviet expert on nationality questions A. I. Kholmogorov asserted that the process of internationalization has touched all aspects of the Soviet peoples' lives and has "accelerated ethnic processes which led to considerable decrease of the numerically small national communities (*obshtnostii*) in the USSR." He noted with satisfaction that while there were 200 such national communities in 1926, only 90 remained at present.⁴⁵

Whether Soviet policies aiming at the cultural Russification and eventual assimilation of the Balts will be ultimately successful is not at all certain. Available evidence suggests that all three Baltic nationalities continue to cling tenaciously to their national cultures and

⁴³*Prauda*, August 16, 1973, cited in A. Sheehy, "Andropov and the Merging of Nations," *Radio Liberty Research*, December 22, 1982.

⁴⁴*Ibid.* For an analysis of the speech, see also "Andropov Speaks on Nationalities Policy," *Radio Liberty Research*, December 21, 1980.

⁴⁵A. I. Kholmogorov, "Noviy etap v razvitii natsionalnikh otnoshenii v SSSR (New Stage in the Development of Nationality Relations in the USSR)," *Russkii yazik v natsionalnoi shkole*, No. 1, January-February 1983, p. 5.

languages and are far from internalizing a Soviet value system or Russian as the "universal vehicle of socialist internationalization." The demographic picture, although presently disturbing in Latvia and Estonia, is also not likely to seriously deteriorate in the future. Due to the demographic decline experienced by the Russians and the resulting acute labor shortage, immigration to the Baltic by young Russians is expected to decrease and be balanced out by outmigration by the mid-1980s. An educated projection foresees by 1985 a stabilization of the native component of the population in Latvia and Estonia at about their present ratios, while the Lithuanian proportion may even increase slightly.⁴⁶

Thus while the Balts have proven remarkably resilient to Russification pressures and are in no immediate danger of denationalization and cultural assimilation, the regime's perceived policies to this end have contributed decisively to the undercurrent of nationalism and dissent discussed in the next section.

⁴⁶See Rein Taagepera, "Baltic Population Changes, 1950-1980," *Journal of Baltic Studies*, Vol. XII, No. 1, 1981, p. 55. This projection, however, is considered by other experts on Baltic affairs, including Professor S. Vardys, to be somewhat optimistic.

III. MANIFESTATIONS AND TYPES OF BALTIC DISSENT

THE NATURE OF BALTIC DISSENT

Before looking into the specific manifestations of Baltic dissent, it is useful to examine the salient characteristics of that dissent and compare them with dissent in Russia, to establish similarities and divergencies that may be politically relevant.¹ To begin with, the term "dissent" may be an inappropriate descriptor of current antiestablishment activities and attitudes in the Baltic region. The common meaning of "dissent," i.e., deviation by a minority from the views of the majority, undoubtedly applies to Russian dissidents who, however brave and dedicated, are relatively few and represent almost exclusively a specific social stratum, the intelligentsia. For the most part, Russian dissidents lack significant popular support and present a serious but not critical political challenge to the regime. Dissent in the Baltic, on the other hand, has the potential of mass support, since its catalyst is national identity and objectives. It cuts across socioeconomic strata, political and religious beliefs, and age groups; it is similar in character to East European dissent and, like it, has the potential to be transformed into a mass opposition movement.

Both Russian and Baltic dissent are antisystemic, but the latter is system-rejectionist in a much broader and more decisive sense. While Russian dissidents, as a rule, reject the Soviet political system, few are opposed to the Soviet supranational state or willing to consider granting independence to the various non-Russian nationalities.² For the

¹ A cogent discussion of the unique character of Baltic dissent is provided in V. Stanley Vardys, "Human Rights Issues in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania," *Journal of Baltic Studies*, Vol. XII, No. 3, Fall 1981, pp. 275-298. For an insightful conceptual examination of Lithuanian dissent, see also Thomas Remeikis, *Opposition to Soviet Rule in Lithuania, 1945-1980*, pp. 19-36.

² A good example of this attitude is found in an essay by the prominent Russian dissident Igor Shafarevich. A staunch opponent and a perceptive critic of the Soviet political system, Shafarevich nonetheless argues for the preservation of the Soviet multinational state, even under a democratic system, in language that bears remarkable similarity to Soviet nationality parlance. Thus he argues that "a common history has welded the Soviet nations together" and cautions against "throwing away centuries-old alliances like useless trash." (Igor Shafarevich, "Separation or Reconciliation? The Nationalities Question in the USSR," in Alexander Solzhenitsyn, *From Under the Rubble*, Chicago: Regnery Gateway, 1981, p. 99.)

Balts, of course, rejection of Soviet political hegemony is the very *raison d'être* of their opposition—their ultimate goal is national emancipation. The driving force and rationale of Baltic dissent is the defense and cultivation of intrinsic national ideals and desiderata, including religious and cultural values. Thus it is directed against the Soviet system in toto. Though the defense of human rights is an important aspect, the Baltic movement is—unlike Russian dissent—first and foremost a movement for national rights.³ It is this nationalist dimension of Baltic dissent, with its potential for mass opposition, that distinguishes it from the dissident activities of Russian intellectuals and makes it, from the regime's point of view, a more serious long-term challenge.

In its practical manifestations, the Baltic dissent movement may be divided into two major currents: religious dissent and political dissent. Although these two forms complement each other, and their advocates often cooperate in practice, they nonetheless pursue slightly different goals and exhibit specific *modi operandi* which warrant separate examinations.

RELIGION AND DISSENT

Within the Baltic region, there is considerable variation in the character, magnitude, and intensity of religious dissent. Of the two major denominations in the region, the Catholic and Lutheran churches, the most active by far has been the Catholic church in Lithuania.⁴

³This view is succinctly expressed in the following excerpt from a meeting between Lithuanian dissidents and Western reporters published in the underground publication *Perspektyvos*, No. 9, 1979:

Our struggle is, above all, a struggle for the freedom and independence of Lithuania. And the movement for human rights also has a national shade. Regrettably, the West does not understand this. . . . We are fighting for freedom. The goal of the struggle of the Russian dissidents is human rights. We shall not stop here. One cannot liberate man and leave nations in slavery. Russian imperialism is incompatible with democracy.

⁴The Lutheran church, to which most Estonians and Latvians belong, has thus far remained largely unaffected by dissent activities, primarily because throughout its history, it has been dominated by the Germans and has never succeeded in establishing itself as a truly national church in either nation. Indeed, only since the beginning of the Soviet period and the expulsion of the Germans has the Lutheran church in both republics been controlled by native Baltic clergy. This development indicates that the church may be moving in the direction of symbiosis between religion and nation, though this is likely to be a long-term process. Despite the general docility of the Lutheran church, individual elements in it have become involved in dissident activities, and there have been several recent arrests of Lutheran priests in both republics. According to information provided by prominent Estonian dissident Sergei Soldatov in the late 1970s, elements in the Lutheran church provided assistance to the Estonian dissident movement in

The emergence of a viable movement for the defense of religious rights has been facilitated by the unique role of the Lithuanian Catholic church.⁵ Unlike the other Baltic nations, the Lithuanians are almost homogeneously Catholic, with some 80 percent of the population professing Catholicism. Moreover, throughout Lithuanian history there has been a remarkable symbiosis between national and religious values, and the Lithuanian Catholic church has served as both a repository of cherished national ideals and a symbol of Lithuanian nationhood. In this respect, the Lithuanian church is quite distinct from any other organized religion in the Soviet Union, with the possible exception of the outlawed Uniate church in the Western Ukraine, closely resembling the Polish Catholic church.

Although religious dissent in Lithuania burst into the open in the late 1960s, it had been simmering just below the surface throughout the postwar period. After the Soviet occupation, the Catholic church, which represented about 85 percent of the population at the time, was subjected to brutal suppression. By 1947, all Lithuanian bishops but one had been deported or shot. Countless priests suffered the same fate. All Catholic convents and monasteries were closed, and monastic orders were abolished. Three out of four seminaries, as well as the Department of Theology at Kaunas University, were shut down, and the remaining seminary was severely restricted in its functions. Church properties and funds were confiscated and priests were denied any means of support. The regime's intentions to eradicate the Catholic religion in Lithuania were unmistakable.

Despite the critical situation in which the church found itself, most of its clergy refused to submit to the Soviet authorities, and on two key issues they defied the authorities in the face of brutal pressure and intimidation. In one instance, a majority of the bishops and diocesan administrators refused to issue a statement ordered by the regime condemning the anti-Soviet partisans.⁶ Indeed, there is evidence that a number of clergymen actively aided and abetted the resistance, though

a number of different areas, including underground publishing activities. For a short account of the current state of religion in Latvia and Estonia, see A. Sons, "Katholische und evangelische Christen in Lettland und Estland," in *Kirche in Not*, Vol. XXIX, 1981.

⁵An excellent and comprehensive scholarly study of the role of religion in Lithuanian dissent is V. Stanley Vardys, *The Catholic Church, Dissent and Nationality in Soviet Lithuania*, Boulder, Colorado, 1978. Other relevant works on religion in the Soviet Union include Dennis J. Dunn (ed.), *Religion and Modernization in the Soviet Union*, 1977; and Richard H. Marshall (ed.), *Aspects of Religion in the Soviet Union, 1917-1967*, Chicago, 1971. A Soviet interpretation of the role of the Lithuanian church is given in Jonas Anicas, *The Establishment of Socialism in Lithuania and the Catholic Church*, Vilnius, 1975.

⁶For details, see Remeikis, *Soviet Rule*, p. 106.

Soviet reports that 250 priests participated in the armed struggle, some 50 of them as leaders, are clearly exaggerated.⁷ The second instance of clerical defiance involved an attempt by the authorities to sever the church's ties with the Vatican and to form a national church—a first step toward the eradication of Catholicism in Lithuania. The regime's efforts were rebuffed by the almost totally united opposition of the entire clergy, and the attempt was eventually given up.⁸

Pressure on the church was relaxed slightly after 1954, when, during the de-Stalinization period, many of the deported priests were able to return and resume their duties and the church achieved some institutional recovery. This respite, however, was short-lived, and the church was subjected to new, far-reaching restrictions with the initiation of Khrushchev's antireligion campaign in 1959. Two new bishops, consecrated during the thaw, were prohibited from exercising their duties and were exiled. A law imposing severe limitations on pastoral work, including the catechization of children, was passed in 1966. Perhaps more important, the number of students allowed to study for the priesthood at the Kaunas seminary was reduced from 80 to 28—too few to replenish the natural attrition rate, a critical factor for the long-term survival of the church.⁹ In 1968, these actions caused the more active members of the clergy to organize petition drives among the priests, requesting the government and the Party to change these repressive policies. The spark that ignited the widespread resentment of regime policies and transformed it into open dissent was provided in 1971 by the trials and sentencing of three priests for the crime of teaching religion to children.

It was probably after these trials that reform-minded clergymen and laymen activists began to mobilize the believers in defense of their constitutionally guaranteed rights and to bring their grievances into the open. The very first action under the new strategy indicated a depth of support and organizational capability that were nothing short of formidable. In early 1972, 17,000 Lithuanian believers signed a petition enumerating their grievances; they addressed it to Brezhnev but sent it by way of U.N. Secretary General Kurt Waldheim in order to attract maximum public attention to their plight. Soon thereafter, in March

⁷*Nauka i religija*, No. 4, 1980, p. 60.

⁸A good example of the antiestablishment solidarity of the church is the failure of an effort to get the Lithuanian clergy to endorse a petition, initiated by the regime in 1949, of condemnation of Pope Pius XII after he issued a decree excommunicating Catholics who join the Communist Party. Only 19 of 800 Lithuanian priests were willing to sign (Remeikis, *Soviet Rule*, p. 107). The text of the petition is given in *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*, No. 15, 1975.

⁹For details on these developments, see V. Stanley Vardys, *The Catholic Church*, passim.

1972, the first issue of the unofficial (*samizdat*) organ of religious dissent, *The Chronicle of the Catholic Church of Lithuania*, appeared. Since then, the *Chronicle* has been published regularly, with 57 issues reaching the West by the spring of 1983 despite concerted efforts by the KGB to suppress it.¹⁰

The Catholic dissident movement has evolved into a determined and well-organized struggle in defense of believers' rights and freedom of conscience. It has pursued its objectives simultaneously in several distinct directions and with different methods.

The practice of submitting petitions and protests to various state and Party officials, as provided for in the Soviet constitution, continues to be used extensively as a vehicle for expressing opposition to regime policies. The dissidents have been remarkably successful in mobilizing public support for their cause, despite the risks entailed in such open defiance. In the past ten years, scores of petitions with over 1,000 signatures each have been submitted to the authorities. In 1979 alone, a Lithuanian petition addressed to the Chairman of the Council for Religious Affairs in Moscow was signed by 10,241 citizens. Later in the same year, a truly unprecedented number (not only for Lithuania but for the Soviet Union as a whole) of 148,149 people signed a petition to Brezhnev, demanding that a church confiscated by the authorities be returned to the congregation.¹¹ Religious-based protest in Lithuania has become so virulent that, according to a recent study, Lithuanian Catholics amounting to roughly 1 percent of the Soviet population have been responsible for 6.8 percent of the total dissident activity in the Soviet Union.¹²

Another major effort on the part of Catholic dissidents has been the publication of numerous underground journals and bulletins, as well as theological literature and prayer books. Thousands of copies of prayer books and hundreds of religious books are reported to have been

¹⁰The *Chronicle* is translated and published in English by the Lithuanian Roman Catholic Priests' League of America, Franciscan Fathers Press, Brooklyn, New York. For an excellent exposé of the origins, focus, and objectives of the *Chronicle*, see Saulius Girnius, "The Tenth Anniversary of the Lithuanian Chronicle," *Radio Liberty Research*, April 14, 1982.

¹¹V. Stanley Vardys, "Lithuania's Catholic Movement Reappraised," *Survey*, Summer 1980, p. 56. The church in question, Our Lady of Peace in the town of Klaipeda, was built with state permission with donations by Lithuania's Catholics. After the building was completed in 1960, the authorities confiscated it without explanation and turned it into a concert hall. The petition, which was signed by every tenth adult in Lithuania, was bound in a book with 1,589 pages and 56 photographs.

¹²David Kowalewski, "Lithuanian Protest for Human Rights in the 1970s: Characteristics and Consequences," *Lituanus*, Vol. 25, No. 2, 1979, p. 45.

printed clandestinely.¹³ Of greatest importance for the viability of the movement in general has been the successful establishment and perpetuation of an underground periodical press. In addition to the above-mentioned *Chronicle*, at least eight other publications with a Catholic religious orientation have appeared periodically since the mid-1970s. Thematically, the individual journals have catered to different audiences and addressed different issues. One is designed specifically to facilitate the pastoral work of the clergy, three focus on youth problems, two deal with cultural-religious issues, and two others have a cultural-political profile. When a journal has to stop publication, it is usually replaced by another of similar editorial orientation.

Faced with the unmitigated hostility and intransigence of the regime, the dissent movement has gone beyond mere protests and dissemination of information. It has shifted some of its forbidden activities to the underground and organized side-by-side with the regular church what has become known as the "catacomb" church. In the mid-1970s, when the number of candidates allowed to enter the only legal seminary was reduced to 5, the church apparently began training priests in a secret underground seminary. Several of these "catacomb" priests are already performing pastoral duties—a fact acknowledged even by Soviet officials.¹⁴ The abolished nuns' orders have also been reorganized in the underground and, according to *samizdat* sources, have more members now than they had during Lithuania's independence.¹⁵ The nuns are said to be especially active in the catechization of children and in producing and disseminating clandestine publications. The existence of a secret lay organization called "Friends of the Eucharist," which organizes prayer meetings among other things, has been revealed on a number of occasions.¹⁶

In a bold challenge to the regime seldom seen in the Soviet Union, Lithuanian clergymen have openly expressed their determination to disobey regulations which transgress canonical laws and the rights guaranteed in the Soviet constitution. This burst of militancy was triggered by legislation adopted in 1976 placing extremely narrow limits on the exercise of confessional rights and effectively placing the church at the mercy of local state organs without the possibility of any legal

¹³Remeikis, *Soviet Rule*, p. 130.

¹⁴G. Vaiganskas, Deputy Chairman of the Lithuanian KGB, "Conviction and Political Vigilance Constitute the Vital Task of Our Times," *Kommunist*, Vilnius, No. 11, November 1981, p. 35.

¹⁵"Catholics in Lithuania Dig in Against Atheist State's Offensive," *Radio Liberty Research Bulletin*, October 27, 1981.

¹⁶Remeikis, *Soviet Rule*, p. 132.

recourse.¹⁷ One of the results of this campaign against the regulations was the formation in November 1978 of a Catholic Committee for the Defense of Believers' Rights, led by five priests, which promptly became the spokesman and cutting edge of religious dissent.¹⁸ In a series of statements to the government initiated by the Committee and signed by two-thirds of Lithuania's clergy, the Committee unequivocally declared the readiness of the clergymen to defy regulations and even regain some of the church's former autonomy:

We priests feel that we have the complete right to ignore regulations that are in contradiction with the constitution, church laws, and our direct obligations. Moreover, we will no longer inform civilian authorities about retreats sponsored by the church or about priests who will attend them and give sermons. We will no longer furnish the councils with statistical information of a purely religious nature, because this is an internal church matter.¹⁹

In a later statement in May 1981, 59 of 60 members of the priest councils elected to serve as church representatives in all six dioceses reiterated that

The priests and faithful of Lithuania can never agree to these requirements, which contravene the hierarchical system of the church and its legal canons.

They argued that the church is responsible only to the Pope and its bishops and, in effect, does not recognize the state's jurisdiction over its ecclesiastical affairs.²⁰

The Lithuanian church received considerable encouragement and support in its struggle with the Soviet regime in defense of the rights of believers, when Karol Wojtyla was elected as Pope John Paul II in the late 1970s. During the tenure of Wojtyla's predecessors, Paul VI and John XXIII, the Vatican had pursued a policy vis-à-vis Moscow that was characterized by willingness to compromise and avoid confrontation, often at the expense of a vigorous defense of the rights of believers under Communist rule. The new pontiff, a man with a proven record of standing up to the Communist authorities as a Polish bishop, made it clear from the very beginning that the plight of Soviet bloc Christians was a special concern of his and that he was not averse to

¹⁷The substance of the regulations is analyzed in V. Stanley Vardys, "Lithuania's Catholic Movement Reappraised," *Survey*, Summer 1980.

¹⁸For details on the Committee as well as a listing of all documents issued by it, see T. Remeikis, *The Violations of Human Rights*, pp. 28-31.

¹⁹*The Chronicle of the Catholic Church of Lithuania*, No. 38, May 1, 1979.

²⁰*The Chronicle of the Catholic Church of Lithuania*, No. 48, June 29, 1981.

confrontation with Moscow on their behalf.²¹ The Pope is intimately acquainted with the situation of the Lithuanian church and has several times expressed his special concern for the Lithuanians, quietly but firmly supporting their uphill struggle. He has, for instance, steadfastly refused to appoint regime-approved church officials regarded as collaborators by most believers and is rumored to have appointed the exiled Bishop Stepanovicius, recognized as the head of the Lithuanian church, cardinal *in pectore*. In the summer of 1982, the Pope was able to win the reinstatement of another revered Lithuanian bishop, V. Sladkevicius, who had also been exiled internally for some twenty years. There are also indications that the Vatican under John Paul II has given moral support to the underground activities of the Lithuanian church.²²

With the support of the Vatican on its side, the Lithuanian church has continued to defy the authorities and to stand up for the constitutionally guaranteed rights of the believers. Its latest action was a statement of grievances and demands addressed to Brezhnev and signed by 90 percent of the priests asked to do so.²³ These and other actions have confirmed the increasing reluctance of the Lithuanian church to compromise and its willingness to confront the regime in its struggle for the survival of the church as a viable institution. As one *samizdat* document succinctly put it,

The priests and believers of Lithuania have long ago come to understand the truth which Pope John Paul II so beautifully expressed when he said that the faithful will have as much religious freedom as they manage to win for themselves.²⁴

Faced with such a massive, intense, and well-organized challenge, the regime has been forced to grant the church some concessions. To prevent the expansion of underground seminar and publishing activities, the authorities have recently raised the quota of the entry class to the Kaunas seminary from 5 to 25, and a catechism was printed in 65,000 copies in 1979—the first such printing since the war.

²¹For details on the impact of Pope John Paul II on the Soviet bloc and his relations with Moscow, see Alexander Alexiev, *The Kremlin and the Pope*, The Rand Corporation, P-6855, April 1983.

²²The head of Lithuanian atheist propaganda has directly accused the Vatican of encouraging and supporting catacomb activities. See Jonas Anicas, "What Are Religious Extremists Seeking?," *Svyturys*, No. 11, June 1982, translated in *JPRS USSR Report, Political and Sociological Affairs*, No. 52, 1982, pp. 31-37.

²³Reported in *Chronicle of the Lithuanian Catholic Church*, No. 55, November 1, 1982. An analysis of the contents of the statement is provided in "Lithuanian Priests Remain Militant and United," *Radio Liberty Research*, February 22, 1983.

²⁴*The Chronicle of the Catholic Church of Lithuania*, No. 44, July 30, 1980.

As a result of its determined struggle, the Catholic church in Lithuania seems to be healthier today than it has been at any other time under Soviet rule, a fact grudgingly acknowledged even by Soviet officials.²⁵ Up to three-quarters of the population of 3.4 million reportedly continue to be practicing Catholics. Half of the urban and 95 percent of the rural population marry in the church, and nearly all newborn babies are baptized.²⁶ Though it is prohibited by law, children are receiving religious education and participating in mass in virtually all parishes.

Yet the relatively stable state of the Lithuanian church by no means indicates that a permanent *modus vivendi* has been found with the regime. Quite the contrary. Though the regime has been forced to grant some concessions to the believers, its long-standing objective of destroying organized religion has not changed. Indeed, it appears that in the early 1980s, dissatisfied with the state of affairs, the regime has decided to embark on a new major campaign of intimidating and repressing the church. Along with its traditional efforts to isolate and circumscribe religious activities, the regime has increasingly resorted to strong-arm tactics to stifle the church. A wave of burning, looting, and desecrating churches has taken place throughout the country. In the summer of 1981, the regime began using force to break up religious processions and assemblies. In one case, KGB, militia, and even army forces are reported to have been used.²⁷ Most ominously, since October 1980, three activist priests have been killed in circumstances that strongly suggest KGB involvement. All three of them had been viciously attacked in the media for alleged anti-Soviet activities several days before their deaths.²⁸ On the propaganda front, there are indications that the regime is seriously worried about the revitalization of

²⁵In an article entitled "Religion and Atheism Today," the director of the Institute of Scientific Atheism of the Central Committee of the CPSU warned that "despite the continuing process of religion's progression toward extinction, it still has the capability of protecting its positions and sometimes even a capability to achieve a temporary revival. We must not underestimate this." See *Sovetskaya Litva*, December 8, 1979, p. 2.

²⁶"Catholic Committee for the Defense of the Rights of Believers Formed in the USSR," *Radio Liberty Research Bulletin*, November 24, 1978. Similar figures were revealed by a high Party official in a speech dealing with the hold of religion on young people. According to N. Dybenko, Second Secretary of the Lithuanian Party, in the *Lazdijai* district, 82 percent of all newlyweds were married in church and nine out of ten newborn children were baptized. ("Jaunimo Gretos," June 30, 1982, cited in *ELTA Information Bulletin*, No. 2 (285), February 1983, p. 15.)

²⁷See *The Chronicle of the Catholic Church of Lithuania*, No. 49, September 8, 1981; and "Crackdown on Religious Processions and Assemblies in Lithuania," *Radio Liberty Research*, January 19, 1982.

²⁸For details, see the bulletins of the Lithuanian Information Center dated August 17, 1981, and December 7, 1981; *ELTA Information Bulletin*, No. 12 (271), December 1981; and *Radio Liberty Research*, No. 339, 1981.

religion and is stepping up its already massive atheistic campaign—especially among young people. The concern of the Party was indicated by the convening of a special plenum of the Central Committee of the Lithuanian Communist Party to deal with atheist and “internationalist” indoctrination.²⁹

The concerted antireligious propaganda effort in the 1980s has attempted to portray the reform-seeking clergymen as “extremists” and as an anti-Soviet reactionary force pursuing essentially political objectives. According to party leader P. Griskevicius, “Clerical extremists are attempting to utilize religion in order to achieve reactionary political goals—subversion of the friendship among peoples and revival of bourgeois-nationalist attitudes. It is important,” he further argues, “that people should understand well that the clerical extremists are pursuing not religious goals, but reactionary political ones.”³⁰ Another top Party functionary has accused “political clergymen” of attempting to “discredit and slander the Party’s policy” and “exaggerate and falsify religion’s role in the history of the Lithuanian people and its culture.” The resilience of the Lithuanian church and its continuing influence even among young people was unwittingly admitted by the same speaker when he stated that “atheistic education for young people remains extremely urgent even under present-day conditions.”³¹ Parallel to presenting the struggle for religious rights as an anti-Soviet political campaign, Soviet propagandists have increasingly tried to link the religious dissent movement with assorted reactionary circles abroad—first and foremost, the Vatican. The Vatican is accused, for instance, of engaging in anti-Soviet slander and of “inciting illegal actions by extremist elements” as part and parcel of a new *Ostpolitik* designed to destabilize the socialist community.³² Lithuanian “religious fanatics” have fallen under the influence of the “Vatican’s vile fantasies,” asserted a top KGB official, and these “fanatics” have become “conductors of the hostile strivings of the anti-communists.”³³ According to another influential official, the Lithuanian Catholic church plays an

²⁹The most important speeches at the plenum were published in *Sovetskaya Litva*, April 17, 1982. A translation is available in *JPRS, Soviet Report, Political and Sociological Affairs*, No. 1274, July 13, 1982, pp. 61–76.

³⁰*Sovetskaya Litva*, April 17, 1982.

³¹Speech by L. Sepetys, Secretary of the Central Committee of the Lithuanian Communist Party, *Sovetskaya Litva*, April 17, 1982.

³²Vladas Nyunka, “The Vatican’s Eastern Policy,” *Kommunist*, Vilnius, No. 8, August 1982.

³³*Kommunist*, Vilnius, No. 11, November 1981.

important role in the "psychological war" conducted against the Soviet Union by "international reaction."³⁴

Such unusually harsh language and the hardening attitudes in regime atheistic polemics seem to indicate preparations for an administrative crackdown on religious dissent. The Central Committee 5th Plenum, mentioned above, apparently dealt with this issue and, according to the Soviet press, correctly assessed the "need to systematically apply strict measures with regard to any violations of the constitutional requirements and laws on religious cults."³⁵

The antireligious campaign was further intensified with the coming to power of Andropov and the accompanying general tightening of ideological discipline. The first evidence of a regime effort to repress the church administratively came in January 1983 with the arrest of Father Alfonsas Svarinskas, a founding member of the Committee for the Defense of the Rights of Lithuanian Catholics and perhaps the most prominent Catholic activist. In May 1983, Svarinskas was sentenced to seven years in prison and three years in exile, thus becoming the first Lithuanian priest to be jailed for anti-Soviet activities since 1971.³⁶ In the meantime, the propaganda campaign continued unabated. In February, the Communist Party organ, in an attack reminiscent of Stalinist times, accused the Lithuanian clergy of "criminal connections" with the Nazi occupiers and the Gestapo during World War II.³⁷ In early May, criminal proceedings were instituted against yet another activist priest who has been accused of trying to "destroy the Soviet state and system by passing anti-Soviet information to Western correspondents and inciting young people to defy authorities."³⁸

These actions give reason to believe that the Andropov regime has opted for a policy of direct administrative repression of religious dissent in Lithuania. It is impossible to tell how harsh or effective this campaign will be, let alone how successful it will be in stamping out dissent. If similar previous campaigns are any example, this one is also likely to fail and may even prove counterproductive for the regime. Nonetheless, the mere fact that the regime has chosen administrative oppression as a method of combatting the Church testifies to the strength and vitality of the religious dissent movement in Lithuania, which in the past ten years has transcended the "dissent" framework and has evolved into a broad popular movement in opposition to Soviet efforts to stifle religion.

³⁴I. Anicas, "In the Same Harness," *Nauka i religiya*, No. 6, 1980.

³⁵*Sovetskaya Litva*, April 17, 1982.

³⁶For details on Svarinskas' background and the charges against him, see "Soviets Sentence Lithuanian Priests," *Lithuanian Information Center*, May 9, 1983.

³⁷*Sovetskaya Litva*, February 8, 1983.

³⁸*Lithuanian Information Center*, May 9, 1983.

POLITICAL DISSENT

Like religion-based dissent, political dissent in the Baltic region is not a phenomenon unique to the 1970s. Open protests and dissatisfaction with the system were voiced with some regularity in the three Baltic republics during the 1960s and earlier. Still, the manifestations of political discontent in the 1970s and early 1980s were of such magnitude and intensity as to indicate a qualitatively new stage in Baltic defiance of the regime.³⁹ Although there are obvious and significant differences in the scope of dissent among the three republics—Lithuania is the most defiant, followed closely by Estonia, while Latvia is relatively quiescent in comparison—the form of the dissent has basic similarities that warrant a collective treatment.

Baltic political dissent has generally focused on specific areas of discontent and has found expression through several different avenues. Unlike Russian dissent, it is not only a human rights protest, but it espouses a clearly nationalist perspective based on rejection of the Soviet political system. The ultimate goal of all Baltic dissent philosophies articulated in the past decade is the restoration of the political independence of the three nations. Unlike Russian dissidents, few Baltic dissidents espouse reform Communism, and even establishment figures who deviate from the official line often appear to do so from a nationalist perspective.⁴⁰

PUBLIC PROTEST AND DEMONSTRATIONS

Political dissent in the Baltic region takes two basic forms: open public protest and organized (often underground) dissent movements. Mass protests and demonstrations against the Soviet regime have a long history in the Baltic republics. The first mass demonstration in the post-Stalin era took place in Lithuania in 1956. Four years later, in 1960, violent riots occurred in Kaunas. Perhaps the largest and best known Baltic antiregime protest took place in Kaunas in May 1972 and turned into a full-scale riot. Following the self-immolation of a Lithuanian youth as a protest against Soviet rule, large-scale rioting

³⁹For a detailed account of the origins and nature of Baltic dissent in the 1960s and early 1970s, see Aina Zarins, "Dissent in the Baltic Republics: A Survey of Grievances and Hopes," *Radio Liberty Research*, December 1976.

⁴⁰For example, in a recent speech, Estonian Central Committee Secretary Ristlaan sharply criticized social scientists who were interested only in studying feudalism and capitalism, and editors and writers who "glorify the good old days," and called for a "determined struggle against all manifestations of nationalism and chauvinism, which have still been preserved in the consciousness of certain people." (*Kommunist Estonii*, No. 9, September 1981.)

broke out and was eventually put down by military units. Massive demonstrations also took place in the Estonian cities of Tallin in 1972 and Tartu in 1976; Liepaja, Latvia, in 1977; and Vilnius in October 1977. In more recent years, mass protests took place in the fall of 1980 in Tallin, Tartu, and other Estonian towns, and again in Vilnius in 1982. These are, of course, only the largest and best documented incidents of open discontent; many lesser protests have passed unnoticed. Nonetheless, the available evidence suggests a remarkable willingness to express discontent openly, despite the high likelihood of negative consequences. An empirical study by a Western scholar examining the period from 1966 to 1977 documented 94 protest demonstrations, which are said to represent 18.9 percent of the total number of demonstrations in the Soviet Union, even though the Baltic nations taken together make up less than 2 percent of the Soviet population.⁴¹ This analysis has thrown much light on the political significance and potential of Baltic political protest. It has revealed, for instance, a surprising degree of organizational talent, discipline, and purposefulness. Only 8.5 percent of the protests were found to be spontaneous; a majority were previously organized and attracted large numbers of demonstrators. In one-third of the demonstrations, more than 500 protestors were present, and half of the demonstrations had over 100 participants.⁴² In most cases, participation bridges the generations and cuts across socioeconomic class lines, though there is a clear overrepresentation of the working class and the youth, in marked contrast with Russian dissent. Public protest in the Baltic has not been limited to the larger cities but has manifested itself at all communal levels. Over one-half (56.9 percent) of all demonstrations in Lithuania in the period 1970 to 1977, for example, took place in villages and small towns with less than 4,000 inhabitants.⁴³ There are also indications that protesters and demonstrators in the Baltic enjoy tacit support among a significant portion of the population at large. One good indication is the reluctance of the authorities to use the volunteer militia (*druzhinniki*), which is largely recruited from the local population, for the suppression of demonstrations. In Lithuania, the *druzhinniki* were used in only 3.9 percent of the demonstrations, while the internal security troops (MVD) and the military, made up mostly of non-Balts, were

⁴¹David Kowalewski, "Dissent in the Baltic Republics: Characteristics and Consequences," *Journal of Baltic Studies*, Vol. X, No. 4, 1979, pp. 307-318.

⁴²*Ibid.*, pp. 314-315.

⁴³David Kowalewski, "Lithuanian Protest for Human Rights in the 1970s: Character and Consequences," *Journal of Baltic Studies*, Vol. X, No. 4, 1979, p. 48.

used consistently.⁴⁴ This practice may indicate regime perceptions of the reliability of local cadres in controlling their fellow countrymen.

DISSENT ORGANIZATIONS AND SAMIZDAT

In addition to public protest and demonstrations, Baltic dissenters have expressed their protests through the organization of political and nationalist movements and underground activities. The earliest known organization of this kind was formed in Estonia in 1966 under the name "Estonian Democratic Movement," with the purpose of producing and disseminating *samizdat* materials.⁴⁵ A little later, the Estonian National Front was established, with the expressed purpose of preparing the ground for regaining Estonian independence.⁴⁶ In October 1972, the National Front and the Democratic Movement addressed a joint appeal to the UN General Assembly and the Secretary General, demanding the restoration of Estonian independence through UN-supervised free elections and detailing the abuses of human and political rights and the regime's Russification efforts.⁴⁷ In the mid-1970s, the regime was able to arrest and sentence to long prison terms many of the key figures behind the Estonian dissident movement and thus temporarily suppress the movement. Soon thereafter, however, two new groups came into existence—the "Estonian Patriotic and Democratic Front" and the "Association of Concerned Estonians"—and continued the work of the suppressed organizations.⁴⁸ In the late 1970s, two more underground groups concerned primarily with the preservation of national and cultural values became active in Estonia.⁴⁹ Throughout the 1970s and into the present, Estonian *samizdat* has continued to function, indicating the existence of many other groups that have preferred to remain submerged.⁵⁰

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 52.

⁴⁵Interview with founding member Sergei Soldatov. Also see Soldatov's article in *Posev*, No. 9, September 1982, Frankfurt, pp. 37–42.

⁴⁶The program of the National Front was reportedly published in the *samizdat* periodical *Eesti Demokraat*, No. 1, 1972. See *Khronika tekushchikh sobytii*, No. 25.

⁴⁷For details on the memorandum, see *Arkhiv Samizdata*, No. 1892, and Zarina, *Dissent in the Baltic Republics*, p. 9.

⁴⁸*Arkhiv Samizdata*, No. 2125.

⁴⁹The groups, about which little is known, were called "White Key Brotherhood" and the "Maarymaa." See Shtromas, *The Baltic States*.

⁵⁰The most important Estonian *samizdat* publications since the early 1970s are *Eesti Demokraat* (Estonian Democrat), published since 1971; *Poolpäevaleht* (The Semi-Daily), started in 1978 but evidently suppressed about a year later; and *Lisanduse motete ja undiste vabale levihule Eestis* (Some Additions to the Free Flow of Ideas and News in Estonia), which continues to appear regularly, with some 13 issues reaching the West so

In Lithuania, where dissident activities are dominated by church-related groups, the first group focusing primarily on human rights appeared in 1976; this was the Lithuanian Helsinki Group, which has published numerous documents exposing Soviet abuses of human rights. There are a number of other dissident groups that do not operate publicly and are particularly effective in disseminating *samizdat* literature. Lithuania has by far the most diverse and prolific *samizdat* press in the Soviet Union, and also in Eastern Europe. There are about a half-dozen secular periodicals appearing at present, and some 9,000 pages of clandestine periodical material had been published by 1980.⁵¹

The dissident movement in Latvia has been relatively less well-organized and conspicuous than the Estonian and Lithuanian movements. Nonetheless, a number of cases of organized dissent are known to have occurred. The earliest known case involved a *samizdat*-produced memorandum known as the "Letter of the Seventeen Latvian Communists" in 1972. In it, Soviet nationality policies and Russification were criticized from an essentially Marxist viewpoint. In 1975, two other dissident groups emerged: the Latvian Independence Movement and the Latvian Democratic Youth Committee.⁵² Another group, called the Latvian Christian Democratic Association, dedicated to the defense of Christian and nationalist ideals, became active in 1976.⁵³ Recently, it has become known that a dissident social-democratic group may have operated in the underground since 1975. Though two of its leaders were sentenced to long prison terms in 1981, the group has continued to be active.⁵⁴ Except for the activities of an underground publishing press, relatively little is known about Latvian *samizdat*.⁵⁵

Within the general nationalist framework, political dissent in the Baltic is characterized by considerable ideological and philosophical diversity, ranging from Christian moralistic to liberal-secular, social-democratic, and even neo-Marxist worldviews. The efforts of the dissidents and the *samizdat* press have focused on helping to preserve the cultural and national identity of the Baltic nations by combatting the

far. For details on the last publication, see *Radio Liberty Research*, April 28, 1982, and January 31, 1983.

⁵¹Lithuania *samizdat* publications are analyzed in Vardys, *Reappraisal*, and Remeikis, *Violations of Human Rights*. Among the most important periodicals that have a more secular orientation are *Ausra* (*The Dawn*), since 1976; *Varpas* (*The Bell*), since 1977; *Alma Mater*, 1979; *Perspektyvos* (*Perspectives*); *Tiesos Kelia's* (*The Way of Truth*); and *Laisves Sauklys* (*The Clarion of Freedom*).

⁵²See Zarins, *Dissent in the Baltic Republics*, p. 18.

⁵³*Arkhiv Samizdata*, No. 2434.

⁵⁴See "Opposition Movement in Latvia, 1961," *Latvija Sodien*, 1982, pp. 116-118.

⁵⁵See "Latvian Samizdat from the 'Pali' Press," *Radio Liberty Research*, April 30, 1976.

regime's program of cultural Russification and struggling for the continuing vitality of national languages against assimilation tendencies. The dissidents have also addressed issues that are not political but are nonetheless considered vital for the self-preservation of the nation. For example, in Lithuania, which is beset by rampant alcoholism, a *samizdat* journal dealing specifically with this problem was reported to have appeared.⁵⁶

Alongside these national-rights-related activities, the *samizdat* press has continued to vigorously pursue its defense of the basic human rights of the Baltic people. It has also effectively striven to publicize the Baltic cause abroad.

While the authorities, until recently, have shown some circumspection in cases of religious dissent, political activists have been persecuted ruthlessly and draconian punishment has been meted out. Hundreds of suspected or real dissidents have been sentenced to prison and labor camp terms or confined to mental institutions. Yet, despite KGB success in stopping several *samizdat* publications and breaking up individual dissident groups, the movement as a whole has continued and has even intensified its defiance of the regime.

SUPRANATIONAL DISSENT IN THE BALTIC

Though dissent in all three republics is strongly motivated by nationalist desiderata, it is not exclusivist or chauvinistic. Indeed, one of its trademarks has been an unflagging concern for the rights of other nations and a desire to cooperate with others perceived as sharing the same predicament and objectives. From the very beginning of the reactivation of dissent in the early 1970s, the Balts have sought to join forces and present a united front in the face of what is seen as a common threat. Reported efforts to establish a formal united Baltic opposition movement do not appear to have been successful so far, but important joint political actions have been carried out with increasing frequency, especially in the past few years. Among the most important recent ones are:

- A petition in August 1979, on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the Nazi-Soviet Pact, signed by 45 prominent dissidents from all three countries demanding the official abrogation of the Pact by the Soviet Union and the two German states and the restoration of Baltic independence.

⁵⁶The periodical, *Blaiurybeje Jega* (*Strength in Temperance*), appeared for the first time at the beginning of 1981. So far it has not reached the West, and we do not know whether publication is continuing.

- A January 1980 petition condemning the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, signed by 26 activists.
- A joint protest statement in the summer of 1980 calling for a boycott of the Moscow Olympics.
- An open letter to world leaders in October 1981 advocating the inclusion of the Baltic region in a nuclear-free zone in Northern Europe.⁵⁷

The dissidents have also sought to establish ties with Russian dissenters and with other national movements. Cooperation with Russian dissent goes back to the very beginning, with the appearance of a "Program of the Democrats of Russia, the Ukraine, and the Baltic Lands" in 1969.⁵⁸ One of the most fascinating chapters in the dissent movement was the close cooperation in the late 1960s between Estonian dissidents and a group of mostly Russian Baltic fleet officers whose goal apparently was the establishment of a democratic regime in the Soviet Union by military means.⁵⁹ Ties were also established with prominent Russian dissidents, including Andrei Sakharov, who often publicized Baltic concerns in Russian *samizdat* publications. Russian dissidents were also active in the dissemination of Baltic materials among Western correspondents and provided organizational help. For instance, the Lithuanian Helsinki Group was launched in Moscow in 1976. Baltic dissidents also seem to pin their hopes on a nationalist revival in the Ukraine, and some form of cooperation may be taking place. In 1976, an organization calling itself "Democrats of Russia, the Ukraine, and the Baltic Lands" became known.⁶⁰

BALTIC DISSENT IN THE 1980s

Political dissent in the 1980s and regime reactions to it have continued the pattern established in the previous decade, but the intensity has increased. The single most important external stimulus to Baltic

⁵⁷For details and texts of these initiatives, see Remeikis, *Soviet Rule*, pp. 437-438, and *The Violations of Human Rights in Soviet Occupied Lithuania*, pp. 61-63; *Dagens Nyheter*, Stockholm, January 3, 1982; *The Manchester Guardian*, August 17, 1981; *The Los Angeles Times*, May 20, 1981; and *The Christian Science Monitor*, November 19, 1980.

⁵⁸See *Khronika tekushchivh sobytii*, No. 10, October 1969.

⁵⁹See Peter Reddaway (ed.), "The Case of the Baltic Fleet Officers," in *Uncensored Russia: Protest and Dissent in the Soviet Union*, New York, 1972, pp. 171-183. Also see Sergei Soldatov, "Estonskiy uzol," *Kontinent*, No. 32, 1982, pp. 223-238.

⁶⁰*Arkhiv Samizdata*, No. 2435. An example of such thinking is provided in an article entitled "Ukraine, Our Hope," in the Lithuanian *samizdat* journal *Ausra*, *Radio Liberty Research*, August 8, 1980.

dissent at the beginning of the decade was the rise of Solidarity in Poland.⁶¹ Because of geographic proximity, among other factors, information on the events in Poland has been much easier to obtain in the Baltic republics than in other parts of the Soviet Union, and the Balts have kept well abreast of the historical confrontation between Solidarity and the Polish regime.⁶² The extent to which the Baltic dissent movement was directly influenced by the dramatic events in Poland, starting in August 1980, is very difficult to ascertain, but it is clear that Baltic activists were following the events with keen interest and sympathy. Barely a month after the signing of the historical agreement at Gdansk, 20 Baltic dissidents of all three nationalities sent a greeting to Solidarity leader Lech Walesa.⁶³ A year later, 35 Baltic activists expressed their conviction that "the historical movement of Poland's working class . . . is significant for the Baltic nations as well."⁶⁴

Attempts to analyze and explain the Polish phenomenon to the Baltic public have appeared in *samizdat* publications. The Estonian *Lisanduse motete*, No. 13, 1981, for example, contains a "Letter on Events in Poland" signed by a group of scholars and professors at Party University, examining the events and the Soviet reaction to them.⁶⁵ Another article deals with the "Historical Lessons of the 'Polish Model,'" and still another discusses the imposition of martial law in December 1981.⁶⁶ Fearing contagion of the "Polish disease," the regime took prompt measures to contain Solidarity's impact and limit the flow of information. In August 1980, jamming of Western radio stations broadcasting to the Baltic was resumed and Polish periodicals disappeared from the newsstands. Tourism and sports and cultural exchanges were also severely curtailed. Shortly before the imposition of martial law in Poland, the automatic telephone exchange with the West was suddenly interrupted.

⁶¹The most exhaustive account to date on the impact of the Polish events in the Baltic region is in V. Stanley Vardys, "The Echoes of Polish August in the Baltic Republics," *Problems of Communism*, July-August, 1983.

⁶²In Estonia, a large part of the population is able to receive Helsinki television as well as radio broadcasts (the Estonian language is closely related to Finnish). Polish television can be viewed in about one-third of Lithuania. Other channels of communication and information are provided by the Polish minority in Lithuania, a smaller Lithuanian minority in Poland, tourism, Polish periodicals, and, of course, the popular Western radio programs.

⁶³*Christian Science Monitor*, September 22, 1980, cited in Vardys, "Echoes of Polish August," p. 13.

⁶⁴*Ibid.*

⁶⁵See "Fourth, Seventh and Thirteenth Issues of the Estonian *Samizdat* Publication," *Radio Liberty Research*, January 31, 1983.

⁶⁶*Ibid.*

Whether inspired by Poland or simply a reaction to the negative trends documented earlier, the discontent simmering just below the surface erupted in the fall of 1980 in a series of mass demonstrations and protests, primarily in Estonia. In September and October, thousands of protesters—mostly students and young people—took to the streets in Tallin, Tartu, Parnu, and other cities, complaining about conditions of life and demanding political freedom for Estonia. The regime was forced to take the unusual step of warning and threatening would-be participants on radio and television.⁶⁷ A strike in a Tartu factory said to involve 1,000 workers was also reported in October 1980.⁶⁸ In the aftermath of the disturbances, 40 establishment Estonian intellectuals and artists took the unprecedented action of sending an open letter to the Soviet media implicitly blaming Soviet nationality and Russification policies for the crisis.⁶⁹ A year later, Baltic dissidents who had formed a group calling itself the Democratic Front of the Soviet Union attempted to organize a strike movement and presented a number of political and economic demands, including the cessation of Soviet interference in Polish affairs. Partial strikes occurred on December 1, 1981, and January 4, 1982, and numerous arrests (150 in Tallin alone) were reportedly made by the regime.⁷⁰ The seriousness of the events in Estonia, in the Party's view, was admitted in a remarkably pessimistic assessment of the political situation by the Estonian Party boss, Karl Vaino. In an article published in the theoretical organ of the CPSU, *Kommunist*, he openly admitted that there have been attempts to organize strikes based on the Solidarity model and to distribute anti-Soviet leaflets.⁷¹

The unrest was not limited to Estonia. While the demonstrations in Estonia were taking place, 5,000 Lithuanians were signing a petition protesting the Russification policies of the regime.⁷²

Anti-Soviet demonstrations involving thousands of Lithuanian youth took place in Vilnius on September 23, 1982.⁷³ Somewhat earlier, 18,341 Lithuanians signed a statement to Party Secretary P. Griskevicius protesting the persecution of young people because of their religious beliefs.⁷⁴

⁶⁷See Vardys, "Echoes of Polish August," p. 14; and *Posev*, No. 11, 1980, p. 15. The demonstrations were also widely reported in the Western media at the time. A number of the alleged organizers of the demonstrations were arrested and sentenced to prison terms.

⁶⁸*Le Monde*, October 25, 1980.

⁶⁹The text is available in Vardys, *Human Rights Issues*, pp. 283–284.

⁷⁰Vardys, "Echoes of Polish August," pp. 15–16.

⁷¹Karl Vaino, "S tochnim znaniem obstanovki (With a Correct Knowledge of the Situation)," *Kommunist*, Moscow, No. 3, 1983, p. 52.

⁷²*Arkhiv Samisdata*, No. 3937.

⁷³Associated Press, September 24, 1982.

⁷⁴*Lithuanian Information Center*, May 17, 1982.

The wave of demonstrations and dissent sweeping through the Baltics in the early 1980s revealed a degree of discontent in Baltic society in general, above and beyond dissident elements, that has surprised and worried the regime. Admissions of the alienation of large parts of the population and the failure of the regime to overcome nationalist and anti-Soviet attitudes increasingly appear in statements by top leaders. Latvian Party boss A. Voss has noted, for example, that "nationalist propaganda exerts an influence on a certain portion of the youth, the intelligentsia, and other social groups" and has admitted the failure of the regime to combat it by arguing that "Party, *komsomol* workers and propagandists are unable or not ready to conduct properly a well-grounded, offensive struggle against nationalist prejudices and sometimes turn out to be theoretically powerless before the various falsifiers of the Leninist national policy of the CPSU."⁷⁵ A top Lithuanian functionary has asserted that nationalism has become "one of the most important weapons of subversive activity against socialism and communism" and has indicted the educational and cultural establishments for being part of the problem rather than providing the solution. This official stated that in the teaching of social sciences, history, and literature, "attempts are made to evaluate the phenomena and figures from the past from a non-class, a non-historical point of view, to emphasize the remote, feudal past and avoid the more recent heroic past of revolutionary struggle and ignore revolutionary writers." Further, he took the creative intelligentsia to task for an "alarming tendency to distort the essence of the class struggle in the post-war period, to cast a shadow on the people's defenders."⁷⁶ Party boss P. Griskevicius also complained about "certain teachers who have a reconciled attitude toward bourgeois ideology and who conduct themselves immorally."⁷⁷

The situation in Estonia does not appear to have improved, from the regime's point of view, and judging by recent statements of First Secretary Vaino, it may be getting worse. According to him, certain

⁷⁵*Sovetskaya Litva*, June 29, translated in *USSR Report, Political and Sociological Affairs*, No. 1287, August 10, 1982, p. 21.

⁷⁶*Sovetskaya Litva*, April 17, 1982. Translated in *JPRS*, No. 1274, July 13, 1982, pp. 65, 69.

⁷⁷*Ibid.*, p. 70. What such a reconciled attitude may involve was revealed in a speech by the Second Secretary of the Lithuanian Communist Party, N. Dybenko. Dybenko related the story of a high-school student who organized a nationalist group that engaged in the distribution of anti-Soviet propaganda. The group evidently operated with impunity for a whole year, while both the Teachers' Collective and the *komsomol* organization did nothing. Significantly, Dybenko also revealed that "similar occurrences" had taken place in three other regions in Lithuania, as well as the cities of Vilnius and Kaunas (*Jaunimo Greta*, August 1982, cited in *ELTA Information Bulletin*, No. 2 (289), Washington, D.C., February 1983).

categories of the population are "prone to succumb to foreign influence" such as enemy nationalist propaganda in which "certain politically naive people" in the intelligentsia and the youth "are not uninterested."⁷⁸ Vaino sees in the young people "political naivete, immaturity, and uncritical attitudes towards the attempts of Western ideologues to influence the youth by any means."⁷⁹ The nefarious work of these Western ideologues is contrasted with the efforts of the Party's own activists, some of whom, according to Vaino, "lack courage and the skill to argue knowledgeably and confront openly foreign ideology."⁸⁰ While most of the admitted weaknesses are limited to problems with youth and the intelligentsia, occasionally one can catch a glimpse in the Soviet official media of discontent among the working class as well. A survey of workers' grievances in Tartu, for instance, showed that every sixth worker in the city had registered a complaint with the authorities, but only 40 percent were satisfied with the response they received.⁸¹

The Party has responded to these negative trends with intensified ideological and atheistic propaganda and a counterpropaganda campaign designed to neutralize nationalist sentiments. The primary method of dealing with political dissent and nationalism under Andropov, however, seems to be direct administrative repression by the KGB. Beginning in January 1983, a massive crackdown on known and suspected dissidents has been conducted in all three Baltic republics. In the process, scores of suspects have been arrested, many more have been interrogated, and close to a hundred houses have been searched in an attempt to destroy the *samizdat* system.⁸² This crackdown may indeed signal the beginning of what the Latvian KGB chief reportedly has called "a new era in Soviet order."⁸³ It is doubtful, however, that it will be any more successful in eradicating dissent than previous tactics have been. Given continued deterioration of economic conditions and increased Russification pressures, the exacerbation of dissent and the possibility of mass unrest in the Baltic cannot be discounted in the long term.

⁷⁸Vaino, "With Correct Knowledge," p. 55.

⁷⁹Ibid, p. 59.

⁸⁰Ibid, p. 56.

⁸¹*Sovetskaya Estoniya*, May 24, 1981, p. 2.

⁸²For details, see, for example, "Wave of Arrests in Baltic States," *Dagens Nyheter*, March 18, 1983; "KGB Reported Stepping Up Repression in Latvia, Estonia," *Deutsche Press Agentur*, March 17, 1983; UPI, March 7, 1983; Associated Press, March 7, 1983. For an interesting series of Soviet articles detailing KGB activities against nationalist and religious dissent, see issues 42, 44, 45, 47, and 50 of *Moskovskaya Pravda*, February 1983.

⁸³DPA, March 17, 1983.

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