

an item of news. Byrnes asked O'Boyle to wait for ten days while the subject could be discussed further.

At the end of ten days the State Department made it known to our agency that the decision to close the D.P. camps had been reconsidered and reversed. Nothing about the matter was broadcast to the press by either the government or the voluntary agency.

It was the advice of Sir George Rendel that was crucial in turning the tide. Rendel, who died at ninety, had a fruitful and exciting career. Entering the diplomatic service in 1913, he survived two world wars. He also survived two assassination attempts in the course of World War II. After the UNRRA meeting he filled a number of posts, including service in 1947 as Britain's chief delegate to the Austrian Treaty Commission in Vienna. The decision to keep open the D.P. camps helped save from unimaginable hardship a whole generation of refugees. They received better protection from UNRRA's successor, IRO, the International Refugee Organization, and went on to become U.S. citizens as well as "New Canadians," "New Australians," and productive citizens of many other lands. The rescue of the Displaced Persons in 1946 was only one of the many occasions on which an American voluntary agency served as "embassy of the stateless" on behalf of the most helpless members of post-World War II society—the members of a war-born nation, the "nation of the nationless," the refugees.

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EXCURSUS III

Joan Landsbergis on The Not So Silent Church in Lithuania

"Everyone in Lithuania is a dissident. We don't have a few dissidents; we have a handful of collaborators."

This bold assertion was uttered November 22, 1978, in Moscow by Father Alfonsas Svarinskas, a Lithuanian priest. He was addressing a group of Western correspondents at a press conference, where, as spokesman for five Lithuanian clergymen, he announced the formation of a new Catholic Committee for the Defense of the Rights of the Believers, established nine days earlier in Lithuania.

The committee, he said, has already sent a number of communications to the Soviet authorities, and has asked President Carter and the Archbishop of Canterbury to take international initiatives to protect religious freedom.

The formation of this new committee is the latest in a series of events that has made Lithuania, a country of 3.5 million, the most dissident and volatile Republic in the Soviet Union. Only a few of these events have come to the attention of the American public. The U.S. press did mention the protest letters to CPSU Secretary Brezhnev and U.N. Secretary General Waldheim signed by more than 17,000 Lithuanian Catholics in January and February of 1972. There were also brief reports about the mass riots in Kaunas, Lithuania's second-largest city, in May, 1972, following the self-immolation of Romas Kalanta, a young student-worker protesting Soviet domination and religious persecution. The establishment in December, 1976, of a Lithuanian Committee to Monitor the Helsinki Agreements also received a few brief notices. But these glimpses hardly begin to tell the story.

Father Svarinskas alluded to this lack of knowledge in the West. During the Moscow press conference he used the term habitually attached to Catholics under Soviet rule, "The Church of Silence." "Even when our woes cried out loudly for help," he said, "even when we were subject to persecution and were struggling," the Catholic Church in Lithuania was still called the "Church of Silence." For instance, very few Americans know today that Lithuania, the only Roman Catholic country in the Soviet Union, leads the other Republics of the USSR in the number of *samizdat* periodicals.

The main source of information on the religious and national ferment in Lithuania is the *samizdat* journal *The Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*, which has been appearing since March, 1972. It is laboriously typed in multiple carbons and passed secretly from hand to hand before being smuggled out to the West. (English-language translations of the *Chronicle* are available from the Lithuanian Roman Catholic Priests' League of America, 351 Highland Boulevard, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11270.) Father Casimir Pugevicius, an American priest of Lithuanian extraction, is the moving spirit behind this project. In his small Brooklyn office he described the *Chronicle*. "The underground journal, thirty-four issues of which have reached the West by the end of 1978, is the second-oldest continuous *samizdat* periodical in the USSR, after the Russian-language *Chronicle of Current Events*. Like its Russian counterpart, the Lithuanian *Chronicle* is distinguished by its factual approach, calm matter-of-fact tone, and general reliability. It keeps a detailed record of religious persecution and violations of human rights. The *Chronicle* has had a great impact in Lithuania and abroad—it has given a voice to the beleaguered Lithuanians and has helped to acquaint the outside world with the extent of the repression and popular discontent in Lithuania."

Last year the *Chronicle* (No.33, May 31, 1978) detailed one of the largest recent manifestations of public criticism of government policies in the USSR. Early in 1978 the new drafts of the USSR and LSSR constitutions were submitted for public debate and generated a stream of comment and appeals. Lithuanian clergy and religious believers requested substantial amendments to guarantee religious freedom. Typical of these demands was the memorandum signed by fifty-seven priests of the Kaunas archdiocese, including Bishop Julijonas Steponavicius.

The priests wrote that their comments on the USSR draft Constitution were totally ignored in Moscow, yet the opinions of Lithuanian Catholics should matter very much in Lithuania, "where they are in the majority." They charged that some of the provisions of the Constitution affecting religious believers were "vague" and "nebulous," while others were clearly "discriminatory" and should be changed:

- Article 32 states that "all citizens of the Lithuanian SSR are equal before the law." In practice, however, religious believers are "second-rate citizens" who are denied "responsible positions," derided in the media, and "deprived of equal rights in culture and art."

- Article 39 speaks of the "right to leisure," yet almost half of the Lithuanian population lives in the countryside and during the summertime is forced to work seven days a week, which makes it impossible for them "to satisfy elementary needs" as religious believers.

- Although Article 50 guarantees "freedom of conscience," in reality religious believers have "only duties and no rights." They are not allowed to have religious literature—"not a single catechism, Catholic newspaper, magazine, calendar, or religious book." Meanwhile, the government finances the publication of atheistic books and sponsors atheistic programs in the media with tax money partly contributed by religious believers. The grievances make a long list—the building of new churches in new communities is not permitted although many believers live and work there; two bishops, Julijonas Steponavicius and Vincentas Sladkevicius, have been in internal exile for seventeen years; only one theological seminary is allowed to operate, its activities are strictly limited, and bishops are not allowed to use their judgment in choosing candidates for the priesthood; religious instruction of children is forbidden, even in private; children of religious parents are "forcibly turned into atheists"; church-going students are harassed and humiliated; the media ridicules believers and distorts history; and believers suffer economic discrimination as the churches are saddled with excessive insurance premiums and must pay six times the normal rate for electric power. The memorandum concludes that any talk of equality between atheists and believers is a "sick joke."

Moscow takes a serious view of the ferment in Lithuania. Boris Weil, a Russian dissident who now lives in Denmark with his wife and small son, reminisced recently about his conversation with the commander of a labor camp, where he served time with a large contingent of Lithuanians. Speaking to Weil as to a fellow-Russian, the commander confided that "every second Lithuanian should be shot" because of all the trouble their resistance has caused the Soviet regime.

The Soviet authorities are as aware as the czars were in the nineteenth century that Roman Catholicism and nationalism in Lithuania are closely intertwined. Tomas Venclova, a poet and member of the Helsinki Group in Lithuania, is very conscious of this link. Permitted to emigrate from the USSR in January, 1977, he was stripped of his Soviet citizenship five months later and now teaches in California. He points out that "although Lithuania was the last country in Europe to embrace Christianity [late in the fourteenth century], the Christian faith has deeply penetrated Lithuania's national consciousness and traditions, and has for centuries determined the nation's life-style and culture. During the czarist occupation [1795-1915], the struggle for national self-determination was indistinguishable from the struggle for religious rights. Similarly today, the Catholic Church in Lithuania has supporters who are not primarily religious believers, but who are aware of the Church's historic role." Consequently, as the Lithuanian underground press charges, Soviet authorities are trying to undermine national resistance in Lithuania by gradually eliminating religion—just as the czars had tried to impose the Russian Orthodox faith on the Lithuanians for the same reasons.

Although anti-Russian resentment in Lithuania is powerful, it has not yet transformed itself into indiscriminate Russophobia. "The Lithuanian human rights movement," says Tomas Venclova, "has never preached chauvinism, but rather works together with its Russian and Jewish counterparts." There are many examples of this cooperation between Lithuanian activists and the progressive Russian intelligentsia:

- In December, 1975, the Russian biologist Sergei Kovalev was tried in Vilnius and sentenced to seven years of "strict regime" labor camps and three years of exile for helping the publishers and distributors of the Lithuanian *Chronicle*.

- The *Chronicle* has published an expression of gratitude to Alexander Solzhenitsyn from the Lithuanians, and a message of congratulations to Andrei Sakharov upon receiving the Nobel Peace Prize.

- Father Gleb Yakunin, a founding member of the Christian Committee for the Defense of the Rights of Believers in the USSR (founded in December, 1976), demonstrated his solidarity with the Lithuanian priests by attending the press conference on November 22, 1978, when the new Lithuanian Committee for the Defense was announced.

Moscow is also worried about the increasing internationalization of the Lithuanian human rights movement. Immediately upon its founding late in 1976, the Lithuanian Helsinki Group did not limit itself to Lithuanians and Catholics but publicized cases of persecuted Pentecostals, Estonian dissidents, and Volga Germans. The Lithuanian *Chronicle* also reports on the persecution of Catholics in the Moldavian, Byelorussian, and Ukrainian Republics. Attempts to form a "Supreme Committee of the National Movement of Estonia-Latvia-Lithuania" were mentioned by the Lithuanian underground press in 1977. (Details of the committee's activities are unavailable and reports in the underground press suggest that the KGB might have succeeded in liquidating it.)

The Lithuanian movement is known in Eastern Europe as well. During their meeting in October, 1977, the Czech and Polish dissidents (Kor-Charter 77) sent a message to other national groups, including the Lithuanians, in which they stressed the need for greater cooperation among various freedom movements.

The local and international implications of the ferment in Lithuania partly explain the severity of the punishments inflicted on the leading Lithuanian activists. In April, 1978, Balys Gajauskas was sentenced in Vilnius to ten years of "strict regime" labor camps and five years of exile for "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda" (Article 68 of the USSR Penal Code). One of his main "crimes," it turned out, was a collection of historic materials about the anti-Soviet guerrilla war in Lithuania (1944-1952). Gajauskas had already served twenty-five years in forced labor camps (1948-1973). Viktoras Petkus, a member of the Lithuanian Helsinki Group, also received ten years of "strict regime" camps on similar charges. The punishments were conspicuously harsher than those inflicted on Ginzburg and Shcharansky in the same year.

The Lithuanian underground press has served notice that the draconian sentences would not intimidate the human rights movement there. The *samizdat* journal *Ausra* (*Dawn*) gave this reply to the Soviet authorities: "We shall continue defending our rights....We are not alone. The other nations oppressed by Russia's dictators are joining the struggle with increased determination....They were wrong when they thought it was enough to destroy the generation that had matured in independent Lithuania—that this would thereby suppress the resistance. Today, a generation that achieved its maturity during the years of occupation is fighting against you....Nothing can assure you that the coming generations of Lithuania will not show even greater determination in their search for freedom and independence."

Simas Kudirka is the Lithuanian sailor who defected off Martha's Vineyard in 1973. His extradition by Coast Guard officials stirred a storm of indignation in the United States. Released from a Soviet

labor camp in 1975, he now lives in Richmond Hill, Queens. Kudirka declares his confidence that "The Soviet tyranny will perish, as others have inevitably done. But the number of victims in Lithuania as well as in other captive countries depends not only on Moscow, but also on the Western world. The silence of the democracies in the face of the oppression and wholesale violation of human rights in the USSR is difficult to understand. Moscow alone is not responsible; the West must also shoulder a large share of the blame."

Joan Landsbergis is a long-time observer of the Lithuanian dissident movement.

QUOTE / UNQUOTE

On Leaving War to the Generals, So to Speak

Opposition to [Bishop Joseph V.] Sullivan [of Baton Rouge, La.] reached a high point last month after he announced that the Claretian Fathers would be replaced as LSU chaplains by priests of his own choice. What roiled the bishop was the Claretians' decision to allow a Methodist group to use their campus facilities for a lecture by Father Charles Curran, a liberal Catholic moral theologian. After Sullivan announced the ban on the Claretians, LSU students and faculty organized mass "pray-ins" in protest; the bishop responded by issuing an icy public statement declaring that "the faithful are not expected to be sufficiently informed to make judgments on these matters."

—*Newsweek*, May 14

Flora Can't Read. Yet.

Out of Lynwood, California, comes *Good & Wild*, magazine of the "International Association for Education, Development and Distribution of Lesser Known Food Plants & Trees."

Them Bad, Us Good!

"People in my generation all grew up hating Indians, objectifying women, fearing 'mobs' and all that. Those movie-makers really knew how to manipulate people's emotions. We have to do the same thing."

—Jane Fonda, as quoted in *The Nation*, July 14-21