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The limits to openness: The impact of glasnost' and perestroika on the Baltic Republics

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the Baltic Republics**

Davis, Susan Faye, M.A.

University of Nevada, Las Vegas, 1989

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**The Limits to Openness:
The Impact of *Glasnost*' and
Perestroika
on the Baltic Republics**

**by
Susan F. Davis**

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of the requirements for the degree of

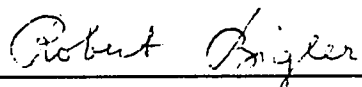
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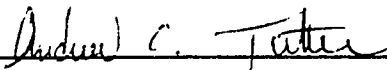
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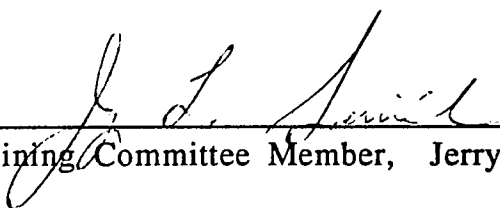
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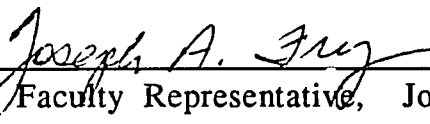
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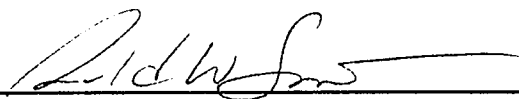
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ABSTRACT

The Baltic Republics occupy a unique position within the Soviet Union. They are the most Western, the most industrialized, the most efficient and the most productive of all Soviet republics. As such, they epitomize the goals of Gorbachev's reforms. If the leadership were to crackdown on the current manifestations of nationalistic unrest and on the recently established quasi-political popular organizations in the Baltic, the result would be a chilling effect on the entire reform process. Therefore, the Baltic Republics, as long as their goal remains the support of *perestroika*, are being allowed to advance previously unacceptable demands including autonomy and nationalism when other republics, for example the Georgian SSR, have been punished for such vocal defiance of central authority.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is to demonstrate the linkage between economic and political decentralization using the example of the Baltic Republics of the Soviet Union. This linkage is evidenced in the relationship between *perestroika* and *glasnost'*; for without *perestroika*, *glasnost'* would not be possible and without *glasnost'*, *perestroika* cannot succeed. The 'nationality question' inherent in the Soviet system is bound to be exacerbated by such a decentralization. Therefore it is important to study this question and determine the ramifications of nationality relations in the context of a less centralized Soviet system.

Due to the fact that the Baltic Republics are integral to the success of the domestic economic reform, previously intolerable levels of nationalist unrest are currently being tolerated. This unrest is the manifestation of *de facto* political decentralization resulting from the economic decentralization necessary to

perestroika.

Perestroika: The Domestic Imperative

When Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev came to power in March 1985, he inherited an economic system that was outdated and stagnant with an entrenched, aging bureaucracy desperately in need of change. The economic system had yielded a near crisis situation. The Soviet gross national product had been declining for over a decade; in 1983, GNP growth was 3.4%, in 1984, 1.4% and in 1985, 1.2%¹. Lack of innovative thinking, individual initiative and incentives had led to a technological lag, with some experts estimating the Soviets were seven to twelve years behind the United States. Given that the bureaucratic structure does not respond quickly, the prospect of 'catching up' without a structural change was considered bleak. Eventually the technology gap would diminish the Soviets' military strength. With the Soviet superpower status defined only in the context of the military, this would be devastating. Economically, the Soviets are a backward, third-rate power, exporting primarily raw materials and natural resources and importing foodstuffs, machinery and technology.

This 'gap' is all the more frustrating to the Soviet people

¹ United States Department of Commerce Statistics. Soviet Union, 1988 (Washington, D.C.: USGPO, 1988).

because they are not as isolated as previous generations. The Soviet Union is no longer a predominantly rural and uneducated nation of peasants who have little contact with the rest of the nation or the rest of the world. The Soviet Union has become more urban; in 1926, 18% of Soviet citizens lived in cities, by 1987 that figure had grown to 65%². This new generation is also more educated; as late as 1959 only 91.3% of workers and 98.2% of peasants had only four years of primary school³. Since the early 1970s it has been mandatory for all Soviet citizens to finish secondary school⁴. Partly due to urbanization and education and partly due to better, more modern, communications, the Soviet Union has developed a modern civil society. This society is more politicized, more aware and more demanding of its leadership.

The information revolution of the late twentieth century has rendered national boundaries more permeable. It is no longer possible to drastically restrict the information which citizens receive. Soviet citizens are now more aware of living standards in their own country and in other countries. The Soviet Union has developed a large new middle class which has many unfulfilled expectations.

The implied 'social contract'⁵ between the Soviet citizen

² Lewin, Moshe. The Gorbachev Phenomenon (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988) pg. 31.

³ Ibid. pg. 47.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ For more on implicit social contracts in the Soviet Union see; Hauslohner, Peter. "Gorbachev's Social Contract." Soviet Economy, vol. 3, no. 1 (1987) pgs. 54-89.

and the government is in grave danger of collapsing. The average Soviet citizen expects a job, health care, adequate food, adequate housing and an advancing standard of living. The stagnation of the Brezhnev years left the citizens without adequate housing and health care. Consumer goods were woefully inadequate in quality and in quantity. Food supplies were also inadequate; when food was available one had to stand in lines for hours in order to obtain it. Under Gorbachev, these problems have not yet been resolved and now *perestroika* threatens the Soviet citizen with the possibilities of unemployment and higher prices.

Gorbachev faces a dilemma. These domestic problems can be neither easily nor quickly addressed. The dilemma of the Soviet leadership is that in order to increase productivity and efficiency, they must provide incentives. However, monetary incentives are currently of minimal utility. The personal savings rate of Soviet citizens is already high due to the few, and poor quality, consumer goods available. In order to make any form of monetary incentive worthwhile, there must first be something on which to spend the money. However, an increase in consumer goods is unlikely without a prerequisite increase in productivity and efficiency.

Western technology is needed for retooling and modernizing the Soviet Union's physical plant. However since the ruble is nonconvertible it will be necessary to find hard currencies to pay for the technology. Decentralization of the foreign trade mechanisms and the new Soviet Law on Joint Ventures are designed to facilitate trade with the West and thus attract more

foreign capital and technology. Such reform is also designed to force Soviet industries to become more competitive in world markets and to increase the quality of their outputs and increase the level of sophistication in Soviet products and management techniques.

Soviet foreign trade has sustained a double blow: cheaper oil and a cheaper dollar. Since 1985, oil prices have fallen 40%, leaving the Soviet Union with an \$8 billion deficit in hard currency accounts⁶. The Soviets sell oil for American dollars, which have sharply devalued during the Reagan years. However, the Soviets do much of their 'shopping' in Western Europe with Western European currency purchased with American dollars. The dollar's decline has essentially raised the prices the Soviets must pay to buy European goods due to the unfavorable exchange rate.

The joint venture law has not managed to lure large numbers of Western businesses to the Soviet Union. Between the restrictions on profit repatriation, the limited ownership rights and the looming possibility of the failure of *perestroika*; many businesses have felt that the huge Soviet market is not yet worth the attendant risks.

Convertibility of the ruble has been discussed. However action on such a change is not expected before 1991. Therefore, the possibilities of purchasing technologies is severely limited. However, if a change in the international climate were

⁶ "Gorbachev's Gamble: The Soviet Economy." The Economist. vol. 307, no. 7544 (April 9, 1988) pg. 1.

forthcoming, increased trade and lending could materialize in the near future.

The Soviet Union is no longer the second largest economy in the world. They are looking at the prospect of falling even further in the rankings with the 1992 consolidation of the European Community. And if one looks solely at exports, the Soviet Union ranks extremely low; far behind Japan and the NICs (newly industrializing countries). Qualitatively, the Soviets cannot compete in international markets, they cannot even compete in CMEA markets. The successes of China's economic reforms further erode the Soviets' place in the global economy. Consequently, the Soviet Union is no longer a model for Third World nations to follow. The underdeveloped world, especially the NICs, have chosen alternative roads of development. The failing Soviet economy can no longer afford to support Third World revolutionary movements nor can it supply the massive amounts of foreign aid necessary to 'win friends and influence people' in the Third World.

The traditional Soviet fear of encirclement is no longer just a question of ideology, but also one of economics. They are surrounded by nations which do not share their ideology and which are vastly superior to them in the field of high technology. Pragmatism dictates that the Soviets strive to attain economic, and thus strategic, parity with the rest

of the world. In order to do this, domestic economic reform is essential.

In addition to all these problems, the Soviet Union is experiencing its own 'Lippman Gap'⁷ which is that the traditional goals of the Soviet Union cannot possibly be obtained given their current means. In its current state, the Soviet economic base cannot support their military power for long, especially given the technological gap between the US and USSR. Paul Kennedy, in Rise and Fall of the Great Powers, asserts that if: "too large a proportion of the state's resources is diverted from wealth creation and allocated instead to military purposes, then it is likely to lead to a weakening of national power over the longer term⁸." This has surely been the case in the Soviet Union where military industries have always taken precedence over consumer industries.

The man who inherited this economic mess, Mikhail Gorbachev, is the first Soviet leader since Lenin to be college educated. Like Lenin, Gorbachev was trained as a lawyer. His public relations skills would be enviable for a leader of any of the industrialized nations. However, the Soviets are fond of repeating Andrei Gromyko's speech nominating Gorbachev for the position of General Secretary, that Gorbachev has a 'nice smile but iron teeth'. Despite his smiling demeanor, he is, and will continue to be, a formidable adversary.

Gorbachev does not have a free hand to rule as he would like;

⁷ For more information on the Lippman Gap see: Huntington, Samuel P. "Coping with the Lippman Gap." Foreign Affairs. vol. 66, no. 3 (America and the World 1987-88).

⁸ Kennedy, Paul. The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers (NY: Random House, 1988) pg. xxiii.

he has opponents and allies. The divergent views among the Soviet elite will have ramifications on Gorbachev's policies. It will be necessary for him to see to it that his allies outnumber his opponents in order for him to ensure the success of his policies. In order to accomplish this, Gorbachev must not be seen as trading away Soviet security or making the Soviet Union weaker in any way. He must be perceived as strengthening the Soviet system.

Perestroika (restructuring) is designed to radically change the economic structure thus enhancing economic efficiency and reducing the 'technology gap' between the Soviet Union and the industrialized countries. In order to reform the system, the problems of inefficiency, corruption, poor quality and unproductive work habits must be addressed. *Glasnost'* (openness) is designed as the 'engine of *perestroika*'; *glasnost'* should accelerate the restructuring process, encourage higher levels of productivity and spur the entrenched bureaucracy to more efficient ways; to pressure the system to become somewhat more accountable. *Glasnost'* is also designed to increase public faith in the system by reducing the 'gap between words and deeds' that has permeated Soviet officialdom.

Glasnost'

Glasnost' is one way in which Gorbachev cannot only gain allies, a constituency for his reforms, but also a way in which he can change the traditional Russian and Soviet notion of reform and revolution from above, into a more lasting reform and revolution from below. If the impetus and desire for true reform comes from the people, it will be more difficult for the leaders to revert to their previous ways.

Glasnost' is most commonly defined as openness however the current literal translation is 'publicity'; another word *otkrytost'* literally translates as openness. If one goes back to Old Church Slavonic:

"the root *glas* means voice or vote. Hence the term suggests 'having one's say,' and means at the very least not just 'publicity,' which is compatible with rigid information control, but 'open publicity' or 'public openness,' which also allows various voices to be heard⁹."

Thomas Remington further defines *glasnost'* as "the principal force in a massive effort at social engineering directed as much at reconstructing Soviet political culture as at reforming the structures of power¹⁰."

⁹ Scanlon, James P. "Reform and Civil Society in the USSR." Problems of Communism. vol. 37, no. 2 (March/April 1988) pg. 41.

¹⁰ Remington, Thomas F. "A Socialist Pluralism of Opinions: *Glasnost'* and

The relative freedoms of speech and the press that have come with *glasnost*' have garnered support among the intelligentsia and the nationalities; especially the Baltic peoples. The intelligentsia are currently enjoying the most literary, academic and artistic freedom ever. The nationalities have been allowed to more freely pursue their interests and cultures; going so far as the demands for autonomy in the Baltic Republics. *Glasnost*' is creating a support group for reform, groups which, because of openness, have acquired a vested interest in the reforms.

Glasnost' is also designed as an accelerator for Gorbachev's reforms. Gorbachev has been encountering indifference and resistance, especially from the bureaucracy. In order to accelerate the pace of reform, it became necessary to generate calls for reforms from below and to enlist the aid of the people and the media in calling to account the bureaucrats who refused to implement new policies. *Glasnost*' is often referred to in the Soviet press as the 'engine of *perestroika*', as such it is supposed to drive the reforms to success. Openness is also designed to foment individual initiative and personal interest in order to motivate the people to be more efficient, productive and feel pride of ownership. These traits would foster pride in workmanship and yield quality and care for the environment.

Many previous Soviet attempts at reform have failed. The constant tinkering led to peaks and valleys of economic output but no lasting trend of increased productivity or output could be seen.

Policy-Making under Gorbachev" (unpublished paper presented at the Southern Political Science Association Convention, November 1988) pg. 1.

The word reform has grown to have negative connotations to the Soviet people due to the constant failure of previous attempts...so much so that Gorbachev deliberately avoids the word, calling instead for *perestroika* or restructuring. Each time a reform failed, the people who had worked to achieve it were injured or punished. Such whimsy by the regime led to a deep lack of trust in reform. *Glasnost'* is designed to help combat this lack of trust in reforms and in the government. It is supposed to make the restructuring permanent and irreversible so that mere whim cannot undo it.

Although limited relaxation of censorship occurred in conjunction with previous reforms, such as the *sovnarkhoz* reforms of the late 1950s, there has never been such significant political change attached to economic reform. As the Latvians asserted at their People's Front Congress, "democratisation is possible only in a decentralised system. A decentralised economy is the road to democracy¹¹." This linkage between economic and political change could be the final factor leading to the success of Gorbachev's *perestroika*.

Yet *glasnost'* has its limits. Exactly what those limits are has not yet been defined. The first arena in which we will see the limits to *glasnost'* may be in the realm of the nationalities; specifically in the currently vocal and boisterous Baltic Republics.

Excessive criticism, especially of the Party, is still not allowed and neither is any explicit information on the Soviet military. Peter Hauslohner asserts that *glasnost'* is a necessary

¹¹ SWB. SU 285, October 18, 1988, B/4.

component of reform. It is essential to stop the 'erosion of the social contract between the regime and society'. The social contract, according to Hauslohner, is composed of the system's promises to the citizens--such as a job, housing, medical care, food, social mobility and a steadily increasing standard of living--and the citizen's promise to the system--at least tacit acceptance of the political and social order. Clearly, both sides of this equation have eroded in recent years. As such *glasnost*' is one way of rebuilding the legitimacy of the Soviet state.

As several Soviet dissidents have noted, *glasnost*' has no legal basis, "there exists no legislation to support or protect those who might seek to take advantage of the new policy¹²." And until Gorbachev's promised legal reforms in 1990, the anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda statutes remain on the books. Many observers also have reservations about *glasnost*', referring to it as an 'illusion of democracy' and that *glasnost*' is primarily concerned with economic issues and not human rights¹³. The policy of openness is another imposition from above, which can be withdrawn as easily as it was granted. Extreme pessimists in the United States classify *glasnost*' as "the modern civilized version of the Stalinist purge¹⁴" designed primarily to enhance Gorbachev's control of the elite and the

¹² Baytes, Nina. "Dissident's Views of *Glasnost*." Radio Liberty Research Bulletin (RL 238/87. June 24, 1987) pg. 3.

¹³ Ibid. pg 3.

¹⁴ Goure, Daniel. "On *Glasnost*: The Status of Openness in a Closed Society." Journal of Defense and Diplomacy. vol. 5, no. 12 (1987) pg. 21.

nomenklatura system and thus consolidate his power.

However, optimists believe that:

"Gorbachev has used *glasnost*' to liberalize social theory, relying on the liberal intelligentsia to supply the intellectual content supporting his policies, and thus to employ the central media to popularize and publicize the contours of the reform program¹⁵."

Some Soviet dissidents are very pessimistic about *glasnost*', Vladimir Bukovsky has called *glasnost*' "simply a short and very intensive effort to get through the current crisis¹⁶." Anatoly Koryagin has said that "*glasnost*' has no legal basis [because] there exists no legislation to support or protect those who might seek to take advantage of the policy¹⁷" and therefore is mere window dressing for Soviet public relations purposes. Sharansky shares this pessimistic view saying that Gorbachev is primarily interested in economics, not human rights¹⁸. And Aleksei Myasnikov has written that *glasnost*' is sanctioned from above and as such can be removed as quickly as it was granted¹⁹. Gorbachev himself has made statements about the limits to *glasnost*':

"Glasnost' and democracy do not mean

15 Remington, Thomas F. op. cit. pg. 15.

16 quoted in Daniel Goure. op. cit. pg. 22.

17 quoted in Nina Baytes. op. cit. pg. 3.

18 Ibid.

19 Ibid. pg. 4.

that everything is permitted. *Glasnost'* is called upon to strengthen socialism and the spirit of our people, to strengthen morality....*Glasnost'* also means criticism of shortcomings but it does not mean the undermining of socialism and our socialist values²⁰."

These are potentially wide ranging limits; defined from above. *Glasnost'* has widened the range of the permissible in Soviet society. However the general public remains skeptical and apprehensive about the new openness and with good reason because policy shifts in Soviet society can be quick and deadly.

Perestroika is an imperative for the Soviet system. In order for the Soviet Union to survive and prosper, economic reform is absolutely essential. And in order for *perestroika* to be successful, a social and cultural change is necessary to elicit the types of behavior necessary for that success; *glasnost'* is the method by which that change will be brought about. A close examination of the Baltic Republics indicates that the behaviors which *glasnost'* is attempting to encourage-- initiative, ambition and efficiency--in order to remedy the economic ills of the Soviet Union, are those already present in those regions. Furthermore, the Baltic Republics are also the most highly industrialized of the Soviet Republics and are therefore integral to the success of *perestroika*.

²⁰ Gorbachev, Mikhail. "Strengthening *Perestroika* Through Real Deeds." *Pravda*. July 15, 1987. quoted in Natalie Gross. "*Glasnost'*: Roots and Practice." *Problems of Communism*. vol. 36 no. 6 (November/December 1987) pg. 74.

CHAPTER 2

The Historical and Cultural Background of the Baltic Republics to the Soviet Occupation in 1940

Despite cultural, ethnic, religious and linguistic differences, the Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians are often considered as a single entity, the Baltic peoples. V. Stanley Vardys refers to this tendency as a single identity "forged by fate¹." During the twentieth century, the region has been subjected to a shared legacy of war, independence, war and occupation. This common heritage is why the three disparate nations are often treated as an aggregate. In addition, they share geographic proximity, a coastline along the Baltic Sea and a common exposure to their Slavic and Germanic neighbors.

In early history, the Baltic region was very active in the amber and fur trade. Amber was highly valued by the Mediterranean civilizations of the time. In trade, metal weapons

¹ Vardys, V. Stanley and Romauld Misiunas. The Baltic States in Peace and War (NY: Columbia University Press, 1978) pg. 1.

and ornaments were sent to the Baltic. This early contact with other civilizations helped to establish cultural and ideological ties between the Baltic region and Europe. Those ties continued throughout the Middle Ages. The Latvians were particularly close, commercially and culturally, to the Scandinavians who transported much of their amber and fur to Europe. There has been a strong Scandinavian influence on the Latvian language and on folklore and customs. Similarly, the Estonians are linguistically and ethnically close to the Finns, thus Finland has had a strong influence on Estonian language and culture. Historically, Lithuania and Poland also developed close ties, although not always friendly.

The Baltic region is located between two large, and often hostile, ethnic groups; the Slavs and the Germans. Competition and resulting wars between the two for hegemony in the region has been extremely detrimental to any nationalistic or autonomous feelings of the Baltic peoples. Strategically located at the Gulf of Finland, Estonia and Latvia guard the entrance to the port that is now called Leningrad and was a center of trading activity for merchants from Denmark, Sweden, Russia and central Europe. These two Baltic Republics have warm water ports, although the port of Riga occasionally freezes over in the winter. The rivers and streams which flow through the Baltic region, into the Baltic sea, are important tributaries of trade as they have been for centuries. The commercial, and later military, significance of their location is one of the primary reasons for the

history of conquests they have endured.

In the 19th century, Estonia and Latvia began industrializing. The capitals, Tallinn and Riga had major ports and were heavily laced with railroads to facilitate the export trade. This well developed infrastructure was one of the reasons that both the Soviets and the Germans vied for influence in the area.

In contrast, Lithuania was a 'Great Power' during the Middle Ages and much of Lithuania's current national pride stems from this heritage. However, the sixteenth century brought a union with Poland which had two lasting effects; it brought lasting Catholicism to Lithuania and the Lithuanian nobility became Polonized. "The older, more developed and culturally richer Polish social structure proved irresistible to the Lithuanian nobility which eventually became indistinguishable from its Polish counterpart²." The Polonization of the Lithuanian nobility had the same effect on the Lithuanian peasants as the Baltic Barons, descendants of the Teutonic Knights, had on Estonia and Latvia. All were ruled by alien elites who shared neither language nor custom with the common people. The awakening of national consciousness in the three countries was due in large part to this dichotomy of ruler and ruled.

The Protestant and Catholic churches in the Baltic region were, and continue to be, very important to their cultural development and to their nonconformity to Soviet/Russian ways. Unlike Orthodoxy, the Protestants and Catholics asserted the

² Vardys, V. Stanley (ed.) Lithuania Under the Soviets: Portrait of a Nation, 1917-1945 (NY: Praeger Publishing, 1965) pg. 3.

dignity of the individual, the necessity of striving to do good, the notion of equality before God and the sanctity of life. These notions are in keeping with the democratic tradition of the West. Orthodoxy, which was one of the underpinnings of the tsarist tyranny, asserting authoritarianism and oligarchical rule, preaches denial, suffering, piety and dogmatism. Orthodoxy encouraged the peasant to accept his lot in life with fatalism and asserted that there is nobility in suffering.

The rise of national consciousness among Estonians did not begin until after the abolition of serfdom in 1816. In Latvia, the rise of national consciousness began slightly later. It was not until the end of the century, and the long process of dismantling serfdom, that the first intellectuals to identify themselves as Estonians and Latvians began to appear. Books and magazines published in Estonian were rare, only 220 were published during the 18th century³. Educated persons still read and conversed in German during this period.

In Lithuania, emancipation did not occur until 1861. Lithuania still remained predominantly agrarian, very little industrialization had occurred. The Russians instituted a policy of Russification in Lithuania in the 1870s however the Russification of Lithuania was handled by the Russian Orthodox Church instead of political authorities. In Catholic Lithuania, the effect of a foreign, and rival, church intruding in their lives was unconscionable and only served to provide impetus to nationalist feelings.

³ Raun, Toiva U. Estonia and the Estonians (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1987) pg. 55.

Throughout the nineteenth century, the establishment of railroads which were necessary for efficient utilization of the Baltic ports brought urbanization and commerce. Along with urbanization came education in the native languages of these areas and "by the end of the century this was one of the few regions of the Russian Empire that had virtually eliminated illiteracy. Education and urbanization led to the emergence of middle and working classes.

At this same time, Lithuania was experiencing an intensive policy of Russification and colonization. From 1864 to 1904 the Latin alphabet was banished, all literary societies as well as Lithuanian schools were suspended. Partially due to these Russian efforts to suppress the Lithuanian language and culture, non-Lithuanian historians and ethnographers began studying Lithuanian customs, language and folklore fearing that the entire culture would disappear. The outside interest in the Lithuanian language and culture not only kept it alive but also renewed Lithuanian interest in it despite sanctions that were occasionally enforced by the Russian authorities.

National Awakening

The ideas of the Enlightenment and the rise of nationalism in

Europe were not unknown to the Baltic peoples. Long known in Russia as the "windows to the West", the Baltic peoples had strong ties to many European nations. During this same era, the Czechs, Slovaks, Poles and South Slavs were also striving for freedom as the Hapsburg dynasty teetered on the brink of dissolution. Some of the ideals of the Enlightenment, such as the rights of individuals and limited government, obviously also appealed to the Baltic peoples.

All three Baltic nations had suffered the oppression of a number of foreign conquerors; the Danes, Swedes, Germans, Poles and Russians. This foreign domination coupled with the oppression of a haughty and foreign nobility helped to foster a common identity and nationalistic feeling. "A foreign elite bent on depriving the peasants not only of their sense of nationality but of their human dignity. Such oppression proved a powerful stimulus and a clear rallying point, unclouded by any possible divided loyalties⁴." Feudalism had sown the seeds of its own destruction in the Baltic nations as it had in the rest of Europe.

Cultural developments and the rise of indigenous nationalist elites were also characteristic of the times. Cultural and literary societies were formed during the mid-1800s. The first Latvian newspaper, *Peterburgas Avizes*, an Estonian newspaper, *Eeti Postimees*, and the first Estonian choral festival were further evidence of the rise of an indigenous elite⁵. The period from

⁴ Bilmanus, Alfred. A History of Latvia (Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 1970) pg. 233.

⁵ Von Rauch, Georg. The Baltic States: The Years of Independence. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, 1917-1940 (Berkeley: University of

1860 to the 1880s "was a period of conscious agitation by a growing number of activists who sought to convince others of the merits of a modern Estonian nation and culture⁶." Literature and music flourished. Ansis Leitans founded an association of Latvians in Riga as the *Rigas Latweeschu Beedriba* which grew into a cultural society and became the virtual nucleus for the national awakening. Members included scientists, writers, musicians and many others of the middle and upper classes. The organization arranged for the publication of a Latvian encyclopedia, founded a national theater and opera, and encouraged indigenous literary and musical works⁷. Many of the provinces soon followed suit with societies of their own. During this time, Karlis Baumanis composed a Latvian national anthem entitled *Dievs Sveti Latviju* (God Bless Latvia)⁸.

Although Estonia and Latvia suffered from Russification during this time, the efforts were directed primarily against the Baltic Barons and thus, in some ways, were welcomed by the peasantry. In Estonia and Latvia, Russification happened gradually and mainly took the forms of administrative reforms and fewer privileges and rights for the nobility. Thus Russification helped to undermine the German nobility while not impacting heavily on the meager existences of the Estonians and Latvians. Later, by the end of the 19th century, Russification

California Press, 1974) pg. 8.

⁶ Raun. *op. cit.* pg. 57.

⁷ Bilmanus. *op. cit.* pg. 244.

⁸ *Ibid.* pg. 245.

intensified and had a more direct impact on the native peoples.

After the assassination of Alexander II in 1881, the Russian government became extremely oppressive. The reforms of the previous decades opened floodgates of nationalist fervor throughout the empire which the new regime would not tolerate. The new government established a program of political centralization, economic expansion and Russification to "put a quietus on the democratic and nationalistic seethings of all the subject peoples on her western borders⁹." Russian became the official language in an attempt to slow down the resurgence of the Baltic peoples' native languages. This action coupled with the police actions of the Russian constabulary actually served to further fan the flames of nationalism.

Russification also affected education. Suddenly primary and secondary schools, which had finally opened to the indigenous peoples, were subjected to the controls of the Ministry of Education in St. Petersburg and Russian was made the only acceptable language of instruction. Since few of the Baltic peoples knew the Russian language, many of the teachers in the Baltic Provinces were soon of Russian nationality.

Censorship was established to reduce the influence of native writers. The censorship was "directed toward nullifying all native attempts to instill into the popular consciousness any nationalistic ideas and idioms or any democratic concepts¹⁰." The newly born indigenous intelligentsia rapidly found themselves unable to work

⁹ Ibid. pg. 247.

¹⁰ Ibid. pg. 250.

within the Baltic Provinces. Often they were actively encouraged to leave the Provinces to find work, By 1900, 54% of the Baltic university graduates could find meaningful employment only in the Russian parts of the empire¹¹. The result was not what the Russians intended; instead of diffusing nationalist feelings Russification actually increased them.

The Revolution of 1905 brought about a relaxation of the ban on the use of native languages in schools, a loosening of the censorship on the indigenous intelligentsia, and indigenous entrepreneurs and craftsmen were once again allowed to expand the cooperative system. In addition, the prohibition on the use of the Latin alphabet was rescinded; the rights of assembly and association and the right to change religions was granted and restrictions on small land owners were removed. But the relaxation of oppression did not last long. Soon a new Russification campaign began which was even more severe than the previous campaigns. Just prior to the outbreak of the First World War, some observers felt that "a systematic attempt was made...to obliterate all trace of national identity among the peoples of the Baltic provinces¹²." All political activities were severely restricted by the government.

In Lithuania, national awakening was integrally intertwined with the Catholic Church. The clergy had taken an intense interest in the Lithuanian language and in primary education. This movement gained further impetus from the Russification policies

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Von Rauch. op. cit. pg. 16.

pursued by the Russian Orthodox Church. These policies pushed the Lithuanians even closer to their church and their culture. Russification was particularly harsh in Lithuania due, in part, to Lithuania's involvement in the Polish insurrections of 1863. Harsh measures such as the confiscation of land, burning of books and the forced emigration or deportation of large numbers of Lithuanians were common. Due to Russification and colonization, Lithuanian emigration reached a peak in 1884. Before the First World War, more than 33 per cent of the Lithuanian people lived abroad, mostly in the United States and Canada¹³. However, among the Lithuanians who stayed, a sense of national identity continued to flourish.

At the outbreak of World War I, Estonia and Latvia were only demanding the reorganization of administrative systems along ethnic lines while Lithuania clamored for independence. During the war, the government authorized the formation of Latvian battalions which eventually exceeded 130,000 men. The formation and success of these totally Latvian battalions greatly enhanced a growing sense of national identity among the Latvians.

Following the Russian Revolution in 1917, the Provisional Government of the new Russian Republic was received enthusiastically in the Baltic provinces. The nationalist movements of the Baltic nations were encouraged by Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points speech of January 22, 1917. They hoped that the Provisional Government would honor these Wilsonian

¹³ Ibid. pg. 19.

ideals and honor them. The call for self determination became the foundation of demands for independence throughout Eastern and Central Europe. The Russian governor-generals were recalled and replaced by representatives who were supposed to act as liaisons between the local and state governments. Local government posts were to be staffed by indigenous persons. The expectations were far greater than the results. The Provisional Government was virtually paralyzed. Still embroiled in war, the government was besieged with demands from all of the non-Russian peoples, including the Baltic peoples.

The Provisional government under Kerenski was not predisposed to allowing secession from the Soviet Empire or talk of national self determination. It threatened the use of force to prevent Finland from declaring independence in the summer of 1917. However, two months later in October, the Bolsheviks seized power in Russia and established the Soviet Union, creating an entirely new situation for the Baltic and other non-Russian peoples of the former Russian Empire.

On November 15, 1917, Lenin as Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars declared that all the nations of Russia had the right of self-determination which included independence¹⁴. This declaration was politically motivated, but the Baltic provinces took it seriously. The teetering economy of the new Soviet state could not afford to lose the most heavily industrial and prosperous of its provinces. The Baltic provinces were also

¹⁴ Vardys. Lithuania. op. cit. pg. 9.

strategically placed between Russia proper and the German enemy and control of the Baltic region meant access to port facilities as well as the protection of Petrograd. The Soviet leadership hoped that the declaration would buy them time. Instead, it hastened the move for independence among the peripheral provinces.

Dedicated to ending the war at any price, the Soviet government immediately began to seek peace with the Germans. Many of the non-Russian nationalities located between Russia proper and Germany became pawns in the peace process. When the Peace of Brest-Litovsk with Germany was finally signed in March 1918, Russia renounced its claims to Finland, the Baltic states, Poland, the Ukraine and parts of the Caucasus.

The Years of Independence, 1918 - 1940

August Voldemaras formed the first Lithuanian government as World War I ended. However the fight for independence was only beginning. For two years, Lithuania had to fend off her neighbors--Germany, Russia and Poland--who all felt they had legitimate claims to portions of the new country. As soon as the Allies defeated Germany, the Soviet Union renounced the Brest-Litovsk Treaty and began a war to regain Finland, the Baltic

region and Poland. All three Baltic states managed to fight off the Red Army and the Soviet government sued for peace. Estonia signed a peace treaty on February 2, 1920; Lithuania on July 12 and Latvia on August 11. The Soviet Union formally renounced all claims on the Baltic countries. There were still problems with all three countries for several years, however the Baltic states remained independent. Of course the only reason these small states could assert their own independence was that the war induced the collapse of the leading powers in the area. Once the Soviets and Germans had regained their strength, the Baltic states would once again be in jeopardy of occupation.

All three Baltic peoples set up governments in the form of democratic republics. Due to their historical experiences with autocratic government under the Tsars, the Baltic peoples were highly suspicious of executive powers. Therefore they vested the majority of governmental power with the legislative branch and the executive was kept deliberately weak; it had to report to the legislature and was responsible to it. The fledgling democratic republics immediately declared a universal and equal franchise and protection of the rights of minorities. The Baltic states aspired to be true Western style states. Inspired by Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points, they instituted a system of proportional representation and direct, secret ballots which further insulated the minorities from any possible repercussions from political acts.

A proliferation of political parties, combined with the nature of proportional representation, necessitated governments formed by

coalition groups. This may have been the strongest factor contributing to the weakness of these systems which eventually led to more authoritarian rule.

Agrarian reforms, foreign trade and the promotion of education and culture were the primary agenda for the new states. World War I, followed by the wars of independence, had so devastated their economies that in order to retain their viability, or some say in order to prove their viability, a focus on internal affairs was highly necessary.

The newly independent Baltic states were too small and resource-poor to become self sufficient. Consequently, they were highly dependent on foreign trade. Due to the chaos of the Soviet civil war and Baltic fears of reannexation, the Baltic states had lost their primary, and closest, export market. In the past, the Baltic ports had serviced the Russian Navy, shipped Russian goods and received Russian imports. After independence, they had to find other customers for their port facilities. Textiles and agricultural products had also been exported to the huge Russian market. After independence Britain and Germany became the Baltic states' largest trading partners.

Due to the small size of the Baltic states, discussions of economic and defensive alliances began almost immediately upon independence. The three had similar problems; small economies, a dependence on foreign trade and the danger of their location between the two hostile powers of Germany and the Soviet Union. Economic federation would allow the Baltic states to enjoy

economies of scale and to become more specialized. Defensive alliance would enhance Baltic security. Proposals for a 'Baltic Federation' ranged from a union of the three Baltic states of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia to a larger union including Finland, Poland and much of Scandinavia. Although several bilateral treaties were signed, the most promising federation was the Baltic Entente formed in 1934. The Baltic Entente coordinated the international relations of the three Baltic nations but never developed further .

Education and culture were the two areas in which the Baltic states had the most success. Literacy was high even before independence but neared 100% during independence. All three Baltic states established free compulsory primary education; Latvia and Estonia began their educational programs immediately upon their declarations of independence. Latvia required the teaching of Latvian history, geography and language even among the special minority schools which were allowed to be taught in their own language. Lithuania was slow to establish its program of compulsory education and the program was not initiated until 1931. But even Lithuania, which was third among the Baltic states in educational accomplishment, was well ahead of Poland and the Soviet Union¹⁵. Secondary education was voluntary and required the payment of a modest tuition. However tuition assistance was often available. Alternative vocational schools were also offered as were a wide variety of apprenticeships and training programs designed to facilitate industrialization.

¹⁵ Ibid. pg. 133.

Prior to independence, there was only one university in the Baltic area; at Tartu in Estonia. In 1919, Estonia established its second university, the Tallinn Technical University. In that same year, Latvia established two universities; Latvian State University and Riga University. Due to the large numbers of degrees these universities conferred, health care improved dramatically due to the increase in the number of MDs and engineers, sociologists and economists. Trained managers also greatly increased in number.

Culturally, the Baltic states made huge strides. Art schools and interest in indigenous art proliferated. Public libraries sprang up in all three countries. Latvia produced more books per capita during the independence years than any other European country except Denmark¹⁶. The number of books, magazines and newspapers in the Baltic languages also increased significantly. Museums, literary and musical societies and academies of science also proliferated.

Although the Baltic states made huge strides in education and culture, they did not remain open, democratic systems for very long. Some experts assert that the reason the Baltic states became more authoritarian was "widespread political disillusionment born of acute economic insecurity¹⁷." The constantly shifting coalition governments in the Baltic states, the impact of the worldwide depression, and the proximity of two large and proselytizing ideologies--fascism and communism--may have contributed to

¹⁶ Ibid. pg. 132.

¹⁷ Bilmanus. op. cit. pg. 357.

more authoritarian forms of government in order to maintain their independence in a time of crisis.

Lithuania was the first to come under a less democratic regime. In 1926, Lithuania experienced a coup d'etat led by the military and the fathers of the independent state. Hemmed in by emerging Nazism and crusading Communism, Antanas Smetona formed an authoritarian presidential regime. Estonia followed with Acting President Konstantin Pats declaring a state of emergency in 1934. Latvia's Prime Minister Karlis Ulmanis also declared a state of emergency.

As the power of Nazi Germany grew, the Soviet Union became more and more apprehensive about its national security. It was especially concerned with secure access to the seas and thus the Baltic states. If Germany gained hegemony over the Baltic states, the Soviet Union could lose access to the Baltic Sea thus landlocking its European navy and lose the Baltic states as a buffer zone between the Soviet Union and Germany. In order to ensure the maintenance of Soviet access to the Baltic Sea, the Soviet Union attempted to establish closer relations with the three Baltic states through a series of bilateral non-aggression pacts. These pacts not only established closer relations, they also paved the way for *rapprochement* with the western countries and led to Soviet membership in the League of Nations. However, the primary motivation was to contain the influence of Nazi Germany.

The Soviet Union, however, was not satisfied with the non-aggression pacts alone. The Baltic states had close economic ties to Germany, including the sale of large amounts of Estonian shale oil

to the German Navy and the sale of foodstuffs, which the Soviet Union felt made the Baltic nations too dependent on the country which was posing a serious threat to Soviet national security. In addition, due to the numerous Soviet motivated *putschs* and attempts to influence the internal affairs of the Baltic states, there was a fear that the Baltic states would side with Germany in a conflict between Hitler and Stalin. This clearly should be prevented. In order to ensure that the Baltic states would remain within the Soviet sphere of influence, the Soviets negotiated a treaty of nonaggression and friendship with Nazi Germany on August 23, 1939. In a protocol kept secret at the time, it was agreed that in any future territorial arrangement Germany and the Soviet Union would divide Poland between them, that the Soviets would enjoy a preponderant influence in the Baltic states, and have their claim to Bessarabia, lost to Romania in 1918, recognized. In return the Soviets pledged to stay out of any war between Germany and Poland, or between Germany and the Western democracies.

Shortly after the signing of the German-Soviet non-aggression pact, the Soviet Union began exerting pressure on each Baltic state to agree to 'Mutual Assistance Pacts'. The pacts were concessions to the Soviet Union and provided for the stationing of troops and the acquisition of naval bases in Baltic territory. Estonia was the first to submit to the Soviet pressure and signed an MAP on September 28, 1939. Latvia and Lithuania followed quickly on October 2 and 10, respectively. By May 1940, the

Soviets were manufacturing violations of the MAPs in order to more firmly control the Baltic states. Each state was accused of violating the spirit and intent of the pacts at different times. The Soviet Union gave ultimatums calling for the formation of new governments which were to be more 'friendly' toward the Soviet Union.

When the Baltic states either refused to comply or did not comply quickly enough, the Soviets invaded. On June 15, 1940, the Soviet Union occupied Lithuania, followed by Estonia on June 16, and Latvia on June 21. One month after the occupation of the Baltic states, the Soviet Union staged elections for new parliaments. Voting was mandatory and returns were reported before the voting even ended. The NKVD (Soviet secret police) were present to take note of troublemakers and non-participants. On July 21, the new assemblies met and formally requested admission to the Soviet Union. The Soviet leadership agreed to these requests on August 3 for Lithuania, August 5 for Latvia and August 6 for Estonia. The Baltic states became Soviet Socialist Republics of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and ceased to exist as independent states.

CHAPTER 3

The Baltic States Under Soviet Rule

The incorporation of the Baltic states into the Soviet Union was quickly followed by a reorganization of social, economic and political life in the Soviet manner. One of the first tasks of the Soviet regime was the eradication of all opponents to the incorporation. As early as the forced elections of 1940, the Soviet secret police were noting dissenters and opponents of the Soviet way.

During the first year of Soviet rule, Russification began in earnest. Chronic shortages of food and consumer goods began as numerous Russians moved into the Baltic area in order to enjoy the higher standard of living and relative prosperity of the region. The Red Army moved into the Baltic in force as well, they also immediately began to buy up food and goods from the comparatively well stocked Baltic stores. In addition, the Soviet authorities began to ship large quantities of food and consumer goods to other parts of the Soviet Union.

The economic policies of the Soviet Union were vastly different from those pursued by the independent Baltic states.

Private property was expropriated and became the property of the Soviet state. "Surplus savings", anything in excess of 100 rubles, was confiscated and the banks were nationalized. The ruble became the official currency and replaced the local currencies at grossly unfair rates of exchange. The Soviets made huge windfall profits on the exchanges¹.

The cultural advances of the independence era were quickly blunted by the Soviet occupation. The Soviet system of education was imposed on the Baltic peoples, including Soviet texts and the Russian language. Censorship was instituted and the publishing houses were taken over by the state and 'nationalist' books, magazines and journals were immediately banned. Artists and writers were forced to join 'Unions' before they were allowed to ply their trades and the 'Unions' enforced strict socialist content on all works. All theological institutes were closed and any government support of religion was ended. Further, a decree from Moscow announced that all marriages, births and deaths were to be handled by civil authorities.

Deportations of 'hooligans' and 'bourgeois nationalists' began on June 14, 1941. Large numbers of people were sent to labor camps and internal exile for opposing Soviet rule or for advocating a return to autonomy. According to some reports, even opposition was not necessary the Soviet deported anyone for almost any reason. Prominent nationalists and leaders of the independent

¹ Misiunas, Romuald and Rein Taagepera. The Baltic States: Years of Dependence 1940-1980 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983) pg. 31.

governments were immediately arrested. During 1940, deportations of Baltic citizens averaged between 200 to 300 per month². The actual number of deportations during the first year of Soviet rule vary however scholars agree that the numbers involved were massive. According to Clarence Manning, in June 1941 alone, over 10,000 Estonians, 14,000 Latvians and 14,000 Lithuanians were deported³. Romuald Misiunas and Rein Taagepera estimated that the numbers were significantly higher; 10,205 Estonians, 15,081 Latvians and 34,260 Lithuanians. This amounts to over 4% of the Estonian population, over 1.5% of the Latvian population and in excess of 2% of Lithuanians⁴. Toivo Raun has a much higher estimate of Estonian deportations, he estimates that over 19,000 Estonians were deported in 1941⁵. Regardless of which estimate is correct, large numbers of Balts were deported because of, and resulting in, resistance to Soviet rule.

At first, the resistance to the Soviet occupation was primarily passive, partially due to the preponderance of Soviet armed forces in the region. The Baltic people utilized boycotts, verbal ridicule and they ignored bans on the practice of religion and observance of holidays. In addition, the Balts began to self

² Ibid. pg. 41.

³ Manning, Clarence. The Forgotten Republics (NY: Philosophical Library, 1952) pg. 219.

⁴ Misiunas and Taagepera. op. cit. pg. 41.

⁵ Raun, Toivo U. Estonia and the Estonians (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1987) pg. 154.

publish nationalist works (*samizdat*) to keep the opposition's morale high and to try to sustain their cultures and languages from the Soviet onslaught.

The Lithuanians formed a resistance group in October 1940 called the Lithuanian Activist Front (LAF). They planned and orchestrated passive resistance as well as setting up underground plans for armed rebellion at the outbreak of war between Germany and the Soviet Union. By 1941, Latvia and Estonia were also forming underground organizations⁶. After the massive deportations of 1941, these movements began to organize as guerrilla units to harass the Soviets at every opportunity.

The Germans began their invasion of the Baltics in June and July of 1941, and, following the year of Soviet terror, were greeted with open arms. In some places such as Kaunas, Lithuania, the indigenous populace overthrew the Soviets on their own and then welcomed the Germans hoping they would be an improvement over the Soviet occupation.

Unfortunately for the Baltic peoples, the goal of the German occupation was no less benevolent than that of the Soviets, and maybe less so. The Germans were looking for *lebensraum* for the German people, they wanted to annex the Baltic Republics and Germanize the region.

Like the Soviets, the Germans wanted to deport large numbers of Balts. However, they had a different motive. Once victory over the Soviet Union was assured, the Germans wanted to

⁶ Misiunas and Taagepera. op. cit. pg. 43.

make the Baltic area a German province, *Ostland*, with only Germanic or Aryan peoples allowed. Therefore the indigenous populace had to be deported. Until victory was secured, the Germans planned to exploit the economies and peoples of the Baltic for the war effort.

Once again, the Balts suffered an unfair currency exchange. The Germans replaced the ruble with the mark as the official currency. Again the oppressor profited with huge windfall profits at the expense of the populace. Huge inflation resulted. Due in part to inflation and part to the German policy of exporting most foodstuffs back to the Motherland, rationing was introduced almost immediately.

Shortly after the Germans took over, a compulsory labor draft was also instituted, followed shortly by mandatory military service, for all men between ages 18 and 45⁷. Both drafts were actively evaded by a large majority of the populace. Many men fled to the wooded regions of the Baltic area and took up arms in active resistance to German rule.

Due to the massive economic exploitation, the drafts and brutal repressions, the Baltic people began to form an armed resistance. The underground presses they started under Soviet occupation grew and produced large quantities of resistance documents. In addition, fighting units were formed. In Lithuania, two groups were formed to fight the Nazis and regain Lithuanian independence; the Lithuanian Front (*Lietuviu Frontas*)

⁷ Ibid. pg. 53.

and the Union of Freedom Fighters (*Laisves Kovotoju Sajunga*). These groups merged into the Supreme Committee for the Liberation of Lithuania in 1943⁸. In the same vein, Latvia formed the Latvian Central Council and Estonia formed the Estonian Republic National Committee.

In 1944, the Soviet occupation returned following the defeat of the Germans. A reinstitution of the massive deportations and repressions served to encourage guerrilla groups in the Baltic states. The choice seemed to be to die fighting the Russians or die of starvation in Siberia, most chose the former.

The Baltic guerrilla units were called the "Forest Brothers" or "Forest Brethren" because they operated out of the dense Baltic forests. Of all the guerrilla units, Lithuania's was the strongest and best equipped guerrilla group called the United Democratic Resistance Movement (*Bendras Demokratinio Pasipriesinimo Sajudis*). Formed in 1946, the BDPS coordinated armed and passive resistance⁹. This may have been due to the dual repression the Lithuanians suffered, not only was their independence crushed but the Soviets had threatened the existence of their church. Lithuanian nationalism and the church had always been intertwined, but now they served to reinforce each other and the desire to overthrow the Soviets. Estonia's guerrilla movement, referred to as *metsavennad*, along with the movements in Lithuania and Latvia received additional support

⁸ Ibid. pg. 64.

⁹ Ibid. pg. 84.

during the collectivization of agriculture during 1949. However, as hope of a restoration of independence waned, the partisan movements slowly faded. By 1946, the overwhelming preponderance of Soviet power had rendered Latvia and Estonia fairly calm. Once again Lithuania behaved differently than the other two Baltic republics and maintained an active guerrilla resistance until 1956.

Once the war was over and the resistance calmed, the task of rebuilding the Baltic region began. The Baltic peoples were well educated and had a large number of skilled laborers. They had a fairly well developed infrastructure that had not been decimated in the war. Therefore it was more cost effective to enhance existing industry in the Baltic then to create new industry elsewhere.

The Reawakening of Nationalism

After the death of Stalin in 1953, the Baltic peoples tentatively began to reassert their nationalistic feelings. Nationalism received further impetus after Khrushchev's 'secret speech' to the 20th CPSU Party Congress in 1956 denouncing Stalin and his terror. By the 1960s, cultural life was enjoying a virtual renaissance.

By 1968, dissent began to appear in Estonia. Initially dissent was primarily concerned with civil rights issues; free speech, press and religion. However by 1970 the content had become nationalistic. The Estonian Democratic Movement and the Estonian National Front were demanding independence. These groups were very small and were dealt a severe blow when four of their leaders were sentenced to prison for 'anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda'¹⁰. Dissent broadened in the late 1970s. In 1977, eighteen scientists "condemned the pollution caused by careless and overly ambitious oil-shale and phosphorite mining in Estonia¹¹." Shortly thereafter several Estonian dissidents joined with other Baltic dissidents and issued the "Baltic Appeal" for self determination on the fortieth anniversary of the Molotov-Ribbontrop Pact. In 1981, the same group issued a call for a Nordic nuclear free zone to include the Baltic Republics¹². Tartu University has been the seat of numerous student protests dating back to the 1960s. The largest Estonian protest occurred in Tallinn in 1980, over 2000 students marched who shouted anti-Soviet slogans and 'Free Estonia'.

In Lithuania, dissent began to reappear at the end of the 1960s and became progressively more organized throughout the 1970s. A widely based movement began in the 1970s to revive Lithuanian folklore, including tales of 'the glory days' as a Great

¹⁰ Raun. op. cit. pg. 196.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

Power. By 1974, the Soviet authorities clamped down on the folklore groups and sentenced the leaders to prison camp terms of from two to six years¹³. The first major nationalistic demonstration since the crushing of the resistance in 1956 occurred on May 18-19, 1972 in Kaunas. It began with the self-immolation of an eighteen year old Lithuanian named Romas Kalanta. Although the Soviet authorities prohibited participation in the funeral service, a huge crowd gathered and marched from the cemetery to the plaza where the immolation occurred. Chants of 'Free Lithuania' were heard and at least one militia man was killed. The following day over 400 persons were arrested in an associated demonstration¹⁴. Sporting events also tend to spawn nationalist protests in Lithuania. In June 1972, a group of Lithuanian spectators at an international volleyball match in Vilnius refused to stand during the Soviet national anthem. In November 1975, 2000 spectators celebrated a Lithuanian win at a soccer match by marching through the city shouting political slogans, a similar occurrence in 1977 drew over 15,000 participants¹⁵.

Samizdat, self-published material, is rampant in Lithuania. The most prominent of the *samizdat* is the Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania, began in March 1972. In 1973, during a crackdown on the Lithuanian nationalist movement, the

¹³ Alexeyeva, Ludmilla. Soviet Dissent: Contemporary Movements for National, Religious, and Human Rights (Middletown, CN: Wesleyan Press, 1987) pg. 66.

¹⁴ Ibid. pg. 68.

¹⁵ Ibid. pg. 69.

Soviet authorities seized "not only typewriters, but a copy machine, rotary presses, hundreds of kilograms of printing type, a homemade printing press, a binder, stocks of paper and so on¹⁶." The Chronicle documents Soviet excesses, especially against religion, monitors Soviet compliance with the Helsinki Human Rights Accords and is an important source of Lithuanian nationalism. However, the Chronicle has ties to the Russian human rights movement as well, and receives much help from them, including help in smuggling the journal to the West. The main goal of the Lithuanian Catholic Movement is, like that of the Russian human rights movement, freedom and human rights--especially of religion--not independence or autonomy. However, the Catholic movement has many connections and interrelations with the solely nationalist groups and often they work together.

Latvia's resistance did not reemerge in an organized fashion until the 1980s and is more peaceful than those of Estonia and Lithuania. Isolated outbursts of nationalist sentiment including graffiti, use of the independence flag or the wearing of black armbands to commemorate the end of the Prague Spring were known to happen but were not widespread. The Afghan invasion provided some of the impetus for a revival of organized resistance. Banners proclaiming 'Free the Afghans and Latvians' began to appear and more than 15 Latvians signed an open letter to Moscow opposing the Afghan invasion and expressing support for a nuclear free zone in the Scandinavian/Baltic region.

¹⁶ Ibid.

Latvia continues to be the quietest of the three Baltic Republics in terms of dissent. The most obvious reason for this is that they are already a minority within their own borders and therefore feel the Soviet presence much more strongly.

Soviet Nationality Policy

"What does the phrase 'the Soviet national question' mean? It refers to the political, socioeconomic, and cultural interplay among the Russian-dominated Party-state, the dominant Russian majority, and the subordinate non-Russians. That interplay consists in a perpetual tug of war between the centralizing and decentralizing tendencies built into the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics at its founding in the early 1920s¹⁷."

The Bolsheviks won the civil war partly due to the support of the non-Russian peoples by promising them some level of cultural autonomy and the right to self determination. Although Lenin believed that secession by the non-Russian nationalities would harm the socialist cause, he allowed a right to secession only to gain their revolutionary support. Lenin compromised his feelings

¹⁷ Motyl, Alexander J. "The Sobering of Gorbachev" in Bialer, Seweryn (ed.) Politics, Society and Nationality Inside Gorbachev's Russia (Boulder:Westview Press, 1989) pg. 150.

against secession as a "temporary concession to practical considerations¹⁸." Of course, concessions are granted only if there is leverage or power to demand them. And since the Bolsheviks assumed that nationalism would dissolve as capitalism disappeared, this was only perceived to be a transitional problem needing a short term concession¹⁹. In the long run, Lenin felt that "the right to self-determination was to be promulgated in order to nip the desire for it in the bud²⁰" thus defusing the nationality problem once and for all.

The centrifugal forces of diversity in the Soviet Union have led to numerous shifts in nationality policy; shifts from autonomy to suppression depending upon circumstance and leadership. Ideologically speaking, the nationality problem is considered a holdover from capitalism however recent leaders, Andropov and Gorbachev, have stated that the problem of nationalism will probably exist long after class differences wither away.

According to Gordon B. Smith, "Soviet authorities distinguish between the 'drawing together' (*sblizhenie*) of nationalities and the 'merger' (*sliianie*) of nationalities²¹." 'Drawing together'

¹⁸ Besancon, Alain. "Nationalism and Bolshevism" in Conquest, Robert (ed.) The Last Empire: Nationality and the Soviet Future (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1986) pg. 6.

¹⁹ for more on the coming obsolescence of nationalism see: Karl Marx. The Communist Manifesto in Tucker, Robert (ed.) The Marx-Engels Reader. (NY: W.W. Norton and Company, 1978) pgs. 469-500.

²⁰ Goldhagen, Erich (ed.). Ethnic Minorities in the Soviet Union (NY: Praeger Publishers, 1968) pg. viii.

²¹ Smith, Gordon B. Soviet Politics: Continuity and Contradiction (NY: St. Martin's Press, 1988) pg. 309.

implies some level of autonomy and allowances for national identity while narrowing social and economic differences between ethnic groups. 'Merger' implies the elimination of ethnic differences and assimilation into a single group; most likely a Russian group.

In Marxist-Leninist thought, nationalism is relegated to the garbage heap of history. it is one of the last vestiges of capitalism and as capitalism is replaced by socialism then communism, it will go away. national self awareness will merge into internationalism.

Lenin used the 'nationality problem' to his advantage during the formative years of the Soviet state. Immediately after the revolution, he issued the "Declaration of the Rights of the Peoples of Russia". This declaration stated Lenin's nationality policy in such a way that it would be attractive to the non-Russian populations. The non-Russians were promised the right of self determination and secession. Similar wording was later used in the Soviet constitution. Essentially, both Lenin and other Soviet leaders used this wording to court the non-Russian peoples of the Soviet Union.

In the case of the Baltic Republics, they were allowed to secede in 1918 at a time when the Soviet Government could not easily prevent it. However, at the time of their annexation in 1940 they had little leverage and little power to exact such a compromise.

Generally speaking, the Soviet Constitution's promise of the right to secession or separation is a rhetorical right at best.

Chapter eight, article 70 of the Fundamental Law of the USSR (Soviet Constitution) establishes a "federal, multinational state formed on the principle of socialist federalism as a result of the free self-determination of nations and the voluntary association of equal Soviet Socialist Republics.²²" There are now fifteen Soviet Socialist Republics (SSRs), or union republics, which make up the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics ranging in size from the largest, the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic (RSFSR) to the smallest, the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic (Estonian SSR).

Each republic is inhabited by a nation, a people with a distinct cultural, linguistic and ethnic heritage and is ruled by its own Party organization, Council of Ministers, Supreme Soviet and constitution. There are three criteria which a nation must meet to be allowed to organize as an SSR; 1) they must border on a foreign nation or have an outlet to an open sea, 2) they must have populations in excess of one million and 3) the nationality involved must be a majority in the area²³.

In addition to the Republics, smaller nations or ethnic groups live in autonomous republics, provinces or regions designed to allow each nation some voice in its own affairs. Currently there are twenty Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republics (ASSRs), eight Autonomous Regions (ARs) and ten Autonomous Areas (AAs). These smaller units have no right of secession and less power to

²² Fundamental Law of the USSR (Moscow: Novosti Press, 1977) pg. 29.

²³ Medish, Vadim. The Soviet Union (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1987) pg. 31.

influence the central government. The actual power and sovereignty is, of course, vested in Moscow. However, the nationalities do play an important role in policy making and in the Soviet system.

The phrase 'national in form, socialist in content' was supposed to reconcile the contradiction between the Soviet Union's ethnic diversity and the centralization of authority in Moscow. Lenin was fairly sensitive to the rights of minorities and, accordingly, supported the federal system the Soviet Union has today. He tried to steer a middle course between the desires of the non-Russian minority for self rule and the 'Great Russian' nationalism of the majority. He argued for a 'new socialist man' and Soviet citizenship; hoping to break the ties of nationalism. 'National in form, socialist in content' allowed each nationality to maintain its own culture and language but established Marxism-Leninism as the pervasive ideology of the system, commanding the ultimate loyalty.

Lenin also began a policy of 'indigenization' or the education of socialist cadres from minority groups. In order to retain the allegiance of the non-Russians, they must gain a stake or vested interest in the system. Therefore, indigenous elites were encouraged to form with the same privileges and rights as the central elites. The dilemma which still faces the Soviet Union today: How to allow cultural diversity thus keeping the differing ethnic groups content while trying to forge a single entity with a single allegiance.

After Lenin's death, Josef Stalin came to power in the Soviet Union. Stalin saw the Russians as elder brothers in a 'Soviet family of nations'. He felt that 'Great Russian' chauvinism and nationalism was inherently less dangerous than non-Russian nationalism. All things Russian were good, all things non-Russian were 'bourgeois nationalism' Stalin, would rule with an iron fist secure in the knowledge that he knew what was best for Mother Russia²⁴.

Stalin distrusted the non-Russians. He deported over one and one-half million during the Great Patriotic War alone among them the Crimean Tatars, Volga Germans, Kalmyks and Karachai²⁵. When the war ended, he claimed the Russians had won the war and therefore were to be recognized as the elder brothers of the Union, not as mere equals.

Stalin imposed the Cyrillic alphabet on the non-Russian populace. He actively discouraged cultural events and customs. He prevented the publication of indigenous works and avidly promoted Russian works and Russian culture. The "Russification" of the tsar's had returned to Russia.

As Russian nationalism openly became part of official discourse, nationalities began to be purged from high Party positions. Local ethnic nationalism became treasonous. Stalin

²⁴ Stalin's behavior on the nationality policy is curious, since he advocated a 'Great Russian' mentality asserting the Russian superiority while he himself was Georgian. Most likely, he was following the tradition of Kaiser Wilhelm and Adolf Hitler who led nations in which they were not born and therefore had to be more nationalistic than the populace to prove themselves.

²⁵ Baradat, Leon P. Soviet Political Society (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1989) pg. 316.

revoked support for indigenization and allowed the Russian minorities in the union republics to claim special privileges. Soon Russians served in most of the high union republic leadership positions.

When Khrushchev succeeded Stalin, he relieved the Soviet people from much of the centralization and cruelty of the Stalin years. He allowed much more leeway and more autonomy to the non-Russian nationalities. Khrushchev condemned Stalin's 'Russification' policies and eventually condemned Stalin himself²⁶. Khrushchev stressed "flowering--rapprochement--merger" meaning increased freedom for nationalities which would lead to better majority-minority relations and eventually to the Marxian ideal of the withering away of nationality.

Under Khrushchev, the non-Russians once again began to attain high Party positions and wield some power in the system. Khrushchev was strongly opposed to 'Great Russian' chauvinism. So opposed that he banned a chorus of the Soviet national anthem which stressed Russian nationalism:

"The unbreakable union
Of the free republics
Has been welded together forever
By Great Russia²⁷."

In 1977, this ban was lifted, implying yet another shift in nationality policy.

²⁶ Khrushchev condemned Stalin in the famed 'secret speech' to the XX Congress of the CPSU in February 1956.

²⁷ Medish. op. cit. pg. 39.

In many ways, the Brezhnev years were characterized by a desire for a 'return to normalcy'; no more reforms, changes, or schemes which had marked the Khrushchev years. Brezhnev's nationality policy stressed the Soviet nation, mature socialism, full national self realization of each nation while drawing closer together through 'mutual enrichment' and eventual merger while asserting Russian dominance.

Andropov and Chernenko, each served such a short period as General Secretary, that their impact on nationality policy was minimal. However, Andropov asserted that "national differences will continue much longer than class differences²⁸" Thus he seemed to implicitly accept the existence of pluralism in Soviet society.

In economic terms, nationalities have traditionally been allowed more autonomy in prosperous times and less in times of economic crisis. However, there can be mitigating circumstances which modify this tradition. For example, a given nationality may be considered extremely vital to Soviet national interest at a given time and thus they would be allowed additional leeway.

The swings of nationality policy coincide with the swings in economic and political policies. When the Soviet Union is in the process of decentralizing or de-Stalinizing, the nationalities invariably receive more autonomy. While centralizing or Stalinizing, the nationalities lose autonomy.

Nationality policy is not a constant. It fluctuates with the

²⁸ Conquest. op. cit. pg. 237.

needs and dictates of the central government and the demands by the nationalities themselves. Historically, nationality problems tend to be exacerbated by political and economic crisis. For example outbreaks of nationalism during the Ukrainian famines of 1931-33 and the Alma Ata riots of 1985 which were precipitated by the removal of an ethnic Kazakh from the republic's hierarchy and his replacement by a Russian.

Often, regional economic considerations exacerbate national tensions. In *perestroika* a choice must soon be made whether to modernize existing technologies, infrastructures and equipments or to build new. Modernization implies favoritism toward the European region of the Soviet Union because that is where the majority of the existing industrial capacity lies. Building new may favor the Soviet Far East or Soviet Central Asia because the Far East has the raw materials and Central Asia has the labor force. However, the educated and skilled workers reside mostly in the European portion, primarily Moscow, Leningrad and the Baltic Republics. Any choice or combination of choices will elicit cries of injustice on behalf of the losers.

Capital for modernization and/or new investment is extremely scarce in the USSR. More advanced and industrialized parts of the Soviet Union, like the Baltic Republics, are becoming increasingly more vocal in their opposition to financing development in lesser developed areas of the country in the name of equalization of ethnic groups. Many of these well developed

areas would much prefer to use their tax monies to enhance existing industries or in a wide variety of other ways within their own republic. The leaders of developed republics also argue that they do not get a fair share of their own resources and products because of exports to Moscow or exports to underdeveloped republics. Unequal modernization and a colonial style (internal colonialism) allocation of resources (central authority takes what it needs, leaves balance) has also exacerbated nationalistic tendencies.

Further complicating the nationality problem is the fact that the Russians are experiencing a demographic decline. They are rapidly losing their majority position in the multiethnic Soviet state. Although they will maintain a distinct plurality in the near future, the extremely high birthrates in Soviet Central Asia in addition to technological and medical advances which will reduce death rates and infant mortality rates even that status will not last for long.

The potential for a new round of attempts to Russify the non-Russians is inherent in the declining number of Russians in the Soviet Union. Having been a solid majority and the dominant ethnic group for centuries, first under the tsars and later the Communists, the chances that the Russians will intensify efforts to maintain dominance over the non-Russians is fairly good. Many feel that imposing the use of the Russian language on the non-Russian nationalities may prevent the Russians from ever losing control of the political system by institutionalizing the 'Russian

way'.

Language policy is considered Russification in many regions of the Soviet Union, especially in republics which have experienced a high influx of Russian immigrants like Estonia. Estonians fear becoming a minority in their own republic and see any support of Russian language schools or the use of Russian in official capacities as a possible loss of ethnic identity. Latvians, who have already become a minority in their republic, also have very strong feelings against any perceived favoritism toward the Russian language.

The Russian language, from the Soviet viewpoint, facilitates communication between the nationality groups, serves to "cement the unity of Soviet culture and acts as an effective accelerator of the drawing-together of nations²⁹." In a practical manner, the use of a single language within a multi-language state, a *lingua franca*, would be vital for the purposes of communication. However, the use of only one of the many 'legally equal' languages coupled with the fact that that group also controls the political and military systems is a recipe for minority discontent.

In order to advance in Soviet society, a knowledge of Russian is virtually a prerequisite. All technical and professional schools teach solely in Russian. High Party posts also necessitate a familiarity with Russian. The non-Russian nationalities see this as discrimination and favoritism.

²⁹ Solchanyk, Roman. "Russian Language and Soviet Politics." Soviet Studies. vol. 34, no. 1 (January 1982) pg. 25.

There is historical precedent for considering language policy Russification. During the 1930s, Stalin's government attempted to 'reform non-Russian languages from within' by ordering the introduction of Russian words into non-Russian languages. This was especially true of political, technical or scientific terminology. The principle upon which this policy was based was called 'the principle of minimum discrepancies' (*printsip minimal'nykh raskhozhdeniy*)³⁰. Obviously an attempt to bring about more linguistic unity in the Soviet Union.

Additionally, the banning of the Latin alphabet in the Baltic area and the attempted imposition of Cyrillic was Russifying language policy. Many other nationalities also were forced to abandon the Latin alphabet, however the Baltic nations were among only a few who either resisted the ban or reinstated the Latin alphabet during a period of relaxed relations with the Russians.

In 1966, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet established a federal Ministry of Education which was designed to oversee republic ministries of education. The new ministry mandated curricula, length of the school term, exam requirements and hours of Russian language to be taught. Textbooks are uniform throughout the Soviet Union with the non-Russian republics using indigenous translations³¹. These are often perceived by the non-

³⁰ Szporluk, Roman. "Nationalities and the Russian Problem in the USSR: an Historical Outline." Journal of International Affairs. vol. 27, no. 1 (Spring 1973) pg 32.

³¹ Ibid. pg. 37.

Russians as attempts at educational assimilation.

The argument for internal colonialism is most prevalent when discussing industrial or modernization policies. When an industry is set up in a republic for which neither the raw materials nor the labor necessary for its success are present within that republic, it is perceived as a contrived excuse to import Russian cadres to operate it and to forever link the economy of the republic to that of the RSFSR.

Since the policy of *glasnost* was instituted, many of the nationalities have formed groups to promote national interests or independence. The Russians are no exception. *Pamyat* (Memory) is the name of the group formed by the Russian nationality and seems to be promoting the 'Great Russian Nationalism' of which Lenin was so afraid.

Nationality Policy Under Gorbachev

Nationality policy under Gorbachev is still evolving. When Gorbachev first assumed the office of General Secretary in March 1985, many scholars believed that "non-Russian Soviet nationalities (had) little good to expect from a man who, as Gromyko told us, smiles a lot but has iron teeth³²."

³² Bilinsky, Yaroslav. "Nationality Policy in Gorbachev's First Year." *Orbis*. vol.

Many felt that Gorbachev was so intent on his economic reform policies that he had neglected to learn about the problems inherent in the Soviet multiethnic state. Having spent the majority of his career in predominantly Russian or at least Slavic areas, he had little personal experience with non-Russians.

The 27th CPSU Party Congress, Gorbachev's first, stressed the importance of central control. This assertion, in and of itself, was enough to make scholars believe that the nationalities would not enjoy much autonomy under a Gorbachev regime. This belief was cemented further by a speech given at the Congress which stated "the national question, which has remained from the past, has been solved successfully in the Soviet Union³³." It is doubtful that anyone believed the 'national question' had truly been solved, more logical explanations would be an attempt to relegate nationality issues to a back seat under Gorbachev or a truly naive belief that the problem was getting much better by a political neophyte.

The 1986 Party program further called for "the development of the Soviet People's single culture, which is socialist in content, diverse in national forms, and internationalist in spirit³⁴."

Shortly after the 27th Party Congress, the director for the Institute of Ethnography of the USSR Academy of Sciences

30, no. 2, Summer 1986) pg. 331.

33 "Programma Kommunisticheskoi Partii Sovetskogo Soiuza, *Novaia redaktsiia priniata XXVII s"ezdom KPSS*," *Pravda*, March 7, 1986. quoted in Bilinsky, *op. cit.*, pg. 332.

34 *Ibid.* pg. 332.

academician Iulian Vladimirovich Bromlei published a paper in *Kommunist*, the party's ideological journal, about the effects and the meaning of the statements at the Congress on the nationality question. He stated that:

"the formerly backward national hinterlands have long ago vanished; socialist nations have joined to form an international community--the Soviet people--that is new in its social parameters; there have formed common cultural traits that are characteristic of Soviet people of all nationalities; national discord is a thing of the past; and the fraternal friendship of the peoples, forged in their common creative labor and tested in the most difficult of wars, has become the standard of life³⁵."

Bromlei also stressed the need for all republics and regions to facilitate the development of a "unified national economic complex³⁶" thus further lessening the individual role played by the nationalities in the economic realm.

With respect to education, Bromlei advocates that:

"It is advisable to train specialists for the entire nation at republic institutions of higher learning and, above all, to assign graduates to jobs throughout the Soviet Union as a whole. The interregional

³⁵ "Sovershenstvovanie natsional'nykh otnoshenii v SSSR," *Kommunist* (1986, no. 8) translated in Bromlei, Iulian V. "Improving National Relations in the USSR." *Soviet Law and Government*, vol. 26, no. 2 (Fall 1987) pg. 37.

³⁶ *Ibid.* pg. 38.

mobility of the 'labor surplus' rural population and the level of its vocational training can also be raised by training part of the rural youth in agricultural vocational-technical training schools in the Russian Federation³⁷."

An 'internationalist' personnel policy can be greatly enhanced using such educational methods according to Bromlei. Education and personnel policy can be utilized to equalize the conditions under which the nationalities live. Localism and regionalism must be combatted using all possible tools. 'Soviet pride' and 'Soviet self awareness' are cited as the two most influential tools in combating the problems of localism and regionalism.

Integration, assimilation and the merging of the nationalities into a unit--the Soviet people--is strongly stressed throughout the article. Considering that *Kommunist* is a well respected, Party oriented and government supported journal, the chances that this is a regime position are very strong.

Gorbachev has made several 'ethnic *faux pas*' which have often been taken as deliberate insults. During a speech in Kiev, the Ukrainian capital, on June 25, 1985, Gorbachev twice referred to the Soviet Union as Russia³⁸. The Ukrainians were offended by this reference, equating it with a reassertion of Russian nationalism and Russian feelings of superiority. In addition,

³⁷ Ibid. pg. 43.

³⁸ Nahaylo, Bohdan. "Gorbachev's Slip of the Tongue in Kiev." Radio Liberty Research Bulletin (RL 221/85, July 3, 1985) pg. 1.

Gorbachev made a toast on the fortieth anniversary of V-E Day during which he not only praised the Russian people but he also used almost the same words Stalin had used in a toast on May 24, 1945³⁹. Whether these slips show mere insensitivity or calculated hostility is unclear.

On the other side, Gorbachev appointed Eduard Shevardnadze, an ethnic Georgian, as Minister of Foreign Affairs and full voting member of the Politburo. He also promoted Aleksandr Yakovlev to the position of Party ideologist who, although Russian, has made several speeches highly critical of Russian nationalism.

Additionally, much of the more recent rhetoric on the nationality question has been extensively softened especially in light of ethnic unrest in Armenia, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan and the Baltic Republics. An alternative explanation for the softening of the rhetoric on the nationality question is that Gorbachev has learned more about the problem and has become more sensitive to the concerns of the minorities.

By January 1987, Gorbachev entered into a new recognition, a growing sophistication, in his understanding of nationality relations. At the Central Committee Plenum Gorbachev displayed what Alexander Motyl refers to as a more 'sober' assessment of the state of Soviet nationality relations, Gorbachev admitted that the Party had made 'mistakes' in implementing its nationality policies⁴⁰. Gorbachev "accused Soviet social scientists of having

³⁹ "Bezsmertnyi podvig sovetskogo naroda." *Kommunist* (May 1985) no. 8, pg. 6 quoted in Bilinski, *op. cit.* pg. 341.

⁴⁰ Motyl. *op. cit.* pg. 158.

painted an excessively optimistic picture of national relations⁴¹."

At the end of 1987, Gorbachev authored an editorial which appeared in the Party journal *Kommunist*. This editorial is seen as a clearer enunciation of Gorbachev's new ideas on the nationality question. The idea that the 'friendship of peoples' is a noble ideal but certainly not a reality, that nationality relations were in as much trouble as the Soviet economy and a clearcut admission that the nationality problem is 'inherent in the system' itself were but a few of the revelations in the editorial⁴².

The change in Gorbachev's beliefs about the nationality problem seem to stem from outbreaks of ethnic rioting during 1985 and 1986; possibly precipitated by a non-Russian perception that they would not fare well under his regime. In May 1985 there were anti-Russian riots in Latvia. November and December 1985 were full of rioting and unrest in Uzbekistan as the Russians tried to cleanup the remnants of the so-called Uzbek mafia. The next major rioting occurred in Alma Ata, Kazakhstan during December 1986. The Alma Ata riots stemmed from the replacement of the Kazakh First Party Secretary with a Russian. They were very violent and included calls for independence. Riga again broke out in riots during December 1986 and January 1987. On August 23, 1987, the anniversary of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact which led to the incorporation of the Baltic states, there were huge nationalist demonstrations throughout the Baltic Republics.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid. pg. 159.

These events could not be ignored and, in part, led to the change in Gorbachev's perception of national relations.

CHAPTER 4

Glasnost' , Perestroika and the Baltic Republics

"The importance of (nationalistic) demonstrations lies in what they hold for Gorbachev's program of restructuring (*perestroika*) the Soviet system. The demonstrations are a foretaste of the side effects of *perestroika* and suggest that the 'national question' of the Soviet Union may prove to be the rock on which Gorbachev's reforms founder. As Gorbachev has haltingly come to realize, he confronts a dilemma: On the one hand, *perestroika* is necessary to revive the system; on the other, it is likely to aggravate the national problem and, in the long run, to threaten Soviet stability¹."

The Baltic Republics of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania occupy a unique position in the Soviet Union. Often referred to as the Soviet 'window to the West', they are the most literate, most

¹ Motyl, Alexander J. "The Sobering of Gorbachev: Nationality, Restructuring and the West." in Seweryn Bialer (ed.) Politics, Society, and Nationality Inside Gorbachev's Russia (Boulder: Westview Press, 1989) pg. 149.

highly industrialized and most Westernized of all Soviet republics.

Very few Balts serve in the ruling bodies, attain high rank in the military or high Party positions. Instead of these political roles, the role of the Balts tends to be economic and social in nature. The Baltic region is the most highly industrialized in the Soviet Union. It has had industrial growth rates among the highest in the Soviet Union since World War II. The Baltic Republics occupy less than 1% of Soviet territory and have only 3% of the Soviet population yet in 1967 Estonia produced 19.6% of food, 13.2% of fuel and 27.2% of electricity; Latvia produced 22.1% of food, 20.1% of electricity and 18.8% of machines and metal works; and Lithuania produced 21.4% of food, 21.3% of electricity and 19% of machines and metal works².

Per capita income and standards of living are higher in the Baltic. In 1969 Latvia had a per capita income of 1515 rubles (\$1680) as compared with 1071 rubles (\$1188) for the whole Soviet Union³. Personal income in the Baltic Republics is also the highest in the Union. In 1978, Estonia had a personal income index of 126.9, Latvia of 113.7 and Lithuania of 115.1 compared to a Russian average index of 100⁴. The retail stores in the Baltic

² Vardys, V. Stanley. "The Role of the Baltic Republics in Soviet Society." in Roman Szporluk (ed.) The Influence of East Europe and the Soviet West on the USSR (NY: Praeger Publishers, 1976) pg. 155.

³ Grossman, Mary Ann. "Soviet Efforts at the Socioeconomic Integration of Latvians." in Ralph S. Clem (ed.) The Soviet West: Interplay between Nationality and Social Organization (NY: Praeger Publishers, 1975) pg. 75.

⁴ Koropecy, I.S. and Gertrude Schroeder(eds.). Economics of Soviet Regimes (NY: Pergamon Press, 1981) pg. 120.

have better quality and a wider variety of goods than those in other republics. Baltic workers also tend to earn higher wages. In 1978 , the average Estonian wage was 2136 rubles, Latvia was 1932 rubles and Lithuania was 1890 rubles (Baltic average, 1986 rubles) where the average All-Union wage was 1920 rubles and the Russian wage was 2016 rubles⁵. Following the pattern of high per capita and personal incomes plus high wages, the Baltic Republics also have high rates of consumption; Estonia has an average consumption index of 130.3, Latvia of 117.2 and Lithuania of 114.7 where Russia has an average consumption index of 109.8 and an All-Union average of 100⁶.

The Baltics' well developed infrastructure, by Soviet standards, facilitates the transportation of the goods manufactured there to other republics or abroad; the Baltic region has many railroads, ports and highways. It also 'underutilized housing, production buildings and urban infrastructure' which allowed the Soviet Union to save scarce capital while still promoting industrialization during the first few five year plans⁷. Additionally, the Baltic region was "cheaper and easier to develop further than the much less accessible and climactically less favorable distant regions of the Soviet Union⁸."

In addition, the independence era ingrained in the Balts

⁵ Ibid. pg. 124-5.

⁶ Ibid. pg. 129.

⁷ Maciuka, Benedict V. "The Role of the Baltic Republics in the Economy of the USSR." Journal of Baltic Studies (vol. III, no. 1, 1972) pg. 20.

⁸ Ibid.

excellent production traditions. They began producing a wide variety of high quality, exportable goods such as footwear, radio equipment, and refrigerators which had a ready market in the Soviet Union, neighboring countries and Western Europe.

Because of the paucity of natural resources, the Baltic region has little heavy industry; it is limited to the extraction of Estonian shale oil and the cement industry. However, they have a highly skilled and educated labor pool, management skills, high rates of productivity and a well developed light industrial base. For these reasons, "Moscow has assigned the Baltic region the role of processor and technological specialist for which skills in designing, engineering and mechanics are required⁹."

For the Soviet Union, where external travel opportunities have been extremely limited, the Baltic region represents 'the West'; "the Gothic towers of Riga, the Hanseatic old town of Tallinn, the baroque churches of Vilnius, the modern coffee shops, restaurants, music, and more fashionably dressed women...the Russians regard the Baltic republics as *sovetskaia zagranitsa*, *rusaskaia zagranitsa* or simply *nasha zagranitsa*--'our foreign country'.¹⁰" Under Swedish, Polish, German and Danish occupations, the Baltic region developed a culture and lifestyle very different from the bulk of the Soviet Union. The role of Western religion has played a large role in the culture of the Baltic region; Estonia and Latvia are Lutheran and Lithuania is Catholic. These are not only religions, they are traditions and values and

⁹ Vardys, V. Stanley. in Roman Szporluk (ed.) op. cit. pg. 154.

¹⁰ Ibid. pg. 159.

philosophies different than those of Russia. Lutheranism and Catholicism are also tied to Western tradition and Western religious centers.

Estonia's proximity and cultural-linguistic ties to Finland also add to the 'Westernness' of the Baltic region. The Estonians receive Finnish television and radio. There is also a large amount of tourist travel between the Estonia and Finland.

The Balts were also the first in the Soviet bloc to translate Western works into their native languages. Camus' The Stranger, James Joyce's Ulysses, and the plays Porgy and Bess and West Side Story, all first became available in Baltic languages. This may be due to the regime's belief that the Baltic region is a good testing ground for new ideas with minimum All-Union effects, since few Balts leave the region and few Russians speak any of the Baltic languages.

In order for *perestroika* to be successful, Gorbachev will ultimately need the support of the majority of Soviet citizens. Since the process of change is lengthy and the goals long term, he may be able to build such a constituency for reform a little at a time. He began by gaining the support of the intelligentsia through *glasnost*'. *Glasnost*' is also part of the reason for Gorbachev's support among the Baltic Republics. Openness allows the Baltic peoples more room to maneuver and allows them to vent their frustrations with the current system. At the very least, their demands are now being heard.

In addition to *glasnost'*, a political reform, the Baltic peoples support Gorbachev due to his economic reforms (*perestroika*). *Glasnost'* and *perestroika* reinforce one another. The latter is not possible in a meaningful way without the former. Decentralization and increased regional autonomy have been among their goals since the days of independence. The Baltic peoples have a history of productive behavior and modern management techniques, which if they are allowed to use them, may help not only the Baltic situation but the All-Union problem as well.

In order to gain mass public support, it will be necessary for the regime to do more than allow the people to air grievances via *glasnost'*. A current Russian saying reminds us that 'one cannot eat *glasnost'*', the Soviet citizens must see an appreciable increase in the availability of food and consumer goods in order for there to be any appreciable change in their levels of support for the reforms and the regime; *glasnost'* alone is not enough. The most viable place in which food and consumer goods of any quality can come from within the Soviet Union is the Baltic region. The goods are of significantly higher quality than those from other regions. Despite higher quality and productivity, due to the small size of the economies in the Baltic, they cannot produce enough goods and services to satiate the entire Soviet market. However, it may be possible to export the higher quality Baltic goods to other nations in return for hard currency which can then be used to purchase the needed food and consumer goods.

Pluralism in the Baltic Republics

The more relaxed political atmosphere under *glasnost'* has yielded many unintended consequences. Among them, the formation and proliferation of grass roots organizations which are, at least, of a quasi-political nature and can be found in all of the Soviet republics. In the Baltic republics, the groups range from national independence parties to environmental groups. The largest groups, and those which will be dealt with here are the Estonian People's Front, the Latvian People's Front and the Lithuanian Movement in Support of *Perestroika* or *Sajudis*. These three groups, which I will refer to collectively as 'movements', are not only quasi-political in nature, they have the blessings and support of their local Communist parties.

The movements do not refer to themselves as parties since a multi-party system is not yet, and maybe never will be, legal. However, their functions are decidedly political in nature. The Latvian People's Front in Support of *Perestroika* has been referred to, by the Soviet press, as a "mass-affiliation social and political movement...(which) unites within its ranks the forces supporting the policy of restructuring and openness."¹¹ The

¹¹ SWB. SU 279, October 11, 1988, B/1.

Estonian People's Front in Support of *Perestroika* is, in the words of their Constituent Congress, designed to:

"become a social guarantor of renewal in society and counter bureaucratic attempts at slowing down the processes of democratisation and openness. Its activists consider it their overriding mission to assist real popular government and help the realisation of the people's will through elected governing councils¹²."

The draft program of the People's Front asserts the importance of the people to the process of reform. The program advocates public opinion polling and opportunities for "the inhabitants of the republic to take an active part in the process of renewal of society and contributing to true people's sovereignty¹³." In order to ensure that society is just, the people must join in political life and make their needs and desires known. The problems of the Union are as much the fault of those who did not speak up as of those who promulgated the policies. The Lithuanian Movement in Support of *Perestroika* or *Sajudis* states many of the same positions and has many of the same goals as the movements in Estonia and Latvia.

One of the most important issues for all three movements is 'full-republic cost-accounting', self-financing or economic and financial autonomy. The idea was prompted by the same basic

¹² SWB. SU 274, October 5, 1988, B/1.

¹³ Ibid.

problems that prompted Gorbachev to propose *perestroika*; poor availability of consumer goods, inefficiency and corruption. Additionally, the republics perceive a growing gap between what they produce and what is available to them in the stores. The republics have no voice in the distribution of what they produce; this yields frustration with the insolvency of the system. One of the most complete statements of republic economic goals was made by Lithuania:

"The sovereignty of Lithuania should embrace the management of all branches of the national economy, economic policies, formation of the budget, policies on finance, credit, trade, customs and taxes; our own monetary system, social security and its development, legislation and administration of the law, education, culture, relations with foreign countries and representation in international organizations, as well as all other spheres of life¹⁴."

From the 21st to the 23rd of September a conference of leading Baltic economists convened to discuss the issue of economic autonomy and to compile a joint platform for submission to Moscow on the subject. The foundations of the proposal were 'exclusive control over the use of property; including all land, mineral resources, inland and territorial waters, the continental shelf and all property created or purchased by the state. State property includes industrial enterprises, farms, banks transport and power networks. Military

¹⁴ SWB. SU 295, October 29, 1988, B/2.

installations of all-union importance may be regarded as union property subject to long-term agreement with republic authorities. All matters regarding taxation will be handled by the republic¹⁵.'

The republics are to be independent "as regards their economic, social and demographic policies. They will be free to exert control over prices and introduce their own currencies, fixing the exchange rates with the Soviet rouble and other currencies at their own discretion¹⁶." Such autonomy necessitates an amendment to the Soviet Constitution so that there would be legal guarantees.

Another important issue for all three movements is the goal of a 'law-governed state'. Gorbachev has supported this issue strongly. He has repeatedly called for 'a government of laws not men' in which a Stalin would be constrained and thus not allowed to terrorize society as he did. The Balts support this proposal for similar reasons but additionally to protect themselves from 'winds of change' in the Soviet system. Gorbachev supports them, but they have no assurances that the next Soviet leader will do the same. A 'law-governed state' would guarantee human rights such as free speech, free press and freedom of association. The basic ideals of all of the movements are embodied in this passage from the Program of the Estonian People's Front:

"The basic ideals of the People's Front are

¹⁵ Ibid. B/4.

¹⁶ Ibid.

to general human values, democracy and pluralism, social justice, internationalism, respect for the rights of all nations and protection of human rights, the interests of the individual and of lawfulness. The People's Front is guided by the General Declaration of Human Rights, corresponding pacts and the constitutional provisions which deal with freedoms and obligations¹⁷."

The People's Fronts further demand that there be "juridical and practical guarantees of the inviolability of the person, his abode and correspondence and for ensuring the secrecy of telephone conversations¹⁸." Additionally, any person charged with a crime or treason should have access to information gathered to prosecute him so that he may prepare a defense, open access to demographic and statistical information, open acknowledgement of Stalin's 'heinous crimes against humanity' and rehabilitations of wrongly convicted political criminals. The People's Front is also in favor of complete freedom of religious practice and the abolition of all prior restraint censorship.

The role of the indigenous populace in the affairs of the republic are also of utmost concern. The Estonian People's Front stated that "the deciding of Estonian matters must take place in Estonia and at the initiative of the Estonians(we must) ensure the permanence of the Estonian people and a hopeful future¹⁹."

¹⁷ SWB. SU 253, September 10, 1988, B/1.

¹⁸ Ibid. B/5.

¹⁹ SWB. SU 274, op. cit. B/2.

Citizenship issues have been the topic of much discussion. In Estonia, the Estonian Central Committee has called the "introduction of citizenship of the Estonian SSR as the most essential step towards forming a permanent population in Estonia. This will enhance the responsibility of the republic's citizens for the well being and future of their home....and does not harm the main rights of citizens of any nationality²⁰." Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania have also all proposed that their indigenous languages be given the status of the official language of the republic. They do not assail the status of Russian as the All-Union *lingua franca* but assert that affairs within their republic borders should be conducted in their own language. Migration into the republics is also an important concern. The Latvians are already a minority in their own republic and the Estonians are rapidly heading that way. The People's Fronts propose limits to immigration as well as cultural, linguistic and political autonomy.

The primary goals of these movements are the establishment of 'legal, economic and political guarantees' of the proposed reforms and their irreversibility. *Perestroika* hit a respondent chord with the Baltic peoples. Decentralization, an end to bureaucratic inertia, cronyism, careerism and abuses of power are highly regarded in the Baltics. The movements propose a separation of power between legislative, executive and judicial arenas and in that vein the establishment of constitutional courts

²⁰ SWB. SU 285, October 18, 1988, B/3.

to ensure laws are followed.

Vaino Valjas, First Secretary of the Communist Party of the Estonian Central Committee, brought greetings from Mikhail Gorbachev to the Estonian Constituent Congress of the People's Front. This show of support from the Soviet leadership was important to the cause but was not unequivocal. Valjas asserted that "The Estonian People's Front should not try to take up a position parallel to the Communist Party, and the aggravating of nationalities issues must not take the ground away from economic reforms and other reform projects²¹." These parameters are very significant in terms of what the Popular Front may and may not do; it seems that so long as their primary goal is support of Gorbachev's reforms and they do not attempt to become an opposition party, they may continue to function. The 19th All-Union Party Conference stated that the party favored all people's movements as a positive societal force as long as they help the renewal and reform process.

The movements are exactly what Gorbachev had hoped to spawn. Many of his speeches have criticized the Russian and Soviet tradition of 'revolution from above'. The People's Fronts represent true public initiatives, grass-roots participation. And better yet, for Gorbachev, their outspoken demands in support of his programs help him in his fight with those who oppose his programs within the Party structure. Such a constituency for his reforms is a necessary precursor to their success and

²¹ SWB. SU 274 op. cit. B/2.

irreversibility.

The limits to *glasnost*' are evident in the intolerance of Soviet officialdom to several other 'movements' which have emerged. The League of Lithuania's Liberty attempted an unsanctioned demonstration in Vilnius on September 30, 1988. Citizens belonging to this anti-Soviet group took to the streets advocating Lithuanian independence and a non-socialist government. Internal affairs officers (KGB) made repeated demands for the group to disburse 18 militiamen were injured in the melee and over 25 persons were detained²². The Lithuanian government later issued a statement that "actions contradictory to the interests of the socialist state and society and impairing the usual pace of life are not going to be tolerated²³." However, the next day the Lithuanian Movement in Support of *Perestroika* (*Sajudis*) held an unauthorized and spontaneous rally to denounce the cruelty of the militia's tactics in handling the previous days demonstrations and to denounce the irresponsible actions of the Liberty League; the rally was not disturbed by the militia²⁴.

22 Ibid. B/5.

23 Ibid.

24 Ibid.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusion: Limits to Openness?

The recently established Popular Fronts in the Baltic Republics have consciously allied themselves with support for the reforms and have been a useful way in which to advance previously unacceptable demands, for example, autonomy and nationalism. These movements address national, environmental and other issues of importance. Many of the movements have demanded the right to run candidates for local soviets. This idea is not as unusual as one first may think because the "collective power of '*obshchestvennost*' the concept of the public acting for itself outside the framework of the state, (is) a power traditionally honored in the breach¹." Additionally, many of the new social movement groups will run candidates for the new Congress of People's Deputies, which will choose the next Central Committee, possibly a huge step toward some form of meaningful participation of the masses.

¹ Remington, Thomas F. "A Socialist Pluralism of Opinions: *Glasnost*' and Policy-Making Under Gorbachev." (unpublished paper presented at the Southern Political Science Association Conference, November 1988) pg. 28.

Gorbachev's recognition of his need for a support constituency for his reform program has led him to allow a wide variety of behaviors that were previously unthinkable. He seems to be gradually moving toward what he terms "*demokratizatsiia*" or democratization; a more multi-tiered system of representation which would allow popular organizations to elect representatives to lower level policy making bodies within the context of Party supremacy. Ideology, defense, foreign and development strategies would remain under the firm control of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU).

Although the Party, in Gorbachev's view, will remain in control of the Soviet Union, Gorbachev has stated that the Party no longer has a monopoly on the truth; this is important for the new social and political climate. A multiplicity of opinions and possibly of parties is now conceivable. Allowing secret ballot voting, up to and including the position of regional first secretary, is designed to increase accountability and allow truth to emerge from the clash of a 'socialist pluralism of opinions'; grass roots democracy under the umbrella of democratic centralism. Despite appearances, there is pluralism in the Soviet Union. The republics play a role in policy making. Republic elites can have a large impact on policies as can the mere existence of a possibility of a loss of control in non-Russian areas. The ethnic question is never far from the minds of the

policy makers, "the political, economic and cultural resources now possessed by the republics translate into increasing influence and weight in the Soviet system and its policy process²." The proliferation of mass movements greatly increases the quantity and quality of pluralism that exists in the Soviet Union and enables the process to become more democratic, more rapidly.

Pluralism, though limited in the past, has been most noticeable when the leadership has occasionally tolerated nationalist beliefs. However, historically, nationalistic behavior has not been tolerated; it has always been suppressed quickly, brutally and effectively. This is true even under *glasnost*'. For example, all twelve members of the Karabakh Committee, the Armenian group advocating the annexation of the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh, were arrested and martial law was imposed in both Armenia and Azerbaijan as a result of the ethnic unrest there. The unrest was neither supportive of reform nor of Gorbachev and therefore was suppressed. Similarly, the recent disturbances in the Ukraine, Moldavia and Georgia, which have been decidedly anti-Soviet, have also been put down.

In short, Gorbachev's priority is domestic economic reform. If ethnic unrest aids him in attaining his reform goals, then the unrest is treated differently from unrest that hinders the reforms, as emphasized by Alexander Motyl:

² Motyl, Alexander J. op. cit. pg. 152.

"Economic modernization is Gorbachev's highest priority. But Gorbachev has come to understand that modernization is contingent upon a renewal of the political system. Administrative effectiveness must be enhanced and political opposition quelled for the radical economic measures he envisions to take effect and to work. In turn, political restructuring means mobilizing the support of various elite and popular constituencies through greater publicity and *glasnost*' and increased popular initiative and participation (democratization). All of these are laudable goals, but even laudable goals can have unintended consequences. Unfortunately for Gorbachev, measures to cope with these consequences may be fatal to *perestroika*³."

Regardless of the intent of *glasnost*', openness will have the unintended consequence of encouraging ethnic unrest of all varieties. The combination of political decentralization (*glasnost*' and democratization) and economic decentralization (*perestroika*) could be the combination that could lead to the disintegration of the Soviet system.

The evolution of new quasi-political structures such as the People's Fronts may be the beginning of such a disintegration. More likely, they are a manifestation of systemic change within the Soviet Union or a 'steam release' for venting frustration with the system designed merely to allow a temporary diffusion of

³ Motyl, Alexander J. *op. cit.* pg. 161.

tensions. Additionally, the new mass movements can serve as a focal point for the ire of Gorbachev's conservative critics thus diffusing their opposition. According to Nikolay Mitkin, the Second Secretary of the Communist Party of the Lithuanian Central Committee has said:

"If some people from the Lithuanian Movement for *Perestroyka* air their view and opinions in a non-standard way, resorting to firm and even impudent devices, there is no need to push the panic button. We must learn to hear the views of people whose opinion seems to be different from ours and especially when they have true facts to back their views...I have been asked on many occasions whether the movement is an opposition party: no, it isn't. I see it as a democratic movement, expressing the people's constitutional rights to take part in the governing of the state⁴."

The Latvian First Secretary Vagris also asserts that the Latvian People's Front in Support of *Perestroika* is "neither a political nor an opposition organization but a broad movement in support of restructuring and *glasnost*' advocating strengthening the power of local soviets, developing culture and protecting the environment⁵." There are, of course, radical members of the People's Fronts who see these movements as opposition parties or as revolutionary forces for change. However, the majority of

⁴ SWB. SU 247, September 3, 1988, B/6.

⁵ SWB. SU 278, October 10, 1988, i.

the movements' members are more pragmatic and desire to gain autonomy within the Soviet system rather than assert independence and risk a more brutal, and more visible, Soviet presence.

The key question remains: how far will the Baltic unrest be allowed to go? The unrest has only been tolerated thus far due to the pressing domestic imperative of economic reform, *perestroika*. The Estonians and the Lithuanians both anticipate a crackdown in the near future. This fear is based on the creation of a new Politburo commission on the Baltic Republics chaired by Vadim Medvedev, a noted hard-liner on national self assertion. *Sajudis*, the Lithuanian movement, has become progressively more radical in recent months and relations between the Lithuanian Party and *Sajudis* have become strained. The Estonian People's Front has also become more radical. The Estonians have called for autonomy and have attempted to give the republic veto power over Soviet laws. These actions have been poorly received, but allowed⁶. How far and how fast the movements can safely progress is unknown. Economic autonomy may be acceptable, secession is not.

A crackdown, however, would not be in the best interest of the Soviet state unless secession was imminent. Gorbachev has been working long and hard to polish the international image of

⁶ Quinn-Judge, Paul. "Lithuania, Baltic Rumblings: Activists Warn of a Crackdown." Christian Science Monitor (February 28, 1989) pgs. 1,2 and "Loosening the Ties that Bind: Estonians on a Collision Course with Moscow." Christian Science Monitor (February 16, 1989) pgs. 1,2.

the Soviet Union through arms control initiatives, payment of United Nations debts, repayment of the tsarist debt to Britain and overtures to Japan and the People's Republic of China, to name but a few. He has greatly enhanced the international legitimacy of his regime. This image will help him to achieve and maintain the calming of tensions that is necessary for him to justify the reduction of military spending. Such reductions would free up capital, technology and skilled labor badly needed for the success of the domestic reforms. Such an international environment will also be conducive to trade, technology transfers and the massive lending of capital from the West to the Soviet Union, which many scholars feel is very important to the success of *perestroika*. Cracking down on the Baltic republics would surely cause an erosion of that good will and therefore is unlikely.

In addition, a crackdown on ethnic unrest in the Baltic republics would also harm the credibility of the reforms on the domestic front. Many Soviet citizens are already wary and distrustful of *glasnost'* and *perestroika*; they have seen reforms come and go before, always leaving in their wake people who were punished when the reform failed or were revoked. The Soviets remain cynical and skeptical of the current wave of reform, crushing unrest in the Baltic would symbolize the whimsy of yet another wave of reforms. Since the Baltic republics represent the qualities that the reforms are meant to

cultivate, the effect of a crackdown would be magnified. This would also be true because the Baltic republics have been held up as the models for economic and political change. The Baltic republics are also important as allies of, and constituents for, the reforms. Above all, Gorbachev needs allies and supporters of the reforms in order to win his battles with his conservative opposition. Regardless, the Baltic movements constitute a challenge to the Communist Party. How will the Party respond to the challenge? Will the Party compete with the movements, thus widening the political base of the Party? Will the Party allow the existence of such pluralism? Or will the Party choose to crush the movements and thus the challenge? Given the domestic imperative of reform, the Party should choose to broaden its political base and accept the challenge of the Baltic movements while allowing them to continue to exist. By adopting at least some of the movements' platforms and allowing the movements to continue to function, the leadership can diffuse dissent and increase Party legitimacy in the Baltic region and possibly in other republics as well. The competition, even if regulated, which the movements would provide for the Party should serve to reinvigorate the Party which has long been one of Gorbachev's goals. Gorbachev could also use the continued existence of these movements to draw the fire of his opponents, thus diffusing their criticisms of his policies. International legitimacy would also be enhanced due to the high visibility of the movements' pluralistic actions.

The limits to openness are, as yet, undefined. However, the limits can be estimated. Gorbachev's overriding priority is domestic economic reform and therefore he must do whatever is necessary to ensure the success of that reform. Since the Baltic republics are integrally important to *perestroika* and since a crackdown on the ethnic unrest there could have damaging domestic and international ramifications, it is highly likely that the Baltic republics will be allowed to continue to test the limits of Gorbachev's policies. The limit to openness would seem to be just short of secession.

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