
Interview: Msgr. Ladas Tulaba

Lithuanian freedom and the Gulf war

By an almost unanimous vote the Lithuanians have declared their desire for independence from the U.S.S.R. The Lithuanian people, who have survived 50 years of communist terror, have once more shown the world that the Red Army's intimidations, Gorbachov's vetos, and the provocations of the pro-Soviet grouplets whose strings are pulled by the KGB, are not enough to subdue their rightful desire for freedom and national sovereignty.

In Rome, *EIR*'s Maria Cristina Fiocchi asked Monsignor Ladas Tulaba, former rector of the Lithuanian College of St. Casimir in Rome and an expert on Eastern European affairs, to comment on the new situation which has emerged since the Feb. 9 referendum.

"The result of the vote is very significant, even though we must make it clear that the vote was not binding and will hence have no practical impact. The Soviet authorities will not change their attitude, nor can we trust the referendum on the Treaty of Union, imposed by Gorbachov for March 17."

EIR: The Baltic republics have announced they will boycott that referendum, and of course here in the West the question arises: Why not express their will for independence by participating in it?

Tulaba: Gorbachov's upcoming referendum is a swindle. If, besides the Balts, the Armenians, Uzbeks, and perhaps even the Georgians decided not to vote, the Russian Republic alone, which represents the overwhelming majority of the electorate, would win the election. In the hypothetical case that a republic were to win the two-thirds majority in the referendum, which is the condition to be able to obtain independence, it would have to wait five years to undergo all the negotiations to secede, and finally the accord would have to be ratified by the Soviet Parliament, which would certainly be denied. In this case, one would have to wait another five years to hold a second vote; in short, according to Soviet law there is no possibility of obtaining independence.

With the Feb. 9 referendum, the Lithuanians showed the world, before the farce of the renewal of the Treaty of Union started, that the majority of the population wants independence.

EIR: After the use of force by the Soviet military on Jan. 13, what do you foresee?

Tulaba: The intervention of Soviet tanks had the purpose of taking control of information away from the Lithuanian government. The Russians control radio, television, the press—they don't need another bloodbath. Instead they will try to use the economic problems and to foment disorder and discontent through their KGB agents to put the present government in a bad light.

EIR: Gorbachov has stated that he had nothing to do with the decision of bringing in the tanks. Do you find this credible?

Tulaba: I think the President of the Soviet Union could not have not been informed of what was going on.

The Western governments are giving credit to a false presentation of facts: Gorbachov is not sincere, the policy of the Soviet Union is pure fiction, Gorbachov's friendship to the West is not a real friendship, just as the clash between Gorbachov and Yeltsin is not genuine.

EIR: What will the repercussions be of the Gulf war on the internal Lithuanian situation?

Tulaba: For centuries, Russia has tried to expand its influence toward the Persian Gulf. Let us not forget that Saddam's Iraq was the best customer for the Soviet arms trade.

As to the current developments in the Gulf war, the Kremlin leaders fear that after the American victory the American troops will stay in the Gulf forever and will set up a puppet government in Baghdad, cutting the Soviet Union out of the region. This explains a certain chilling in U.S.-U.S.S.R. relations. There is also no lack of those who have even more troubling scenarios on the drawing boards.

EIR: From the outset of the Gulf crisis down to the present, the Pope has intervened no fewer than 38 times calling for peace. The Holy See is carrying out intense diplomatic activity in favor of peace. The Pope's clear choice of peace has brought down threats upon him.

Tulaba: That does not surprise me. The Holy See is talking about a just peace, not just any peace. As to the threats on the Pope, why be surprised? They already shot at the Holy Father, trying to kill him. But those who hate John Paul II for his courageous stance in the present conflict, ought to know that no Pontiff can ever bless an unjust war, or tolerate the killing of thousands of innocent human lives.