

**NATIONALIST FERMENT IN BALTIC STATES:
A CASE STUDY OF LITHUANIA, 1985-1991**

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D E C L A R A T I O N

Certified that the dissertation entitled "Nationalist Ferment in Baltic States : A case study of Lithuania, 1985-1991", which is being submitted by Sunaina Sharma for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy is her own work based on secondary sources and may be placed before the examiners for evaluation. This dissertation has not been submitted for the award of any other degree of this University or elsewhere.

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P R E F A C E

This is the study of one of the most important historical problems of the contemporary world. The problems of Baltic states is related to many centuries, however, it became an international issue after the October Revolution in 1917. The problem of Baltic nationalism and their independence became so volatile that Lenin had to bow before the existing reality and he allowed all ^{the} three Baltic republics (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) to become free in 1919. After two decades of their freedom, the wheel of the history once again took a reverse circle ^{at} the outset of World War II and all the three Baltic states were re-annexed by Soviet Union following a secret pact signed with Germany. The pact is known as Molotov-Ribbentrop pact as both the signatories were foreign ministers of Soviet Union and Germany respectively.

This study consists of five chapters which begins with a short introduction about Nationalist ferment in the Baltic states.

In the second chapter we have presented historical background of Baltic nationalism which used to emerge from time to time during its long period of political slavery.

The third chapter deals with the impact of Perestroika and Glasnost on the nationalist movement in Lithuania during the period, 1985-1988. This period was marked by many historical events which led to the far-reaching effect on the contemporary international relations. The democratisation programme under Glasnost changed not only the face of Russian society, it also

brought dramatic changes in the international thinking which led to ~~an~~ end of the cold war era.

In the fourth chapter, a detailed analysis of the struggle for the independence of Lithuania during the period 1989-1991 has been made. This period is related to the epic making events in the Soviet Union which changed the face of the entire world. During this period freedom fighters of Lithuania had to face many twist and turns in the struggle for the independence of the country. This period was also marked by the taste of democratic victory in the general elections and later on ironically by the bloody Soviet military action in Lithuania.

In the last chapter we have drawn a conclusion of this study which might create an academic interest for the scholars of this area study.

I owe debt to my teachers, friends and well wishers. First of all I would like to record my thanks to Dr. Tulsiram, my supervisor without whose compassionate attitude and able guidance my research work would not have been completed in time. I am quite in dearth of words to express my gratitude to him. I am extremely grateful to my sisters for their unfailing help during the entire course of my study.

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(SUNAINA SHARMA)

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Baltic States (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) have always played a strategic role in Russian-Soviet history. This is why, geo-politics of this area had created fierce rivalry among regional powers in the past. At different points of time the Baltic states had become victim of foreign aggression not for the economic gains but for the strategic consideration which had been most important factor in Russian policy towards these states. In this regard, the Baltic states always created a major irritant in Russia's relations with the West.

It is interesting to note that the Baltic states had become Russian subject long back in 18th century. For instance, Estonia and Latvia had been annexed by Peter the Great in 1710 while Lithuania was grabbed by Russia in 1795. However, after October Revolution, following Lenin's new approach towards national liberation, the Baltic states were allowed to become independent from the old Tsarist colonial rule. Surprisingly, after about two decades of temporary freedom, these states were again annexed by Soviet Union at the outset of World War II through the notorious Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact signed in August 1939. This is the reason, why most of the Western historians have argued that the Baltic issue had played a major role in shaping the alliances for World War II.

So far as, the nationality problem in Baltic states is concerned, its root goes back to the Tsarist rule under which the

Estonians and Latvians had practically been governed by the Baltic Germans. These Germans had settled there long back in 13th century after their conquest of this region. This is how, the German Culture and Protestantism became an essential part of Estonian and Latvian's lives. On the other hand, the social development in Lithuania was quite different from these two states as it had been dominated for centuries by Polish rulers who introduced Catholicism in Lithuania. These socio-cultural variations put far-reaching impact on Baltic states. Although Estonia and Latvia had become developed parts of Tsarist Russia, the Lithuania remained a backward area. The educational development in Lithuania was particularly neglected by Tsarist Russia. Following the uprisings in 1863, Tsarist Government banned Lithuanian language, schools and Lithuanian publications in Latin print. However, underground efforts were made by a section of clergy and other nationalist elements of the society to promote Lithuanian education especially to eradicate illiteracy from the masses. In this regard, according to Soviet sources, it is remarkable to note that by 1897 the literacy rate in Lithuania had gone up to 54 percent as compared to 49 per cent in Moscow. It is also notable point that in 1938 when Baltic states were independent, the average worker in each of these states received higher wages than his counterpart in the Soviet Union. This is why, the remarkable achievements of Baltic states during their short-lived independence period always survived in the memory of these people throughout their forced existence with the Soviet Union.

After reannexation of Baltic states, Stalin initiated a deliberate plan to russify these states with rapid industrialisation and radical cultural transformations. These efforts suffered considerable hindrances due to Hitler's attack during the World War II period. However, after the war within a short period the most significant changes were brought in socio-cultural lives of the Baltic people's. Under Stalin's plan large number of population was shifted from one place to another and Russian language was imposed forcefully. The new Russian population in Baltic states brought an alarming situation in the society. On the other hand, all the key positions in political system and society were held by Russians. All these developments sowed seeds of utter discontent among the people of Baltic states particularly in Lithuania. Under such situation the Baltic states had to live with the Soviet system for a half of the century till 1990. Though after the death of Stalin, Khrushchev did try to initiate liberalisation and democratisation in Soviet society by condemning the cult of personality and by launching a plan to de-Stalinize the Soviet system, the Baltic states remained almost untouched by these reforms. Even during the long spell of Brezhnev, the Command system in Baltic states remained the same which facilitated the growth of nationalist ferment very fast.

The most significant development regarding nationalist upsurge came to light in early 1970's in all the three Baltic states. It was reported in 1972 that a letter written by 17 Latvian Communists had been sent to Western communist parties in which they had appealed for help in halting the Russification of

Latvian life. At the same time, the underground activities of Estonian "National Front" regarding self-determination of Estonia also came to light. Later on in, 1974 the Estonian National Front and Estonian Democratic Movement in an appeal to the then Secretary General of the United Nations, demanded the restoration of independence and basic rights to the Estonian people. They also demanded the withdrawal of Soviet troops and free elections in Estonia. Earlier the same kind of demands were made in Lithuania in 1971. It is a significant point that a Lithuanian sailor known as Simas Kudirka who had deserted from a Soviet ship and rescued by U S Guard Vessel became the symbol of nationalist expression as mentioned above. This sailor had asked for aslyem in the United States of America but after his plea was rejected returned back to Soviet ship. Later on, he was put on trial before Lithuanian Court and was sentenced to a labour camp, though he was ultimately released in 1974. It was further reported in 1972 that a young Lithuanian Romas Kalanta who was a member of the Communist league burnt himself alive in town square of Kaunas protesting against Soviet suppression of national religious freedom in Lithuania. It was followed by many such self-immolation incidents in Lithuania and open demonstrations in different towns were also organised by the people demanding freedom of Lithuania.

Though sporadic voices of freedom continued to rise for years, it could not pose any significant danger to the Soviet rule in Lithuania. However, the nationalist upsurge began to take a dramatic turn in Lithuania after Gorbachev assumed Soviet

power in 1985. Gorbachev tried to introduce real democracy and freedom in entire Soviet society by introducing Perestroika and Glasnost, but as the pace of such reforms got momentum, the demand of independence was intensified in Lithuania and other Soviet republics. Gorbachev tried to provide meaningful autonomy to different republics but completely failed in his mission before overwhelming mass upsurge against Soviet system.

Following many twists and turns, in general elections of 1989 the Communists were defeated and a nationalist Government of opposition groups was formed in Lithuania. Thus, Lithuania became first state to declare independence from Soviet Union. A meeting held on March 10-12, 1990 Supreme Soviet of Lithuania declared the restoration of independence of Lithuanian State and the invalidation of Soviet constitution.

Immediately after such developments in Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia also declared their independence from the Soviet Union. The Soviet forces tried to crush their independence but existing domestic as well as international situation did not allow to do so. Ultimately, after the failure of August 1991 coup d'état the political crisis took such a dramatic turn that not only the Baltic states but all the Soviet republics emerged as independent nations and thus the total collapse of Soviet Union was completed by December 1991, when arch rival of Gorbachev the Russian President Boris Yeltsin after holding a dramatic meeting of the different republican leaders at Minsk, decided to break the Soviet Union for ever.

CHAPTER - II

"HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF BALTIC NATIONALISM"

Though the Baltic States have always been geo-politically very important in the turbulent politics of Central Europe, the scholars have paid very little attention to the study of this region. This is one of the major hurdles in pursuing a serious research work in this area. However, scholars were attracted towards the study of this region particularly when the Baltic States were re-annexed by Soviet Russia in 1940 following the notorious Molotov-Ribbentrop pact which proved to be a tacit understanding between Hitler and Stalin. In this regard, it is interesting to note that perhaps the Baltic States were the first nations in the modern History which were grabbed twice by any single power. It is well known fact that all the three Baltic States - Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were set free by Lenin immediately after the October Revolution and they enjoyed freedom for about two decades before being grabbed again by the Soviet Russia.

Historically, the Baltic States had different cultures, traditions and political entity, however, different Russian rulers treated them as their personal belongings. In this context, here is a remarkable observation made by the famous Soviet historian Roy Medvedev who says : "We Soviet historians are not ashamed to say that Russia conquered Central Asia or even the North Caucasus----- . But we still continue to write in our official historical works and elsewhere, that Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania voluntarily joined the Soviet Union. This is not

true.1^d

So far as, historical background is concerned, according to a Western Scholar, the Baltic States came into this world as more or less unwanted children.² He further says that before World War I, only some Baltic poets and scholars dreamed about full independence for their countries. Most of the Baltic politicians struggled only for greater autonomy, more cultural and social than political in nature. They wanted to put curbs on the extraordinary privileges enjoyed by Baltic German, Russian and Polish nobility and to limit arbitrariness practised by local Russian governors and the Diets of Baltic German nobility which had usurped the rights of sole spokesman for the Estonian and Latvian nations.³ In this regard, it is interesting to note that there have been certain occasions in the history of Baltic when its rulers displayed their muscles against powerful neighbours. For example, during 14th and 15th century, Lithuania under the Grand Dukes of the Jagiello dynasty reached the peak of its medieval development. In the Battle of Grunwald in 1410, Grand Duke Jagiello led Lithuanian and Polish troops against the Teutonic Knights, who then ruled Prussia and Livonia, the Knights were defeated and forced to halt their Eastward expansion. The Lithuanians also gained territory at the expense of the

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1. Oleg Glebov and John Crowfoot (Editors), The Soviet Empire: Its Nations speak out (London, Harwood Academic Publishers, 1989), Soviet Studies: Volume 1, P.25.
 2. Edgar Anderson, "The role of Baltic states between the USSR and Western Europe", East European Quaterly (University of Colorado, January, 1974), Vol.VII, No.4 P.379.
 3. Ibid.

neighboring Russia, who had been weakened by Tatar invasions. By repelling Tatar advances on its own land, Lithuania extended its realm from the Baltic to the Black sea, thus becoming one of medieval Europe's largest states. In this period Lithuanian history flowed into new channels. In 1386 Grand Duke Jagiello embraced Roman Catholicism and married the Polish princess Jadwiga, thereby combining the crowns of Poland and Lithuania and ruling as Ladislas II.⁴

Later on, in 16th century different European powers tried to subjugate Baltic states which created a kind of rivalry among themselves. For example, in 1558 Tsarist Russia attempted to gain access to the Baltic sea by launching severe attack on Latvia. Though the Russians failed in their mission, it led to the collapse of Knights states in 1561. Soon after this development Poland became a dominant force in the region, particularly in Latvia and ruled until early 17th century. Later on, Sweden emerged as a victorious power and colonised Estonia and Latvia together. The Swedes ruled these states with iron hands, however, they defended this region from being grabbed by Russia. On the other hand, Poland had become an undisputed coloniser in Lithuania. The Lithuanians lived on the mercy of Polish rulers and their priests not only spread christianity but also introduced western and Polish institutions in Lithuania. Thus

4. Collier's Encyclopedia (MacMillan Educational Company, U.S.A. 1983), Vol.14, P.692.

the Roman Catholicism was forced on Lithuanians while Protestantism became the way of life for other two Baltic states under the influence of Swedish rulers. These developments were followed by a dramatic turn in early 18th century when Swedish rule was suddenly terminated from Estonia and Latvia where Peter the Great, ^{of} Russia emerged as a victor in 1710. Somehow, Lithuania remained untouched by Russians till 1795 while it was ultimately conquered by the Tsar Alexander and thus the complete subjugation of Baltic states was accomplished by Russia in 1795.

After the complete colonisation of Baltic states by Russia, not much significant developments could be seen during next 150 years in this region. However, political developments in Russia became the most important factors in bringing radical changes in the colonies. In this regard, abolition of serfdom by Tsar in 1861 laid the foundation of dramatic changes not only in Russia but also in Baltic states. The political situation at the outset of the abolition of serfdom was very explosive through out the Russian Empire. The peasant uprisings occurred through-out Russia and large scale migration of peasant from different corners created a typical situation before the Tsar. According to Great Soviet Encyclopedia, "In response to the large-scale migration of Estonian peasants into interior Russia and to the many petitions sent from Southern Estonia to the central authorities, the Tsarist Government introduced new bourgeois reforms: it enacted a passport statute in 1863 giving the peasants greater freedom of movement, adopted a commune law in 1866, and abolished the Corvee* in 1868. Industry developed

* See on next P.

rapidly after the reforms of the 1860s. In agriculture the corvee-based manor economy was shifting to a capitalist economy, with money rent becoming the norm by the late 1860's. The purchase of holdings from the landlords led to a proliferation of small peasant farmsteads. By the end of the century peasants had purchased 86% of the tenant land in southern Estonia and 50.4% in Northern Estonia, more than 66% of the peasants remained landless". 5 In Latvia during the transition from serfdom to capitalism, the Latvian people were formed into a nation. Along with the bourgeoisie, a working class took shape, it was marked by a multinational composition (Latvians, Russians, Lithuanians, and so on). The interests of the Latvian urban and rural bourgeoisie were reflected in the national liberal movement (the "Young Latvia" movements). The dominance of the German Landowners and pastors in public education was opposed by the progressive representatives of the Latvian bourgeois intelligentsia, who contributed to the cultural development of the Latvian people. 6

In Latvia the peasant and workers movement were highly politicalised. Its history goes back to 1870s and 1880s. According to Russian sources, the workers movement in Latvia had

* In feudal times, day's unpaid work which had to be done by French peasants. In modern times hard task or duty unwillingly performed.

5. Great Soviet Encyclopedia, (MacMillan Educational Company, London, 1975) Vol.14, p.309.

6. Ibid, Vol.30, p.263.

developed in close collaboration with the workers movements in St. Petersburg and other Russian industrial centres. The official data reveals that between 1895 and 1904 there were 78 strikes in Latvia specially the strike movement in 1899 began in May with a mass demonstration by the proletariat of Riga, which turned into the Riga Rebellion - an open armed clash between the workers and the police and Tsarist troops"7. It was also during this period the intelligentsia jumped into fray and set up many cultural and educational societies to which Baltic nationalism directed against Tsarist Russia began to emerge. On the other hand, the colonisation of Lithuania with Russia facilitated the emergence of capitalist relations. One of the most important aspects of this development was that the Lithuania was brought into all Russian market which strengthened ties between the people of Russia and Lithuania. Thus the revolutionary movement emerged in Lithuania. According to Great Soviet Encyclopedia, "The feudal serf system in both Lithuania and Russia underwent a crisis in the first half of the 19th century. The peasant movement gained considerable strength. During the suppression of the 1830-31 uprising in Lithuania and Poland, Tsarist troops devastated the region. Large-scale peasant uprisings occurred in 1838, 1842, 1843 and 1847. The peasant movement took on a particularly broad scope during the revolutionary situation of 1859-61. As early as 1817, under the influence of the peasant struggle, Lithuanian landowners had proposed the abolition of serfdom without

7. Ibid.

transferring their lands to the peasants. On November 20, 1857 the tsar issued a rescript to the Wilno governor general, V.I. Nazimov, that laid the foundation for the 1861 reform. The Lithuanian landowners were trying to liberate the peasants without land. Because it feared disorders, the tsarist government demanded the compulsory guarantee of land to the peasants in return for certain fixed obligations.⁸

So far as, the emergence of Baltic nationalism is concerned the abolition of serfdom played a great role. During the transition from serfdom to capitalism, a strong bourgeoisie emerged in all the Baltic States, which also caused the emergence of powerful working class. This situation was very well exploited by the Russian Bolsheviks in the early 20th century who helped the Baltic *people* to revolt against the Tsarist regime. It is also remarkable to note that after the formation of Russian Social Democratic ^{Labour} Party in 1898, the Social Democratic Organisations were also founded in all the Baltic states, i.e. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania and thus the close revolutionary Co-operation between Russian and Baltic workers began to increase which practically intensified the emergence of Baltic nationalism. According to Lenin "During the revolution of 1905-07 the Latvian proletariat and the social democratic movement occupied one of the first and most prominent places in the struggle against the autocracy and all the forces of old order"⁹

8. Ibid, p.573

9. Quoted in Ibid., p.263.

In Estonia underground Social Democratic Workers Circles had already been formed in 1901-02. Afterwards the Tallinn Committee of Russian Social Democratic Labour Party was founded in 1904. After the formation of Tallinn Committee a series of strike movements were launched in different cities of Estonia. According to Russian sources, Estonia's first political strike took place in Tallinn from April 30 to May 2, 1904. The revolutionary struggle was joined by the democratic intelligentsia and by revolutionary university and secondary school students.¹⁰

Meanwhile, Estonian People's Party under the leadership of liberal bourgeoisie was also formed in October 1904. This party played an important role in the struggle for Baltic identity. The Russian sources reveal that November 27, 1904 the Estonian bourgeoisie convened an all-Estonian assembly of people's representatives in Tartu. At the urging of the Social Democrats, the revolutionary delegates to the assembly of November 27-29, 1904 called for the overthrow of autocracy and the establishment of revolutionary committees of self government. About 50 such revolutionary committees were soon formed.¹¹ It further says, "On December 10, 1904 the authorities proclaimed martial law in Tallinn and in Harju District. Thereupon worker's detachments led by Social Democrates left Tallinn for the country-side with the aim of seizing landlords estates and

10. Ibid, Vol. 14, p.309.

11. Ibid.

placing them at the disposal of local Committees. They were joined by farm workers. Between December 12, 1904 and December 20, 1904 more than 120 landlord's estates were burned or ransacked, and revolutionary rule was established in the area caught up in the uprising. The armed clashes that broke out in Velise, Kabala and other Volosts (small rural districts) ended in the defeat of the worker's and peasant's detachments. Between December 1905 and February 1906 punitive forces executed some 300 people and subjected more than 600 others to Corporal punishment?¹²

In the same way there were mass scale upsurges in Lithuania during that period. The pattern of these upsurges were the same as in Estonia and Latvia. However, the conservative elements gathered around Russian Democratic Party of Lithuania who opposed the revolutionary movements in favour of counter revolution. That is why, the revolutionary struggles were suppressed during 1905-07. There was repetition of the same happenings in Baltic states after the October Revolution in Russia. At the initial stage it was felt, as if the Bolsheviks were going to sustain their powers in Baltic states but they failed due to the Baltic bourgeois nationalist forces as well as the foreign invaders. For example, the revolutionary uprising in Estonia was crushed in February 1919. According to Russian sources, the bourgeois dictatorship consolidated its position

12. Ibid, pp.309-10.

after elections were held to the Constituent Assembly of Estonia. On May 19, 1919, the Constituent Assembly proclaimed the formation of bourgeois Estonian republic.... Under the constitution adopted by the Constituent Assembly on June 15, 1920, the highest legislative body was to be the unicameral State Assembly, which was empowered to form the Government. The Estonian government adopted a pro-British foreign policy 13.

At around same time bourgeois nationalists aided by the U.S.A., Britain and other West European powers captured Latvian capital Riga on May, 22, 1919.

So far as, Lithuania is concerned, it had become an arena of battle during the world war I period, particularly the Germans had occupied almost entire territory of Lithuania. Ultimately, bourgeois nationalists became the ruler of Lithuania. Lenin himself signed a decree recognising the independence of Lithuania on December, 22, 1918. Thus for over two decades all the three Baltic states remained independent. But the beginning of the world war II changed the complete geo-politics of Baltic states who were once again occupied by Soviet Russia.

During the independence period the Baltic states were simply interested in trade relations with Soviet Union. They never liked to be drawn into Soviet economic system and therefore they always tried to remain economically independent. In this

13. Ibid, p.311.

regard, Edger Anderson has pointed out, "Agriculturally they depended on Western markets and the goodwill of Western powers. Industrially they did not want to be dominated and manipulated by the Soviet Government. Latvia had a bad experience in this regard from 1927 to 1932. All Baltic states were interested in the lucrative Soviet transit trade. The Soviet Government realized this fact and skillfully played them against each other by alternately transferring transit trade from one Baltic country to another."¹⁴

As mentioned earlier about Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact signed on August 23, 1939, it paved the way for Hitler's advance in Eastern Europe and the Soviet advance in Baltic States. Although the Soviets have constantly claimed that all the Baltic States voluntarily joined the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the reality, however, is quite different.

Regarding this affair Alex Shtromas, a scholar on the subject has pointed out that the Supreme Soviet of U.S.S.R. met on August 1, 1940. On August 3, it had decided to adopt Lithuania and, on August 5 and 6, Latvia and Estonia respectively, as Union Republics of the U.S.S.R. This is how, by August 1940 the Soviet takeover of the three Baltic States was completed in all actual and formal terms.¹⁵ He further says, "The history of the Sovietization of the Baltic States exemplifies the general modus

14. Edger Anderson, op.cit., p.383.

15. Alex Shtromas, "Soviet Occupation of the Baltic States and their incorporation into the U.S.S.R. : Political and Legal aspects." East European Quarterly, op.cit, vol.,XIX,No.3. September, 1985, p.300.

operandi of a communist takeover. It is rather typical in terms of the close co-operation and coordination of action between the Soviet Party State and its foreign constituencies that, however, small and insignificant, exist in any country of the world and, if properly boosted up by unequivocal Soviet support, can become a formidably strong political force fully able to seize and even quite effectively exercise state power. It is the same pattern of close coordination of Soviet and indigenous Communist action which allowed the Soviet State in 1918-1921 to take so effectively possession of the Ukraine, Georgia and some other states newly formed on the former territory of the Russian Empire, or of a number of East European States in the aftermath of World War II. Basically the same pattern of coordinated action allowed for the establishment and consolidation of communist minority regimes in countries like Angola (1975), Ethiopia (1974-77), Afghanistan (1978) and so many others"¹⁶.

However, after the end of World War II Soviet Union tried its best to justify the annexation of Baltic States by giving much emphasis on the so called "Voluntarily merger". In this regard, they claimed that they were the saviour of Baltic people whom they protected from the clutches of fascist Germany. They also claimed that their main tasks were to restore the national economy and to lay the foundation for socialism in the

16. Ibid.

Baltic Republics. According to Soviet sources, in accordance with the post war five year plan for restoration and development of the national economy of the U.S.S.R. during the period 1946-50, Latvia saw the beginning of socialist industrialisation, the transformation of agriculture, and the implementation of the cultural revolution.¹⁷ The same thing was told about Estonia and Lithuania also. As a whole, as per Soviet claim,¹⁸ for Baltic republics it was a period of restoration of economy, Socialist Construction, industrialisation and collectivisation of agriculture.

A Lithuanian born scholar V. Stanley Vardys, has pointed out, "..... In each of the Baltic republics, private farming was eliminated, and with it that stratum of the population which through the centuries had clung most assiduously to national identity. It was this stratum that had provided the matrix for the intelligentsia which sparked the national awakening of the Baltic people in the 19th century and eventually won them independent statehood in 1918. With this social stratum eliminated, it was conceivable that the new city culture might produce educated groups quite differently disposed towards the whole issue of preserving national identity and autonomy.¹⁹ He further says that in addition to industrialisation, urbanization and the collectivization of farm life, Soviet development

17. Great Soviet Encyclopedia, op.cit Vol.30, p.267.

18. See for details, Ibid, Vol.14, p.312; and Vol.30, p.577.

19. V. Stanley Vardys; "Modernization and Baltic Nationalism." Problems of Communism (Washington, October, 1975) vol.XXIV, No.2, p.38.

policies have had other effects with a more direct bearing on the ethnic structure and characteristics of the Baltic societies. These effects can be grouped together under two sub-headings : (1) declining majorities for the native ethnic groups in their own respective republics, both in the overall republic populations and more especially, in the local ruling elites; and (2) Russification of communications in public institutions and in private life. 20

Imposition of Russian language and culture as well as uprooting of population from one area to another area of the U.S.S.R. created ethnic discontent not only in Baltic republics but also in non-Russian regions. This process contributed to great extent the emergence of national chauvinism in the Baltic Republics. Quoting from official sources V. Stanley Vardys says; "the bulk of immigrants into each of the Baltic republics was consisted of Russians. As a consequence, since the establishment of Soviet rule in 1940, the proportion ethnic Russians in the population of each of the three republics has tripled. By 1970, Russians accounted for a quarter of Estonia's population almost 30% of Latvia's, but only 8.6% of Lithuania's..... At no time in the past have there been such large slavic (primarily Russian) minorities in the Baltic regions. What is important about the Russian numbers (particularly in Estonia and Latvia) is that they are large enough to allow not only separate but competing

20. Ibid.

community life. Moreover, the Russians and Ukrainians who have immigrated to the Baltic republics are not average slaves. Better educated than their counterparts in the Russian and Ukrainian republics, they also have more formal education than the average person among the indigenous Baltic nationalities."21

Even the composition of the membership of the communist parties of the Baltic republics was also very typical. In this regard, Stanley Vardys has further pointed out that as of 1970, merely 52.3% of the membership of the Estonian Communist Party was Estonian; in 1968, only 66.3% of the Lithuanian Party was Lithuanian. The ethnic composition of the Latvian Communist Party has never been published, but figures on total Latvian membership in the Soviet Communist Party in 1973 allow the deduction that Latvians could have constituted no more than 43% of their republic's party membership. Thus in each republic, the local ethnic group's share in the party membership was below its share of total population. 22

During 70s the Baltic nationalism took a new turn resulting into the fresh demands for freedom and independence. In this context, another scholar has pointed out that the old ethnic antagonisms had been reinforced by powerful new conflicts between the demands of the center and the aspirations of the various national groups. And the force of nationalism seemed to

21. Ibid p.40. (Quoted)

22. Ibid.

be on the rise in a dialectical process of challenge and response..... with integrationist and assimilationist pressures resulting in nationalistic challenges to the central leadership, which responds with policies that unwillingly engender greater nationalism 23.

Thus, we have observed during the post-world, war II period that the Soviet Union had made a well knit plan to wipe out all *problems* of ethnicism and nationalism from the Baltic republics. The most interesting part of this plan were the democratic changes brought by Soviets in these republics. Despite all these far-reaching plans the nationalist upsurge could not be curbed down, though it was not very much visible till Gorbachev came in power 1985. It was during his period that the Baltic issue became an international problem and ultimately the Baltic states could be able to achieve independence even before the collapse of Soviet Union itself.

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23. Teresa Rakowska-Harmstone, "The dialectics of Nationalism in the U.S.S.R." Problems of Communism, *opcit*, May-June 1974, p.114



CHAPTER III

PERESTROIKA AND GLASNOST

Its impact on national upsurge in Lithuania 1985-88

I THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: - ~~Perestroika and Glasnost~~ Considering the miraculous developments in the former Soviet Union during the Gorbachev period (1985-91), the history will remember his leadership as a crucial landmark in the life of Russian society. Many scholars have termed his socio-economic and political programmes of Perestroika and Glasnost as 'Second Revolution'. There is no doubt that these two terms created a new phenomenon in world affairs. In this regard, an Indian scholar wrote : "Gorbachev's contributions to world lexicon are the two Russian terms - Perestroika and Glasnost-which today have acquired a world-wide common currency requiring no translation in any language any more and subsuming two vital comprehensive and interlinked processes of transformation of socialism in the Soviet Union, namely, overall socio-economic and political change in an atmosphere of openness of debate, discussion and decision-making" 10

The far-reaching reforms taken by Gorbachev were mainly defined as Perestroika (restructuring), Glasnost (openness) Novoe Myshlenie (new thinking). Perestroika was introduced with the aim of bringing radical economic and political changes in Soviet society, while Glasnost was

1. Rasheeduddin Khan, "Perestroika: Overview", World focus (New Delhi, Oct-Nov-Dec 1988), p.3

intended to democratise the old command system in the social life of the common people. The New thinking was devoted to the new Soviet foreign policy primarily towards the West, whose aim was to eliminate the cold war practices. For the purpose of accomplishing the above tasks, Gorbachev put forward the philosophical slogans like "Socialism with human phase, deideologisation of international relations and common European home". All these philosophical slogans immediately proved to have devastating impacts not only on the domestic affairs in the Soviet Union but also on the international affairs. These slogans had particularly influenced the entire World communist movement which forced to democratise itself on the pattern of Gorbachev reforms. As a result of these developments, Gorbachev came to be known as the greatest communist reformer in the history of world communist movement. Initially, he became an extraordinary popular man in the contemporary world, however, due to over-emphasis on Glasnost or democratisation, the socialist system began to crumble very soon. Within 3 years of Perestroika and Glasnost 'at work' the process of disintegration of socialist societies from East Europe to Soviet Union became crystal clear.

The identity crisis of ethnicity was particularly intensified in different Soviet republics in general and Baltic republics in particular. At this juncture, Perestroika was completely replaced by separatist demand and 'declaration of independence' over-shadowed everything

through out the Soviet Union. The fact was that the soul of Perestroika and Glasnost was nipped in the bud and only the anarchy prevailed. In this regard, a Moscow based Indian journalist, Rajiv Shah has rightly pointed out: "Looking back to 1985 and early 1986, upto the period just before the 27th CPSU Congress that began on February 25, there was a phase when changes in Soviet Society were seen in common perception, at least in certain sections in Moscow, Prague, Berlin (GDR), Budapest, Sofia and Warsaw, as no more than a drive against drunkenness. The general secretary's campaign for a sober way of life was (made fun of, and sometimes he was) insultingly called "mineral (water) secretary". The phase could not stand the test of time as the anti-drunkenness drive at least in Gorbachev's scheme of things, proved to be a very minor perhaps negligible-portion of the reforms".² He further says: "Then came the phase when the "release" of Academician Andrei Sakharov from the closed city of Gorky and permission to him to occupy his apartment in the very heart of Moscow in January 1987 appeared to many foreigners as the greatest signal of restructuring. Sakharov was allowed a normal academic life, he could freely meet journalists now. He even addressed a crowded press conference in one of the smaller halls of Moscow's Cosmos Hotel,... This phase also died down

2. Rajiv Shah, New Horizons of Soviet Policies (new Delhi, Patriot publishers, November, 1987), p.2.

sooner than expected. Sakharov ceased to be an exciting "news" for more than two months, and in March, 1987 he was already forgotten by his Western friends. The reason for this was the soviet leadership's attempt to take up deep and serious issues and go into their theory and practice. The plenary meeting of the central committee of the Communist Party that began on January 27, 1987 was the starting point of this new change. The plenary, from all available indications, posed certain very basic questions which earlier appeared settled or which, it was thought, would find answer on their own as the society would progress. Even most elementary questions, such as what is socialism? and what is communism? --- apparently considered as having been answered ---- began being posed once again and answers sought within the context of what the Soviet Society had accomplished and at what price. More complex questions pertaining to socialist democracy, its role in building and developing society too, began reopened, particularly in the context of restructuring?3.

Professor Devendra Kaushik, an expert of Soviet affairs has pointed out, "..... It is under his (Gorbachev) leadership that an integrated comprehensive concept of restructuring (Perestroika) with democratisation as its important component has been evolved during the 1985-1988 period. A new strategy of socio-economic acceleration was

3. Ibid, pp. 2-3.

first mapped out at April 1985 plenum of the CPSU Central Committee and the Twenty-seventh CPSU Congress in February-March 1986, and the January and June 1987 plenums of the party Central Committee held subsequently, added a new content to this strategy, developing it into a comprehensive concept of restructuring". 4 Gorbachev's Political Report and the new edition of the Party Programme adopted by the Twenty-seventh Congress highlighted the need for further deepening the democratic character of the socialist system. His Political Report gave a resounding call for expanding Glasnost and rejected the plea for exercising caution. 5

In this context, 19th All Union Conference of the CPSU held in June 1988, proved to be a landmark in pushing Soviet Society into a deep crisis. This conference stressed too much emphasis on Glasnost. It is remarkable to mention here a resolution passed by 19th Conference which says: "Perestroika has pushed Glasnost to the forefront, Glasnost is being practised in most diverse forms in the work of Governmental and public Organisations, at meetings, at Scientific and other conferences, and at gatherings of citizens. Today, the mass media are a powerful outlet for public opinion. They have done a lot to restore the truth of history, to restore justice, to criticise faults and omissions, to propagate the experience of Perestroika and to cultivate people's ability to think and out along new lines,

4. Devendra Kaushik "Political Reforms-A Balance Sheet" World Focus op.cit, pp. 13-14.

5. Ibid p. 14.

creatively, with a purpose "Glasnost presupposes a plurality of opinions on all questions of home and international policy -a free play of different points of view, and discussion. It can not fulfil its social role, it cannot serve the interests of the people and socialism, in the absence of such an approach". 6 The resolution also proved to be a forecast: "The coming years will determine the future of our country, the destiny of the Soviet system. For us this future will be what we make it. We ourselves--- for no one will do it for us or instead of us. That is how, matters stand, and we must provide a straight forward answer, without reservations or omissions. Without attempts to evade an honest comparison between what we want and what really exists, between words and deeds, and between subjective notions and objective realities. The Soviet people want a clear perspective. They want full-blooded and unconditional democracy. They want rule of law without reservations. Glasnost in all things, big and small?"7. Separate resolution on Glasnost the 19th Conference further elaborated "By asserting and expanding Glasnost in Party, Government and public affairs, and in the mass media, the Party and Soviet society have set in motion the powerful potential of the socialist system, its vast resources. Without Glasnost there is no Perestroika,

6. 19th All Union Conference of the CPSU: Documents And Materials (Report by Mikhail Gorbachev, Moscow, Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, 1988), pp. 88-89.

7. Ibid., p. 92.

no democracy. Glasnost is the natural climate for the life and progress of democratic human socialism The Conference is sure that all communists will contribute to the consolidation of Glasnost as a standard of life in the socialist society?⁸

Through the above theoretical framework, it seems that everything was left behind Glasnost which practically proved to be a single biggest factor in fanning national ferments through-out the Soviet Union. Though the 19th Party Conference had analyse^{of} the problem of nationalities in a concrete manner, the problem, however, remain~~d~~ unresolved and reached the most miserable point by 1989. In this regard, 19th Party conference in a resolution 'on relations between Soviet nationalities', had rightly pointed out "..... dynanism, witnessed during the initial stage of the formation of the multinational Soviet State, was substantially undermined by departure from the Leninist principles of the nationalities policy, by breaches of the rule of law during the personality cult period, and by the ideology and psychology of stagnation. The result achieved in resolving the nationalities questions were raised to an absolute. It was claimed that there were no problems in relations between nationalities. The needs for the social, economic and cultural development of certain republics, autonomous entities, and ethnic groups, were not fully taken into consideration. Many acute questions that derived from

8. Ibid, p. 157.

the very development of nations and nationalities were not resolved promptly enough. This led to public dissatisfaction, which now and then escalated into conflicts. We still witness cases of national egoism and arrogance, sponging and localism. The negative phenomena that accumulated over the decades had been neglected and ignored for a long time, and were not properly assessed by the Party-Perestroika, democratisation and Glasnost have revealed these phenomena and, at the same time, created conditions for overcoming them in a democratic way?"⁹

Before the above utterances the Glasnost had already occupied the basic roots of future independent movements in Lithuania. In the beginning, the people in Baltic republics became very conscious of their language, literature and culture. During the long spell of Russification the Baltic people had to face bitter alienation in their own motherlands. The Glasnost came as a provocation to all the Baltic republic's struggle for freedom. In the mean time, reopening of the secret Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of 1939 added fuel to the fire. A series of debates and discussions among the Baltic people and in their mass media suddenly became the order of the day. The growing controversy regarding, Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact forced the Soviet leadership to respond favourably and ^{for the} first time they accepted the existence of this Pact which had caused the

9. Ibid., pp, 146-147.

enslavement of Baltic states. Though the secret pact had already been discovered ^{by} the allied forces in a Nazi archives towards the end of World War II, the Soviet Union not only denied but also called it a falsified provocation. However, the New ~~York~~ Times of August 17, 1988 published a report that in August 1988, just weeks before the 49th anniversary of the Molotov-Ribbentrop agreement Valentin Falin, the head of the Soviet press Organization Novosti, announced at a news conference that an official commission to investigate the secret protocols concluded that the protocols were either destroyed or had never existed? ¹⁰ Thus, the national upsurge in Lithuania emanated from the above theoretical framework. Though the spirit behind all these developments was nothing but the Glasnost.

II National upsurge in Lithuania, 1985-1988
— cont. on next Page.

10. Gregory Gleason, Federalism and Nationalism: The Struggle for Republican Rights in USSR, (London westview press, 1990), p 116 (Quoted).

II National upsurge in Lithuania, 1985-88

As mentioned earlier the revelation about Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact laid the foundations of separatist movement in all the Baltic republics. There was a stormy debate over this issue in Soviet Parliament. Several members of Soviet Parliament from Baltic republics raised this issue and tried to know full details of the secret Pact. On the eve of the election of then Deputy Chairman of the Supreme Soviet (for which Anatoly Lukyanov was a candidate), a member of Parliament from Lithuania, Egidijus Bickauskas sarcastically asked Lukyanov: "Perhaps my question to you, comrade Lukyanov, will not be understood by the majority of Deputies. Your answer, however, will certainly do much to explain what is going on in the Baltic republics but is clearly not fully or correctly reflected in the central press. It will also explain the position of the majority of Lithuanian Deputies. The answer is exceptionally important for all the Baltic region and for our voters; and it is exceptionally important when we are establishing a state governed by the rule of law "Before they vote (to elect you Deputy Chairman of the Supreme Soviet) the Lithuanian Deputies and, I think, a number of those from other republics would like to learn what your position is regarding the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and the additional secret agreements between the USSR and Nazi Germany. As a consequence, Lithuania and the other Baltic republics were

occupied and incorporated into the USSR thereby losing their sovereign statehood." 11

In reply to Bickauskas' question, Anatoly Lukyanov said: "This is a very complicated issue that affects not only the fate of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia but also Western Ukraine, and other areas and the fate of our country as a whole. Therefore in Party's Central Committee has now set up a Commission to consider this question."12 Proceeding with the same issue Endel Lippmaa, member of Parliament from Estonia, put forward many suggestions before the Soviet Congress of People's Deputies. He said: "The issue of the 1939 treaties between the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany has been raised in many speeches and by many delegations here. We propose the following draft decree. The congress of People's Deputies decrees: first that a Commission to be set up to provide a political and juridical assessment of the Nazi-Soviet non-aggression agreement of 1939, the "Molotov-Ribbentrop pact", and of its secret additional protocol, i.e. the protocol concerning territorial and political reorganisation in Eastern Europe and the Baltic republics and Poland in particular (a suggested membership of 20 is

11. Oleg Glebov and John Crowfoot (Editors and Translators) The Soviet Empire: Its Nations speak out (The first congress of People's Deputies Moscow, 25 May to 10 June 1989), (London Hardwood Academic Publishers, 1989), p. 32

12. Ibid. p. 33.

listed: it included Landsbergis, Lauristin, Bisher and 7 others from Baltic republics)." In addition, we would like one representative each from the Ukrainian, Belorussian and Moldavian delegations. We did have some suggestions ourselves although this is, of course, the business of the delegations to choose. However, our suggestions were Professor Shinkaruk (Institute of Philosophy, Ukraine) Vasil Bykov (Writer, Belorussia) and Ion Drutse (Writer, Moldavia). As a Chairman we suggest the writer Chingis Aitmatov, Frunze (Kirgizia). Second, the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other Government departments and archives are obliged to put all the essential materials at the disposal of the Commission. Third, the commission will present its conclusions to the USSR Supreme Soviet by the end of June this year (1989) and will make the results of its activities in public."¹³

He further elaborated: "The question remains why is there such a hurry? The answer is that August 23 this year marks the 50th Anniversary of the agreement with Hitler about the partition of Europe. Therefore, we must do something immediately. Moreover, there were suggestions to repudiate this pact from the moment of its signature. This is not a bad suggestion but many of our deputies here do not know this text and, secondly, repudiation is not enough we

13. Ibid.

must draw conclusions. To declare the pact invalid is insufficient. There are great many consequences and therefore a commission must be set up."14 Edvins Inkens, a Parliamentarian from Latvia said:"All the world knows perfectly well that such protocols existed. The unwillingness to discuss them here is simply like stuffing your fingers in you ears when someone tells the truth. One more point. This treaty has not been invalidated. Although the war had already began in 1941 the Soviet Union concluded a special agreement with the Polish Government in emigration (in London) about the partial repudiation at the pact. So, unfortunately, it does still have a certain validity. Most important of all, the pernicious part of the agreement refers to the period from 1939 to 1940. And that was when the Baltic Republics were annexed."15 Ultimately, Gorbachev intervened in the debate and expressed doubts that the incorporation of the republics into the USSR was entirely involuntary or that a clear statement could soon be made. Since Shevardnadze (like all ministers) was not a Deputy, it was suggested that Politburo member Alexander Yakovlev who was also responsible for international relations be included instead. The commission headed by Yakovlev, finally had 26 members (including chairman) of whom 11 were from Baltic republics, 5 from Ukraine, Belorussia and Moldavia. It was

14. Ibid, pp. 33-34.

15. Ibid, p. 35.

to report back to the autumn (1989) session of the Congress.¹⁶

Later on, Alexander Yakovlev, submitted a report of the commission to the second congress of People's Deputies of the USSR in 1989. The commission came to the following conclusions regarding the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact :

Firstly, a secret additional protocol of August 23, 1939 did exist.

Secondly, the original protocol was drawn up in the German Foreign Ministry and approved by Stalin and Molotov, with slight amendments. The Soviet negotiators--not to their credit--forgot about their original wish to have a dual guarantee of the independence of the Baltic states. They did not insist that the protocol reflect Germany's readiness to make Japan see reason, and were satisfied with the verbal promises from Ribbentrop on that score.

Thirdly, the political and Government bodies of the Soviet Union were not informed about the preparation of the protocol. Molotov did not have the appropriate formal powers to sign it. The protocol was exempted from ratification and was not approved by the country's legislative or executive bodies.

Fourthly, signed in circumvention of the country's laws

16. Ibid, pp, 35-36.

and in violation of its commitments under treaties with third countries, the protocol was inherently an illegal document, a collusion, reflecting the intentions of the actual persons who signed it.

Fifthly, the methods used to elaborate the protocol and the categories and terms it include, such as "territorial-political restructuring" etc., were an obvious departure from the Leninist principles of Soviet foreign policy.¹⁷

Long before the publication of above commission's report, the people's movement had already begun demanding the termination of the Soviet annexation of Baltic republics. In an unprecedented move in May 1988, an official gathering was organised in the memory of the victims of Stalin in Lithuania. A few days later a massive demonstration supposed to be attended by 10,000 people took place in June, 1988 in favour of radical reforms in Lithuania. Many such demonstrations were also organised in Estonia and Latvia. Later on, huge demonstrations were taken out in all the three Baltic Republics on August 23, 1988 on the occasion of 49th anniversary of the signing ^{of} Molotov-Ribbentrop pact. Quoting different materials from New York Times, Gregory Gleason has pointed out that the summer of 1988 witnessed an unprecedented level of public discussion over the circumstances of the Baltic states "voluntary"

17. On the Lithuanian Problem (white book), (Moscow, 1990) , pp 94-95.

reincorporation into the USSR. Empowered by the Glasnost campaign, the nationalistic intelligentsia of the Baltic republics raised the question of the underlying principle of the "autonomy" of the Soviet republics with exceptional vigor. Soviet news sources reported with surprising candor the open challenges to the central authority. At the public gathering in August 1988 commemorating the loss of national independence, the existing communist governments were equated with Nazi rule. This is an extremely sensitive subject. Soviet central officials have historically considered this one of the most invidious comparisons possible. Official estimates of the crowds in Vilnius were 100,000. Unofficial estimates were twice that number. In October (1988) a Lithuanian "Sajudis" political group calling itself the "Movement in support of Perestroika" drew over 200,000 people into the streets for a torchlit parade.¹⁸ He further says that at the first congress of the organisation, delegates issued a number of demands including the creation of a separate currency, the right to send Lithuanian missions abroad, the establishment of limits in-migration to the republic, and the establishment of republican control over the Lithuanians serving in the Red Army.¹⁹

During 1987-1988 the public demonstrations and all

18. Gregory Gleason, *op. cit.*, p, 116.

19. Ibid.

other forms of struggles through out the Baltic region were quite peaceful. However as the movement spread, the indication of separatist tendency began to emerge in all the Baltic republics. It created an alarm for the Russians in Baltic as well as in Moscow. In this regard, some interesting events occurred particularly in Estonia and Lithuania. According to contemporary mass media in an uglier vein gang wars between Estonian and Russian youth (from an organisation called Molodoiia Rossiia) had reportedly broken out on a number of occasions. In the fall of 1987 too, a group of Russian soccer fans painted red stars on their cheeks and travelled to Vilnius, where they chanted anti-Lithuanian slogans and beat up local residents. In general, according to interviews carried out by a Finnish newspaper (Helsingin Sanomat, June 20) anti-reform sentiment was rising among the non-Estonian population of Estonia. In August 1988 a Russian "international movement" held its first conference in Tallinn, where supporters discussed measures to oppose the Baltic autonomy movement.²⁰ In the meantime, in an unprecedented challenge to Kremlin power, the Communist Party leadership of Estonia declared the Republic "sovereign" at an emergency session of its legislature. The Estonian Supreme Soviet declared the supremacy of its laws over the laws of the USSR. The

20. Ben Eklof, Soviet Briefing: Gorbachev and the Reform Period, (Boulder, San Francisco, and London WestView Press, 1989), p, 154. (Quoted)

legislators also amended the Republic's law and constitution so that Estonia and not Moscow will control its own land, natural resources, factories, banks, farms and housing. They also passed laws reserving the right to veto decisions made in Moscow and to maintain sovereignty in every area except military and foreign policy. The Baltic challenge to Moscow was a turning point in the short history of Soviet reform. By legally declaring the republic's sovereignty, a step just short of proclaiming independence. Estonia official leadership was testing Gorbachev rhetoric of 'democratisation.'²¹

Immediately after the Estonian action, Lithuanian leaders moved to bolster the republic's own identity by designating a new flag and declaring Lithuanian the official language. However, the Lithuanian law makers for the time, being dropped plans to duplicate Estonia's challenge to Soviet authority but the Lithuanian legislators picked up an old national song as the national hymn. Legislators also approved a protest of proposed amendments to the Soviet constitution that the residents of the three Baltic republics claim would limit their autonomy.²²

Before the above developments, through out the Baltic

21. The Hindustan Times, (New Delhi), November 18, 1988.

22. The Telegraph, (Calcutta), November 20, 1988.

region cultural organisations particulaly the writers associations had been on the forefront of all activities related to the struggle for the liberation of Lithuania. In the meantime, a Commission of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences whose aim was to come up with the proposals and amendments of Lithuanian constitution had ended its work. In July 1988 the proposals were handed over to the Presidium of the Lithuanian Supreme Soviet. The Commission had stated that a number of clauses in the Lithuanian and USSR constitutions deemed sovereignty, economic, social and cultural independence of a Union Republic. The Commission noted that over long years beginning with 1940-41 when the central management increased its influence and turned more bureaucratic, Lithuanian competence was reduced. In many cases the republic had under its control only secondary matters. The present Commission suggested for making principal amendments to the constitution. One of the most important statements was that on Lithuanian territory exclusively Lithuanian laws were enforced while the Soviet union would have on the Lithuanian territory competence granted by Lithuanian laws and not the other way round. Above all, it concerned the activity of the union ministeries to which Lithuanian industrial enterprises were subordinated. 23

23. Survey of World Broadcast (London), August 6, 1988.

During this period the Sajudis (Lithuanian restructuring movement) spread its activities on the mass scale throughout Lithuania. It became a powerful force for the future liberation of Lithuania. On the other hand, Lithuanian League of Liberty, a political organisation which was formed in late 70's and simultaneously forced to work underground, also became a powerful voice of the people. Somehow, it became a legal organisation and entered a new phase of development in Lithuania. The analysis of political developments in 1988 in Lithuania shows that there was quite uncertain behaviour of the Communist Party of Lithuania towards Moscow, while the people's anger was increasing very fast against the communist rule from Moscow. However, after large scale demonstrations in August 1988 against Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, it had become quite clear that the Lithuania could not remain for a long time with the Soviet union. After August demonstrations against Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, the politics of demonstrations became a regular feature in Lithuania.

In this regard, it is interesting to note that for the first time Sajudis movement and the Lithuanian League of Liberation shared the same platform on September 1988 at a rally which was held to protest the militia violence against the peaceful demonstrators and hunger strikers. It was followed by another development on October 7, 1988 when in the presence of 1 lakh people in Vilnius the capital of Lithuania a new national flag was hoisted over a historic

fort on Gediminas hill. In another significant development the leadership of Lithuanian Communist Party was changed on October 20, 1988. Algirdas Brazauskas became a new general secretary of the Lithuanian Communist Party, who promised major reforms including multi-candidates elections and better Church-State relations. In the meantime, the founding Congress of Sąjūdis was held on October 22-23, 1988. Professor Vytautas Landsbergis was elected as the head of Sąjūdis. Proceedings were broadcast live on the TV including an address by Antanas Terleckas leader of Lithuanian League of Liberty calling for immediate restoration of Lithuania's independence. 24 Following this, the Government announced the imminent return to the faithful of the historic Vilnius cathedral which had been turned into an art museum 48 years ago and for the first time, the Soviet regime accorded recognition of a religious feast day. All saints day On November 1, 1988. 25 On November 9, 1988 the Sąjūdis launched a massive drive to petition the Supreme Soviet against proposed changes in the Soviet constitution which would centralize power in Moscow to an even greater extent than heretofore. Considering the deteriorating situation Gorbachev sent Nikolai Slyunkov, a politburo

24. "Chronology of Seminal Events Proceeding the Declaration of Lithuania's Independence". Lithuanus (Chicago Morkunas Printing Company U.S.A. 1990) vol 36, p33.

25. Ibid.

member of CPSU to Lithuania to talk to local leaders, so that the further deterioration could be avoided. In the meantime, Lithuanian Communist Party prevented the Lithuanian Supreme Soviet from voting on a resolution intended to declare its sovereignty like Estonian Supreme Soviet which had already declared independence from Moscow. However, on November 20, 1988, Sajudis declared the "Moral Independence of Lithuania and that henceforth only those laws will be honoured which do not limit Lithuania's independence. On November 26, 1988, the two major Lithuanian national democratic movements staged rallies in Gediminas square in Vilnius. The first organised by Sajudis urged Lithuanian Deputies departing for the All -Union Supreme Soviet session in Moscow to defend Lithuania's right to sovereignty. The second organised by the Lithuanian League of Liberty denounced the proposed changes in the Soviet constitution, opposed sovereignty as a half-measure and demanded the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Lithuania. Meanwhile on December 29, 1988 Bishop Julijonas Steponavicius ~~exited~~ from his Vilnius diocese in 1961 for refusing to condemn Government interference in church matters notified that his 48 year banishment was over, and that he would resume his pastoral duties in Vilnius.²⁶

Thus, we see that the period which has been covered in this chapter, was marked by unprecedented developments following the introduction of Perestroika and Glasnost which ultimately led to the complete independence of Lithuania.

26. Ibid. p. 36.

CHAPTER IV

STRUGGLE FOR THE INDEPENDENCE OF LITHUANIA 1989-1991

As obvious from the description of political developments in the previous chapter, it seems that the suppressed feelings of the Lithuanian people were instigated by Perestroika and Glasnost to such an extent that the outcome of the whole affairs became out of control during the period, 1989-1991 which we are going to cover in this chapter. This period was also marked by the upsurge of Lithuanian people moving around the sinister pact between Stalin and Hitler, originally known as Molotov-Ribbentrop pact. The year 1989 became the symbol of freedom for the Lithuanian people as it was the 50th anniversary of the above pact through which Lithuania had been grabbed by the Soviet Union. The Lithuanians launched their fierce struggle for the liberation from the Soviet clutches, however, Soviet leadership considered this struggle as the outbreak of the ethnic problem. Thus, it became a major misunderstanding between the Lithuanians and the Russians. Soviet Union still felt that the Lithuanian's problem could be solve within the framework for Perestroika and Glasnost and thus it could not judge the speed of changes which occurred all of a sudden without casting any shadow before.

The Molotov-Ribbentrop pact put a magnetic effect on Lithuanian people in their struggle for the independence from Moscow. It is remarkable to note that when the deputies of the People's Congress of the USSR from Lithuania were leaving for Moscow at the end of May 1989, they were told by the crowd at the farewell meeting in Vilnius Kalnu Park. "In 1940 Stalin's sun was brought to Lithuania; now you must bring it back to Moscow." This

expressed the nation's mood quite well,¹ True to the spirit of the above suggestion, when the Lithuanian Deputies arrived in Moscow at the first session of the People's Congress of the USSR, they considered themselves not as a part of the Congress but rather as the Lithuanian delegation to the Congress. They started to work cautiously but methodically for the restoration of Lithuania's independence.² In this regard, a Lithuanian scholar Linas Kucinskas has pointed out : "By the opening of the Congress they had the Declaration from May 18, 1989 of the Supreme Soviet of Lithuania, condemning the occupation of Lithuania in 1940 and proclaiming the priority of the Lithuanian Constitution and Lithuanian laws above the Constitution and laws of the USSR. This was the first attempt of the Lithuanian legislative body to reject Soviet authority. The Lithuanian Deputies to the People's Congress had three main goals : to seek the condemnation by the congress of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of 1939, to make possible the creation of a self-ruling economy for Lithuania, and to fight attempts to establish the USSR Constitutional Review Committee which would be an instrument to overrule the Lithuanian legislature. The first conflict developed when the Lithuanian delegation refused to attend the voting for Supreme Soviet of the USSR. Mikhail Gorbachev called such behaviour "an ultimatum" but showed no inclination to lead the conflict to ahead. The second and final conflict at this session occurred during the voting for

1. Linas, Kucinskas, "Lithuania's Independence", The Litmus Test For democracy In The USSR." Lithuanus, (Chicago, U.S.A., 1991) vol. 37, P.7.

2. Ibid.

the USSR Constitutional Review Committee. Lithuanians again refused to attend the voting and when Mr. Gorbachev tried to disdain this protest, almost the entire Lithuanian delegation left the Kremlin Congress Palace. Lithuania's protest expressed in such an unusual way, became an international sensation³

He further says that a negotiation schedule was fixed between Lithuanian delegation and Gorbachev next morning. During the negotiations Mr. Gorbachev gave up his demand to create the USSR Constitutional Review Committee and promised to support an idea of a self-ruled economy for Lithuania. At this meeting for the first time the word "independence" was spoken. Mr. Gorbachev was asked by Lithuanian Deputy Nikolai Medvedev to give his opinion on the question of the independence of Lithuania. Mr. Gorbachev responded that he supported the idea of sovereignty, but not of independence. When he was told that there was no difference between independence and sovereignty, he said he accepted sovereignty within the framework of the Soviet Union. Mr. Gorbachev was informed clearly that the idea of the Lithuania's independence was alive; nine months remained until that independence was proclaimed....⁴

Simultaneously, Lithuanian people also launched social democratic parties to intensify the struggle for freedom. In Lithuania situation had become complex with informal creation of organisations of two groups Sajudis in which mainly Lithuanians were represented and Edinstvo comprising people speaking mainly Russian language in Lithuania. Sajudis had demanded radical

3. Ibid, pp. 7-8.

4. Ibid, p.8.

amendments to the constitution of the republic which was not conceded by the Supreme Soviet of the republic. It had succeeded so far only in making the Lithuanian language as the official language ⁱⁿ the republic. 5)

In a significant development in January 1989 a meeting of Union of Writers ^{was} held in which the historians condemned the annexationist Soviet-German secret protocols ^{of} 1939 which violated the elementary norms of international law. 6) On the other hand, in pursuing its programme of "economic self-sufficiency" and "sovereignty" for Lithuania, the new leadership of the Lithuanian Communist Party itself eventually called for condemnation of the Nazi-Soviet ^{on} pact. At the same time, February 23-24, 1989 Lithuanian historians met in Tallinn with a large delegation from Moscow, who discussed the various problems related to the freedom of Lithuania. Later on, Valerionas Baltrunas, head of the Ideological Commission of the Communist Party of Lithuania managed to organise a delegation of Lithuanian historians who visited Moscow to discuss the Lithuanian's interpretation ^{of} the events 1939-40. In the meantime, the Lithuanian Supreme Soviet adopted a declaration characterising the Nazi-Soviet pact and its secret protocols as a continuation of Munich policy. 7) At this crucial juncture, the general elections for the Congress of People's ~~Deputies~~ of the U.S.S.R. were held in March 1989 in

5. Times, (London), January 21, 1989.

6. E.A. Senn; "Perestroika in Lithuanian Histography : The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact." Russian Review (The Ohio State University press, U.S.A., January, 1990), Vol.40, No.1, p.43.

7. Ibid.

which Communist Party of Lithuania was badly defeated and the nationalists under the banner of Sajudis (Perestroika Movement) won the elections. The leaders of the Sajudis had already declared that they would pronounce independence as soon as they assumed power. In this regard, it is interesting to note that during the general elections the Sajudis candidates challenging the Lithuanian Communist Party's first and second secretaries Brazauskas and Vladimir Berezov, withdrew at the behest of Sajudis Executive Council who hypothetically expected that the possible victory over two communist leaders might enable Moscow to replace with officials hostile to the Lithuanian National Democratic Movement. 8

Following the victory of Sajudis, Lithuania became the first Soviet Republic to adopt a multi-party system. The Lithuanian legislature abolished the clause in its constitution which had granted the communist party a monopoly on the power. Mr. Gorbachev called the idea of a multi party system in the Soviet Union "rabbish", and supported the communists' constitutionally guaranteed leading role in public life. 9 Adolfus Uza leader of Sajudis movement said : "There are no doubt a lot of party functionaries in Moscow who are going to be unhappy but we in Lithuania are delighted". 10 On April 1, 1989 the new President Vytautas Landsbergis declared that Lithuania was evolving towards a multi-party system which included the

8. "Chronology of seminal events proceeding the declaration of Lithuania's independence." Lithuanus, (Chicago Morkunas Printing Company U.S.A., 1990) vol.36, p.37.

9. Bangkok post, (Bangkok), February 22, 1989.

10. Times of India (New Delhi), February 27, 1989.

Lithuanian Freedom League, the Greens, the emerging Lithuanian Christian Democratic Party, the Lithuanian Democratic Party, the Worker's Party and the Lithuanian Social Democratic Party.¹¹ In one of the most significant developments, on May 13-14, 1989 the first joint assembly of representatives from the independence movements in the three Baltic Republics was held in Tallinn, the capital of Estonia. Approximately 500 leaders participated from the Lithuanian Sajudis and the Popular Fronts of Latvia and Estonia respectively. It called for independence in a neutral and demilitarised zone comprised of the three Republics. On May 18, 1989 Lithuanian Supreme Soviet declared for self-determination and restoration of State Sovereignty.¹²

In the meantime on May 31, 1989 the head of the Communist Party of Lithuania demanded that the Kremlin should reveal the historic truth about Molotov-Ribbentrop pact and set up a commission for this purpose. Later on, in response to these developments the then Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev told the viewers of Moscow TV that the Baltic national drive for independence would not be tolerated.¹³ In a reaction to the Gorbachev's statement, the Lithuanian President Landsbergis who was in New York stated on July 7, 1989 : "Our right to self-determination is ours and we do not have to beg anyone for it.... Some great leaders believe that they can bestow these rights and take them away. This is an antiquated mentality of the

11. See, footnote 8 *op. Cit.*

12. Ibid p.39.

13. Ibid.

times of serfdom.¹⁴ By this time the mood of the Lithuanian people had become quite defiant. On July 12, 1989 a huge demonstration was organised at Lenin's Monument in Vilnius to mark the Lithuanian-Soviet Peace Treaty of 1920 under which Lenin's government had renounced all claims to Lithuanian territory. Sensing the dangerous development, the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, on July 27, 1989 endorsed a plan to give the Baltic Republics an unprecedented degree of economic independence beginning next year. The three Baltic Republics would control their own trade, industry and resources and a right to conduct their economies on a free market basis.¹⁵ However, the defiant mood of the people reached the climax when on August 23, 1989 hundreds of thousands of citizens of the Baltic Republics linked hands in a massive protest ^{against} Soviet annexation of the Baltic areas. The protesters formed a human ~~chain~~ ^{chain} across 400 miles of territory from the capitals of Tallinn to Riga, to Vilnius. Bowing to public pressure, Soviet authorities reversed ^{the} ~~the~~ course and acknowledged the existence of the secret protocols. But the authorities continued to insist that the protocols were irrelevant to questions of the contemporary legal status of the Baltic countries. On August 22, 1989 a Commission of the Lithuanian Supreme Soviet became the first official body to openly challenge not just the morality but the legal legitimacy of Soviet rule by declaring that the annexation of the territory of Lithuania was illegal.¹⁶ Panicked by unprecedented success

14. Ibid., p.40.

15. Ibid.

16. Gregory Gleason; Federalism and Nationalism : The Struggle for Republican Rights in the USSR. (Westview press, U.S.A., 1990), P.117.

of the human chain demonstration through out the Baltic region in which more than 2 million people had participated, Soviet Communist Party issued a statement on August 26, 1989 accusing the independence movements of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia of exploiting the atmosphere of Soviet reform to disintegrate the cohesion of the Soviet Union and warned of impending disaster. 17)

At this sensitive moment, the Communist Party of Lithuania held its central committee's plenum in the last week of August 1989 and stated : "We understand the unease and concern of CPSU Central Committee prompted in the context of the complex political situation by the ill-considered statements and actions made by certain individuals participating in social movements. This statement obliges us to look yet again at the path travelled by restructuring and responsibly and soberly to outline further steps to regenerate society. Lithuania has changed radically within a short period. At a time when the party has rejected the methods of administrative leadership and is taking a tolerant attitude towards criticism and self-criticism, political pluralism and Glasnost have developed a pace and the first shoots of democracy have started emerging". 18 It further said: "We have done a great deal to restore and provide new interpretations for the historical truth. However, the truth should not be used to whip up political passions and encourage attempts to map out Lithuania's future while ignoring the 50 year path of Soviet

17. See, footnote 8 ~~of~~ at p.41.

18. Summary of World Broadcast (Reading, U.K.), September 1, 1989.

development. Yes, the secret protocols to the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact and the actions that followed them should be seen as an act of political violence. However, we should realise that the republic's legal status will not change because of this. We should soberly realise that the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic is politically and economically integrated into the USSR. It is natural that the assessment of us in the aforementioned CPSU Central Committee statement is based on that standpoint.¹⁹

However, the actual reality in the plenum was entirely different from the above statement. According to Izvestia (August 30, 1989) a majority of Central Committee members had voted against giving a detailed report of the plenum in the local press, and the assessments by plenum speakers of the statement on the Baltic situation made by the CPSU Central Committee did not show the "unanimous approval" traditionally, reserved for the statements of this kind. When the status of the Communist Party of Lithuania was discussed, "around 70% of communists taking part in the discussion" supported the "independence of the republic's party."²⁰

During this topsy-turvy some encouraging development for the Soviet Union took place in Lithuania. The Moscow home service reported on September 4, 1989 that in Kalnu park in the

19. Ibid.

20. Ibid.

capital of Lithuania there had been a meeting of working people of the city with the participation of representatives of Klaipeda, Snieckus and also several rayons of the republic. It was organised by the newly formed union for the Defence of Soviet Power in Lithuania. The meeting discussed the statement by the CPSU Central Committee of the situation in the republics of the Soviet Baltic. The speakers at the meeting stressed that they had shared the concern expressed in the CPSU Central Committee statement at the trends of development in the socio-political situation in the republic. The confidence was expressed that the statement of the CPSU Central Committee should become a firm basis for consolidating all social forces, movements and citizens aspiring for the socialist renewal of society and the rebirth of every nation and nationality in the united family of the people's of the socialist fatherland. The participants in the meeting appealed to all citizens the republic to exert all efforts and goodwill for confirming inter-ethnic accord, mutual respect and co-operation. On behalf of working people of various nationalities and social strata of the population of Lithuania, the participants in the meeting addressed demands to the Supreme Soviet of the republic not to all the adoption of laws and decrees directed at withdrawing Lithuania from the Soviet Union, contradicting the USSR Constitution.²¹

It further stated that the demand guarantee proportional

21. Ibid, September 6, 1989.

representation for citizens of non-Lithuanian nationality in the elected bodies of power, and that the draft law on nationalities should be in line with the principles of the CPSU platform on nationalities policy. The participants in the meeting also voiced other demands concerning the provision of real equality of all people of nationalities living in Lithuania, the demonstration of society, the status of the Communist Party of Lithuania and other matters. On the day before in the same park, there had been a meeting organised by the Interethnic Co-ordination Association of Lithuania. Those taking part discussed questions of relations between nationalities in the republic and gave their evaluation of the statement of the CPSU Central Committee..... The meeting called for the strengthening of friendship of people of differing nationalities noting that for all of them Lithuania was their homeland.²²

Regarding the prevailing situation Raymond Pearson has pointed out : "Although efforts were now made to buy off Baltic dissidence, notably by the Supreme Soviet in July 1989 granting 'economy autonomy' to Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania from 1990, it was too late. Compromises and concessions which might have stood a chance of containing Baltic nationalism upto 1987 and possibly 1988 now only whetted the appetite for more. By late August 1989 Pravda was denouncing the 'nationalist hysteria' in the Baltic and ordering the Local Communist Parties to squash 'extremism and

22. Ibid.

separatism'. But as the revolutions in Hungary, Poland, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria and even Romania gathered unstoppable momentum over autumn 1989, the Baltic nations could not restrain their determination to participate in the recreation of Greater Eastern Europe'²³

As described earlier, 'after August 23, 1989 grand demonstrations through out Baltic regions, the relations between Baltic republics and Moscow began to deteriorate very fast. Meanwhile, Algirdas Brazauskas, secretary of Lithuanian Communist Party had an intensive talk with Gorbachev on telephone. This talk was arranged on the initiative of Gorbachev himself immediately after demonstrations of August 23, 1989. Later on Algirdas Brazauskas revealed : "Until now Gorbachev supported the administrations of the Baltic republics. However, we are adopting anti-constitutional decisions, and he said that he would no longer be a friend and that he had now crossed over to the opposite side. The concept of financial autonomy had been set up; however, according to him, the leaders of the republics had failed to ensure the normal process of restructuring, Sajudis had crossed all the limits and had deviated from the initial course; we should come to our senses; they could not conceive of the Baltic republics as not being within the federation.'²⁴

Earlier the commission of the USSR Congress of People's Deputies for a political and legal evaluation of the 1939 German-

23. Raymond Pearson, "Nationalities : Decolonising the last Empire", in D.W. Spring (Editor), The Impact of Gorbachev : The first phase, 1985-1990. (Pinter publishers, London, 1991), p.99.

24. Summary of World Broadcast. (Reading, UK), September 6, 1989.

Soviet non-aggression pact came out with some interesting reports. The members of the commission had reached the following conclusions.²⁵ (1) The non-aggression pact concluded on August 23, 1939 between Germany and the Soviet Union possessed an addendum -an additional secret protocol. Even if the original protocol has not been found in either Soviet or foreign archives, the trustworthiness of the copies which have been preserved must be recognised as being proven.

Obligations resulting from the pact came into the force immediately from the signing, even if the pact underwent ratification. In the course of the ratification, the secret protocol was not presented at the USSR Supreme Soviet on August 31, 1939, nor was it mentioned directly or indirectly in the speech of V.M. Molotov, Chairman of the USSR Council of People's Commissars of Foreign Affairs.

(2) Members of the commission find that the secret protocol constitutes in both the manner of its composition and its content, a deviation from the Leninist principles in Soviet foreign policy, and that from the juridical point of view the division of German and Soviet spheres of interest envisaged in it is in conflict with the sovereignty and independence of a whole string of third-party states.

The members of the commission stated that the Soviet

25. Ibid.

Union's relations with Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia at that time were regulated by an integral system of agreements. These relations were founded upon the 1920 peace treaties and upon non-aggression pacts concluded between 1926 and 1933, according to which the participants pledged mutual respect for each other's sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability under all circumstances.

(3) The members of the commission stated that Stalin and Molotov held the talks connected with the secret protocol, with fascist Germany in secret and without the knowledge of the Soviet people, Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik) or the Deputies of the USSR Supreme Soviet. For this reason the concluding of it (Secret Protocol) did not in any case express the will of the Soviet people. The latter bears no responsibility for the actions of the Stalinist leadership.

An abrupt turn about from an irreconcilable struggle against fascism to co-operation with the Nazi Germany disorientated the masses and had a demoralising effect upon anti-aggression anti-military forces.

(4) Taking into account the great political importance of the present issue, members of the commission recommend the following to the Congress of USSR People's Deputies :

(a) to affirm with a special act the annulment -beginning with the German attack upon the Soviet Union - of the August 23, 1939 pact, the Treaty on Friendship and Borders of September 28 of the

same year as well as the other 1939-41 Soviet-German agreements, and to recognise all secret protocols as being juridically without foundation and invalid from the moment they were signed.

(b) to condemn and regard as incompatible with the Leninist foreign policy the pre-war Soviet leadership's infringements of those legal obligations which the Soviet Union had taken upon itself in respect of third-party states and the use of ultimatums and strong arm politics, as being methods alien to socialism in foreign policy.

(5) Considering the importance of the events of 1939-41, the members of the commission will seek further, comprehensive research into them. The commission will continue its work.

In the meantime, in a dramatic development the Communist Party of Lithuania declared itself independent from the CPSU. This declaration came from the 20th Congress of the Lithuanian Communist Party which was held on December 20-21, 1989. The Congress adopted a "Declaration on the Independence of the Lithuanian Communist Party" and a resolution "on the status of the Lithuanian Communist Party". A Lithuanian Communist Party Programme and status were also adopted. The Congress proclaimed that the CPSU's Lithuanian Republic Organisation had now become an independent Lithuanian Communist Party, and it saw as its main goal the creation of an independent democratic Lithuanian state.²⁶

The Congress adopted a resolution and sent it to the

26. Linas Kucinskas, *op. cit.*, p.9.

CPSU Central Committee informing about its decision to be independent and asserted its right to self-determination. Quoting different sources Linas Kucinskas has pointed out that such development of events resulted in near panic in the Politburo of the CPSU. Only a very few days later, on December 25, 1989, the Plenary Session of the CPSU Central Committee was held to discuss the Lithuanian Communist Party challenge. However, only one idea dominated that session : how to prevent the break^{Up} of the so-called Soviet Union. In fact, this state never has been a union, it was confirmed by Mr. Gorbachev himself, who said in his report at Plenary Session : "Up to now, our state has existed as a centralised, unitary state. As yet, none of us has the experience of living in a federation.²⁷ He further points out that against the secession of Lithuania Mr. Gorbachev brought two arguments. First, Lithuanians were accused of planning to cut economic ties with the rest of the USSR immediately after secession, despite the Lithuanians leaders stressing at every occasion that they had no intentions to cut any economic ties with the Soviet Union but only to turn them to equal partnership. Second, the independence of Lithuania could hurt the integrity of the USSR and would be fraught with the destabilisation of the political situation in Europe and in the world. In relation to this it is necessary to say that deliberations of East European countries could have provoked much stronger destabilization than the liberalization of the Baltic states, but nothing of the kind

27. Ibid, p.10.

happend. On the other hand, the freedom of Lithuania is not a coin to pay for stability anywhere.28

In the beginning of 1990 the new political development began with President Mikhail Gorbachev's visit to Lithuania on January 11, 1990. His trip was materialised following an advise given to him by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The December 1989 Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU had declared the decision of the Lithuanian Communist Party as illegimate and invalid and condemned Algirdas Brazaukas for compromising with nationalist and separatist forces. Gorbachev re-affirmed his position that the future of the Perestrokia and the prospects for reforming the federal structure of the Soviet Union would depend on the Unity of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Despite prevailing explosive situation Vladimir Medvedev chief of the ideology department of CPSU Central Committee, ruled out the use of force to bring the Lithuanian Communist Party to heel...29

Before leaving Moscow for Lithuania, Gorbachev met on January 4 and 6, 1990, with the leaderships of both the Communist Party of Lithuania and the rival "Lithuanian Communist Party of the CPSU platform" (created in December 1989 by a breakaway faction supporting unity with the CPSU). Significantly according to unofficial reports, he also met four members of the leadership of the nationalist Lithuanian Restructuring Movement (Sajudis).

28. Ibid, p.11.

29. Keesing's Record of World Events, (Torquay, U.K.) January 1990, p.37168.

An advance party comprising more than 40 CPSU Central Committee officials and led by Medvedev arrived in Lithuania on January 8, 1989 to sound out public opinion at meetings in factories and on collective forms '30

On the first day of his visit on January 11, 1990, addressing a meeting of Lithuanian intellectuals at the Academy of Sciences in Vilnius, Gorbachev stated : "Withdrawal into isolation is a dream which seems attractive. We are for self-determination, including secession. In this connection instructions were given to draft a law on the mechanism of implementing this right by any Republic. Such a draft already exists and it will be put forward for nationwide discussion and a referendum. This will involve all nations. But if someone thinks simplistically that an election will be held, say, in a few days, and that you will get together, vote and immediately secede from the Soviet Union, this is not serious politics. - This is something definitely not serious, for in that case, problems will have to be settled with all the republics and with the state. And what about those people who will want to leave if you secede? Who for example, will pay for the housing which they will leave behind and who will give them new jobs? This is a very deep, painful and serious process. There is a constitutional right, but the mechanism has not been worked out Perestroika will fail if we do not solve this problem. But I am for its solution within the framework of the federation, because otherwise we will face such an aggravation in human relations that this will throw the whole

30. Ibid.

Union and each nation back and result in great losses. That is why we should move slowly but steadily, without getting ahead of ourselves. A start has already been made : the Supreme Soviet is taking the issues of land and property. Next will come a law on the division of the competence of all union and republican bodies. Everything must be clear-cut, not as it is now when a Republic may undermine the Supreme law and the Supreme law interferes in the affairs which can be settled by a rural Soviet."31

He further said : "We will actively move forward without destroying, without endangering the pillars of our union, without arousing suspicion in each other. Just look at the turmoil the whole country is in! Perestroika is moving ahead, we are all advancing towards democratization and sovereignty and what do the Lithuanians want? Some are beginning to say that the people cannot be for such a way. The people will have to understand what is what, and of course they will do so when they are told what they will have to go through and what they should expect in that case. They will think. That's why I am for the second way. You should know about this conviction of mine. I must understand your way of thinking, but you should also know whom you are dealing with. A few days ago I was told that Sajudis was holding its sejm and the following words were spoken at it : we should be saying that we support Gorbachev's line, but implement our own line.32

31. On The Lithuanian Problem, (White Book Moscow, 1990), pp.17.18.

32. Ibid., p.18.

* Lithuanian Parliament.

At the end of his speech, he seemed to be lamenting over the Lithuanian situation and concluded by saying : "I am for the renewal of the federation and against separatism. Some people see such an attitude as a ~~continuation~~ of the imperial way of thinking to me personally such thinking is absolutely inadmissible. My approach is based on realities..... Yesterday one of the speakers at the meeting in Vilnius said : "we are looking forward to Gorbachev's visit as the leader of a firendly country. Some way of putting it. This is nothing but playing political foot~~log~~. But, I must say this is not at all that harmless and safe. One cannot play political games when the fate of the people is concerned. This must not be done. So, dear friends, let us think and find answers--in the framework of cooperation and collaboration. I am confident that we will find the right answers". 33) The main aim of Gorbachev's visit was to discourage the Lithuanian's attempt to declare independence and persuade Lithuanian Communist Party to realign with the CPSU, however, he completely failed in his mission. After Gorbachev's visit, the ever biggest blow to Moscow was caused by the elections for the Lithuanian Supreme Soviet which was held on February 24, 1990. In the first round of balloting, on February 24, 1990 Sajudis affiliated candidates won enough seats (72 out of 90 ~~seats~~ ^{Seats} decided) to ensure an outright majority in the 141-seat Supreme Soviet. A second round was held on March 14~~th~~ in constituencies where no candidate had secured an absolute majority and 43 ~~more~~ seats were decided, 20 going ^{to} Sajudis-backed

33. Ibid., p. 20.

candidates.³⁴

Immediately after the elections the newly elected Lithuanian Parliament declared Independence of Lithuania on March 11, 1990 by a vote of 124 to none. In a resolution called "Act of the Supreme Soviet of the Lithuanian Republic on the Restoration of the Independent Lithuanian State," it was said: "Expressing the will of the people, the Supreme Soviet of the Lithuanian Republic hereby resolves and solemnly declares that the exercise of the sovereign rights of the Lithuanian State, flouted by an alien force in 1940, shall now be restored and Lithuania shall henceforward once more become an independent state. The Lithuanian Council's Independence Act of February 16, 1918 and the Constituent Sejm's Resolution of May 15, 1920, on the reconstitution of the democratic Lithuanian State have never lost their legal force and make up the constitutional base of the Lithuanian state. The territory of the Lithuanian State is integral and indivisible and no foreign constitution is valid on it. The Lithuanian State places an emphasis on its adherence to the generally recognized principles of international law, acknowledges the *infallibility* of frontiers, as formulated in the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, adopted in Helsinki in 1975, and guarantees the rights of *men* citizen and national communities. The Supreme Soviet of the Lithuanian Republic as exponent of its sovereign will, is in virtue of the present Act, starting to exercise the full sovereignty of the state."³⁵

34. Keesing's Record of World Events, (Torquay U.K.) March, 1990.

35. White Book, *op.cit.*, pp. 21-22.

An other Act of the Lithuanian Republic on the Resoration of the Constitution of Lithuania of May 12, 1938, declared the suspension of the Lithuanian Constitution of May 12, 1938 in the course of aggression against independent Lithuanian State and its annexation by the Soviet Union on June 15, 1940 as illegal. It further declared that the operation of the Constitution (Basic law) of the USSR of October 7, 1977 as well as of the Fundamental Legislation of the USSR and the Union Republics, and other laws of the USSR on the territory of the Lithuanian Republic would be terminated and the operation of the Constitution of Lithuania of May 12, 1938 would be resumed all over the territory of the Lithuanian Republic while suspending the validity of the chapters and articles governing the status of the President, the Sejm, the State council and the State Inspection Service of the Republic.³⁶

The Act on the Interim Basic Law on the Lithuanian Republic stated : "Taking into account the necessity of bringing the provision of the restored constitution of May 12, 1938, into line with the changed political economic and other social relations, the Supreme Soviet of the Lithuanian Republic hereby resolves :

1. The Lithuanian Constitution of May 12, 1938, shall be suspended.
2. The interim Basic Law of the Lithuanian Republic shall be endorsed.

36. Ibid., p. 23

3. It shall hereby be established that the laws and other legal Acts which have been in force in Lithuania until now and which do not contradict the interim Basic Law of the Lithuania).

4. The present Act shall enter into force upon adoption."37

By another decree the operation of the Military Commissariat) of the Ministry of Defence of the USSR, as institutions of foreign state, present on the territory of the Lithuanian Republic, was terminated. 38

Following the above acts and Decrees passed by the Lithuanian Parliament, Gorbachev sent a telegram titled "Heed The Voice of Reason" to V. Landsbergis the President of Lithuania, in which he said : "I hereby send you a copy of the Resolution the special Third Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR, adopted on March 15, 1990. Inform us within three days of the measures that will be taken to implement this Resolution. 39 The resolution of the Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR contained the following points :-

1. Conforming the right of every constituent Republic to free secession from the USSR (Article 72 of the Constitution of the USSR) the Congress rules that until the procedure and consequences of secession from the Soviet Union are established by law, the unilateral decisions of

37. Ibid., p. 23.

38. Ibid., p. 25.

39. Ibid., p. 33.

the Supreme Soviet of the Lithuanian SSR, in violation of Articles 74 and 75 of the USSR Constitution, shall be considered invalid.

2. The President of the USSR, the Supreme Soviet of the USSR and the Council of Ministers of the USSR shall be called upon to ensure, pending appropriate decision-making on the subject at issue, the protection of the legitimate rights of every individual residing in Lithuania, as well as the observance of the rights and interests of the USSR and of the Constituent Republics on the territory of the Lithuanian SSR.
3. The bodies of State authority and the Government of the Lithuanian SSR shall take all necessary measures to ensure that law and order are not violated on the territory of the Republic. 40

It is obvious that the Lithuanian Parliament and the People did not pay any attention to Gorbachev's telegram, though Lithuanian President Landsbergis assured Gorbachev that the Lithuanian state would take necessary measures to ensure that the law and order on the territory of the Lithuanian Republic could not be violated. 41

In a defiant mood Gorbachev again appealed to the Lithuanian Parliament and said : "The incumbent Lithuanian leadership does not heed the voice of reason. It continues to ignore the

40. Ibid, p. 34.

41. see, for the details, Ibid, p.35

decision of the Third Extraordinary Congress of the USSR People's Deputies and is taking unilateral steps that run counter to the USSR constitution and that are openly challenging and insulting to the entire Union. I want to declare yet again that this road is ruinous and will only lead to a dead end.... I propose that the Lithuanian Supreme Soviet immediately annul the illegal acts it has adopted. Such a step will open a possibility for discussing the entire range of problems on the solely acceptable basis-within the framework of the USSR constitution.⁴²

In the meantime, new laws regarding secession of the Republics were framed by the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. According to the operational part of these laws the decision on secession of a Union Republic from the USSR shall be taken by the exercise of free will of the people of the Union Republic through a referendum (popular vote) On the initiative of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR and the Supreme Soviet of a seceding Republic the Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR shall establish a transitional period of not more than five years, during which the questions arising from Republics secession from the USSR should be solved. ⁴³ As a final ultimatum, a resolution regarding the secession of a Union Republic was passed by the Supreme Soviet of the USSR which stated :

1. The USSR Law "on the Procedure of settling Problems
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42. Ibid, p. 38.

43. Ibid, p. 40.

connected with the secession of a Union Republic from the USSR" shall be put into force immediately upon publication.

2. Any moves, connected with the raising of the issue of a Union Republic's secession from the USSR, going against the USSR Law "on the Procedure of settling Problems connected with the secession of a Union Republic from the USSR," and juridical consequences for the USSR or for the Union Republics.
3. The Supreme Soviets of the Union republics shall bring the legislation of the Union Republics in accordance with the USSR law" on the Procedure of settling Problems connected with the secession of the Union Republic from the USSR.⁴⁴

Despite the series of ultimatums from Moscow, Lithuania could not bow before the pressure, as a result of which Soviet Union decided to impose economic blockade against Lithuania. The economic blockade ~~came~~ into force on April 19, 1990 and as a first step the crude oil supply to Lithuania was cut off. Quoting from different sources Linas Kucinskas says that the Soviet Union cut off not only oil and gas but also broke off shipments of sugar, fish, metal, wood, rubber, tires and industrial parts. An additional measure a military attack on the printing plants, was also arranged. Soviet Army soldiers armed with AK-47 assault weapons stormed a Communist Party- owned

44. Ibid, pp. 47-48.

printing plant beating civilian guards. A member of the Lithuanian Parliament, Zigmantas Vaisvila, who tried to stop the military action, also was beaten by armed soldiers. The Kremlin ~~was~~ seeking to stop the plants, put the workers on the streets, and encourage social unrest, "Lithuanian President Vyautas Landsbergis charged at a news conference. Thus the "honest dialogue" between the USSR and Lithuania reached its highest point. 45

At this movement, Lithuania got overwhelming support from the Western countries, however, Soviet Union initially took tough stand against the Lithuanian independence. Meanwhile, the US Congress passed a resolution by a 416-3 vote urging the Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev to recognise the independence of Lithuania at the earliest. Later on almost all the European heads of states came out with open support to independent Lithuania. A hectic diplomatic move was launched by the United States and other European powers to force some kind of negotiated settlement between Lithuania and the Soviet Union.

In the meantime, after a sustained diplomatic activities from all sides Lithuanian parliament agreed on June 29, 1990 to put a moratorium on the declaration of independence for one hundred days if Moscow would ~~end~~ its economic blockade against Lithuania. Supporting this resolution Lithuanian President Landsbergis said: "Two years ago we chose the peaceful route to

45. Linas Kucinskas, op. cit., pp 26-27.

independence, the route of negotiations, now the condition for negotiations is a moratorium." 46

In a favourable response to the moratorium, just next day on June, 30, 1990 Soviet Union reopened the oil pipe line to Lithuania. Thus the economic blockade began to subside. However, millions of roubles had already been lost.

For the purpose of coming out miserable economic crisis Lithuanian began to prepare for a cautious negotiation with Moscow. Towards the end of 1990, alongside the official delegation headed by President Landsbergis, a working group headed by deputy Prime Minister Romualdas Ozolas was formed. The working group was assisted by nine groups of experts. According to Linas Kucinskas, at the very beginning the Soviet side showed some interest in negotiations. After both official delegations met in October 1990, the start of official negotiations was scheduled for November 30, 1990. However, when that day arrived, the USSR refused to attend the negotiating session, explaining that top officials were preoccupied by preparations for the fourth Congress of People's Deputies. A new date for negotiations was not set.47

At this crucial juncture, Soviet Union was getting prepared for a possible military intervention in the Baltics. That is why, its stand became tougher. Since the Western powers did not like to cause any trouble for Gorbachev, they moved cautiously

46. Ibid., p. 37 (Quoted_)

47. Ibid., pp. 37-38.

towards a very sensitive issue of Lithuanian independence. It was the period, when the United States of America and other Western Powers were preparing an intervention in the Gulf over the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait as it is well known fact that the Iraqi forces had launched a massive attack on Kuwait on August 2, 1990 and annexed the entire territory of the Country. In this regard, United States and its allies wanted to have full support of the Soviet Union, so that they could liberate Kuwait by teaching a good lesson to Saddam Hussein. This is the reason, why the Western powers particularly United State took liberal stand for the time being on Lithuanian issue, as a result of which the Soviet Union felt unhindered in taking tough stand against the Baltic Republics

In this regard, Soviet Union as mentioned earlier, adopted a policy of putting aside all attempts for negotiations. This is why, Lithuanian delegation led by Landsbergis failed to start any political negotiation with the then Soviet Prime minister Nikolai Ryzhkov in October 1990. The prospects for such negotiation had ultimately vanished, when on December 3, 1990 Rafiq Nishanov the chairman of the Soviet of Nationalities, warned that Republics would be unable to negotiate on their individual status unless they first signed the new Union Treaty. On December 13, 1990 Landsbergis had announced that a further round of preliminary consultations had been postponed indefinitely by the Soviet side.⁴⁸

This is how, the Soviet forces resorted to military

48. Keesing's Record of World Events (Torquay, U.K.), January, 1991. p. 37944.

intervention On January 19, 1991 in the Baltic Republics, thereby providing dramatic evidence of a new hard line in Soviet internal politics. In both the Lithuanian and Latvian capitals Soviet forces seized key buildings and installations. The nineteen people were killed most of them Lithuanian civilians, who resisted the Soviet tanks. The crackdown provided an international outcry, although this was greatly tempered by Western recognition of the need to maintain Soviet support for the campaign against Iraq in the Gulf War.⁴⁹ The crackdown started on January 7, 1991 when the USSR Defence Ministry ordered divisions of paratroopers into the three Baltic Republics, as well as into Armenia, Georgia, Moldavia and parts of the Ukraine, to enforce conscription and round up deserters. On January 8, 1991 the Defence Ministry sought to justify its operation against draft-dodgers by declaring that conscription levels were so low as to threaten national security. The commander of the Baltic military district, Col. Gen Fedor Kuzmin, telephoned the Prime Ministers of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia to warn them not to hinder the paratroopers. ⁵⁰

President Gorbachev on January 10, 1991 issued a message to the Lithuanian Supreme Council stated that deteriorating situation in Lithuania was the result of flagrant violations of

49. Ibid.

50. Ibid.

the USSR Constitution and deviations from the constitution of Soviet Lithuania. 51

The bloody events began in the early hours of January 13, 1991 when troops from the local Red Army garrison stormed the Vilnius television centre where at least 13 protesters were killed. The assault was launched despite Gorbachev's assurance a few hours earlier that the force would not be used in Lithuania.

In this regard, it is interesting to note that the next day after the ~~assault~~ Gorbachev publicly denied any prior knowledge of the attack on television station. Later on, the Soviet Interior Minister Boris Pugo explained that the Soviet forces intervened at the request of "National Salvation Committee" formed by pro-Moscow Communist Party on January 11, 1991, after its members were allegedly beaten up outside parliament as they protested against anti-Soviet slander in Lithuanian media. The Vilnius garrison Commander had ordered troops, tanks and armoured personnel carriers to the television station, clearing this action with a member of the Baltic Military District Command. After the building was taken, the "National Salvation Committee" installed itself there as a rival government. 52

After these bloody events the national mourning was declared

51. Ibid.

52. Ibid., pp.37944-45.

in Lithuania for two days on January 14-15, 1991. In an interesting development Boris Yeltsin the then President of Russian Federation had suddenly rushed to Estonia on January 13, 1991 and issued a joint statement with all the three Baltic President calling for an emergency U.N. conference on the crisis. Yeltsin also appealed to the Russian soldiers in the Baltic states not to obey orders to use force against the civilians.⁵³

(C) Thus Yeltsin created an unprecedented embarrassment to the Soviet leadership particularly Mikhail Gorbachev.

In the meantime, it was reported that the Lithuanian President Landsbergis tried to talk to President Gorbachev on telephone to Moscow but failed. He was told by the Gorbachev's officials that Soviet leader (Gorbachev) was having lunch. However, a message was left for the President stating that the military units under his command were spilling blood in Lithuania and he must issue orders to halt this action immediately. The Western powers came out openly against Soviet intervention in the Baltic Republics, however, they could not take any decisive measure to stop the Soviet intervention as they themselves were busy in Gulf war for which Soviet support was necessary for them. In this way, after about a month of intervention the Soviet policy appeared to shift on January 30, 1991 when Pugov announced that all the paratroopers and two-thirds of the Omon units were being withdrawn. Reportedly this had been promised on January 29, 1991 by the new Soviet foreign Minister Aleksandra Bessmertnykh at the

53. Ibid., p. 37945.

end of talks in Washington with the US Secretary of States James Baker. It appeared to represent a retreat in the face of international criticism. At the Washington talks, it had been agreed to postpone the summit meeting between Gorbachev and President Bush scheduled for February 11-13, 1991. Both sides said that Bush was too busy with the Gulf war, but US unease about events in the Baltic was widely assessed as having also been a factor. 54 Following this development, one of the most surprising diplomatic moves came from the smallest member of NATO bloc, the Iceland who extended first diplomatic recognition to Lithuania. The Icelandic move symbolised the Western powers' (particularly the NATO) desire to accept Lithuania and other Baltic states ^{as} independent nations. It also marked the beginning of the crack in the Soviet empire. After the above developments, the main target of Gorbachev's policy concentrated on a new Union Treaty. His sole aim was, some-how, to maintain the integrity of the Soviet Union but the Presidents of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia issued a joint statement on July 28, 1991 refusing to take part in talks of a new Union Treaty. 55 Earlier the All Union referendum on the preservation of the Soviet Union had taken place on March 17, 1991. Though the referendum favoured the preservation of the USSR by 76.4 percent "yes" votes, in practice the country headed towards disintegration.

54. Ibid.

55. Linas Kucinskas, op.cit., p. 42.

Meanwhile, the most dramatic event occurred on August 19, 1991, when a coup attempt was made by the hardliners of the CPSU to ~~oust~~ President Gorbachev from power. The first news of the coup was a statement signed by Yanayev, Pavlov and Baklanov and distributed by the official news agency Tass on the morning of August 19, 1991 saying that, in keeping with the constitution, presidential power had been transferred to Vice-President Gennady Yanayev "due to Mikhail Gorbachev's inability to perform his duties for health reasons", and that a state of emergency had been introduced in parts of the Soviet Union for six months to overcome "the profound crisis, political, ethnic and civil strike, chaos and anarchy that threaten the lives and security of the Soviet Union's citizens". The statement listed the members of the State Committee for the State of Emergency, formed, "to run the country and effectively exercise the State of ~~E~~mergency".⁵⁶

The coup attempt could not get proper support from the Army and the KGB. At the same time, the maverick leader Boris Yeltsin ~~succeeded~~ in getting support from all sections of Russian society as a result of which the coup d'etat failed within three days on August 21, 1991 and President Gorbachev was re-~~instated~~. However, the real power was grabbed by Yeltsin and Gorbachev practically became defunct. The new Union Treaty which was scheduled to be signed on August 20, 1991 became the historic victim due to the coup attempts and thus, disintegration of the)

56. Keesing's Record of World Events (Toronto, U.K.) August 1991, p. 38368

USSR became imminent.

In this context, during the coup period telecommunications and broadcasts had been interrupted in Lithuania. All the Baltic leaders declared the State Committee for the State of Emergency illegal and appealed for calm bearing the consequences of provoking military action. Government representatives were given authority to establish government in exile, should legitimate government be taken over. 57 On August 19, 1991, the first day of the coup the Lithuanian Government appealed to the nations of the World for recognition. The Lithuanian President Landsbergis stated in the appeal: "The coup in the Soviet Union which started on August 19, 1991 and the aggression being unleashed against Lithuania threatens the Lithuanian Republic and bloodshed. We are waiting for your urgent decisions, full official recognition of the Government of the Lithuanian Republic and the renewed establishment of diplomatic relations with the Lithuanian Republic". 58 On August 27, 1991 the Supreme Soviet of Lithuania in a resolution "On complete withdrawal of Soviet forces from Lithuania" demanded that all armed forces of the Soviet Union be withdrawn from Lithuanian territory by an agreed date.

Ultimately the great day arrived, when on September 6, 1991 the State Council of the Soviet Union voted unanimously to recognise the independence of the Republics of Lithuania, Latvia

57. Ibid., p.38370

58. Summary of World Broadcast. (Reading, U.K.) August 21, 1991.

and Estonia. The three states were admitted to the Conference and Security and Cooperation in Europe on September 10, 1991 and United Nations on September 17, 1991. In the meantime Soviet Union proposed to withdraw its troops (80,000 strong) from Lithuania by 1994. The Lithuanian President Landsbergis said : "The Baltic countries will receive support from the international community in achieving a rapid withdrawal of Soviet troops and 1994, named by the Kremlin at present as the term for pulling out Soviet troops was absolutely unacceptable to Kremlin. (59) On different forum the issue of withdrawal of Soviet forces from Lithuania continued to be a hard point of discussion during that period. At same time, Lithuania faced bitter economic crisis as well as the ethnic problems. Since Soviet troops were still in Lithuania which had initially been deployed many decades ago during the World War II and never went back, ^{the} Lithuanian leaders were psychologically very disturbed. In the meantime, the power struggle in Soviet Union between Gorbachev and Yeltsin aggravated to such an extent that the disintegration of USSR soon became a reality. In December 1991, Boris Yeltsin managed to hold historic meeting of the leaders of all remaining Soviet Republics at Minsk, the capital of Byelorussia in which the disintegration of the Soviet Union was materialised and ultimately all the 15 Soviet Republic emerged as new independent states. Thus, the disintegration of the USSR proved to be a guarantee to the independence of Lithuania.

59. Summary of World Broadcasts.. (Reading M/s), September 27, 1991

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION:

In the preceding chapters, we have tried to investigate the historical roots of nationalist ferment in Baltic states with special reference to Lithuania during the proposed period, 1985-1991. The Lithuania alongwith other Baltic states has a history of unprecedented colonial domination. Though the state of Lithuania emerged during 13th century, most of the time it remained colonised by different neighbouring powers.

So far as historical process is concerned Lithuania was grabbed by Russia in 1795 and remained a colonial territory for about two hundred years with an exception to two decades (1919-1940) during which it had become an independent nation. As it is obvious from the historical facts that the Baltic states were never considered for economic gains but their strategic location attracted the mind of different rulers of that region. This is the fact which became most important part of Soviet foreign policy during the World war II. That is why, Stalin decided to occupy all the three Baltic states in 1940 through a secret pact signed with Hitle~~r~~rite Germany which is known as Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. The annexation of Baltic States provided Soviet Union once again the strategic supeiority in the Baltic sea.

Traditionally Lithuania was never known for its economic boom, however, it is surprising to know that according to latest published data in 1988, Lithuania's GNP was 2427 roubles while average national index of Soviet Union remained only 2210

roubles. The Soviet Union claimed that it had invested about 50 billion roubles in Lithuanian economy during its rule as a result of which Lithuania's industrial output had increased 84 fold more than what it was in 1940. In spite of the fact that during Soviet period the Lithuanian economy had become stronger, however, the people were culturally suppressed. Though the Soviet constitution provided all the republics the right to secede, practically such ideas were forcibly crushed wherever and whenever it become invisible. In this process, the suppressed feelings of the people accumulated during long Russian/Soviet rule exploded against Soviet Command system following Gorbachev's policy of Perestroika and Glasnost. When Gorbachev declared to establish socialism with human face, deideologization of international relations and common European home, the process of internal as well as external relaxation of tension began to prevail. However, it led to a devastating effect on monolithic socialist system which began to crumbled in the USSR. It caused the emergence of numerous new socio-political organisation opposed to communist system through out the USSR. When President Gorbachev came out with the idea of maket economy and privatisation scheme, the anti communist forces got overstrength. The situation was aggravated by another Gorbachev's fatal mistake, when he dropped article 6 from the Soviet Constitution which had given to the Soviet Communist Party in monopoly of power.

So far as, the nationalist upsurge with separatist tendency in Lithuania is concerned, it became sharper than other Soviet

republics which forced Gorbachev initially to allow all the Baltic state to hoist their own national flags on all public buildings. It was a major breakthrough in the path of freedom to Lithuania. Earlier the Sajudis (Perestroika movement) a political organisation of Lithuanian opposition had got tremendous popularity which led to a confrontation with the CPSU and the Soviet Government. The contradictions between Sajudis and Soviet Government became sharper when the general election for the Soviet Congress of People's Deputies held in March, 1989, provided crushing defeat ^{to Communist Party in} Lithuania. In the meantime, the Lithuanian Communist Party declared itself independent from Moscow. It was the most humiliating blow to Soviet rule in Lithuania. The popular support enjoyed by the Sajudis and other opposition groups, prompted them to declare Lithuania as an independent nation on March 11, 1989. The declaration of independence of Lithuania got much needed and the biggest support from another overwhelming victory of opposition forces in the elections of the Lithuanian parliament held in February, 1990 in which CPSU was badly defeated.

However, Soviet Government refused to accept the independence of Lithuania and declared it illegal. In order to improve the situation Mikhail Gorbachev visited Lithuania in early January 1990 and had extensive talk with the Sajudis and other leaders, but no change could be brought into the existing situation. A series of negotiations between Lithuania and the Kremlin leadership failed even Communist Party of Lithuania

stopped obeying CPSU's guidelines..

Ultimately Soviet Union imposed economic sanction against Lithuania. It also failed to pressurise Lithuania, as a result of which, Soviet Union intervened militarily in Lithuania in January 1991. The Soviet military action in Lithuania invited tremendous criticism from the Western powers, even Boris Yeltsin, the president of Russian Federation openly criticised Gorbachev for taking military action against the independence of Baltic states, particularly Lithuania and Latvia. The Soviet intervention in Lithuania took place at a time when United States of America and its Western allies were fiercely busy in the Gulf conflict in January 1991. As it is well known fact that without Soviet support the US and its allies could have never succeeded in taking military action against Iraq over its annexation of Kuwait. Therefore, they could not do anything against Soviet military action in the Baltic states except issuing some strong statements of criticism.

However, the situation inside Soviet Union took dramatic turn due to Gorbachev and Yeltsin rivalry, as a result of which, it became impossible to maintain integrity and the unity of the USSR. Ultimately the Soviet parliament was forced by the existing political reality to give recognition to the independence of Lithuania and the other Baltic states on September 6, 1991. After this development, it had become almost clear that the Soviet Union would be disintegrated very soon in the near future. Sensing this danger Gorbachev tried somehow to maintain a loose confederation of all the republics but failed.

A deathknell came to the unity of the USSR following the failure of August 19, 1991 coup d'etat which led to the emergence of 15 different independent states on the territory of the powerful former Soviet Union. Thus the Lithuania alongwith other two Baltic states once again became an independent state after a long period of political slavery under Russia..

APPENDIX

THE PROGRAMME OF THE LITHUANIAN RESTRUCTURING MOVEMENT

'Tiesa' in Lithuanian 12 Oct. 88

The "Draft of General Programme of the Lithuanian Restructuring Movement, Sajudis"

I. General Principles

(1) The Lithuanian Restructuring Movement (henceforth referred to as "Sajudis") is an independently acting civil movement which supports and enhances the structuring of socialist society which has been started by the leadership of the CPSU on the basis of democracy and humanitarianism.

Sajudis emerged as a civic initiative expressing the moral and national rebirth of society.

(2) Sajudis strives to eliminate the results of Stalinism and the period of stagnation; to implement openness and democracy, social justice and constitutional guarantees; and to balance the economy.

With these objectives in view, Sajudis stimulates social consciousness and activeness in every possible way, it organises the necessary civil actions.

The principal objectives of Sajudis are openness democracy and restoration of the political, cultural and economic sovereignty of Lithuania, a socialist low-governed state where the people's will is represented at all levels of legislation with the execution of the law and in the courts of law.

Local Soviets must become competent single bodies of authority representing the will of the people.

Only the laws of the Lithuanian SSR must be in force of the territory of the republic.

(3) Sajudis rallies and co-ordinates independently acting civil movements and social forces which support restructuring and the course of renewal and which denounce the practices of Stalinism and stagnation.

Participation in Sajudis is not restricted by dividing citizen according to their profession, party membership, religion or nationality.

(4) Sajudis is independent of all government bodies.

Sajudis holds a dialogue with the leadership of the republic for the solution of the most important issues of restructuring and carries out the function of publicly supervising the authorities.

The aspiration of Sajudis is to revive civic consciousness an active society, and to make man a morally responsible personality, a citizen who is master and patriot of his country.

In defending equal rights for all nationalities living in the republic, Sajudis at the same time strives to ensure the condition for the survival and continuation of life of

Lithuanians in the land of their fathers. For this purpose it is essential to restore and develop social, political and cultural forms of the nation's life on the basis of the union republics sovereignty.

II. Society and State

(1) In democratising society it is imperative to restore genuine meaning to the slogan "All power to the Soviets". This will be accomplished by establishing a system of democratic elections.

(2) Sajudis is striving for a relationship between the Lithuanian SSR state and society which would legally guarantee the actual equality of all members of society and of organisations irrespective of differences in world outlook and ideology.

In order to ensure democracy and pluralism, Sajudis encourages the legal activity of various social and political organisations.

(3) Sajudis, realising the will of the citizens of the Lithuanian SSR, is struggling to safeguard the state sovereignty of the Lithuanian SSR and all its consequences. The Lithuanian SSR's status in the Soviet Union must be determined by the federation's Leninist principles and the equality with a permanent right of self determination. The Lithuanian SSR must independently take part in international organisations and must maintain diplomatic and consular ties with foreign countries.

(4) Sajudis maintains that no political organisation has the

right to usurp political power in the republic. Legislative executive and legal state functions must be strictly separated. Control over this must be exerted by the constitutional court of the Lithuanian SSR.

Sajudis proposes drawing up draft laws and referendums, taking part in election campaigns, monitoring election procedures, and organising public actions.

The results of the referendums, as the expression of the elector's will, must guide the actions of legislation and government.

(5) Implementing the principles of openness, democracy and sovereignty, Sajudis unites all the constructive forces of the Lithuanian SSR's public life.

III. Human and Citizen's Rights

(1) The political-legal social structure must ensure personal freedom and civic harmony. Therefore Sajudis demands that the status of the Lithuanian SSR's citizens be based on the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civic and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (it will also strive to ensure that the optional protocol of the Covenant as Civil and Political Rights is acknowledged). This must be reflected in the Lithuanian SSR Constitution.

(2) Sajudis demands that the constitutional and legal rights, property and security of residence of the person be guaranteed;

it demands secrecy of correspondence and telephone conversation and freedom of speech, press and assembly. Civil rights must not be limited because of political conviction; any persecution for expression of political views is illegal and liable to be brought to responsibility.

(3) Sajudis is convinced that in a law-governed state, no office or institution can collect information about a person unless this person can acquaint himself with this information and, if need be, lodge a complaint against those collecting this information, in accordance with the law.

Legal practice must be guided by the presumption of innocence.

The place of serving punishment imposed by the court can only be on the territory of the Lithuanian SSR; during imprisonment or banishment persons retain their Lithuanian SSR citizenship.

Sajudis maintains that no Lithuanian SSR citizen can be taken outside the borders of Lithuania against his will.

(4) Sajudis demands that the Lithuanian SSR Criminal Code must be restructured in such a way as to eliminate all the relics of Stalinism: Articles 68, 199(1), 143 and 144 must be abolished as suppressing people's social activity and trampling on the principles of democracy. People sentenced or serving punishment in accordance with these articles must be set free.

(5) Sajudis demands that citizens have the right to lodge complaints against personal and collegial actions of the officials according to the law.

(6) Not a single law must be passed without public discussions or, if need be, a referendum.

(7) Sajudis demands that Stalinist crimes against Lithuania and Lithuania's inhabitants be declared crimes against mankind and humanity. Ideologists, organisers and direct preperators of these crimes must be publicly named and their social privileges, awards and titles of honour withdrawn. The names of the victims of illegal repressions must be made public, their memory must be perpetuated, and the moral and material losses of the victims be compensated for.

All limitations on persons of Lithuanian origin returning to Lithuania must be removed. No one can be incriminated on the basis of data of biographical questionnaires.

(8) Sajudis demands that the status of Lithuanian SSR citizenship and the conditions of granting it be defined constitutionally.

Sajudis affirms that international relations are a necessary condition of civilized life and the prerequisite of progress.

The law on Lithuanian SSR citizenship must guarantee emigres of Lithuanian origin the right to take part in Lithuania's social, cultural and economic life.

(9) Sajudis is convinced that the present procedure for military service in the USSR Armed Forces is outdated and amoral. On this basis it strives to revive the traditions of Lithuanian military units and the institutions for training national officers. The period of compulsory military service must be reduced. Sajudis strives to ensure that Lithuania's young people carry out their military service in Lithuania.

Lithuanian SSR citizens must be forbidden to take part in military actions condemned by the UN.

Sajudis considers it possible to introduce labour duty for young people who, because of their convictions, cannot serve in the army.

Sajudis is in favour of the demilitarisation of public life, the reduction or complete abolition of the programmes of military training in secondary and high schools and the release of women from military training. The recruitment of students into the army is considered by Sajudis to be detrimental.

IV. Social Justice

(1) The humanisation of society is regarded by Sajudis as one of its most important aims.

The rightful and real opportunity must be guaranteed for Lithuanian SSR citizens to use their abilities in the spheres of their chosen activity and to receive fair payment. Formalistic principles of wage-levelling and social competition must be

abolished.

(2) Sajudis will strive to ensure that the real limits of the Lithuanian SSR citizen's poverty are regularly defined and that price indexes and the co-efficient of the dynamics of inflation are published. It is essential to renew fundamentally the system of social security, guardianship and charity, establish a mechanism of compensation for inflation and create conditions for young people, pensioners and the disabled to take part in various activities.

Rights must be granted and suitable conditions created for the work of charitable and self-help organisations established on social, professional, national and religious grounds.

(3) Sajudis favours the expansion of the system of credits, and the granting of credits to young families and those with many children (three upwards), under particularly favourable conditions for the construction of dwellings and acquisitions of household goods.

(4) Sajudis demands that a policy of housing construction be introduced which corresponds to Lithuania's cultural and historical traditions; it supports the rapid development of the construction of individual dwelling houses and also the regulation of the growth of Lithuania's large towns, taking into consideration humanitarian and ecological criteria. A proper programme of social and cultural development in each region of the republic is essential.

(5) Sajudis demands that the state protect citizens' dwellings and guarantee freedom in choosing one's place of residence. In withdrawing a dwelling owned by a citizen, another dwelling must be provided with the right of ownership and the place of residence acceptable to the citizen, or the real costs of rebuilding must be reimbursed.

(6) Sajudis will support a policy of caring for the family which would guarantee that the increase in the number of children does not have a negative influence on the family's living standard and the development of the children's personality. The upbringing and education of children must be made legally equal with paid work. Conditions must be created to educate children of pre-school age in the families.

(7) Sajudis supports the struggle against alcoholism, drug taking and other social evils and the introduction of moral responsibility in people's mutual relations. For this purpose, forms of leisure developing the nation's physical and spiritual health are encouraged.

(8) Sajudis recognises the necessity of basically changing the population's medical services and establishing a modern system of diagnostics, treatment and rehabilitation.

(9) Sajudis supports institutions for examining independent public opinion and encourages them to inform the population constantly about the living standards of various strata of society. Sajudis will strive to establish an independent centre

for examination and prognosis of social problems.

(10) Sajudis demands that the category of nomenklatura workers and their privileges be abolished. Office duties must be distributed on the basis of competence and competition.

Sajudis states that the structure of trade unions should be reformed with a view to independence and true representation of the citizens' professional interests.

It must be recognised that all social and professional strata are of equal value in the social and political sense.

V. Nationality

(1) Sajudis regards national self-awareness and self-expression as self-contained values and important factors in the regeneration of society.

Sajudis regards as illegal and rejects the practice of mechanical mixing of the nations, of deportation and national nihilism, the policy of merging nations. It condemns the crimes and harm inflicted on the nations by the Stalinist nationalities policy, which has driven more than one nation to the situation of ethnic extinction.

(2) Sajudis is striving for concrete and clear constitutional and legal guarantees of national equality to ensure the republic's sovereignty and citizenship and the recognition of Lithuanian as the state language. On the basis of these guarantees it is essential to acknowledge equal social, economic

and cultural rights and freedoms to all Lithuanian SSR citizens irrespective of their nationality, language, religion and customs.

(3) Participating in restoration of a democratic society in Lithuania, Sajudis strives to ensure for national minorities residing in the republic the right to express their national self-consciousness publicly and encourages and supports the development of their culture and literature in their languages. It will ensure the right for all national minorities in the Lithuanian SSR to establish schools and classes in their languages with the aid of state institutions or on a social basis, to establish autonomous associations, propagate the values of national culture and on this basis educate the rising generation.

(4) At the same time Sajudis is of the opinion that national equality can be implemented only when representatives of all nations recognise the right of the Lithuanian nation's self determination and sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Lithuanian SSR and recognise and respect Lithuanian history, culture and language. It is essential to recognise the right of the Lithuanians, like any other nation, to safeguard this survival and preservation and development of their economy, nature, language and culture on the territory inherited from their forefathers.

(5) Sajudis is convinced that uncontrolled migration created by the irrationally developing economy and linked with the

separation of people from their native land and culture is detrimental to the national interests of the nations.

Migration must be controlled by the Lithuanian SSR Law on Citizenship.

(6) Sajudis condemns any injustice on the basis of nationality and the injuring of national dignity, culture and language. In the event of national tension, it is essential to reveal and publicly discuss its historical and social reasons and seek the correct ways to eliminate them. Mutual respect and co-operation among nations must be fostered.

(7) The celebration of dates important to the nation must be legalised.

(8) Lithuanian national symbols must be granted the status of state symbols only after the restoration of the Lithuanian SSR's sovereignty.

VI. Culture

(1) Culture is the entity of spontaneously spreading creative powers of the nation. The nation's morals are the foundation of culture.

Sajudis is against state monopoly in the sphere of culture and supports freedom of cultural creation and the pluralism of creative organisations.

(2) The nation's culture is a single entity; it can not be split

for ideological reasons setting off some its parts against others. The condition and development of all components of culture is an essential condition for the nation's historical continuity and vitality.

It is essential to cherish and foster the whole of Lithuania's culture, embracing the cultural contribution of all national groups which have lived or are living in Lithuania.

(3) Sajudis is striving for unimpeded cultural co-operation with the world and a broad and unrestricted representation of Lithuania in international cultural and sports activity.

(4) Language is the greatest cultural wealth of each nation. The ability to use it in a lively way must be cultivated in the family and school. The propagation of the Lithuanian language with the maintenance of the growth of the languages of the republic's national minorities is to be encouraged.

It is essential to revive Lithuanian dialects and establish dialect newspapers in Lithuania's regions (Zemaicial, Aukstaicial and Dzukai), as well as the terminology of Lithuanian culture and science.

(5) Sajudis is striving to establish in Lithuania a national education system corresponding to the nation's historical and cultural traditions. The main aim of the national school is to cultivate the personality of a Lithuanian citizen-patriot. All teaching subjects must be presented in the context of Lithuanian culture, suitably combining humanitarian and natural science

disciplines.

(6) Sajudis will strive to ensure that, together with the state schools, there are private institutions educating young people, supported by a variety of teaching and educational methods. Financial and other assistance must be rendered to Lithuanian school and cultural associations beyond the borders of Lithuania.

(7) Higher education establishments and the Academy of Science must enjoy extensive rights of autonomy and self-government and must freely maintain contracts with foreign universities and scientific centres. It is essential to restore the Vytautas the Great University in Kaunas. The granting of scientific degrees and honours must be within the competence of the republic's scientific institutions.

(8) Historical memory is essential for every nation's self consciousness; it helps to preserve national identity and continuity. This memory is of special importance to the Lithuanian nation, which has a rich and dramatic history, traditionally drawing its vitality from the past. It is essential to reorganise the subjects of Lithuanian history in the school programmes.

Sajudis will strive for the establishment of a centre of Lithuanian archives and the recovery of plundered and dispersed funds; the preservation of historical and cultural monuments; the tending of the cemeteries of all nations and confessions; the allocation of the necessary funds for the preservation of monuments as a criminal offence.

(9) Sajudis demands that all things of historical, cultural and artistic value historically belonging to Lithuania but removed from it be returned.

VII. Religion and Society

(1) Sajudis is striving for the normalisation of the church's position in society and for the right of the church to arrange its affairs according to its internal canons to be genuinely ensured.

(2) Sajudis favours ensuring the opportunity to revive and establish religious associations, granting them the status of a legal entity.

(3) Nobody has the right to impose on another person a world outlook which he opposes or to force him to speak, behave or act contrary to his conscience. Anti-religious education which is contrary to their convictions must not be imposed on the children of believing parents.

(4) Sajudis is in favour of believers and atheist having equal rights in the dissemination of their views; it advocates that the state should cease financing and organising atheistic activity (and that funds earned by believers should not be used for the propagation of atheism).

(5) Sajudis strives to ensure that the problem of the international status of the Lithuanian church province be solved.

(6) Sajudis demands that wealth which belonged to the church and its illegally expropriated building be returned.

VIII. The Economy

(1) Sajudis is striving to reorganise the Lithuanian SSR economy so that it serves the people and the improvement of their living standards.

Man must become the master of his country's wealth, regain the right independently to organise production and income, rid himself of indifference, inertness and dishonesty and ensure that only labour efforts and skill are the sources of his income.

(2) Sajudis demands economic independence for the Lithuanian SSR as essential component of sovereignty and contributes to its implementation (if need be, through radical action).

Lithuania participates in the Soviet Union as a single economic and as a self-supporting sovereign state. Lithuania's economic relations with the union and other equal republics must be maintained by contracts and equivalent market exchanges.

The republic solves independently all its internal economic problems - prices, tariffs, taxes and the regulation of the system of wages, finance, currency and credit. Sajudis supports the introduction of an independent monetary system in the republic as a means of ensuring economic stability.

(3) The Lithuanian economic system is based on a variety of the forms of property: state, co-operative, joint-stock, personal and

mixed. The co-ordination of these form and the guaranteeing of economic use of wealth makes man the real master of the economy. The right of personal property is also extended to the means of production. The right of property, its inviolability and inheritance are consolidated in the Constitution and by law.

Sajudis supports only democratic, voluntary and unbureaucratic methods for firms, associations etc. to join enterprises.

(4) The republic's authorities must give up bureaucratic ways of guiding the economy, the directive planning of the work of enterprises and the fulfilment of the plan as the goal of production. The authorities, representing the citizens' interests, must safeguard the programmes of scientific and technical progress, analysis of and information about the economic situation, the policy of subsidies and taxes and the supervision of prices. State orders are possible only in the form of mutual agreement by the state apparatus and the enterprises.

(5) The production branch and territorial structure of the Lithuanian SSR economy must be humanised taking into consideration the nation's historical, social-demographic, natural-climatic, ecological and political conditions and must be developed without harming ecological, cultural and national interests.

Sajudis supports direct ties with the Soviet republics and foreign countries in developing trade, building enterprises and developing the tourism and leisure industry.

(6) Sajudis supports and participates in the development of the co-operative and individual sectors of the economy in all the branches of the economy (except state monopoly branches). It is expedient to reorganise small and medium sized enterprises producing household goods and those rendering services into co-operatives, and also collective farms, state farms and other organisations working at a loss.

(7) Sajudis is striving to improve the living and working conditions of the peasants, to restore to them their rights as masters of the land and to restore individual and co-operative farms. It is essential to defend agricultural workers against any compulsion and dictate.

(8) Sajudis supports economic and administrative-legal means of regulating the demographic system and defending the rights of the local population and struggles against the wilfulness of departments and enterprises uncontrolled by local authorities in importing labour from other republics, which complicates the supply of housing food, household goods etc.

(9) Sajudis strives for the priority of the consumer over the producer by developing the market and supporting competition. Sajudis is examining and looking for economic means to solve the problem of shortages.

Sajudis, opposing any social inequality, struggles through the means accessible to it against the degeneration of labour relations and the humiliation and exploitation of man.

(10) Sajudis firmly believes that the new economic policy will serve not an anonymous society but Lithuania's actual people.

IX. Ecology

(1) Lithuania's precarious ecological situation emerged because of the implementation of ecologically unfounded economic concepts by union departments, the irresponsibility of the republic's government and local departments and the lack of qualified ecological examination. So far, economic and administrative means of solving problems concerning ecology and nature protection have been ineffective. In realising the Lithuanian SSR's sovereignty it is essential to evolve effective economic and administrative methods of using natural resources and managing the protection of nature.

(2) The union departments must compensate for the harm done to Lithuania's nature and the health of its people. It is essential to form constitutional and other legal guarantees for all Lithuania's people to live in healthy environment. Lithuanian must become a part of Europe's nuclear-free zone (and its territory must be demilitarised).

(3) Sajudis demands that new ecologically aggressive industrial and power plants be no longer developed or built. Decisions on the construction of potentially ecologically dangerous plants must be taken by means of a public discussion.

The primary task is to strive for ecologically clean

production and the introduction of technologies which use small quantities of power and produce small quantities of waste, by reorganising or closing down production plants.

The further aim of Sajudis is to prepare norms regulating the quality of the environment on the whole of Lithuania's territory corresponding with international standards.

(4) Sajudis strives to prepare and implement the ecologisation strategy of the republic's agriculture and other branches of the economy by reducing the negative results of their extensive growth and by orientating this strategy towards the production of high quality food products and protecting the environment and nature.

(5) Sajudis demands that a Lithuanian system of ecological research and ecological monitoring, supplied with modern instruments, be established, that data on the state of nature and the environment be regularly published and that the strategy of nature protection in the republic be improved.

(6) Sajudis demands that punishment for the destruction of nature be increased.

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