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Welcome to the New World Order!



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"For their freedom and ours!"

The outcome of this confrontation is by no means predetermined. The Baltic movements have powerful allies, allies that are potentially a match for Gorbachev and the Stalinist Black Hundreds that have flocked to his crusade to "save the Union".

They are not the Western governments that have made hypocritical protests.

The Soviet press has had no trouble finding statements by Western leaders showing that they don't really mind.

The allies of the Baltic national democratic forces are, in the first instance, the mass democratic movements in the other republics and in the Russian federation itself.

This support was reflected in the demonstration of more than 100,000 people in Moscow on January 20.

The movement of solidarity with the Baltic peoples that began to develop in earnest in the Russian centers in response to the blockade of Lithuania has grown into a vast mobilization.

It is of crucial importance for the future of the democratic revolution in the Soviet Union.

Ivan Drach, chair of the Ukrainian national movement, Rukh, responded to Moscow's campaign of violence in a message to the Lithuanians by raising the old slogan of the 1848 revolutions.

"The dark forces of evil cannot break the aspirations of the peoples for independence! Together we are invincible. For your freedom and ours!"

Radicalization of national movements

The Soviet crackdown came in fact in the context of a radicalization of the national movements both in the political and in the social sense, as reflected, for example, by the rejection of Lithuanian premier Prunskiene's price rises and the denunciation of the bureaucracy's privatization by Drach at the recent congress of Rukh. (See *International Viewpoint* No. 196, December 10, 1990.)

The attacks of the Soviet armed forces have had essentially two targets — first of all, newspaper printing plants and paper warehouses, and secondly centers of independent armed forces, including the legal police and the Ministry of the Interior of Latvia, which has by no means been a nest of nationalists.

Obviously, what worries the Stalinist bureaucracy is first and foremost the freedom of speech that has existed for some years now in the Baltic, which has made it the cockpit and political laboratory of the

A DECISIVE battle is now being waged in the Soviet Union. It is not simply between the Baltic peoples, or even the national movements in general, and Moscow. It is between all those who support democratic rights to one degree or another and the leadership of the Stalinist bureaucracy, desperate to roll back the democratic gains that the masses have made in the Soviet Union as a whole.

GERRY FOLEY

mass movements.

In fact, it has not only been the press in the local languages that has become an open forum, but also the Russian-language papers published in the Baltic countries.

A prime example has been the former all-Union Komsomol daily, *Sovetskaya Molodezh*, published in Riga.

The editors of the latter paper that I talked with in June did not show a great enthusiasm for Latvian national aspirations, but they had a friendly relationship with the People's Front on the basis of a common interest in democracy.

It is notable also that the crackdown on the Baltic governments was accompanied by blows at the more independent Russian and all-Union media.

The Kremlin's main political line of attack on these movements in the last period has become the charge that they threaten to impose a new "totalitarianism" because of their alleged anti-Communism and chauvinistic intolerance, among other things.

There have been emotional reactions against the experience of Stalinism that have led to anti-Communist expressions.

Mistake to ban pro-Moscow party

The Lithuanian government also made a mistake in trying to ban the pro-Moscow Communist party as "foreign based". It failed to make the necessary distinction between defending political ideas, even if the mother organization is foreign, and acting as the material agent of a foreign

enemy.

But the recent events have shown quite clearly that the pro-Moscow CPs in the Baltic republics serve only as pawns of, and political cover for, the Soviet armed forces.

They are collaborators of an oppressor power, and have to expect to be treated as such.

The statement of the Lithuanian "National Salvation Committee," published prominently in *Pravda* of January 17, was decked with "left" Stalinist rhetoric: "Lithuania was transformed by the Western special services into a carefully defended base for a peaceful attack on the USSR in order to restore capitalism."

It went on to say, "Now in Lithuania dual power has arisen, the power of the bourgeois nationalist Supreme Soviet and the power of the National Salvation Committee of Lithuania.

"Dual power cannot last long. At any moment, it can be resolved by a civil bloodbath".

Supposedly, to prevent bloodshed, the Committee called on the workers and "engineer-technicians" to "take power in the factories".

With breathtaking hypocrisy, it called for "driving out of the collectives the thieves who are robbing the people under the banner of privatization."

Bureaucracy favours restoration

The fact is that it is the Stalinist bureaucrats above all who are doing that, and who are openly for restoring capitalist relations, with themselves as the beneficiaries.

There is no reason to think that the national-democrats are in any way more restorationist than the "internationalist" bureaucracy.

Moreover, unlike the advocates of economic reform in Moscow, who stress the need for "a firm hand" to impose painful changes, the Baltic movements have generally placed their economic programs in the context of a thoroughgoing democratization of all decision-making in the society.

So far, it seems that few if any workers in the USSR have been taken in by the left rhetoric of the neo-Stalinists.

Workers and socialists in the West should not be either.

It is essential that socialists and workers now defend the embattled Baltic movements without hesitations or reservations.

"For their freedom and ours!" ★