

ESTONIAN AND LATVIAN MEMORANDUM TO THE CONFERENCE ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION — 1975

EDITORIAL NOTE:

The following Memorandum, signed in Tallinn - Riga by representatives of the Estonian and Latvian Democrats, dated June 17, 1975 — the 35th anniversary of the occupation of Estonia and Latvia — was recently received in the West. It is reprinted without editorial corrections.

TO ALL GOVERNMENTS PARTICIPATING IN THE CONFERENCE ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

This summer European heads of state will meet in Helsinki to bring to a conclusion the All - European Conference on Security and Cooperation. This assembly is expected to sanction officially and on the highest level the detente — a process that still continues to arouse principal discussions and doubts in the minds of many Europeans. Up to now a fundamental question has been left open: will detente which the European heads of state are hoping to achieve, be real, illusive, mutual or unilateral, will it have equal effect on all European nations or will it be implemented at the expense of basic rights and liberties of certain smaller numbers of European Community? It remains also to be decided, whether the effects of the hoped security and cooperation will be limited to the relations between governments and official organizations or could detente be based on closer intercourse and wider change of information between millions of ordinary Europeans, fostering better mutual understanding and trust.

A definite and exhaustive answer to those dilemmas is expected also by Baltic nations, whose national independence and basic rights have fallen victim to the deal of two imperialist superpowers. It is important to point out that the notorious Molotov - Ribbentrop Pact of 1939 was also concluded under the pretext of security and cooperation. However, the Munich agreement, Soviet - Nazi Pact as well as F. D. Roosevelt's short-sighted diplomacy at the end of the World War II and naive trust in the goodwill of his totalitarian partner, have proven beyond all doubt, that real security and cooperation cannot be based on unnatural compromises, reached at the expense of universally acknowledged international rights and basic human liberties. It is not a coincidence that instead of peace, the Munich agreement and Soviet-Nazi Pact paved the way to the World War II and that surrendering of East Europe to the mercy of Soviet totalitarianism was quickly followed by Soviet attempt to subdue the western part of Europe as well as attempt that was foiled only through resolute counteraction by the late President H. Truman.

On the eve of the European Summit Conference, once again a moment of decision has come for the Western democracies: can they rely on the goodwill and peaceable intention of a totalitarian superpower — the Soviet Union? We appreciate tenacious efforts which Western representatives have made during the first and second stage of the European Security Conference with the view of linking intergovernmental detente to freer flow of information, ideas and people. However, we are conscious of the fact that in several Western counties there is a growing tendency to care almost exclusively about one's own economic and social well-being. Hence arises temptation to make unprincipled political compromises, to exhaust short-term economic gains by expanding trade with the Soviet Union, to weaken unilaterally one's defense (under the pretext of coming detente and present-day economic difficulties), to overlook the fate of several smaller members of European Community. The shameful invitation by British trade union leaders to the taskmaster of Soviet working people and former KGB boss Shelepin showed clearly enough the dangerous opportunism of certain Western politicians.

Such trends cannot but provoke deep anxiety among the Soviet-occupied nations of Eastern Europe. The question remains to be answered — —at whose expense the European detente is intended to be achieved? Are the victims once

more to be found among smaller and weaker European nations, whose tragic fate now happens to be just an inappropriate obstacle on the smooth highway of East - West security and cooperation?

EUROPEAN SECURITY AND COOPERATION IS LINKED ALSO TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE BALTIC STATES

We as the representatives of the two Baltic nations cannot remain indifferent to such an outlook. Despite heavy losses and sufferings the Estonians and Latvians have preserved their national integrity, language and an European mentality. Defying russification and strict censorship they have managed making their contribution to the all-European culture. In the West, too, they have sizable and viable communities of refugees, whose representatives have performed outstanding work as regards preservation, development and propagation of the cultural heritage of their respective nations.

It is our opinion that before signing understandings on principal questions concerning European security and cooperation, one is bound to ask: have there appeared essential changes in the Soviet regime to justify reduction of vigilance and putting trust in the signatures of the Kremlin leaders? Can one find at least some sign of hope that the Soviet society is developing toward real implementation of human rights and basic liberties?

Relying on the 35-year experience of Soviet rule we are in position to testify that such changes have not taken place. The nature of the present-day Soviet regime has remained essentially the same as it was during the Stalin era, comprising all its violence, aggressiveness, mendacity and intolerance. The system of government in the two Baltic states, far from being based on legal rights and people's mandate, rests on the sense of fear, generated by an all-embracing apparatus of violence and spying. Compared with the Stalin era, the actual regime of terror appears only in a more decent robe, it speaks more politely and softly, yet behind the lip-service to legality and democracy latent but ever-vigilant violence is looming. Instead of physical arrests and exterminations — which have been no means disappeared — the regime is holding millions of minds in an iron cage of official ideology, crippling one's free will, conscience, creative expression, esteem of truth and basic human values.

If the human rights and basic liberties are not a public topic of discussion in the present-day Estonia and Latvia, it is because these rights and liberties have been so totally oppressed. As for the Soviet rulers, perpetuation of such a situation is a necessary precondition of their totalitarian power. The aim is to accustom the people from earliest childhood to the idea, that from the hands of bureaucratic police regime they would always receive stones instead of bread, that instead of real rights citizens would be merely entitled to their distorted sterile effigies.

So in the articles 125 and 126 of Soviet constitution certain general rights and liberties are on the one hand acknowledged; on the other hand, implementation of these rights is promptly preconditioned by following provisions: "in conformity with the interests of the working people" (representation of which the ruling group would consider her indivisible and sacred monopoly) and "in order to consolidate the socialist order" (i.e. totalitarian regime). Under the circumstances only a simple-minded or queer person would sometimes claim his constitutional rights. A "Sensible" and "conscious" citizen is expected to accept without demur the illusive nature of his "rights" acknowledging by the same the arbitrary power of the ruling clique (alias "working people") over an individual, who lacks any kind of defense against all-powerful state. Even starting discussion over one's constitutional rights is considered as an offence against good breeding, the telephone, correspondence and private life of such person becoming immediately an object of KGB surveillance.

As to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, an overwhelming majority of its articles are being ignored and violated (articles 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 26/2, 27, 28, 29, 30). That means that a citizen of the Estonian or Latvian SSR has no real right to the inviolability of his private life, habitation, correspondence and honor, he lacks in fact opportunity for impartial justice, exit and political asylum. It is completely out of question to express one's will through genuine elections ("trimming" results, to fit them to previously set targets is even by Soviet one-candidate predetermined ballot a regular practice, witnessed by thousands of "conscious" ballot counters), to participate freely in the political and cultural life, to protest or strike against poor wages or social injustice.

Articles 18 and 19 of the Human Rights Declaration are being violated with special brutality. As regards freedom to receive objective information, a sufficient example could be the way how the Soviet people have been informed about the work of the European Security Conference for the past two years: the central topic of discussion — —free flow of information, ideas and people — —has been passed over in silence or reported in an utterly distorted manner. In the everyday life a citizen of Estonia or Latvia is denied opportunity to have and express freely one's convictions to say nothing of proclaiming or changing the latter in public. As the official ideology has appeared incapable to explain contradictions and evils of the reality, to justify ineptitude and inhumanity of the regime, it has to distort that reality in the minds of its subjects. From here results utter intolerance and fear of objective information, alternative ideas and free flow of people.

Totalitarian regime has always shown vehement hostility towards religion as a potential ideological rival. By means of its universal and human ethics the Christianity is bound to remain the most serious challenge to the inhuman and intolerant

class ideology. The Soviet Constitution assures believers merely the freedom of religious cult while atheists, having the support of the powerful state apparatus, are entitled to unlimited anti-religious propaganda, which frequently comprises vicious slandering of religion and believers. To be a believer in the present-day Soviet Union means to be a pariah, who has to renounce the right to occupy any important or representative post, especially that of a teacher. In Estonia and Latvia, a believer is often tolerated, provided he keeps silent in face of adverse propaganda. But if he would publicly defend his belief, he could be dismissed immediately. Indeed, foreign visitors may sometimes experience pleasant surprise at view of few crowded churches in Tallinn or Riga. What they would not experience is the atmosphere of silent coercion, created in and around the church by open spying and arrogant interfering into the religious life from the side of state and security organs. Ministers and preachers as well as noted activists have to undergo painful process of regular accounting to the representatives of State Committee for Religious Affairs or interrogating and instructing by the KGB. Every real initiative, especially among the youth, being checked, believers are in fact doomed to drag on a miserable existence which is confined to church walls and limited to saying formal service for elder generation and tourists. During 35 years of Soviet rule in Estonia and Latvia, not one copy of the Bible, Gospel or hymn-book has been published. Even introducing Bibles from abroad is prohibited. At the end of October 1974 seven people in Latvia, near Ligatne, were arrested and later sentenced 3 - 5 years imprisonment for printing religious literature; 30000 Gospels were confiscated. Considerable forces of Latvian KGB are hunting nowadays not foreign spies, but messengers of truth and brotherly love.

To sum up the question of how the human rights are being implemented in Estonia and Latvia, we cannot but conclude: no such rights really exist in these countries. What makes the situation worse is the fact that hardly any progress toward real implementation of these rights can so far be observed. Thus we ask, what should then serve as basis for genuine security and cooperation?

RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF BALTIC STATES AS INDEPENDENT MEMBERS OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY IS INDISPENSABLE FOR SURVIVAL OF ESTONIAN AND LATVIAN NATIONS

Among all human rights the right of self-determination, which finds its expression in the demand of re-establishment national independence to the Estonians and Latvians, is of utmost importance for Baltic nations. Restoration of Estonia and Latvia as independent and sovereign members of the European Community would be their only chance for preservation and free development of their nationhood, culture and frame of mind. Actual situation offers the two nations nothing but systematic and progressive russification, which is realized under the slogan of molding the various nations of the USSR into a "new historic union", the notorious "Soviet nation". At the 24th Communist Party congress in 1971, L. Brezhnev proclaimed it as an intention of the Soviet leadership "to do also in the future everything possible to stimulate the process of approach among nations of the USSR". As a means of bringing about the desired approach (internationalization of societization), Kremlin is stepping up mechanically the pace of industrialization in the national republics. Forced expansion of industry provides most convenient pretext for increased migration of the Russians into the Union Republics. The ultimate aim of such policy was disclosed with startling frankness by the same Brezhnev in his speech made on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the USSR. Said the Communist Party leader: "the more intensive the economic and social development of each national republic is, the more clearly there appears the process of internationalization of all our life." As an example of a model internationalized Union Republic Brezhnev pointed out Kazakhstan, where as a result of societization the Kazakhs formed in 1970 merely 32,4% of total population, while the Russian (including the Ukrainians and Byelorussians) totalled over 50%. Sovietization of Kazakhstan has bore its fruits in the field of education, too: in secondary schools and universities, instruction is given nowadays in Russian instead of the Kazakh language, before the war already, Arab and then Latin alphabet was replaced by the Russian one, isolating thus younger generation from older part of national culture.

There is not a shadow of doubt that similar destiny is awaiting the Baltic nations as well. These republics have had invariably the highest growth rates of industrial production in the Soviet Union, notwithstanding acute shortage of manpower: between the years 1940 and 1972, industrial output in the Soviet Union as a whole has increased about 14 times while in Lithuania it has increased 37 times, in Latvia and Estonia almost 32 times. Such a development results in an utterly abnormal situation, in which the main source of population increase is no more the natural growth, but a mechanical one: influx of manpower from Russian Federation and other Union republics into Latvia and Estonia. In Latvia, for example, during the 4 year period of 1970-73, mechanical growth (i.e. influx of the Russian and others outnumbered the natural growth by 2:1 — mechanical growth 60,000 people, natural growth 30,000). In Estonia, during the years 1966 -72, respective figures were 67200 and 40600. The bulk of these Russians or Russian-speaking migrants would settle down in larger and more important cities, where they have assumed in fact the role of civil garrison. These civil garrisons serve as a basis for progressive russification (sovietization) constituting

at the same time an important political counter-balance to any possible "nationalist" actions by native population. As a result, Riga, the Latvian capital, has been already sovietized to a considerable extent: even on the ground of official data (census of 1970), the Latvians make up only 40% (300,000) out of the total population of 730000, with the Russian exceeding the 50% limit (369000). Tallinn is developing in similar direction: out of 363000 inhabitants (1970), the Estonians

constituted merely 56% (202000), the Russian civil garrison about 40% (147000), not to speak of the military garrison. As for future developments, special anxiety is aroused by the fact, that not only in Riga, but also in Tallinn Russian-language schools outnumber the national schools.

Virtually nowhere can one speak of the praised reciprocal enrichment of national cultures. As for language, only 1 Russian out of 9 in Tallinn is able or dares to maintain that he has a good command of the local language. Such figures show expressively the real role of Russian contingent as an instrument of unilateral sovietization. Chauvinistic animosity or total indifference of the Russian-speaking population toward local language and culture, which they tend to regard as temporary relics and impractical decorations, doomed to vanish sooner or later before progressing sovietization, exposes once more the true nature of those immigrants. They remain, indeed, a civil garrison, an ominous tumor in the body of the Estonian and Latvian nation.

To sum up the situation one has to conclude that during the past 10 or 15 years, serious shifts have taken place within the national structure of Estonia and Latvia. Between 1959 and 1970, that is within 11 years, share of the Latvians has diminished from 62% (1959) to 56,8% (1970), that of the Estonians from 74,65% down to 68,2% of the total population of their respective republics. On the other hand, percentage of the Russian has risen from 31% up to 36,1% (increase of 205000) in Latvia and from 22,3% up to 27,2% (increase of 114000) in Estonia.

The figures presented above need hardly a comment. Provided the same trend will continue (and it certainly will as Communist Party secretary Brezhnev has promised), then within the next 2 decades turn in favor of sovietization will take place in the two republics. Local population will be reduced into a hopeless minority by means of continued influx of alien element, by means of mixed marriages, mixed schools and various administrative and propaganda measures. Russian will in effect become the language of Estonians and Latvians will be given a status of ethnographic rudiments. And the European family of nations would lose forever two of her members.

Pacing these sinister perspectives, the representatives of Estonians and Latvians appeal now, on eve of the European Summit Conference to the heads of European governments, calling on them to remember and apply following principles:

1. Let the proposed detente be a real, not an illusory one.
2. Let it be based on just and fair principles.
3. Let it foster the human rights and basic liberties, including free flow of information, ideas and people as well as right of self-determination as envisaged by the United Nations Charter, Declaration of Human Rights and Pact on Political and Social Rights. Human rights and liberties must become main condition of security and cooperation until their unequivocal and fair implementation has been achieved or at least effective measures taken as to their implementation.
4. Let the rights and interests of all, without exception, members of the European family be taken into account, including of the Baltic nations to be compensated for past injustice, that is to express freely their will and re-establish their national independence.
5. Let it be remembered that ignoring legal rights of some nations, which are living under soviet occupation, is bound to undermine implementation of these rights in the West as well. Only realization of basic human liberties and values within the Soviet Union can guarantee real peace and security, because it would give ordinary Soviet citizen a chance not to follow blindly aggressive intentions of the present ruling faction.
6. Let the Western governments take a firm stand against any attempts by totalitarian powers to undermine — by means of impudent demagoguery the real meaning of basic human rights. If unprincipled and ambiguous compromises will be tolerated, the result would be that these rights will lose their inner sense altogether, will become hollow phrases. That is just what is expected from side of aggressive forces, who are brandishing human rights with the sole end of covering their oppressive nature. As a warning example, it must be that simultaneously with the gathering of European heads of state in Helsinki, only 80 kilometers southward, in Tallinn, silent campaign of terror by KGB organs against basic human liberties is continuing for the 7th month, with several people arrested, homes of tens of intellectuals and believers searched and hundreds of men and women endlessly questioned and terrorized. A show process is being prepared against 5 men, who are being accused of having used natural right to appeal to the United Nations to bring about realization of human liberties for Estonia.
7. Finally, let it be taken into account that more than ever, firm belief in the human values and ideals of the Western civilization and culture is needed. Aggressors have always respected determination, will-power and moral integrity. Let the West then be strong and united in order to achieve a real detente. Let all members of the European family be united in peace, justice, freedom and respect of each other rights.

Representatives of the Estonian and Latvian democrats
Tallinn - Riga 17th of June 1975,

35th anniversary of the occupation of Latvia and Estonia by the Red Army

