

lights worthy. And they believe the time has come for a renewal of American self-respect and a resumption of American responsibility.

The question inevitably presents itself: How many such believers are there? How strong is the new patriotic impulse? The answer, as in the case of the antiwar movement, is, we do not know nor does it matter. Look to the culture, in which an ideological battle is now being waged and in which battle the recently dominant opponents of American power grow ever more enervated and uncertain and, in their enervation and uncertainty, ever more thinly shrill. The future of the political at-

mosphere, without support from which no one in office may conduct any but the most trivial of policies, lies in the relative strength of competing ideas.

And in this, the United States is but the whole world writ small. If the "new patriots" were truly to gain ascendancy—and there is much cheering though not yet conclusive evidence that they are doing so—it would make possible the first indispensable step in national revitalization: the assertion that American power is not only great but good. If the country were to be so revitalized, her allies in turn, concerted in what was now an effort not to beg for the most advantageous terms available but to

secure the survival of a world political order, would have reason to become more resolute. And her enemies, confronted by the two things they most fear, Western power and Western ideology, would once again grow cautious and respectful.

A war of ideas may not be as aesthetically pleasing as a dance of doubts and complexities. It is certainly more demanding to conduct than a barter of near-term interests. Yet in a world living under the long shadow of V.I. Lenin, it is a war we are, whether we will it or not, engaged in. The moment may have come when we are to remind ourselves that, Lenin to the contrary, we need not inevitably lose. □

Francis X. Maier

RED-CURTAINED CATACOMBS

In little Lithuania a gigantic passion persists to haunt the Kremlin and apparently to bore the West.

Earlier this summer, three Russian women were expelled from the Soviet Union for publishing a feminist samizdat journal. Their exit produced an interesting study in contrasts. None of them was beaten up. None of them was sent to the gulag. And as far as the State Department knows, none of them had any trouble bringing her family to the West with her.

At about the same time, Nijole Sadunaite completed the final year of a six-year sentence for dissident activities: three years hard labor in a strict regime Mordovian prison camp, and three years internal exile in Siberia. Sadunaite, like the Russian feminists, was also associated with samizdat activism—in this case, with the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*, which documents religious persecution and other human rights violations in the Soviet Baltic republic. Unlike the feminists, she was not invited to emigrate.

The three Russian women—Tatiana Mamonova, Tatiana Goritscheva, and Nataliya Nalachovskaya—drew the attention of American network television news, national news magazines, and a variety of leading news dailies across the country.

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Sadunaite's story, on the other hand, sparked a couple of brief blurbs in the far more obscure religious press.

The disparity in the media coverage of these two incidents is almost as disturbing



Nijole Sadunaite.

as the disparity in the punishment meted out. But one can easily see why the Party chose to act as it did. Women's rights is a "progressive" issue (in the Marxist sense), and the international women's movement is vocal and well-covered by the Western press. As nearly every Soviet exile has pointed out, the regime can be surprisingly sensitive to the pressure of world criticism.

Religion, however, is *not* a progressive issue, and, to make matters worse Nijole Sadunaite, it turns out, is a clandestine nun. The Party, in treating her far more severely, betrayed its thorough knowledge of contemporary Western, and especially American, attitudes toward religion: Basically, the Soviets assumed they could get away with it. And they did.

But there was also an unstated fear in the Soviet treatment of Sadunaite that is quite different from the repression dealt out to the feminists, or even to Sakharov and Solzhenitsyn. Sadunaite's activism is representative of a growing minority nationalism which the Soviets, despite official propaganda, have been unable to head off.

Lithuania is one of the three Baltic states annexed by the Soviet Union in 1940. Ethnically, culturally, and linguistically it

is distinct from "Great Russia": Its alphabet is Roman, its "psyche" is Western, and, because it enjoyed 22 years of independence from 1918 to 1940, its society is more self-assured and "relaxed" than that of its giant neighbor. Lithuania's literacy rate and standard of living tend to be higher than the Soviet average, and Socialist Realism has yet to extinguish residual Western influences in music and art.

The extent of Soviet crimes in Lithuania is difficult for Westerners to grasp. In the years since occupation, the Soviets have arrested and deported more than 300,000 Lithuanian artists, priests, intellectuals, and political leaders—the heart of the country's national spirit. In a nation of barely three million people, the loss has been staggering. The great majority of these exiles died in labor camps or have never returned. After World War II, Lithuanians waged a bitter and almost totally unreported eight-year guerrilla struggle against the Russians, a struggle they lost in the face of overwhelming Soviet numerical superiority, scorched-earth tactics, and counterterrorism. The West looked the other way.

As in Poland, the Soviet political repression has merely channeled the impulse for resistance back into the Church. Lithuania's national identity is bound up in its Catholic faith—and always has been. Early in its modern history, Lithuania was a pawn in the geopolitical struggles between Russia and Poland. Inevitably this gave the Catholic Church a position of special importance in Lithuanian culture, a position which solidified when a distinctly Lithuanian and peasant-based clergy emerged from Polish ecclesiastical domination in the nineteenth century. At the time of its seizure in 1940 Lithuania was 87 percent Latin-rite Catholic.

Today, despite 40 years of intense anti-religious education and propaganda, about 66 percent of the population is still active in the Catholic faith. Almost 90 percent of all Lithuanian children are baptized and almost as many receive their First Communion, in spite of Soviet law, which forbids children under 18 to go to Church unaccompanied by an adult and which fines priests for teaching catechism.

As in other Soviet republics, Lithuania's constitution guarantees the right of religious worship, but not the right to catechesis (without which, of course, the Church's many symbols and rites are stripped of meaning), or to evangelization. On the other hand, the active propagation of "scientific" atheism in Lithuania is not merely tolerated by constitutional mandate, it is heavily financed and aggressively carried out as well by the local Party machinery, and has become, in effect, the new state religion. This socialist atheism bears little resemblance to its complement in the desecralized West. The regime is as intolerant of "bourgeois" atheism—the kind which, although critical of religion, is willing to compete with it on

equal terms—as it is of religion itself.

In recent years, more than *forty thousand* atheist lectures, courses, education drives, and publicity campaigns have been mounted by the Soviets to eradicate religious influence from daily Lithuanian life. According to Casimir Pugevicius, the editor of the English translations of the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*, "The present policy of atheization is a kind of perverse continuation of pre-revolutionary Russian policy, which was to root out national identity among minorities like the Poles or Lithuanians by forcibly converting them to Orthodoxy." Today, the Party has taken the place of Russian Orthodoxy as the agent of cultural repression, but many of the techniques are the same, among them, the heavy official preference for the Russian language and alphabet at the expense of Lithuania's own.

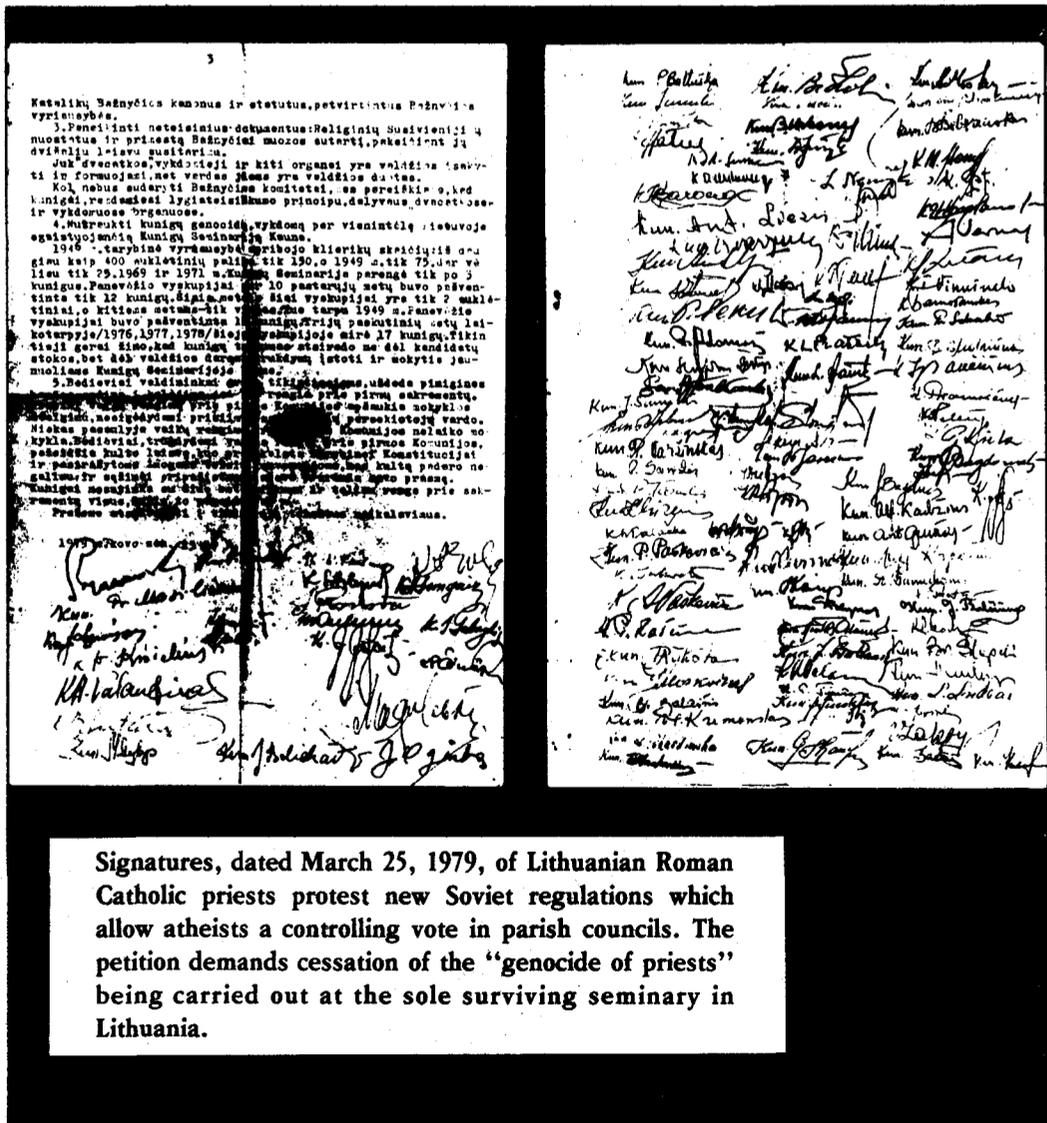
On a practical level, the Soviets effect their religious persecution not only through psychological warfare, but also through physical intimidation and legal harassment. The Church in Soviet Lithuania does not enjoy legal legitimacy; as an institution, it does not exist. Believers who seek to worship must form small parish councils of 20, called *dvitsakas*. These groups then "lease" the state-owned churches and sacred vessels from political authorities. The priesthood is not recognized as a legitimate profession; priests must therefore

rely on their parishioners for their income, which is then disproportionately taxed. In the last two years, the authorities have also taken to "packing" parish councils with nonbelievers, who can then vote to close down the church on the grounds that it is no longer needed.

Not surprisingly, the regime pays special attention to the country's only seminary, in Kaunas. Soviet security agents, through the state's Commissioner of Religious Affairs, interview every seminary applicant and hold veto power over every candidate to the priesthood. In this way they may not only dissuade worthy candidates but also promote those who are morally and psychologically unfit, at the same time recruiting informers and *agents provocateurs* who may then sow the seeds of dissension within the local clergy. The regime also keeps the annual crop of new priests below the number of priests who die each year, thereby shrinking the clergy's ranks inexorably.

Meanwhile, parents who provide religious education to their children face career reprisals, fines, and even prison sentences. Children who persist in their belief (as documented by testimony at the Sakharov Hearings in Washington last year) face discrimination in the grading of their schoolwork, classroom humiliation from their teachers, and beatings from fellow students.

The objective of all this is, of course, the slow strangulation of the Catholic commu-



Signatures, dated March 25, 1979, of Lithuanian Roman Catholic priests protest new Soviet regulations which allow atheists a controlling vote in parish councils. The petition demands cessation of the "genocide of priests" being carried out at the sole surviving seminary in Lithuania.

nity through a program of brutality and nuance. The level of anti-religious pressure must be intense enough to promote the steady decay of the Church but at the same time ostensibly light enough to keep the illusion of hope alive among believers: The prospect of some sort of spiritual *modus vivendi* with the state must always seem to be just around the corner. The last thing the regime wants is to provoke desperation, because this drives the Church underground, where combatting it is an infinitely more difficult job.

But this Soviet strategy has now clearly failed, which accounts for the severity of Nijole Sadunaite's sentence. Sadunaite was seized with a copy of the *Chronicle* in her typewriter. Despite her arrest and repeated KGB sweeps and crackdowns, the Soviets have failed to quash the *Chronicle*. It continues to appear every two months—more than 40 successive issues have reached the West since the early seventies—and is now the oldest uninterrupted samizdat journal in the Soviet Union. In the past year the *Chronicle* has acknowledged the existence of illegally ordained, underground priests, as well as a clandestine seminary. And the number of secret Religious sisters, like Sadunaite, now runs into the hundreds.

The Lithuanian reaction to Paul VI's *Ostpolitik* is much easier to understand once these facts are digested: The Soviet government saw in the Vatican's overtures an official way of isolating Catho-

lic activists. The activists, in turn, reacted with feelings of panic and betrayal. In fact, one of the reasons for founding the *Chronicle* was to inform the Vatican of the real conditions of the Church in Lithuania.

Since the election of John Paul II, the Vatican's *Ostpolitik* has changed. Lithuanians regard Karol Wojtyla—who, in Communist Poland, successfully outmaneuvered government authorities at their own game—as a man they can live with very comfortably indeed. And one of Wojtyla's first moves after his election was the naming of a new cardinal *in pectore* ("in the heart"), the process used for raising bishops to the red hat who cannot be publicly acknowledged for reasons of personal safety. That bishop is strongly rumored to be Lithuania's Julijonis Steponavicius, Archbishop of Vilnius. Lithuania's Catholics have understood the sign: They are not forgotten.

There is a temptation to regard Lithuania as just another sideshow in a century full of horror stories. Indeed, Baltic nationalism gets very little attention these days, even among American Catholics, who, in decades gone by, were legendary for their anti-Communism. But the plight of Lithuania's Catholics is merely the most dramatic example of what is now going on throughout the Soviet empire, where religious persecution is now more systematic,

massive, and severe than at any time since the sixteenth century.

Amidst the ponderous acclamations on behalf of human rights in the American political and cultural rhetoric of the past several years, these violations of the right of religious belief have somehow suffered neglect and silence. This is probably less the result of a conscious prejudice than a function of the unique American schizophrenia regarding religion. We are a believing people: We were founded, at least in part, by religious refugees. But the bitterness of religious controversy also left its mark: We have sought, whenever possible, to remove sectarian disputes from the realm of political affairs. Thus, over the past three decades, as American culture has become increasingly secularized, we have somehow lost the capacity to appreciate the gravity of purely religious persecution.

But if America in particular and the post-Christian West in general tend to regard religion as a private—and therefore politically unimportant—affair, the Soviets very clearly do not. They have harassed Muslims throughout Soviet Asia, forcibly suppressed and outlawed Ukrainian-rite Catholicism, subverted the Russian Orthodox Church from within, shut down Jewish synagogues, and mercilessly hounded Protestant evangelicals (like the ones presently holed up in the American embassy in Moscow). The irony is that, as the spiritual dimension of Soviet life has been systematically destroyed, what has resulted is a wave of cynicism among educated youth, which has led, in turn, to a religious revival.

Of course, equally unsettling for the Soviets is the symbiotic relationship religious faith has developed with minority nationalism. Great Russians are now, for the first time, a minority in the Soviet Union, which means that the contradictions of Soviet cultural imperialism become ever more apparent. (Incidentally, this calls into question the integrity of the Western intelligentsia, which sophistically justifies the revolutionary violence of "emerging" nations but says nothing at all on behalf of recently *submerged* peoples.)

The modern Islamic upheaval has been characterized as the end of the Enlightenment, a rejection of both the ideological atheism of the East and the practical atheism of the West. Whether God exists or not—and I believe He does—man's eternal thirst for Him is a powerful witness against materialism and against the kind of human destiny that follows from it. This is why religion is, ultimately, "progressive": It is the guardian of hope, of the secret places of the human heart. It is the final, and the only impregnable, refuge from the modern state.

That is why God is hunted down so relentlessly by Soviet police. And why He always will be. □

Lit. TSR

KAPSUKO RAJONO
LIUDVINAVO APYLINKES
Darbo žmonių deputatų taryba

ЛИТОВСКИЙ РАЙОННЫЙ
Совет депутатов трудящихся
КАПСУКСКОГО РАЙОНА
Литовской ССР

1980 m. spalio mėn. Nr. 31

Liudvinevo bežnyčios Klebonui

Liudvinevo spylinkės Darbo žmonių deputatų Tarybos
vykdomasis kaitetas, remdamasis Kapsuko rajono vykdomojo
komiteto telefonograma, praneša Jums, kad šių metų rugpjūčio
mėnesį neleista prvesti jokių atleidų, ryšium su plintančiomis
gyvulių ligomis.

Liudvinevo spylinkės Darbo žmonių
deputatų tarybos vykdomojo
komiteto pirmininkas

Vaida

Su pranešimu susipažinsiu:
/parepįjos klebonas MATULAITIS/

**Lithuanian SSR, Kapsukas Rayon, Liudvinavas District,
Council of Working Peoples' Deputies**

To the pastor of Liudvinavas Church

On the basis of a Kapsukas Rayon Executive Committee telegram, the Executive Committee of the Council of the Working Peoples' Deputies of Liudvinavas informs you that religious festivals during August of this year are forbidden due to the spreading of animal diseases.

Executive Committee Chairman of the
Liudvinavas Working Peoples' Deputies,
Vaida

Kenneth S. Lynn

MALCOLM COWLEY FORGETS

Dear sweet old Malcolm, once, long ago, Stalin's
American literary executioner, now purges his past.

Almost 50 years ago, Malcolm Cowley remarked in regard to *Exile's Return*, his forthcoming memoir of the 1920s, that "There is always the temptation, in writing about your own past, to interpret the facts discreetly with the purpose of showing what a wholly likeable fellow you were." In *The Dream of the Golden Mountains*,* his recently published memoir of the 1930s, Cowley has succumbed to that temptation even more blatantly than he did in *Exile's Return*. Supposedly, the book is based on the articles and reviews he regularly contributed to the *New Republic* during the Depression years, but the image of himself he presents to us in *The Golden Mountains* is rather different from the man of the *New Republic* pieces. Although Cowley finally foreswore his political fellow traveling in 1940, he still has not acquired an adequate respect for historical truth. Just as he once ignored the patent falsity of the defendants' confessions at the Moscow purge trials in order to argue that the trials had been eminently just, so in *The Golden Mountains* he has not hesitated to consign unpleasant facts about what he said and did in the thirties to an Orwellian memory hole. Cowley is now in his eighties, and he has posterity very much in mind. If he has his way, history will not remember him as the man whom Eugene Lyons described in *The Red Decade* (1941) as "the Number One literary executioner for Stalin in America."

What the author of *The Golden Mountains* wants us to find most likeable about him is his honesty. One man is always representative of an age, he says of himself in the preface, "when he gives honest testimony about what he has felt and observed." On page 82, he recalls the nature of his literary ambitions in the thirties—"I

wanted to write honestly." On page 228, he reminds us that in *Exile's Return* "I had taken the risk of speaking candidly about my own life." But Cowley's campaign to persuade us of his honesty is not merely carried out by bald assertion. Through the details he chooses to emphasize about his personality, he also seeks to convince us that he is a man to be trusted. "And that author, that observer who is trying to be candid about himself," Cowley writes, "what sort of person was he in 1930?" From a Harvard man who had spent most of the 1920s in Europe, we might expect an answer emphasizing his cosmopolitanism. But, as Benjamin Franklin discovered long ago, a cosmopolite can often enhance his credibility by pretending to be a rustic, and this lesson has apparently not been lost on the author of *The Golden Mountains*. Without qualification, Cowley insists that

he was still a country boy after spending most of his life in cities; he had a farmer's blunt hands. . . . He never forgot that he came of people without pretensions, not quite members of the respectable middle class. He was slow of speech and had a farmer's large silences,



though he was not slow-witted; people were fooled sometimes.

Along with his trustworthiness, Cowley would have us admire his benignity. Other historians have stressed the combativeness of American intellectual life in the early 1930s, but Cowley remembers the battles of those days as "good fun," and he plunged into them, he says, with the exhilaration of a college halfback diving into a scrimmage. Only gradually did he realize that "real blows were being exchanged by others." Did this realization then cause Cowley himself to turn nasty? *The Golden Mountains* offers no evidence that it did. Thus Cowley repeatedly praises John Dos Passos and Edmund Wilson without ever once suggesting that his earlier opinions of these writers had sometimes been less than complimentary. And while he freely admits that William Phillips, Philip Rahv, James T. Farrell, and other leftists sometimes "bludgeoned or shillelagged me," as he ruefully says about Farrell's attacks, we get only the faintest sense of why they were so angry at him, and no sense at all that he ever replied to them in kind. In the confrontation he cites with Phillips and Rahv, for instance, Cowley asserts that, in the face of their comments, "not many [of which] were eulogistic," he was simply "amused and polite."

Yet while Cowley does not want us to fail to notice the contrast he alleges between his own manner and that of his critics, the principal business of his memoir is not to snipe at ancient adversaries. Indeed, more often than not Cowley is at pains to evade the issue of sectarian differences on the Left. Thus in his discussion of the Communist-front League of American Writers, the impression is created that anti-fascist intellectuals were indiscriminately welcomed into the organization and that no one was ever excluded or condemned for criticizing the Communist Party or the USSR, whereas the reverse was true. For the overriding purpose of *The Golden Mountains* is to rehabilitate the myth that the 1930s was an era of revolutionary brotherhood. What Cowley wants us to

*Viking Press, \$14.95.

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