

European Communities

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EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

# Working Documents

1982-1983

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4 October 1982

Document 1-656/82

REPORT

drawn up on behalf of the Political Affairs Committee

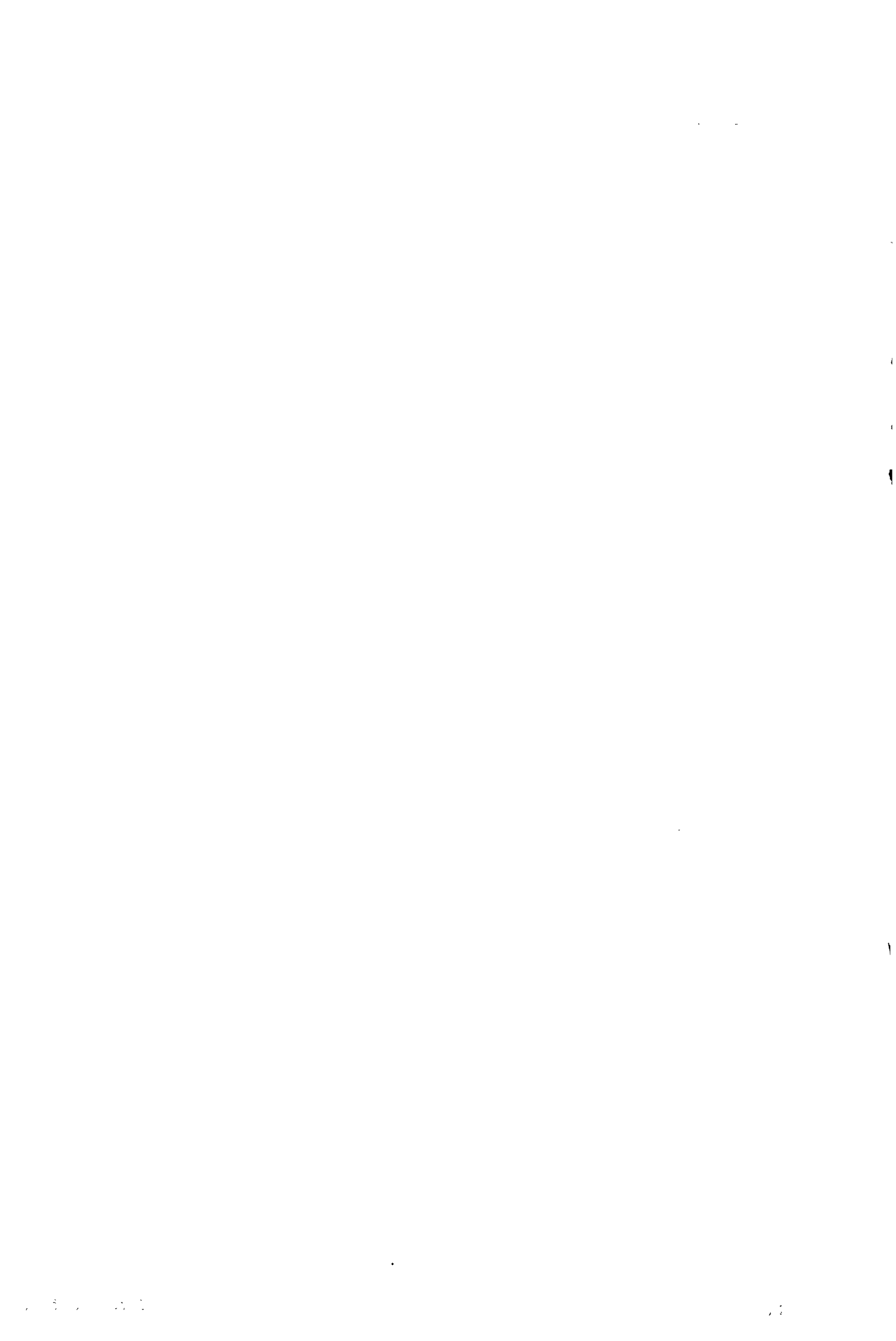
on the ~~situation~~ situation in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania

Rapporteur: Mr O. HABSBURG

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English Edition

PE 78.130/fin.  
Or. Fr.



At its sitting of 12 January 1981 the European Parliament referred to the Political Affairs Committee the motion for a resolution (Doc. 1-777/80) tabled by Sir James Scott-Hopkins and others on the situation in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

The Political Affairs Committee decided at its meeting of 23 to 25 September 1981 to draw up a report on the subject.

At its meeting of 27 and 28 October 1981, the committee appointed Mr Otto Habsburg rapporteur.

At its meeting of 24 to 26 February 1982, the committee considered a working document on the subject submitted by the rapporteur (PE 76.886).

At its meetings of 28 - 30 April 1982, 26 - 28 May 1982, 23 - 25 June 1982 and 22 - 24 September 1982 the committee considered the present report and unanimously adopted the motion for a resolution contained therein.

The following took part in the vote: Mr Rumor, chairman; Mr Haagerup, vice-chairman; Mr Fergusson, vice-chairman; Mr Habsburg, rapporteur; Mr Antoniozzi, Mr Barbi, Mr Bournias, Mr Cariglia, Mr Croux (deputizing for Mr Deschamps), Lord Douro, Mrs Gaiotti de Biase (deputizing for Mrs Lenz), Mr Israel (deputizing for Mr de la Malène), Mr Klepsch, Mr Lalor, Mr Mommersteeg (deputizing for Mr von Hassel), Lord O'Hagan, Mr d'Ormesson (deputizing for Mr Diligent), Mr Penders, Mr Romualdi, Mr Schall and Sir James Scott-Hopkins.

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Annex - MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION Doc. 1-777/80

The Political Affairs Committee hereby submits to the European Parliament the following motion for a resolution, together with explanatory statement:

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

on the situation in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania

The European Parliament,

- A. having regard to the joint declaration of 45 nationals of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, in April 1979, calling on the United Nations to recognize the rights of the Baltic States to self-determination and independence, and demanding a referendum on this issue,
- B. having regard to the bilateral peace treaties between the Soviet Union and the three Baltic States in Dorpat (2 February 1920), Moscow (12 July 1920) and Riga (11 August 1920), in which the Soviet Union guaranteed the three Baltic states the inviolability of their territory and eternal peace,
- C. having regard to Article VIII of the Final Act of the Helsinki Conference on Security and Cooperation, which secures the right of self-determination of peoples and their right, in full freedom, to determine, when and as they wish, their internal and external political status,
- D. condemning the fact that the occupation of these formerly independent and neutral states by the Soviet Union occurred in 1940 pursuant to the Molotov/Ribbentrop Pact, and continues,
- E. whereas the Soviet annexation of the three Baltic states has still not been formally recognized by most European states and the USA, Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia and the Vatican still adhere to the concept of the Baltic states,
- F. having regard to the eight-year long struggle and armed resistance of Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians fighting for their freedom, the thousands of victims of this struggle and the 665,000 Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians who have been resettled and removed to labour camps in Siberia by the Soviet rulers since 1940,
- G. having regard to the motion for a resolution on the situation in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania (Doc. 1-777/80),
- H. having regard to the report of the Political Affairs Committee (Doc. 1-656/82),

1. Calls on the Conference of Foreign Ministers meeting in political cooperation to attempt to form a common favourable approach to the declaration addressed to the United Nations in 1979;
2. Suggests that they submit the issue of the Baltic states to the Decolonization Subcommittee of the UN;
3. Considers that the plight of the peoples of these states should be the subject of review during the conferences to monitor implementation of the Helsinki Final Act;
4. Expresses the hope that the Conference of Foreign Ministers will use their best endeavours to see that the aspirations of the peoples of these states as to their form of government are realized,
5. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Foreign Ministers of the Member States of the European Community meeting in political cooperation, and to the governments of the Member States.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

in the age of world-wide decolonization, the USSR is the last great colonial power on earth. This applies not only to the Russian-occupied areas of Asia - Siberia and Central Asia - but also to the European nations that fell under the hegemony of Moscow in the aftermath of World War II. This is a fact reflected not only in the Chinese formula of the 'twelve unequal treaties' but also in the utterances of non-European statesmen like Presidents Senghor and Houphouët-Boigny.

The regime imposed by the USSR on the three Baltic States, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania as a consequence of the Hitler-Stalin Pact, also known as the Molotov-Ribbentrop agreement, bears all the hallmarks of colonialism. The three states were occupied in June 1940 by the Red Army, taking advantage of Hitler's victory in France. The fruits of this aggression have not so far been formally recognized by most European countries; the USA, Australia, Canada and Britain continue to acknowledge the concept of Baltic States, although it fails to find embodiment in any government.

Historically, the three Baltic peoples belong to Western culture. Their alphabet is Latin and not Cyrillic; their religion is Western - Protestant in Estonia and Latvia, Roman Catholic in Lithuania. Their languages are not slavonic.

Since the occupation of the three states, Moscow's consistent aim has been to denationalize the Baltic peoples and to exploit their resources in favour of Russia. In Stalin's day, some 200,000 Balts were deported in order to obliterate - as Stalin stated to Secretary of State Byrnes - their national identity by the annihilation of their intellectual elite. Under the dictator's successors, the same goal was pursued with somewhat different means. It was done by systematic Russian mass-immigration and by discrimination against every expression of Baltic allegiance, which was branded as 'bourgeois nationalism' and made punishable by law. Numbers reflect this systematic policy. Before the Second World War there were 300,000 Russians in the Baltic States; by 1970 they were 1,300,000. Between the War-years and 1970 the number of non-Baltic residents rose in Estonia from 8% to 40%, in Latvia from 25% to 43%, in Lithuania from 16% to 20%. If Lithuania is relatively better off, this is due to its predominantly agricultural economy and because its Catholic population has a higher birth-rate than the predominantly Protestant areas. The denationalization policy shows in the fact that in the cities the Russians enjoy priority over the natives in the allocation of housing. Hence the fact that in Riga the number of Balts has dropped below 40%.

Besides favouritism for the Russian language, it is also noteworthy that in the all-embracing Communist Party the Baltic influence has steeply declined. This is instanced by the letter of 17 Latvian Communists, published in 1972 by the Socialist Party. The authors complain bitterly of denationalization in the party and the persecution of Communists who stand by their Latvian origins. The only Balt in the top leadership of the USSR, the aged Stalinist Arvid Pelshe, is nominally a Latvian, but speaks and feels as a Russian. In the leading

bodies of the Communist Party of the three countries the language used is Russian. The Second Secretaries - they have all-important control-functions - are Russians, Konstantin Lebedev for Estonia, Nikolai Beluha for Latvia and Nikolai Dybenko for Lithuania.

In the economy, especially that of highly industrialized Estonia and Latvia, the enterprises are led and controlled from Moscow mainly to benefit the Russian part of the USSR. This is particularly true of such crucial raw materials as oil-shale and phosphorite from Estonia. Both are exploited recklessly. The valuable oil-shale is used uneconomically to fuel thermal electric power plants supplying Russian areas almost exclusively. In addition to this comes destruction of the environment, as attested to in the letter of 18 Estonian environmental scientists. The sea is extensively polluted, and the regions of Maarü, Kohtla-Järve and Toolse are beginning to resemble a lunar landscape. This is the consequence of a policy dictated from abroad, which consistently sacrifices the well-being of the environment to unrealistically high production targets.

The policy of the Soviet Union has adversely affected the people. A widespread sense of hopelessness has brought a dramatic fall in birth-rate and extensive alcoholism, now reaching catastrophic proportions in the Baltic States and accelerating the decline in the population.

It is not therefore unreasonable to speak of systematic, cold-blooded genocide, fundamentally at odds with the principles of the Helsinki Final Act and the Charter of the UN. This is a quite separate issue from the denial of the Baltic peoples' right to self-determination.

The Baltic population suffers severely from religious persecution. At the beginning of Soviet occupation 78% of Estonians were Protestants, 55% of the Latvians were Lutherans and 24% Catholics, 81% of Lithuanians were Catholics and 10% Protestants. The two great waves of deportation decimated the clergy of all denominations. A number of Bishops and Archbishops were executed. The teaching of religion in schools is banned everywhere. Since 1975, a 1929 law has been in force, whereby the (communist) Council for Religious Affairs rules, without having to state any reasons, on such matters as the level of rent congregations have to pay for the use of Churches, etc. A clergyman wishing to visit a dying person needs permission from the local Soviet. At the same time, atheistic propaganda is stronger in the Baltic States than anywhere else in the USSR.

Some indication of the true situation can be derived from the petition from 17,054 Lithuanian Catholics, individually signed in full and sent to Brezhnev towards the end of 1971. It states:

'... The Catholics of Lithuania have no Catechism, no prayer books, no press and no literature. The children of practicing parents are forced to attend atheist schools. The seminary is allowed to train only 4 to 6 priests a year, while the annual death-rate is 20-30. Priests are imprisoned for no other



reason than being prepared to teach the truth of their faith at parents' request. Priests are punished simply because children want to serve at mass or take part in a procession. Two Bishops have been given ten years' internal exile without trial. Young and fit priests are posted to small parishes, while older clergymen are assigned to large parishes. Catholic intellectuals are dismissed from their jobs simply for attending Church. Representatives of the atheist state sit in at Bishops' Conferences and dictate pastoral letters ...'

The number of priests and laymen sentenced for purely religious reasons is high. A typical case was that of a young woman, Nijole Sadunaite, whose trial took place on 16 and 17 June 1975 and ended with her being sentenced to three years' hard labour followed by three years in exile because of her faith. She said in her defence: 'This is the happiest day of my life ... It is my glorious fate not only to fight for the rights of my people and for truth, but also to be sentenced for having done so ... I go willingly into slavery so that others may be free, and I shall gladly die so that others may live.'

Incidents like these strengthen Baltic resistance. In the Baltic States, especially in Lithuania, there is an active Samizdat-press, in particular 'Lietuvos Kataliku Baznycios Kronika' (Chronicles of the Lithuanian Catholic Church), in existence since 1972. The local communist papers carry frequent reports of sentences passed on subversive nationalists. The fact that even the Soviet press feels unable to suppress this information proves the continuing strength of national and religious resistance despite more than forty years of foreign occupation.

The Baltic States belong to Europe. In the past - especially between the two World Wars - they were part of the community of democratic nations and members of the League of Nations. Europe can expect to have no say on human rights if it does not show concern for the plight of these Europeans. To forget them is to lay oneself open to rightful charges of hypocrisy, of remaining silent when the oppressor is a major power, while protesting vocally against smaller countries.

In this context, the motion for a resolution (Doc. 1-777/80) which gave rise to the present report is highly welcome. The rapporteur would nevertheless propose one substantial change. The intention should be backed up by practical action. Hence the suggestion that the Ministers should consider submitting the problem of the Baltic States to the Decolonization Subcommittee of the UN. The Soviet Union could not complain, because it too has resorted to this procedure, directly or indirectly, in other cases. Decolonization is indivisible. What is right for Africa and Asia is no less appropriate for Europe.

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION (Doc. 1-777/80)

tabled by Mr Scott-Hopkins, Lady Elles, Mr Møller, Mr Tyrrell, Lord Bethell and Mr Kirk

on behalf of the European Democratic Group  
pursuant to Rule 25 of the Rules of Procedure  
on the situation in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Joint declaration of 45 nationals of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, in April 1979, calling on the United Nations to recognize the rights of the Baltic States to self-determination and independence, and demanding a referendum of this issue,
  - having regard to Article VIII of the Final Act of the Helsinki agreement, which secures the right of self-determination of peoples and their right, in full freedom, to determine, when and as they wish, their internal and external political status,
  - recalling that the occupation of these formerly independent and neutral states by the Soviet Union occurred in 1940 pursuant to the Molotov/Ribbentrop Pact, and continues,
1. Calls on the Conference of Foreign Ministers meeting in political co-operation to attempt to form a common favourable approach to the declaration addressed to the United Nations in 1979;
  2. Considers that the plight of the peoples of these States should be the subject of review during the Madrid Conference;
  3. Expresses the hope that the Conference of Foreign Ministers will use their best endeavours to see that the aspirations of the peoples of these States as to their form of government are realized.