

accord to circumvent the Soviet embargo. Needless to say, President Gorbachev expressed his extreme displeasure at this suggestion.

On 13 June, Soviet Prime Minister Nikolai Ryzhkov met with the prime ministers of all three Baltic republics. He announced that the USSR would ease the energy blockade, allowing up to thirty percent of the normal daily supply into Lithuania. In return, Lithuania intimated that it might freeze its declaration of independence along the lines of the Soviet proposal.

On 16 June, the Lithuanian cabinet proposed a compromise -- a moratorium on the declaration of independence. The declaration would remain valid, but implementation would be frozen while negotiations with the USSR were underway. This proposal was moved slowly through parliament so as not to antagonize the strong nationalist sentiments throughout the country. Furthermore, some Lithuanian officials, including President Landsbergis, believed President Gorbachev to be in a weakened position and felt that more concessions could be wrung from him. However, the moratorium proposal succeeded, passing through the Parliament on 29 June 1990.

### *Latvia*

In general, Latvia has been more cautious in its approach to national self-determination than the other two Baltic republics. Much of this can probably be attributed to the very high percentage of ethnic Russians living in Latvia. For example, Latvia gave official status to the national language and the pre-war republican flag in October 1988, later than Estonia and Lithuania. When a resolution endorsing Latvian as the state language was finally approved in May 1989, the status was postponed to 1992 in order to ease Moscow-Latvian tensions and Latvian-Russian tensions within the republic.

However, Latvians were in contact with their Baltic neighbours, participating in the all-Baltic mass rallies of 23 August 1988 and 1989. There was also strong Latvian participation in the "Baltic Union" congresses, culminating in the Baltic Council.<sup>4</sup> Within the republic there was the familiar pattern of nationalist agitation and public protest.

The Latvian Popular Front held its founding congress on 9 October 1988. Over 100,000 people attended the mass rally preceding this event. The Congress itself was addressed by the First Secretary of the Latvian Communist Party, again indicating deep national sentiments within elements of the republican communist ruling elite. The Front's programme followed the lines of the other Baltic demands: greater economic and political autonomy; an end to immigration by non-Latvians; free elections; an independent constitutional court; territorial armed forces; separate diplomatic recognition; and an end to atheistic teaching in schools.

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<sup>4</sup> See above section on Estonia.