

## A Century of Struggle for Freedom

1963 marks the centennial since the Lithuanian and Polish revolt against Russian domination. The 1863 revolt in Lithuania was a consequence of a peculiar combination of economic interests, liberalism, and national emancipatory activities by the leaders and the insurgent masses. The 1863 revolt is significant to recall for it is indicative of the centuries - old Russian colonialism, now disguised in the robes of a messianic Communism. An even wider area and even more nations are today dominated by Russian Communism than by Russian Czar-ism, a hundred years ago. It is, indeed, an epitome of hypocrisy for Khrushchev to support the emancipatory struggles of the colonial peoples while being a master of an expanding colonialistic empire. The at least century old question of national self-determination of the peoples in the Russian Empire has not been answered to this day.

The 1863 revolt is an almost controversial event, with a diversity of interpretations. On the one hand, the nationalist interpretation, propagated by the older Lithuanian and Polish historians, considers national emancipatory motive as the dominant and explaining feature of the revolt. On the other hand, the soviet historians take a monist position, attempting to explain it on purely socio-economic grounds. This is a politically as well as ideologically motivated explanation. By emphasizing the economic basis of the revolt, the soviet historians evade the question of the relations of the ruling Russian nation and the ruled nations in the Empire. And, of course, there are a variety of interpretations, in various ways combining the economic and the nationalistic approaches.

The leading article of this issue by V. Trumpa takes a fresh and critical look at the meaning of the 1863 revolt to the modern history of the Lithuanian nation, suggesting new hypotheses in need of further research substantiation. A critical survey by Dr. J. Jakštas exposes the politics of current soviet studies of the subject. An excerpt from a novel *SUKILĖLIAI* (The Rebels) by V. Mykolaitis-Putinas suggests the spirit of 1863 in an artistic manner.

The national emancipatory activity that colored the 1863 revolt is still being continued today by the captive peoples inside and outside the Soviet Union. One of the leading Lithuanian organizations in this area is the Supreme Committee for Liberation of Lithuania. It was founded in 1943 by all the Lithuanian political parties and resistance organizations (except, of course, the communist) to direct the struggle against the Nazi and Soviet occupations. To this day the Supreme Committee, from bases in the Western World, continues this struggle, which, with the exception of twenty years of independence, started in the nineteenth century.

In commemorating the twenty years since the founding of the Supreme Committee for Liberation of Lithuania, the editors present an eye-witness account of its formation by Stasys Lušys, a participant and leader in the resistance.

The great powers are not unaware of or unsympathetic to the interests of the captive peoples. In international forums the Soviet Union is constantly reminded of its colonialism. Indicative of this open concern for the captive peoples is the statement of the late President Kennedy, made in 1961, which reads in part as follows:

There is no ignoring the fact that the tide of self determination has not yet reached the Communist empire where a population far larger than that officially termed "dependent" lives under governments installed by foreign troops instead of by free elections — under a system which knows only one party and one belief — which suppresses free debate, free elections, free newspapers, free books and free trade unions — and which built a wall to keep truth a stranger and its own citizens prisoners ... Let us have debate on colonialism in full — and apply the principle of free choice and the practice of free plebiscite in every corner of the globe...

Despite such statements, often made in response to Soviet attacks on Western colonialism, the Western Powers never formally raised the question of Soviet colonialism in the United Nations or other international organizations. Yet it is about time to have a debate on colonialism in full. Centuries of struggle against foreign suppression of nations certainly justifies such an effort.