

Editorial

The spirit of a free people

This Easter, as church bells rang throughout the world, Lithuanians could celebrate the Resurrection with great joy; yet Mikhail Gorbachov's message to them was that he would initiate an economic blockade against their nation unless they capitulated and renounced independence. The Pope, in his Easter message, spoke for all of us, when he said that his heart was with this brave people.

There is a special, beautiful quality to the Lithuanian Revolution, which reminds us of the American Revolution, and the poets like Friedrich Schiller, and the musicians like Ludwig van Beethoven who celebrated the existence of a new republic in which man's spirit was no longer enslaved. Indeed, Beethoven chose the text of Schiller's famous "Ode to Joy" as the theme for the close of his Ninth Symphony.

On April 19, Lithuanian President Vytautas Landsbergis gave an exclusive interview to U.S. Cable News Network television. He called upon President Bush to clearly state the U.S. position on Lithuania, and to reiterate that the Soviet Union has no constitutional or other rights over Lithuania. He asked the U.S. President to publicly acknowledge that Soviet dealings with Lithuania constitute a new form of aggression.

Landsbergis's remarks up to that point were true, but not unexpected; but then he was asked whether he would wish President Bush to get tougher with President Gorbachov, to which he answered, yes. However, when he was asked what Bush might do, his answer was that he could offer no advice, *except that they need support which is best expressed by music.*

What kind of music? the interviewer asked; to which Landsbergis replied: Beethoven, the Fifth or the Ninth Symphony—yes, the Ninth.

Taken aback, the interviewer could not understand why the Ninth in particular. Landsbergis explained: The Ninth is the symphony of hope, the symphony of the future.

Landsbergis also had outlined steps the Republic of Lithuania had taken to counter the economic warfare launched by Moscow, stating that several other republics and the Scandinavian countries were prepared to

supply Lithuania. He also answered the question, whether a young government pitted against a big government could stand up to that pressure. We are a young power, he said, a power of the future, and the future is on our side.

President Landsbergis is himself a musicologist, and we are reminded not only of the special role that the playing of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony has had in reaffirming the true German spirit—as the eastern zone of Germany has struggled to free itself from the tyranny of the Soviet puppet regime which ruled it—but also of the special role in that revolution of conductor Kurt Masur.

Not only is he the conductor of the prestigious Leipzig Gewandhaus orchestra. It was he who averted violence in October of last year, when communist chief of the German Democratic Republic Erich Honecker sought a pretext to unleash the police on a population demonstrating for freedom. When Masur addressed the crowd, even the police were moved—so moved that they refused to carry out the orders of the tyrant Honecker, but instead left the demonstrators unharmed.

Now is the time for freedom-lovers everywhere to act on President Landsbergis's suggestion. Let Beethoven's Ninth Symphony voice our support for the Lithuanian people against Soviet tyranny. We would urge in particular that Masur's performance of the Ninth be broadcast by the Voice of America.

The United States has recently taken the disgraceful path of blasting satanic rock music into the home of the Papal Nuncio in Panama, as a way of driving General Noriega from that sanctuary. This outrageous act of barbaric warfare was followed up by the U.S. government-funded radio station Radio Marti, which is now beaming rock music into Cuba.

Enemies of the human spirit have attempted to pretend that rock music is emblematic of freedom in the West. In reality, it is emblematic of the hedonism which is destroying Western culture. Now President Landsbergis has set the record straight in one master stroke. We fully support his call.