

... Russia without any prejudice recognizes the self-rule and independence of the State of Lithuania with all the juridical consequences . . . and for all times renounces with good will all the sovereignty rights of Russia, which it has had in regard to the Lithuanian nation or territory.

Peace Treaty with Russia  
Moscow, July 12, 1920

Lietuvos  
nacionalinė  
M. Mažvydo  
biblioteka

President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill:  
1. Their countries seek no aggrandizement, territorial or other;  
2. They desire to see no territorial changes that do not accord with the freely expressed wishes of the peoples concerned;  
3. They respect the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live; and they wish to see sovereign rights and self-government restored to those who have been forcibly deprived of them.

Atlantic Charter  
August 14, 1941

# LITHUANIAN BULLETIN

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## Barbarians Storm Lithuania

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The Fall of 1938 was sad indeed for everyone in Lithuania. As yet, Lithuania had not been attacked. But the German thrust into Czechoslovakia's Sudetenland October first was looked upon in Lithuania as the forerunner of great misfortune. With dire forebodings, early that morning, leaders, representatives of organizations and newspaper editors began to gather for hurried conferences. Profound sorrow engulfed everyone. Many a tear was brushed away. We were very sorry for the Czechoslovaks but we expected still greater calamities.

We firmly believed that the safety of smaller nations had reached a catastrophic stage as the larger nations pressed them to yield to brutal German forces.

The result of our many discussions was the formation of one political platform for two leading Lithuanian parties — the Catholic and the Liberal or Populist. A part of the nationalist group immediately joined forces. We prepared, as best we could, to meet the gigantic world holocaust with complete unity of Lithuanian hearts. We thought it most likely that the Germans would attack us first, but at the same time we feared the Russian appetite. Government heads were calm, optimistic...

Five months later all of Czechoslovakia had been swallowed, but only Memel (Klaipėda) was taken from Lithuania (March 22, 1939). Lithuania could not oppose the German juggernaut alone and the British, French and Russians very plainly stated that they could not help her. Opposition on our part would have meant complete occupation of Lithuania, not merely the seacoast section. Thus, German aggression against Lithuania began very early.

In the wake of that aggression, it became evident to me that we must remove all valuables in our museums and libraries, our gold and other

monies, from Lithuania into Sweden, thence to America. Regarding this matter, I approached our Prime Minister, the Hon. Jonas Černius, and later several other ministers. I also spoke to Mr. Galaunė and General Nagevičius, directors of the museum. The government higher-ups were still placid. Some ministers agreed with me, but they could not move without definite orders from above. The World War began in 1939. In view of the eventual annexation of the Baltic States, Russia signed treaties with them permitting the establishment of Russian garrisons. But the dangerous situation did not force the Lithuanian government to safeguard cultural and financial treasures. It was evident that the spirit of initiative and authority was lacking.

After a year of cruel, inhuman bolshevik occupation, the Russian-German war began. With it came another occupation of Lithuania, which for sheer cruelty has seldom been equalled. It can be divided into three periods.

### The First Period — Flirtation With Fear.

The first period lasted from June 24 to August 10, 1941. Russian occupation had caused tens of thousands of Lithuanians to be exiled to Siberia and several thousand political prisoners were executed before and during the widespread uprising against bolshevik tyranny. Now with German occupation imminent, the poorly armed Lithuanians were too weary and oppressed to oppose it. As they marched into Kaunas, the Germans found a new Lithuanian nation coalition government with J. Ambrazevičius at its head. The Germans did not intend to recognize this government, but they did not immediately close government institutions.

In the beginning, the Germans did not know what awaited them in Russia and they thought



it unwise to clash with the Lithuanians. But gradually they disarmed the Lithuanian insurgents and each day the power of the Lithuanian government grew less. The young inexperienced Lithuanian government officials thought their first concern was to spare valuable lives and save what was left after the Russian invasion — and thus they tried to negotiate with the German authorities. But when, in August, the Germans finally stated that they would not recognize an independent Lithuania — further negotiations became pointless. The Germans wanted to make the Lithuanian Cabinet of Ministers simply an advisory body without any deciding power. The ministers refused. They resigned.

### **The Second Period — A Normally Cruel Occupation**

The second period began in August 1941 and continued until March 19, 1943. It was marked by the sudden closing of the Vilnius and Kaunas Universities, and in all probability, the other academies. The second period lasted about twenty months.

Cruelty during the second period passed all bounds. During the first half year of occupation, Germany's war authorities ruled Lithuania. Their conduct recalled the 1915—1918 German army's oppression of Lithuania but with an important difference. In 1915 the Germans found very few intellectuals and as yet little nationalism among rural inhabitants. In 1941, despite mass deportations to Siberia, there were still in Lithuania several thousand university graduates and tens of thousands of college graduates. Almost all rural inhabitants had been graduated from grammar schools and were modern in their thinking. The country's patriotism was based not only on the history of a heroic millenium but also on the achievements of the present generation in economic and cultural life, the like of which neither Germany nor Russia could boast.

Patriotism and the thirst for freedom in Lithuania was more intense than in many Western European countries. Even the barbaric Germans had to take into consideration these moral forces in Lithuania. They could not attack directly but had to resort to subterfuge.

During the first half of the first year of occupation, the Gestapo slowly and carefully tightened the reins in Lithuania until it obtained a stranglehold. Economic resources were sapped. The Germans took over the famous cooperatives, corporations, banks, large estates and the better homes and acted as the real owners, completely ignoring the Lithuanians. Their conduct approached Russian standards. With the Soviets everything belongs to the State and sometimes to the party. The Nazis followed the same pattern. The Lithuanians had to become proletarians, they could look at the wealth they had earned by hard labor but they could not use it and they could not call it their own. Heavy penalties threatened them for transgressions.

But in cultural and religious fields the Germans tolerated several minor rights which the bolsheviks had taken away. Church services were allowed to be broadcast. Holy Scriptures and patriotic writings could be printed. The bolshevik edict forbidding the flag to fly over the War Museum in Kaunas was rescinded. Although the observance of Independence Day was forbidden the Lithuanians did not heed the ordinance and February 16, 1942 and 1943, the Lithuanians decorated their homes with national flags and church services and meetings were held. Schools and universities functioned and all education was exclusively in the Lithuanian language. Teachers were left at their post. About a dozen or more newspapers in Lithuanian language were published. All this was done to pacify the Lithuanians and to accustom them to the "new order".

### **The Third Period — Vandalism**

During the second period the Lithuanian situation was somewhat similar to that existing in the Bohemian-Moravian protectorate. There were some noticeable differences. Economically, Lithuania was more exploited. Lithuanians received less food than the Czechs. Because Lithuanian universities still functioned, the Nazification was hardly felt because of the steadfastness of the Lithuanian teachers.

In February of this year the Germans decided to draw Lithuanian volunteers into the German army. There were no volunteers, although Germany boasted that there were... Owing to the failure of the volunteer drive, late in the Spring the Germans decided to force compulsory mobilization in the Baltic Republics. They hoped to gain a half million soldiers and officers fit for war services. Among six million inhabitants this number is more or less normal. Three million Lithuanian inhabitants could provide about 250,000 men and 4,000 officers. To further the mobilization an All-Lithuanian conference was called (April 5) but not one important political leader participated.

Those who did attend spoke vaguely and without conviction or didn't speak at all. The conference was a fiasco.

From several sources it became known that the Germans proposed only such "autonomy" as the Russians had granted after the annexation of Lithuania but with a "Lithuanian" Quisling government whose "president" could have only such power as the presidents of Ukraine or Bohemia-Moravia.

The Lithuanians refused to accept or to fight for such a condescension. About 3,000 university students fled to the woods; the intellectuals sealed their lips; the underground press became more active. The youth, anticipating mobilization and forced labor for the German war machine, went into hiding. Lithuania is an unusual and peculiar state; her students have a magical influence on her youth. As far as I can gather, there is not another country where the children of poor



farmers fill the universities to such a degree as they do in Lithuania. They are remarkably well organized. The closest ties bind them with the masses of farmers and workers. Because of that they have a tremendous influence throughout the country. Many of the students from past experiences have been accustomed to work secretly and to orientate themselves individually in every difficult situation.

When the Germans closed the universities, it was very evident that the students would hamper mobilization. And Germany lost a large force in the Baltic Republics at a time when such an army was vitally necessary to her.

Will the free world understand what risks have been taken, what dangers were faced and endured, what heroic efforts were necessary? Will this be repaid by recognition of our rights for freedom...?

### German Cruelty Surpasses Itself

The years from 1915 to 1918 were fortunate ones for the Germans in Lithuania. At that time they destroyed Lithuania's beautiful forests and emptied her overflowing bins. They did not have to pay because in 1919 Lithuania was a weak and unrecognized state. We have the same situation in Lithuania today. They are cutting down our dense woods; they are reaping the reward of a good harvest; they are slaughtering our live stock, and they are robbing us of all of our dairy products, and as if that were not sufficient, they are compelling thousands of our people into forced labor of fighting forces for German victory.

They are doing all this quite calmly and in goodly measure, but what is more important, they believe that they will not have to make any payment for it, even if Germany loses the war. They believe that there will be no Lithuania at the Peace Conference, that the „defenders” of the great democracies will not admit her. Up to the present time, Lithuania is excluded from the United Nations, although she opposed the Germans more vigorously than did several other countries, and she put up a more united stand against the Germans than some Western European nations. Under these circumstances Lithuania is a more fitting grab for the German „Raubwirtschaft”.

Failing in her efforts to attract volunteers and to mobilize Lithuanian youth, Germany grabbed at the chance to destroy Lithuania's cultural wealth. The Germans closed two universities and other academies; they smashed the medical laboratory in Vilnius, they confiscated rare and valuable books from the libraries and treasures from the museum—all in typical German fashion as was done before in Poland and elsewhere. All that is normal German cruelty. But when Germany vented her rage on the old capital Vilnius, the loss was beyond description. In the archives of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences they found and completely destroyed the manuscript of a dictionary of the Lithuanian language which had taken over 40 years to compile. The manuscript weighed about one and one half thousand pounds

and was the fruit of the labor of several dozen learned people. Prof. K. Buga, philologist of European fame, headed this work until 1924, when it was taken over by Prof. Balčikonis and others. The first volume, containing the letters A-B, had been printed in Vilnius and it filled a thousand large pages. The complete set would have consisted of 10 volumes or more. It would have been one of the greatest dictionaries in the world, a monument to a beautiful and unusually rare language, a gem, fashioned by the endless, tireless and patient work of many young and old Lithuanian linguists. For opposing the mobilization the Germans decided to choke the soul of Lithuania, her education, her cultural heritage, her very existence. That was a demoniacal act.

But even that was not enough... In the same place they found 2,000 records of old folksongs, songs which our forefathers sang hundreds, perhaps, thousands of years ago.

I hold our songs and hospitality to be the most characteristic product of the cultural heritages of our people. We have perhaps a half million songs, but we did not succeed in collecting many old characteristic folk songs. But this collection showed the world that the Lithuanians were the most human of people — „homines humanissimi”. When Germany's „Kulturtraeger” forced their way into the Lithuanian Academy, they shattered to bits 2,000 glorious recordings of a people's soul. They can never be restored, they are voices of our compatriots long since stilled.

When I read this dreadful — this horribly dreadful news — emotion overcame me, my mind was numb. I knew many of the splendid souls who had spent so much time and effort in preparing this dictionary, who with reverence had gathered these songs... I join them in prostrating myself on the pyre of our cultural ruins as we sink in abject despair. If such barbarism should spread, will there be any reason for a cultured person to want to live, to work, to suffer?

**The Germans had an opportunity to surpass their own cruelty, and to penalize the Lithuanian nation with the antics of a mad beast.**

German magnanimity again displayed itself to the world in the recent kidnapping of twenty-five thousand Lithuanian children from four to twelve years of age. These children, now in Germany, are to be raised as Janissaries to fight for the German Lebensraum of the next generation. The sorrow of the twenty-five thousand families and the pitiful plight of the captured children can scarcely be imagined.

### Can Retribution Be Made To Lithuania?

The heroic stand of the youth of Lithuania, against the German mobilization attempt must be fully evaluated. General Stasys Raštikis, a most popular and influential warrior, was summoned several times before high Nazi officials, and each time refused to join the mobilization movement and to head it. Who is Raštikis, you well may ask.



A tragic figure, the father of three beloved daughters captured by the bolsheviks two years ago and whose whereabouts are shrouded in mystery. This fact alone is proof of the strong and indomitable will of these people who will accept no foreign yoke — be it Germany's or Russia's.

The unusually well-disciplined mass uprising against the bolsheviks in June 1941 and the present widespread opposition to German mobilization, in spite of the most atrocious German vengeance, indicates the force of character of these people and emphasizes their deathless aspiration to be free.

The Atlantic Charter was not written for the benefit of the large nations — their independence was never threatened. **That Charter was especially written for us**, although the foes of freedom do not wish to apply it to us.

We hope to regain our freedom. But will we succeed in resurrecting our cultural and material wealth from the ruins? To compensate Lithuania for the loss of her forests, the depletion of her live stock and harvests, she should receive, in return, an adequate allotment of German farms and forests. An equivalent number of German universities and academies, libraries and laboratories should replace those destroyed by the Germans. The manuscript of the dictionary and song records are irreplaceable. Payment should also be made for other losses, but only after we are admitted into the United Nations.

So far, the world has treated us shamefully. Among the United Nations are several somewhat younger nations, but Lithuania with her cultural, political and economical maturity, has not yet been permitted to become a member of the United Nations. And what irony of history: **the promoters and victors of the famous Tannenberg battle (1410) are not officially permitted to participate in the epochal struggle against the German hydra, which the Lithuanians fought during so many centuries...**

There are about 80 independent nations in the world, but the loss of freedom threatens only the three Baltic Republics whose civilization ranks with that of the oldest nations; whose poor peasantry and their descendants accomplished in twenty years through sincere effort and unusual zeal that which took other nations a hundred years to achieve.

Now we find "benefactors" who intend to place them lower a dozen other semi-civilized, but still independent, countries. They think that we should be content. Barbarians are destroying us, because for hundreds of years we have stood in the path of the "Drang nach Osten".

For three hundred years our strong and unyielding lines defended Russia from a German thrust into the East, and now that same Russia would keep her benefactors from the ranks of the free nations, while the world's cynics and paid hirelings endeavor to find arguments to vindicate the Russian appetite.

Probably there are some naive minds who think that Lithuanians have no mind, no heart, that

they do not understand the wrong which are being prepared for them in return for the streams of blood shed in the long wars against the Germans.

The most anti-German nation, whose annihilation has been Germany's supreme desire since thirteenth century, is not permitted now to raise its flag in the gigantic struggle against the German monster.

It is a dreadful, cynical paradox. It bodes no good for us. It forces us to endure alone all the suffering and unspeakable hardships. Everyone demands our cooperation, many would like to claim our hard earned money, but they refuse to grant us justice; they bow to those who robbed us of our freedom.

Germany, the greatest aggressor in this war, will probably lose just one colony — Eastern Prussia. But that is only three percent of Germany, while the Baltic Republics which have harmed no one, **are in danger of losing one hundred percent of their land and people.** Every honest person should ask, is this the purpose of the war? Heroic Lithuania is occupied, but not defeated. She continues to carry on the fight on all fronts.

This is a people whose cultural treasures the Germans have destroyed, whose soul they have tried to poison and kill. Their plight is indeed tragic...

July 15, 1943  
Carleton College,  
Northfield, Minn.

### THE "ALL—LITHUANIAN CONFERENCE" IN KAUNAS

As a result of the fragmentary information reaching us from Nazi sources, we now have idea of what happened at the so-called "All-Lithuanian Conference" which was held in Kaunas on April 5, 1943.

This Conference followed an appeal to the Lithuanian people signed by numerous Lithuanians. Whether or not these persons have signed or really attended the Conference, it could not be ascertained.

According to the first radio reports received, the purpose of the Conference was presented as aiming at the dissolution, for all time to come, of the union with Soviet Russia. No intelligent person, of course, could accept this explanation. If this were true, why did the Nazis wait so long to convene this Conference? Over a year and nine months have passed since the German occupation of Lithuania, and it was never considered before that such a "severance" of relations was at all necessary or advisable.

But even these radio reports, destined for foreign countries, evolved a rather euphemistic expression for the genuine purpose of this Conference, namely, "to demonstrate to the world, Lithuanian determination to support the battle against Bolshevism and to make a contribution to the reconstruc-



tion of Europe." There is no doubt that the whole purpose of this Conference was to stimulate and encourage the local population to take an active part in the mobilization of manpower that is now being carried out all over occupied Europe, including the Baltic countries. Reports coming from neutral countries agree that German efforts to mobilize the Baltic countries is being actively resisted by them. People asked themselves: Why should we fight? To perpetuate Nazi domination?

In a report published in the Nazi-controlled *Wilnaer Zeitung* of April 6, 1943, the real intentions of the Conference are made unequivocally clear. Although the Nazis concealed their real intentions on the radio broadcasts for foreign consumption, it would be impossible for them to do so in a local newspaper.

Two aspects of this Conference are of very great interest: first, its composition, secondly, the leading personalities taking part in it. There are contradictory reports concerning its composition. According to one of them "Lithuanians from all parts of the country and all classes were represented." This is the statement made by Transocean on April 9th, but the Rome radio on the same day reported that "Four representatives of every social class attended the meeting." The reader may still be puzzled as to what constitutes a "social class." The *Wilnaer Zeitung*, however, speaks of "two to four delegates from every district." This would mean that the basis for representation were certain territorial units. But what all these statements fail to report is the method of election used or what would be more probable, the method of nomination according to which these delegates were chosen. The informations received from London mention 93 delegates. From the same sources we have been informed that before going to attend this Conference, all the delegates in due form made their wills.

The second outstanding feature is the complete absence from this Conference of any of the recognized political leaders of the Lithuanian nation. It is true that it was presided over by Prof. Michael Biržiška, rector of the University of Vilnius. It is to be regretted that he lent his name to such an undertaking. On the other hand, it must not be forgotten that Mr. Biržiška never played any part at all in Lithuanian political life.

The spokesmen of the Conference were two generals (Kubiliūnas and Navakas) and "Generalrat" Romanauskas. Kubiliūnas "stressed the vital importance of Germany's help to Lithuania, pointing out that the duty of every Lithuanian was to take part in the struggle, both by joining the armed forces and working in industry." General Navakas "warned the people of the fatal consequences that would ensue should they fail to respond to the call of total mobilization." Romanauskas "urged the farming community to produce the utmost quantity of foodstuffs required by the armies and also by the civilians, warning them that severe penalties would be inflicted for disobedience."

These addresses speak a clearer language than the vague formulas of Nazi broadcasts.

According to the *Wilnaer Zeitung* three resolutions were passed:

The Conference affirms the determination of the Lithuanian people to take up arms against the Soviets and to fulfil both the economic and personal duties required by the circumstances and expresses the conviction that all Lithuanians who understand their common interest with Western Europe will fight under the leadership of Greater Germany.

The second resolution expresses the conviction that it is necessary, apart from the present conscription for labor service, to form armed Lithuanian units, commanded by Lithuanian officers, on the basis of "voluntary" enlistment.

The third resolution states that the Lithuanian people in the future are also determined to support the struggle against Bolshevism and urges all Lithuanians who have been, or who will be called upon, to obey their orders without any hesitation.

A telegram expressing loyalty (*Ergebenheits-telegramm*) to Hitler was read in conclusion, of course.

We have learned that those resolutions were simply read to the Conference without any submission to the regular vote. One could imagine the stupefaction of the "delegates" the next day, on April 6, when they read in the morning newspapers the official communique of their "vote".

It is obvious that the purpose of the Conference was to urge the population to rally to the campaign for mobilization, by means of threats, but it can be said in advance that there will be little increase in the zeal of the local population to serve the Nazis after this comedy.

The contradiction between the second and the third "resolutions" is flagrant. On one hand enlistment was supposed to be "voluntary", on the other hand Lithuanians are called upon to "obey orders" by enlisting.

## BISHOPS PROTESTING AGAINST GERMAN OPPRESSION

The following is a summary of a memorandum handed to the Commissar-General in Kaunas by the Lithuanian Catholic Bishops on October 13, 1942. It gives the best evidence of the present relations between the Church and the German authorities in Lithuania.

It is stated in this document that the Bishops in their annual conference had discussed questions concerning the situation of Catholics in Lithuania and decided to inform Dr. von Renteln of their opinion on the present conditions and to ask him to cancel all measures that put restraint on religious freedom and the education of Lithuanian youth.

Their claims were summarized in the following seven points:

1. Regarding the Church's property. The Bishops pointed out that the German authorities on several



occasions had declared their intention to restore property rights in Lithuania in the near future. This question is important to all Lithuanian people and to the Catholic Church because nearly the whole of the Church's property and that of the Catholic organizations, have been nationalized. The Bishops, as it was indicated in the memorandum, had several times declared that Catholics cannot recognize such an expropriation as legal. The respect of property rights was always considered by them as the mark of Christian civilization. All European peoples respected property rights; they were respected in the Reich also. The Roman Catholic Church, it was said further, considered property not only as a purely economic question; it was a postulate of natural and Christian morality, confirmed by the positive Divine Law...

### Condemn Bolshevism

Then the Bishops compared the situation of property rights under the Bolshevik and present regimes. They explained that the Lithuanian people condemned Bolshevism and its consequences, among them all confiscation of private property.

It has come to the knowledge of the Bishops, they went on, that the German Civil administration had considered the problem concerning a reform of ecclesiastical land properties in Lithuania. In the opinion of the Bishops, the time is ripe for such a reform; however, it should be introduced only by agreement with the Apostolic See.

They then stated that the Bolsheviks had taken away from the dioceses and parishes various documents, church registers and archives. The archives and church registers taken away from the dioceses and parishes were now indispensable to the ecclesiastical authorities. The Conference of Bishops therefore requested the return of this property to the diocese and parishes without further delay.

The Bishops further pointed out that owing to the transfer of property from its rightful owners and the report that further evictions were to take place, these parish and ecclesiastical documents were of urgent importance.

### Deported Workers

2. The second point of the Memorandum concerned the situation of the Lithuanian workers deported to work in German industry in the Reich. The Bishops observed that most of the workers were Catholics. When exhorted to go to Germany, they have been promised that Lithuanian priests would be appointed to care for their religious needs. The Conference of Bishops stated, to their great sorrow, that these promises, although repeated many times, have not been kept; the priests appointed for this purpose had not received permission to perform their duties. Thus the Bishops by virtue of their position called the attention of the Commissar-General to this fact and asked him to take the necessary measures to keep the Germans to their promise.

3. The third point dealt with the German order to enlist the graduates of Lithuanian higher schools for labor service abroad. There they would be without any care from their parents and without religious and moral support. Still more dangerous, according to the Bishops' opinion, was the intention of sending young girls to labor service in Germany. This would damage their health and corrupt their morals in a still higher degree than those of the young men. The despatch of the younger generation to foreign countries would be regarded by the Lithuanian people as an infringement of the rights of parents.

Having made such a statement the Bishops declared that they were expressing not only their own anxiety and concern but also those of the parents. The Lithuanian parents, it was said, could not forget the measures taken to encourage enlistment of young men to the labor service by means of alcohol, tobacco, etc. The Lithuanian people and all Bishops were certain that the young men and girls would do their labor service to the best purpose in their own country.

### Obstacles to Education

4. In the fourth point the Bishops attacked the German authorities for the obstacles placed in the way of theological education in Lithuania. They pointed out that during the 1941-42 academic year the normal studies at the Theological Faculty had been disturbed. In spite of the often repeated promises to give the Lithuanian people full freedom in the domain of education, the Faculty, the Bishops observed, had met with difficulties that had not been overcome. Further it was stated that the position of the theological faculty at the University of Kaunas had been secured by the Concordat and Lithuanian law from the very foundation of this University. Therefore the Bishops declared that in accordance with the legal basis and with the needs of Catholics, the Bishops were unable either to change the legal status of the Theological Faculty or to renounce the right to it.

The memorandum touched on the present situation of the Lithuanian Universities in Kaunas and Vilnius and explained that both of them were great cultural achievements of the free Lithuanian people. Therefore there were no groups, nor any individuals in Lithuania, who were not interested in the existence of these universities.

5. The fifth point of the memorandum was devoted to the activity of religious circles in Lithuanian schools. The Bishops emphasized that in spite of the fact that scientific circles were being permitted in the Lithuanian school, religious circles were forbidden. Thus pupils were not allowed to increase their knowledge in religious and moral matters. Parents and all Catholics regarded such an unequal treatment of the school circles as a persecution of religious convictions.

6. In the following section the Bishops expressed their point of view on the difficulties of the Catholic Press in Lithuania under the German regime. This press had ceased to exist although



many requests to recommence publishing Catholic newspapers, so numerous before the war, had been handed to the German authorities. The Lithuanian Catholic population noticed with astonishment that while luxury papers, read only by a small group of the local inhabitants, were published in Lithuania, the Catholic population, though in a great majority, was not allowed to publish a simple paper. The Bishops therefore impressed upon the Commissar-General the necessity for one weekly popular magazine and one monthly review for the clergy and educated classes.

### Ask Return of Property

According to the declaration of the Bishops, this matter was of great importance. The Catholics had their own printing offices acquired by donations and loans. These donations and loans were attended by certain obligations. The present managers of the nationalized printing offices were unable to meet these obligations. The printing offices should be returned to their legal owners at once.

7. Finally the memorandum demanded general religious freedom and freedom of action to the Church in its special sphere. If even there were no Concordat with the Holy See, the Bishops emphasized, the Church would still have the right of establishing Catholic organizations, so necessary for religious action.

The memorandum closed with the expression of hope that the Commissar-General would take necessary measures to solve all the above mentioned questions in the near future.

### THE GERMAN FAILURE IN LITHUANIA.

*Aftonbladet*, Stockholm, 7. 6. 43. — Gunnar Muellern, in an article on conditions in the Baltic countries, writes: The Lithuanians have energetically refused to form military units of volunteers to fight against the Bolsheviks. Commissioner-General von Renteln was forced to recognise this failure; the Lithuanians claimed the guarantees of their independence, a unanimous front has been established against all attempts at enlistment, and the Catholic Church is also in the opposition.

In a communique on March 17th, 1943, Renteln said while the Estonians and Latvians had been fighting Bolshevism, the Lithuanians had not responded to the German appeal, thus acting not only against the community of Europe but also against their own vital interests, for Lithuania, owing to her geographical position, is threatened more by the Bolsheviks than Germany is. **Renteln therefore, abandoned the idea of forming a Lithuanian Legion.** The communique goes on to say that all the Lithuanian High Schools and Universities will be closed. Many members of the Self-Government, professors, teachers, priests and soldiers have been arrested. A large number of

Lithuanian students has been transferred to concentration camps in Germany.

One of the first German measures in Lithuania was to dissolve the National Government which had been formed to fight the Russians in 1941. This was followed by the prohibition on displaying the national flags and a warning against any illusions being made to the fact that Lithuanian independence might ever be restored; instead the country was assigned a role in the confederation of States to be set up after the war under the title of "Ostland," with Rosenberg at its head. Russian nationalised property was not restored to its legal owners, industries and banks have been taken over by "Treuhaender." The Lithuanians are deeply resentful.

Under the impression of the reverses on the eastern front the Germans decided last winter to change their policy towards the occupied eastern territories with the object of availing themselves of manpower to counteract the losses on the Fronts, and the Ukrainians, Estonians and Latvians responded to some extent to German propaganda, but the Lithuanians flatly refused. The Germans approached the Lithuanian General Raštikis for assistance but he refused, and the Lithuanian Self-Government held a session to consider the Germans' appeal when the resolution was passed that they would not participate in any military initiative so long as the Germans did not show willingness to guarantee the Lithuanians their independence.

The Germans resented this and, seeking a compromise, they sent the members of the Lithuanian Self - Government to Riga on February 22nd, 1943, where they were received by the SS chief in Latvia Jaekel, who said that he had been authorised to negotiate only military problems as distinguished from political ones. The Lithuanians insisted on their point and Jaekel finally proclaimed that Lithuanian Legions would be formed against the wish of the Lithuanians. Shortly afterwards Renteln in Kaunas announced the order to form a Lithuanian Legion.

Prospective soldiers did not report and clandestine Lithuanian organizations set to work.

The Gestapo chief, Jaeger, sent to the Archbishop at Kaunas, Skvireckas, to solicit the support of the Church for recruiting but the Archbishop refused. Posters bearing the names of Renteln, Major-General Just and SS General Wysocki summoning the men to enlist were without result. At last the occupying authorities succeeded in obtaining the consent of three out of nine of the members of the Self-Government to sign an appeal for recruiting, the remainder continued to object while the Lithuanian youth still did not respond. The publication of Renteln's above-mentioned communique was the result. At the same time he blamed the Lithuanian intellectuals for the failure of the recruiting; mass arrests followed, first the members of the Self-Government were arrested for refusing to sign the appeal for recruiting. The entire Lithuanian intellectual elite is



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1943, Nr. 5

now imprisoned and the universities in Kaunas and Vilna, the Academy of Science in Vilna, the Academy of Arts in Vilna, the Institute of Veterinary Surgeons in Kaunas, the agricultural school in Dotnauva, the Music Academy in Vilna, the Commercial High School, and many teachers' and priests' seminaries have been closed. Finally the occupying authorities announced that no Russian nationalised property will be allotted to those who refuse to take active part in the struggle against the Bolsheviks.

Editor's note. — Analysing the German procedures in Lithuania, we stated on June 23 (see the "Lithuanian Bulletin" Nr. 4 page 4) that the Germans were largely using the "divide — and — conquer" policy. In this connection we mentioned the case of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, where each country was set up as an example to the other.

Obviously, the above given quotation, dated March 17, taken from the communique of von Renteln represents a typical pattern of that tortuous strategy.

## NEWS FROM ESTONIA

To show the similarities of German procedures and the extraordinary analogy of popular reaction throughout the Baltic countries, we are reprinting excerpts from the July issue of "Meie Tee", an Estonian monthly, published in New York. In it we see how the Estonian people react against the compulsory mobilization into the Estonian Legion and other military units:

It is well known how little success German propaganda for voluntary enlistment of Estonian citizens into the Estonian Legion has met, although this propaganda has been carried out with great intensity and supported by every conceivable means of indirect pressure and coercion. The same tenacious passive resistance that was opposed to the propaganda campaign for voluntary enlistment, now meets the compulsory measures with which occupation authorities and their lackey Dr. Mae are forcing Estonian young men into the Legion. The country is flooded with underground leaflets and papers in which the falsehood of German propaganda is unmasked and Estonian citizens are enjoined upon to abstain from supporting the war efforts of Nazi Germany. Some quotations from these papers and leaflets give an idea of the state of mind in Estonia at present.

A leaflet that is being widely spread all over the country, answers point by point the question: "Why an Estonian will not join the Estonian Legion?" The most essential points in this answer briefly summarized sound as follows:

1. The Germans declare that they are strong enough to crush the Bolsheviks by themselves. If so, why ought we, Estonians, to be eager to join the Legion? Moreover, we can be sure that we will be used in battles anywhere else but not for the defense of our home country.

2. Every man at home will be a fighter, when defending the front of his own country, than any one thousand meters far away from the home country, if the latter be the best trained and provided with best modern arms.

3. At the conclusion of peace no one will take into account our merits which we have performed in the past. The only thing that will be reckoned with is our strength at that moment. Let us therefore spare and preserve our strength!

4. One avoids mentioning volunteers' prowess now. What reason have we to believe that it will be recognized and praised later on?

5. For the present time the Germans need us, but still they withhold recognizing our natural rights. Why should they grant us any rights after they do not need us any more?

6. It is not our "duty or honor" to conquer, for instance, the Ukraine, for the German Reich. Our only duty of honor is to defend the frontiers of our own country.

7. The Estonian Legion is not any national military unit, it belongs unconditionally to Adolf Hitler, as is expressly stated in the text of the oath of allegiance which the legionnaires have to make to the Fuehrer.

8. When two powers, both hostile to us, are combating each other, then we have to wait for the right moment in order to restore the Estonian Republic!

## UNDERGROUND LITHUANIA

In our issue of June 23 (page 8) we were referring to the existence of a vast underground movement in Lithuania. Now we are in position to inform that this movement is headed by so called "Supreme Council of Liberation", itself composed of the representatives of all Lithuanian political parties.

Moreover, we are learning that the Supreme Council of Liberation is in touch with Lithuanian circles in Sweden and England.

## EASTERN FORTIFICATIONS

In our Bulletin of May 15, under the headline "Lithuanian Wall is in construction" we gave some information about the building of a presumed line of fortifications along the eastern boundary of Lithuania.

Now we are learning that in the beginning of June "The fourth Lithuanian Pioneer Battalion (Baubataillon), formed by the Commander of the "Sicherungsgebiet Litauen" was given a send-off for the Eastern Front. The Commander of the Battalion, Major Černius, paraded his men before German Major General Just. The Battalion has been incorporated in the German armed forces."

In our issue of June 23 in an editorial on the failure of German mobilization in Lithuania we wrote that a special mention should be reserved for the battalions of "Lithuanian engineers" etc.