

... 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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LAI DZIVO BRIVA UN NEATKARIGA LATVIJA!

On the Silver Anniversary of the Declaration of Independence by the People of Latvia, the Lithuanian National Council extends its fraternal felicitations to the Latvian People.

The Latvians and the Lithuanians are Peoples of the same origin, speaking closely related languages. Our ancestors had jointly stood off the Teutonic onslaught and shed their freemen's blood in defence of their freedom not only at Durbe and Šiauliai in the XIII century, but in 1794, 1812, 1831 and 1864. Our present generations have jointly defended their human rights in 1905, their national independence in 1919, and since 1941 our Peoples are fighting in a close alliance, even if not reduced to a solemn treaty, for their heritage as freemen and for the restitution of their sovereignty.

Our destinies are one, and our aspirations are one. The Atlantic Charter is our Peoples' battle cry by adoption, and may the year 1944 bring the liberation of Latvian, Estonian and Lithuanian Peoples and the restoration of their sovereignty in a happy family of independent democratic nations!

New York, November 18, 1943

THE BALTIC NATIONS WILL NEVER DIE

By DR. A. BILMANIS
Envoy Extraordinary and Minister
Plenipotentiary of Latvia,
Washington, D. C.

During the twenty-two years of their independence (from 1918 to 1940) the right of the Central Baltic Republics Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania to be independent has never been questioned. It was internationally agreed that they had the same natural right to live an independent life as all other European states. The Political Committee of the League of Nations endorsed the admission of the Baltic States to the League on September 22, 1921, on the grounds that these states possessed all the usual prerequisites of independent states:

1. The Baltic peoples are ethnographically homogeneous and are the indigenous population of their countries. They are neither Teutons nor Slavs, and they certainly are not Russians. They speak genuine languages of their own: the Latvians and Lithuanians speak languages derived directly from the ancient Sanscrit and are considered to form the Baltic branch of the Indo-European family of languages; the Estonians speak a Finno-Ugric dialect. The Baltic peoples also have a different faith than the Russians: they are Roman Catholics and Protestants, whereas the Russians are Greek Orthodox.

2. The Baltic peoples have inhabited their own territories from times immemorial, and occupy more than one thousand miles of the northeastern sea coast of the Baltic. They have never been integral parts of Russia, the latter having forcibly occupied the Baltic States only after the downfall of Napoleon in 1813. Moreover, there are in Europe thirty one independent states, many of which are smaller than the Baltic States. Latvia, for example, ranks nineteenth among the European states.

3. The Baltic States have their own national governments. Already in 1917 they proclaimed their full self-determination, and in 1918 they organized their national administrations. They elected constituent assemblies, adopted constitutions, and since then have lived an organized state life. They have their own national anthems, coats of arms, flags, envoys abroad, and monetary systems.

In 1920 Germany and Soviet Russia voluntarily recognized the independence of the Baltic States, Soviet Russia particularly emphasizing the principle of the self-determination of nations.

Shortly thereafter all the world recognized them. Also the United States recognized them unconditionally.

On their part the Baltic States of their own free will granted the most liberal cultural autonomy to their national minorities. They rebuilt their devastated countries without outside help, and soon became economically prosperous. Their economic relations with other states continued to grow. The Baltic States were always good neighbors, particularly of Soviet Russia, to which they granted tax free transit over their ail — and waterways and through their ports. Railway tariffs were reduced even below local ones.

The Baltic States strictly adhered to their international obligations. They accepted the decisions of the World Court and of the Hague Tribunal of Arbitration. They respected the decisions of the International Labor Organization, and ratified all the conventions concerning labor, hygiene, etc.

The Baltic States established the closest mutual relations, which culminated in 1934 at Geneva in the signing of the Treaty of Closer Collaboration and Better Understanding, or the Baltic Entente, this pact being open to other nations. They accepted the Eastern European pact of collective security proposed by Soviet Russia. Their motto was to live and to let live, without interfering in other peoples' affairs.

The Baltic nations in general are serious, hard working farming peoples, and are basically economically minded. They believe in family life, religion and private property, which they have earned by hard toil. They want to be free and to govern themselves. The Baltic peoples have never desired to be "liberated" from their preferred mode of life. The Bolsheviks came in uninvited. They occupied the Baltic countries in June 1940 by unprovoked military aggression. Anti-soviet elements were killed or deported to Siberian forced labor camps by scores of thousands. The Baltic States were bolshevized by force of arms. This was done in so barbarous and scandalous a fashion, disregarding all decency, that the great powers indignantly repudiated these acts of Bol-

A PUBLIC APPEAL

TO:

THE HON. FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT,
THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,
and
THE HONORABLE CORDELL HULL,
THE SECRETARY OF STATE,
WASHINGTON, D. C.

WE, AMERICAN PEOPLE associated in the LITHUANIAN AMERICAN COUNCIL of GREATER NEY YORK, — loyal parents, brothers and sisters of American fighting men and women, and taxpayers doing their best in the war effort to hasten the victory of American arms and ideals, — APPEAL to our representative Government to stand by its pledged principles.

shevik satraps backed by the G. P. U. and the Red army.

After ten months of ruthless communist oppression the Germans invaded the Baltic countries, purportedly to liberate them from the Bolsheviks, and then simply followed their example. They even perform their bloody deeds in the same G. P. U. dungeons and torture chambers that the Bolsheviks had established. A Baltic patriot is hated by Bolsheviks and by Nazis alike, and vice versa, the Baltic peoples hate nazism and communism. The Baltic peoples, however, have not lost their courage. There have been times in their history when similar foreign oppression had scourged them, but they have endured and have emerged with new moral forces.

We strongly hope that also after this great trial by God the Baltic peoples will regain their strength and again become free. They have a right to freedom and independence like all other nations. It is absolutely inconceivable that the civilized world could tolerate a situation whereby decent, God fearing people would be sacrificed and "ceded" to the Bolsheviks only because the latter were attacked by the Nazis and were thus compelled to fight. It is evident that without the help of the great Democracies — the bombing of Germany and the occupation of Africa and Italy — the predicament of the Bolsheviks would be far more serious. It is very doubtful who should pay whom.

To our understanding the idea stressed by the Democracies of a postwar world organization which would include all states, big and small, is the only real solution of the peace problem and also of the Baltic problem.

The hope of all small nations of the world are now concentrated on the United States of America, the shrine of the high ideals of international law and justice. The great American people, which has proclaimed the principles of self-determination, the Atlantic Charter and the Four Freedoms, will not fail the small nations.

The wish of all Baltic States is to see peace restored in the world, freedom assured, and goodwill reigning among nations.

The American People owe no apology to any foreign state or people for our ways of life, and for our insistence on the application of democratic principles to international relations and in the postwar peace settlement. Our Declaration of Independence proclaimed equality of men, and the recent Four-Power Declaration at Moscow admits, in theory, the equality of sovereign states, large and small. The Atlantic Charter expressed the principles essentially derived from the Declaration of Independence, and our men and women on the fighting fronts and on the home front readily accepted the Atlantic Charter in all seriousness as deserving their sacrifices. Our firm faith and pride in our Government's war-peace policies were well

justified. Recently, however, grave doubts beset our confidence.

In totalitarian one-party countries a public opinion is molded entirely by self-imposed governments, whereas the American People enjoy their independence and freedom of thought. The American People remember the developments abroad that had led to the present war, and will not succumb to misrepresentations frantically poured forth by editors, columnists and commentators of recent origin to confuse them. Omission in some official publications and film releases of certain phases of events fixing, in part, the responsibility for war and aggression upon our Russian Ally against our European enemies, will not cause the American People to forget the acts of aggression by the Soviet Union against Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Finland and Rumania, and the statements by the President and the Department of State in condemnation of those acts.

We, the People, did not hesitate to express our horror at Soviet brutalities, disregard of Divine and human laws, violation of freely assumed international treaties, massacres and mass deportations of innocent Poles, Lithuanians, Latvians and Estonians into the Arctic and Siberian regions of Russia. We were indelibly impressed when more than ninety percent of the inhabitants of Finnish areas ceded to Russia in 1940 left their ancestral lands and homes to eke out a new life in poverty in the interior of Finland, rather than become slaves and suffer oppression worse than death. We recognized the immortality of human struggle for freedom when the Lithuanians, Latvians and Estonians rose up in arms and reasserted their sovereignty as soon as first shots had been fired between the two erstwhile dictatorial allies. We were proud to note the spirit of forgiveness and magnanimity of the Poles when they extended their hand in friendship to Russia as soon as the Russians had been obliged to fight on the side of the Democracies, hitherto loathed and abused by Soviet leaders. We admired the brave fight of the Russians in defense of their own homes, and we readily approved the extension of lend-lease to Russia by our Government.

Alas, our Government is presently wavering in the battle over the principles for which it stood so firmly up to now.

Our Government is reluctant to state, in no uncertain terms, its views upholding the sovereignty of small Christian states bordering on Russia in the West, while Russia, shameless and unblushing, is boldly announcing its claims to the loot gained in a joint enterprise with Hitler. Official pronouncements promise the punishment of war criminals of Germany, of satellite enemy nations, and of various quislings and collaborators in the occupied countries of member-states of the United Nations. But there is immunity for Soviet criminals whose evil deeds had destroyed or disrupted the lives and fortunes of millions of innocent people. Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia

are excluded from the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Conference, held on the American soil under the auspices of our Government. Russia is admitted into international commissions to share in the Allied Military Government and control over the occupied Western European countries, but our Government does not firmly insist on the extension of a joint Allied control over non-Russian territories likely to be occupied by the Russian armies, specifically in Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland. Democracy and free elections are promised for enemy countries and for peoples of Western and Southern Europe, but no such promise is given to our allies and friends, the suffering peoples of North-Eastern Europe. In fact, according to published press dispatches, our Secretary of State is reported to have stated that much will depend on what particular army will first come into occupation there, and that there will be no free opportunity for the peoples to decide under what flag they choose to live — which, if true, would be tantamount to a consent, in advance, to an uncontrolled Russian occupation of Poland and of the Baltic States.

WE, THE PEOPLE, CALL UPON THE PRESIDENT AND THE SECRETARY OF STATE:

That our Government, separately or jointly with Great Britain and the Soviet Union, reiterate its stand for the independence and territorial inviolability of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland.

That our Government insist on the occupation by American and British naval and military forces of all territories brought into dispute by Russia's claim for territorial aggrandizement at the expense of Poland and the Baltic States.

That our Government use its good offices to provide adequate safeguards that the anticipated intermediate Russian occupation of disputed Polish and Baltic territories will be strictly a military occupation, under an international control and in compliance with the provisions of the International Law governing military occupations.

That our Government demand immediate release of all Polish, Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian nationals presently held incommunicado by the Russian authorities, and insist on extension of facilities of the American Red Cross to give its direct relief and to supervise the re-evacuation of these victims of aggression.

That our Government demand that Allied Military Government officials and United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Agencies accompany the Russian troops on their march into Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia.

That our Government firmly propose that Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia be immediately admitted to full membership in the United Nations and in the Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, and that it provide facilities to form provisional Governments — in — Exile to represent those countries.

NEWS FROM THE OCCUPIED BALTIC STATES

A. ECONOMIC EXPLOITATION OF THE BALTIC STATES BY THE GERMANS

1. Increased food production in the Baltic

From the news dated August 7, we are informed:

A threefold quantity of milk and eggs is now surrendered by the farmers in the central sector of the eastern occupied areas, governed by the military authorities, according to information from Berlin. In the case of root crops, the increase is reported to amount to 28%, that of winter corn to 11% and that of summer corn to 18%. These favourable conditions are said to be the consequences of the new "agrarian reform", providing the restoration of private ownership, hence the stimulated private initiative. The provisioning of the civil population and the German army group, "Mitte", from this area has already been secured.

2. Livestock Slaughtered Because Fodder Inadequate.

Following Svenska Dagbladet, of 22. 8. 42, the German occupying authorities in the Baltic States have ordered the slaughter of more livestock, maintaining that livestock must be kept in proportion to the fodder and grain available. Slaughterhouses in Lithuania have been placed under German experts; 50 special plants are being installed, which enable an increased quantity of fat to be extracted from the carcasses.

Previously there has been no mention of the failure of crops, which is quite contrary to the reported satisfactory yield. Mass slaughtering is believed to be due either to the need for the increased quantities of meat to feed the mass influx of bombed out Germans or in anticipation of large requisitions of fodder for Germany.

3. The fate of German evacuees from USSR

We have news, that the Gebietskommissar of Vilna-Land issued the following order on October 14th: accommodation, maintenance and general care of people evacuated from Soviet territory to the Ostland will be entrusted to the local authorities when those concerned are not in the position to earn a livelihood. Everyone must take care of evacuees if ordered to do so by the authorities. In the case of disagreement with the authorities, complaints must be addressed to the senior official of the local administration. The decision of the Chief of the Kreis is final. Farmers are obliged to provide evacuees with proper food. Evacuees receive food ration cards. If circumstances permit, they will be placed on a farm which is self-sufficient. Foodstuffs, supplied by the farmers to evacuees may be credited to the farm's delivery quotas. Farmers may ask evacuees to perform agricultural work on the farm. The authorities

may employ those evacuees pl...
mers for non-agricultural wor...

The order of December 10th, the employment of Eastern workers (Ostarbeiter) in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, and its supplement of July 31st, 1943, must be applied in such cases. Expenses incurred by farmers and others in charge of evacuees, which are not compensated by the work of the evacuees, will be reimbursed by the local authorities. The latter in their turn will be duly compensated for such expenditure. Local administrative authorities are authorised to impose a tax up to RM 100 for the execution of the necessary measures; those contributions will be collected as public taxes. Those who disobey the authorities in the execution of these orders or who refuse to receive evacuees or who do not supply sufficient or proper food, will face imprisonment up to six weeks or a maximum fine of RM 1,000. The order comes into force from October 1st.

B. LITHUANIANS UNDER GERMAN YOKE

1. Curfew for Lithuanians

From a paper dated October 11, 1943 we are reading this:

"The time has come to remind the public of the curfew which was proclaimed by the Reich Commissioner on September 6th, 1941, for non-German inhabitants in the General-Bezirk Litauen, prohibiting the urban population to be out of doors from 22.00 to 5.00 and the rural population from one hour after sunset to one hour before sunrise.

Exemption can be granted only with the consent of the Gebietskommissare. It has been repeatedly emphasised that disobedience will be punished drastically."

2. Lithuanian RAD "Volunteers" to Report

The Lithuanian men who on completion of the RAD service signed a contract engaging themselves as volunteers for service in the "Polizeiausbildungsbataillon Litauen" and who have not yet reported at the "Gruener Berg" barracks at Kaunas must do so immediately to start service. Those reporting before 18.00 on October 17th will go unpunished.

Punishment will be imposed on those who, evading the obligation, have failed to report within the above mentioned time... **If the RAD men flee, reprisals will be taken against their relations.** Application for their release from engagements cannot be considered for the time being.

Editor's note. RAD means Reich's Labour Service.

The above mentioned facts clearly show the conditions prevailing in Lithuania under German occupation and speak for themselves.

B. Blp (LKA) 1331
1943, N.B.