

... 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.M.  
bit

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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## Dr. P. Grigaitis, Executive Secretary of Lithuanian American Council ON THE SEIZURE OF KLAIPĖDA BY HITLER'S GERMANY

Five years ago, on the 22nd of March, 1939, Lithuania was coerced into yielding to Hitler's threat of force accompanying his demand that Klaipėda (Memel) be ceded to Germany. This was one of his acts of aggression against peaceful nations of Europe, preceding the present world conflict.

Just one week before that date, German army marched into Prague, to complete the destruction of Czechoslovakia, after she had been stripped of her border fortifications by the disastrous decisions of the Munich conference. The appeasement of aggressors, in the vain hope to preserve peace, was the guiding spirit in the foreign offices of the Great Powers, at that time.

It was, therefore, out of the question for Lithuania to seek the assistance of the signatory powers to the Memel Convention, when she was confronted with Nazi ultimatum. This "last territorial claim in Europe" by Germany, after the previous "last claim" against Czechoslovaks for Sudetenland, had to be satisfied, in spite of the fact that the German demand constituted a flagrant disregard of international treaties and obligations entered into by the Reich.

Germany had undertaken on her own initiative, in addition to her agreements with the Great Powers, to respect the sovereign rights of Lithuania over Klaipėda District, by signing a treaty with Lithuania, in Berlin, on January 29, 1928, which treaty has subsequently been duly ratified by Reichstag. And even Hitler himself had expressly confirmed the validity of this obligation by giving assurance to the British Prime Minister, in 1938, according to the statement by the Foreign Secretary, Sir Samuel Hoare, to the Parliament that Germany would not interfere in the internal affairs of Klaipėda.

The seizure of this Lithuanian territory by the Nazis dealt a heavy blow to the little Baltic State, depriving it of a valuable strip of land with 150,000 inhabitants, and of Lithuania's only seaport which handled 80% of her foreign trade; and, on top of it, Lithuania lost all her investments in Klaipėda's industries, in residential buildings and in harbor installations.

As soon as German army and Gestapo took over the District, 20,000 Lithuanian workers, employees and businessmen were expelled, and the same was done to 4,000 Jews. The Nazi rule of terror and plunder was inaugurated.

Now all of Lithuania is under the heel of German militarism whose arrogance and mad thirst for power has plunged the world into a bloody mess. Only the utter defeat of this evil force can restore freedom to the enslaved peoples of Europe and open the road to a lasting peace.

To achieve this end, the Lithuanian Americans will do their utmost in supporting the war effort of the United States. They hope that after the war Lithuania will again be a free and independent nation, firmly attached to the principles of democracy and international cooperation, and that to this Republic of Lithuania will be restored not only Klaipėda District but also that part of East Prussian territory which for centuries had been inhabited by the people of Lithuanian race.

## GERMAN PRETENSIONS TO LITHUANIA MINOR

By Rev. THOMAS G. CHASE

Author of "Significance of Ruthenian and Muscovite elements in Lithuanian History".

At present the people of the Republic of Lithuania are involved in a deathly struggle with the ruthless force of German arms, which have occupied the entire land and are intent upon converting it into an insignificant province of the

Great German Reich of the Nazis. However, this struggle is not a new one. It rather is a continuation of a battle that is more than eight hundred years old. Practically from the very first days of her appearance in world history as a sove-



reign and independent nation in 1226, Lithuania's relations with the Germanic elements of Europe have been unfortunately very unsatisfactory and most unhappy. This state of affairs persisted because of the German insistence upon annexing Lithuanian territories and absorbing or exterminating the Lithuanian populations of these areas. This same German tendency has been the major, if not the sole cause of the present war.

### The Knights of the Sword

In 1201, a quarter of a century before her organization as a political entity, Lithuania witnessed the Teuton invasion of the lands of the Letts, a branch of the Aistian race closely related to the Lithuanians. During succeeding years she saw these "crusading" Knights of the Sword, under the pretext of christianizing the Lettish peoples, subdue with amazing rapidity all the areas about the Dwina River, and create a loosely united political state of Livonia. During those same years she was called upon to resist the ever-increasing pretensions of these same German invaders to Lithuanian territories, which later formed the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Finally, she did succeed in crushing their power at the battle of Šauliai in 1236 under the leadership of her first king, Mindaugas (1226-1263). But so well and so strongly had the Knights of the Sword entrenched themselves in Lettish lands, that neither this nor subsequent Lithuanian victories were able to expel them from the shores of the Baltic. They continued to retain their ruling position in Livonia until the Muscovite and Swedish invasions of the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries.

### The Knights of the Cross

Meanwhile another force of German warriors, known as the Knights of the Cross, dangling false missionary ideals before the eyes of an unsuspecting world, established themselves at Kulm along the Vistula River at the invitation of the Mazovian prince, Conrad. And in 1231, under their Grand Master, Hermann von Balke, they initiated a campaign of systematic annihilation against the peoples dwelling between the Vistula and the Pregel Rivers, called the Old Prussians, another branch of the Aistian race, and also intimately related by blood and language to the Lithuanians. Within fifty-two years, these Teutonic Knights not only completely subjugated the Old Prussians (1282), not only assumed the name of their vanquished victims, but likewise laid the foundations and the basis for the future German kingdom of Prussia and the modern Prussian province of Greater Germany. Furthermore, they even crossed the Pregel and the Nemunas (Niemen) Rivers into Lithuanian territory, and incorporated this area which later, together with the Suvalkai district was to be known as **Lithuania Minor**, into the German-Prussian political unit.

### The story of Lithuania Minor

The history of the Aistian peoples in this small area of Lithuania Minor is of extreme interest. It is mainly a tale of German aggression, calculated to suppress every non-German instinct. Historians perhaps will never be able to make quite clear to the world at large just exactly how

close were the relations of the extinct Old Prussians to the Lithuanians and the Letts. The same may be said of the defunct Aistian group of the Yadvings, who were practically destroyed by the joint efforts of the Ruthenians, Poles and the Teutonic Knights (1283). Yet that all these four peoples (old Prussians, Lithuanians, Letts and Yadvings) did feel and recognize the actual existence of an intimate bond of language and blood among them is verified by Peter of Dusberg, member of the Knights of the Cross. In his *Chronicles* Peter speaks of assemblies and congresses held by these four branches of the Aistian race at Romova, their social and religious center, for the purpose of arranging common political action, in spite of their occasional personal quarrels.

The Lithuanians, who alone of the Aistians survived the onslaught of foreign invasion to construct an expansive empire in the Middle Ages, extending from the Baltic to the Black Sea, conscious of this common bond, repeatedly indicated that only unwillingly would they surrender Lithuania Minor. They consistently made serious efforts to unite the remnants of the four branches into a common state. Numerous were the times that Mindaugas, the first Lithuanian ruler, sought to free the Letts, especially those living west of the Dwina, from the yoke of the German Knights of the Sword. He likewise sent re-enforcements and gave his assistance to the Old Prussians in their frequent revolts against their German conquerors. His policy was continued by his successors Treniota (1263-64) and Traidenis (1269-82). And when the Teutonic Knights had pushed their conquests beyond the River Pregel, the River Nemunas became the natural line of defense for the Lithuanians. Many also were the refugees who fled from the areas invaded by the Knights across the Nemunas (Niemen) and into Lithuania Proper, where the power of the Grand Duke still remained supreme.

Lithuania has never given up her claims to the territory which lies between the Pregel and the Nemunas and Klaipėda (Memel), inhabited by tribes formerly known as the Sambians, Nadrovians and Skalovians, or to that section east of the Prussians, south of the Nemunas, formerly called Sudavia, known today as the Suvalkai district, whose original population consisted of the Yadvings, the fourth branch of the Aistian race. Consequent historical events indicate that only one of two judgements can be passed on the people of Sambia, Nadrovia and Skalovia and Sudavia (Lithuania Minor): **either** these areas were occupied originally by the same Lithuanians who were united under King Mindaugas **or**, if not, then the ethnic character of these people was much more identical with that of the Lithuanians than we have been led to believe by some historians. Numerous facts substantiate this view.

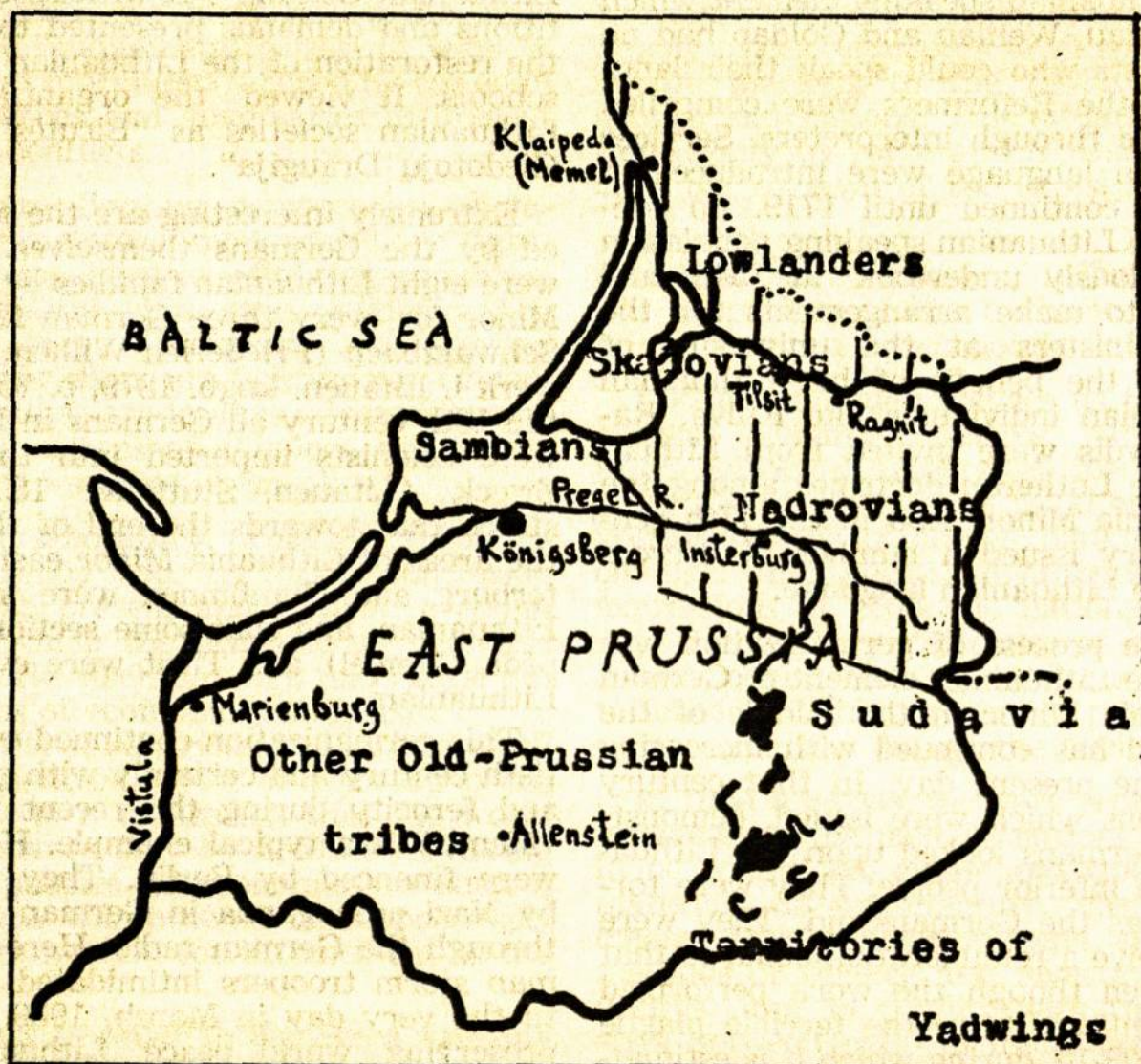
**First of all**, one undeniable fact is that until the 18th century the inhabitants of the eastern sections of East Prussia were predominantly Lithuanian. In spite of the fact that the chroniclers have described Sudavia as reduced to a wilderness and attest that German brutality was heaped upon the peoples between the Pregel and the Nemunas, nevertheless it is preposterous to



claim that every living original inhabitant of those areas was put out of existence. If all the machines and instruments of modern warfare with all their devastating effects permit the survival of proportionately large numbers of war zone residents, then certainly the 13th and 14th century warfare of the Germans did not destroy all the inhabitants, whose descendants, unless germanized, would today indicate the real ethnic character of the original people. Likewise, if the Letts, remaining under foreign domination for eight centuries, still emerged as a distinct linguistic and national unit closely akin to the Lithuanians despite of utterly different cultural and po-

a century old struggle against the Germans, simply because the Teutons flatly refused to cede to Lithuania their conquered areas between the Pregel and the Nemunas. And just as German domination continued under the Knights of the Sword in Livonia, so did it entrench itself in Old Prussian territory and Lithuania Minor under the Knights of the Cross. Even though the warring German "monks" were crushed at Grunwald by the united Lithuanian and Polish forces directed by Vytautas, Lithuanian Grand Duke (1392-1430), nevertheless these areas remained in German possession, with the exception of the Suvalkai district which however the Teutons did

**TERRITORIAL DISTRIBUTION OF WESTERN BRANCH OF AESTII PEOPLES  
(LITHUANIANS AND OLD-PRUSSIANS)**



**REFERENCE**

Shaded section indicates area still called by the Germans as "Littauische Kreis" (Lithuanian District).

litical development they had undergone, then it is quite possible for the people of Lithuania Minor, commonly designated as the Eastern Portion of East Prussia, after a slightly shorter period of German subjugation, to still retain their peculiar national characteristics. Furthermore, history reveals no mass migrations of Lithuanians into so-called East Prussia.

Again, Grand Duke Gediminas (1316-1341), by his treaty with Ladislas of Poland against the Teutonic Knights, showed that he looked upon the people of Lithuania Minor as Lithuanians. In 1358, during the reign of Grand Duke Algirdas (1345-1377), Lithuania refused to accept a proposed peace which would have brought to an end

annex for a space of twelve years in 1795 during the third partitions of the Polish-Lithuanian Republic.

Finally, history infallibly reveals the actual presence of real Lithuanians in large numbers in Lithuania Minor, Eastern section of East Prussia, that area between the Pregel and the Nemunas and Klaipėda (Memel). It was not long before the Teutonic Knights themselves recognized that their subjects east and north of the Pregel river were in reality Lithuanians, differing only in dialect from the Old Prussians, who had lived west of the Pregel where German colonization and process of extermination had been carried out more intensely. Continued wars with the Lithua-



nians prevented colonization of the eastern sections (Lithuania Minor). Its need, as a means of strengthening Teuton positions, was removed by the pact of Melno with Vytautas in 1422. And as documentary evidence shows the Knights remained quite contented with distinguishing between the rights of Lithuanians and the rights of "Prussians" in the eastern areas of their political unit. Both in reality were serfs and the German knights alone were the masters.

With the arrival of the Protestant Religious Reformation of the 16th century it became quite clear that the Teutonic Knights had not christianized the subjects of their domains. The only Christians were the Teuton overlords and the German colonists who were settled mainly in the west. But the Lithuanian speaking element which lived east of Labiau, Wehlau and Goldap had no ministers or priests who could speak their language. Therefore the Reformers were compelled to appeal to them through interpreters. Services in the Lithuanian language were introduced in these areas and continued until 1719. So predominant was the Lithuanian speaking population that Albert zealously undertook in 1546 and following years to make arrangements for the education of ministers at the university of Koenigsburg for the benefit of his Lithuanian subjects. Lithuanian individuals like Kulva, Rapalavičius, Mažvydis were invited from Lithuania to spread the Lutheran doctrines among the people of Lithuania Minor. And in the 17th century the Chancery issued a number of decrees and notices in the Lithuanian language.

The real active process of germanization was begun against the Lithuanian element of German occupied Lithuania Minor in the middle of the 17th century and has continued with increasing momentum to the present day. In that century various regulations which were issued, demonstrated that the Germans looked upon the Lithuanians serfs as an inferior people. They were forbidden to dress as the Germans did. They were forbidden to receive a remuneration equal to that of a German even though the work performed by both was identical. After the terrible plague and famine of 1709-10, during which it is estimated that one-third of the Lithuanian inhabitants of Lithuania Minor perished, a heavy infiltration of German colonists followed. These received the support of the government. They were strictly forbidden to adopt Lithuanian customs or speak the Lithuanian language. The Lithuanian tongue was either abolished or at best relegated to second place in the churches. Only in Koenigsburg, Tilsit and Klaipėda did three churches remain where the use of the Lithuanian to the exclusion of the German was permitted. In addition to these attacks upon the Lithuanian element through such vital sources as religion and social life, the years 1865-1873 witnessed the official elimination of the Lithuanian language from the schools of German occupied Lithuania Minor. Living under such conditions imposed by their German masters, it is only natural that gradually a vast number of the Lithuanians were germanized and absorbed by the Germans. A rather strange deed

for a people dreaming of supermen and race purity!

But the Lithuanian element of Lithuania Minor did not yield to this brazen attack upon their nationality without first offering a stubborn resistance. The 18th century witnessed the publication of Lithuanian dictionaries and grammars and other literary works. It saw the rise of one of the leading Lithuanian poets, Duonėlaitis (1714-1780). The 19th century brought the co-operation of these German ruled Lithuanians with the Renaissance movement which at that time was sweeping over Russian occupied Lithuania Proper. It saw the appearance of Lithuanian papers as "The Traveler" (Keleivis), "Thoughts about the Gospel" (Nusidavimai apie Evangelijos prasiplatinimą tarp žydų ir pagonių), "The Lithuanian Ceitung". It witnessed a series of petitions and demands presented to the Kaiser for the restoration of the Lithuanian language to the schools. It viewed the organization of purely Lithuanian societies as "Birutės" and "Lietuvių Giedotojų Draugija".

Extremely interesting are the statistics gathered by the Germans themselves. In 1736 there were eight Lithuanian families living in Lithuania Minor for every three German families. Beheim-Schwarzbach (Friederich Wilhelm I. Colonisation-werk i. Litauen. knbg. 1879, p. 75) stated that in the 18th century all Germans in Lithuania Minor were colonists imported into that area. Again Zweck (Litauen, Stuttgart 1898, p. 139-140) stated that towards the end of the 19th century the areas of Lithuania Minor east of Labiau, Insterburg and Gumbinnen were still 40 to 70% Lithuanian, and that some sections such as Klaipėda (Memel) and Tilsit were even 70 to 100% Lithuanian.

This germanization continued even in the twentieth century and certainly with greater intensity and ferocity during the recent years. Klaipėda (Memel) is a typical example. Here Nazi agents were financed by Berlin. They were supported by Nazi propaganda in German newspapers and through the German radio. Here uniformed German storm troopers intimidated the citizens until the very day in March, 1939, in the hope of preserving world peace Lithuania reluctantly yielded to Hitler's demands and surrendered Klaipėda with its hinterlands to Germany. How untrue were the accusations hurled at the Lithuanians in those days have now been demonstrated by Hitler's subsequent actions. No further comments are necessary. It may be added, however, that after this seizure of the Klaipėda territory, the first measure of the newly imported German administration was to post placards inscribed with the warning: "Hier gibt nur Deutsche Sprache!", that is, "Here only German may be spoken".

Lithuania realizes that German intrigues and German brutality in the course of eight centuries consummated the stealth of a large portion of Lithuania Minor. But she well knows that not all Lithuanians living there have been germanized. And certainly the restoration of Klaipėda and Tilsit-Ragnit to the pre-war Lithuanian Republic would be but a meager restitution for a robbery of major proportions!



## WORLD SECURITY THROUGH AMERICAN LEADERSHIP

JOHN TORPATS

While the citizens of the United States of America of all races and national origins are either fighting on the seven seas and five continents, or are engaged in equipping and feeding our armed forces as well as those of Russia, Britain and China, one would expect that under these circumstances our nation should have a definite objective to justify the sacrifices. Yet, so far we lack a program that could bring about a just and lasting peace, for the establishment we are supposed to be fighting for.

A glance at the world which followed the "war to end all wars" should convince everyone that wars have nothing to do with dictatorship or democracy, capitalism or communism, republics or monarchies. Likewise we need not waste time in search for the fundamental causes of wars in religious, racial, or moral issues—belied by the combinations of alliances and adversaries in present and past armed conflicts.

Democracies are fighting democracies, dictators are fighting dictators, monarchies are fighting monarchies, republics are fighting republics, white race is fighting white race, yellow race is fighting yellow race, Christians are fighting Christians, non-Christians are fighting non-Christians, yesterdays allies are to-days adversaries and all possible combinations of alliances and adversaries are formed amongst them all.

Application of laboratory principles to international relationships leads us to the conclusion that all wars—past, present and future—are essentially a way in which the principle of "survival of the fittest" works itself out on a mass scale under the conditions of economic nationalism.

The rank and file of American public, interested in the establishment of a just and lasting peace must be brought to a realization that the world can eliminate warfare only by definitely altering the underlying policies of economics in such a way that warfare will become an unnecessary and inappropriate method for attainment of the results desired.

This means that in order to achieve a just and lasting peace the public must adopt a definite and positive policy in national and international leadership. It should be clear by now that peace cannot be had or maintained simply by refusal to resort to war or by cultivation of the right spirit within individuals, any more than can pestilence or epidemics be wiped out by one's refusal to get sick or die.

Wars are but symptoms of barbaric international economic policies, and every plan or effort toward world security should concentrate its entire energy on elimination of the fundamental cause of war. Sincere workers for a lasting peace must stop wasting their energy in fighting symptoms and concentrate upon removing the fundamental sources of friction.

### Fundamental causes of all wars

Those of us who with open minds study wars and their recurrence in the lives of every na-

tion, and who discuss "pacifism" and various methods of "outlawing war", recognize more and more the fact that the causes of war are inherent in the primitive foundation of economic localism or nationalism, under communism and capitalism alike, and that they are not the outgrowth of bad temper, ambition, or desire for personal aggrandizement of some individual despot or tyrant. Rather are these tyrants the expressions of the world order based upon and ruled by the principle that "might makes right."

Economic nationalism expresses itself in the policy which attempts to fence off territories, natural resources, markets, trade routes, fields of investments for the exclusive exploitation of nationalistic vested interests, in order to obtain monopoly prices, monopoly profits and maintain monopoly markets to the disadvantage of other groups and nations. This situation can be maintained only by force and is based upon the principle of "survival of the fittest."

All such policies known as "Colonialism", "Imperialism" and "Sphere of Influence" are nothing but expression of the barbaric principle of economic localism or economic nationalism.

Likewise all such policies as tariff restrictions, quotas, exchange controls, currency manipulations, subsidies, embargoes, discriminatory legislations and confiscatory taxations on foreign investments, debauching of banking or credit mechanism for special advantages—, are blatant expressions of economic nationalism and constitute the fundamental cause of armed conflict in these modern times, just as much as the attempt to fence off fishing waters or pastures constituted a cause for war during the ancient times.

In final analysis, all wars represent conflict of interests on the part of nations to obtain better living conditions, closer and freer access to raw materials of manufacture, cheaper and better means of transportation routes, and more efficient methods of finance and investment. When these desires come in conflict with the economic barriers between political units, established for the benefit of vested interest, thus constitute the real cause for perpetual armed conflict; for these barriers are not based upon nationalization, but upon force.

### World — One Economic Unit

A glance at the globe and the location of various essential minerals and metals, the products of climate and soil, will convince us that by nature the world is one economic unit. There is not a single state or continent which can live in "economic isolation" or "economic self-sufficiency" from the rest of the world with the standard of living of modern civilization. And there are only two ways to establish free access to all natural resources: (1) by conquest of the entire world, or (2) by genuine economic cooperation. Thus far mankind has practiced the first method, and has continuously failed to establish a lasting



peace or conquest of the entire world by any one nationalistic group.

The second method implies complete and free access of all nations to the natural resources in every part of the world. Free access means free trade, stability of currency, sound banking mechanism - nationally and internationally, free access to capital markets and to the fields of investment, - complete destruction of all economic barriers between nations. Under such conditions all political units, large and small, throughout the world, can live in peace side by side with their neighbors, developing living standards as fast as the ability of each nation to produce and distribute efficiently and to trade economically will permit. This full freedom of production and trade we may justly call a "genuine economic internationalism," as contrasted with restricted production, restricted access to natural resources, restricted trade and investments of economic nationalism.

### Genuine Economic Internationalism

If all our efforts and sacrifices are not to become just another futile juggling; if all our blood, sweat and tears are not to be spent in the effort to destroy the menace of some dictators only by substituting their tyranny with that of others, we, as a nation must come to the realization that there is no substitute for war but a genuine economic internationalism.

Since wars are fundamental in a world governed by economic nationalism—a common characteristic of all nations—from prehistoric times to the present, we must bring about utter destruction of that tyranny. This means that if the world is to have a just and lasting peace, the "picnic of politics" in the fields of economic must come to an end, just as it has in other fields of natural sciences. Since economics is the science which combines all other sciences, one wanders why the mankind has tolerated political interference in this field for so long.

We must establish a national policy which will tell the world at large that this globe of ours must be governed by national economic policies which fully recognize the principle of "live and let live," through complete defeat of that barbaric inheritance known as "economic nationalism" — the common enemy of peaceful economic and cultural development, and the real source of all wars of aggression and defense.

### Foundation of Genuine Economic Internationalism

A genuine economic internationalism must be founded upon the basic "four pillars" of a just

and lasting peace, each of which represents an integral part of the whole. These are:

International Investment Union

International Monetary Union

International Tariff Union

International Investment Union.

The foundation, composed of the four organic units named, should constitute the "International Authority" of which many groups have been talking and writing about. Such an "Authority" would constitute the central control for the elimination of all international friction, ill-will and causes of aggression. Such an international authority, functioning as a body, with its branches in each and every country, free from local political pressure groups and vested interest, is nothing more nor less than recognition of the self-evident fact that modern nations live internationally; that the commercial, investment, monetary and banking policies are no longer national in their effect and influence, but international; that there must be some uniform application of sound and tested principles in all these fields; that the policies should not be dictated by any nation or group of nations, but rather they must be based upon the principles of soundness and justice to all.

These are the fundamental prerequisites of any just and lasting peace upon which the super-structure of culture and civilization of all nations can be built with its numerous ramifications and details. These "four pillars" constitute the supports and the controls of all other routine structure of political and social independence of nations. These are the needed changes and modifications in the foundation of modern economic life conducive to peaceful international development, for economic recovery, world reconstruction, and for full employment of capital and labor everywhere in the world. Unless we succeed in this all else will fail.

Substitute intellect for force in the field of economics, and the causes of aggression can be eliminated. Replace the barbaric principle of economic nationalism by a policy of "live and let live" and the present allies don't have to become adversaries to-morrow, since the "Freedom from want and fear" will be established on a sane and sound basis. Rid the world of the principle of "survival of the fittest" in the field of economics, and we shall then erase from our civilization the last barbaric vestige of pestilence.

The world is ripe for action. Let the United States furnish the leadership to which it is entitled for its sacrifice and efforts. The security of world requires an international economic Health Department, for which neither an ambulance or international charity is no substitute.

## FINLAND AND THE BALTIC STATES

The following is from a "Studies on Eastern Europe 1919—1939" chapter V, published by Friends Post-War Service Committee, Friends House, Euston Road, London, N. W. 1.

At a time when the Russians have borne the weight of the German onslaught it seems a mean reward to discuss Soviet Russia in any light other

than that of a brave and courageous country. Yet when the war is over there is little reason to hope that the Finns will not remain Finns and the Russians will not remain Russians. And if we are thinking of post-war reconstruction we must try, however difficult it may be, to rid our minds of a war psychosis. We cannot discuss Finland with-



out reference to Russia. It has always been a cardinal problem for the Finns stretching back to the dim ages when they steadily retreated to their present home in the face of Russian expansion to the north-west. Even as late as 1918 there were large groups of Finns clustered round Leningrad. This folk so taciturn as to make the Scot loquacious has never been warlike; in fact, leaving out of account the struggle against Communism in 1918, the war to resist the Russian attack in 1939 was the first in its history.

Until 1918 the Finns had never had their freedom, though under the Czars the country had had a large measure of autonomy. Before it was ceded to Russia it was more or less a Swedish province and the language of the ruling class was Swedish. But though the Swedes in Finland occupied a position not unlike that of the Baltic barons over the peoples of Estonia and Latvia, their rule displayed the great administrative qualities of the Vikings and not the "master-race" mentality of the Germans. For this reason, though the Finns on achieving freedom naturally wished to rid the country of Swedish influence, they willingly co-operated with the Swedes. And by their honesty, industry and integrity they earned for themselves the highest reputation in the commercial world. It is not without interest to note that the foreign trade of Finland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in 1938 amounted to \$585,000,000 while the foreign trade of Soviet Russia was \$513,000,000.

Few people are as honest as the Finns. The story goes that in a fight between Reds and Whites during the Communist Revolution one house was taken and retaken several times. When the owner took possession he found that not even a fork was missing. Perhaps the story is apocryphal, but what is certain is that in Finland no one locks the door of his house. They are a dour, taciturn, honest, clean and grim folk. Despite stringent laws against the blood-feud it existed till quite recent times. Knifing is still a way of settling private quarrels and the only really harmless Finnish knife is the boy-scout's knife. But the Finns are passionately democratic and today with the Germans virtually in control of their country their newspapers refused to be muzzled. Finland considers herself as belonging to the Scandinavian bloc and during her short period of freedom she proved herself worthy even of the high level of social and cultural reform set by Sweden.

#### **The Baltic States: Common Characteristics**

In 1938 a national festival was held in Latvia. The great open-air stage facing two to three hundred thousand spectators allowed scenes from Latvia history to be portrayed with full pageantry. But there was one unique feature in these episodes. The evil spirit which at a critical moment robbed the Lettish people of success in their fight through successive ages for independence was not some outside influence. It was symbolised in the evil old man of Latvia. A people which recognises that its weakness lies in itself has moral stamina. This self reliance is a typical feature of the three peoples of the Baltic States.

When the Estonians, the Latvians and the Lithuanians gained their independence in 1918 their respective countries had been wasted and pillaged. They were too small and too unknown for the international world to be interested in them. But with their own muscles and their own intelligence they turned their devastated lands into flourishing and healthy states. Their cooperative societies took advantage of scientific knowledge, with the result that their export of butter and bacon began to offer serious competition to the Danish products in the British market.

Estonia and Latvia have been the gateway between Europe and Russia. From the days of the amber trade of the classical age to the state control of commerce in Soviet Russia, merchants and goods have passed to and fro, while Germans, Poles, Swedes and Russians have waged wars and decimated the population on many an occasion to gain control of the strategic and economic position of this part of the Baltic. Yet centuries of foreign rule and oppression did not crush the spirit of these peoples. When the chance came they fought and won their right to live their lives in their own simple way and on their own soil. And when it achieved freedom, Estonia earned the reputation of being one of the best states in its treatment of minorities. To survive several centuries of servitude and to emerge tolerant is a contribution to the dignity of the human being.

So you are not dealing with some outlandish and backward tribes but with Europeans, with men and women who have the same standard of values as ourselves. The cleanliness of a peasant cottage in the Baltic States compares more than favourably with similar places in most countries. In Czarist days the people of St. Petersburg knew a Latvian regiment was mounting guard at the Palace. The windows off the barracks were clean. And few peoples are so passionately fond of flowers, as the neat flower beds on even small stations showed.

But centuries of oppression have left their mark on the mind. In the past the Baltic peoples have heard many high-flown phrases about the benefits they were going to receive from new rulers, but the only result was the same old condition of servitude. So they do not get enthusiastic about foreign plans for their benefit. On the other hand, they are touched by any interest taken in them. But while they will listen politely to your words it is your deeds they take as proof. Yet they are not suspicious by nature. They just wait and see what you do and how you do it before coming to a judgment. And if you look like doing the work well, they willingly co-operate, but you must be competent, for they are practical and intelligent folk. While on this subject of caution towards great plans for their benefit it must be quite definitely stated that there was one great plan in which they put their trust. It was the League of Nations. At the time of Munich the peoples of the Baltic States were ready to fight in defence of the League's principles. We may laugh at their puny strength, yet if everyone had realised the issue at stake as clearly as any simple Estonian, Latvian or Lithuanian peasant, the world to-day might have been different.



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### The Baltic States: Variations

Within the peoples of the Baltic States there are naturally some distinctions. Lithuanians and Latvians are of Indo-European stock, while the Estonians are descendants of an original Finnish branch of the Ural-Altaic family. Yet in a slight degree Estonians and Latvians seem to have more of a common outlook than the latter have with their racial cousins the Lithuanians. The causes of this similarity in outlook may be traced to geographical and historical bases. Estonians and Latvians are fisherfolk as well as peasants, and the configuration of their respective lands makes them lands of the Baltic sea like Finland and Sweden rather than parts of the continental hinterland. Both peoples have a common history in that they were subjugated by the German knights in the thirtieth century and remained under the domination of the Baltic German barons until they gained their freedom after the last war. And both peoples are Protestant.

The Estonians are a kindly and tolerant people with a streak of wisdom that is lacking in quite a number of great nations. Oppression has not made them cynical nor has it made them shun contact with other peoples. They are ready to co-operate. The Latvians are virile, hard-working, competent, with a talent for organisation. Their Red Cross organisation played a larger part in the nation's life than the Red Cross in any other country. Lotteries which elsewhere are run for the benefit of the State were the monopoly of the Red Cross, and with these funds a great network of centres of social relief was maintained.

The historical and geographical background of Lithuania is different from that of the other two Baltic States. Its limited coastline tended to make its people somewhat more continental in outlook, and this, together with Catholicism, produced some men with a wider range of vision than one is accustomed to expect in a small nation. The Lithuanians have indeed characteristics which show their kinship to the Latvians. They are practical, with their feet very much on the ground, and they have the same tenacity which generally enables them in the long run to get what they want. Yet often their hearts get the better of their heads and they genuinely appreciate any aid that is rendered. Their history also is different from that of the other two Baltic States. They have a great tradition of successfully defeating the repeated attempts of the German knights to subjugate them. But being practical people they concentrate their attention on the present and the future rather than on this past, which has led them to ever closer co-operation with the other Baltic States with which they have so much in common.

### The Baltic States: Recent Experience

All three peoples have shown their capacity to build up decent, clean and healthy homes, to provide education and social services, to improve economic conditions by co-operation and the use of science, and to find time, money and interest to develop the cultural side of life. In other words, they have proved their fitness to become members of a society of nations. And they proved their

readiness to undertake the duties of a member of a society of nations by fulfilling the requirements of the recommendations made by the League of Nations in the matter of sanctions at the time of the Italian attack on Abyssinia.

Within the last three years the Baltic States have had a repetition of their pre-independence days. Two foreign powers have overrun them ostensibly for benefit of the Baltic peoples. But the latter have heard this declaration so often in the past from foreign rulers. They do not believe and they do not like it. They know that it means the old servitude. Yet if they are allowed to survive as peoples on their own soil, the same tenacity to hold on till they could live as free men in possession of their own land, which they showed in the past, will manifest itself. Lord Acton's dictum, "Most great men are bad men," is echoed in the Baltic peoples' belief that "Most great nations are bad nations". It will look grim for the future of humanity if the small nations of Europe are forced to the conviction that all great nations are bad nations.

### The Four Countries: Relations With Europe

Finland and the Baltic States have this in common: they were all once part of the Russian Empire in the days of the Czars and they all fear Russian rule. Before we can understand these four peoples, there is one thing we must get clear in our minds. It is not Communism they fear. It is Russianism. For them the Russian way of life is not European, nor has it the European standard of values. The Finns were under Swedish rule, the Estonians and Latvians under German domination and the Lithuanians by their union with Poland came under Polish influence. But whatever form of tutelage each had they had one thing in common. Swedes, Germans and Poles belong to a European civilisation. When the oppressed peoples gained their freedom in 1918, they emerged as Europeans in spite of generations of foreign domination. And they wish to survive as Europeans.

### BOOKS ON LITHUANIA:

For a succinct analysis of the Lithuanian economy consult **THE ECONOMIC RECONSTRUCTION OF LITHUANIA AFTER 1918** by Anicetas Simutis (Columbia University Press, New York, 1942).

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Let's be acquainted with Lithuanian language! Reade: **THE LITHUANIAN LANGUAGE** by Alfred Senn of the University of Pennsylvania (Publication of the Lithuanian Cultural Institute, New York, 1942).

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