

27th ANNIVERSARY OF LITHUANIAN INDEPENDENCE — FEBRUARY 16th

. . . . 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

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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SOVIET RUSSIAN METHODS AND PROCEDURE

In Annihilating the Political Independence and Territorial Integrity of Lithuania in 1940

By The LITHUANIAN AMERICAN COUNCIL, Inc.

Lithuania was occupied by the Red Army on June 15, 1940, upon the expiration of a nine-hour ultimatum.

Faced with an alternative of either (a) opposing the unprovoked Russian aggression or (b) salvaging the vestiges of independence by accepting the ultimatum, the Lithuanian Government elected to attempt a full-scale collaboration with Russia, still being hopeful that the Kremlin would respect at least some of its solemnly pronounced international obligations.

In taking this line of action, the Lithuanian Government was fully aware that any armed resistance against the overwhelmingly stronger Red Army would only lead, sooner or later, to an internment of the Lithuanian Army in East Prussia and its surrender into protective custody of Nazi Germany — a perspective which Lithuania tried to avoid.

However, the functioning of the constitutional Government apparatus was placed **under duress** immediately after the occupation of Lithuania:

1. Moscow at once reorganized the Cabinet, under the direction of V. G. Dekanozov, Vice-Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union, who arrived in Kaunas by plane from Moscow on June 15, 1940.

2. Acting President Antanas Merkys was ousted from office, detained and, with his entire family, deported to Russia. Dekanozov installed one Justas Paleckis, an obscure communist newspaperman, in the dual office of "Premier-President" and packed the Cabinet of the new "People's

Government" with communists and persons subservient to Muscovite direction.

3. These developments initiated a series of swift operations, simultaneously and uniformly patterned in all three of the Baltic States, ultimately leading to the "incorporation" of the Baltic Republics in the Soviet Union:

- On July 6th elections into a "People's Diet" were decreed.
- "Elections" took place on July 14 and 15.
- The "People's Diet" met in its first session on July 21st.

— On July 22nd a resolution was placed before the "People's Diet" asking for admission into the Soviet Union, although throughout the "election campaign" not a single word was allowed to be uttered that, within a week, Lithuania would be ordered to commit suicide. On the contrary: official utterances by communist candidates and by important officials of the Kremlin **always and everywhere** emphasized that the "elections" will tend to promote amity and friendship with the U.S.S.R.

4. On the morrow of the second session of the "People's Diet", the Government of the United States reacted to these manipulations by issuing the following statement:

" During these past few days the devious processes whereunder the political independence and territorial integrity of the three small Republics — Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania — were to be deliberately annihilated by one of their more powerful neighbors, have been rapidly drawing to their conclusion.

" From the day when the peoples of these Republics first gained their independent and democratic form of government, the people of the United States have

watched their admirable progress in self-government with deep and sympathetic interest.

" The policy of this Government is universally known.

" The people of the United States are opposed to predatory activities, no matter whether they are carried on by the use of force or by the threat of force.

" They are likewise opposed to any form of intervention on the part of one state, however powerful, in the domestic concerns of any other sovereign state, however weak.

" These principles constitute the very foundations upon which the existing relationship between the twenty-one sovereign Republics of the New World rests.

" The United States will continue to stand by these principles, because of the conviction of the American people that unless the doctrine in which these principles are inherent once again governs the relations between nations, the rule of reason, of justice and of law — in other words, the basis of modern civilization itself — cannot be preserved."

(The Department of State *Bulletin*, July 27, 1944, Vol. III, No. 57, p. 48.)

To complete the picture, it may be added that on July 30, 1940, hand-picked "delegates of Lithuania" departed to Moscow to "petition" for the incorporation of Lithuania as an Nth Socialist Soviet Republic.

At the moment, France had already capitulated and Germany was massing its forces to strike the first blow in the Battle for Britain.

PARTY-LINE CONTINUES

There can be no doubt that the aforesaid statement of the Department of State truthfully and realistically described the events of June-July 1940 as "devious processes" and "predatory activities" in violation of international morality, law and order.

Ignoring the position of the Government of the United States, and in disregard of the underwriting of the principles of the Atlantic Charter and Four Freedoms by the Government of the Soviet Union, viz., the Declaration by the United Nations, and the Moscow and Teheran Declarations, — official Soviet propaganda lavishly promulgated in this country, and "party-line" publications of the Council for American-Soviet Friendship and other American apologists for the Soviet Union, continue to portray to Americans the "elections" of June 14-15, 1940 and the subsequent "vote" for incorporation of the Baltic States into the U.S.S.R. as allegedly representative of "a true expression of the people's will in conformance with the principles of the Atlantic Charter. Some apologists of Soviet imperialism go to the extent of labeling those "elections" as an alleged plebiscite.

This party-line provides a basis for anticipating the Soviet argumentation and orientation.

DENIAL OF SELF-EXPRESSION

It seems axiomatic to us, American citizens brought up in freedom ideals of this great country

of ours, that any elections carried on by the invader in the conditions of military occupation cannot be considered representative of the freely expressed will of the people concerned.

If we are attempting to take up the time of our readers and to claim their attention and interest in the events of July, 1940, it is only with a view of illustrating the methods employed by the occupational authorities of the Soviet Union in Lithuania. (More detailed description of the methods and procedure employed by the Soviet Union in all three of the Baltic States can be found in a work by August Rei, **Have the Baltic Countries Voluntarily Renounced Their Freedom?** available at Estonian Consulate General, 9 Rockefeller Plaza, New York 20, N. Y.)

We are limiting ourselves to the three more important features of those so-called "elections":

- a. Nominating procedure;
- b. Structure of electoral apparatus;
- c. Ballot counting and verification.

NOMINATING PROCEDURE

The following statement by an American eyewitness, A. S. provides a disinterested account of the procedure followed in "nominating" the candidates for the "People's Diet."

I, A. S., a citizen of the United States of America depose and say:

I lived in Lithuania for a number of years, including the period from June 15th, 1940, on which date Lithuania was occupied by troops of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, until December, 1940, when I left for the United States of America.

After Lithuania was occupied by the Red Army, several thousand of the more active and more prominent Lithuanians were imprisoned. Hundreds fled across the frontier. Many civil employees were dismissed from their positions and were substituted by communist sympathizers. Those who remained at their posts were placed under communist supervision. The right of assembly was abolished. Press and radio were taken under direct control by the new regime. All political parties, organizations and assemblages were disbanded. Only the Communist party and communist-controlled organizations were permitted to function. Supported by Red police and Red troops, the communist groups became all-powerful. For instance, in the town of Palanga, a group of only seventeen people formed the nucleus of the local communist organization. This group ruled the 3,000 inhabitants of Palanga and environs.

Such were the conditions in Lithuania, when, at the end of the first week of July 1940, elections to the new Parliament were announced to be held on July 14th, 1940.

Only the newly organized communist-controlled "Working People's Union", was permitted to present a list of candidates for the elections. Theoretically speaking, the candidates were to be nominated at public meetings of "working people", presided over and controlled by members of the local electoral commissions, which had been appointed by the Communist controlled District Electoral Commission. In fact, the candidates were chosen before-hand by the Central Communist Party and presented by the presiding communist chairman for approval by acclamation. No one was able to nominate his own candidate or oppose the nomination of the presented ones. The number of candidates in a given district was strictly limited and corresponded to the number of deputies to be elected there.

The fake meeting to nominate the candidate for the District of Kretinga was held under these circumstances:

A member of the local electoral commission announced to workers of the local flax factory, who were already on their way home from work, that they would have to participate in the meeting to nominate the candidate. The meeting took place with the participation of uniformed members of the Red Army and some local communists who were informed about the meeting beforehand. The majority of the population, however, did not know about the meeting.

An extremely vigorous campaign for participation in the elections was launched by the new government and the communists, who had exclusive control of the press and radio. It was announced that those who would not vote would be considered "enemies of the people". "He who is not with us is against us" these words were pronounced at an electoral meeting in Palanga (where I resided at the time), by Moscow appointed Mecišlovas Gedvilas, at that time Minister of Interior and later chairman of the Council of Commissars.

It was also announced that every voter when presenting himself at the polls would have to bring along his identification papers, which were to be stamped as an indication that he had voted. Since identification papers had to be exhibited on frequent occasions, this measure was interpreted by myself, and insofar as I know also by others, as having been devised in order to quickly discover those who abstained from voting and to subject them to the fate reserved for the "enemies of the people"

I wish to stress particularly the fact that in electoral speeches by Moscow appointed high officials of the new regime (J. Paleckis, M. Gedvilas and others) nothing was said about the intended incorporation of Lithuania into the U. S. S. R. Quite the contrary — during the electoral campaign it was emphasized that Lithuania was to remain independent.

There are several score American citizens, now resident in the United States, who had witnessed the whole comedy of elections in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia.

No legitimate political party and no representative bodies were permitted to express their views. The voting was made compulsory. The "elections" followed strictly a single-party pattern, ridiculously adorned with all the trappings of a full-scale "electioneering campaign". **All that the stage-managers had to do, was to compel as many people as possible to present themselves physically to the polling places to cast dutifully one-party coupons.**

With no opposition tolerated, the "success" of the single communist list was assured beforehand, no matter how the voters behaved.

STRUCTURE OF ELECTORAL APPARATUS

The device which Moscow put into effect in the occupied countries was very simple. A new Election Law was promulgated by a decree. A **Supreme Electoral Commission** was created at the top. All of its members were hand-picked by Justas Paleckis, the "Premier President" newly inaugurated by Dekanozov. This closely-controlled body fixed the number of deputies to be elected from various areas.

The next lower rung in the electoral ladder was a **District Electoral Commission**. Its chair-

man, the only functioning official, was appointed by the Supreme Electoral Commission. It was the duty of this lower instance to organize local mass-meetings in cooperation with the newly formed "Working Peoples' Union", the only communist front promulgated by the government to absorb the candidates.

The third and lowest instance in this set-up was a **Township, or City, Electoral Commission**, whose chairman and vice-chairman were appointed by the Chairman of the District Electoral Commission. This hand-picked chairman was permitted to nominate three additional members, subject to confirmation or rejection by the District Electoral Commission, viz., its Chairman.

The whole apparatus, from the Supreme Electoral Commission to Township Electoral Commissions, and the hand-picked "People's Government" were built upon the communist directed "Working People's Union", itself subordinated to the supreme will of Moscow via Dekanozov, the local Soviet Legation and the ever-present Red Army.

BALLOT COUNTING AND VERIFICATION

Special balloting permits were issued to all comers without means of identity, with no proof of citizenship asked, and a number of curious Americans voted in consequence of this "freedom".

The ballots were counted, or presumably counted, by this carefully selected electoral apparatus. Balloting coupons were destroyed by fire immediately after counting, on the spot. Even the privilege of registering a complaint was taken away — the courts were not permitted to interfere and electoral commissions were the only places to declare complaints, if one dared.

Consequently, it was no surprise when, on July 19, 1940, the Supreme Electoral Commission published the official results: 95.51% of all eligible voters had "voted" and 99.19% of the ballots were cast for the imposed candidates.

UNEXPECTED SLIP

The balloting in Lithuania was to take place on July 14, 1940, and the polls were to close at 8 P. M. on that day. Because of inclement weather and poor attendance, the voting was extended twice: first to 10 P. M., then — to another day (July 15).

In a comedy of errors, the stage managers operating on the spot failed to apprise Moscow of this extension of balloting for another day. The consequence was that, according to Bernard Newman, *The New Europe*, New York, 1943, p. 207: "It was an unfortunate slip by which a London newspaper published the official results from a Russian news agency **twenty four hours before the polls were closed.**"

In conclusion, we would like to direct the attention of our readers to the following statement, wherein several former deputies of the so-called

People's Diet give their testimony of the actual events behind the screen.

WE THE UNDERSIGNED MEMBERS OF THE FORMER "PEOPLE'S DIET" CONVENED AT A MEETING IN KAUNAS ON AUGUST 30TH, 1940, PUBLICLY DECLARE:

1. In violation of solemn promises given to the Republic of Lithuania to respect in all circumstances Lithuania's "sovereignty and territorial integrity and inviolability" (Lithuanian-Soviet Treaty of 1926, par. 2), the Government of the Soviet Union by military action occupied Lithuania.
2. The Lithuanian Government which was formed in accordance with the Moscow ultimatum, and which was assured that Lithuania's independence will be respected, later, on the insistence of Moscow, was reorganized giving the majority of places to the communists led by M. Gedvila with the aim in view of making the government a virtual tool of Moscow.
3. The Moscow Government ordered the reorganized Government to engineer elections to the "People's Diet" in such a manner that it would later ask for the incorporation of Lithuania into the Soviet Union.
4. The "People's Diet" could not and did not express the will of the Lithuanian nation because:
 - a) The structure of the "People's Diet" had been decided in advance by the Communist Party in accordance with orders received from G. Dekanozov, Moscow's representative and N. G. Pozdniakov, Soviet envoy in Lithuania; there were only as many candidates as there were deputies to be elected to the "People's Diet";
 - b) The list of candidates was prepared in advance and in order to create the desired impression it was announced that 95.51% of those having the right to vote cast their votes for the listed candidates, while, in reality according to testimony of officials of the local election boards, and according to statements made at closed meetings by M. Gedvila and J. Paleckis, the two ranking officials of the Lithuanian SSR, the percentage of the valid voting cast was only 16-18;
 - c) Non-communist candidates were forced by threats to accept nomination and to vote for the incorporation of Lithuania to the Soviet Union;

d) The deputies' votes for incorporation into the Soviet Union were not counted; outsiders who were seated among the deputies also voted.

5. Protests by any of the deputies against such an outrage were impossible, for such protests under existing circumstances meant death. Deputies (and members of their families), who had declared that they would not vote at the session of the "People's Diet" for the incorporation of Lithuania into the Soviet Union, were openly threatened by G. Dekanozov, Moscow's representative, and by members of the Soviet Legation.
6. We, the undersigned, publicly protest against the treacherous and perfidious methods which were used by the Soviet Government against the Republic of Lithuania and the Lithuanian nation during both the elections and the functioning of the "People's Diet". Neither we nor other deputies of the "People's Diet" could and did not, because of the circumstances given above, express the true will of the Lithuanian nation concerning the incorporation into the Soviet Union.
7. The "People's Diet", itself, in its declaration of July 21, 1940, has stated that: "The people, with the help of the mighty Red Army have now overthrown the hated Smetona regime and have established a soviet government"... "If the Lithuanian people were able to establish in their country a soviet form of government it is thanks only to the Soviet Union," thus the Diet itself has established the role which the Red Army played in the decisions of the Diet and of the other organs of the government.

Kaunas, August 30, 1942

Former members of the People's Diet

Dr. A. Garmus

I. Dovydenas

H. Kacinskas

R. Juknevičius

V. Birzietis

Agriculturist Pr. Mickus

St. Vainelkiene

P. Milanciute

Prof. V. Kreve-Mickevičius

Former Acting Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Jurgis Glusauskas

Former Commissar for Social Matters of the Lithuanian Socialist Soviet Republic

THE PROBLEM OF LITHUANIAN BOUNDARIES

By KAZYS PAKSTAS, Ph. D.

Preface

There can be no question that the present war will end in the not too distant a future. We can only express the hope that the world will hear of that happy day sooner than present circumstances seem to indicate.

Germany, the instigator of this war, will be vanquished, disarmed, and dealt with in such a manner that she probably will no longer be able to plan periodic slaughter of innocent people in the future.

The oppressed nations, whose independence and freedom have been ruthlessly torn from them, will be reborn. A Free and Independent Lithuania will also be reborn.

Liberated nations will live in a new Rejuvenat-

ed Europe. Preliminary steps in the creation of this New Europe have already been taken in many appropriate places.

It is our duty to contribute to postwar planning by offering authentic documentary and historical reference material for the planners.

We must inform the organizers of the New Europe of the true state of affairs, of the injustices inflicted upon the Lithuanian people in the past, of their intense desire to live in a free and independent state, so constituted that it will serve their natural interests.

We hope that, during the reconstruction period, representatives of the Great Democracies will wish to acquaint themselves thoroughly with all of the complex details of Lithuania's position, with her perspectives for economic reconstruction, and

with her people's desires as to affiliation with, or complete independence from, this or that political unit. We do not fear the voice of the Lithuanian people. Furthermore — full consideration of the articulate desires of her people, an exemplary spirit of true political tolerance and the ability to develop herself economically, have always been among Lithuania's most prized features and historical traditions.

For instance, we do believe that an economic-political association of the Baltic States would constitute a worthwhile scheme for post war planning. It is entirely conceivable that the above mentioned idea may one day be taken as a sound basis for an even greater reshaping of the East and Central European complex.

In order to inform the Great Democracies of these facts, this little work is respectfully dedicated.

HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

1. Prehistory of the Baltic Nations

Recent excavations undertaken by Lithuanian and Latvian archeologists indicate that the Eastern Baltic countries were inhabited as early as the beginning of the Mesolithic period, or about 10,000 B. C. Nothing is known of the race or nationality of these earliest inhabitants.

At the beginning of the Bronze Age (1500 B. C.) the people of the Eastern Baltic region had split into two cultural zones: the Northern and the Southern. The Northern zone appeared to be inhabited by Estonians and Livonians, both very close linguistically to the present Finns. The Southern zone was inhabited by the Baltic or Aistian group of the Indo-European family.

From 500 B. C. to 600 A. D. the Baltic linguistic group went through the process of differentiation into several closely related dialects: Prussian, Lithuanian, Couronian, Semigallian, Selian, Lettish and Galindian. Several of these dialects assimilated with other Baltic languages before 1300 A. D. The Prussian dialect became extinct under German oppression in the 17th Century. The Latvian (spoken by 2,000,000) and the Lithuanian (spoken by 3,000,000 in Europe and by 800,000 in America) are the only two living languages of the old Baltic group, which before 500 B. C. occupied a large region between the Baltic Sea, the Lower Vistula, Daugava (Duna), Upper Volga, Oka, Pripyat and Bug Rivers.

The Lithuanian language originated in the basin of the Upper Dnieper and Berezina during the II and III centuries A. D. Early Lithuanians very soon (VIth Century) migrated into the Niemen (Nemunas) river basin and near the Baltic Sea. Spoken by a people isolated by forests and swamps from other linguistic groups, the Lithuanian language preserved the oldest grammatical forms and became very important in the study of comparative Indo-European philology.

Lithuanian and Latvian vocabularies are mostly

based on common root forms, but they are entirely different from the Slavic (Russian, Polish) or Germanic.

2. Medieval History

The Roman historian Tacitus (52-117 A. D.) made the first recorded reference pertaining to the Baltic peoples. But the real history of the Lithuanians began in 1040 A. D., when the name of Lithuania was first mentioned in the Kievan chronicles. In the beginning of the 13th century the Teutonic Knights attacked the Prussians, Lithuanians, Latvians and Estonians, divided into many small principalities and unable to resist the well organized Germanic onslaught. Thus, the Estonians, Livs, Latvians and Prussians were conquered by the Teutonic Knights. Only the Lithuanians, being in a central position, succeeded in uniting all their principalities under the leadership of their energetic King Mindaugas between 1219 and 1236. In 1236 Mindaugas (or Mindowe) defeated the Germans in the first great battle fought by a united Lithuania. Soon after this Victory, the young Lithuanian state, heeding a desperate appeal of population to save them from Tartar onslaught, began its great expansion to the East and South, through White Ruthenian, and Ukrainian lands to Tartary and the Black Sea.

Under Gediminas (1316-1341) Lithuania occupied nearly all of White Ruthenia and Western Ukraine (Volhynia), while energetically resisting Germanic invasion from the West. Between 1362 and 1569 the Lithuanian Empire was at the peak of its territorial expansion. Its frontiers extended from the Baltic to the Black Sea, from the vicinity of Moscow to the Bug and Dniester Rivers. It protected Western Europe and the greater part of Western Slavs from enslavement by the powerful Tartar Empire of the East. Most interesting to historians is the fact that this **little heathen nation ruled** Christian lands, ten times larger than herself, covering about 350,000 sq. miles, where 56 million people live today. For this tremendous energy in creating with limited resources such a powerful Empire, the Lithuanians were called the Vikings of the Continent. They gave a Lithuanian dynasty to Poland (1386) which ruled over both states (1430-1572).

In 1410 Vytautas the Great, with Lithuanian and Polish armies, defeated the Germans in the greatest battle of that century at Gruenwald. After this battle the Lithuanians, Russians and Poles were safe from the German "Drang nach Osten" for about three centuries.

In 1569 Lithuania concluded an Union or Confederation with Poland. There was a common king, but **two separate governments with separate armies, money, custom duties, laws, etc.** In 1795 Lithuania and Poland lost their independence, being partitioned by Russia, Prussia and Austria. Russia took nearly all of the Lithuanian territory. Four times (1812, 1831, 1863, 1905) Lithuania paid with her blood, trying to reestablish her in-

dependence, but none of these uprisings were successful.

In Lithuanian cultural life the 16th century has played relatively the most important role in her history. Here we can mention only the most important events of that period:

- 1529 - First edition of the Lithuanian Statute, the only codified law of that century in Eastern Europe, in use until 1842.
- 1547 - First book in the Lithuanian language was published in Lithuania Minor (Koenigsberg). This was the Lutheran Catechism of Mosvidius (Mažvydas).
- 1579 - The Academy of Vilnius was founded by Jesuits. It became the most important and most famous center of learning for Eastern Europe.
- 1582 - First history of Lithuania published by M. Strykowski.
- 1595 - First Lithuanian Catholic Catechism published in Vilnius by M. Daukša.

During the 16th and 17th centuries Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania, became the great art center of Northern Europe. Her famous baroque churches earned for her the title of "Florence of the North".

In the 18th century, the first Lithuanian poet of European fame, Kr. Duonelaitis (1714-1780), wrote his "Seasons" in hexameter style. This work has been translated into several languages.

3. Modern Lithuania

The real national and cultural renaissance of the Lithuanian nation ripened *en masse* in 1883, when Dr. J. Basanavicius began publishing his cultural and political newspaper „Aušra” (The Dawn) This movement prepared Lithuania for the events of 1914-1918.

On February 16, 1918, Lithuania, strongly supported by her emigrants in America, declared her independence. After two years of war against Russian, German and Polish invaders, she affirmed her determination to be a free nation and was soon recognized as such by Germany, Russia, the United States, Great Britain, France and all other sovereign countries.

During the period of independence (1918-1940), Lithuania established several thousand new schools, increasing the school enrollment by approximately 600%. She founded about 150 high schools, 40 colleges and 8 new institutions of higher learning: universities, academies, and institutes. The number of books published in Lithuanian increased from 200 to about 1400 a year. The number of periodicals increased from 25 in 1914 to about 250 in 1940. Lithuanian Opera, Drama and Ballet enjoyed prominence in Europe, and their artists were invited to appear in the main centers of culture in Europe and America. The period of independence was Lithuania's golden era of progress in culture and economic well-being.

At the start of World War II, Lithuania declared herself neutral, although pressed from many sides to take weapons against Poland and revenge the Polish seizure of the old Lithuanian capital Vilnius. Faithful to her old traditions, Lithuania declined the offer to stab Poland in the back. In March of the same eventful year 1939 Lithuania was forced to yield her old harbor of Klaipėda (Memel) to Germany. It was Hitler's next crime after the invasion of Bohemia and the taking of Praha.

Lithuania's more than correct conduct in the eventful pre-war months failed to preserve her neutrality and independence. Forced by Moscow in the Fall of 1939 to admit Russian garrisons, Lithuania was finally invaded and occupied by the Red Army on June 15, 1940. About 65,000 of her educated masses and progressive farmers were either liquidated or exiled to Siberian concentration camps, or left the country at the outbreak of Soviet-German hostilities. Their property was confiscated and their manner of life was changed to the low standards of Russia.

On June 22, 1941, Lithuania was invaded and occupied by Germany. The German regime confirmed the Russian policy of confiscation and suppression of religious and national life. But these two foreign occupations were not accepted by the Lithuanians themselves, nor were they recognized by the Democracies of the World. Lithuanian legations and consulates are still functioning in the United States, Great Britain, Canada, Argentina, Brazil, Switzerland and Vatican City. The illustrious President of the United States, Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Democracy are sincere friends and protectors of Lithuanian liberty, and Lithuanians are enthusiastic supporters of the United Nations' war for world freedom.

In view of this, there is a strong hope that this little old nation will again be given the chance to reestablish her independence and freedom, to develop and progress in the arts and sciences, to contribute to mankind's civilization, and to work for the better material and spiritual well-being of her four million people under her own historical and national traditions.

1. Origin of Obscurities and Complications

From a practical viewpoint, it seems rather strange to speak of a small nation's boundaries which have yet to be established between her and a considerably larger nation. This oddity arises from a fact which is even more strange: for twenty years two sovereign countries, Lithuania and Poland, lying approximately in Europe's center, had no mutually agreed boundaries. This singular European peculiarity has been brought about by the aggression of Poland against her former partner, Lithuania, an ancient nation reestablished after World War I. Let us consider the Polish-Lithuanian boundary problem in the light of geographical science, of that science to which the various boundary problems on this earth's surface belong.

In the past 500 years, there has been a minimum of interpenetration between the Lithuanians and Latvians. The prewar administrative line of the Kaunas and Courland provinces was also the linguistic ethnographical and historical border line, a border line which needed only a very little ethnographical correction. Without great difficulty, both countries (Lithuania and Latvia) agreed to settle controversial points by arbitration, selecting Professor Sir James Simpson of Scotland as chief arbitrator (1921). Thus, in March, 1921, the border line between Lithuania and Latvia was finally followed through 487 km., Lithuania keeping Palanga with 21 km. of the Baltic shore, and Latvia was granted certain advantageous concessions, especially in the region of the eastern boundary. In this manner these countries, related to one another by origin, language, and mutual attraction, settled their territorial problems quickly and without a lengthy controversy. This gave each nation a feeling of relief and allowed both to begin widespread cultural, economic, and political cooperation. Thus, it confirmed a staunch old friendship.

But Lithuania's boundary line on the west is less tangible where it encounters the Germans. The old boundary of Germany and Russia before World War I was only a political and religious border line. But it is neither a linguistic nor an ethnographical line, for people of common Lithuanian origin live on both sides of this line. However, towns on the German side were attenuated with German immigrants while the Lithuanian villages were already permeated with a German type of civilization which had even partially forgotten the Lithuanian language. The situation, to a certain extent, was also complicated by religious differences. Inhabitants of historical Lithuania remained mostly Catholics, while those of Prussian Lithuania became Lutherans. Reflecting upon this situation, the Treaty of Versailles (1919) did not separate all of Prussian Lithuania from Germany, which covered over 12,000 sq. km. It only differentiated one-fourth of this territory, that on the right bank of the Nemunas river. This territory known as Klaipėda District was reattached to Lithuania in 1923. The Klaipėda territory occupies 2848 sq. km. (1100 sq. miles) and in 1939 had about 150,000 inhabitants. From the standpoint of national origin, almost 90% are Lithuanians; from the standpoint of religion, about 80% are Lutherans and 15% are Catholics. In 1938 about 4% were Jews, but now their numbers have decreased, due to the Nazi anti-Jewish measures and forced deportations; in 1939 many of them were moving of their own will to Lithuania Propria. A majority of the inhabitants of the Klaipėda territory use two languages: Lithuanian and German. Forty per cent of the people in the Klaipėda territory speak the German language and consider themselves Germans (mostly in the towns). **About fifty per cent of the inhabitants, predominantly in the country, give preference to the Lithuanian language in their homes.** Not all of them considered them-

selves to be Lithuanians or Germans either, especially in the years immediately preceding World War II. Unwilling to acknowledge German or Lithuanian descent, and yet not desiring to be handicapped in their business with German or Lithuanian firms, a portion of the population calls itself by the neutral term: Klaipėdiečiai or Memellanders. This is partly due to the policies of appeasement which were practiced towards Nazi Germany by the Western European Powers until the Fall of 1939.

A somewhat similar situation prevailed in French Alsace.

Statistics compiled in 1925 show 28% of the inhabitants avoiding the claim of a definite nationality in this manner. Nevertheless, in 1925, 25% or 34,000 of the inhabitants of the Klaipėda territory asserted themselves to be true Lithuanians. The growth of Klaipėda's harbor, its industry, and its commerce brought a demand for a large number of new workmen, a number which Klaipėda alone was not able to supply; it was necessary, therefore, to obtain these workmen from Lithuania Propria. As a result, over a period of fifteen years (1923-1938), about 17,000 Lithuanians came to settle in Klaipėda. In 1939 there were at least 51,000 Lithuanians in the whole territory of Klaipėda: about 30,000 Lutherans and 20,000 Catholics. Moreover, a considerable number of Lithuanian immigrants were earning a regular income of 150 litas per month (\$25.00), the minimum income qualifying the right to vote under the laws promulgated by German political leaders. Consequently, the political power of the Lithuanian element was purposely suppressed, while the political influence of Germany grew.

From the standpoint of ethnological origin, almost 90% of the inhabitants of the Klaipėda (Memel) territory are of Lithuanian origin. About 55% of these are Lithuanian speaking; about 32% are Lithuanians by inner national conviction; and those Lithuanians who have, with difficulty, obtained the suffrage right constituted only about 15% — 17% of the entire electorate of the autonomous territory. Enslaved under the German rule for 600 years and strongly influenced in cultural, religious, and economic affairs by the ruling German castes, the Lithuanians of this territory form an intermediate zone between Lithuania and Germany. Although pre-war political and cultural tendencies opposed the ethnological origin of the inhabitants, the economic interests of the Nemunas river basin definitely joined the tiny and narrow Klaipėda (Memel) territory with Lithuania. The Klaipėda territory gives Lithuania its only outlet to the sea and affords the whole country a natural harbor through which 75% of Lithuania's foreign commerce passed, without which in turn, the city of Klaipėda could not grow and prosper. Upon the reunion of this territory with Lithuania, it was granted a liberal autonomy so that the preponderance of German culture, acquired through several centuries of former associations, should not suffer. Thus, a

balance between the powerful German cultural interests and the economic affairs of small Lithuania was more or less obtained. Internally, the territory was directing its affairs under a German Code as though it were under a German rule. The most important arteries of transit transportation and the harbor were in the hands of the central government, though the lower stream of the Nemunas was governed and used for transport by Lithuania and Germany mutually.

Lithuania's boundary line with Germany before the yielding of Klaipėda stretched over 230 km. The Nemunas River alone runs about one half of this distance; the line following this current and along the sea was the most natural of Lithuania's boundary lines. This forms another weighty argument for the union of the Klaipėda territory with Lithuania. South of the Nemunas the Lithuanian-German line runs along small rivers and over dry land. Since this line remained unchanged through 500 years, it has certain historical rights. By the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th, the part of the area between Tilžė (Tilsit), Gumbinė, Pilkalnis and Labguva (Labiiau) ceased speaking Lithuanian and accepted the German language, which was strongly enforced by the Prussian administration. On the left side (south) of the Nemunas River there are still about 100,000 Lithuanian-speaking people. They are located in two regions: 1. The lower basin of the Šešupė River near its confluence with the Nemunas and 2. Between the Gilija (German: Gilge) and the delta of the Nemunas. Both regions cover over 2,500 sq. km. or about 1000 sq. miles. This area was not separated from Germany by the Versailles Treaty of 1919, **despite the claim of a special Lithuania delegation.** The Lithuanian place names have been gradually Germanized. In 1938-1939 alone, about 2000 Lithuanian place names have been changed to German in the triangle between Königsberg, Goldap and Tilsit. With usual carefulness, the German administration, by the end of 1938, published even a special map showing the introduced changes in the names of East Prussian localities. It permits the laymen to judge the past and the enormity of the Lithuanian national distress in this part of Europe.

Lithuanian newspapers and cultural societies were liquidated in Tilsit and Klaipėda in 1939. The name of East Prussia's Gauleiter and notorious Nazi Eric Koch must be particularly stressed in this connection.

The Lithuanian republic in 1939 occupied 55,658 sq. km. (approx. 21,000 sq. miles) and its population numbered 2,580,000 which was classified according to nationalities as follows: Lithuanians — 81%, Jews — 7%, Germans — 4%, Poles — 3%, Russians — 2.3%, others — 2.7%. Excluding the Memel (Klaipėda) territory, there are only two small townships in Lithuania which do not have a majority of Lithuanians: these are Lapiai near Kaunas and Joniškis in the county of Utena. And yet, Lithuania today occupies only six per cent of the Vytautas Empire and only seven-

KERENSKY'S INTERPRETATION OF THE ATLANTIC CHARTER

To the Editor of the New York Times
Sir:

In a letter to THE NEW YORK TIMES published on January 13th, the former head of the Russian Provisional Government, Mr. A. Kerensky, asserts that the principles of the Atlantic Charter do not apply to the Baltic States on the ground that the annexation of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia by Soviet Russia had taken place a full year before the promulgation of the Atlantic Charter.

According to accepted practice in international relations, continues Mr. Kerensky, an obligation assumed by Soviet Russia became effective only as of January 1, 1942, i. e. the date of signing by Soviet Russia of the Declaration of the United Nations.

In this connection, permit me to quote paragraph 3 of the Atlantic Charter: "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."

As anyone can see, the wording of aforesaid clause implicitly entails a **retroactive application.**

The only possible question that might arise in interpreting this clause is — who is to be considered to have been forcibly deprived of sovereignty and self-government? In other words, which date marked the beginning of international aggression? Does it date back to Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland or the Baltic States?

This question seems to be already answered by a three-Power Declaration signed at Moscow in 1943, by which Austria is cited as being the first free country to fall a victim of aggression.

Very truly yours

Col. K. V. Grinius, Lithuanian Army

January 18, 1945.

teen per cent of historical Lithuania which existed until 1795, and which ruled over territories of not less than 320,000 sq. km. (approx. 123,500 sq. miles) for almost six hundred years.

(to be continued)

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