

. . . 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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## On the eve of the San Francisco Conference

### MEMORANDUM ON POSTWAR INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION

by

#### UNITED ORGANIZATIONS OF AMERICANS OF LITHUANIAN, LATVIAN AND ESTONIAN DESCENT

#### A. RETURN TO LAW, ORDER AND FOUR FREEDOMS ON THE BALTIC SHORES

As soon as the decisions of the Yalta Conference were made public, the Lithuanian American Council, meeting in session at Washington, D.C., has taken the following stand:

"The Lithuanian American Council, a coalition committee coordinating the activities of the overwhelming majority of Americans of Lithuanian descent, comprising the largest democratic groups and fraternal orders, held executive sessions at Hotel Twenty-Four Hundred in Washington, D.C. and wishes to bring to the attention of the American people its views on the post-war settlement.

"It is natural that American citizens represented by this Council have a special interest in the fate and future of the land of their ancestors.

"The independent Republics of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia have lived in peace and friendship with their neighbor, the Soviet Union, and in a series of treaties from 1920 to 1939 Soviet Russia had solemnly obligated itself to respect their na-

tional sovereignty, and non-interference in internal affairs.

"When the Nazis were pressing on Paris, the Soviet Union took advantage of international confusion and violated its treaty pledges by occupying the Baltic States and introducing by force of arms a communist regime.

"The Lithuanian American Council followed with satisfaction the progress of the Red Army campaign in pushing the common foe—Germany—from the enemy-occupied territories, but at the same time it followed with dismay the complete annihilation of every vestige of democracy when the Soviet authorities re-introduced by sheer force the totalitarian communist system in the Baltic States.

"The Lithuanian American Council believes that the Government of the United States continues to adhere to the policy expressed by the Department of State on July 23, 1940. Furthermore, the recent Yalta Declaration on Liberated Europe promised free and unfettered elections on the basis of uni-

versal suffrage and secret ballot, and stated, in part:

"The establishment of order in Europe and the rebuilding of national economic life must be achieved by processes which will enable the liberated peoples to destroy the last vestiges of nazism and fascism and to create democratic institutions of their own choice. This is a principle of the Atlantic Charter. . . .

"To foster the conditions in which the liberated peoples may exercise these rights, and three Governments will jointly assist the people in any European liberated state or former axis satellite state in Europe where in their judgment conditions require (a) to establish conditions of internal peace; (b) to carry out emergency measures for the relief of distressed peoples; (c) to form interim governmental authorities broadly representative of all democratic elements in the population and pledged to the earliest possible establishment through free elections of governments responsive to the will of the people; and (d) to facilitate where necessary the holding of such elections.

" . . . By this declaration we reaffirm our faith in the principles of the Atlantic Charter, our pledge in the Declaration by the United Nations and our determination to build, in cooperation with other peace-loving nations, world order under law, dedicated to peace, security, freedom and the general well-being of all mankind."

"The Lithuanian American Council reiterates its belief in the principles of the Atlantic Charter, to wit, the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live, and the restoration of sovereign rights and self-government to those peoples who have been forcibly deprived of them.

"We re-state our stand for a free and independent Lithuania, and request the Government of the United States to render all assistance in achieving the aforesaid end."

Representative organizations of Americans of Latvian and Estonian extraction concur in this stand, and all three committees jointly express their desire to see the self-government of the peoples of the sovereign Republics of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia restored.

Shortly afterward, the President of the United States, in his statement of Congress on March 1st, 1945, emphasized that the three Allied governments "will endeavor to see to it that interim governments will be as representative as possible of all democratic elements in the population, and that free elections are held as soon as possible thereafter."

The Governments of the United States and the United Kingdom have not recognized the attempted annexation of the Baltic States by Soviet Russia. As recently as March 3rd, 1945, Acting Secretary of State Grew made known, at a press conference, that the Government of the United States continues to recognize Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia as independent states.

Consequently, the above-mentioned dispositions with regard to the restoration of liberty and independence to liberated peoples ought to be fully

applied in the three Baltic States. The fact that they are subjected today to an occupational Soviet Russian regime cannot alienate their recognized rights.

The right of the Baltic peoples to choose the governments under which they will live can be honored in practice only through establishing representative national interim governments. The next step would be the holding of free elections—after the removal of the Soviet occupational troops and after the return of those citizens who had been forcibly mobilized, imprisoned or deported by the occupying powers (Germany and Russia). In the meantime, until conditions permit a genuine expression of the people's will, an Inter-Allied Control Commission with effective powers and with real participation of the United States and Great Britain should be set up in the Baltic States to fulfill the promises of the Yalta Declaration. The immediate task of the Inter-Allied Control Commission would be to restore the freedom of speech, assembly and press. This freedom, under the joint auspices of the victorious United Nations, would give the Baltic peoples confidence that elections will be unfettered and free, that the voters will be protected at the polls, and that they will be safeguarded from reprisals afterwards. Members of this Commission should be persons whose moral prestige, in their own countries as well as abroad, is generally recognized, and the Commission should have an adequate technical staff.

Since the events of last Summer—the second occupation of the Baltic States by Soviet armies—the undersigned United Organizations of Americans of Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian descent have unceasingly called to the attention of our Government the desperate situation prevailing in the Baltic States in consequence of the ruthless policies of reprisals by Soviet Russia against "a socially alien element," viz., against 99% of the Baltic populations.\*

Countless resolutions, memoranda and appeals of American relatives of these peoples plead in ever-increasing numbers:

- (a) that the military occupation of the territory of the Baltic States be placed under the effective supervision of an Inter-Allied Control body;
- (b) that the Baltic peoples be given the right to organize their own representative interim governments as soon as possible in order to enable free and uncoerced democratic elections;
- (c) that the Soviet administration in occupied Baltic States act in accordance with International Law;
- (d) that the citizens of the Baltic States deported

\* See Lithuania's "Liberation" on the last page.

to the U.S.S.R. be released and permitted to return home;

- (e) that American relief agencies be given full facilities to extend immediate relief to the inhabitants of the Baltic States and, pending their return home, also to the Baltic deportees in Soviet Russia.

All available information bears out the fact that the policy of wholesale extermination, bloody reprisals, confiscation of private property, deportations of peaceful citizens, suppression of their religious freedom and individual human rights—at the hands of the occupying authorities of the U.S. S.R.—continue unabated in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia.

ALL THIS ON THE EVE OF THE INTERNATIONAL SECURITY CONFERENCE.

## B. INTERNATIONAL SECURITY CONFERENCE AT SAN FRANCISCO

Prior to the establishment of an United Nations International Organization, as suggested by the preliminary Chapter devised at Dumbarton Oaks and its partial amendments by the Yalta understanding, we would like to focus attention on the following facts:

- (a) The Government of the United States since the recognition *de jure* of the Baltic States in 1922, has never ceased to recognize the Republics of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia as sovereign States;
- (b) Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia are full-fledged members of the League of Nations. These Republics have always faithfully assumed and executed the obligations of membership in, and of the Covenant of, the League of Nations.;
- (c) The peoples of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia during the years of the Nazi occupation never ceased to fight the Nazi invaders by every means, and through this struggle for the restoration of their own independence they have directly contributed to the defeat of our enemies;
- (d) Only the unprovoked aggression and occupation by the U.S.S.R. prevented Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia from becoming co-belligerent allies of the United States *de jure*, not alone in fact.

For these reasons, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, the countries of our forefathers, should be fully entitled to be represented in the deliberations at the forthcoming International Security Conference at San Francisco.

## C. DUMBARTON OAKS PROPOSALS AS AMENDED.

Our Founding Fathers in their Declaration of

Independence proclaimed that all men are created equal, are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, such as **Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness**, and that governments derive their powers from the consent of the governed.

These fundamental principles have never been violated by our Nation.

We hold that the same principles should be recognized by all Nations and should constitute the basis of the entire international security organization.

Unfortunately, the trend of affairs since the Dumbarton Oaks Meeting is deviating from the course of these fundamental principles.

Such provisions as the right of any great power accused of aggression to veto the sanctions against itself, the right of any great power to stop discussion of a dispute in which it is not directly involved, and a denial of the Assembly's right to make recommendations on any subject which happens to be under consideration by the Council—transform the entire Post-War Security edifice into an **exclusive Directorate of the Great Powers** to perpetuate wartime acquisitions as a **status quo** in a world of power politics.

The fair wording of Chapter 2 of the Dumbarton Oaks project is overshadowed by Chapter 6 of the same document which implicitly invests the Great Powers into the seats of unrestricted control in the Security Council.

The power of the would-be Council is so expanded that the International Court of Justice is left practically a superfluous institution.

A statement by the Honorable Cordell Hull on March 21st, 1944, shows how far the Dumbarton Oaks proposals have deviated from American fundamentals:

### “International Cooperation

Cooperation between nations in the spirit of good neighbors, founded on the principles of liberty, equality, justice, morality, and law, is the most effective method of safeguarding and promoting the political, the economic, the social, and the cultural well-being of our nation and of all nations.

### International Court of Justice

Disputes of a legal character which present a threat to the peace of the world should be adjudicated by an international court of justice, whose decisions would be based upon application of principles of law.

### Moscow Four-Nation Declaration

Through this declaration, the Soviet Union, Great Britain, the United States, and China have laid the foundation for cooperative effort in the post-war world toward enabling all peace-loving nations, large and small, to live in peace and security, to preserve the liberties and rights of civilized existence, and to enjoy expanded opportunities and facilities for economic, social and spiritual progress.

### Spheres of Influence and Alliances

As the provisions of the four-nation declaration are

carried into effect, there will no longer be need for spheres of influence, for alliances, for balance of power, or any other of the special arrangements through which, in the unhappy past, the nations strove to safeguard their security or to promote their interests.

### Sovereign Equality of Nations

Each sovereign nation, large or small, is in law and under law the equal of every other nation. The principle of sovereign equality of all peace-loving States, irrespective of size and strength, as partners in a future system of general security will be the foundation stone upon which the future international organization will be constructed."

As matters now stand, and should the projected Dumbarton-Yalta plan be adopted, it will—

- (a) inaugurate a new era of Power Politics, each great European Power being an unrestricted master in its own zone of influence;
- (b) give a new impetus to unrestricted competition in building up armed power which fact, sooner or later, will bring on World War III, following the pattern of the years 1815 through 1848-1856;
- (c) create a permanent troubled state throughout Europe for oppressed nationalities which, there can be no doubt, will continue to fight in order to free themselves from the foreign yoke, as they had in 1848 and, in the Baltic section, in 1831, 1863-1864, and 1905.

### D. SUGGESTIONS

Being fully cognizant of the difficulties involved and of the fact that the Dumbarton Oaks proposals, as amended to date, are but an unhappy compromise because of wartime exigencies, we recognize that there are **three different courses open** to the American People:

- (a) **Adoption of the Dumbarton Oaks plank**, with the Yalta amendments, probably with slight modifications;
- (b) **Adoption of a basic amendment** whereby, by

a majority vote of the Assembly, any particular political arrangement made during the war may be rectified;

- (c) **Reversal of the Dumbarton Oaks plank**, as amended at Yalta, and **substitution of a new Charter based on the fundamental principles as expressed in our Declaration of Independence and in the Atlantic Charter.**

It is respectfully submitted that the latter course (c) is the only sound course to be followed in the interests of the future well-being of mankind. In such an event, no peace-loving nation should be excluded from the deliberations of the Conference at San Francisco. Either the sponsoring Powers or the Conference itself should extend an invitation to **all neutral states**, members of the League of Nations, including the sovereign Republics of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia.

**An International Bill of Human Rights**, expressly specifying and guaranteeing individual human rights and fundamental freedoms should be embodied in the future World Security Charter.

A provision whereby any situation, the **relic or consequence of injustice and oppression**, could be **readjusted** in the interests of justice and peace within the framework of a worldwide Security Organization, should be adopted.

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## THE PROBLEM OF LITHUANIAN BOUNDARIES

(Continued from the *Lithuanian Bulletin*, Vol. III, No. 1)

By KAZYS PAKSTAS, Ph.D.

The Latvian-Lithuanian frontiers, in the north, were established to the mutual satisfaction of both states. The German-Lithuanian political boundary did not do justice to Lithuanian ethnographic claims but, nevertheless, it was accepted by both interested states. The southern and eastern frontiers of Lithuania—no matter how odd this may sound—were never settled definitely or accepted by those concerned—Lithuania, Poland and Russia.

It is true that the Russo-Lithuanian Peace Treaty of Moscow (July 12th, 1920) provided a satisfactory eastern boundary of Lithuania, in-

cluding Vilnius, the historical capital of the country. Lithuania was to embrace a territory of 88,000 sq. km. (approx. 34,000 sq. miles) with a population of roughly 4,000,000 inhabitants. However, within three months of the delineation of the Russo-Lithuanian frontiers, a Polish army invaded Lithuania and, after several weeks of hostilities, seized approximately one-third of the Lithuanian territory. This violation of the truce of Suvalkai within two days after its signing (Vilnius was seized October 9th, 1920, the pact was signed October 7th, 1920) increased political complications between Lithuania and Poland. During

the two decades (1919-1939) of the co-existence of Lithuania and Poland, the boundaries between the two neighboring countries, formerly political partners in a dual Commonwealth, were not definitely delineated. Poland wished to consider the line of demarcation, where the fighting armies of both countries stopped hostilities in the late fall of 1920, as the definite state frontier. This line separated the regions actually controlled by the administrative organs of the respective states, and both nations agreed to call it "the administration line" instead of a state frontier.

Lithuania is still looking forward to an honest settlement of the frontiers with Poland by negotiations in an atmosphere of "sovereign equality."

## 2. Historical Criteria of the Boundaries of Lithuania

A national Lithuanian state first emerged in the early Thirteenth Century. It embraced some 44,000 square miles of territory inhabited by closely related tribes of kinsmen, all speaking the same language (of several dialects) and professing the same heathen religion.

The young pagan Lithuanian state was an island within a sea of Christendom. The Teutonic Knights attempted to subjugate Lithuania from two powerful bridgeheads—Livonia in the north, Prussia in the west. While fending off the powerful Teutonic thrusts from two directions, the Lithuanians were also obliged to repel Polish incursions from the South and Ruthene advances from the north-east and east. When the Eastern Slavonic principalities (Ukraine and White Ruthenia) were weakened by the great Mongol Invasion, and Muscovy was subjugated by the Tatars, Lithuania sought more manoeuvring space and more manpower reserves in her long and bitter defense against the Teutons. Lithuania managed to assess the situation correctly and to expand into White Ruthenia and Ukraine.

Lithuanian expansion reached its peak in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, culminating in a Vitoldian Empire extending over some 330,000 sq. miles of territory between the Baltic and the Black Seas. This vast area is inhabited today by some fifty-six million people of various nationalities. Kiev was at that time the geographic center of the Lithuanian Empire and Vilnius was the political capital and the nerve center. The port of Palanga on the Baltic, with the port of Riga controlled by the Germans, and the port of Haji-Bey (now known as Odessa) on the Black Sea, were the main outlets for the international trade of this multi-national Lithuanian Empire. Great waterways of the Nemunas, Daugava and Dnieper accommodated the trade leading to and from these ports. It may be noted in passing that the vast region between the Baltic and the Black Seas was united under one flag only twice throughout the

long history of the region: by Lithuania in XIV-XVI centuries, and by Muscovy since the XVIII century.

The vast empire, created by state builders emerging from a small heathenish Lithuanian nation, began to dissolve in 1494. Between 1494 and 1569 the territorial area of Lithuania diminished from 330,000 sq. miles to 124,000 sq. miles. Muscovy gained a sizeable chunk of territory east of the upper Dnieper, and Poland acquired practically all of Ukraine. Lithuania lost her outlet on the Black Sea, and the plan to link by canals the Dnieper with the Nemunas and Daugava was dropped. After 1569, the Lithuanian State embraced all of ethnographic Lithuania (exclusive of East Prussia), all of White Ruthenia, and a narrow belt of northern Ukraine: Lithuania controlled the Nemunas basin except its delta, a stretch of the Daugava, and the upper Dnieper. The area of Lithuania of the years 1569-1772 is today inhabited by fourteen million people. In the period of 1919-1939 the larger portion of this area was a part of the U.S.S.R., a smaller part was a part of Poland, and only one-sixth of that area remained within the frontiers of Lithuania.

As can be seen, Lithuania's historic boundaries between the XIII and XVIII centuries varied between 44,000 sq. miles, 330,000 sq. miles and 124,000 sq. miles. The north-western, Lithuanian-speaking part of the state, was more densely populated throughout the whole historic period, as it is today the most densely populated area. The Lithuanians comprised nearly one-half of the population of their Empire during its period of expansion—the southern steppes of Ukraine, the area on the left bank of the Dnieper, the vast Pripet Marshes and the Bialowież Forest were sparsely populated. Ruthene Christian subjects of Lithuania inhabited the densely populated Volynia, an area around Kiev, and the area between Menks, Smolensk, the Dnieper and Vitebsk. After the Union of Lublin, the Lithuanians may have comprised a majority in their territorially reduced state. However, the area of Lithuanian language was steadily receding from the east and the south—the White Ruthene language was gaining in the east and south in the process of assimilation, and Polish (Mazur) settlers moved northward and westward in Sudavia (Bialystok-Grodno-Suwalki area) and East Prussia. The Polish language began to spread, principally in the cities and on the estates of the great landowners.

Post-1569 Lithuania still retained an area of 124,000 square miles—the area where Lithuanian historic influence was uninterruptedly felt since the XIII century. The area was equal to that of the Hungarian Kingdom before the year 1918. In 1938 this territory was divided politically as follows: the Soviet Union ruled over some 59,000 sq.

miles, Poland controlled 46,000 sq. miles, Lithuania controlled 21,000 sq. miles (exclusive of the Klaipeda Territory). Indicative of the great loss of the Lithuanian speech between 1569 and 1939, this whole area is now inhabited by 14,000,000 people of whom about 8 million speak the White Ruthene, about 3 million speak Lithuanian; almost 1,200,000 are Jews, about 800,000 are Russians, more than 500,000 speak Polish and 500,000 speak Ukrainian (near Brest Litovsk or "The Lithuanian Fording Place" in translation).

In 1918, when new European states were being formed and old ones were being re-established and re-shaped, two Slavic components of the old composite Lithuanian-Polish Commonwealth began to advance definite plans for reestablishing a "Lithuania" on that vast area. However, the Lithuanians themselves practically unanimously opposed such plans and insisted on the reconstitution of a nationally monolithic Lithuanian state within ethnographic boundaries, and on application of the Wilsonian principle of national self-determination. The Lithuanian national movement irrevocably renounced all thought of territorial ambitions beyond the ethnographic Lithuanian areas whose inhabitants still speak the Lithuanian language. Historical experience has taught the Lithuanians that in a multi-national state Lithuanian administrative talents and methods may be appreciated, but that in a multi-lingual political organization, particularly should the Lithuanian-speaking element be in the minority, the Lithuanian language is the loser.

During World War I, politically active White Ruthene intellectuals and Polish federalists promoted a creation of a Lithuanian-White Ruthene State. Both these factions had different plans, however.

The White Ruthenes were the less influential element. A Government of the democratic and independent Republic of Bielarus, backed by a small White Ruthene detachment later incorporated in the Lithuanian army, was unable to establish itself in White Ruthenia in the face of Russian and Polish aggression and occupation. This Government found shelter at Kaunas in Lithuania, and vegetated in exile for several years. At the same time communist White Ruthene leaders, backed by the Red Army, formed a "Lithuanian-White Ruthene Soviet Republic" with a capital at Vilnius. A dual state, promoted by Soviet politicians and strategists, appealed to some White Ruthenes: the White Ruthene element would have constituted a majority in such a state, and White Ruthenia would secure an outlet on the Baltic Sea via Lithuania. The port of Klaipeda-Memel would enjoy a privileged position among the Eastern Baltic ports, because of the concentration of trade from all of the vast hinterland of Lithuania and White Ruthenia—all of the

Nemunas basin and a large part of the upper Dnieper and upper Daugava basins. The projected Moscow-dominated Lithuanian-White Ruthene state would have been medium-sized in population, yet large enough to permit rapid industrial development to be followed by increase in population.

Polish federalists likewise entertained similar plans—but under the aegis of Warsaw. A supporter of this idea was Marshal Joseph Pilsudski, a person of Lithuanian descent and with a workable knowledge of the Lithuanian language. He fancied himself as a "**homo historicus**," a state planner with historical perspectives. He actually made an armed attempt to recreate a historical Lithuania in 1919 and 1920, and to bind such nominal Lithuania to Poland by federal ties. The Polish plan visualized the internal organization differently from that proposed by Moscow and White Ruthene communists. Instead of two cantons, component elements of "Lithuania" (the cantons of Lithuania and White Ruthenia), Pilsudski foresaw three cantons: 1) Lithuania, with Kaunas as the capital and Lithuanian in speech; 2) White Ruthenia, with Mensk for a capital and White Ruthene in speech; and 3) Central Lithuania, Polish in speech and with the capital at Vilnius which was also to serve as the federal capital of "Lithuania". All of this three-canton state was to be linked with Poland in a confederation.

The Lithuanians do not understand the White Ruthenian language, and only a few know the Polish language. The White Ruthenes do not understand Lithuanian at all but it is not difficult for them to acquire a working knowledge of the Polish language (the White Ruthene tongue is a "bridge" between the Polish and the Great-Russian tongues). There were a little more than half-a-million Poles or polonized Lithuanians among the fourteen million inhabitants of the whole area of post-1569 pre-1772 Lithuania (124,000 sq. miles). The Polish speaking element was concentrated in the larger cities, particularly in Vilnius, and around large estates—doomed to be parcelled if land-hungry farmers were to have their way in a democracy. These Poles owned large tracts of the better arable land in the area. Centrally situated (at Vilnius) Polish canton, plus the Polish urban and land-owning elements strongly entrenched in economic, social and cultural positions in at least one other (White Ruthenian) canton, would have enabled Poland to control a tri-lingual "Lithuania." Naturally, the Poles expected that both the Lithuanians and the White Ruthenes would use the medium of the Polish language for mutual understanding. Federal ties with Poland would have served as a guaranty of Polish cultural, linguistic and political predominance in a three-canton "Lithuania."

Pilsudski engaged in a war with Russia to regain the frontiers of the Polish-Lithuanian Com-

monwealth of the period of 1772. After an initial success, the fortunes of war turned against Poland, yet Pilsudski succeeded in the end in separating Lithuania from White Ruthenia: the Russo-Polish peace treaty signed at Riga in 1921 created a Polish "corridor" between Lithuania and the U.S.S.R. This was a first practical step toward compelling Lithuania to accept a federation with Poland, dangling the possession of the capital Vilnius as a bait for establishing political ties with Poland.

However, the Lithuanians definitely rejected the romantic dreams of Pilsudski and other federalists of Poland. The Lithuanians were aware of Polish aggressiveness and would not associate with a large Polish state which would inevitably nourish greater territorial ambitions based on the historic "greatness" of the past. The Lithuanians sympathetically followed, and aided, the White Ruthene national movement. Believing in the processes of democracy, they realized that the growing national consciousness of the White Ruthene masses and the developing national White Ruthene culture would not long permit the rich Polish minority to retain a dominating control in politics and culture. The more practical Polish leaders likewise opposed the federal plans of Pilsudski.

The idea of a historical Lithuania had almost entirely disappeared among the Lithuanians themselves, and a federation of Poland and Lithuania was opposed by them unanimously. Practical minded Lithuanians could not conceive a Lithuania with a Lithuanian national minority and the reins in Warsaw. They strove to re-constitute an independent national state with a Lithuanian majority and Vilnius as a capital. They wished to include in their state only those small White Ruthene districts which form islands within a Lithuanian-speaking area and which gravitate economically toward Vilnius, being connected with Lithuanian centers by railroads and rivers. Such non-Lithuanian speaking regions were to enjoy a broad cultural autonomy in the best Lithuanian historical tradition of tolerance. It may be recalled that Catholic White Ruthenes are denationalized Lithuanians in fact—they are ethnically Lithuanians who had ceased to speak the Lithuanian language. A Ministry for White Ruthene Affairs (with the Ministry for Jewish Affairs) was formed in the Lithuanian Cabinet, and the ministerial seat was occupied by a nominee of the White Ruthene minority. There was no antagonism between the White Ruthene minority and the Lithuanian majority, and the White Ruthene ministry would have greatly aided the political development of White Ruthene masses.

The odd contest between two non-Lithuanian great states over the possession of the territories of a long-dead historical Lithuania ended in a Russo-Polish peace treaty of Riga in 1921. The

lands of a historic Lithuania were divided almost equally between Russia and Poland—Russian title to 59,000 sq. miles was approved, and Poland gained (it must be remembered that prior to 1919 Poland had no title to the "frontiers of 1772" north of Ukraine) 44,000 sq. miles. The remaining 21,000 sq. miles were retained, after a difficult and costly struggle, by the **Lithuanian Republic itself which had defended its independence in a truly heroic fight against Russian and Polish annexionist plans.** Russia created an "autonomous" White Russian Socialist Soviet Republic (now claiming a seat in the proposed International Organization based on the Dumbarton Oaks plan), containing an area of 50,000 sq. miles with a population of about six million. Mensk, which lies near the very western border of the Soviet province and which had a population of about 230,000, became the capital of a Soviet White Russia.

Similarly, the three million White Ruthenes within the political frontiers of Poland, living mainly in the palatinates of Polesie, Nowogrodek, Bialystok, and in some counties of the palatinate of Vilnius, did not enjoy much freedom, either. They had no university here, only one high school and a few elementary schools. Only the bare remnants of societies and newspapers were retained, and even these were greatly restricted. Moreover, the White Ruthenes lived in frightful poverty, bordering on starvation. Regardless of these deplorable conditions, the national consciousness of the White Ruthene masses was growing in Poland—a nation was emerging just before World War II. Judging by reports escaping through the veil of German censorship, White Ruthene national consciousness, stimulated by the struggle against German invaders, had gained in strength between 1941-1944. There can be no doubt that the White Ruthene political awakening would gain in strength in the conditions of individual freedom. Unfortunately, however, there are no prospects of success for this natural movement under a totalitarian communist regime imposed by newly nationalistic Soviet Russia. It may be safely stated that the politically conscious White Ruthene masses are, at the present moment, either in some Asiatic concentration camps already or on the way there.

On the basis of personal research and past contacts with White Ruthene intellectuals, it may be stated that, **were they permitted to decide by plebiscite, the White Ruthenes would gladly renew their old ties with Lithuania.** They have confidence in the national Lithuanian character and in the historic tradition of Lithuanian administration, and they feel secure in claiming that a proper representation in a federal administration would endow the White Ruthenes with the blessings of personal, economic and cultural liberty and Western standards of life.

Consequently, it is rather difficult for the Lithuanians to ignore the pleas for sympathy of their White Ruthene neighbors who remember the "old days" of Lithuanian rule. The Lithuanians, however, realize their proportions and the realities of life. They sympathize with White Ruthene aspirations and sheltered White Ruthene leaders and cultural institutions, always mindful of the close watch maintained over the White Ruthene activities by Soviet Russia and Poland. Lithuanian resources and hard reality of the struggle for the very existence of the Lithuanian nation precluded any rash overtures of political aid to the White Ruthenes.

Ideas which are not paid for or lavishly publicized on the radio and in the press, and which are

not supported by a special propaganda machinery, have little opportunity to take root in the Europe of today. Therefore, ancient historical reminiscences do not carry enough weight of themselves to stand much chance of being revived, especially since the type of man known as "homo historicus" has almost disappeared from the Lithuanian scene. Today, this type is yielding his place to the more dynamic "homo nationalis." Once more Poland and Russia are waging a diplomatic battle over the possession of White Ruthene and Ukrainian lands—both disregarding the wishes of the inhabitants themselves. Lithuanian aspirations do not enter into this battle—Lithuania wants to regain her own independence within national frontiers.

*(To be continued)*

## LITHUANIA'S "LIBERATION"

From "The Weekly Review" London, January 11, 1945.

Now that the Press is full of the stories about the situation in the liberated Western Europe, news from liberated Central and Eastern Europe is rather scarce. The other day in the House of Commons Major Pethrick, speaking on the situation on Poland, among other things, said: "that the situation in the Baltic States now controlled by Russia is a very serious and a very ugly one." Therefore perhaps it would be timely to examine evidence as to what liberation in Eastern Europe means to the countries concerned. This time we will deal with the situation in Lithuania.

The Supreme Committee for the Liberation of Lithuania (an underground body directing Lithuania's fight for independence), in its latest appeal to Great Britain and the United States of America, urgently requested them "to send their missions without delay to Lithuania in order to safeguard the vital interest of the Lithuanian people and to save them from threatening extermination." Evidence of this is accumulating, and reports are trickling into Sweden of the alarming state of affairs in Soviet-Occupied Lithuania.

An eye-witness who left Lithuania at the end of October reports that the Red Army does not take any active part where the political side of the occupied country is concerned. This is done by N.K.G.B. which is following hard on the heels of the Army. The latter confines its activity to checking the documents of all the people just behind the front line, and of course "acquiring" as many useful things as possible. Food is requisitioned without any regard for the needs of the local population or the requirements for the next spring sowing. Red Army men are particularly keen on clothes, watches, mirrors, pen knives, rings and similar articles. Anyone met by the soldiers wearing good clothes or shoes is stripped on the spot.

The eye-witness was himself a victim of such "acquisition" by the Red Army.

What is happening in the districts far behind the front line firmly held by the rule of N.K.G.B. is indescribable. In Kaunas 400 intellectuals were shot by the Soviet authorities. In Siauliai 700 persons met a similar fate. In Zarasai all kinds of local officials, families of Lithuanian officers, patriots, and any suspected of anti-Soviet mentality—even Russians and Poles—were liquidated. In Daugailiai a "people's court of justice" was established, and a box into which anonymous denunciations were dropped was set up. All thus accused were sentenced to death. Many people were shot in the towns of Deguciai, Salakas, Dusetai, Antaliepte, Kamajai and Swedasai. In the regions of Kedainiai and Panavezys the local inhabitants were ordered to exhume the bodies of Communists who had been killed by the Germans in 1941, and after doing this they were shot and buried in the same graves. There are reports that large numbers of Lithuanian people are being rounded up and sent for forced labor to the East. All able-bodied men are being conscripted into the Red Army. The relatives of the former Mayor of Kaunas, Dr. Garmus, one of the leading Lithuanian Social-Democrats, a pre-war advocate of close collaboration with Soviet Russia, and a member of the "People's Parliament" elected under Soviet supervision in 1940, was sentenced to death. A similar fate befell the relatives of Dr. Seinius—a writer and former Lithuanian diplomat, and Father Mironas—a former Lithuanian Prime Minister. These men had voiced the people's cry for freedom. Now even their innocent relatives are sentenced to death . . .

Such is the position in Lithuania and the price which the people have to pay for their "liberation." Never has a word been more misused in order to conceal the truth than the word "liberation" today.