

. . . 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

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FIVE YEARS OF LITHUANIAN UNDERGROUND RESISTANCE

*An Account of Activities
of the
Supreme Lithuanian Committee of Liberation*

Somewhere in Western Europe,
April 1945.

In its declarations addressed to the Lithuanian People and to the Governments of the United Nations during the past five years of foreign occupation, the Supreme Lithuanian Committee of Liberation repeatedly reaffirmed that the Lithuanian People are linking their destinies with the **Victory of the Western Democracies**. The great world cataclysm is rapidly approaching its climax. The Lithuanian People rejoice with other freedom and peace loving peoples that the hour of Victory is near at hand and that the moment of final liberation of the many peoples enslaved in the recent years by the evil forces of totalitarianism will soon arrive.

For the first time after five years of unprecedented suffering, sacrifices and relentless struggle for freedom, representatives of the Supreme Lithuanian Committee of Liberation are able to come into direct contact with the representatives of the English-speaking Democracies and to voice the grievances of the Lithuanian People to the freemen of the world.

The Supreme Lithuanian Committee of Liberation takes advantage of this occasion to convey the high regard which the Lithuanian People have for the American and British Peoples who, at the cost of immense sacrifices, have arrested the for-

ward march of the brutal forces of Naziism and Fascism and have put a stop to the denial of the elementary rights of individuals and nations. The Lithuanian People view the impending victory of the Western Allies as a guaranty of a better future for humanity and of a durable peace based on the principles of justice and morality inherent in the Atlantic Charter. The memory of the soldiers of the United States of America and of the British Commonwealth of Nations who gave their lives so that others might live in freedom, will forever remain sacred to the Lithuanian Nation, as it will to all the other liberty-loving nations. The Supreme Lithuanian Committee of Liberation is especially happy to be able to state that in the ranks of the liberating American and British armed forces considerable numbers of Americans and Britons of Lithuanian origin have fought with equal bravery and sacrificed their lives as nobly.

1. Sketch of Historical Background

The Supreme Lithuanian Committee of Liberation begs to be allowed a short excursion into the past and to give a concise account of the policy of the Lithuanian State and of the position taken by the Lithuanian People in the present war.

Lithuania has a long historical record of an ancient and great past as an independent State. The Lithuanian People had formed a national state of their own in the early part of the Thir-

teenth Century. In the course of the following centuries, thanks to a succession of wise rulers, the Lithuanian State spread its influence over vast territories lying between the Baltic and the Black Seas, and became an important political, economic, cultural and military factor in the geopolitical part of the European continent where the East meets the West. The Lithuanian State has left a permanent positive cultural imprint on its neighbors. Its law code, formulated in the early part of the Sixteenth Century and called the Lithuanian Statute, was adopted by other nations. The Lithuanian Code, the first Census, and the great agrarian and tax reforms carried out in the Sixteenth Century astonish the researchers even today by their advanced ideas.

Unfortunately, the geographic situation of the Lithuanian People living between the Germans and the Slavs endangered the security of Lithuania. German expansion from the West forced the Lithuanians to seek support in the East. Somewhat later, intensified pressure from the East obliged Lithuania and Poland to enter into a dynastic union and, later, into a political confederation dictated by considerations of mutual defense. The ancient Lithuanian State had performed signal services to Western European civilization. Lithuania had contained and stemmed the Mongolian advance towards the West. The great victory at Tannenberg in 1410 effectively stopped the German *Drang nach Osten* for several centuries.

In the Eighteenth Century, when Muscovy and Prussia had greatly expanded territorially and had built up powerful military machines for conquest, the dual Commonwealth of Lithuania and Poland was unable to hold its own against the concerted aggressive policies of Muscovite-Prussian partnership. In 1795 Russia, Prussia and Austria partitioned Lithuania and Poland among themselves. Having been long accustomed to democratic ways of life and to membership in the Western community of nations, the Lithuanian People bitterly resented the autocratic policies and oppression imposed by the Muscovites, who had for forty years banned all printing in Lithuanian and all repairs to dilapidating churches of the Lithuanian People. During the 120 years of foreign rule, each generation of the Lithuanian People paid dearly in its struggle for basic human freedom and restoration of sovereignty. Lithuania revolted in 1794-5, 1812, 1831, 1863-4, and 1905. The victory of Western Democracies in 1918 and the principle of free self-determination proclaimed by President Wilson of the United States, enabled the Lithuanian People to reassert its will for freedom and independence. After a prolonged and bitter struggle against the Red and White armies of Russia, against the German armies, and against invading Polish armies, Lithuania was finally reconstituted as a sovereign state with a democratic form of government.

2. Record of Independence

During the twenty-two years of untrammelled independence, the Lithuanian Republic gave ample

proof of its maturity and capability for self-government as a useful member of the community of independent nations. The cultural and economic progress made by Lithuania during this short period of recovered freedom was truly great and unusually rapid. Lithuania based her foreign policy on close collaboration with Latvia and Estonia, and with the other States bordering on the Baltic Sea and desiring to see established a solid bloc of Northern States dedicated to the maintenance of peace and oriented culturally and economically towards Great Britain and the Atlantic Community of Nations.

Lithuania had established very close and mutually beneficial economic relations with Great Britain, and these relations showed a marked tendency to grow even closer. This development, in Lithuanian eyes, was a real guaranty of their future. At the same time, cultural relations between Lithuania and Great Britain also grew ever closer. It is enough to mention the activity shown by the Lithuanian British Association at Kaunas and by its counterpart in London; the frequent visits of British scientists, men of letters, parliamentarians and others to Lithuania; the growing numbers of Lithuanian students matriculating in British universities; introduction of the obligatory study of English in Lithuanian schools, etc.

Lithuanian relations with the United States of America, despite the considerable geographical distance between the two countries, have always been very cordial. Dating back to the period of Lithuanian enslavement under the Tsarist Russian regime, about one-third of the Lithuanian People had emigrated to the United States of America. The Lithuanians found there a hospitable new home, and they have greatly contributed to the life of the great American community. They maintain there a number of churches, schools and cultural organizations, and are prominent in business and industry. Lithuanian Americans have maintained a splendid record of generous contribution to the American war effort in the present war, as well as during the World War I. While contributing to the life of their respective communities and to the national war effort as Americans, they had not forgotten the Lithuanian language and their interest in the land of their ancestors. The number of Lithuanian-language papers published in the United States of America falls not far below that published in Lithuania itself.

Americans have frequently visited Lithuania in the years of peace. The number of American tourists, according to statistical traffic and travel data, was second only to the number of annual visitors from the states in the immediate neighborhood of Lithuania, Latvia and Germany. Some American students studied in Lithuania, and Lithuanians studied in America. During the years just preceding this war, commercial relations between Lithuania and the United States were also expanding upgrade. For this reason Lithuania was very glad to be able to maintain her own pavilion at the World's Fair at New York in 1939.

Within the limits of its modest capacity, the Lithuanian State has consistently aided the efforts of other peace-loving nations to maintain peace. Although she had political difficulties with Poland regarding her capital city of Vilnius (Vilna), and with Germany regarding the Territory of Klaipėda (Memel), Lithuania directed all her efforts to a settlement of the said differences by peaceful means, as provided for in the Covenant of the League of Nations. Aspects of these political differences were referred to the Permanent Court of International Justice at the Hague, and each time a decision was made in favor of the thesis defended by Lithuania. It is a matter of record that Lithuania did not violate any one of her international treaty obligations, and Lithuania is a member of good standing in the League of Nations.

3. Beginning of the Tragedy

In view of the terrible upheaval convulsing the world at the present time, surely no one will deny that the political crisis in Europe and, at the same, the whole global tragedy began with the coming of the Nazis into power in Germany. After Austria and Czechoslovakia, Lithuania was the third successive country directly affected by the Nazi lawlessness. In March 1938 the Polish Government, by its notorious ultimatum, obliged Lithuania to enter into diplomatic and consular relations with Poland, although the Lithuanian People were determined to have no relations with its southern neighbor as long as that neighbor continued to hold the Vilnius Territory which had been seized from Lithuania by violence and in violation of a solemnly signed agreement. This Lithuanian stand was sanctioned by the highest institution of international justice—the Hague Peace Court.

A year had barely gone by thereafter, when in March 1939 the Third Reich, after a brutal ultimatum and by threats of violence, tore from Lithuania the Klaipėda District—constituting the northern part of Lithuania Minor and embracing the only seaport of Lithuania, which Lithuania had developed from a small harbor into a prosperous seaport and trading center. Lithuania bowed to this ultimatum of Nazi Germany only after she had been urgently advised to do so, in the interests of world peace, by Great Britain and France, co-signatories with her of the Klaipėda Convention, and after the British and French Governments had assured her that this sacrifice, demanded of Lithuania in the cause of peace, was only of a temporary character.

When the Third Reich began war against Poland on the 1st of September 1939, Lithuania announced that she would remain strictly neutral. All the efforts of von Ribbentrop to draw Lithuania into the bloc of the Axis countries, by urging her to march on Vilnius and tempting her with other alluring promises of power politics, despite the natural Lithuanian resentment growing out of the still unsettled dispute with Poland, broke against the steadfast determination of the Lithuanian Government to avoid any and all ties with the predatory fascist powers. On the contrary,

Lithuania hospitably received scores of thousands of Polish soldiers and civilian refugees who, pressed by the Hitlerian and Communist armies, sought shelter on Lithuanian soil.* Many of these refugees were later aided to reach Great Britain from Lithuania.

But just as at the end of the Eighteenth Century, the collaboration between Berlin and Moscow was once again fatal to Lithuania. Having gained the acquiescence of Berlin to the occupation of Lithuania, the Soviet Union at first demanded military bases on the Lithuanian Territory (by the imposed treaty of the 10th of October 1939 at Moscow). Nine months later, the Soviet Union, breaking all the treaties which it had concluded with Lithuania and ignoring all its international obligations, infamously violated the sovereignty of the Lithuanian State by a peremptory ultimatum of the 14th of June 1940, and by the use of overwhelming military forces.

4. First Soviet Occupation and the Insurrection

The Bolshevik occupation of Lithuania, which lasted a whole year, and the farce of incorporation of the country in the Soviet Union, which was at the time condemned as null and void by the United States, Great Britain and France, marked the beginning of the unforgettably painful tragedy of Lithuania. This occupation began the planned extermination of the Lithuanian People and threatened to destroy all the cultural and economic progress attained during the twenty-two years of independence.

The Bolshevik occupation disorganized the economic structure of the country. It inaugurated a policy of russification and stifling of the national Lithuanian cultural life. It introduced an unendurable regime of police-regulated oppression. Finally, it initiated the mass deportations of Lithuanians to the farthest regions of the Soviet Union.** In this activity of the occupants, the most important roll fell to the merciless NKVD, the secret political police now officially called NKGB (Narodnyj Commissariat Gosudarstvennoj Bezopasnosti).

Nevertheless, with all its misery, the Bolshevik occupation proved how deeply rooted in the Lithuanian People is the love of liberty and how strong is the will to live its own independent life, in a sovereign state of its own. In spite of the severity of occupational regime and the policies of terror applied by the occupants, the Lithuanian People obstinately resisted the Soviet designs and secretly formed an underground resistance enjoying the confidence of all the classes of population. In June 1941, shortly after the mass deportations had begun, the Lithuanian People rose up in arms against the Bolshevik oppressors and against the Soviet order introduced into the country by vi-

*14,000 Polish soldiers and 25,000 civilian refugees found shelter in Lithuania in September 1939, in consequence of the Soviet-German partition of Poland.—*Editor.*

**35,000 Lithuanians of every walk of life were forcibly deported to the USSR by the end of the first occupation. Several hundred people, mostly public functionaries, were executed by the Russians. Besides the deportees, some 30,000 people were evacuated to Russia. Consequently the first Soviet occupation caused a manpower loss of 65,000 people.—*Editor.*

olence and maintained by a foreign dictatorial regime. Chief Lithuanian cities of Vilnius and Kaunas were liberated by the spontaneous general uprising. Restoration of the sovereign Lithuanian State was proclaimed and a Provisional Government was formed through a coalition of all democratic parties.

The Provisional Government of Lithuania immediately annulled all the illicit decrees of the so-called "Lithuanian Soviet Government," which had actually been set up by and at Moscow. Sovietization, forcibly imposed upon the country by a foreign power, was stopped and legal constitutional order was restored.

5. German Occupation

Unfortunately, the Provisional Lithuanian Government was unable to order Lithuanian affairs very long. The Nazis, who had poured into Lithuania, liquidated the Provisional Government, re-established the Soviet order of affairs, and re-introduced nationalization of private property in order to facilitate the plundering of the country. All the wealth of Lithuania, formerly nationalized by the Soviet Union, was proclaimed to be the booty of Germany. The Germans gave over the administration of the country to their *Zivilverwaltung* and introduced a strict police regime to exploit Lithuania's resources and manpower for the war effort of Germany.

If Moscow sought to incorporate Lithuania in the Soviet Union by creating a so-called "Lithuanian Soviet Republic" and by falsifying the will of the Lithuanian People through farcical "elections to a People's Diet," Berlin showed itself not one whit better. The Germans systematically plundered the country, exterminated a considerable part of the people, and prepared the way for a complete annexation of Lithuania,*—all the while attempting to take advantage of the anti-bolshevik temper of the Lithuanian People by letting it be understood that the exercise of the sovereignty of the Lithuanian State was only being postponed until the end of the war.

The Lithuanians could not passively contemplate the preemptory and ruthless exploitation of the country's resources, the arbitrariness of Nazi officials, and the trampling of the People's rights of freemen. Resistance of the Lithuanian People to the German occupant broke out spontaneously and quickly spread throughout the country. In order to co-ordinate the nation's struggle for survival and for restoration of national sovereignty and democratic order, the **Supreme Lithuanian Committee of Liberation** was formed soon after the liquidation of the Provisional Lithuanian Government. This underground committee of resistance was formed by the representatives of all the political parties active during the period of parliamentary government, and of the new combat organizations, namely: the **Lithuanian Social Democratic Party**, the **Christian Democratic Party**, the **People's Agrarian Party (Radical)**, the **Farmers**

Union (Catholic), the **Farmers Party (Liberal)**, the **National Union**, the **Nationalist Party**, the **Federation of Labor**, the **Union of Combatants for the Liberty of Lithuania**, the **Lithuanian Front**, and the **Unity Movement**.

It is a noteworthy fact that in Lithuania there was found not a single collaborationist movement or group, and until the very end of the German occupation the Nazis were unable to produce such a movement. **The Supreme Lithuanian Committee of Liberation was and is, without any reservation, recognized by the entire Lithuanian People as the supreme political authority of the People and as the only rightful interpreter of their political will.** Lithuanian diplomatic representatives in the various countries have also subordinated themselves to the authority of this Committee. Thus, throughout this difficult and critical period, the Lithuanian nation, fighting energetically for its future and for the right to lead an independent life, has never been without a recognized political leadership.

It is a matter of record that the so-called "Lithuanian" Communist Party is not represented in the Supreme Lithuanian Committee of Liberation. In reality, this so-called party consists only of a negligible handful of people who, in one way or another, had come under the influence of Moscow. The Bolsheviks themselves, during their first occupation of Lithuania, officially announced that this "Party" had less than 2,500 members in a population of more than three million people, and that the majority of these were of non-Lithuanian origin. During the German occupation this fictional "party" has shown no activity at all and has taken no part in the anti-German resistance of the Lithuanian People.

Under the prevalent conditions, the activity of the Supreme Lithuanian Committee of Liberation could only be of underground character, but its significance has been very great. Through the efforts of the political parties and combat organizations which constitute this Committee, fifteen underground periodicals were regularly published during the German occupation. In this way, under the Committee's leadership, public opinion was formulated and crystallized, and the nation's resistance activities were closely co-ordinated. The Lithuanian People effectively resisted all the German attempts to mobilize our nation's manpower. It is to the credit of the Lithuanian underground leadership that the Germans had been unable to form a "Lithuanian Legion" to fight for Germany.

Apart from this, the Supreme Lithuanian Committee of Liberation directed all other resistance activities of the People. Soon after their entry into Lithuania in 1941, the Nazis began the ruthless extermination of the Jews of whom there were 263,000 in a pre-war Lithuania. At the same time, the Germans attempted to drive out Lithuanian Poles from their homes and farms and to send them to slave labor camps abroad. Lay spokesmen of the Lithuanian public, and Church dignitaries, repeatedly protested against the cruel measures of the Nazis and, through the Lithuanian under-

*During the three years of German occupation, approximately 200,000 Lithuanians, mostly those of Jewish faith, were exterminated and at least 100,000 people from all walks of life were deported to Germany either as political prisoners or slave laborers.—Editor.

ground press, disclosed to the world the methods of extermination being used against the minorities with whom the Lithuanian people themselves had always lived in harmony. Dr. Kazys Grinius, former President of the Republic, the Rev. Mykolas Krupavicus and Professor Jonas Aleksa, the two former Ministers of Agriculture, presented a written protest to the head of the German occupational administration on this matter. Thereupon they were immediately arrested and exiled by the Gestapo.

Being unable to save the Lithuanian Jews in any other way from a threatening total extermination, the Lithuanians, risking their own lives, hid the Jews away and succored the Jewish families locked up in the ghettos with food, fuel and clothing. Many Jewish children were abducted from the ghettos and were hidden by Lithuanian townspeople and farmers alike. Thus a number of Jews were saved. A considerable number of Lithuanians were executed by the Germans for this humanitarian activity of aiding fellow men.

The Supreme Lithuanian Committee of Liberation consistently fought against the very few individual Lithuanian collaborationists. In consequence of activities of resistance, the Germans were unable to exploit the country's vital resources and manpower for the military needs of the Third Reich. In spite of all the Nazi attempts to disrupt the underground administrative apparatus of Lithuania, this has been maintained nearly intact. Lithuanian underground administration was prepared to take over the administration of the country at any opportune moment. Secret military formations, staffed by competent officers, were formed. The Committee established excellent contacts with similar underground organizations in the other two Baltic States and in other friendly nations.

Naturally, this activity of consolidation of the nation's struggle for its fundamental rights was not carried on without casualties. The German Gestapo took all possible measures to break the will to resistance of the Lithuanian People. In connection with the German attempt to mobilize the manpower in March 1943, which has been very effectively frustrated by the Lithuanian resistance movement, the Gestapo arrested and sent to concentration camps in Germany about eighty Lithuanian intellectuals, among them former ministers, professors, clergymen, soldiers, and students. Some of these died in captivity, and the fate of the survivors is not known at the moment. In consequence of the similar German failure to mobilize the Lithuanians in May 1944, several scores of high Lithuanian former officers were arrested and the majority of them are still in German concentration camps. Simultaneously, several thousand soldiers were deported to the Reich for forced labor. A large number of drafted Lithuanian soldiers were summarily executed by the Nazis for obedience to their rightful leaders of the underground movement. In their futile efforts to put down the resistance of the Lithuanian People, the Nazis shut down the Lithuanian Academy of Sci-

ences, the Universities in Vilnius and Kaunas, the Agricultural Academy at Dotnuva, the Commercial Institute at Siauliai, the Conservatories of Music and the Schools of Art in Vilnius and Kaunas, and various other institutions of learning and culture.

The repressive measures of the Gestapo hit especially hard at the most active section of the Lithuanian nation—the youth of the country. The Germans hunted down young Lithuanians on the streets of the cities and on the farm fields. Lithuanian youths were indiscriminately imprisoned or sent into concentration camps in large numbers, and deported for slave labor in Germany. In consequence of these measures, thousands of Lithuanian youths were obliged to hide in the forests for years, and all of them were succored and aided by the masses of our people. A considerable number of Lithuanian farmers also suffered severely for their willful refusal to supply the prescribed quotas of food and fodder for the German army. Whole villages were razed to the ground and their inhabitants, regardless of their age or sex, were done to death in the most brutal manner.

Finally, in May and June, 1944, the Gestapo struck at the Supreme Lithuanian Committee of Liberation. Accidental arrest, in the Estonian capital, of the Committee's representative on his way abroad, enabled the Gestapo to bare, in part, the membership of the Supreme Lithuanian Committee of Liberation and to unearth its headquarters. Several members of the Committee and many of the officers of the underground combat associations were arrested and carried off to prisons in Germany. The main charge levelled at them by the Gestapo was that they spread pro-Anglo-American tendencies among the Lithuanian People. They were also accused of espionage on behalf of England. Remaining members of the Committee managed to go into hiding just in time, and thus they escaped arrest. The Supreme Committee had perforce to be reconstituted in part, but its continuity and activity never ceased for a moment.

In July 1944, under the overwhelming pressure of the Red Army, the Germans began to withdraw from Lithuania. Foreseeing that, in consequence of military operations, Lithuania might be occupied for the second time by the Soviet Union, and that under the new Bolshevik occupation the political activity might become well nigh impossible and, especially, that communication with the outside free world might be severed entirely—the **Supreme Lithuanian Committee of Liberation formed a special delegation outside of Lithuania.**

This delegation was empowered to act in behalf of the Supreme Lithuanian Committee of Liberation. One of its first duties was to establish contact with the free world at the earliest possible moment. As the Red Army proceeded to occupy nearly the whole of Lithuania and the news continued to arrive from the Russian-occupied parts of Lithuania of the policy of wholesale liquidation of the Lithuanian resistance elements, the Supreme Lithuanian Committee of Liberation itself determined to establish its headquarters abroad,

leaving its representatives in Lithuania. Unluckily, the Gestapo managed to capture the chairman of the Committee and several of his Aides. The Gestapo had long sought the chairman but, fortunately, it was not able to establish his real identity, nor that of most of his companions. After keeping them in prison for some time, the Gestapo exiled some of them to Germany and sent others to a concentration camp.

6. Political Platform of the Supreme Lithuanian Committee of Liberation

Thanks to the victories and the rapid advance of the liberating allied armies, the Delegation of the Supreme Lithuanian Committee of Liberation was at long last, able to come out into the open.

Coming into the long-sought contact with the Great Western Democracies, the Supreme Lithuanian Committee of Liberation deems it necessary to make the following statement of its policies and objectives:

1. As was aptly expressed by Franklin D. Roosevelt, the late President of the United States, in a statement to the Lithuanian American delegation at the White House on the 15th of October 1940, after Lithuania had already been occupied by the Red Army,—**the independent Lithuanian State continues to exist**, only the exercise of its sovereignty, because of external events, is temporarily suspended. The Lithuanian People, victim of the acts of two aggressive powers, firmly believe that the high principles of the Atlantic Charter will be applied to Lithuania in accordance with the Yalta Declaration and without any reservations, and that conditions will be established which will enable the People of Lithuania to reconstitute freely the constitutional organs of the Lithuanian State.

2. The reconstituted Lithuanian State, as was stated in the Declaration of the Supreme Lithuanian Committee of Liberation of the 16th of February 1944, will shape its form of government on democratic principles, with a Parliament elected by the direct, equal and secret ballot of the whole nation, and with the executive government constituted by the said Parliament and responsible to it. Until it is possible to hold the first free and untrammelled elections to the Lithuanian Parliament, uninfluenced by the presence of the armed forces and police of a hostile power, an interim Provisional Government of National Unity will be formed by all the democratic elements remaining in the country and those presently living obligatorily abroad. The chief duty of this interim government will be to organize democratic elections to the Lithuanian Parliament. By agreement with all the political parties and combat organizations, the Provisional Government of National Unity will be formed by the Supreme Lithuanian Committee of Liberation.

3. The Supreme Lithuanian Committee of Liberation is determined that the foreign policy of post-war Lithuania, even as that up to the 15th of June 1940, will be based on respect for international agreements, on the maintenance of justice and peace, and on the desire to have close relations

with all the other freedom and peace loving nations. Because of her geopolitical situation and her centuries-old traditions of statehood, Lithuania gravitates to the North-European Bloc of States bordering on the Baltic Sea, which, in turn, would look for support to the Anglo-American world. As regards Soviet Russia, post-war Lithuania will endeavor to forget the wrongs done her during the European cataclysm and will not stint her efforts to develop and strengthen friendly relations with the Russian People.

7. Lithuanian Refugees in Western Germany

The war hit Lithuania badly in another way. During the three years of German occupation, the Nazi authorities deported many thousands of Lithuanians for forced labor in the Reich and threw many people of the professional classes into German prisons and concentration camps. In this way, even before the Soviets had occupied Lithuania for a second time, a considerable number of Lithuanians unwillingly found themselves on German soil.

Because the Red occupation of Lithuania in 1940-41 has left in the Lithuanian People so many unhealed wounds and unforgettably terrible memories, considerable numbers of Lithuanians of all social classes, frightened by the spectre of a second Bolshevik occupation and protesting in the only way open to them against the violation of the sovereign rights of Lithuania and of the basic human liberties, left their native land in the summer and autumn of 1944. The great majority of these refugees were obliged to take advantage of the only remaining possibility to escape by withdrawing into Germany, and this despite all the German measures to close the border to the refugees.

In this way, the refugees and those forcibly deported, together with the thousands languishing in Nazi prisons and concentration camps, number about 350,000. In consequence of the war and three consecutive occupations, **more than 10% of the entire Lithuanian People** is found at the present time on German territory.

Even recently, when the Lithuanians were in the most desperate straits, the Nazis attempted to take advantage of the Lithuanian rancor against the Soviet policies and aggression. However, all the efforts to draw the Lithuanians into active fighting on the side of Germany or, at least, to use the Lithuanian manpower productively for war purposes, did not produce any tangible results. The Lithuanians who are compelled to live temporarily in Germany, just as those remaining behind in Lithuania, firmly believe in the victory of the Western Democracies and refuse to collaborate in the German war effort.

Aside from the general political determination of the Lithuanian nation at home, an important role has been played here by the Delegation of the Supreme Lithuanian Committee of Liberation. In spite of the presence of considerable numbers of Lithuanians in Germany and the great pressure put upon them by the Germans, the Nazis were unable to mobilize the Lithuanians of

military age or to form a representative body which would collaborate with Germany. The Germans did not succeed in bending the Lithuanians to their influence even by establishing a Relief Institute for them within the Reich's Ministry for the East. The Lithuanians avoided the "Hilfstelle" and "Leistelle", organized within the Ministry for the East. Instead, they gathered around the Lithuanian Association in Berlin, which they themselves had organized. This Association, in

spite of the many difficulties put in its way, remained independent all the time. It represented and protected Lithuanian interests, without entering into any co-operation with German institutions.

Today, as the Allied armies proceed to occupy Germany, the fate of the Lithuanians in Germany, and the assistance which they require, is a problem that cannot be left unsettled.

A letter to the President of the United States by United Organizations of Americans of Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian Descent

Dear Mr. President:

The undersigned officers of national representative Baltic American organizations feel that your reference, in your historical address at San Francisco, to "the millions of loyal and patriotic Americans who stem from the countries not represented in this Conference" as being interested in the accomplishments of UNCIO, automatically included those Americans who stem from Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia.

Please permit us, Mr. President, first to express our sincere and deep gratitude for the manner in which you laid down the great task ahead upon the completion of the Charter of UNCIO. We were profoundly moved by your hope that with this Charter the world can begin to look forward to the time when all worthy human beings may be permitted to live decently as free people.

Unfortunately, all fractional news seeping through the blanket of the Soviet-imposed blackout of all contacts with the outside free world continues to depict a picture of unprecedented terror in the Baltic States. Baltic peoples continue to be murdered, tortured, oppressed, exploited and driven to distant parts of the USSR. Foreign settlers continue to be colonized by the Russian occupational regime on the confiscated depopulated estates. And this at the very moment of the signing of the UNCIO Charter which, as you, Mr. President, rightfully said in your address, is dedicated to the achievement and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

We have repeatedly called the attention of our Government to the highly distressing situation prevailing in the Baltic States since the Summer of 1940, when the countries of our forefathers fell victim of Nazi-blessed Soviet aggression.

At that time, our Government showed a complete understanding of the true situation. The State Department found it necessary in a special statement on the 23rd of July, 1940, to condemn Soviet aggression. The same understanding and the same sympathetic attitude has been shown by

our Government to the Baltic peoples during the three years of subsequent Nazi occupation. We feel certain that the war criminals, i.e., the Nazi perpetrators of the crimes in the Baltic States will, in due course, answer for their crimes.

We have continued to inform our Government, with facts and figures substantiating our appeals, on the situation prevailing in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia since last Summer upon the entry of the Red Armies and NKVD-NKGB police troops.

A special appeal was directed to President Franklin D. Roosevelt on the 12th of September 1940. Another appeal was made on the 17th of October. In the absence of any visible signs of amelioration of the situation in the Baltic States, on the eve of the impending meeting of the heads of the three states principally responsible for laying the groundwork upon which the peace shall be built, we respectfully appeal to you, Mr. President, to give these facts all the earnest consideration at your command and to intercede with the Government of the USSR to stop the terror and deportations in the Baltic States and to fulfill the promises of the Atlantic Charter and other declarations made in behalf of the three great world powers.

The ideals of that great statesman of a generation ago, Woodrow Wilson, made the independence of the Baltic States a reality; the ideals of that great statesman of our generation, Franklin D. Roosevelt, filled the distressed peoples of Eastern Europe with hope for the restoration of their freedom and independence; your ideals, Mr. President, as expressed in your address at the San Francisco Conference on the 21st of June confirms that our great country will not deviate from the ideals of opportunity for life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, as expressed in our Constitution, the Atlantic Charter and the Four Freedoms.

May the Almighty Father bless you with strength and wisdom at your forthcoming meeting. Six million Christian Lithuanians, Latvians and Estonians are looking for their salvation to you. We, their friends, join in hopeful prayers that, at long last, you will speak up and help

restore true freedom in Eastern Europe, and in the Baltic States in particular.

Faithfully yours,

The Lithuanian American Council, Inc.
The United Latvian American Committee
United Committee of Estonian American
Organizations

July 2, 1945.

The Tannenberg Anniversary

The 535th anniversary of the epic Battle of Tannenberg will be commemorated this year in an atmosphere of a historic paradox: the battle which culminated the Lithuanian resistance of two centuries against the Teutonic aggression enabled the rise of the Muscovite power, and Muscovite aggression replaced the Teutonic one, while Lithuania lies submerged and being uncertain of her fate.

Vitoldian Lithuania had been at the peak of its power in 1410, yet the Lithuanians were not able to eliminate the Teutonic power by their own forces alone. In an alliance with Poland, then being ruled by King Jogaila, a cousin of Vytautas, the Lithuanians and their Polish allies destroyed the military prowess of the Teutonic Order of Prussia.

After a series of distracting incursions from Samagitia and Masovia, Lithuanian and Polish armies effected a junction near Czerwinsk on the Vistula and invaded Prussia from the south. The Teutons blocked the progress near Gilgenburg. Then Vytautas led the allied forces around the lakes and marshes and took up positions on the main road to Allenstein, in a saddle-like area lying between the villages of Tannenberg and Gruenewald.

On July 15, 1410, the allies and the Teutons lined up in battle formations. The Order brought a perfectly trained army of at least 12,000 men. Lithuanian and Polish forces may have numbered between 15,000 and 20,000 men but these, except the veterans of Vytautas, were not as well armed or trained.

Polish army of mobilized nobles and mercenaries (Vytautas had lent some funds for this purpose) was led by Zyndram from Maszkowice. The Lithuanians were commanded by Grand Duke Vytautas in person. Vytautas also presided over the joint war council and was the commander in chief in the field. King Jogaila retained the nominal command and was to give the signal for the commencement of the battle he was frankly abhorring. The Lithuanians held the right wing and a sector of the center, exposed in the field. The Poles held another sector of the center and the left wing, protected by marshes and a forest, with Czech mercenaries in the reserve.

Grand Master Ullrich von Jungingen of the Order directed his elite forces—heavily armored cavalry—against the Lithuanian veterans of the right. After an hour of fighting at close quarters, the Lithuanians, including a Tatar detachment of

light cavalry, executed the famed Tatar "Tulughma" manoeuvre—a disengagement and a feigned flight to lure the enemy to disrupt his formations, followed by a return and a strike against the over-extended lines. The Germans, in their inexperience with Tatar tactics, rushed in pursuit and bogged down in the marshes. Meanwhile, other German forces struck the center and the Poles. After three hours of savage fighting, the Teutons were encircling and pressing the Poles backward. At the critical moment, Vytautas brought in his second line and, finally, his reserves. In the heat of battle, the Germans moved their last reserves into the battlefield.

Suddenly formerly retired Lithuanian units reappeared and struck the German left flank and the last reserves rushing to reinforce the sagging lines. A lance wielded by a Lithuanian killed the Grand Master, an able and brave soldier. German ranks wavered, and finally broke down in panicky flight, with the allies on their heels. The rich German camp at Gruenewald—with stocks of wine and food and thousands of shackles brought in anticipation of a victory—fell to the allies. Only a handful of Germans escaped.

The Order buried at Tannenberg its elite forces and never regained its former strength. The figures of troops taking part in the battle were grossly exaggerated by both sides—wavering between the estimates of 23,000 and 163,000 for the allies, and 15,000 to 83,000 men for the Teutons. The number of "banners" does not mean much, as the regiments were of various sizes—100 to 1,000 men each. The Order explained that it had lost 18,000 men killed—an intentional exaggeration to impress Europe. Some two or three thousand Germans were taken prisoner—other sources claim 16,000. The Germans felt the sting of this defeat for many centuries to come—i.e., Hindenburg's victory over the Muscovites in 1914 not far from the battlefield of 1410 was promptly named "The Battle of Tannenberg."

Muscovite Pan-Slavs invented in the XIXth century a fanciful tale of the Tannenberg battle being that of "Teuton vs. Slav." The fact is, however, that the Teutonic tide was contained from 1200 to 1410 by the Lithuanians (a non Slavic people) alone, while some Slavs (Poles, Pomeranians, Silesians, Lausatians and Czechs) were battling on the Teuton's side. There were no Muscovite troops at Tannenberg, and the Muscovites had never heard of this battle until the rise of the Pan-Slav movement in the XIXth century. The battle at Tannenberg was fought and won by pure-blooded Lithuanians and Poles, with some auxiliary Ruthene (Ukrainian and White Ruthene), Tatar and Czech detachments. On the other hand, there were some Polish (Pomeranian, Silesian etc.) units on the Order's side. The Muscovites as such had never fought the Teuton until 1914, and Poles were never enthusiastic about the Pan-Slavism of Muscovy. The victory at Tannenberg stopped the *Drang nach Osten* for more than three centuries and saved the plains of Muscovy from the onrushing tide of Germanism.