. . . 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

233 Broadway, New York 7, N. Y.
Published by the Lithuanian American Council

Vol. VI | MAY - JULY, 1948 | Nos. 5-7

Piercing the Iron Curtain

The Westward Mission of an Envoy of the Lithuanian Underground

By *Saulius*

Orders to Go West

Early December, 1947. A district in Lithuania under the jurisdiction of the Iron Wolf Command.

Night. A beautiful clear moon bathed the countryside. Two Lithuanian Freedom Fighters were slowly trudging along the fields of Sudavia. One, Guerrilla Kardas (The Sword), carried a light French infantry machine-gun on his shoulders while bands of reserve munitions swung from his left shoulder. His belt was weighted down under the load of hand grenades, pistol and underground literature. The other, Guerrilla Saulius, was armed with an automatic PPD, a pistol, hand grenades and carried a heavy bag of literature.

They were making their way south-eastward, stopping occasionally to check their progress with the aid of a compass and a watch. Warily they avoided homesteads and crossroads. They dared not alert watchdogs, and MVD ambush forces might be hiding in the ruins and in roadside ditches at crossroads. Frequent deviations necessitated constant checking by a compass.

Disturbed owls occasionally rose from the underbrush and frightened hares scampered across the road. Suddenly somewhere in the distance the sound of Russian automatic weapons broke the silence and rocket flares pierced the sky. Rifle shots were heard, then the answer of German and Russian tommyguns. The two Freedom Fighters looked at each other, the unasked question on their lips—"which one of our units has discovered lurking Ivans?" They stopped instinctively in the shadow of a tree and tried to detect the direction of the fighting and to identify the unit involved in the skirmish. With a silent prayer to God for their comrades they moved on to an appointed meeting place which they reached shortly after midnight.

Kardas knocked on a window in a prearranged signal. I stood, gun in hand, ready for any eventuality. The answer was satisfactory and we slipped into the house.

Our host lost no time in giving us a package from District Headquarters. Among the papers was an order from the District Commander together with a copy of the decision of the Chief Command directing me to go westward on a mission of specific objectives. The order explained that the men originally selected for the mission were discovered in a bunker by the Russians and they were forced to blow themselves up. Fraught with the greatest danger the Mission had to be carried out during the darkest nights of December.

After a hurried repast served by the daughters of our host, we proceeded further.

Simultaneously, but by other routes, the District Commander had transmitted orders to Fighter Mindaugas, Special Duty Officer of Tauras District, to join me on this mission abroad.

Three days later, we met at an appointed place and planned our trip. We selected our own volunteer escorts to map the exact route.

The Envoys and some of their escorts in Lithuania, December 1947.
The author is shown kneeling in the first row, first man from the left.

Preparations

Mid December. A farewell was staged in the District Commander's bunker for the "D.P.s"—the envoys going abroad. Taučius, a member of the Supreme Command, was among the 36 Freedom Fighters present. Representatives of Fighting Latvia were also present to wish us Godspeed. Our toasts were for a united, fraternal struggle for freedom. We received our leader's last "blessing," all necessary equipment and the material being sent abroad.

Shortly after midnight the men dispersed to their nests. They had vital work to do also. After bidding farewell to our comrades, Mindaugas, Šarūnas and I headed for A——— on the former Lithuanian-German frontier. We had to take advantage of the softly falling wet snow so that we would leave no footprints; the Ivans always went out on manhunts after a fresh snowfall, and woe unto him who lingered too long on any pretext.

We had to cover 40 kilometers during the night. At one spot we noticed freshly made footprints in the snow. Just about fifteen minutes earlier some 18 MGB troopers crossed the road and we were lucky to avoid an encounter with them. We could hear dogs barking in a nearby village to our right. Loud raps on windows and doors were heard distinctly. After listening a while we proceeded further.

When we had covered about half the distance, Šarūnas led us to a farm for some food and for rest. Our host's son stood guard. We had scarcely settled down when we were warned that someone was prowling around in the garden. It was too late to escape through the door, so we ran into an adjoining room; guns in hand, with bated breath, we waited. If it were Russians we would try to make our escape through the windows noiselessly, so as not to implicate our host. Should we be observed we would defend ourselves with hand grenades and run through the orchard.

A familiar knock on the window. These were our men, not the Ivans! It was Jaunutis with his three men. He had come across our footprints in the snow and followed us to this farm. We took them along with us. We were now seven.

We were armed with two "shockers" (MK 43/1), three automatic pistols (PPS), one automatic rifle (SSV) and one Russian tommygun (PPSh). We marched in single file across the fields of B———. The fields were unplowed for six years and were overgrown with tall, dry weeds. Occasionally we walked on the road to confuse possible trackers.

On the way we stopped at a hut to meet men of the Žalgiris Detachment. It was full of armed fighters. Platoon leader Naras of the First Company was here with his men. Reports and orders were given. In the light of a weak oil wicker lamp the men recounted their latest exploits.

Only yesterday, the Ivans came upon a farm where Saidokas and Jaunutis were hiding. There were 12 Ivans against two Freedom Fighters. The two fighters were hiding in straw in the cattle barn. Jaunutis kicked Saidokas in the shins and Saidokas instinctively dug deeper into the straw. A rotting ceiling board caved in. Voices of the MGB men could be heard in the yard; if they had entered the barn and raised their eyes, they would have observed Saidokas hanging from the waist in the ceiling. But the Ivans had decided to search the living quarters instead. They pulled out drawers, smashed the hearth, bayoneted the foundation, toppled over the doghouse, punctured the walls. They ate up the host's food, pilfered everything they could and finally, three hours later, they left.

The host confessed that "a stone had rolled off" his chest. "I was certain that they would find you, so I kept an axe handy. But they were too foolish to find you, men."

The previous week, after a raid on a Sovkhoz, Perkūnas was resting on a farm, deep in straw. The Ivans came. They banded together the farmers of the neighborhood and ordered them to roll out all the straw from the barn. "This time I will be nabbed, and my next resting place will be as a corpse in some town's market place," thought Perkūnas. "But I will not give up without a struggle. A few of those Bolsheviks will join me." A lazy Ivan, or maybe "a smart one," was assigned to the place where he lay. Instead of transferring the straw with pitchforks, the Russian ordered *"Raz-dva-Vali"* (One-two-Roll), and the gang began to roll the entire pile from the barn into the yard. "They rolled me out so excellently, that no one noticed that they were rolling me inside the pile."

Rolandas told about his visit to a nearby town. The bolsheviks decided to check his papers. "All I had upon me was a pistol and a receipt issued to my father when his bull was delivered to the government. Thinking quickly, I shoved the receipt toward the Russian. His superior asked "Is there a seal on it?" *"Da, pechat yest"* (Yes, the seal is there). That saved my skin."

Our reminiscences stopped with the sharp command —"Prepare to march!"

Lithuanian Underground Envoys with one group of escorts near the German Lithuanian frontier, December 1947.

In a column of twos, about thirty men marched across the fields in the neighborhood of B———. More escorts awaited us in another village. The next two days were spent in making final arrangements. We sewed white coats from the tablecloths to mask us in the snow.

When the other members of our Mission—Butautas, Krūmas and Feliksas—arrived, all of our escorts turned back, and now the six members of the Mission with the local guide Strazdas, marched toward the German-Lithuanian frontier. Our hazardous task to pierce "The Iron Curtain" was begun.

In East Prussia

We approached the Šešupė River. We found a boat hidden in an unfrozen spot and crossed into Prussian territory. Our packs were crammed with food reserves, cartridges, anti-tank grenades and other items, including material to be delivered abroad.

The ruins of the Noviškis-Andriejaitis estate lay in heaps on the former frontier. The former palatial estate was a mass of debris. Broken pieces of furniture could be seen, window sills and door frames were burned and broken. What they could not take, the Russians destroyed, the usual Russian urge to despoil everything.

We selected a route through East Prussia and Poland. We figured that East Prussian-Polish frontier would not be guarded as closely as the Polish-Lithuanian frontier, where large-scale battles and grave casualties were to be expected. The Polish-Lithuanian frontier is guarded by two lines of barbed wire fences, and trenches in between them are at all times alerted for combat. The entire frontier is protected by "resistance points" of the frontier guards every 5 kilometers, and each point is defended by units of roughly 200 men. It is difficult to approach such a zone unnoticed. However, once this is done, one finds himself in terrain criss-crossed with barbed wire fences. It is difficult to avoid touching the wires by night, and light rockets automatically shoot up and warn the frontier guards, indicating the exact spot where escape from the Soviet paradise is attempted.

That is why we decided to go across the dead land which once was called East Prussia.

Desolate fields stretched before us. Several years ago, these fields were carefully tended and were fertile. Now we were pushing our way through high, thick weeds. Occasionally boars rushed out of the underbrush, or probably they were wild swine, once tame and carefully raised on German farms. Not a footprint anywhere on the road. No lights flickered at night in former farmhouses. Here and there we came upon ruins of farms. Broken rafters blown by the wind creaked eerily. Broken signposts lay at the crossroads. Much war material lay rotting in the fields. It was indeed a Land of Death.

After walking about a dozen kilometers we sat down in the snow to rest. On a nearby road we saw the track of a sled which had passed this way about a day ago. It gave us an idea—we too should appropriate a sled and ease our travels. But there was nothing in sight. We checked our map and continued on our way.

We left the road as it turned into a different direction from the one we had to take. After crossing fields we came across some ditches about three meters deep covered by a thin layer of ice. We had to build "catwalks" to cross these ditches. Krūmas slipped once and was drenched to the ears. Mindaugas suggested that we stop at the first farm ruins and build a fire to dry our clothes. Several kilometers further we found a suitable place in the cellar of a homestead. We made tea of snow and strawberry branches. Mindaugas produced a slab of Lithuanian bacon and a bottle of "the water of life" (*Aquavit*) from his knapsack. This helped us to overcome tiredness and drowsiness. Our spirits rose and, thinking of other days, we all softly sang an old folksong.

We still had far to go before dawn and, not wishing to become muscle-bound, we again embarked on our journey. Every three kilometers we sat down in the snow and rested. At dawn we reached the scheduled place, the former village of Viliūnai (Wiluhnen). Here we saw footprints in the snow, made about a half hour earlier. It was too risky to follow the same road, our white snowcoats and dress would betray that we were not Ivans—we might be mistaken for American paratroopers. Three roads met at the spot we approached. We turned right; passing a cemetery we came upon the ruins of a deserted estate.

We decided to spend the day in these ruins. We were pleasantly surprised to find a metal ladder affixed to a chimney which was undamaged. The chimney we used for an observation post. Visibility was excellent. For a distance of two kilometers no human being could approach without being observed.

We drew lots for sentinel duty, which consisted of observation duty, taking care of the fire, boiling our tea and keeping the flames away from our clothes. We discovered some boards and covered the window frames to keep the wind out. We fitted a stove pipe, fixed sleeping places out of boards set around the fire and went to sleep. We slept fully dressed but without our knapsacks. A huge oak tree in the yard shielded the smoke.

The day passed uneventfully. Dogs barked toward the East. We could see smoke rising in two places but no buildings and no life could be observed. Beyond the horizon lay the city of Stalupėnai (Stalupönen).

About three in the afternoon our sentinel observed a truck with three men passing some distance on the road. Apparently, these were Russians making their 111th trip in search of war booty. Some time later a man strolled by with a hunting rifle over his shoulder.

We felt much rested toward evening. We packed our belongings, took some photographs of the place as a souvenir of the trip, cleaned up, checked our guns and at sundown started the second lap of our trip.

We planned a shorter trip this night than the previous one. As it had been snowing all day, our progress, mostly across fields, was more difficult and we tired in spite of the resting periods. We had to pass Stalupėnai this night and reach the Heidemüde Forest.

We were forced to go a distance to the left to avoid Russian kolkhozes which were established in this area.

Near the town, we crossed the highway and went down a hill, but we came upon boglands with wide draining ditches on which the ice was rather thin. Playfully, Šarūnas lay on his stomach and began to "swim" across a ditch; the ice was strong enough to hold him. We crossed to the other side in this fashion. We came upon a small river several hundred meters further where the ice was much thinner, and spots of water could be seen. Šarūnas once again plumped down on his stomach and began to "swim" over the ice. He almost reached the opposite bank when the ice broke and he plunged into the water. We couldn't help him. But our resourceful Šarūnas reached the opposite bank safely. There he found a hay pile boarded up. He picked up a few boards and laid them on the ice, for us to walk across. Šarūnas was wet to the skin, and as each spark of life and every ounce of strength in our bodies was of vital importance to our task, we had to think of some means to dry his clothes. His clothes and gun were frozen rigid. Alas, we had to travel several kilometers before we found a hiding place. We built a fire in the cellar of a ruined farmhouse, undressed our comrade and dried his clothes.

Russian "Kolkhozniki" Everywhere

We were again on our way two hours later. Part of the distance we covered over the autostrade (motor speedway), until we approached a town. We wanted to walk its streets but when we came nearer we saw flickering lights from windows and changed our minds. We turned left, crossed railway tracks, and turned into some ruins for a rest. With strength regained we plodded on.

Dawn. We began to look around for a convenient hideout for the day. If we could only find a native German family. But in vain. Wherever we cautiously approached windows through which flickered a light we found Russian families. We came to some haystacks and decided to stop and dig in. At one spot, we burrowed holes from all four sides. Two men climbed into each lateral hole, and one man into each end tunnel. This took up much time and effort, because the hay was well settled and cold. A bitter cold wind blew from the east.

We covered the outlets of our burrowed holes leaving only narrow holes for observation. We could not leave our place in daylight, as the neighborhood was full of *"kolkhozniki"* and they might see us. We figured that there could not be any large forces of MGB troops around, as there were no guerrilla operations in this area, and there were no natives who could hinder MGB activities. Nevertheless we had to be prepared for anything. We kept our boots on, frozen puttees chilling our legs. This was safer than to jump out barefooted in the event of an attack.

At dusk we climbed out of our "caves." Our teeth were chattering from cold. We carefully covered up our burrowed holes, ate some food, and continued on our way.

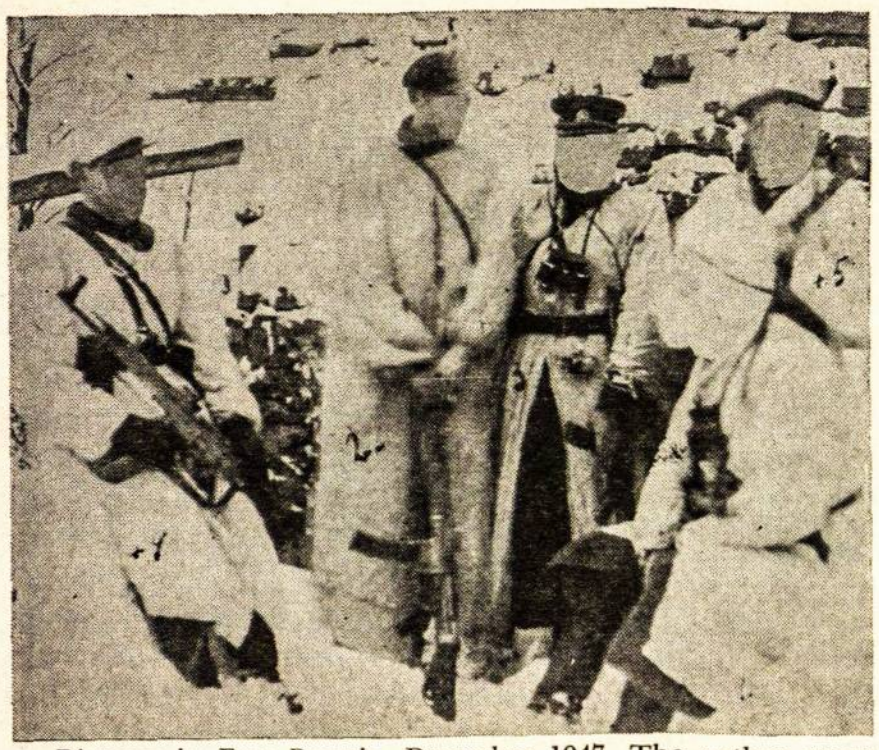
Near a highway, we noticed sled tracks. Anxious to speed our progress, we chanced using the highway for some distance. It was 23 kilometers to Heidemüde, and we had to cover that distance during the night.

As we came closer toward the Polish frontier it was most important that we meet some natives to learn something about the situation at the frontier. We were not quite certain about the exact delineation of the new Polish-Russian frontier.

There was a light in a home near the highway. Hoping that it sheltered some poverty-stricken German family, we decided to investigate. Šarūnas and I cautiously crawled toward the hut and peered through the window at dirty figures moving about. Small children were crawling over the filthy dirt-floor. They all spoke Russian. It was clear that these were *"kolkhozniki."*

As we turned from the window a Russian voice shouted: *"Stoy! Kuda idyosh?"* (Halt! Where are you going?) Some Russians had come up to the cabin unnoticed. Somehow we had to stop these Russians. We must have looked queer to them. We assumed a belligerent attitude and asked for water. Unperturbed, we pretended to be Red Army men. We questioned them about the neighborhood's kolkhozes and other places. The nearest kolkhoz was called "Kirov." These Russians were serfs from that kolkhoz and were returning from their night shift. We promised to call on them with vodka and cigarettes on our way back from the town—just to keep them in anticipation.

The Russians showed us the road to the town. We were obliged to confuse our tracks because even the dumb *kolkhozniki* might decide that we were not *"nashi"* and that the government should be warned. We walked back for about two kilometers. We found a spot where osier and willow trees helped us mix our tracks. We then jumped over the ditch and crossed the willowed terrain, walking in single file back westward to about two kilometers from the Russian hut. After some time we came upon the kolkhoz mentioned by the Russian settlers. From tracks in the snow we could see that many people were living nearby. We left the highway and, single file, walked toward the grove with guns held in readiness. The branches of pines and firs were weighted down with snow and occasionally the snow showered the back of our collars. It was indescribably dark in the forest. With one hand we had to protect our eyes. We could not use our flashlights and betray our presence. We made a fire and grouped around it after the terrific lashing we all had had from the East wind.



Bivouac in East Prussia, December 1947. The author wears a white furcap. Man marked No. 3 remained in Poland. Nos. 4, 5 and the taker of this photograph perished in the Rominta Battle.

We had picked a spot, still several kilometers distant, for our day's rest. It was far from the beaten roads. On our way there we came across obstacles left by the war hostilities of 1945. Barbed wire barriers were still hanging in spots, heavy timber logs lay piled up and deep ditches lay before us,—they had been used to hinder tanks. It was a bitterly cold Winter night. A heavy snowfall descended on us and the wind howled in its fury. We "captured" one obstacle after another as we approached. In spite of the fact that we had no shelter from the elements we were grateful for the snowstorm which covered up our tracks. This was very important on approaching the frontier.

Early morning. Sunday. We all searched for some kindlewood to start the fire. We prepared our frugal meal and afterward we built berths of fir branches, placed our knapsacks under our heads and stretched out, hugging our firearms. We took turns at guard duty, tending the fire and making tea out of snow.

We rose from our bear lairs at noon. It was the Sabbath and we had to pay fitting tribute to our Maker. We knelt in snow to beg God's help for our embattled nation, our comrades and for the success of our difficult mission.

Our Sunday dinner was better than all our previous meals. Instead of boiled sausages, we had on our "table" sausages broiled on a canteen cover. We also had fried bacon and onions. Our tea was made delicious by a few drops of anise. We swallowed some vitamin tablets for strength and topped everything with a swallow of another universal tonic, vodka. We then cleaned and oiled our guns.

When guerrillas decide to put their guns in order they are reacting to an instinct of approaching danger. We asked each other about our dreams of the forenoon. Feliksas had a dream of ill omen. He was drowning in some morass, and Butautas and Krūmas were drowning with him. Queer trees grew on the banks of the morass and blood was dripping from the trees. He saw his comrades standing at a distance but they could not approach him or save the men sagging down into the morass.

According to our plan, we had to reach the Rominta River near the town of the same name. Our information was that the Russian-Polish frontier was somewhere around that spot. With a fervent "Heaven help us!" I ordered Mindaugas to start the march.

The Battle at the Rominta River

The snowstorm had subsided somewhat in the afternoon and it was unusually quiet. The snow had obliterated all footprints of men and animals. At various places in the forest we came upon signs of the Ivans' activities. Scattered here and there were carelessly stacked two-meter woodpiles, and unpicked tree branches obstructed our march. We were fortunate that this was Sunday, which is *"vykhodni dyen"* (stepping out day) for the Russians. There were fewer chances of encountering the working Russians this day.

We marched in single file, each man stepping into the footsteps of the leader. This procedure was very exacting and tiresome to the men bringing up the rear. After a few kilometers, we came upon the remnants of a wartime camp. Wooden crosses dotted the snow against the background of young fir trees. Of course, these were German military graves. The bolsheviks did not place crosses on their graves, they place their red "booths." We passed the camp, turned right, and approached a highway. Here there were traces of traffic. Every dozen or so meters, posts driven into the ground carried inscriptions *"Ostorozhno, valka lesa!"* (Warning, timber falling!) Tracks of truck wheels and skis could be seen on the road.

Mindaugas was convinced that we were near the frontier. The unusual quietness and particularly the ski tracks confirmed his guess that we were inside the most dangerous zone. We left the highway and turned right, where we should find the Rominta River and a bridge to cross it. We were walking in a ravine with sharp banks. Suddenly we came upon trenches and wire barriers.

This was the new frontier between Russian East Prussia and Poland! We quickly formed a double column and prepared to act instantaneously. We jumped over the trench but were delayed slightly by the barbed wire barrier. To overcome the barrier, we went too far to the right toward the bank of a bog. There was a path alongside the bog, leading to the bridge. We had to make our way along this path and decided to cross it only after coming close to the bridge; patrols might be encountered on the path.

In straying too far to the right we committed a grave error: we were observed by Russian ski troopers swishing down the highway. They stopped in their tracks. They looked a long time at the spot where we had disappeared behind the fir trees, and then as suddenly zoomed away—to bring reinforcements.

Mindaugas quickly oriented himself in the situation. Holding a map in one hand, an automatic gun in another, he started running forward, waving to us to follow him. Running in long strides we jumped over the fir bushes, with the rear man removing snow from the tree branches and hastily masking our footprints. We turned into the path leading toward the bridge which we had to pass.

The bridge was but 100 meters away. Two sentinels stood guard at the bridge. They looked around nervously. Protected by our white snowcoats, we approached very close to them. The Russians were dressed in greasy *"vatufkas"* (cotton padded coats). One had a tommygun, the other an ordinary rifle. We took careful aim. The Ivans, as if anticipating death, showed nervousness even though they had not observed us.

Instead of a command, our guns spoke up. The crack of my *"Amerikanka"* was joined by our comrades' tommyguns of lesser frequency. The Russians were cut down! They wavered and slumped backward in the snow. Our order: Advance!

Mindaugas and I, with eight meters between us, started running across the bridge. A Russian detachment appeared in our rear also racing toward the bridge. Again we fired and the dying yells of the Russians rang in our ears. The Ivans' leader shouted *"Stoy, ble. . . .!"*

Mindaugas and I had successfully crossed the bridge and we crouched down on the roadside on the opposite bank. The banks of the road, about half-a-meter high, offered excellent protection to us. Feliksas and Krūmas took cover on the Russian side to protect the others. Šarūnas and Butautas were crawling over the bridge. As they reached the center of the bridge, both sides opened fire. Mindaugas and I from one bank and Feliksas and Krūmas from the opposite bank. We kept about 15 Russians under crossfire. Their leader was yelling *"Vperyod!"* (Advance!) But this was not so easy. Mindaugas and I, after a successive barrage, strove to retreat as far as possible from the bridge in order to relinquish our posts to Šarūnas and Butautas who took up positions at the bridgehead. They fired their "Liliputians" from a kneeling position. Feliksas and Krūmas seconded them from the trench. The Ivans were approaching upright even though one comrade after another "fell out of their sabots."

Butautas grew impatient at his dangerous post on the bridge and he jumped quickly to clear the bridge. He fell dead.

Šarūnas who was nearest to Butautas, approached our fallen comrade. He lifted his arm and was convinced that he had died instantly; a burst of automatic fire had cut across his chest and head. Šarūnas tossed his comrade's automatic into the river, hurriedly removed some papers from the knapsack and, with bullets whistling, he crawled over the bridge to our side. The Russian fire was slightly weaker as eight were no longer firing. They still outnumbered us, two to one, but our guns apparently were better—and this was no small consolation to us.

Mindaugas and I had already released our positions to Šarūnas, while Feliksas and Krūmas had just left their trench and were crawling toward the bridge.

The Russians on our right began to retreat, but Šarūnas kept them under his steady fire from their flank. To our despair, newly arrived Russian reinforcements concentrated on Feliksas and Krūmas. Feliksas rose from the ground to dash across the bridge. Russian fire hit his knapsack which contained an anti-tank grenade. There was a terrific explosion. Clouds of snow and dust rose skyward, and our poor comrade uttered not a sound as he swept toward Eternity. The compressed air blew the gun out of Krūmas' hands. He was just several meters distant from Feliksas. Krūmas recovered his gun in a flash, took one look at the blood-spattered spot where his friend had been, shuddered at the pieces of his comrade's body and leaped across the bridge in several long strides.

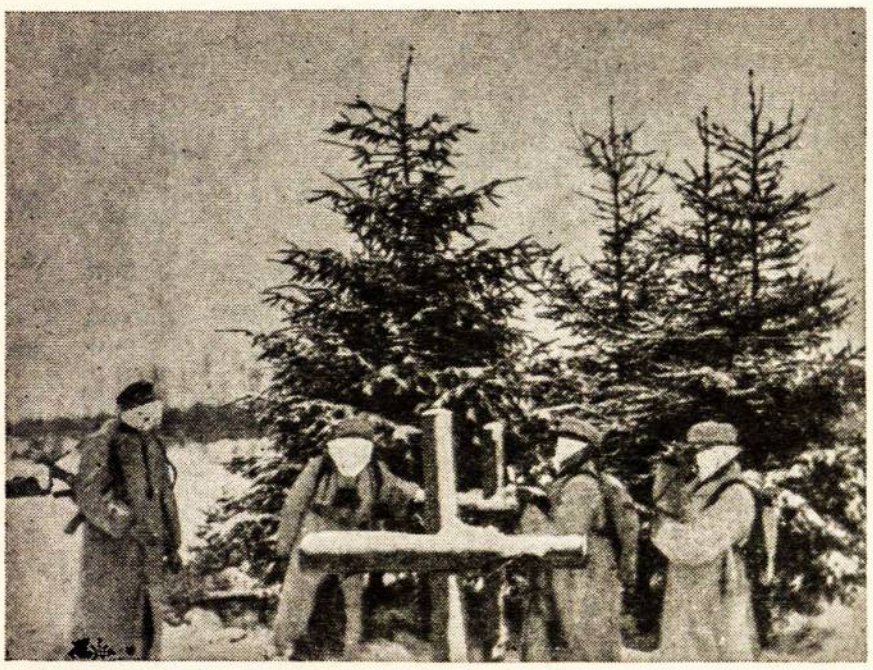
The Russians were already in the trench where a few minutes before Feliksas and Krūmas were covering our crossing. They were thus able to fire some well-aimed shots from our rear. To the right, the Russians were either dead or in flight. We four had good positions and could properly meet the Russians attempting to cross the bridge,—or even attempt an attack and destroy them. Our rear, however, was not safe, and we had to retreat from the bridge.

The Russians evidently understood our position and rushed to the bridge after us. We could hear truck motors in the forest and occasional shots—more Russians were coming! We dashed to take cover over the hillock and, protecting our flank by a sharp road-bank, lay down to wait for the Ivans. Peering backward, we reloaded our emptied cartridge-bands. Suddenly we saw the gun muzzles of the Russians sticking in front of us. Their muzzles faced us but the Ivans had not yet observed our position over the top of the hillock. We allowed them to approach and then fired. We fired long bursts, trying to eliminate as many as possible and to compel the others to retreat. When their first soldiers fell, an order was heard in Russian to retreat. But the Russians kept up a blind fire in our direction.

As Krūmas rose to shift to a more convenient position, a Russian explosive bullet struck him in the right leg, just above the knee. The bullet tore his flesh and broke his bone. He said simply, "Krūmas is wounded!"

Mindaugas and I ran toward Krūmas to attempt to move him to a safer position. It was dusk and getting dark quickly. The trees offered some shelter.

Krūmas could not help moaning. The white snow reddened around him. We could not dress his wound as the enemy began to surround the hillock: we had to retreat. The bleeding sapped the strength of Krūmas and all hope for his survival vanished. Sensing this, Krūmas asked all of us to approach him. He hug-



Heidemüde Forest in East Prussia December 1947, just before the battle.

ged and kissed each one and bade us his last farewell. He asked us to take care of his mother, to console her and help her. He wished us luck and success in taking revenge against the bolsheviks.

He unhitched a hand grenade from his belt. Unashamedly, the tears coursed down our cheeks. We could not speak at all. Death was about to claim our loyal friend and companion. Russian machine guns were firing in our direction. We slowly crawled in retreat, with a last painful look at our disabled comrade. We saw him pull out the grenade's plug, insert a capsule and place the grenade to his head.

Almost immediately, it seemed, he was encircled by the Russians. Just then we heard the explosion of the grenade: our third comrade had given all for his country. How many Russians rose skyward with him—we could not know.

It was becoming very dark. We knew we would have to cross the highway in our advance. This must mean the end of the Russian frontier zone—the real frontier. Ordinarily it is not guarded as heavily as the immediate Russian zone. The distance between the two lines should not exceed 3 kilometers.

We waded through a half-frozen shallow bog and reached the highway. Crawling across the highway, we expected gunfire. Nothing happened. On the other side of the highway we came upon a barbed wire barrier more than 2 meters high. With all our ebbing strength Šarūnas and I seized the lower wires and tore them from the ground. We crawled under the fence and breathed easier, and then traveled as fast as we could.

After covering about three kilometers beyond the frontier we stopped to rest. It was now very dark. We could not help but think of our recent painful experience. Our lips were pressed tight but tears betrayed our feelings. A few hours ago we were six, now but three. How many would complete our Mission?

We prayed for our fallen comrades. We could still hear the moans of Krūmas, his last words and the firing. The dream of Feliksas was indeed prophetic. A part of the materials meant for abroad perished with him. But we remembered our oaths to fight with redoubled energy for the restoration of freedom for our beloved motherland.

We had to keep going. We were wet to the skin from the snow and from wading in ditches. Our clothing hardened and froze, but we could not stop to dry them: three single shots came from the direction of the frontier. This meant that the patrols had found the spot where we had crossed the barbed wire barrier and had given a signal to the garrisons of the frontier guard.

In Poland

The forest protected us for three kilometers. There was a highway skirting the forest and Polish homes dotted the countryside along the highway. We held our weapons tight and ready for any emergency as we hurriedly passed the houses. Surprised faces peered at us through the windows; our white protective coats and guns in hand scared them.

We stopped at a house to inquire the name of the place. We felt that the Polish frontier units and local militia were alarmed by the Russians by this time. We were not afraid of the Poles, because they usually patrolled in twos and threes and were armed with ordinary Russian "clarinets" (PPS) : the first burst clears the muzzle—and then one could fight by hurling bats or hats. Polish guardsmen are addicted to movements rearward; and as we were determined not to retreat, such opponents would be compelled to retire from battle on encountering us. We had no desire to fight the Poles. Occasionally they still offer their "union" to us. They are not real bolsheviks, just their serfs.

We were exhausted, but we had to cover 40 kilometers this night. The following day we could expect an *"obława"* (a manhunt) because the commander-in-chief of such forces is still a Russian MGB officer. The Russians guard the frontier most effectively, this in part is due to the efficiency of their Mongol troops. The Mongols surpass even their four-legged canine pals. Polish troops do not relish standing immobile as robots in the outposts; they like to visit nearby homesteads, calling on village girl friends while on duty. They have no objection to extra income, either, but no one would dare to offer money to a Mongol.

We came upon a large farm and inquired if we could secure a sled and a couple of horses. Here we met a fellow national—an "exile," about 30 years of age, who had formerly resided near Kaunas. When the bolsheviks overran Lithuania he fled and stopped here. With our host's permission, our Lithuanian warmed some coffee for us. We fried some bacon with onions and felt immeasureably refreshed. We emptied the water from our boots, changed and rewound our puttees and asked our countryman to try and get us a sled. This was difficult indeed. But finally, with proper pressure, we did get a sled and a pair of horses.

We drove about 15 kilometers before we released our countryman and the sled, and continued on foot toward Przerośl. It was wearisome going and we decided to get another sled. We called upon another farmer, who was also the village Elder. He began explaining all sorts of regulations we were to follow in order to obtain a sled. We told him we not only disagreed with such regulations but that we disliked the officials enforcing them, and that we had no time to go into further discussion with him. Reluctantly, he took us as far as Przerośl. When we learned from him that the town's police force consisted of eight men, we insisted on driving past the police headquarters. It was night and no one paid any attention to us. We ordered our driver to go home and forget all about this ride,

We called on a third Pole. After snatching a bite to eat we requisitioned our host's sled, sat him at the reins and proceeded toward Fornetka. Our host reminded us that it was his duty to report the appearance of guerrillas to the authorities immediately. His wife seemed especially dutiful in this respect: we had promised her that her husband would return within 3 hours. After covering about 10 kilometers we sent him back with the admonition that it was best for him to forget all about us.

We walked along the highway, following the river bank, when we came upon a farmhouse. Here we would rest. It was early morning and familiar sounds came from the barns, roosters crowing, horses neighing, cows mooing. We knocked on the window. We asked permission to rest. We were received warmly by our hostess, who led us into a comfortable guest room and immediately made up the beds for us. We washed and checked our weapons. We dried our puttees and boots. I prepared breakfast from our last food reserves. One stood guard and the other two fell asleep immediately.

We had scarcely settled down when our hostess rushed in with important news. The Commandant of Suwałki had telephoned to the militia and UB (Security Forces) of Rutka, Wižojnie and Przerośl, that armed men had broken through from East Prussia to Poland and were seen going toward Fornetka. Three sleds in the immediate neighborhood were requisitioned and placed at the disposal of the UB and the militia.

We covered our uniforms with civilian overcoats, asked our hostess to have horses hitched to a sled and were ready to depart. The danger menaced us from three directions. We therefore chose the fourth direction toward Smolniki. When we reached Smolniki at 4 P.M., we released our driver and called on the first farmhouse on the outskirts. Here we ate the excellently prepared dinner so thoughtfully provided by our previous hostess. We offered to pay this driver in dollars, but he courteously declined, informing us that he himself was an anti-bolshevik guerrilla and that he considered it his duty to assist us.

As darkness descended, we proceeded forward and decided to get another sled. It was difficult to find a spare horse just before the Christmas holidays. And those who could provide horses were fearful of government regulations—and probably of us. However, we succeeded in getting a sled.

If the Commandant of Suwałki had informed the militia of the exact places where we were seen, it was quite clear that one of our drivers had cooperated with the authorities and betrayed the direction we had taken. We regretted that this area was not one under our jurisdiction: we could have cured the inhabitants of serving the bolshevik usurpers.

The Skirmish with Polish UB Forces

We took our places in the sled and drove eastward. A short while later we noticed three sleds moving toward us. We covered up our uniform insignia and weapons as best we could so that they would not glisten in the moonlight. As the first sled drew nearer, we saw that it was full of armed men. We hoped that they would take us for civilians and thus spare bloodshed. But alas. . . .

We could see that the occupants of all three sleds were unduly excited. As soon as the first sled passed us, we heard the sound of automatics being uncocked, and at the same time an order came for us to stop.

We jumped out of our sled like streaks of lightning, firing as we jumped. Quickly, we took up positions in the roadside ditch and commenced firing on the first sled. The horses reared backward and fell on the road. Dying men moaned in the sled. Those unhurt ran away like rabbits without having fired a shot. Only one escaped from this encounter with the Lithuanian guerrillas.

Thus, the first *"stawka"* was disposed of without any casualities to us. We were convinced that the Poles had not anticipated that battle. We were very sorry for them but—why did they have to stop us?

In the meantime, the other two sleds approached. The UB men jumped out and hid behind the buildings on the right side of the road. Several boldly marched down the highway, thinking that their comrades from the first sled were the victors. A Polish lieutenant rushed at me from behind a tree. Uncocking his automatic he yelled: *"Kto tam?"* (Who is there?).

Instead of replying, I knocked the automatic from his hand, pushing my own *Amerikanka* into his ribs and ordered in Russian: *"Ruki v vyerkh!"* (Hands up!) In an instant Mindaugas was beside him. He slapped the Lieutenant on the ear and, indicating the direction with his arm, shouted *"Idž do djabła, panie poruczniku!"* (Go to the Devil, Mr. Lieutenant!).

Surprisingly enough, the Lieutenant quickly clicked his heels together, raised his right hand to his cap in salute and hurried off toward the building where his men were taking cover.

In the Heidemüde Forest December 1947.

When the Poles saw their Lieutenant running back disarmed, they finally realized what had happened. They opened fire on us.

The distance between us was not more than 25 meters. As soon as fire flashed from behind the buildings, we sent a long burst in reply. Neither the sheds nor the barns offered any shelter to the Poles from our bullets. There remained nothing for them to do but flee. As they ran we purposely fired around their ears, because the whistling of bullets encourages one to run faster and provides the necessary stamina.

We examined our damage. Šarūnas had lost his knapsack with the last food reserves and other items, and received several holes in his coattails. The UB-men suffered considerable loss of blood for their provocative intervention.

Hide and Seek

After walking several kilometers, we met a horsecart full of Christmas wares for the cooperative store in Rutka. After inspecting the merchandise we decided that too many items were being transported. We requisitioned the "surplus": three liters of liquor with suitable refreshments, a pocketful of candy for each man, and wished the cooperative people a very Merry Christmas. The latter became very gay and sociable when they saw that we were about to go our own way.

We had now lost all incentive to travel by sled. Indeed, we might encounter "Kops" (*Korpus Ochrony Pogranicznej*—Frontier Guard Corps) and militiamen lying in ambush at any crossroad. We marched across the fields.

We built a fire in a deserted bathhouse and studied our map by candlelight. Alas, we had left our detailed map in the sled and from this one we could only determine our general location. But we were not depressed; if we had succeeded thus far, we would succeed—God willing—to the end. We enjoyed the gifts of the Rutka cooperative store and we each tasted a sip or two of the Polish *wódka*.

Before dawn we had to find a place where we could spend the day and find out exactly where we were. I recalled my first visit to these parts and it seemed that we were too close to the border.

At the first house we were told that this was the Kociołki village. We asked the farmer to hitch up his horse and give us a lift. He appeared very friendly but "the devil was in his heart." As we waited inside the house for him to get ready, he struck his horse and was out of the yard in a jiffy—to notify the militia, of course.

The frontier zone was here, the roads were carefully guarded by the reinforcements dispatched from Suwałki and by the Polish UB units, and we had to cover more than 10 kilometers before dawn.

We turned into the Seinai-Cypliškės (Sejny-Cypliszki) highway. Luckily we encountered a man who informed us that he had just transported "the authorities" somewhere. Because we too meant considerable authority, the man carried us as far as Cypliškės. On approaching the village, two lay down in straw in the sled and one sat with the driver, just to take care of him in case of need. We finally reached our intended stopping point.

We treated our driver with the cooperative store's liquor. Our new host told us our driver was a man to be trusted not to betray us. The driver left for his home and we remained.

The spirit of the approaching holiday season was everywhere. The women were sweeping out the corners, rearranging rooms and making vast preparations for the Christmas Eve supper. We felt very tired. We could no longer keep our eyes open. Our host suggested that we sleep in a very small inconspicuous off-room.

During the day strong units of *"Kops"* and UB were combing the entire neighborhood in search of guerrillas from Lithuania. Stories of our exploits seemed to have preceded us to this village. With a machine gun in each sled, the "authorities" moved from one farm to another and searched everywhere.

At noon they reached our farm. We slept on. Our host could not warn us, he was petrified with fear. The militiamen went through the grain barn, the stables, searched the cellars, and all the rooms in the house—with the exception of the little off-room where we were sleeping. They then requisitioned a sled and drove away.

Our host ran into our room, blessed himself, and excitedly cried: "It is a miracle!" We were so overjoyed we started a party. At night we hid in the barn as it was too risky to stay in the house.

The day before Christmas, units of militiamen, "Kops" and "Ubists" raged in the neighborhood once more—on the same mission. The Ubists of Suwałki called on our host again toward evening, on their return from the manhunt. They asked for a meal and a sled to ride. Our host gathered from their conversations that many more "hunters" were around who would also call here. They kept asking each other

"Where in Hades had the *Litwini* vanished?" That morning they had heard that they were at Kociołki, and now they had vanished "into the soil." The Ubists were angry. Our host was frightened. As for us—we had to give up all thought of celebrating Christmas Eve, one of the most beautiful holy days of the year, rich in meaning and memories and dear to the heart of the lowliest Lithuanian.

Now, when all Christendom, sick and tired of wars and chaos, reverently awaited the coming of Christ we were lying in straw. Thinking of our own homes, our dear mothers. Our minds bridged the distance and we were home again. I could see my family sitting down to their traditional Christmas Eve supper with the appearance of the first star in the sky. I could see my father giving each member of the family a brightly colored wafer, the *"plotkelė,"* which had been consecrated in church, and each member sharing his *"plotkelė"* with everyone present. It was the symbol of good will and harmony. I thought of the hay under the tablecloth in memory of the night in Bethlehem. Then father taking the hay to the stable probably in spite of entire divisions of the MGB raging around, to feed the animals on Christmas Eve; it was a time of feasting for them too, as animals were present at the birth of the Christ Child.

Here we lay in straw, cold, thirsty and hungry. All sentiment was forgotten. We thought of countless thousands of our countrymen dying in Siberia and in the uncounted prisons of Russia; of those twenty thousand of our comrades-in-arms who had met martyrs' deaths, their limbs mutilated, their ribs broken, fingers twisted. Probably many more were dying this very night in their own fields fighting the cruel invader and oppressor. Hands clasped we bid each other *"Linksmų Kalėdų.*

In the morning, on his way to feed the animals, our host brought us the remnants of the Christmas Eve supper.

Rumors

Christmas night. We reached the Polish supporters of our cause. After establishing contact with our liaison men, Mindaugas and I went to the railway station to start the last lap of our mission. Šarūnas remained in Poland for further duty. Eventually, he returned to Lithuania.

The railroad station was filled with people. Natives stood around discussing the events of the past few days. They repeated stories of the battles fought by Lithuanian guerrillas on the soil of Poland.

One narrator told about 12 guerrillas who had crossed the frontier. "They had left heaps of Russian corpses at the frontier, and beat the hell out of the strong garrisons of "Kops" and militia of Rutka and Wižajnie, and even the re-enforcements dispatched from Suwałki by the U.B. The Commandant himself had perished in the battle and the chief of militia of Rutka was taken prisoner. These are truly devils!"

Another added: "The Lithuanians are now marching on Sejny. Stankiewicz from Kociołki had moved to the city,—he was afraid of the revenge of the *"Litwini."* They had called on Stankiewicz asking for a lift. He hitched his mare, and, before the Lithuanians managed to leave the house, he struck his mare on the sides and *"aj-di"* to the militia HQ. Of course he expected the militia to dispose of the Lithuanians in short order and that he would continue sleeping peacefully at home. But who could nab them? So Stankiewicz was afraid to return home."

The first narrator intervened again: "The Kops during the past year have caught and killed a great many Lithuanians who had escaped from the bolsheviks and were working on Polish farms, and now Lithuanian fighters have come to retaliate against the Kops. The militiamen of Cypliszki were happy that they had not encountered the Lithuanians eye to eye. Who knows how many would have missed the Christmas holidays? — "You say that our Kops have a machine gun in each sled? Ha, what is that? — those others *each* carry a machine gun." "They are polite with people"—attested this Pole. "They do not rob food and they pay dollars for a lift."

The train pulled in. The throng moved and we moved with it. If these people had only known that they were standing near a couple of the *"Litwini"* about whom legends were beginning to grow. . . . We could not help winking once, as we both fondly patted our trusty Walthers in our pockets. The rest of the frontiers were no problem. . . .

Betrayal of Europe

Comments on the Documentation of the Nazi-Soviet Relations 1939-1941

III.

94. Resolutions Drafted in Moscow and Printed Before "Voting"

I was instructed to arrange for the broadcasting of the first session of the People's Diet scheduled to open 21 July 1940, to be held in the State Theater Building. In my capacity as broadcasting supervisor, I had access to various "Election Boards" and Communist officials sent from Moscow, and to observe the backstage activities of the "Secretariat"—under the guidance of the Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union, Comrade V. G. Dekanozov, and his right-hand aide, Soviet Minister Pozdnyakov.

On 21 July 1940, just before the opening of the People's Diet, a Red Army unit of 180 men was brought backstage and sentinels were posted. The troopers were armed and hid behind the stage decorations, projectors, curtains, flower wreaths and flags. Several soldiers lay underneath the decorated table reserved for the Presidium—they were protected from

the public view by draperies reaching to the floor. All soldiers were armed with loaded tommyguns and pistols.

Despite the fact that all the elaborate installations for the broadcast had been made, a Russian NKVD Major protested just before the opening and the broadcast was cancelled. Nevertheless, certain fragments of the speeches were recorded on the discs. The Russians feared that some ingenious obstruction might be attempted—and broadcast to the world at large—so no chances were to be taken.

I chanced to read the agendum just before the opening. It was written in the Russian language on the official stationery of the Soviet Legation in Lithuania. Under each item of the agenda the speaker's name was indicated. Speeches to be made by them were drawn up at the Soviet Legation and bore a written approval signed by Soviet Minister Pozdnyakov. The text of the speech was to be given the "deputy" when the latter "reported for duty" on the rostrum.

When the "People's Deputies" took the seats assigned to them in the orchestra, each "deputy" found himself in company of an "observer" seated next to him and closely watching his motions and listening to conversations. The "observers" were there to see that the "deputy" should raise his arm at the proper moment.

The entire proceedings were outlined in minutest detail on special sheets of paper. Whenever a "deputy" mounted the speaker's dais, the Diet's Chairman asked the speaker's name several times, checked the name in his own libretto, and then permitted him to speak.

"Deputy" Ročius was given an assignment to speak on the change of the government system. By an odd chance, his speech was missing when he passed the speech distributor just before mounting the rostrum—he was given the text by Chairman Adomauskas when he approached the dais.

"Deputy" Banaitis, who was also Director of the Kaunas Radiophone, had given me a copy of the Communist daily "TIESA" /PRAVDA/—and the latter contained, in advance of the session and the rehearsed play, the text of the resolution proclaiming a Soviet order in Lithuania and the "voluntary membership" of Lithuania in the Soviet "Union."

He told me to broadcast the "decisions of the People's Diet," by reading same from an advance copy of "TIESA." When I ventured to express some doubt regarding such a decision and that the text might be changed, Banaitis replied: "The bolsheviks do not mark time. The People's Diet is not like Smetona's shop. Great affairs are decided speedily and without wavering. The new era brings a new tempo."

Another hitch developed: when the time came for Paul Pakarklis to propose "voluntary enrollment" of Lithuania in the Soviet Union, the session was adjourned because his speech was not yet flown back from Moscow. A telephone call was put through, in my presence, to the airfield: had a courier plane arrived from Moscow with an "urgent package?" Unfortunately, the plane was delayed a full hour. A hurried consultation was held between Pakarklis and Pozdnyakov, and the latter authorized Pakarklis to read from a copy containing the stamped and signed approval by Dekanozov.

M. STONYS.

/Extracts from a sworn affidavit./

95. The Nazis Learn that the Russians Want More Territory

Ribbentrop to Schulenburg

No. 1339 of August 2

Berlin, August 2, 1940—4:24 p.m.

Reference your telegram of July 13, No. 1363.

You are requested to inform Herr Molotov that the Reich Government has taken cognizance of the wish of the Soviet Government that Germany leave to the Soviet Union that part of Lithuania allocated to Germany by the Moscow agreements. This would represent a rather considerable change in the Moscow Treaty to the disadvantage of Germany. Before the Reich can consider the matter in detail, therefore, I should be interested in hearing what *quid pro quo* the Soviet Government would propose.

RIBBENTROP.

/*Nazi-Soviet Relations* 1939-1941, Washington, D.C. 1948, p. 174./

96. Incorporation of Lithuania created "a completely new situation"

German Foreign Office to the Legation in Lithuania

Berlin, August 9, 1940.

Confidential W XII 5228

For personal information only.

The incorporation of Lithuania into the territory of the Soviet Union creates a completely new situation for the Memel Free Port Zone. The Free Port Zone represented an international obligation, made to facilitate the return by little Lithuania of her most important port to Germany. For Russia, which has expanded and has at her disposal a great number of Baltic Sea ports, it has lost its real significance; its continued existence would lead to politically dangerous Russian privileges on German territory. If Russia should demand the continuance of the Free Port Zone in Memel, the position taken here will be that the promises given in the German-Lithuanian Treaty of March 22, 1939, are no longer applicable to a Lithuania which has been incorporated into the Soviet Union. The competent offices will initiate the necessary steps for terminating the present state of affairs.

The question of handling Russian traffic via the German port of Memel will especially be kept in mind.

By order:

SCHNURRE.

/*Ibid.*, pp. 175-176./

97. Russian Judas Willing To Pay Cash For Lithuania . . .

Schulenburg to Berlin

Moscow, August 13, 1940—12:25 a.m.

Very Urgent—Secret No. 1639 of August 12.

Reference my telegram of the 7th, No. 1590.

Concerning the Lithuanian strip of territory Molotov today handed me a long memorandum stating that territorial compensation was unacceptable to the Soviet Union, but declaring readiness to pay 3,860,000 gold dollars within 2 years (i.e., half of the sum the U.S.A. paid to Russia for the cession of Alaska), either in gold or goods, as Germany may prefer, for the retention of the strip of territory by the Soviet Union.

The text of the memorandum will be sent Wednesday via courier by plane. SCHULENBURG.

/Ibid., p. 176./

98. Russia Would Also Like To Retain Privileges in Klaipeda . . .

Schulenburg to Berlin

Moscow, August 30, 1940—10:12 p.m.

Urgent No. 1799 of August 30

Reference instruction W XII 5228 of August 9.

Last night Molotov asked me to see him and handed me a *note verbale* in which the attention of the German Government is called to activities of German authorities in the Memel Free Port Zone which violate rights and interests of the Lithuanian Soviet Republic. Disregarding the rights fixed in the German-Lithuanian Treaty of May 20 concerning the Memel Free Port Zone (which are quoted in detail in the *note verbale*) German authorities had ordered German troops to invade the territory of the Free Zone, had discontinued the activities of the Customs Office, and had declared that all Lithuanian goods in this zone were to be removed. The German authorities had thereby seriously affected the economic situation and commercial possibilities of Lithuania, which now forms part of the Soviet Union. The Soviet Government was of the opinion that the Lithuanian Soviet Republic was entitled to all the rights and privileges granted by the German-Lithuanian Treaty as well as by the letters exchanged between Schnurre and Norkaitis on May 20, 1939, and that their validity could not be terminated by a unilateral act.

Molotov added orally that just as the German Government takes for granted the fulfillment of the commercial treaties concluded between Germany and the Baltic countries, so also must the Soviet Government demand the observance of the German-Lithuanian Treaty with regard to the Memel Free Port Zone which was likewise a commercial treaty.

Please enable me as soon as possible to answer the *note verbale,* the text of which will follow by the next courier.

Minister Schnurre will give his opinion on this issue separately. SCHULENBURG.

/Ibid., pp. 177-178./

99. The Partners Have Something To Hide From Each Other

Ribbentrop to Schulenburg

Berlin, September 3, 1940—6:20 a.m.

No. 1580 of September 3.

Reference your telegram No. 1815.

Please call on Herr Molotov again and to his statement that Germany, by her conduct in Vienna, had violated the obligation to consult contained in article 3 of the Nonaggression Pact, reply in accordance with the following memorandum and afterwards hand him this memorandum as a summary of your instructions. If there is anything you wish to say regarding the instructions, please report to me before you call on Molotov.

Text of the Memorandum:

In his last oral discussion with Ambassador Count von der Schulenburg, . . . Molotov said that he had to call Germany's attention to the fact that by her conduct in Vienna she had violated article 3 of the German-Russian Nonagression Pact of August 23, 1939, which provided for consultation. The Soviet Government had been confronted by Germany with accomplished facts, which violated existing agreements and conflicted with assurances the Soviet Government had received from Germany regarding questions of common interest to the two countries. The present case involved two of the Soviet Union's neighbors in which she naturally had interests.

Conscious of her friendly relations with the Soviet Union, which have developed in a manner satisfactory to both parties, and have been intensified both in the economic and in the political field since the conclusion of the treaties of 1939, the Government of the Reich takes the following position on the construction placed by the Soviet Government on the German-Russian Nonaggression Pact:

In article 3 of the German-Russian Nonagression Pact an obligation was agreed upon for reciprocal information and consultation on questions of interest to both parties. Likewise at Moscow, at the delimitation of the respective spheres of influence, an interest in Bessarabia was stressed on the part of Soviet Russia, while Germany declared herself disinterested in these areas. But that Germany is intensely concerned in the remaining Rumanian territories and the other problems of the Danube region . . . is generally known and has, moreover, been communicated to the Soviet Government on various occasions and been recognized by it in its entirety. On the other hand, after the settlement of the Bessarabian question a like interest in the rest of Rumanian territory on the part of the Soviet Union is not evident, and has not been expressed to the Government of the Reich, either at the Moscow settlement or later. The same is true of Hungary. Hence the existence of mutual interest . . . is out of the question here. Thus, even if Rumania and Hungary are neighboring countries, Germany has certainly not committed a violation of the obligation for mutual consultation.

The Government of the Reich, moreover, believes itself the more justified in this view, in that the Soviet Government itself, on the occasion of various political moves in the recent past, by no means considered the fact of contiguity to Germany of the territories affected by her acts as a reason for prior consultation with the Government of the Reich. In this connection,

the Government of the Reich refers to Russian action in the Baltic States, especially Lithuania. In the latter case, besides the fact that Lithuania is adjacent to Germany, an obligation existed to surrender to Germany a certain area in the southwest of Lithuania in the event that the Soviet Union should take special measures on Lithuanian territory for the safeguarding of her interests. Nevertheless, the Soviet Union effected a military occupation of that area also, although as a result of the Russian measures it should have been treated forthwith as German territory. Only after representations by the Government of the Reich was this question reopened.

Further, one might add that at the occupation of Bessarabia and Northern Bucovina the Government of the Reich likewise received only very short notice from the Soviet Government. . . .

In conclusion, the Government of the Reich would like further to observe . . . that while the moves of the Soviet Union were planned moves for the occupation of various territories in the neighborhood of Germany, and were not previously announced to the Government of the Reich, the steps of the Reich Government in the case of Rumania and Hungary served the purpose of securing the peace in the Danube region. . . .

RIBBENTROP.

/Ibid., pp. 181-183./

100. Schulenburg Needs More Instructions

Moscow, Sept. 4, 1940—5:30 p.m.

Very Urgent

No. 1841 of September 4

Reference your telegram No. 1580 of Sept. 3.

I would appreciate authorization to supplement the ideas contained in the memorandum to be handed to Molotov in the sense that the Soviet Government really set off the great complex of questions by its settlement of the Bessarabian matter with unexpected speed. . . .

Furthermore, my interview with Molotov would be substantially facilitated if I were enabled at the same time to communicate to him the position of the German Government, for which Molotov has in the meantime pressed several times, in the matter of the strip of Lithuanian territory as well as in the question of the Free Port Zone of Memel (see our telegrams No. 1799 and 1800 of August 30). The question of the Free Port Zone of Memel was taken up with Schnurre on September 2 by Mikoyan in a manner which leaves no doubt as to the resentment felt by the Soviet Government, and makes much more difficult the further pursuit of our interests in the Baltic States. (See telegram No. 1829 of September 3).

Please wire instructions. SCHULENBURG.

/Ibid., pp. 183-184./

101. Unprincipled Germany Prepared "In Principle, Against Adequate Compensation . . ."

Berlin, Sept. 6, 1940—4:35 a.m.

Received Moscow, Sept. 6, 1940—10 a.m.

No. 1609 of September 5

For the Ambassador personally.

Reference your telegram No. 1841.

To your suggestions I state the following . . .

4) I leave it to you whether or not you think it opportune to bring up on this occasion the question of the strip of Lithuanian territory. If you think it advisable, you may tell Herr Molotov that the Government of the Reich is prepared in principle, against adequate compensation, to forego the cession of the strip of Lithuanian territory which was agreed upon in Moscow. The compensation which the Soviet Union has offered is certainly not acceptable to us. At the moment we are engaged in drawing up a proposal for adequate compensation and we shall soon approach the Soviet Government with this proposal.

5) On the other hand, I request you not to broach the question of the Free Port of Memel on this occasion. We must persist in our view that we cannot grant the Soviet Government a free port zone in Memel. But this question will have to be discussed separately with the Soviet Government. . . .

RIBBENTROP.

/Ibid., pp. 185-187./

102. Molotov Pleased With Prospect Of Swallowing All Of Lithuania

Moscow, September 10, 1940.

Schulenburg to Berlin

No. 1900 of September 11

Reference your telegram No. 1649 of the 10th.

Molotov displayed great interest in, and had me repeat several times, the statement that "the Government of the Reich is prepared in principle, against adesuate compensation, to forego the cession of the strip of Lithuanian territory which was agreed upon in Moscow." I had the impression that Molotov was satisfied. The statement that the compensation offered was certainly not acceptable to us and that we were engaged in drawing up a counter-proposal, Molotov noted with interest, without any further comment.

SCHULENBURG.

/Ibid., p. 188./

103. The Thieves Explain Away Each Other's Misdeeds

The People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union to the German Embassy in the Soviet Union

In reply to German Ambassador Count von der Schulenburg's memorandum of September 9 of this year, the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs has the honor to state as follows: . . .

2) To justify the omission of such a consultation with the Government of the U.S.S.R. in the Vienna decisions, the Government of the German Reich cites the fact that allegedly the Government of the U.S.S.R. did not consult with the Government of the German Reich, either, on its measures in the Baltic States, especially in Lithuania, and gave only short notice with regard to Bessarabia and Northern Bucovina.

The Soviet Government must, in the first place, point out that during the entire period of the validity of the Treaty of August 23, 1939 the Government

of the German Reich did not once declare that the Soviet Government had violated its treaty obligations or had failed to consult with the Government of the German Reich on the above-mentioned questions. The Soviet Government is of the opinion that the best way to establish mutual understanding and to secure the complete and effective performance of the obligations imposed by the Treaty is by a timely declaration of claims that may arise, in case there actually are such claims. The Soviet Government must point out that during the whole year that the Treaty of August 23, 1939 has been in effect it had not received any such declarations or claims from the Government of the German Reich.

To turn to the substance of the above-mentioned matter, the Soviet Government believes it necessary to declare that the said statement of the Government of the German Reich is not in accord with the real situation. The Soviet Government not only informed the Government of the German Reich in advance regarding the measures it intended to take in the Baltic States, especially in Lithuania, but even received from the Government of the German Reich on June 17 of this year a communication stating that the measures taken by the Soviet Government in those countries were regarded by Germany as measures which concerned solely the Soviet Union and those countries. Such a declaration from the Government of the German Reich was entirely comprehensible to the Soviet Government, as Germany had as recently as August 1939 recognized the special interests of the Soviet Union in respect to the Baltic States, and the measures which the Soviet Union had taken regarding those states, especially Lithuania, in no way went beyond the scope of the Soviet-German Pact of August 23, 1939. In regard to a certain area in the Southeast of Lithuania, however, the Soviet Government in June of this year clearly confirmed the rights of Germany, and reserved its new proposals concerning this Lithuanian area for a special arrangement with the Government of the German Reich.

The same holds true as regards the question of Bessarabia and Bucovina. . . .

On the basis of the foregoing explanations, the Soviet Government deems it necessary to declare that the measures it took in regard to the Baltic States and in Bessarabia were entirely in accord with the Soviet-German Treaty, while the new and lesser problems which were not anticipated in this Treaty are being solved and will be solved by the Soviet Government in consultation with the Government of the German Reich.

Hence the reference by the Government of the German Reich to the measures carried out by the Soviet Union in the Baltic region as an explanation of the failure to consult with the Soviet Government regarding the Vienna decision is not confirmed by the facts and therefore not justified. . . .

In conclusion, the Soviet Government deems it necessary to add to the foregoing considerations that, if article 3 of the Nonaggression Treaty involves certain inconveniences and restrictions from the standpoint of the Government of the German Reich, the Soviet Government is prepared to negotiate on the question of an amendment to or deletion of this article of the Treaty. . . .

Moscow, September 21, 1940.

/Ibid., pp. 190-194./

104. Ribbentrop Suggests to Stalin Worldwide Division of Spoils

Berlin, October 13, 1940.

My Dear Herr Stalin: Over a year ago, through your decision and the Führer's, the relations between Germany and Soviet Russia were re-examined and put on a completely new basis . . . which led to a delimitation of mutual spheres of influence and to the German-Soviet Russian Nonaggression and Friendship Treaties . . . advantageous to both sides. I am convinced that the consistent continuance of this policy . . . will redound to the greater and greater benefit of the two great peoples in the future . . . a personal contact through other than the customary diplomatic channels is indispensable from time to time in authoritarian regimes such as ours. . . .

. . . In the meanwhile, fate would have it that documents of inestimable importance fell into the hands of the German armies advancing with lightning speed in the various theaters of war . . . we succeeded in capturing the secret political files of the French General Staff . . . the documents at our disposal prove that the gentlemen from the Thames would not have shrunk from attacking completely disinterested nations, merely because they continued their natural trade with Germany despite British representations and even threats. Undoubtely, the Soviet-Russian oil centers of Baku and the oil port of Batum would even this year have become the victim of British attacks. . . .

The policy which we have recently pursued in the Rumanian-Hungarian controversy . . . is due exclusively to the necessity of protecting this Balkan region. . . . There was no time for any negotiations or consultations. Matters had already gone too far from a military standpoint. This accounts for the completely improvised meeting in Vienna and the award within 24 hours. . . .

In summing up, I should like to state that, in the opinion of the Führer, also, it appears to be the historical mission of the Four Powers—the Soviet Union, Italy, Japan, and Germany—to adopt a long-range policy and to direct the future development of their peoples into the right channels by delimitation of their interests on a world-wide scale.

In order further to clarify issues of such decisive importance for the future of our peoples and in order to discuss them in concrete form, we would welcome it if Herr Molotov would pay us a visit to Berlin soon. . . . Upon his return, Herr Molotov will be able to report to you at length concerning the aims and in-

tentions of the Führer. If then—as I believe I may expect—the opportunity should arise for further elaboration of a common policy in accordance with my foregoing statements, I should be happy to come to Moscow again personally in order to resume the exchange of ideas with you, my dear Herr Stalin, and to discuss —possibly together with representatives of Japan and Italy—the bases of a policy which could only be of *practical* advantage to all of us.

With best regards I remain

Respectfully yours,

RIBBENTROP.

/Ibid., pp. 207-213./

105. The British Were Ready To Bomb Caucasian Oilfields?

House of Commons, Oral Answers

35. MR. EMRYS HUGHES: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that I have been pressing for the publication of secret documents from our own archives, especially those relating to the proposed attacks on Russian oilfields in March 1940? Will he consider publishing these documents?

(*The Minister of State*) MR. (HECTOR) MCNEIL: I cannot accept the imputation. The question does not, of course, arise, because we are speaking here of the disposal of captured archives.

/Hansard, vol. 446, No. 51, 28th January 1948./

106. Dear Herr Stalin Thanks For Confidence . . .

Moscow, October 22, 1940—5:02 a.m.

Schulenburg to Berlin

Very Urgent

No. 2236 of October 21

For the Reich Foreign Minister personally.

Tonight Molotov handed me Stalin's sealed answer together with a copy. The form and style of the letter leave no doubt that the letter was composed by Stalin personally.

Literally translated, the letter reads as follows:

"My Dear Herr von Ribbentrop: I have received your letter. I thank you sincerely for your confidence, as well as for the instructive analysis of recent events which is contained in your letter.

I agree with you that a further improvement in the relations between our countries is entirely possible on the permanent basis of a long-range delimitation of mutual interests.

Herr Molotov admits that he is under obligation to pay you a return visit in Berlin. He hereby accepts your invitation. . . .

I welcome the desire expressed by you to come to Moscow again in order to resume the exchange of ideas begun last year on questions of interest to both our countries. . . .

As to joint deliberation on some issues with Japanese and Italian participation, I am of the opinion (without being opposed to this idea in principle) that this question would have to be submitted to a previous examination.

Most respectfully yours."

Molotov added orally that he planned to arrive in Berlin on the 10th, 11th or 12th of November. . . .

Molotov requested that the whole affair be treated in strict confidence for the time being.

SCHULENBURG.

/Nazi-Soviet Relations 1939-1941, *supra,* pp. 216-217./

107. Molotov, Dekanozov, Ribbentrop and Co. Plotting in Berlin

Memorandum of the Conversation in Berlin on November 12, 1940.

. . . To a question by Molotov . . . the Reich Foreign Minister . . . replied . . . Thus far, both partners had benefited from the German-Russian Pact, Germany as well as Russia, which was able to carry out her rightful revisions in the West. The victory of Germany over Poland and France had contributed considerably to the successful achievement of these revisions. Both partners of the German-Russian Pact had together done some good business. This was the most favorable basis for any pact. The question now was, whether they could not continue in the future also to do good business together and whether Soviet Russia could derive corresponding advantages from the new order of things in the British Empire, i.e., . . . in the direction of the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Sea, and whether at the same time certain other aspirations of Russia in this part of Asia—in which Germany was completely disinterested—could not also be realized.

The Reich Foreign Minister further brought up the subject of Turkey . . . the Straits Convention of Montreux . . . other common issues . . . a joint declaration by the Soviet Government and the powers of the Tripartite Pact pledging the early restoration of peace . . . interests of the four countries could be clarified for the future on a very long-range scale . . . China . . . Japan. . . .

Molotov agreed . . . and replied . . . by saying that they had been of great interest to him. . . . He had well understood the statements of the Reich Foreign Minister regarding the great importance of the Tripartite Pact. As the representative of a non-belligerent country, however, he had to ask for a number of explanations . . . the concept of a "Greater East Asian Sphere" was quite vague, at least for a person who had not participated in the preparation of the Pact. Therefore, it would be important for him to obtain a more accurate definition of this concept. Moreover, the participation of the Soviet Union in the actions envisaged by the Reich Foreign Minister must be discussed in detail, and that not only in Berlin, but also in Moscow . . . precision was necessary in a delimitation of spheres of influence over a rather long period of time. . . . Particular vigilance was needed in the delimitation of the spheres of influence between Germany and Russia. The establishment of these spheres of influence in the past year was only a partial solution, which has been rendered obsolete and meaningless by recent circumstances and events, with the exception of

the Finnish question, which he would discuss in detail later. . . . Russia wanted to come to an understanding with Germany, and only then with Japan and Italy. . . .

At this point the conversation was interrupted in order to give the Russian delegates time for a breakfast in a small circle before the conversation with the Führer began.

SCHMIDT (*Minister*).

Berlin, November 13, 1940.

/Ibid., pp. 217-225./

108. Hitler, Molotov, Ribbentrop, Dekanozov Develop the Plot

Memorandum of Conversation in Berlin on November 12, 1940.

After some words of welcome, the Führer stated . . . Russia and Germany, . . . both countries had systems of government which did not wage war for the sake of war, but which needed peace more than war in order to carry out their domestic tasks . . . it should really be possible to achieve a settlement between them, which would lead to peaceful collaboration between the two countries beyond the life span of the present leaders.

After Molotov had expressed his entire agreement with these arguments, the Führer continued. . . . By and large, not only Germany, but also Russia had gained great advantages. On further consideration, the political collaboration during the one year of its existence had been of considerable value to both countries.

Molotov stated that this was quite correct.

The Führer declared further that probably neither of the two peoples had realized its wishes 100 percent. In political life, however, even a 20-25 percent realization of demands was worth a good deal. He believed that not every wish would be fulfilled in the future either, but that the two greatest peoples of Europe, if they went along together, would, in any case, gain more than if they worked against each other. If they stood together, some advantage would always accrue to both countries. If they worked against each other, however, third countries would be the sole gainers.

Molotov replied that the argument of the Führer was entirely correct and would be confirmed by history; that it was particularly applicable to the present situation, however.

The Führer then went on to say . . . he had reached several conclusions:

. . . 3. There were nevertheless certain requirements . . . absolutely vital to Germany. Among them were certain sources of raw materials. . . . Possibly Herr Molotov was of the opinion that in one case or another they had departed from the conception of the spheres of influence which had been agreed upon by Stalin and the Reich Foreign Minister. Such departures had already occurred in some cases in the course of Russian operations against Poland. In a number of cases, on calm consideration of the German and Russian interests, he (the Führer) had not been ready to make concessions, but he had realized that it was desirable to meet the needs of Russia half-way, as, for instance, in the case of Lithuania. From an economic point of view, Lithuania had, it is true, had a certain importance for us, but from a political point of view, we had understood the necessity of straightening out the situation in this whole field in order thereby to prevent in the future the spiritual revival of tendencies that were capable of causing tension between the two countries of Germany and Russia. . . .

Molotov concurred in this idea, stating that in any case it was vastly more expensive to attain a goal by military measures than by peaceful means. The Führer pointed out further . . . he had undertaken an exchange of ideas with France, Italy, and Spain, in order with these countries to set up in the whole of Europe and Africa some kind of Monroe Doctrine. . . . In other regions, where Russia was the power in the foremost position, the interests of the latter would, of course, have to come first. This would result in a great coalition of powers which, guided by sober appraisal of realities, would have to establish their respective spheres of interest and would assert themselves against the rest of the world correspondingly. . . .

The Führer . . . understood thoroughly Russia's attempts to get ice-free ports. . . . Germany had enormously expanded her *Lebensraum* in her present eastern provinces. At least half of this area, however, must be regarded as an economic liability. Probably both Russia and Germany had not achieved everything they had set out to do. In any case, however, the successes had been great on both sides. . . .

Molotov replied that the statements of the Führer had been of a general nature and that in general he could agree with his reasoning. He was also of the opinion that it would be in the interest of Germany and the Soviet Union if the two countries would collaborate and not fight each other. Upon his departure from Moscow, Stalin had given him exact instructions, and everything that he was about to say was identical with the views of Stalin. He concurred in the opinion of the Führer that both partners had derived substantial benefits from the German-Russian agreement. Germany had received a secured hinterland that, as was generally known, had been of great importance for the further course of events during the year of war. In Poland, too, Germany had gained considerable economic advantages. By the exchange of Lithuania for the Voivodeship of Lublin, all possible friction between Russia and Germany had been avoided. The German-Russian agreement of last year could therefore be regarded as fulfilled, except for one point, namely, Finland. The Finnish question was still unsolved. . . . Also, in the opinion of the Soviet Government, the German-Russian agreement of last year represented only a partial solution. In the meanwhile, other issues had arisen that also had to be solved. . . .

The Führer replied that . . . In no case was a settlement to be made without Soviet Russian cooperation. This applied not only to Europe, but also to Asia, where Russia herself was to cooperate in the definition of the Greater East Asian Sphere and where she was to designate her claims there. Germany's task in this case was that of a mediator . . . the problems of Western Europe, which were to be settled between Germany, Italy, and France, as well as for the issues of the East, which were essentially the concern of Russia and Japan, but in which Germany offered her good offices as mediator. It was a matter of opposing any attempt on the part of America to "make money on Europe." The United States had no business either in Europe, in Africa, or in Asia.

Molotov expressed his agreement with the statements of the Führer regarding the role of America and England. The participation of Russia in the Tripartite Pact appeared to him entirely acceptable in principle, provided that Russia was to cooperate as a partner and not be merely an object. In that case he saw no difficulties in the matter of participation of the Soviet Union in the common effort. . . .

In view of a possible air raid alarm the talk was broken off at this point. . . .

SCHMIDT.

/Ibid., pp. 226-234./

109. Hitler, Molotov, Ribbentrop and Dekanozov Get To The Point

Memorandum of the Conversation in Berlin on November 13, 1940.

The Führer referred to the remark of Molotov during yesterday's conversation, according to which the German-Russian agreement was fulfilled "with the exception of one point: namely, of Finland."

Molotov explained that this remark referred not only to the German-Russian agreement itself, but in particular to the Secret Protocols too.

The Führer replied that, in the Secret Protocol, zones of influence and spheres of interest had been designated and distributed between Germany and Russia. In so far as it had been a question of actually taking possession, Germany had lived up to the agreements, which was not quite the case on the Russian side. At any rate, Germany had not occupied any territory that was within the Russian sphere of influence.

Lithuania had already been mentioned yesterday. There could be no doubt that in this case the changes from the original German-Russian agreement were essentially due to Russian initiative. Whether the difficulties—to avoid which the Russians had offered their suggestion—would actually have resulted from the partition of Poland, could be left out of the discussion. In any case, the Voivodeship of Lublin was no compensation, economically, for Lithuania. However, the Germans had seen that in the course of events a situation had resulted which necessitated revision of the original agreement.

The same applied to Bucovina. . . .

The situation regarding Finland was quite similar, . . .

Molotov interposed here that the Russian Government had had no cause for criticism with regard to the attitude of Germany during that conflict.

In this connection the Führer mentioned also that he had even detained ships in Bergen which were transporting arms and ammunition to Finland. . . . Germany recognized that, politically, Finland was of primary interest to Russia and was in her zone of influence. However, Germany had to consider the following two points:

1. For the duration of the war she was very greatly interested in the deliveries of nickel and lumber from Finland, and

2. She did not desire any new conflict in the Baltic Sea . . . both Germany and Russia would naturally be interested in not allowing the Baltic Sea to become a combat zone again. Since the Russo-Finnish War, the possibilities for military operations had shifted, because England had available long-range bombers and long-range destroyers. The English thereby had a chance to get a foothold on Finnish airports.

In addition, there was a purely psychological factor which was extremely onerous. The Finns had defended themselves bravely, and they had gained the sympathies of the world—particularly of Scandinavia. In Germany, too, during the Russo-Finnish War, the people were somewhat annoyed at the position which, as a result of the agreements with Russia, Germany had to take and actually did take. Germany did not wish any new Finnish war because of the aforementioned consideration. However, the legitimate claims of Russia were not affected thereby. Germany had proved this again and again by her attitude on various issues, among others, the issue of the fortification of the Aaland Islands. For the duration of the war, however, her economic interests in Finland were just as important as in Rumania. Germany expected consideration of these interests all the more, since she herself had also shown understanding of the Russian wishes in the issues of Lithuania and Bucovina at the time. At any rate, she had no political interest of any kind in Finland, and she fully accepted the fact that that country belonged to the Russian zone of influence.

In reply Molotov pointed out that the agreement of 1939 had referred to a certain stage of the development which had been concluded by the end of the Polish War, while the second stage was brought to an end by the defeat of France, and that they were really in the third stage now. He recalled that by the original agreement, with its Secret Protocol, the common German-Russian boundary had been fixed and issues concerning the adjacent Baltic countries and Rumania, Finland, and Poland had been settled. For the rest, he agreed with the remarks of the Führer on the revisions made. However, if he drew up a balance sheet of the situation that resulted after the defeat of France, he would have to state that the German-

Russian agreement had not been without influence upon the great German victories.

As to the question of the revision of the original agreement with regard to Lithuania and the Voivodeship of Lublin, Molotov pointed out that the Soviet Union would not have insisted on that revision if Germany had not wanted it. But he believed that the new solution had been in the interest of both parties.

At this point the Reich Foreign Minister interjected that, to be sure, Russia had not made this revision an absolute condition, but at any rate had urged it very strongly.

Molotov insisted that the Soviet Government would not have refused to leave matters as provided in the original agreement. At any rate, however, Germany, for its concession in Lithuania, had received compensation in Polish territory.

The Führer interjected here that in this exchange one could not, from the point of view of economics, speak of adequate compensation.

Molotov then mentioned the question of the strip of Lithuanian territory and emphasized that the Soviet Government had not received any clear answer yet from Germany on this question. However, it awaited a decision. . . .

The Führer replied. . . . At any rate, Germany had not violated the agreement in the least in this matter. To the objection of Molotov that the revisions with regard to the strip of Lithuanian territory and of Bucovina were not of very great importance in comparison with the revision which Germany had undertaken elsewhere by military force, the Führer replied that so-called "revision by force of arms" had not been the subject of the agreement at all.

Molotov, however, persisted in the opinion previously stated: that the revisions desired by Russia were insignificant.

The Führer replied that if German-Russian collaboration was to show positive results in the future, the Soviet Government would have to understand that Germany was engaged in a life and death struggle, which, at all events, she wanted to conclude successfully. . . . The Soviet Union had to realize that in the framework of any broader collaboration of the two countries advantages of quite different scope were to be reached than the insignificant revisions which were now being discussed. Much greater successes could then be achieved, provided that Russia did not now seek successes in territories in which Germany was interested for the duration of the war. The future successes would be the greater, the more Germany and Russia succeeded in fighting back to back against the outside world . . . there was no power on earth which could oppose the two countries.

In his reply Molotov voiced his agreement with the latest conclusions of the Führer. In this connection he stressed the viewpoint of the Soviet leaders, and of Stalin in particular, that it would be possible and expedient to strengthen and activate the relations between the two countries. However, in order to give those relations a permanent basis, issues would also have to be clarified which were of secondary importance, but which spoiled the atmosphere of German-Russian relations. Finland belonged among these issues. If Russia and Germany had a good understanding, this issue could be solved without war, but there must be neither German troops in Finland nor political demonstrations in that country against the Soviet-Russian Government.

The Führer replied that the second point could not be a matter for debate, since Germany had nothing to do with these things. Incidentally, demonstrations could easily be staged, and it was very difficult to find out afterward who had been the real instigator. . . .

In conclusion the Führer stated on this point that Germany did not desire any war in the Baltic Sea and that she urgently needed Finland as a supplier of nickel and lumber. Politically, she was not interested and, in contrast to Russia, had occupied no Finnish territory. . . .

. . . Molotov replied . . . Of course, both countries were also interested in peace in the Baltic, but the Soviet Union was entirely able to assure peace in that region . . . the deeds did not always correspond with the words, and he persisted in the opinion which he had previously expressed: that peace in the Baltic Sea region could be absolutely insured, if perfect understanding were attained between Germany and Russia in the Finnish matter. Under these circumstances he did not understand why Russia should postpone the realization of her wishes for six months or a year. After all, the German-Russian agreement contained no time limits, and the hands of none of the partners were tied in their spheres of influence.

With a reference to the changes made in the agreement at Russia's request, the Führer stated that there must not be any war in the Baltic. A Baltic conflict would be a heavy strain on German-Russian relations and on the great collaboration of the future. In his opinion, however, future collaboration was more important than the settlement of secondary issues at this very moment.

Molotov replied that it was not a matter of war in the Baltic, but of the question of Finland and its settlement within the framework of the agreement of last year. . . .

When the Führer replied that he could only repeat that there must be no war with Finland, because such a conflict might have far-reaching repercussions, Molotov stated that a new factor had been introduced into the discussion by this position, which was not expressed in the treaty of last year.

The Führer replied that during the Russo-Finnish War . . . Germany had meticulously kept her obligations toward Russia and had always advised Finland to give in . . . he now declared with the same frankness that a war with Finland would represent such a strain on German-Russian relations, and he asked the Russians to show exactly the same understanding in this instance as he had shown a year ago in the issue

of Poland. Considering the genius of Russian diplomacy, ways and means could certainly be found to avoid such a war.

Molotov replied that he could not understand the German fear that a war might break out in the Baltic. Last year . . . Germany had not raised this issue. . . . He did not see where under those circumstances the danger of war in the Baltic Sea should come from. He would have to request that Germany take the same stand as last year. If she did that unconditionally, there would certainly be no complications in connection with the Finnish issue. However, if she made reservations, a new situation would arise which would then have to be discussed.

In reply . . . the Führer stressed that . . . he wanted to end the European War, and he could only repeat that in view of the uncertain attitude of Sweden a new war in the Baltic would mean a strain on German-Russian relations with unforeseeable consequences. Would Russia declare war on the United States, in case the latter should intervene in connection with the Finnish conflict?

When Molotov replied that this question was not of present interest, the Führer replied that it would be too late for a decision when it became so. When Molotov then declared that he did not see any indication of the outbreak of war in the Baltic, the Führer replied that in that case everything would be in order anyway and the whole discussion was really of a purely theoretical nature. . . .

SCHMIDT.

Berlin, November 15, 1940.

/Ibid., pp. 234-247./

110. New Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact

Memorandum of the "Final Conversation" in Berlin, 13 November 1940

Despite the air raid alert . . . Ribbentrop and Herr Molotov went into the Reich Foreign Minister's air raid shelter after the supper at the Embassy of the U.S.S.R. at 9:40 p.m. on November 13, 1940, in order to conduct the final conversation.

The Reich Foreign Minister opened the conversation. . . . By and large, it was a matter of achieving future collaboration between the countries of the Tripartite Pact—Germany, Italy, and Japan—and the Soviet Union, and he believed that first a way must be found to define in bold outlines the spheres of influence of these four countries and to reach an understanding on the problem of Turkey. From the very beginning it was clear in this connection that the problem of the delimitation of the spheres of influence concerned all four countries. . . .

The agreement itself would be announced to the public. Beyond that, . . . a confidential (secret) agreement could be concluded—in a form still to be determined—establishing the focal points in the territorial aspirations of the Four Countries. . . .

The focal points in the territorial aspirations of the Soviet Union would presumably be centered south of the territory of the Soviet Union in the direction of the Indian Ocean.

Such a confidential agreement could be supplemented by the statement that the Four-Powers concerned, except for the settlement of individual issues, would respect each other's territorial aspirations and would not oppose their realization. . . .

. . . To be sure, he still clearly recalled Herr Stalin's remark, when Herr Stalin said that he knew the Asiatics better than Herr von Ribbentrop did . . . he knew that . . . Japan would be willing to recognize the Russian spheres of influence in Outer Mongolia and Sinkiang. . . . An agreement could also be reached on possible Soviet aspirations in the direction of British India. . . .

Herr Molotov replied that, concerning Japan, he had the hope and conviction that they would now make more progress. . . . As for Turkey, the Soviet Union assumed that they would have to reach an understanding with Turkey on the Straits question first of all. . . . The questions which interested the Soviet Union in the Near East, concerned not only Turkey, but Bulgaria. . . . But the fate of Rumania and Hungary was also of interest to the Soviet Union. . . . It would further interest the Soviet Union to learn what the Axis contemplated with regard to Yugoslavia and Greece, and . . . Poland . . . Swedish neutrality. . . . Besides, there existed the question of the passages out of the Baltic Sea. . . . As to the Finnish question, it was sufficiently clarified. . . .

. . . Reich Foreign Minister . . . had no comment to make on the Bulgarian question . . . without previously consulting Italy. On all other questions he felt he had been "queried too closely" (*"überfragt"*), by Herr Molotov. . . . As to the passages out of the Baltic Sea, the Baltic Sea was at present an inland sea, where we were interested in the maintenance of the free movement of shipping. Outside of the Baltic Sea, however, there was war. The time was not yet ripe for discussing the new order of things in Poland. . . . In the Balkans we had solely an economic interest. . . . He could only repeat again and again that the decisive question was whether the Soviet Union was prepared and in a position to cooperate with us in the great liquidation of the British Empire. On all other questions we would easily reach an understanding . . . a matter of the interests of the Soviet Union and Germany requiring that the partners stand not breast to breast but back to back, in order to support each other in the achievement of their aspirations. . . .

In his reply Molotov stated that the Germans were assuming that the war against England had already actually been won. If . . . Germany was waging a life and death struggle against England, he could only construe this as meaning that Germany was fighting "for life" and England "for death." As to the question of collaboration, he quite approved of it, but he added that they had to come to a thorough understanding. This idea had also been expressed in Stalin's letter. A delimitation of the spheres of influence must also be

sought. On this point, however, he (Molotov) could not take a definite stand at this time, since he did not know the opinion of Stalin and of his other friends in Moscow in the matter. . . . The things that were started must first be completed before they proceeded to new tasks. . . .

Thereupon Herr Molotov cordially bade farewell. . .

HILGER.

Moscow, November 18, 1940. */Ibid.*, pp. 247-254./

111. Stalin's Reservations in Joining the Axis

Moscow, November 26, 1940—5:34 a.m.

No. 2362 of November 25

For the Reich Minister in person.

Molotov asked me to call on him this evening and in the presence of Dekanozov stated the following:

. . . "The Soviet Government is prepared to accept the draft of the Four Power Pact . . . subject to the following conditions:

"1) Provided that the German troops are immediately withdrawn from Finland. . . .

"2) Provided that . . . the security of the Soviet Union in the Straits is assured by the conclusion of a mutual assistance pact between the Soviet Union and Bulgaria . . . and by the establishment of a base for land and naval forces of the U.S.S.R. within range of the Bosporous and the Dardanelles. . . .

"3) Provided that the area south of Batum and Baku in the general direction of the Persian Gulf is recognized as the center of the aspirations of the Soviet Union. . . .

"This protocol should provide that in case Turkey refuses to join the Four Powers, Germany, Italy, and the Soviet Union agree to work out and to carry through the required military and diplomatic measures. . . .

'Furthermore there should be agreement upon:

"a) a third secret protocol between Germany and the Soviet Union concerning Finland. . . .

"c) a fifth secret protocol . . . recognizing that Bulgaria is geographically located inside the security zone . . . of the Soviet Union. . . ."

In conclusion Molotov . . . would appreciate a statement of the German view. SCHULENBURG.

/Ibid., pp. 258-259./

112. Hitler Decided He Must Fight Stalin

Führer's Headquarters

December 18, 1940

Directive No. 21

Operation Barbarossa

The German Armed Forces must be prepared *to crush Soviet Russia in a quick campaign* (operation Barbarossa) even before the conclusion of the war against England. . . .

I shall order the *concentration* against Soviet Russia possibly eight weeks before the intended beginning of operations. . . . ADOLF HITLER.

/Ibid., pp. 260-264./

113. Germany Collects Judas' Pence

Secret Protocol

The German Ambassador, Count von der Schulenburg, Plenipotentiary of the Government of the German Reich, on the one hand, and the Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the U.S.S.R., V. M. Molotov, Plenipotentiary of the Government of the U.S.S.R., on the other hand, have agreed upon the following:

1. The Government of the German Reich renounces its claim to the strip of Lithuanian territory which is mentioned in the Secret Supplementary Protocol of September 28, 1939 and which has been marked on the map attached to this Protocol;

2. The Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics is prepared to compensate the Government of the German Reich for the territory mentioned in Point 1 of this Protocol by paying 7,500,000 gold dollars or 31,500,000 Reichsmarks to Germany.

The amount of 31.5 million Reichsmarks will be paid by the Government of the U.S.S.R. in the following manner: one-eighth, that is, 3,937,500 Reichsmarks, in non-ferrous metal deliveries within three months after the signing of this Protocol, the remaining seven-eights, or 27, 562,500 Reichsmarks, in gold by deduction from the German gold payments which Germany is to make by February 11, 1941 in accordance with the correspondence exchanged between the Chairman of the German Economic Delegation, Dr. Schnurre, and the People's Commissar for Foreign Trade of the U.S.S.R., Herr A. I. Mikoyan, in connection with the "Agreement of January 10, 1941 concerning reciprocal deliveries in the second treaty period on the basis of the Economic Agreement between the German Reich and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics of February 11, 1940."

3. This Protocol has been executed in two originals in the German language and two originals in the Russian language and shall become effective immediately upon signature.

Moscow, January 10, 1941.

For the Government of the German Reich:	By authority of the Government of the U.S.S.R.:
SCHULENBURG	V. MOLOTOV
(Seal)	*(Seal)*

/Ibid., pp. 267-268./

114. Germans, Too, Had Their Fill of Russian "Repatriation Missions" . . .

Foreign Office Memorandum

State Secret

Pol I M 653 g RS

General Warlimont and Naval Captain Bürkner bring up the point that for certain reasons a speedy termination of the activities of the various Russian Commissions at work on German territory in the east and their immediate despatch home is necessary. Such commissions are still on German territory in connection with the return of Lithuanian emigrants from Germany to Lithuania. The German-Russian boun-

dary commission is also active, as well as several local sub-commissions. Of these sub-commissions some are located on Russian territory and others on German territory (and in fact south of Suwalki?). The work of these sub-commissions was to be completed by March 10th. For some reason, they have not yet begun their work. The OKW requests that everything be done to prevent this work from being begun.

The presence of Russians in this part of Germany can only be permitted up to March 25. In the northern sector strong elements of German troops are already being assembled. From the 20th of March on an even heavier massing will take place.

The question is raised in this connection as to whether the Russian consulate in Königsberg is occupied.

RITTER.

Berlin, March 13, 1941. */Ibid.*, p. 279./

115. Germans Were Not Blind To Observe Crimes in the Baltic States

Memorandum of Conversation Between Ribbentrop and Matsuoka at Berlin on March 27, 1941.

. . . With Russia, Germany had concluded the well-known treaties. Confidentially, he (the Reich Foreign Minister) could inform Matsuoka that present relations with Russia were correct, to be sure, but not very friendly. After Molotov's visit . . . Russia had made conditions that were unacceptable. They involved the sacrifice of German interests in Finland, the granting of bases on the Dardanelles and a strong influence on conditions in the Balkans, particularly in Bulgaria. The Führer had not concurred because he had been of the opinion that Germany could not permanently subscribe to such a Russian policy. . . .

Under these circumstances, relations with Russia were externally normal and correct. The Russians, however, had for some time demonstrated their unfriendliness to Germany wherever they could. Germany was watching these proceedings carefully. He (the Reich Foreign Minister), who knew Stalin personally, did not assume that the latter was inclined toward adventure, but it was impossible to be sure. The German armies in the East were prepared at any time. Should Russia some day take a stand that could be interpreted as a threat to Germany, the Führer would crush Russia . . . he did not believe that Stalin would pursue an unwise policy. In any case, the Führer was not counting on the treaties with Russia alone, but was relying, first of all, on his Wehrmacht.

It must also not be overlooked that the Soviet Union, in spite of all protestations to the contrary, was still carrying on communistic propaganda abroad. It was attempting not only in Germany, but also in the occupied areas of France, Holland and Belgium, to continue its misleading propagandist activity. For Germany, this propaganda naturally constituted no danger. But what it had unfortunately led to in other countries, Matsuoka knew well. As an example, the Reich Foreign Minister cited the Baltic States, in which today, one year after the occupation by the Russians, the entire intelligentsia had been wiped out and really terrible conditions prevail. Germany was on guard, and would never suffer the slightest danger to threaten Germany from Russia. . . .

SCHMIDT.

Berlin, March 31, 1941.

/Ibid., pp. 281-285, 288./

116. "Occupation by Russia Would Lead to Complete Destruction"

Ribbentrop-Matsuoka Conversation in Berlin on 29 *March* 1941.

. . . The Reich Foreign Minister pointed out that the Social-Democratic governments in Finland had always been against the Führer, so that there was no reason for Germany to help them during the Russo-Finnish War. Besides, Germany had to assume an absolutely neutral position, because in the conversations with Molotov and Stalin, Finland had been designated as not lying within the German sphere of interest. But when the Finns defended themselves so valiantly against the Russians, strong feeling for them sprang up in Germany, so that it was now impossible to give up Finland, since an occupation by Russia would lead to complete destruction of the country, as was shown by the example of the Baltic States. . . .

Berlin, March 31, 1941.

/Ibid., p. 304./

117. Russian Deliveries to Nazis

Protocol

on the outcome of conference between the plenipotentiaries of the Government of the German Reich and the Government of the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics to inquire into the observance of the Commercial Agreement between Germany and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics of February 11, 1940.

The plenipotentiaries of the Government of the German Reich and the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics acting in pursuance of article 10 of the Commercial Agreement between Germany and the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics of February 11, 1940, have, on the basis of their inquiry into the observance of the above-mentioned agreement as of February 11, 1941, agreed as follows:

According to Soviet calculations, the Soviet deliveries on February 11, 1941, amounted to 310.3 million Reichsmarks. The Germans will by May 11, 1941, make deliveries from Germany in at least this amount.

Two original documents executed, each in the German and Russian languages, both texts having the same validity.

Done in Berlin, April 18, 1941.

For the Government of the German Reich
K. SCHNURRE

By authority of the Government of the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics
A. KRUTIKOW

/Nazi-Soviet Relations 1939-1941, *supra*, p. 327./

118. While "Partners" Collaborate, Lithuanian Underground Resistance Movement Is Born

See the NKVD's own secret reports published in full in *Lithuanian Bulletin,* vol. V, Nos. 9-10, September-October 1947, pp. 6-31.

119. Hitler Is Suspicious of Russian Concentrations

Conversation of the Führer with Schulenburg on April 28, 1941.

. . . Russia was now very apprehensive at the rumors predicting a German attack on Russia. The Führer insisted that the Russians had been the first to move, since they had concentrated needlessly large numbers of divisions in the Baltic States. I replied that this was a matter of the well-known Russian urge for 300 percent security. If for any reason we sent *one* German division, they would send 10 for the same purpose in order to be completely safe. I could not believe that Russia would ever attack Germany. The Führer said that he had been forewarned by events in Serbia. What had happened there was to him an example of the political unreliability of states. . . .

. . . I pointed out that Cripps had not succeeded until 6 days after the conclusion of the Russo-Yugoslav Treaty in even speaking to Molotov's deputy, Vishinsky. I further reminded him that Stalin had told Matsuoka he was committed to the Axis and could not collaborate with England and France, as well as of the scene at the railroad station, which Stalin had purposely brought about in order to demonstrate publicly his intention to collaborate with the Axis. . . . I was convinced that Stalin was prepared to make even further concessions to us. It had already been intimated to our economic negotiators that (if we applied in due time) Russia could supply us up to 5 million tons of grain next year. Citing figures, the Führer said he thought that Russian deliveries were limited by transportation conditions. I pointed out that a more thorough utilization of Russian ports would obviate the difficulties of transportation.

The Führer then took leave of me. . . .

ADEMANN.

Berlin, April 29, 1941.

/Nazi-Soviet Relations, supra, pp. 330-332./

119a. Weizsaecker's View of Russia

Memorandum to Ribbentrop

Berlin, April 28, 1941.

Concerning Count Schulenburg's memorandum on German-Russian relations:

I can summarize in one sentence my views on a German-Russian conflict: If every Russian city reduced to ashes were as valuable to us as a sunken British warship, I should advocate the German-Russian war for this summer; but I believe that we would be victors over Russia only in a military sense, and would, on the other hand, lose in an economic sense.

. . . We must distinguish between two possibilities:

a) England is close to collapse: . . . Russia is no potential ally of the English. England can expect nothing good from Russia. Hope in Russia is not postponing England's collapse. /In handwriting:/ With Russia we do not destroy any English hopes.

b) If we do not believe in the imminent collapse of England, then the thought might suggest itself that by the use of force, we must feed ourselves from Soviet territory. I take it as a matter of course that we shall advance victoriously to Moscow and beyond that. I doubt very much, however, whether we shall be able to turn to account what we have won in the face of the well-known passive resistance of the Slavs. I do not see in the Russian State any effective opposition capable of succeeding the Communist system and uniting with us and being of service to us. We would therefore probably have to reckon with a continuation of the Stalin system in Eastern Russia and in Siberia and with a renewed outbreak of hostilities in the spring of 1942. The window to the Pacific Ocean would remain shut.

A German attack on Russia would only give the British new moral strength. It would be interpreted there as German uncertainty as to the success of our fight against England. We would thereby not only be admitting that the war was going to last a long time yet, but we might actually prolong it in this way, instead of shortening it.

WEIZSAECKER.

/Ibid., pp. 333-334./

120. Dekanozov Moving Up In Hierarchy Of Tyrants

Schulenburg to Ribbentrop

Moscow, May 12, 1941.

. . . Stalin's decision to take over this office (as Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars), which V. I. Lenin was the first to fill . . . gains especial significance from the fact that Stalin had previously avoided taking a government post. Stalin won his position of power in party and state solely by his personal authority and by the aid of men devoted to him. . . .

. . . It can rather be stated with great certainty that if Stalin decided to take over the highest government office, it was done for reasons of foreign policy. . . . It was generally noticed that at the great review of May 1 the Soviet Ambassador to Berlin, Dekanozov, stood directly next to Stalin, on his right, on the Government reviewing stand. This prominence given to Dekanozov must be regarded as a special mark of confidence on the part of Stalin. Also, a remarkably large number of generals and admirals of the Red Army and the Red Fleet participated in the review and the large reception in the Kremlin that followed. . . . Since the appointment of Stalin was announced by the Kremlin on May 6, the obvious assumption is that the conversations with the Soviet Ambassador to Germany and the mingling with representatives of the staff of generals precipitated Stalin's decision to take over the Chairmanship of the Council of People's Commissars. No other reason for this action could have applied than a revaluation of the international situation on the basis of the magnitude and rapidity of

German military successes . . . and the realization that this makes necessary a departure from the former . . . estrangement with Germany. . . .

. . . It is remarkable that groups representing the most divergent opinion agree in the presumption that Stalin is pursuing a policy of *rapprochement* with Germany and the Axis.

. . . Stalin has set himself the goal of preserving the Soviet Union from a conflict with Germany.

COUNT VON DER SCHULENBURG.
/Ibid., pp. 336-339./

121. Secretary Marshall Still Learning What Ribbentrop Had Learned Before Him

Ribbentrop to Schulenburg
Very Urgent Berlin, June 21, 1941.
State Secret
By radio

For the Ambassador personally.

1) Upon receipt of this telegram, all of the cipher material still there is to be destroyed. The radio set is to be put out of commission.

2) Please inform Herr Molotov at once that you have an urgent communication to make to him and would therefore like to call on him immediately. Then please make the following declaration to him.

"The Soviet Ambassador in Berlin is receiving at this hour . . . a memorandum giving in detail the facts which are briefly summarized as follows:

"I. In 1939 the Government of the Reich, putting aside grave objections arising out of the contradiction between National Socialism and Bolshevism, undertook to arrive at an understanding with Soviet Russia. Under the Treaties of August 23 and September 28, 1939, the Government of the Reich effected a general reorientation of its policy toward the U.S.S.R. and thenceforth adopted a cordial attitude toward the Soviet Union. This policy of good will brought the Soviet Union great advantage in the field of foreign policy.

"The Government of the Reich therefore felt entitled to assume that thenceforth both nations, while respecting each other's regime and not interfering in the internal affairs of the other partner, would arrive at good, lasting, neighborly relations. Unfortunately it soon became evident that the Government of the Reich had been entirely mistaken in this assumption.

"II. Soon after the conclusion of the German-Russian treaties, the Comintern resumed its subversive activity against Germany, with the official Soviet-Russian representatives giving assistance. Sabotage, terrorism, and espionage in preparation for war were demonstrably carried out on a large scale. In all the countries . . . deliberate misrepresentation and deceit and the conclusion of the treaties themselves as a tactical maneuver for obtaining arrangements favorable to Russia. The guiding principle remained the weakening of the non-Bolshevist countries in order the more easily to demoralize them and, at a given time, to crush them.

"III. In the diplomatic and military fields it became obvious that the U.S.S.R.—contrary to the declaration made at the conclusion of the treaties that she did not wish to Bolshevize and annex the countries falling within her sphere of influence—was intent on pushing her military might westward wherever it seemed possible and on carrying Bolshevism further into Europe. The action of the U.S.S.R. against the Baltic States, Finland, and Rumania . . . showed this clearly. The occupation and Bolshevization by the Soviet Union of the sphere of influence granted to her clearly violated the Moscow agreements, even though the Government of the Reich for the time being accepted the facts.

"IV. . .. . Southeastern Europe . . . Bulgaria . . . the Straits . . . Finland . . . Turkey . . .

"V. This policy was accompanied by a steadily growing concentration of all available Russian forces on a long front from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea. . . .

"To sum up . . . Thereby the Soviet Government has broken its treaties with Germany and is about to attack Germany from the rear, in its struggle for life. The Führer has therefore ordered the German Armed Forces to oppose this threat with all the means at their disposal."

End of declaration.

Please do not enter into any discussion of this communication. . . .

RIBBENTROP.
/Ibid., pp. 347-349./

122. The Hangman of Lithuania Gets His Walking Papers

Berlin, June 21, 1941.
Memorandum

The Russian Ambassador, who had wanted to call on the Reich Foreign Minister today and had been referred to me instead, called on me this evening at 9:30 p.m. and handed me the attached *note verbale.*

This note refers to a complaint of the Russian Government of April 21 of this year, regarding 80 cases of flights of German aircraft over Soviet territory in the spring of this year. In the meanwhile, says the note, 180 more flights of this kind had taken place. . . .

I replied . . . that I, on the contrary, had been informed of wholesale border violations by Soviet aircraft over Germany territory. . . .

When Herr Dekanozov tried to prolong the conversation somewhat, I told him that since I had an entirely different opinion than he and had to await the opinion of my Government, it would be better not to go more deeply into the matter just now. . . .

The Ambassador agreed to the procedure and left me. . . .

VON WEIZSAECKER.
/Ibid., pp. 353-354./

123. Dekanozov at the Height of Power in Lithuania 24 July 1940

There was much talk regarding the gravediggers of the Baltic States who had flown in from Moscow to Kaunas, Riga and Tallinn—comrades Dekanozov,

Vyshinsky, and Zhdanov. Soviet Minister Pozdnyakov and other members of the Russian Legation were said to be more favorably inclined regarding Lithuania and its people. Nevertheless, as against Dekanozov, Pozdnyakov was merely a humble errand boy of the powerful plenipotentiary of the Kremlin.

Dekanozov worked tirelessly day and night, unwaveringly adhering to the general line, as befits a gravedigger. As all workers of the almighty Party, Dekanozov strictly stuck to the Communist dictate: "If you accuse—that's in order; if you acquit—why did you acquit?"

In order to escape the ever-haunting "why," the dekanozovs, vyshinskys, zhdanovs always strike "from the shoulder," as the Russian proverb says. Dekanozov could not afford to go back to Moscow with mediocre "tree felling." He had to outshine and outdo Vyshinsky and Zhdanov in bringing the sovietized Baltic States prize before Stalin's feet.

On 24 July 1940, a grand reception and ball was held in the Presidential Palace in Kaunas. Dekanozov was in fine humor: independence of Lithuania had been voted by the theatrical audience without a hitch. He frankly told us, "People's Deputies":

"The world considers it an honor to learn from the Soviet Union, and to understand the Soviet Union. What would you, Baltic people who are close neighbors but laggard Communists, like?"

Deputy Zybertas proudly reported to Dekanozov:

"The bourgeois and assorted democrats were preparing to smuggle their candidate lists to the People's Diet, but comrade Antanas (Sniečkus) placed them behind different 'tables'. Still, there are some people's enemies, the ignorants, who express sympathy for those gentlemen."

Dekanozov, unsmiling, gravely tossed his head on his short thick neck, leaned back on the sofa's corner and, toying with his gold watch chain, slowly discoursed to us, "deputies," gathered around him.

"Old style. The system of several parties must be left to the ladies of the beauty salons and the public of the anterooms. We, bolsheviks, have no time and no interest to inquire of the voters regarding their party preferences. Leaders of the Communist Party know the price of their Party, and there can be no other parties, no combinations. . . . You see, in Lithuania we went to work under the label of the working people's union. We included non-party people and liberal intellectuals—but our Party alone deliberates and decides. In the next elections, when the country will be matured and deserving, we shall go in the name of the party of Lenin and Stalin.

"You see, there were times when the Communists abroad were forbidden to associate or collaborate with the democratic or other parties. However, when the Party gained strength and was well welded in discipline, we can afford to form blocs, to associate with parties which are useful for us. Eventually, however, we throw them off their feet and claim the inheritance. In Lithuania and in the other two Baltic States, there is no need for us to waver or adjust compromises, because we received these countries thanks to the political and military game with Germany. In other countries, however, we may be obliged to try collaboration with all sorts of parties, as long as that tactic may be useful to us and lead to the objective. The objective—yes."—With these words, he picked up a glass of wine and pressed his hard lips to the glass. He drank a long time.

Dekanozov narrowed his eyes and looked at the dozen or so "deputies".

"The objective, Deputies, may not be clear to you. The objective deserves all of our efforts. Namely—*the entire globe. . . .*"

He mused for a moment in silence. Then he asked a question—and answered it himself, in a typical Russian fashion.

"Who shall rule the World?—We!"

There was oppressive silence. Deputies guardedly studied each other's faces.

Dekanozov, an expert psychologist of the NKVD dungeons, could read their faces. He observed concern, dismay, fear reflecting from the faces of these despised harnessed intellectuals. The wine and champagne apparently were wasted on them—the oppressive silence betrayed the shock.

We walked away. Professor Garmus, M.D., quietly whispered to me:

"Moscow's rulers want to promise us the globe, but we would be satisfied with our little corner, if they would only leave us alone."

Liūdas Dovydėnas
"Deputy Speaker of the People's Diet of the Lithuanian SSR."

124. Dekanozov Takes Leave Of Berlin . . .

Memorandum of the Ribbentrop-Dekanozov Conversation in Berlin at 4 A.M. on June 22, 1941.

The Reich Foreign Minister began the conversation with the remark that the hostile attitude of the Soviet Government toward Germany and the serious threat that Germany saw in the Russian concentration on the eastern border of Germany, had forced the Reich to military countermeasures. Dekanozov would find a detailed statement of the reasons for the German attitude in the memorandum. . . .

. . . The policy of compromise between the two countries had therefore been unsuccessful. . . .

Dekanozov replied briefly that, for his part too, he exceedingly regretted this development, which was based on a completely erroneous conception on the part of the German Government, and, in view of this situation, he had nothing further to say except that the status of the Russian Embassy would now be arranged with the competent German authorities.

He thereupon took leave of the Reich Foreign Minister.

Minister SCHMIDT.

Berlin, June 22, 1941.

/Nazi-Soviet Relations, supra, pp. 356-357./

125. Mass Deportations from the Baltic States 14-21 June 1941
Mass Insurrections in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia Growing in Volume

126. Lithuanian Insurrection Succeeds. Provisional Government Formed and Broadcast Over the Seized Radio of Kaunas 23 June 1941

127. German Reaction to the Events in Lithuania

By Col. *Kazys Škirpa*

The Lithuanian determination to restore independence was "a thorn in the eye" to the German *Drang nach Osten*. My memorandum to the Reich's Foreign Office, which I presented officially on 19 June 1941, forewarned the Germans that, in the event of a German-Russian conflict, they must reckon with the Lithuanian Insurrection aiming at a complete restoration of sovereignty, the formation of a Provisional Government of Lithuania and of the armed forces to maintain sovereignty. My motives were: to enable the German command to forewarn its forces that, even though not uniformed, the Lithuanian *insurrectionists were members of the regular armed forces of the Republic of Lithuania* and clashes should be avoided; to warn the Germans that we ourselves would take care of the traitors; to go on record that the Wehrmacht would be dealing with a sovereign state and would be obliged to behave as an occupying force bound by International Law.

The Germans treated all of my suggestions very coolly and evidently disbelieved my claims. For us, the Activist Front of Lithuania, it was important to impress the Germans that we considered the sovereignty of Lithuania unaffected by the Russian "reforms" and Germany's consent to Russian occupation, but we carefully avoided any expression that might be interpreted as a request for German assistance.

I learned later that there had been some good will among the Foreign Office personnel. It was said that Ribbentrop was inclined to reckon with the restoration of the Lithuanian independence but he failed to convince his Führer.

When the Kaunas Radio announced the membership of the Provisional Government of Lithuania around 10 A.M. on June 23, while the German forces were still far away from Kaunas, I demanded an urgent appointment at the Reich Foreign Office. I was received by Herr von Grundherr, who had earlier accepted my memorandum.

I told von Grundherr that the sovereignty of Lithuania was already restored and that a Provisional Government was in control. My information affected him as a bomb explosion. He picked up my note. He jumped from his chair, held his head between hands, crossed his office several times, violently rebuked me and made open threats. He kept on repeating:

"What have you done! What have you done! This will cost Lithuania dearly!"

"Why?"—I interrupted.—"Is it because the Lithuanian People rose up in arms against bolshevism in furthering their national ideals?"

Von Grundherr persisted: "How could you do such things when the Reich's armed forces are marching against the enemy?"

I retorted: "What is happening in Lithuania is no surprise to the German armed forces, as I had forewarned them."

Grundherr argued: "But the German Foreign Office knew nothing about it."

I countered: "It is not my fault if the Military Command failed to inform the Foreign Office." I reminded him that I had tendered to him a memorandum several days ago.

"Yes, yes, but . . ."

When he cooled off, I told him that the Lithuanian insurrectionists are fighting for their country's independence and are not attacking the German forces. No one could ban our nation's aspirations. Furthermore, as long as the insurrection is taking place in the rear of the enemy of Germany, the Germans have no reason to complain. Finally, I proposed that the German Government recognize the fact of the restoration of Lithuania's sovereignty and that "German Foreign Office should not smash porcelain with Lithuania." Von Grundherr promised to inform his Government of my proposal and to give me a speedy reply.

While our conversation was dramatic, we parted smiling. I suspected that von Grundherr was not a Nazi at heart and that he desired to ease by his smile the nasty impression of his first reaction. Personally, I was amused: I realized that the action of our patriots would serve to explode the Nazi propaganda bubble of the alleged Nazi struggle "against bolshevism" and for a "New Europe," where freedom and conditions for developing national cultures would be open to all.

(To be concluded)

Lithuanian Folk Art

By *Jurgis Baltrušaitis, Ph.D.*

(Continuation)

III.
Sculpture

The chapels and crosses house figurines—*"dievukai"* (little deities) or *"smūtkeliai"* (little sorrows) as the Lithuanians call them. Statues of the Virgin, of Christ, of all the popular saints dear to the heart of the Lithuanian are sheltered under trees; they appear in little shrines affixed to tree trunks; the larger ones nestle in

FIGURE 23
Pietà of the Seven Sorrows.

chapels which look much like glorified sentry boxes. It is perhaps to this imagery made of wood that the Lithuanian rustic has contributed the most. Religious but not Church art, this sculpture spread despite the periodic wars waged against it by the clergy. One iconoclastic crusade followed after another but the work of the *"dievdirbis"* ("god-maker") did not stop. As late as 1752, Bishop Tiškevičius of Samagitia preached against these images. He doubtless gave the same reasons as St. Bernard did in his fight against the monsters in the Romanesque churches: unreservedness of expression, coarseness of features. The clergy refused to consecrate these figures and it was forbidden to place them in the sanctuaries with but two exceptions: a representation of the Crucifixion and one figure of Christ. All the other unauthorized figurines are placed in the fields and forests, and greet their worshipers by the roadside.

This conflict with the churchmen had a profound repercussion on the development of this art in Lithuania. Banished from the church, the popular sculpture escaped the church conventions and developed untrammeled.

The most common subjects generally are inspired by the Gospels, the Apocrypha, and the legends regarding the Saints.

The subjects from the Gospels usually relate to the Passion: the Pietà, the Virgin of the Seven Sorrows, the 'Sorrowing Christ" (depicting the Savior, crowned with a wreath of thorns, seated, with His head bowed on His arm), Christ carrying the cross, the crucifixion itself. The Pietà as a rule conforms to the canonic image: as in Western sculpture, the seated Virgin holds the body of her Son on her knees. The figure of the Savior is something quite small: to His Mother, He always remained a child. The Mother of the Seven Sorrows has an enormous heart pierced by seven radiating glaves. Christ often wears a red robe and His hands are bound with ropes: He is awaiting torture.

The Apocrypha have furnished such subjects as the Education of the Holy Virgin and St. Joseph holding the Holy Child who usually has an arm around St. Joseph's neck. Among the Saints, the favorite is St. George transpiercing the dragon. St. George is the protector of the Lithuanian farmer. Another rural saint is St. Isidore, Patron Saint of hired farmhands. He is always accompanied by an angel guiding a plough.

The iconography is generally correct: St. Catherine holds her wheel, St. Agatha carries a loaf of bread, St. John Nepomut holds a crucifix and a bough, St. Rocco, The Pilgrim, shows his ulcered knee (St. Rocco is always accompanied by his dog carrying a piece of bread in its mouth), St. Francis of Assisi is depicted kneeling before a cross and receiving the stygmata. Nevertheless, certain details sound a particular note: the image of the Pietà is often conjoined

FIGURE 24
Saint Rocco.

with that of the Virgin of the Seven Sorrows. An aureole of stars surrounds the head of the Mother of God and two angels, bearing candles, stand at either side (Fig. 23). Often the Virgin's head is crowned with the Grand-Ducal Crown of Lithuania.

The seated Christ, generally an isolated figure in Western art, is accompanied by two officiating hieratic figures. According to the Samagite legend, this is not a scene from the Passion: on returning to earth after the Resurrection, Christ sat by the wayside and wept over the sorrows of men. Jesus of Nazareth always has thick, wavy hair in recollection of a greatly venerated statue brought from Italy to Vilnius in 1700; the hair of this statue miraculously was said to continue to grow.

St. Rocco and St. Isidore, coming from abroad, wear derby hats (or bowlers. Figures 24 and 25). St. Francis often has a large spoon or ladle under his belt. St. Agatha's bread protects against fire: should a fire break out, the consecrated bread is carried around the burning building. St. George usually wears a plumed helmet on his head. Many more examples could be given.

But it was not these picturesque details which aroused the clergy's ire. It was rather the form, the movement and the treatment of the relief.

FIGURE 25
Saint Isidore.

FIGURE 26
A Saint.

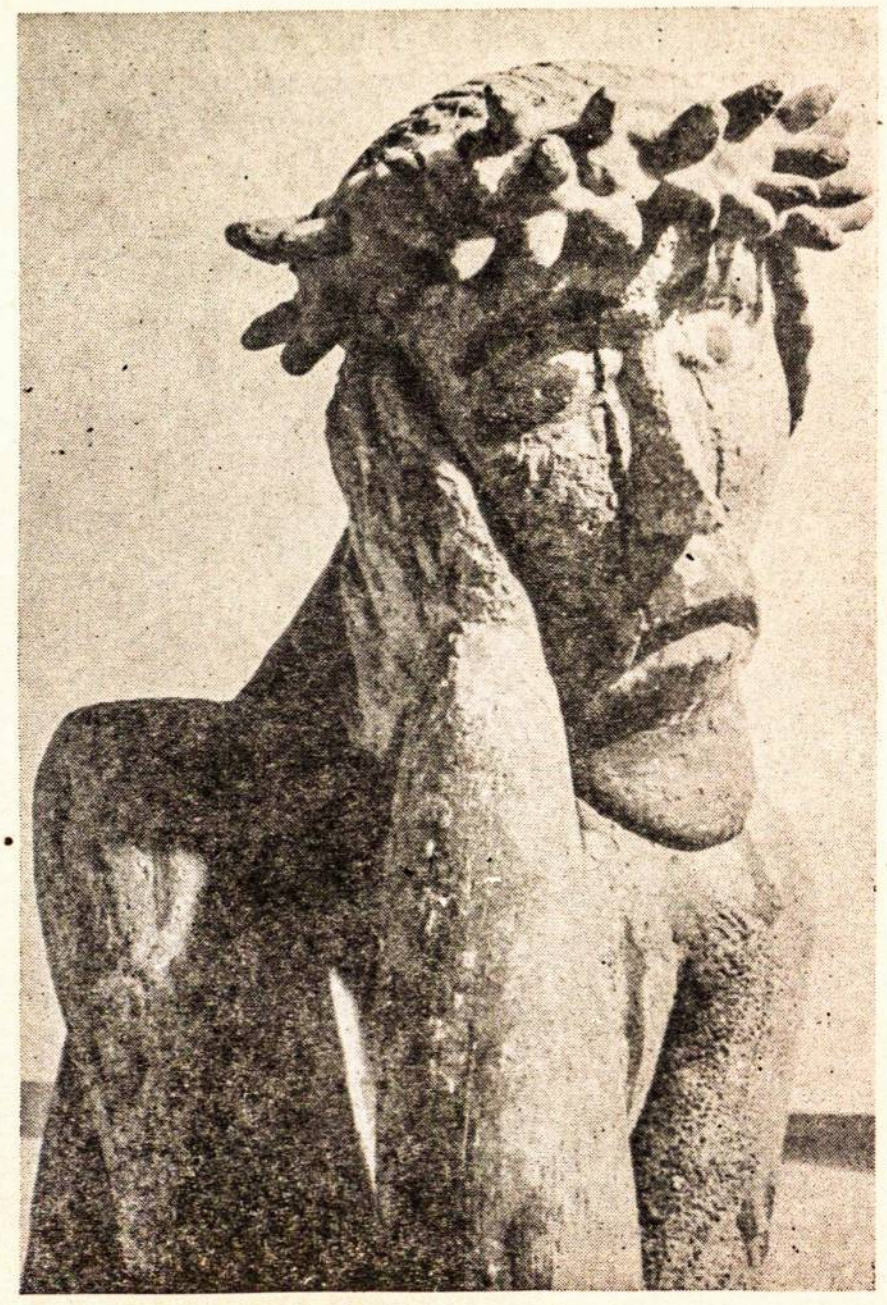


FIGURE 27
Head of a Saddened Christ.

Some of the figures recall the images of Homeric Greece: a rough-hewn pole has a simple ball for a head. On some of the faces there is the fixed smile of the *Korés*. The trunk is often irregular, the heads too large or too small, the hands enormous or atrophied, the attitudes convulsive. It is there, in these deformed bodies, that the image-maker expressed himself most eloquently (Figures 26 and 27). Some heads, for instance that of the seated Christ, drown in the mass of hair, the cheeks are spotted with great blood stains, or that of the Crucified Christ, brandishing an enormous hand, His mouth cloven like a wound, the eyes barely indicated, have dramatic violence. These "masks" have an infinite variety: sometimes fixed to long stem-like necks, sometimes attached directly to the trunk, the eyes wide open or completely closed, the grimacing mouths—these masks are at the same time supernatural and highly realistic. Other figures are stiffened to an inaccessible gravity, as for instance this Virgin, flat and pale, who holds her Son with the gesture of an automathon.

These figures belong to two races: side by side with tormented and monstrous humanity there appears a pastoral and peaceful humanity. Here the Saints are chubby peasants with high cheekbones and large astonished eyes. It is a familiar world (Figs. 28 and 29). The Pietà is no longer an insensible idol but a stupefied country-woman, bent over her dead Son. She is not accompanied by angels but by choir boys with wings. Often she is only a timid shepherdess, hiding behind a fan of swords.

FIGURE 29 — A Saint.

FIGURE 28
Education of the Holy Virgin.

FIGURE 30 — Three Saints.

FIGURE 31
Pietà.

In these bustling figurines where everything is good natured and natural, there is perhaps more pathos than in the superhuman beings with exaggerated features (Figs. 30).

But the episodes are not in any sense genre scenes. The atmosphere of mystery remains. The little angel grasping the handle of the plough with courageous hands is a troll out of a child's fairy tale. Often the tale is told with epic simplicity. The love of detail does not alter the main lines. The malicious observations take on an unexpected meaning. The miracle of the Saint dressed in the garb of a village priest is therefore all the more marvelous. Bearing symbolic attributes—bread, work tools—these peasants with the resigned faces of sages and of humble folk, receive the wings of angels and enter into legend.

Such are the principal aspects of this sculpture. At one and the same time divinities and toys, reality and fable, rarely indifferent, these figurines carved from wood are at once touching and terrifying. One can easily understand the hostility of the clergy in the classical period and later, when the village churches began to seek conventional plaster statues, manufactured by the thousand.

The composition and the making of these reliefs is very varied. All the stages of an evolution from the archaic to the most pretentious refinement are to be found in them at the same time. Preserved by the rites of the craftsmen, divers forms, widely separated by time, meet in the same object, are used in the same workshop. The uncompromising geometricism, the monumental equilibrium of the masses, the colorful play of agitated surfaces—contradict and complement one another.

These figures are carved with strong and keen strokes. Synthetic lines simplify the features and sometimes deform them. Details are stressed by graphical incisions. The polychromy of pure and vivid colors accentuates the contours and the planes. A deep sense of architecture is everywhere apparent. Certain elongated bodies stiffen into pillars. The legs of the seated Pietà form a plinth for the body of Christ (Fig. 31).

In spite of the reduced scale, these figures are truly great. Their wood is not inert materiel. It itself helps make animated images. In the interior of the statuette the core of the tree continues to live. The cassock is a robe made of bark. St. George's dragon stirs like a twisted root. Carved from a log, these are truly sylvan

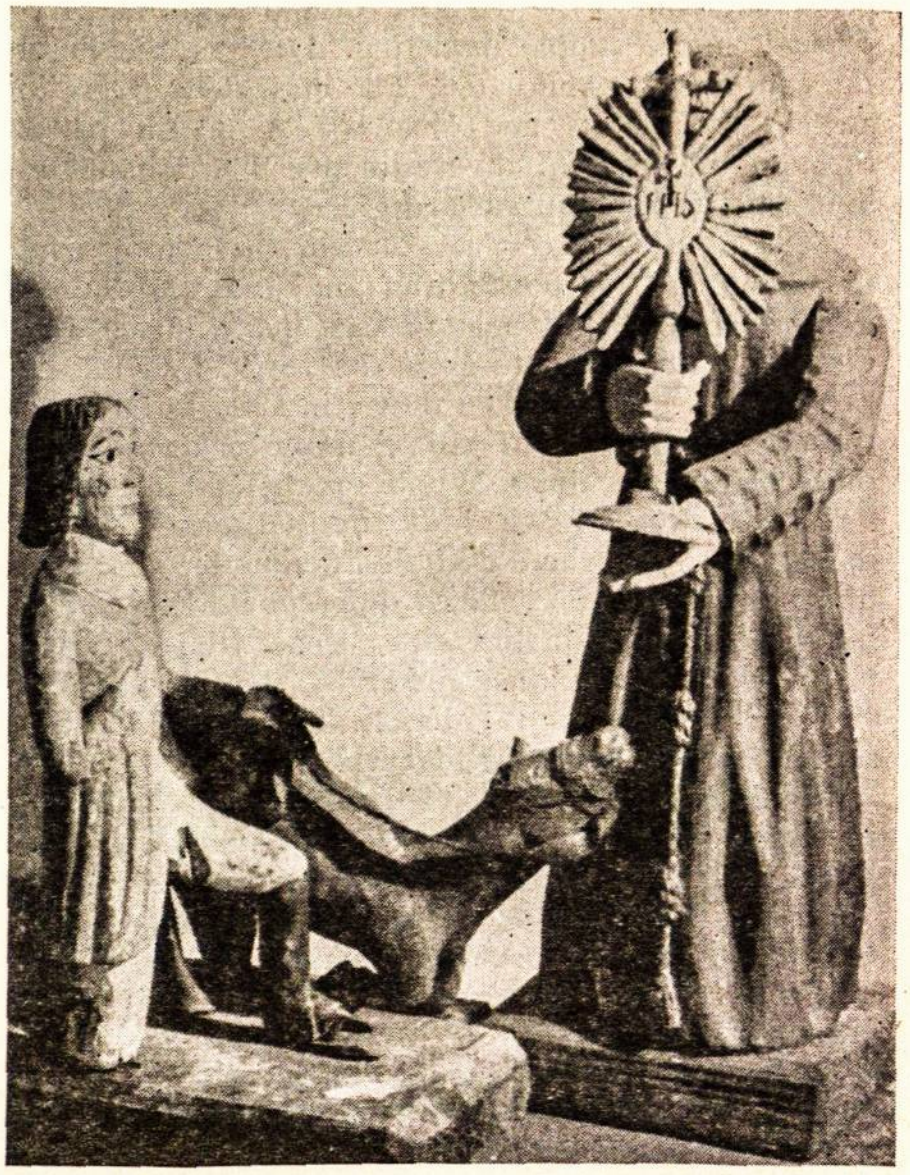


FIGURE 32
St. Anthony of Padua.

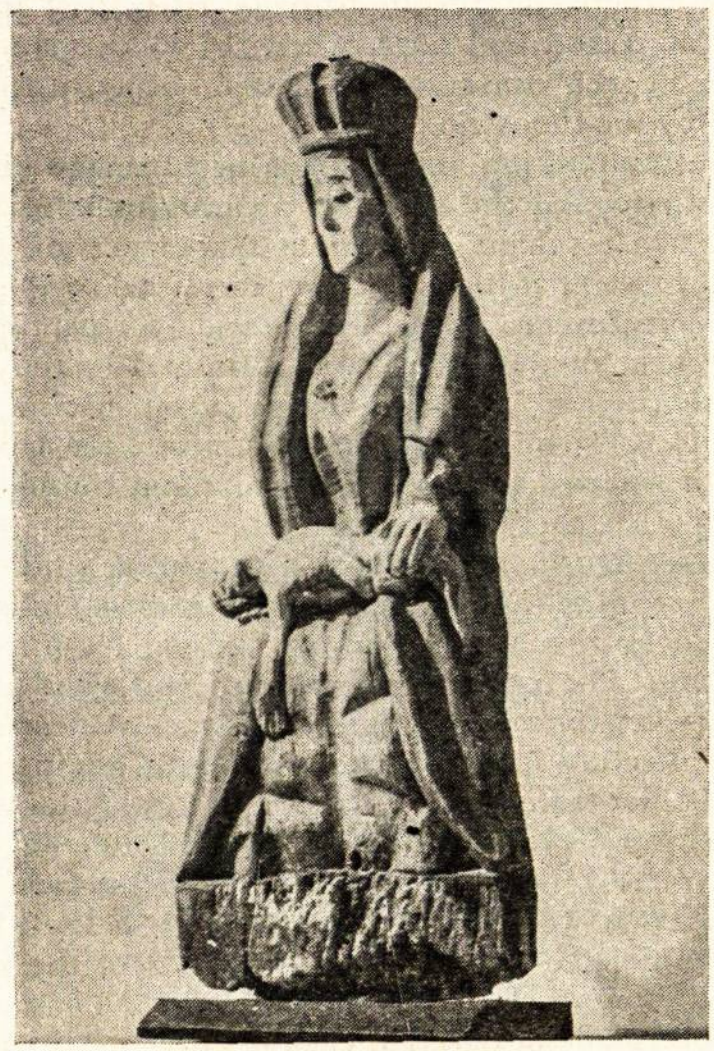


FIGURE 33 — Pietà.

gods. Sometimes the rigidity disappears and gives place to more supple modeling. The graphicism of the contours is accentuated. The mass flows freely in an eddy of lights and shadows. A breath passes through the folds of the vestments. The silhouettes sometimes take on an affected grace.

Eager to utilize everything he can, the sculptor tries to exhaust all his possibilities and finds inspiration everywhere. In his art may be seen the Western Middle Ages, baroque art—even the rustic toys of the present day. Having taken refuge in a world far from the great highways, the village image-maker is often quite behind his times. Whole epochs and successive styles sometimes reach him simultaneously. Movements which elsewhere exclude one another, come to him at the same time. These different influxes, arriving together, provide him with a richer choice. Tributary to varied techniques and styles, the image-maker yet remains faithful to himself. He transposes and adapts, without betraying his own spirit.

The influence of the toy is particularly perceptible in the groups where the personages are juxtaposed like little soldiers without being united by common action. They may be displaced or interchanged despite the fact that in themselves they are unsuited for movement. But these scenes constituted by inarticulate dolls are often deeply touching because of their candor. Some animals appear in this series (Fig. 32). St. George's mount is often a fine dappled wooden horse, straight out of a fairy tale. The two oxen hitched to a plough and attached to a plank belong to the gingerbread bestiary. Guided by an angel, they become God's own good little animals. The magic plaything of the child serves the religious cult of the grown-ups.

Among the Occidental forms which have been able to impose themselves most forcefully, elements of classical and baroque art must be mentioned first. After the Counter-Reformation, the Jesuits triumphed over the other movements which were quite numerous in Lithuania. The great European currents penetrated everywhere. Five great religious colleges were founded between 1565 and 1575, the most important being the Academy of Vilnius established in 1570. The latest doctrines were propagated in these institutions of learning, and the people's tastes were educated. A new era of civilization began. Cathedrals and palaces were built throughout the country, foreign artists were cordially welcomed and lavishly supported. The great Lords and the churches began to build up collections. Some statues acquired at that time are still venerated as miracle-working. But the influence exercised by this sculpture is limited to a few iconographic types and to certain plastic themes. The sculptor in wood was not deeply touched by these statues. The works they inspired never achieve the magnificence of the originals. The faces are heavy, the bold gestures merely awkward, the proportions impersonal. It is perhaps the tortured folds and mystic rays which are best assimilated. But even in the models with luxuriant undulations, notes often appear recalling the flamboyant style.

FIGURE 34
Pietà of the Seven Sorrows.

It is quite evident that medieval art exercised a much stronger attraction on the Lithuanian image-maker than either the classical or the baroque. This appears in the choice of themes from the Passion: the Pietà, the Virgin of the Seven Sorrows, and the care-worn Christ; in the predilection for scenes from the childhood of Christ or the Education of the Virgin; in the popularity of certain saints like St. Rocco, protector against the plague. The cycle of the 15th and 16th centuries is restored (Figs. 33 and 34). We find the Middle Ages also in the figure of the devil. With his bat's wings, his horns and his hooked talons, the devil of Samagitia comes straight from the Medieval hell which classic art abandoned (Fig. 35).

It is a strange survival of an ancient repertory. Nothing interrupted its development. In town churches there are almost no traces of it left, but the shrines nailed to the trees, placed by the roadside and at bridgeheads, are full of these images. They are relics of the first Christians of the country. These witnesses of their baptism have not forsaken the Lithuanians.

The religion of the West was introduced into Lithuania at the precise moment of the flowering of medieval sculpture. The conversion of certain kings (Mindaugas in 1251) and princes did not change the people's beliefs. Christianity penetrated deeply and widely only in the 15th century. It had first to adapt itself to the local traditions, fusing with the local legends and absorbing native beliefs. There is no doubt but that the Gothic wooden saints were welcome in this land of trees. The popular patheticism, developed during the last decades of the Middle Ages, with its sense of melodrama and its love of anecdotes which directly touch the heart of the agrarian, also greatly contributed to this new propagation of ancient forms.

FIGURE 35
"Velnias" of Samagitia.

Medieval art left a very strong impress on the sculpture of this country. Even the figures copied from classical baroque monuments often show this imprint. Medieval man continues steadfast in our image makers. But he is not only a man of the 15th century. The older Middle Ages, unknown to this region, come back to life. Deities with immoderate bodies, figures with heavy heads are often nearer the personages of the 12th century than to those of the great Gothic altar screens. They have identical deformations and their movements are the same—angular and cleancut. Here too one finds the supernatural world of fable. Elongated silhouettes, frozen to the shaft of a column, make one think of the statue-columns of Chartres. Even as in an architectural relief, the folds of the vestments form veritable striae. Some of the Crucified Christs have all the violence of the Christ of Perpignan. If the Romanesque sculptor had had to treat the group of the Pietà, he would have created something exactly like this relief where a tense Madonna holds the body of her Son, arms and legs rigid, broken into a rectangle, moulded into the massive base of her knees. The Virgins of Auvergne are reborn in some of the seated Virgins of Lithuania. Remote sisters of Saint Foy of Conques, these insensitive idols, often adorned with necklaces, nevertheless have not the slightest historical connection with her. It is not a question of transmission but of a meeting of the minds.

In carving a Gothic saint, the *"dievdirbis"* in a way reveals the past. The rustic's energetic tool removes the bark accumulated by the years and releases the primitive force. Squared images become detached from opulent statues. The contours are simplified and schematized. In the dolorous mask of Christ, the wild features of a more ancient god may be discerned. Movements again become abrupt. Bodies become inert, are shortened, elongated, regain the harshness and the power of another era. The rigorous means used, the need for solid construction, the innate taste for geometric forms allied to a haunting interest in the supernatural and the strange, produce the same deformations as in the statuary of the 12th century which, by certain of its aspects, also has a popular side. The hermit of the Nemunas follows the dreams of the image-makers and of the monks who decorated the little Romanesque churches. It is a fraternity of form and technique which has permitted the reconstruction of an unknown ancient world.

Thus odd contradictions characterize the principal aspects of this sculpture. It is indifferent enough to the great Western currents which have left such beautiful vestiges in the country. It is deeply marked by an epoch of which few monuments remain. Finally, it has certain striking affinities with an art unknown in these places. But, above all, it belongs to the forest. The statuettes keep the knots and the scent of newly cut timber. The *"dievukai"* and *"smūtkeliai"* have not changed up to the present day. It is this fidelity to the world from which they had sprung which alone explains their permanency. *(To be continued)*

Mother's Day Stories

I

Passed away: a persecuted mother of a Judas

Mrs. Marijona Sniečkus passed away, in voluntary exile, at a DP Camp in Hanau, Germany, on 27 January 1948.

Born 24 April 1863 and an exemplary wife of a self-respecting farmer, she had borne four sons and three daughters. With the exception of her youngest son, Antanas, the rest of her children grew up as decent and respected members of the society. 17-year old Antanas Sniečkus was implicated in subversive activities and fled to Russia. Having graduated from the NKVD "academy" training foreign communist leaders, Sniečkus returned to Lithuania illegally. He was detained—and exchanged for Bishop Matulionis.

When the Russians in 1940 invaded Lithuania, Antanas Sniečkus reappeared as "The Little Stalin"—Secretary General of the Communist Party.

His poor mother cried much. She prayed night and day that her offspring should see the light. As he made no effort to see her, she finally decided to call on him.

She arrived at Kaunas and found her son closely guarded by massed police. Her son reverently kissed her hand and told her that the Russians were bringing happiness and prosperity. "What happiness—when they take away the beloved soil soaked in the sweat of generations, all our savings and liberty?" The mother departed in tears: she no longer wanted to see him again—but she continued to pray for him. . . .

Antanas Sniečkus avoided meeting his brothers and sisters—and the latter feared and despised him.

When mass deportations began in June 1941—Sniečkus included his own relatives among "the people's enemies": his uncle, one brother, a cousin, and their families. When these people were already locked in the cattle cars, the surviving brothers and sisters appealed to Antanas but could not reach him. Finally, his secretary arranged a meeting.

Antanas Sniečkus arrived in an official car under heavy guard but entered his brother's quarters alone. He seemed in excellent mood. When he saw his sister crying, he joked and admonished her for the unnecessary sentimentalism. His kin asked him—was he blind to the mass terror? Sniečkus joked—"only the prostitutes of Kaunas" were being transported to labor camps. His family reminded him of his own kin being exiled. Sniečkus answered: there was no need to get excited—they were estate owners and exploiters, and they must learn to earn their daily bread. He refused to help any of his relatives and walked out.

When the Russians were returning in 1944—all of the close relatives of Antanas Sniečkus, including the then 81year old mother, fled. The aged mother finally found shelter in the American zone of Germany.

American newspapermen once called on her: why was she not going home, where her son was a powerful official? The old lady answered simply that God had not listened to her prayers and had not taken her

The late
Marijona Sniečkus

errant son from this evil world; just the same, she no longer had a son and did not want to see either him or the crying, enslaved and tortured homeland—she would rather die in a foreign country. "I had cursed the day when I had given birth to a traitor who is torturing his own country, and the bridges back are burned forever."

II

Death of a Man Deprived of His Motherland

But no death produced such an impression in the "Fifth Division" as that of a Lithuanian who had been with us for four months. Lithuanian convicts were numerous in the camp. Two waves of mass deportation from that country had met here: one came in 1941 and 1944 . . . after . . . Lithuania was re-occupied by the Soviets. The Lithuanians were now dying in every ward of the Kotlas camp hospital. This one was a railway worker from the vicinity of Kaunas, a middle-aged, sedate man. He was still strong, and he volunteered to wash weak patients. He was extremely reticent, and carried himself with dignity. At night, he would sometimes awaken, sit up on his cot, and for hours look straight forward with a stony gaze, then he would walk over to the stove for a smoke (in daytime smoking was strictly prohibited to him), and would return to his bed without saying a word. This man died quite unexpectedly. His body swelled swiftly, and death came within a few days. He died in great agony and without dignity: he shrieked in a high-pitched voice, which nobody had expected to hear from him. Others grew quiet before death, but his was a reverse case. During his last day he was delirious and shouted and sang until he was gone. His cries still sound in my ears:

"Lietuvata mana! Lietuvata mana!" /Lietuva Tu mano!/

My Lithuanian fellow-prisoners told me that this meant "My Lithuania!" We were deeply impressed by this man's longing, in the hour of his death, for his motherland. And many of us thought of our own motherlands, which we were perhaps destined never to see again.

/"I Witnessed Mass Murder"—Death in the Kotlas Camp, by Julius Margolin, *The New Leader,* 29 May 1938, p. 5./