

## PRAGMATIC CHARTER

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The plight of Lithuania, as well as that of the other two Baltic countries in the "world's geopolitical heartland," foreshadowed the coming of the Atlantic Declaration.

The whole story began as early as 1918 when the "limitrophes" — Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia — proclaimed their intention to live freely and independently. As early as December 25, 1918, the Bolshevik "Izvestia" complained that "Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians stand on the Russian path to Western Europe; hence they are the obstacle to our revolution, separating Soviet Russia from revolutionary Germany. This fence must be knocked down..." urged the U.S.S.R. governments daily.

Wilson's Fourteen Points and Cordone San-nitaire enabled the Baltic nations to enjoy freedom for twenty-two short years. In July, 1939, came the beginning of the end: the Soviet Baltic Fleet went on a three-day cruise, when the Baltic States dared to decline the proposed Soviet guarantee of security against Nazi attack. The Baltic states, however, were given hope by the French and British, who did not believe that the hour was really late. Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain thought that a "declaration" type of joint statement would be sufficient, but Stalin wanted more—much more. The next month "Kremlinite" had a solution. A quotation from contemporary Collier's states: "...those two dictators are old style land grabbers and empire builders wearing a new set of labels and slogans..." On Oct. 10, 1939, the Soviet Union, "permitted" by Nazi Germany, "secured" the last of the Baltic Republics — Lithuania — forcing her to admit a number of Red Army troops inside her own borders. The London Times reported the following day: "...in twenty years the Baltics have done so much to raise culture and prosperity and now they are faced with a horrible predicament. It is like living among people who are condemned to death..." Far away American people were watching with great concern, when Lord Halifax spoke in Parliament on December, 1939: "...We have always maintained the position that the rights of third persons must remain intact and be unaffected by our negotiations. Events have shown that the judgement and instinct of His Majesty's Government in refusing agreement... (with U.S.S.R. in terms of formulae covering the cases of indirect aggression on the Baltic states, were right. It is now plain that these formulae might have been the cloak of ulterior design..." The British Secretary of Foreign Affairs stated that he was sure the rather than compromise the honor of Great British nation would prefer to face difficulties Britain!

Having expanded their war budget from 27 billion rubles to 57 billions in 1940, the Soviets were all set for "Izvestia's" revolutionary path toward the West. On the 14th of June, 1940, under disguise of ridiculous pretexts and using political and military pressure, they finally incorporated the three Baltic States into "the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics", thus breaking all valid international treaties. The act was a logical sequence of age-old Russian Imperialism, as Mr. Molotov-Skriabin confessed to the "liberated" Lithuania's Prime Minister Vincas Krėvė-Mickevičius, "... this was required for the development of the Russian State and the Russian nation. It would be unpardonable if the Soviet Government did not seize the opportunity which may never reoccur..."

### Rape of Baltic inspires Atlantic Declaration

The final seizure of the Baltic States by the Soviet Union was protested in clear terms at once by the United States. Mr. Sumner Wells, then acting Secretary of State, on July 27, 1940, voiced the defiance of his government: "...The people of

the United States have watched their admirable progress with deep and sympathetic interest. The policy of this government is universally known. The people of the United States are opposed to predatory activities, no matter whether they are carried on by use of force or by the threat of force... They are likewise opposed to any form of intervention on the part of one state, however powerful, in the domestic concerns of any sovereign state, however weak. The United States will continue to stand by these principles because of the conviction of the American people that unless the doctrine in which these principles are inherent once again governs the relations between nations, the rule of reason, of justice and of law — in other words, the basis of modern civilization itself — cannot be preserved." Three months later President Roosevelt assured the American Lithuanian delegation, that "time will come and Lithuania will be free again. This will happen sooner than you may expect." No one in the delegation dared to break the solemn silence and ask the President just how this might be brought about; for it was known that Mr. Molotov in an address before the Supreme Soviet had already answered Mr. Sumner Wells with this tirade: "...We have learned that there are certain people in the United States who are not pleased with the success of the Soviet foreign policy in the Baltic States. But we must confess we are little concerned over this fact inasmuch as we are coping with our tasks without the assistance of these displeased gentlemen." Ignorance of Mr. Molotov's statement during the Teheran, Yalta and Potsdam negotiations proved to be fateful to the initial advance of the Atlantic Charter.

### **Bolsheviki were trusted!**

During the month of August, 1941, Stalin's former "ally", Hitler, was knocking at Moscow gates. Cries for help now were addressed to the "displeased gentlemen" in the United States almost continuously by defeated Soviet tyrants. President Roosevelt without asking questions expedited all kinds of aid to "yesterday's enemy — today's friend." Some authors later asserted that at the time President Roosevelt was not aware of the real strength of the U.S.S.R. and thought to prolong conflict between the two dictators. President Roosevelt, therefore, did not care to invite Stalin to "a Bip Two" meeting at Newfoundland where the postwar order was to be featured.. It is said, at this meeting the Anglo-Saxon and American statesmen were to challenge Hitler's slogans of "Neues Europa Ordnung", the third point of which urged everybody on the planet to join the German "crusade against the bloodstained criminals in whom the bestial cruelty is allied with the capacity for artful mendacity of the rest of the world."

The Atlantic Charter, issued in August, 1941, set forth the basic aims of the allied nations for the peace after World War II; the restoration of status quo in eastern Europe was clearly urged. The British, in precarious military position at the time, were anxious to find out whether or not Stalin felt "insulted" by the wording of this declaration and the failure to invite him. But he wasn't, being in much worse military situation than were the Anglo-Saxons. Encouraged by the British, Stalin hurriedly sent the Big Two a telegram expressing his "willingness" to cooperate and without the slightest hesitation accepted and signed the Atlantic document. A newcomer to the international arena, the United States' President then decided to play ball. It seems now he did not clearly realize that his opponent was not the Republican minority in the House of Representatives. In his September 3, 1941, letter to his Holiness Pope Pius XII President Roosevelt, however, said: "...in my opinion, the fact is that Russia is governed by a dictatorship, as rigid in its manner of being as is the dictatorship in Germany. I believe, however, that this Russian dictatorship is less dangerous to the safety of other nations than is the German form of dictatorship... I believe that the survival of Russia is less dangerous to... humanity in general than would be the survival of the German form of dictatorship.. We shall win this war and in victory we shall seek not vengeance but the establishment of an international order in which the Spirit of Christ shall rule the hearts of men and nations"...

On September 24, 1941, Ambassador Maisky in London expressed willingness on the part of U.S.S.R. "to adhere to the fundamental principles of the Charter, because 'the Soviets always were for self-determination', always 'denounced violations of the sovereign rights...!', always 'recognized equality of nations...!' and because... 'these are the principles of which the political structure of the U.S.S.R. is built...'" However, when Anthony Eden, British Secretary of Foreign Affairs arrived at Moscow three months later, he was immediately approached with a proposal to settle "Russia's postwar European boundaries", which, according to Stalin himself, were of "fundamental importance". Badly beaten everywhere, also fearing the possibility of another Nazi-Bolshevik "mutual assistance and friendship pact", the British at this time were in the mood to promise anything. Luckily, the United States, confronted with the Soviet's demands, informed the Anglo-Russo treaty negotiators that such a formulation would be an open violation of the Atlantic Declaration and therefore the United States would never agree to it! Prime Minister Churchill then confusedly intervened saying that as a matter of fact Russians did adhere to this Declaration on the condition only that "it would not interfere in the matters of their state..."

The London Times wrote on February 14, 1942: "...Recent events have shown that the imperative necessities of Russian defense provided a more solid foundation for some past claims than most of the people in this country were prepared to concede at the time..." Encouraged by the British attitude, the Soviets nine days later referred to the three Baltic States as "socialistic Baltic Republics" and promised them an early "re-liberation". And all this took place only six weeks after, when the Soviet Union, together with twenty-five other states, on January 1, 1942, had signed "United Nations Charter" once more adhering to the principles of the Atlantic Declaration!

### **Unrealistic American Policy**

The government of the United States, therefore, was well aware of Stalin's postwar objectives; however, President Roosevelt and his Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, failed to formulate a realistic policy until the opportunity for negotiating a

firm American understanding with the Soviets had been lost for many years to come. Stalin's double option won again. He reasoned that if no understanding on matters such as the Baltic States was reached at this time, the recuperating Red Army would ultimately secure the desired borders. The Americans were not only trapped; President Roosevelt himself proposed "a compromise" on the 1942 Anglo-Russo treaty. He asked to postpone the action regarding the future of the nations on Russia's western borders. Today some authors believe that the President had hoped "somehow, somewhat" to shelve these fateful problems until the end of the war. Mr. Churchill was doing his best to convince the President that: "...the increasing gravity of the war had led me to feel that the principles of Atlantic Charter might not be construed so as to deny the frontiers Russia occupied when Germany attacked her." When the American President again 'bluntly expressed' his stand on principles, British observers then commented: "...His attitude is logically unassailable, but logic was not the cause of Russia's acquiescence."

As the "logical" situation grew worse with respect to the advance of the Red Army and the NKVD in 1943, the American press became worried that "such a course of events is providing a fertile ground for Nazi propaganda riding bogey of Bolshevik usurpation of Europe". The New York Times wisely calculated that Soviet "declarations" probably were not sufficient and urged the Western Powers to negotiate more explicit agreements "in order to give to the Atlantic Charter more concrete meaning". Then the Yalta agreement was signed. After refusing Mr. Molotov "a recognition seat" for a "Soviet Lithuanian Republic" in the United Nations Assembly, the Big Three issued at the Crimean Conference another declaration. In Point II — "Declaration on Liberated Europe" — the leaders solemnly repeated the sacred formulae of the Atlantic Charter: "The Right to the peoples..."

Presently President Roosevelt is frequently attacked for his overconfidence in the Russians or for his "shortsighted foreign policy." In the memoirs of the late President Eduard Benes of Czecho-Slovakia, published in London, there is a memoranda to the Czech cabinet in London. It states that Mr. Roosevelt asked him to explain to Stalin the "true" American position on the Soviet enslavement of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. "The United States," Benes quotes Roosevelt, "are not able and do not intend to hinder their final annexation to the Soviet Union, but must respect world public opinion and therefore it is a question of finding the form and procedure which will calm world public opinion". The official attitude of the United States is that the Russians, not the former President of the U.S., are to be blamed for clear cut violations of the international "gentlemen's agreement!"

It is not known how President Roosevelt planned to enforce the Atlantic Charter in the territories ruled by the forces of Kremlin. Some former aides to the President are speculating that perhaps the President thought to negotiate with Moscow on terms of reparations and direct economic aid to Russia. This, however, is guesswork.

### **Realistic Churchillian Policy**

When the war was almost over, the attitude of Prime Minister Churchill with respect to the Baltic States still was confusing. His statement on the subject on February 22, 1944, was similar to one made in 1942: "I cannot feel that Russian demand for reassurances about her western frontiers goes beyond the limit of what is reasonable or just." Afterwards, however, he not only urged the President and his American generals to invade the Balkans and occupy Berlin, but the British troops immediately were ordered to action when Stalin tried to invade Greece by subversive means. At Potsdam Mr. Churchill dared to tell Stalin what he really thought about the Soviet demands: "...In spite of heavy losses we suffered we made no territorial claims. — no Koeniesbere. no Baltic States, nothing...". Stalin was, nevertheless, accused indirectly of breaking the Atlantic Charter.

Two other newcomers — President Harry S. Truman and Clement Attlee of Britain — later had to decide whether to enforce the Charter of 1941 into "peaceful coexistence", leaving an "open door" for further negotiations with the Kremlin. Truman's Cabinet decided on the latter course and the powerful United States Army was quickly demobilized, leaving millions of human beings condemned to deportation, slavery, and death.

### **Atlantic Charter Status Today**

On September 18, 1941, a few weeks prior to the Atlantic meeting was heralded, present Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, then Chairman of the Committee Studying the Basis for a Just and Durable Peace, criticized the Charter as "inadequate". He urged the President to face the facts and try to avoid the mistakes of Versailles. Mr. Dulles also sounded a warning against giving promises to the "small sovereignties of the old European system which had constantly and inevitably bred war and which must continue to do so!" He agreed, however, that "there should be much left along the ethnic lines... our aim must be unification of Europe as a cooperative commonwealth." Touching the Charter's last disarmament point Mr. Dulles explained his disbelief in the "peaceful coexistence" of the old world. Wrote he: "The world is a living and constantly changing organization. As the nations are organized forces, actual or potential, this (war) is the accepted method for determining whether and when and to what extent changes may occur between them." Dulles warned the Atlantic Charter signatories that "there are no reliable alternatives. This is said not with appropriation, but in the interest of realism." President Roosevelt was reminded by Mr. Dulles that "there will be no disarmament, no acquiescence in unilateral disarmament, no diminution of efforts to develop national power until the world is made organically flexible with mechanism to assume a peaceful, political response to the constant fluctuations of underlying conditions." It was repeatedly emphasized that "the Atlantic Charter has no value without an international mechanism." Somewhat later Mr. Dulles moderated and expanded his stand when in his "War or Peace" he wrote: "Strong nations which want peace cannot

buy it by throwing bits of weaker nations into the jaws of ambitious despots. That makes them only rapacious." Speaking of the foreign policy author Dulles stated that "Our foreign policy is not just a United States policy; it becomes the foreign policy of many nations and many peoples. Therefore, we cannot play with it as with something that is just our own." At present working hard to have the Atlantic Charter fitted with an international mechanism, Mr. Dulles on February 16, 1955, had this to say about the "small sovereignties" — the Baltic peoples... "despite the efforts of Soviet rulers to hide the nature of their administration in the Baltic States, the plight of the Baltic peoples is much in our thoughts. There are many signs that the Baltic peoples have successfully resisted the devices of Soviet terror and propaganda intended to destroy their patriotic and religious alleiances. By the nonviolent but stubbornly insistent expression of their human aspirations, the captive peoples are showing their rulers the hopelessness of continued disregard of basic human rights... We seek to create conditions under which the right of the Baltic peoples to resume their place in the community of free nations will be universally respected. We are convinced that a world community in which the Baltic peoples are free to choose their own form of government and their political and economic institutions is likely to be one which will assure peace, with justice, for all nations, large and small."

In this belief Mr. Dulles, the shape of the "liberation" policy, is approvingly supported by the Congress of the United States. Both houses have restated this again and again in their resolutions. The House majority leader Hon. Mac Cormick said recently in Congress on the occasion of Lithuanian independence day: "...On the basis of justice and righteousness, on the basis of the solemn principles of the Atlantic Charter, independence should be restored to the Lithuanian people." The more realistic appraisal of "independence" for the small peoples was given by the New York Times' usually well-informed daily editorial staff on Feb. 16, 1955: "The Lithuanians... are part of the 70,000,000 people whom Soviet Russia had subjugated in Eastern Europe during and after the war in defiance of the Atlantic Charter, the United Nations Charter and all other wartime agreements, from Teheran to Potsdam. But, though subjugated, they have not succumbed. Like all other subjugated peoples, the Lithuanians, and their leaders in exile in particular, realize that liberation will not come overnight, and that until it does come resistance will exact a fearsome price in death and mass deportation. They also realize that the time for small nations as self-contained entities is over, and that they must seek salvation in a wider all-European organization. But for the present the fight for liberation must invoke all the values that go with nationhood and independence."

### **"The Conscience of the Free World..."**

In June, 1954, on the eve of the anniversary marking the fourteen years of Lithuania's annexation by the Soviet Union, the pledge of the Atlantic Charter was again solemnly renewed by "Big Two": President Eisenhower and British Prime Minister Churchill, this time in terms which raised no doubts: "In regard to formerly sovereign states now in bondage we will not be party to any arrangement or treaty which would confirm or prolong their unwilling subordination."

Recent publication of the Yalta "record" has stirred "the conscience of the free world and thereby helped to demonstrate both the unwisdom and the immorality of any attempt to reach an agreement with the Soviets on the basis of a status quo which would perpetuate the enslavement of nations." The subjugated peoples therefore rightfully expect that the pragmatism of the Atlantic Charter will be finally proved by "peaceful means" in the coming Big Four meeting, else...!

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### STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER OF ENGLAND AND THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES\*

August 21, 1941

"Joint declaration of the President of the United States of America and the Prime Minister, Mr. Churchill, representing His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, being met together, deem it right to make known certain common principles in the national policies of their respective countries on which they base their hopes for a better future for the world.

"First, their countries seek no aggrandizement, territorial or other;

"Second, they desire to see no territorial changes that do not accord with the freely expressed wishes of the peoples concerned;

"Third, 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;

"Fourth, they will endeavor, with due respect for their existing obligations, to further the enjoyment by all states, great or small, victor or vanquished, of access, on equal terms, to the trade and to the raw materials of the world which are needed for their economic prosperity;

"Fifth, they desire to bring about the fullest collaboration between all nations in the economic field with the object of

securing, for all, improved labor standards, economic advancement, and social security;

"Sixth, after the final destruction of the Nazi tyranny, they hope to see established a peace which will afford to all nations the means of dwelling in safety within their own boundaries, and which will afford assurance that all the men in all the lands may live out their lives in freedom from fear and want;

"Seventh, such a peace should enable all men to traverse the high seas and oceans without hindrance;

"Eighth, they believe that all of the nations of the world, for realistic as well as spiritual reasons, must come to the abandonment of the use of the force. Since no future peace can be maintained if land, sea, or air armaments continue to be employed by nations which threaten, or may threaten, aggression outside of their frontiers, they believe, pending the establishment of a wider and permanent system of general security, that the disarmament of such nations is essential. They will likewise aid and encourage all other practicable measures which will lighten for peace-loving peoples the crushing burden of armaments."

"(Signed) Franklin D. Roosevelt."

"(Signed) Winston S. Churchill."

\*) 77th Congress, House of Representatives, Document No. 358.