

LITHUANIA AND RECENT POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

It has often been very difficult to get an anti-Communist article on Lithuania, depicting the true and rightful aspirations of the Lithuanian people for liberation from Soviet Russia's enslavement, printed in any newspaper in the Western democratic countries. One wonders why the press is so silent in regard to Lithuania. We are driven to the conclusion that Lithuania is being forgotten, as she was fifteen years ago when Soviet Russia presented Lithuania with an ultimatum, then later invaded and forcibly occupied that country. The world situation has not yet changed for the better. So far as the free press is concerned, sufficient attention is not being paid to Lithuania's heroic resistance and her struggle against the Soviet Union. Nor do Lithuania's hopes for liberation receive their fair share of attention.

Four years ago, the Free Europe Committee, Inc., was organized to work for the liberation of captive Eastern European countries. Lithuania is represented on this Committee by the Committee for a Free Lithuania. Later, Radio Free Europe was inaugurated and began its broadcasts to certain Eastern European countries. But here misfortune struck Lithuania: the Lithuanian people were refused, for completely non-understandable reasons, Lithuanian-language broadcasts over Radio Free Europe. The Lithuanian people are still being discriminated against. The reason given is that such a broadcast would not be heard in Lithuania because of the technical facilities used. The fact remains that if a Lithuanian-language broadcast were beamed over Radio Free Europe, using the same facilities that are being used for broadcasts to neighboring countries, it would be heard in occupied Lithuania. Why then, is any Eastern European country considered more important than Lithuania? All countries should be equal so far as their right to freedom and independence is concerned.

Tens of thousands of Lithuanians escaped to Germany in 1944 just before Soviet Russia occupied their country for the second time. A few years later, when World War II had ended, these political refugees, also called "Displaced Persons", were given permission to immigrate into a number of Western democratic countries where they found a haven. A number of these refugees have already become citizens of their chosen countries. They have been through many questionings and screenings, and they have been subjected to repatriation campaigns instigated by the Soviet Union. But early in the summer of 1955, the Soviet Union began another repatriation campaign, the so-called "Snow Operation", conducted by Gen. Mik-hailov from his "Committee for return to the Motherland" located in East Berlin. The aim of this "Snow Operation" is to induce political refugees to return to their homelands in Eastern Europe, which are still under Soviet occupation, because the majority of these refugees are the only living eyewitnesses of Russian Bolshevism, its policy, its tactics, its persecution, its deprivation of property, its mass killings and deportations. Therefore, they are considered dangerous to Soviet Russia's security. Russia wants them to return to their homelands so that she can liquidate them later or deport them to Siberian slave labor camps, just as she has already done with several refugees who did return. Soviet Russia herself, needless to say, does not repatriate the hundreds of thousands of innocent Lithuanians who are in her slave labor camps and prisons, nor has she ever returned even those innocent Lithuanian deportees who have already completed their sentences.

Although the Western democracies did only sparingly take advantage of the opportunity to gain valuable knowledge about Russia's Bolshevism from these political refugees, now that they have become citizens of their chosen countries they are entitled, under the Constitution of the adopted country, to security, safety, and protection against any and every terrorization by the Soviet Union. Yet nothing has been done to protect these refugees from Mikhailov's "Snow Operation" or from any other Soviet propaganda device. Are these the results of "peaceful co-existence" and the "Geneva Spirit"? Can even the citizens of the Western democracies no longer have peace and security? The situation is the same for the former citizens of every captive state in Eastern Europe. Only when the Soviet Union withdraws its armed forces, its secret police, its administrative agents, and its colonists from Lithuania will the Lithuanian political refugees return to their beloved homeland.

In September, 1955, newspapers in Washington, D. C., and in New York published articles dealing with Germany's unification. These articles contained plans for German unification and guaranties to the Soviet Union. One was a British plan and another an American plan, which might be proposed at the forthcoming Four-Power Foreign Ministers Conference at Geneva in October, 1955. These plans included Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and other captive European countries, but both of them failed to include Lithuania and certain other formerly independent countries. The Lithuanian people most sincerely hope that these were only preliminary plans, not final ones. They also hope that the Western democracies, including the United States, will not exclude Lithuania from the final plan, which will be proposed at

the Foreign Ministers Conference, settling Germany's unification and striving to achieve liberation of captive Eastern and Central European countries by setting up a neutral buffer zone between East and West. If there is to be a neutral buffer zone, it must include the formerly independent states of Lithuania, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria, and others. Failure to include Lithuania in the proposed neutral zone might have grave political repercussions; for by so doing, the self-determination rights of States such as Lithuania would be violated. If the Western democracies should participate in such a deal, they would violate not only their promises to guarantee freedom to others, but also the rights and principles under which they themselves live — the conviction that every country is entitled to live in freedom and independence and to select the form of self-government under which it will exist. Now is the time to correct the wrongs done during and after World War II and to grant the captive Eastern European countries, including Lithuania, the freedom, independence, and self-government which are rightfully theirs. Or, is Lithuania once again to be forgotten that other countries may live in peace and freedom?

In September, 1955, the Soviet Union decided to return the Finnish port or naval base of Porkkala, to Finland. As soon as this decision was announced, purely for propaganda purposes, another announcement was made — this one by... Marshal Zhukov, Soviet Defense Minister that the United States also should give up its overseas bases. That the decision to return Porkkala to Finland was made only for political and propaganda purposes is made crystal clear by Marshal Zhukov's announcement, which is self-explanatory. Porkkala is not the only base which the Soviet Union has occupied for more than fifteen years. On the same Baltic shores are other bases which are still occupied by Soviet Russia, such as, Lithuania's bases of šventoji and Klaipeda, which were occupied on June 15, 1940. When is the Soviet Union going to return these bases to independent Lithuania? If Soviet Russia wants to be regarded by the Western world as a peaceful nation, giving up everything that belongs to other countries, she can do that easily by discontinuing the occupation of Lithuania. Moreover, if the Soviet Union wants to be peaceful, just, and faithful to the promises contained in her treaties and agreements with Lithuania, the following measures are absolutely essential:

1. Withdrawal of Soviet Russia's armed forces, secret police, administrative agents, and colonists from Lithuania and restoration of Lithuania's freedom and independence.
2. Immediate release and return to their homeland of all Lithuanian prisoners, political and otherwise, from forced labor camps and prisons in Soviet Russia.
3. Integration of the Lithuanian districts of Breslauja, Svyriai, Ašmena, Lyda, Gardinas, and Suvalkai into the ethnographic territory of Lithuania.
4. Cession of Lithuania Minor (or the northern part of East Prussia) to Lithuania, along the line of the Potsdam Agreement, leaving on the Lithuanian side the towns of Balga, Lanka, Yluva, Girduva, Darkiemis, and Galdape.

When the General Assembly of the United Nations voted to discuss the Algerian question, the Soviet Union favored that discussion. Senator W. F. Knowland of California is absolutely right, and he should be commended for his courageous stand of October 1, 1955, when he demanded that United Nations investigate the Soviet occupation of the Baltic States. A resolution should be introduced in the General Assembly of the United Nations now, and passed, to the effect that the United Nations should investigate the occupation and annexation of Lithuania and the other Baltic States by the Soviet Union, because these countries have been invaded and forcibly occupied by the Soviet Union and are still illegally occupied by Soviet Russia, despite Russia's promises in 1939 that she would respect territorial integrity and would not interfere in the internal affairs of sovereign countries. Since the Soviet Union has voted for the investigation of the Algerian question, she should also vote for the investigation of Lithuania's occupation. Or is the Soviet Union afraid to let an investigation be undertaken? Perhaps it might be proved that the Soviet Union occupied Lithuania by force for her own, imperialistic purposes, that she has deprived the Lithuanian people of their basic rights and freedoms, that she has nationalized every property, that she has reduced a once prosperous country to poverty, that law and order have been abolished and a terroristic regime introduced, that thousands of innocent Lithuanian people have been imprisoned and killed, and that some 10 percent of the Lithuanian population has been deported. Here is the task for the United Nations. It is hoped that this time the United Nations will not fail to undertake an investigation of the enslavement of Lithuania, with the legal representatives of Lithuania participating, for the United Nations must live up to its own principles in regard to other countries — not to divide them, but to liberate them. Otherwise, the fate of the United Nations itself may well be at stake.

Why is it that the Soviet Union allows no one to visit Lithuania freely, whether the visitor be a foreign diplomat, a member of parliament, or even a private citizen from a Western country? Is it because the Soviet Union does not want any visitor to see that Lithuania, once a democratic, free, and agriculturally, economically, and culturally rich and happy land, has been reduced to a slave state; that Lithuanian youth have been deprived of their right to serve in their own national military units in Lithuania but are drafted into Red Army units and sent to the Soviet Union; that today Lithuania resembles a huge prison or a gigantic slave labor camp; that today Lithuanian people look like ragged beggars and suffer from serious shortages of food, clothing, consumer goods, medicine, etc? Is it not because nine tenths of every production item, agricultural, economic, and industrial, is taken to the Soviet Union? In many cases, indeed, nothing whatsoever is left for local consumption, while every production item goes to build up the Soviet Union's war machine, which in turn is working day and night to bring about the conquest of the free democratic world.

The Lithuanian situation is far too serious to be forgotten by the free world. The enslavement of Lithuania by the Soviet Union must be terminated and the restoration of Lithuania's freedom and independence negotiated; otherwise, "peaceful co-existence" between East and West will not be possible. Surely, the free world must see that the so-called "peaceful co-existence" is already working to the disadvantage of the West.

By St-s

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A recent Moscow incident exemplifies how much the Soviet Government has lifted the Iron Curtain and how much it has not. The incident revolves about two of our Congressmen who have been visiting Moscow, and the fact of their presence there testifies to the improvement in accessibility of the Soviet Union. But when Congressmen requested permission to visit Riga, capital of Soviet Latvia, they were refused and told, "This will have to wait until relations are better".

Of all Soviet-ruled areas, the Baltic states of Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia have been among the most hermetically sealed off from foreigners. It is now more than 15 years since these first became part of the Soviet Union, nominally at their own request, though the presence of Soviet occupation troops at the time of the "request" may be duly noted. Occupied by the Germans during World War II, these states appear to have been fully sovietized during these past ten years. There has probably been spirited resistance. Repeated reports have told of mass deportations of Balts from their own homelands and their replacement by Russians and other Soviet people.

The Soviet Government insists, of course, that the people of the Baltic states are happy to be included in "the multinational family of friendly Soviet peoples". But if so, why the Iron Curtain surrounding these states? The Soviet Government is not afraid to let foreigners visit even Kazakhstan and Central Asia; whence then fear of visits to the Baltic states? So long as this Iron Curtain persists, the Soviet Government can hardly blame the outside world for doubting the official Soviet picture of sentiment and life in that important area.