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# DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES AND STRUCTURE IN LITHUANIA

If at the beginning of 1940 Lithuania had occupied a territory of 65.3 thousand square kilometers as it does at present, it would have had approximately 3.17 million inhabitants.[1] The war has disrupted the normal development of Lithuania. From the middle of 1940, with the exception of the German occupation period of 1941-1944, the country has been under Soviet occupation. The first population census in the Soviet Union after World War II whose results were publicly announced took place on January 5,1959. According to this source, there were 2.711 million inhabitants in Lithuania on that day. Thus, almost twenty years later, the same territory had approximately 14% less people in it. Even this, however, does not render a complete view of the great population loss suffered by Lithuania in such a brief period of time. It must be borne in mind that had the events developed in normal and peaceful way, Lithuania with its 1% natural annual population increase would have had 3.8 million inhabitants by the beginning of 1959. This shows that during the period 1940-1959 Lithuania suffered a loss of approximately 1.09 million people, that is, more than 34% of the entire population in 1940. How did this loss of population come about? The chronological loss of population can be viewed as follows:

| Years | | Persons |
|---|---|---|
| 1941 (Jan.-May) | Repatriated to Germany | 52,000 [2] |
| 1941 (June) | Deported to the Soviet Union | 35,000 [3] |
| 1941 (June) | Evacuated to the Soviet Union and did not return | 5,000 [4] |
| 1941 | Killed by the Soviets | 1,200 [5] |
| 1941 | Perished during uprising against the Soviets | 4,000 [6] |
| 1942-1944 | Deported to Germany for forced labor and did not return | 9,800 [7] |
| 1942-1944 | Killed by the Nazis (mostly Jews) | 170,000 [8] |
| 1942-1945 | Other war losses (killed soldiers, including those conscripted into the Red Army, persons killed during air raids, etc.) | 25,000 [9] |
| 1944 | Fled from the Soviets to the West | 60,000 [10] |
| 1944 | Fled or were evacuated to Germany from the territory of Klaipeda | 105,000 [11] |
| 1945-1958 | Repatriated to Poland | 200,000 [12] |
| 1945-1958 | Deported by the Soviets (mainly to Siberia) and not returned | 260,000 [13] |
| 1944-1953 | Partisans who died in guerilla action against the Soviets | 30,000 [14] |
| 1955-1959 | Repatriated to Germany | |

| | | 10,000[15] |
|---|---|---|
| 1945-1959 | Transfered or moved to other Republics of the Soviet Union | 30,000 [16] |
| 1941-1959 | Deficit of births | 93,000 [17] |
| | Total loss of population | 1,090,000 |

During the same period the natural population increment reached approximately 420,000. In addition, approximately 210,000 persons (mainly Russians, as will be seen later) came to Lithuania from other Soviet Republics during this period. Bearing in mind these numbers, it is easy to compute that the above-mentioned difference of 1.09 million between the potential and the actual population in 1959 corresponds to the indicated population losses (3.17 milions + 0.42 million + 0.21 million — 2.71 million = 1.09 million).

It should be noted that, although Lithuania did not take part in the war, its population losses were markedly greater than those of countries that did take part in World War II. In comparison to those countries that bore the heaviest war burden, Lithuania's position is as follows:

| | Population [18] in 1939 (Thousands) | Population [18] in 1959 (Thousands) | Percentage of population increase or loss |
|---|---|---|---|
| U. S. A. | 131.028 | 177.700 | + 35.6 |
| Netherlands | 8.781 | 11.346 | + 29.3 |
| Italy | 43.394 | 49.052 | + 13.2 |
| Soviet Union | 190.678 | 210.500 | + 10.1 |
| Great Britain | 47,762 | 52,157 | + 9.2 |
| France | 41.300 | 45.097 | + 9.2 |
| Belgium | 8.391 | 9.104 | + 8.5 |
| Germany | 69.314 | 72.294 | + 4.3 |
| Lithuania [19] | 3.140 | 2.711 | — 13.7 |

As indicated by the table, Lithuania is the only country whose population in 1959 had decreased by a large percentage in comparison to the 1939 population figure.

Besides significant changes in population distribution by nationality, the same period in Lithuania brought changes in the population's urban - rural composition. According to the September 17, 1923, census, the population of Lithuania had the following distribution by nationality: 84.2% Lithuanians, 7.6% Jews, 3.2% Poles, 2.5% Russians, 1.4% Germans, 0.7% Latvians, 0.2% Belorussians, and 0.2% others.[20]

In 1924 the region of Klaipeda was joined to Lithuania and the Jaunary 20, 1925, census revealed the following change in the nationality composition of the country's population: 80.1% Lithuanians, 7.1% Jews, 4.1% Germans, 3% Poles, 2.3% Russians, 0.7% Latvians, and 2.7% others.[21]

The next census took place in May 27, 1942, when Lithuania was under German occupation. According to the obtained data, there were : [22]

| Lithuanians | 2,262,356 | or | 81.1% |
|---|---|---|---|
| Poles | 337,541 | or | 12.1% |
| Russians | 86,475 | or | 3.1% |
| Belorussians | 80,898 | or | 2.9% |
| Others | 22,317 | or | 0.8% |

Yet, neither the 1923-1925, nor the 1942 census gives an accurate nationality distribution of the population in the present territory of Lithuania. In 1923-1925 the Vilnius region was under Polish administration (only by 1939 was it reunited with Lithuania) and was therefore not included in the census. Had this region been included, the nationality distribution would have registered marked changes, especially in regards to Polish and Belorussian minorities, because both these nationalities were rather numerously represented in this region. Similarly, the 1942 census results do not give an accurate view of the 1940 nationality distribution in Lithuania because the region of Klaipeda was annexed by Germany; the population of the Klaipeda region and the number of Jews in Lithuania who were enclosed in ghettos were not included in the census. The German civil authorities did not even inform the Lithuanian Bureau of Statistics of the population data in the Klaipeda region. In addition to this, the 1942 census includes several border districts of East Lithuania in the Lithuanian territory; after World War II these districts were awarded to Belorussia.

Although precise data are lacking, from an evaluation of all available sources it appears that among the 3.14 milion inhabitants in 1940 there should have been 2,340,000 Lithuanians, 330,000 Poles, 210,000 Jews, 80,000 Russians, 130,000 Germans, 30,000 Belorussians, 10,000 Latvians, and 10,000 others.[23] The population distribution according to

nationality would have been: 74.6% Lithuanians, 6.7% Jews, 10 % Poles, 2.5% Russians, 4.1% Germans, 1% Belorussians, 0.3r' Latvians, and 0.3% others. On the other hand, according to the January 15, 1959, census the nationality - distribution in Soviet occupied Lithuania was: 79.3% Lithuanians (or 2,151,000 persons) ; 8.5% Russians (231, 500); 8.5% Poles (230,000); 1.1% Belorussians (30,000); 0.9% Jews (25,000); 0.7% Urkainians (18,000) ; and 1% (26,000) other. If we compare this distribution with 1940, we note at once that important changes in the country's national structure have taken place during the twenty years' period.

Notwithstanding the decrease of Lithuanian nationals by 189,000 persons (from 2.340,000 in 1940 to 2,151,000 in 1959), Lithuanians still make up the most numerous national group in their country. Yet, losses which the Lithuanians had to sustain were great. Under normal conditions, the number of Lithuanians had to increase from 2,340,000 in 1940 to 2,830 by 1959. If the actual natural increment can be taken to be approximately 300,000 persons, then it means that during the twenty years' period the loss amounts to 489,000 persons (2,340,000 + 300,000 — 2,151,000 = 489,000). This corresponds to approximately 20.9% of all the Lithuanian nationals of 1940.

During the same period, the number of Russians in Lithuania increased from 80,000 to 231,000; most of them came from the Soviet Union. The most intense Russian immigration to Lithuania took place in the early years after the war. Part of them came under official orders to take up leading post in the country's administration and economy; others came on their own initiative, attracted by the prospects of a better living. Lithuania was becoming known in the Soviet Union as "little America." This notion had originated in 1940 with the soldiers of the occupying Red Army, who found a heretofore unseen, high standard of living in Lithuania.

Statistical data indicate that, as it could have been anticipated, most of the Russians have settled in cities. In Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania, out of 236,000 inhabitants 33.6% are Lithuanians, 29.4% Russians, 20% Poles, and 17% are made up of other nationalities. Kaunas, the second largest city in the country, has 11.7% Russians. Many Russians also reside in the port city of Klaipeda.**25** Out of 231,000 Russians in Lithuania in 1959, 177,848 (or 77%) lived in urban centers, whereas only 33.6%  Lithuanians dwell in cities.

In rural areas in 1959 there were 53,160 Russians, making up only 3.2% of all rural population. Even so, most of these Russians are migrants or colonizers of old czarist times. The exception consists of Moscow's communist emissaries — officials of collective and state farms. Lithuanians in rural districts make up 85.5% of all the rural population.**26** This means that the countryside is almost thoroughly Lithuanian.

It should be noted that the cited number of Russians does not portray the Russian element in Lithuania in its entirety; for example, Red Army soldjers stationed in Lithuania are mainly Russians, but are not included in the census. Lithuanian recruits are generaly sent out to other parts of Soviet Union. Similarly, the category of post-war immigrants should include the 18,000 Ukrainians, who were nonexistent in Lithuania in 1940.**27**

There is a sharp decrease of Polish nationals in Lithuania. The Poles were severely touched by deportations and war losses, but the major reason for the decrease of the Polish national group was the massive repatriation during the periods 1946-1948 and 1956-1958 carried out by an agreement between the governments of the Soviet Union and of Poland. Between 1946 and 1948, 178,013 persons repatriated from Lithuania to Poland, while the 1956-1958 period of repatriation involved approximately another 22,000 persons. Notwithstanding this, the Polish national minority in Lithuania remains significant. Except for the Russians, the Poles are the only ones that have their own schools conducted in their native language. There is even a teacher-training institute for Polish teachers. A few years ago, a Polish folk ensemble was established in Vilnius and there are Polish publications, newspapers, and cultural centers. A considerable number of Poles reside in Vilnius; in 1959 there were 47,226 persons, that is 20% of all the inhabitants of the city. Generaly, however, the majority of Poles are found in rural areas. Of the total 230,107 Poles, 161,523 (or 70%) are country-dwellers.**28** Politically, however, the Polish national group does not play any role, because the regime does not tolerate any national organization that could exert an influence on social or political affairs. This, of course, does not preclude Polish nationals holding high Party or Government posts, yet these individuals can not be considered as official representatives of the Polish national minority.

In 1959 there were 30, 256 Belorussians of whom approximately a half lived in Vilnius and the rest mainly along the border between the Lithuanian and the Belorussian SSR. Predominantly Belorussian villages can be found in these regions. It is interesting to note that since 1940 there has been little change in the number of Belorussians living in Lithuania. Since Belorussia is the closest neighbor on the eastern side of Lithuania, it was plausible to expect a great influx of colonists from that quarter. The fact remains, however, that there are very few newcomers from Belorussia to Lithuania. The major explanation for this phenomenon is that, besides Lithuania, Belorussia is the only other Soviet Republic whose 1959 population had not reached the 1939 level.**29**

The fate of Jews in Lithuania is especially tragic. The 29,672 Jews who were present in Lithuania in 1959 are only a small remainder of the Jewish national group that existed in 1940. Even the present Jewish minority is constituted mainly of Jews who came from other parts of the Soviet Union, since those who resided before World War II were almost completely wiped out during the German occupation. Some Jews who somehow avoided the destructive German hands migrated to Israel after the war. There were probably several thousand such migrants. Prior to the war the Jews in Lithuania had actively participated in the social and cultural life of their communities. They had schools, newspapers, publishing houses,

political organizations, cultural societies, ect. At present the Jews do not make up an organized unit. Some of them consider themselves to be Russians, while others consider themselves Lithuanians.

Another national minority that has decreased in number is the Germans, who in 1940 had been 130,000 strong. As it has been stated, part of them repatriated to Germany in accordance with the Hitler-Stalin repatriation agreements. The majority of Germans in the Klaipeda region were evacuated by the German Government or fled to Germany of their own accord. Approximately 6,000 Germans who fled from the Karaliaucius (Koenigsberg) district after the war to escape the famine were returned to Germany between 1953 and 1955. Several thousand more Germans repatriated from Lithuania in 1959 after Chancellor Adenauer's intervention. There remains only a small handful of Germans, mainly in the Klaipeda region.**30** They have no organizations, nor do they participate in any specific organized cultural activities.

Besides the already stated national groups, in 1959 there were Latvians, Estonians, Khazaks, Armenians, Georgians, and others totaling to 15,000 persons. With the exception of the Latvians, most of them came to Lithuania after the war from other parts of the Soviet Union.

There were other significant changes in the population structure in Lithuania. In 1939 approximately 77% of the population lived in rural areas and only 23% resided in cities. By 1959, the rural population comprised 61% and the urban population had risen to 39% of the total.**32** This large increase in urban population can be explained by industrialization and by collectivization of land, which resulted in pauperizing the countryside. During this period, some cities grew very rapidly. Between 1939 and 1959, the population of Kaunas has grown from 154,000 to 214,000; Sauliai from 32,000 to 60,000; Klaipeda from 47,000 to 90,000; Panevežys from 27,000 to 41,000.**33** It has been estimated that in the future urban centers will grow even more rapidly; there are claims that in the 1960's the urban population will reach 60% of the total population of the country.**34**

On another occassion, in a study of manpower needs by the developing industry in Lithuania, the author of this article has shown that Moscow's industrialization plans for Lithuania far exceed the reserves of manpower in the country and that behind these plans hides the policy of Russianization of Lithuania through the immigration of Russian workers to satisfy manpower needs.**35** It was pointed out that, in order to realize the industrial development plans by 1980, it would be necessary to transfer approximately 430,000 workers to Lithuania from other parts of the Soviet Union, first of all from Russia proper. The latest demographic statistics indeed indicate that there is an intensive migration to Lithuania. On January 15, 1959, there were 2,711,445 inhabitants in Lithuania, while in January 1, 1962, there were 2,852,000 inhabitants.**36** Thus, in three years the population increased by 140,800. A natural increase of population in Lithuania between 1959 and 1962 could have amounted to approximately 97,200. The difference is explainable only by migration into Lithuania. Thus, in three years about 43,600 people immigrated to Lithuania, the majority of whom we can assume were Russians. This quite agrees with the above - mentioned prognosis. If this migration is not somehow stopped or controlled, the ratio of nationalities in Lithuania may rapidly change to the Lithuanians' disadvantage.


NOTES
1 Includes Vilnius and Klaipeda (Memel) areas. Cf. Centralinis Statistikos Biuras, *Lietuvos Statistikos Metraštis* (Statistical Yearbook of Lithuania), vol. for 1938, p. 13 and vol. for 1939, p.13. Also included are the districts of Svencionys and Deveniskes with about 100,000 inhabitants, which later were annexed to Lithuania.
2  According to a private information to this author by Land wirtschaft der Litauendeutschen im Bundesgebiet, 51,852.
3  *Lietuvių Enciklopedija* (Lithuanian Encyclopedia) (Boston), vol. VII, p. 139, gives the number of deported during the mass deportations of June 14-15, 1941, as 34,260. This figure does not include those who were earlier arrested and already deported to the Soviet Union.
4  The late prof. K.. Pakstas in his article "The Consequences of Genocide to Lithuania", *Draugas* (Chicago), May 7, 1960, claims that at the beginning of the German-Russian hostilities 30,000 people were evacuated to the Soviet Union. According to Soviet data only 22,671 were evacuated to the Soviet Union, among them 3,421 individuals between 12-23 years of age. Cf. *Komjaunimo Tiesa* ("Komsomol Pravda"), (Vilnius), October 20, 1962. How many of the evacuees returned to Lithuania subsequently is unknown. The figure given is an estimation of this author.
5  *Lietuvių Enciklopedija*, vol. VII, p. 140.
6  E. J. Harrison, *Lithuania's Fight for Freedom*, New York, 1945, p. 140.
7  According to prof. Pakštas, *op. cit.*, 30,000. Cf. Rastenis' figures, given in *The Baltic Review*, (New York), 1956, no. 9, p. 19. According to Rastenis, 50,000 were sent to Germany for labor duty. A portion of this group later returned to Lithuania.
8  Up to the beginning of 1942 the so-called "Einsatztruppen" annihilated 136,421 Jews in Lithuania. At the same time 34,500 Jews were still living in the ghettos of Vilnius, Kaunas, and Šiauliai. See Leon Poliakov and Josek Wulf, *Das Dritte Reich und die Juden*, Berlin, 1955, p. 149.
9  According to prof. Pakštas, *op. cit.*, 54,600.
10  According to the International Refugee Organization data, on November 1, 1946, there were under its care 57,495 Lithuanians in Germany and 1,404 in Austria. Lithuanian refugees were also  to be found in France, Italy, Denmark, and other countries. Also, not all the Lithuanian refugees were under IRO protection. Cf. *Lietuvių Enciklopedija*, vol. V, p. 148. On the other hand, a portion of the labor conscripts to Germany (9,800) were included in the IRO data.
11  At the beginning of 1955 there were 50,275 refugees from Klaipeda (Memel) district in West Germany, who possessed A and B refugee status certificates. This data was provided by the West German Minister of Refugee Affairs to this author

in a letter of Jan. 17, 1962. A similar number of people from Klaipėda could have settled in Berlin, East Germany, or beyond German borders.

12  During the period between 1945-1947 178,013 individuals were repatriated from Lithuania to Poland who could prove their Polish ancestry. Cf. *Rocznik Statystyczny*, 1948, Warsaw, 1949, pp. 28-29. A second wave of repatriation to Poland occured in 1957-1958. It is estimated that on this occasion about 22,000 people repatriated to Poland.

13  Estimated from various sources. Many cite a much larger figure. Nevertheless, it must be taken into account that until 1959 a portion of those deported returned to Lithuania.

14  According to *Lietuvių Enciklopedija*, vol. XXII, p. 44 — 50,000; according to Pakštas, *op.cit.,* — 20,000; according to Rastenis, *op. cit.* — 30,000. The American Correspondent George Weller of the *Chicago Daily News*, who in 1960 visited Lithuania and had an interview with R. Šarmaitis, the Director of the Party History Institute in Vilnius, reports the 20,000 figure supplied by Šarmaitis. See *Chicago Daily News*, August 17 and 22, 1961. Since many fallen partisans were burried by their comrades or local inhabitants, the soviet statistics thus reflect a lower than actual figure.

15  Between 1956 and 1961, 7,412 individuals repatriated from Lithuania to West Germany. Data provided by the Minister of Refugee Affairs, cited in note 11 above.

16  According to V. Rastenis, op. cit., since 1948 Lithuania loses annually about 15,000 people, who are transported to other parts of the Soviet Union as labor conscripts or who remain outside Lithuania after serving in the army. 150,000 thus would have "emigrated" from Lithuania up to 1959. In the opinion of this author, this is too liberal an estimation.

17  About 15% of natural increase of the population.

18  Statistical Office of the United Nations, *Demographic Yearbook 1960*, New York, 1960, pp. 131-151.

19  Within the present borders of the country.

20  Centrinis Statistikos Biuras, *Lietuvos Statistikos Metraštis 1939 m*., Vilnius, 1940, p. 15.

21  Centrinis Statistikos Biuras, *Lietuvos Statistikos Metraštis 1924-1926 m*., Kaunas, 1927, p. 22.

22  Simas Miglinas, *Pavergtoji Lietuva* (Enslaved Lithuania), Memmingen, 1954?, p. 16.

23  American Jewish Committee, "Jews of Lithuania" in *The Jewish Communities in Nazi Occupied Europe*, New York, 1944, p. 1.

24  Tsentralnoe Statisticheskoe Upravlenie pri Sovete Ministrov SSSR, *Narodoe Khoziaistvo SSSR v 1959 Godu*, Moskva, 1960, p. 19.

25  Centring Statistikos Valdyba prie TSRS Ministry Tarybos, *1959 Metų Visasąjunginio Gyventojų, Surašymo Duomenys* (The Results of the All-Union Census of 1959), Vilnius, 1963, p. 162.

26  *Ibid.*

27  Many Ukrainians, Belorussians, and Jews, immigrating to Lithuania, consider themselves Russians. This is indicative also in the fact that in Lithuania 46.4% of the Ukrainians, 41.0% of the Belorussians, and 28.0% of the Jews consider the Russian language as their native tongue. See Centrine Statistikos Valdyba prie Lietuvos TSR Ministrų Tarybos, *Tarybų Lietuvos Dvidešimtmetis: Statistinių Duomenų Rinkinys* (Twenty Years of Soviet Lithuania: A Collection of Statistical Data), Vilnius, I960, p. 78.

28  Seymour Topping in *New York Times*, May, 1961.

29  *Narodnoe Khoziaistvo SSSR v 1959 g.*, p.8.

30  *Tarybų Lietuvos Dvidešimtmetis, op. cit.*, p. 78.

31  *Ibid.*

32  *Narodnoe Khoziaistvo SSSR v 1959 g.*, p. 10.

33  *Lietuvos Statistikos Metraštis 1939 m*., p. 14; *Lietuvos Statistikos Metraštis 1938 m*., p. 14; *Tarybų Lietuvos Dvidešimtmetis, op. cit.*, pp. 72-77.

34  From an article by K. Meškauskas, Director of the Institute of Economics of the Lithuanian SSR Academy of Sciences, in *Tiesa* ('Pravda'), August 16, 1961.

35  Pranas Zundė, "Soviet Industrial Policy in Lithuania", *Lituanus*, June, 1963.

36  *1959 Metų Visasąjunginio Gyventojų. Surašymo Duomenys. Lietuvos TSR*. (The Results of the All-Union Census of 1959. Lithuanian SSR), Vilnius, 1963, p. 17.