

# LITUANUS

LITHUANIAN QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

Volume 12, No.4 - Winter 1966

Editor of this issue: Thomas Remeikis

ISSN 0024-5089

Copyright © 1966 LITUANUS Foundation, Inc.



## THE BALTIC STATES IN U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONS The Years of Doubt, 1943-1946

RICHARD A. SCHNORF, CMDR.USN

This article is a second part of a survey of American disposition toward the Baltic States and Soviet aggression during World War II. For the first part, see Richard A. Schnorf "[The Baltic States in U.S. — Soviet Relation, 1939-1942](#)", *Lituanus*, Spring 1966, pp. 33-53 .and the last of the three part series "[The Baltic States in US - Soviet Relations, From Truman to Johnson](#)" in the *Lituanus* Fall 1968 issue, pp 43-60.

As the war progressed, mounting was the belief that allied unity was the paramount issue transcending the plight of victims of Soviet aggression. By 1943, American determination to support the free Baltic States was fading. The three were occupied by Nazi Germany, and this tended to disassociate them from their 1940-1941 status. Furthermore, the Anglo-American Allies were being pressured by their Communist partner to provide aid. No British or American troops were fighting Germans on the continent of Europe until late in 1943. Only the battered Red Army faced Hitler's troops, and in spite of its belated bravery, it might not have been in action had not the German dictator been so confident.<sup>1</sup>

In America, the President and his advisers had adopted the view that post-war Europe should be a matter of discussion at a peace conference rather than an item of contention among reluctant allies who were fighting for their individual existences. However, Roosevelt was aware that Stalin would have some demands regarding territorial claims in Europe. In March of 1943, Roosevelt and Eden discussed prospective Soviet claims, and the Baltic States were part of the conversation. It was reported that:

... Eden thought that the Soviet government would insist on absorbing these, and that it would reject the proposal which Roosevelt thought ought to be made — that a second plebiscite should be held in these countries before any such action was taken. Roosevelt remarked that we might have to agree to this absorption, but, if so, it ought to be used as a bargaining counter with Russia.<sup>2</sup>

In July of the same year, Roosevelt sounded little like the man who told Lithuanian-Americans that the independence of Lithuania was not lost. In obvious futility, he allegedly told the Polish Ambassador: "The problem of the Baltic States, and particularly that of Lithuania will be much more difficult\_\_\_\_What can we do if Stalin calmly announces, for instance, that the question of Lithuania must be left out of the discussion?"<sup>3</sup>

Pro-Russian propaganda continued to mount. Walter Lippman, always a realist, lent his talents to the cause.<sup>4</sup> Elmer Davis, one of the most popular news commentators of the period, heaped praise on the Russian efforts. Henry Wallace was joined by other prominent members of the Roosevelt administration in glorification of Russia. On November 8, 1943, Harold Ickes stated:

The truth is that, despite the vicious Hitlerisms of the Hearst and the Patterson-McCormick newspaper axis, there are many things of which the Soviet Union has reason to be proud. In certain respects we could do well to learn from Russia, yes, even to imitate Russia. I do not see what possible cause for an embroilment there could be between the United States and the Soviet Union after the present war.<sup>5</sup>

All American publicists were not, of course, favorably disposed toward the Soviet regime. Many of them kept the Soviet Union under constant attack, and other noted Americans like Herbert Hoover, Robert Taft, David Dubinsky, and Martin Dies never let the menace of international Communism fade far from the view of the American public.

Nonetheless, it was a dramatic shift from the days of the Russo-Finnish war when Joseph E. Davies would address twenty thousand people in Chicago in February of 1942 to state naively that "by the testimony of performance and in my opinion, the word of honor of the Soviet Government is as safe as the Bible."<sup>6</sup> An American Senator would have risked his political life in 1940 if he had dared to face his constituents with the words which Senator E. D. Thomas of Utah was willing to chance in 1943:

In the future, when we make an estimate of Soviet leadership, we will see that it is based upon the finest of democratic principles, the cultivation and development of the people by providing proper education, proper health, proper hospitalization, and proper social opportunities.<sup>7</sup>

Perhaps too harshly, but nevertheless not without accuracy, the first American Ambassador to the Soviet Union described the political atmosphere in the United States in those days in this manner:

And all the agents of the Soviet Government in America, all the members of the Communist party, and all the dupes who are "fellow travellers," made hay with American public opinion while the Red Army fought heroically and the White House sun shone.<sup>8</sup>

It was almost as if the United States had accepted the dictums of the **Daily Worker** whose James S. Allen wrote of the Baltic States in June of 1942 that "... they were Soviet territory when the Nazis started their invasion and they will remain Soviet territory when Hitler is defeated; it was not a question open for discussion".<sup>9</sup>

The Soviet Union, Adolf Hitler and the **Daily Worker** had accepted the Soviet Union's annexation of the Baltic States as decisive. Had the American people? The U. S. Government, in spite of its retreat from determination, had not accepted it. However, the American people were then under the effective spell of pro-Russian propaganda. The same people who had cheered the Finns when they repelled the Soviets cheered the Soviets when they threw back the Nazis.

This was not pro-communism. It was, however, compromise. Engaged in a vicious war with Germany, the United States welcomed anyone's support. The Soviet Union had checked Hitler's advance, and beyond doubt was contributing more to the Allied effort in Europe in 1943 than were Britain and the United States. As the Moscow Foreign Ministers Conference approached, Soviet troops were crossing the Dnieper River on a broad front while the Western Allies were moving slowly up the Italian peninsula.

### **Moscow Foreign Ministers Conference**

Held preceding the Teheran Conference, the Foreign Ministers Conference in Moscow in October, 1943, was received with mixed feelings. In general, the American press approved the results of the meeting. On the other hand, Baltic diplomats worried about rumors which claimed that the United States had decided not to press Baltic claims for independence. By this time, the tide of war had turned against the Axis. Although the second front demanded by Stalin had not materialized, the Western Allies were in Italy; and invasion of France was impending. The days of desperation of 1941 and 1942 were over.

Cordell Hull apparently was not instructed to discuss the Baltic States at this conference. However, President Roosevelt did discuss his plans for Teheran prior to Hull's departure for Moscow. At least in part, he accurately described to Hull on October 5, 1943, what he would do at Teheran:

As for Poland and the Baltic States, the President said that, when he should meet with Stalin, he intended to appeal to him on grounds of high morality. He would say to him that neither Britain nor we would fight Russia over the Baltic States, but that in Russia's own interest, from the viewpoint of her position in the world, it would be a good thing for her to say that she would be willing, two years or so after the war, to hold a second plebiscite in the Baltic countries. While Russia was satisfied that the plebiscite she had already held was conclusive, he commented, the rest of the world did not seem to think so.<sup>10</sup>

Roosevelt's remarks to Hull unquestionably were well intended, but if Hull quoted Roosevelt accurately, the President echoed a Soviet falsehood. In referring to a second plebiscite, he implied that a first plebiscite had been held. This is untrue. The Baltic peoples never voted to join the Soviet Union. The elections of 1940 were held under Soviet control, but they were held to elect men to represent independent states.

Unlike Hull, the British Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden, received specific instructions from Churchill. If analyzed from a Baltic viewpoint, the instructions were full of contradictions. Churchill advised in part:

We consider that states and nations that have been subjugated by Nazi or Fascist violence during the War should emerge at the Peace Conference with their full sovereign rights and that all questions of final territorial transference must be settled at the peace table, due regard being paid to the interest of the population affected.

We reaffirm the principles of the Atlantic Charter, noting that Russia's accession thereto is based upon the frontiers of June 22, 1941. We also take note of the historic frontiers of Russia before the two wars of aggression waged by Germany in 1914 and 1939.

We have no desire to keep any branch of the European family of nations in a condition of subjugation or restriction except as may be required by the general needs and safety of the world.<sup>11</sup>

Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania were invaded by Germany. Their populations were treated no differently from those of other conquered states. Churchill dealt them a severe blow by permitting the Soviet Union to set its frontiers on the date of the German invasion, well after the Russians had expanded their borders into large portions of Eastern Europe. One might also wonder whether Churchill believed that the subjugation of the three Baltic States was "required by the general needs and safety of the world."

The most startling indictment of the conference came from Jan Ciechanowski who was at the time Ambassador of Poland to the United States. He later wrote:

It surprised me when, in conversation with some officials of the State Department and with politicians of the Inner White House Circle, I realized that contrary to the artificial enthusiasm regarding the results of the Moscow Conference, their private opinions were mostly pessimistic. I gathered that, as far as could then be ascertained, America and Britain had had to sacrifice the three Baltic countries and half of Poland to Russia for the sake of understanding with the Soviets.<sup>12</sup>

Admiral Leahy had voiced his doubts previous to the conference when he mentioned on September 23, 1943:

America's position at this conference might be very difficult because of our reputation for reliability and our previous announcement that the sovereignty of small nations should be reestablished after the war's end.

It was inconceivable to me that Stalin would submit to the reestablishment of effective sovereignty in Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia.<sup>13</sup>

In spite of absence of direct evidence, there are indications — such as the following passages from Admiral Standley, who was then the American Ambassador to the Soviet Union — that Hull had planned to discuss Eastern Europe, hence by implication, the Baltic States. Stanley wrote that Hull had told him he was trying to achieve "A settlement for Eastern Europe, a plan for the control of Germany after the surrender, a settlement of Polish and Finnish problems, and a participation of the Soviet Union in the Pacific War".<sup>14</sup>

Finally, the **Daily Worker** was described by William C. Bullitt as having written in February of 1944 that "... there is every indication that when Mr. Hull returned from Moscow he knew that the status of the Baltic States was not an all-European problem".<sup>15</sup>

It is presumptuous to conclude that Hull had actually discussed the Baltic States at Moscow. However, there is fertile ground to speculate. Certainly, in 1943 and early 1944, there was considerable speculation. Johannes Kaiv, for example, responded to the rumors by recapitulating his views of the plight of the Estonians in a note to the Secretary of State.<sup>16</sup>

No matter what actually occurred in the pre-Tehe-ran meeting, it is certain that the Baltic States did not benefit from the proceedings.

## The Teheran Conference

On the groundwork laid by their Foreign Ministers, Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin met at Teheran, Iran, in December, 1943. Previous to the publication of the official United States papers, there were considerable differences concerning the part which the Baltic States played. The differences still exist, of course, but the United States has published the Teheran papers; and if the U. S. version is complete and accurate, all other writers have been deficient in their reporting of discussions on the Baltic States.

Sherwood mentioned that through an error in translation Stalin thought Roosevelt was bringing up the matter of the Baltic States whereas he was, in fact, mentioning the Baltic Sea.<sup>17</sup> Churchill substantially supported this except that he made no mention of an error in translation.<sup>18</sup>

The redoubtable Jan Ciechanowski asserted that the Baltic States had been discussed and that Stalin informed Roosevelt that he had not yet made a definite decision about them except that the Soviets would establish military bases there.<sup>19</sup>

The official United States papers verify Sherwood's report that Roosevelt discussed internal American politics with Stalin, explaining to him that there were millions of voters of Polish, Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian extraction in the United

States.<sup>20</sup> The notes of Charles Bohlen also disclose that Roosevelt went ahead with his plans to discuss the future of the Baltic States. Quoting the President, Bohlen wrote: "He said that he fully realized the three Baltic Republics had in history and again more recently been a part of Russia and added jokingly that when the Soviet armies re-occupied these areas, he did not intend to go to war with the Soviet Union on this point".<sup>21</sup> The clever Stalin previously may have surmised that the United States would not fight for self-determination for the Baltic peoples, but perhaps it reassured him when the American President jokingly made these remarks.

Furthermore, it is difficult to reconcile Roosevelt's show of indifference with the Atlantic Charter and the Declaration of the United Nations. On the other hand, this may have been Roosevelt's method to soften the Soviet ruler for the plea which followed. Bohlen reported the President's discussion as follows:

He went on to say that the big issue in the United States, insofar as public opinion went, would be the question of referendum and the right of self-determination. He said he thought that world opinion would want some expression of the will of the people, perhaps not immediately after their re-occupation by Soviet forces, but some day, and that he personally was confident that the people would vote to join the Soviet Union.<sup>22</sup>

Roosevelt had, in short, asked Stalin to conduct plebiscites in the three states. The last part of his statement may send chills up the spines of Baltic ethnic groups and political opponents of the late President, but it appears probable that Roosevelt resorted to tools of diplomacy in an attempt to soften the hard core of Stalin with this false flattery. It defies common sense, not to mention diplomatic finesse, to accept Roosevelt's words on their face value. Though the technique may be criticized with justification, by following this approach Roosevelt must have hoped to impress Stalin with the need for further consideration of the Baltic issue.

Stalin, however, was not impressed by world opinion and stated that there was no outcry of world opinion when the Tsar had not granted the Baltic provinces autonomy.<sup>23</sup> The Communist leader closed the door on the Baltic States, and the American President allowed the issue to die.

Roosevelt treaded on controversial matter when he stated that the Baltic States had "in history" been a part of Russia. Perhaps he was placating Stalin, but the phrase does not disguise the connotation of an extended period of time. Although less damaging than the word "historically," the phrase does slide nicely into the Russian concept of Baltic nationalism. The Russians consistently used the expression, and the Baltic peoples stoutly have avoided it. In terms of national existence, Estonians, Latvians, and Lithuanians have lived longer free from Russian domination than they have existed under the Tsars and Communists.

However, as before, the President may have been trying to lull Stalin into concessions with mesmeric diplomatic license. That Roosevelt failed to do this is apparent in the Bohlen notes of this meeting held at the Soviet Embassy on December 1, 1943.

Roosevelt had resisted coming to Teheran, preferring first Alaska, then Basra, as the site for the meeting. At Soviet insistence, he came to Teheran. After his arrival, he shifted his headquarters from the American Legation to the Soviet Embassy to lessen the dangers of assassination along the lengthy route from the Legation. However, his move prompted severe criticisms which have not abated over the years. Admiral Standley said this of Roosevelt's residence in the Soviet stronghold: "In retrospect, it seems as though it may have been an early sign of the physical and mental deterioration which eventually led to his death"<sup>24</sup>

Perhaps the entire story of the Teheran Conference never will be known. Roosevelt's penchant for personal diplomacy and his faith in his ability to deal successfully with Stalin have been linked with his stay at the Soviet Embassy to produce rumors of secret meetings. Whether or not there were such meetings, it is clear that Roosevelt did not succeed in enhancing the cause of Baltic independence. After his conversation with Stalin, it was certain that the United States accepted the fact that the Soviet Union would re-establish its authority in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.

The conversation dulled to a great extent the keen moral edge of the United States policy of July 23, 1940. Although the United States did not renounce that policy, it made no serious attempt to deter the Soviet Union from repeating its rape of the Baltic States. The diplomats from the Baltic countries had been powerless when the massive influence of the Soviet Union came to bear on the United States. Seized with fear of a separate Russo-German peace, the American Government no longer could afford the luxury of condemning devious processes.

The fears caused both the United States and Great Britain to treat the Soviet Union with a delicacy seldom seen in international relations. In spite of the fact that responsible men argued that there could be no separate peace, the doubts lingered. The U. S. Ambassador to Russia earlier had attempted to stamp them out. Describing the feeling in Washington in May of 1943, he wrote: "Fear of a separate Russian peace reached a new high in Washington. I tried to play this down, for I felt certain the Russians would never stop fighting as long as the Nazis held one foot of Russian territory".<sup>25</sup> Other authorities have come to the same conclusion. In discussing the possibility of a separate peace, George F. Kennan decided that there was no stage during the war when this could have occurred.<sup>26</sup>

Nonetheless, regardless of the poor foundation for those fears, they were real. They were real enough to thrust aspirations for Baltic freedom into the background. In this respect, and in view of Roosevelt's failure to use the strength available to him, the Teheran Conference marked the low point in relations between the United States and the Baltic States as represented by its diplomats. The slim thread of non-recognition of the Soviet annexation was not broken, but it was tightly stretched.

### **Soviets Re-occupy the Baltic States**

By 1944, German armies were steadily retreating under the pressure of the Red Army. The Western Allies were in France, and the inevitability of German defeat was widely accepted.

For the people of the Baltic countries defeat of Nazi Germany did not have the meaning which it did to other Europeans. For them it meant the return of red terror which had scourged their lands, especially in the mass deportations of June, 1941. Their only hope was that the Atlantic Charter was something more than an expression of solidarity, that the principles of the Charter would be applied to them. They substantially had resisted German efforts to recruit them for a common struggle against the Bolsheviks. Baltic ships had carried war supplies across the Atlantic Ocean, and their fleets had been decimated under the hammer blows of German submarines. In the minds of the hapless Baltic peoples, they were part of the Allied war effort, and they hoped that they would be given the rights to be accorded to other occupied states.

Johannes Kaiv asked the United States to send official observers with the advancing Red Army, asserting that the presence of Americans would be a relief to the Estonian people.<sup>27</sup> Not mentioned in his request, but obviously intended, was Kaiv's belief that even a token number of Americans would prevent the Soviets from reinstating a ruthless campaign against self-determination.

From the countries themselves came pleas for help. Out of the depths of Riga, the Latvian Underground Central Council expressed the hope that the United States and Britain would apply the principles of the Atlantic Charter to Latvia.<sup>28</sup>

The people of the Baltic countries repeated their performance of 1941 as German forces were driven from their lands. In Tallinn, the Estonian Republican National Committee under J. Uluots and O. Tief formed a cabinet.<sup>29</sup> Tallinn was seized and held for four days until the Soviets smashed the independence movement. Uluots escaped to Sweden, but Tief and most of the cabinet were not heard from again.

In the same month in which the Estonians were making their bid for freedom, September of 1944, the Supreme Committee for Liberation of Lithuania appealed from Vilnius to the United States and Great Britain to send missions to Lithuania to protect the rights and interests of the people and to save Lithuania from extermination.<sup>30</sup>

None of these efforts was successful. None of them stemmed the tide of optimism in the United States. Russia was pounding the German foe into submission, and it was popularly hoped that the Russians would not be so severe in their second occupation of the Baltic countries.

Not all Americans joined the chorus of praise for the Red Army. One voice, that of a ruggedly patriotic American, privately was raised in disgust. James V. Forrestal wrote to a friend on September 2, 1944:

I find that whenever any American suggests that we act in accordance with the needs of our own security, he is called a goddamned fascist and imperialist, while if Uncle Joe suggests that he needs the Baltic Provinces, half of Poland, all of Bessarabia, and access to the Mediterranean, all hands agree that he is a fine, frank, candid and generally delightful fellow who is very easy to deal with because he is so explicit in what he wants.<sup>31</sup>

A vivid contrast to the determination of Forrestal was the loss of determination by Sumner Welles. Although he had left the Department of State in 1943, he always would be associated with the strong position he released on July 23, 1940.<sup>32a</sup> However, by 1944, he permitted a book to be published under his name, and the book was unfavorable with regard to the Baltic situation. It contained the misleading statement that the Baltic countries had been "an integral part of Russian territory until the termination of the first world war."<sup>32</sup> The memories of that summer of 1940 had faded when he referred to the "plebiscites of 1939 (sic)."<sup>33</sup> However, the most damaging statement was that "perhaps the peoples of the Baltic States desire to form an integral part of the Union of Soviet Socialistic Republics."<sup>34</sup> An irresponsible remark like this credited to a man like Sumner Welles was a blow to Baltic freedom. It was, indeed, a reflection of mass indifference to the plight of the Baltic peoples.

### **The Yalta Conference**

American indifference to the problem of the Baltic States was highlighted in the Crimean meeting of Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin in 1945. Perhaps it was more a matter of impotence than indifference, but various accounts of the conference



are singularly free of mention of the Baltic States except for a passing reference to the possibility of Lithuania's inclusion in the United Nations as a Soviet Socialist Republic.<sup>35</sup>

If the Baltic States had been of real concern to the United States, even this passing mention would have provoked a vigorous reaction from President Roosevelt. Certainly, Churchill would not have let it pass if the right of self-determination in Lithuania were of vital interest to Great Britain. On the other side of the coin, when an error in translation at Teheran had made it appear that Roosevelt was discussing the Baltic States, Stalin reacted sharply with a statement that the Baltic States had "by an expression of the will of the people voted to join the Soviet Union and that this question was not therefore one for discussion."<sup>36</sup>

Apparently at Yalta Churchill and Roosevelt respected Stalin's position. There is no indication that either of them made any attempt to improve the status of the Baltic peoples. Since Russian troops were in control of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, Roosevelt probably believed that it already was too late to influence the future of three states.

Though the Baltic States did not figure in the meeting itself, they were injected into proposals for discussion while the United States was planning for the conference. In a secret letter of January 8, 1945, John Hickerson, Deputy Director of the Office of European Affairs, urged the Secretary of State to submit certain proposals at Yalta. He stated:

We know that the three Baltic States have been re-incorporated into the Soviet Union and that nothing which we can do can alter this. It is not a question of whether we like it; I personally don't like it although I recognize that the Soviet Government has arguments on its side. The point is that it has been done and nothing which is within the power of the United States Government to do can undo it.<sup>37</sup>

Realism had reached its peak; idealism was fading. Roosevelt's futility of 1942 had now reached into the ranks as Hickerson delivered a Baltic bombshell:

I would favor using any bargaining power that exists in connection with the foregoing matters to induce the Russians to go along with a satisfactory United Nations organization.... I would favor our agreeing to accept as fact the re-incorporation of the three Baltic States into the Soviet Union and our recognition of these areas as Soviet territory. This would involve our withdrawing recognition from the three diplomatic representatives of those countries in the United States.<sup>38</sup>

The official records of the United States do not disclose a reply to Hickerson's proposal. In anticipation of approval, Hickerson had recommended a program to prepare public opinion for a change in American policy.<sup>39</sup> There is no evidence that such a program ever was undertaken.

Bryton Barron, formerly of the Department of State, objected to the deletion of one hundred pages of galley proofs from the official record. He hinted that they may have been historically important.<sup>40</sup> If, as Barron said, information was suppressed, there will continue to be uncertainties about mention of the Baltic States.

William Henry Chamberlin bitterly criticized the United States for its actions at Yalta, asserting that Roosevelt and Hopkins were in poor health and that the new Secretary of State, Stettinius, possessed no qualifications for the position.<sup>41</sup> He went further to muse:

Suppose the United States and Great Britain before Yalta and at Yalta had committed themselves to a firm, uncompromising declaration that they would neither use the war as a means of territorial gain themselves nor recognize any annexations carried out by other powers in violation of the principles of the Atlantic Charter.<sup>42</sup>

His conclusion was that the Soviet frontiers of 1939 would have been recognized as valid, but that not one square foot of eastern European territory beyond the 1939 borders would be accepted as being under Soviet control.<sup>43</sup>

Chamberlin, of course, wrote from the advantage of retrospection. In contemplating the startling gains of the Soviet Union in World War II, Kennan too was looking over his shoulder when he wrote:

... that Russia emerged from this military contest in possession of half of Europe... and when one reflects that all this occurred with the acquiescence, if not the blessings of the Western Allies at the moment, one finds it not surprising that people in the West should subsequently have posed sharply and insistently the simple question: Why? <sup>44</sup>

The Yalta Conference did not restrain the Soviet Union from further gains in Eastern Europe. It did not protect the rights of the Baltic peoples. Indeed, it was a tacit agreement for Soviet domination of Eastern Europe.

## **Conference of the United Nations and Potsdam**

By 1945, the Soviets were firmly entrenched in the Baltic countries, and they had grilled those who had not retreated with the Red Army in 1941, flushing out the strongest of them for punishment. Germany was all but defeated as the Conference

of the United Nations met in San Francisco in April. There were no representatives from the free Baltic States. When the League of Nations stopped functioning politically, the international voice of the Baltic States was stilled.

The Baltic diplomats looked on the United Nations with hope, yet with misgivings. In a note to Secretary of State Stettinius, Johannes Kaiv firmly expressed his opinion that the delegation of the U. S. S. R. could in no way express the view of the Estonian people, a right which belonged only to the legal representatives of an Estonian constitutional government.<sup>45</sup>

From the viewpoint of Baltic independence, the conference at San Francisco was fruitless. The European order which emerged from San Francisco reluctantly included Soviet domination of Eastern Europe.

The status of the Baltic States figured prominently in the Potsdam Conference but only in a secondary aspect. The American version of the proceedings contains many references to Soviet claims to displaced persons, and in every case, the American position held that involuntary repatriation of Baltic nationals would not be permitted.

However, in the discussions among the principals the Baltic States were mentioned only obliquely. Winston Churchill used them as examples of Soviet claims while the three leaders were speaking about colonies: "But in spite of the heavy losses we have suffered, we have made no territorial claims — no Königsberg, no Baltic states, nothing. We therefore approach the question of colonies with complete rectitude."<sup>46</sup>

However, the leaders were not vitally interested in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania though they discussed many states. Truman talked about situations in Greece, Rumania, and Bulgaria. Stalin brought up Poland, Tangier, Syria, Lebanon, and Spain.<sup>47</sup>

Stalin explained to the American and British leaders that the Spanish Government of Francisco Franco had been imposed by the Germans and Italians. His vulnerability in the matter of imposition of governments was not exploited by Churchill or Truman. Charles Boh-len reported that the Soviet Marshal continued his attack on Franco. He wrote that "The Soviet Government thought it would be proper to break off relations with the present regime and give the Spanish people a chance to select a government of their choice."<sup>48</sup>

What an irony it was that the Communist dictator of Russians, Estonians, Latvians, Lithuanians, and other nations should condemn the Fascist dictator of the Spaniards. Neither Truman nor Churchill alienated Stalin by pointing out that a good share of the world felt that the Baltic peoples should have a chance to select governments of their choice.

### **American Policy Hardens Again**

The Baltic fortunes had not been improved by the conferences from Teheran through Potsdam. The three states had slipped back under Soviet domination with less notoriety than there had been in 1940. The Baltic diplomats had not succeeded in convincing the United States to send observers with the advancing Red Army. Ethnic references to the Atlantic Charter had failed to produce action. In fact, except for the important consideration of non-recognition of the absorption, there was no longer a real Baltic issue in the United States.

However, thanks to the Russians, the pendulum of opinion had begun to swing back to sensibility in the United States. Stalin and his Bolsheviks were portrayed less as brave defenders of their native land and more as voracious land pirates. Harry Hopkins advised Stalin in May, prior to the Potsdam meeting, that all was not well between the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. Bohlen wrote that Hopkins told Stalin: "In fact ,in the last six weeks deterioration of public opinion had been so serious as to affect adversely the relations between our two countries."<sup>49</sup>

Any difference between the Soviet Union and the United States was a source of strength at this time for the Baltic diplomats since a Russo-American split made it less likely that the U. S. would change its Baltic policy. In spite of the tragedy of the re-occupation, the Baltic diplomats had survived the dreary period of appeasement.

At this time, America was taking a closer look at the men who had warned of the post-war Russian potential. Some like Loy W. Henderson had weathered the storm without being professionally injured. Others, like A. A. Berle, Jr., had been mauled. Chamberlin quoted Berle's indictment of his opponents:

I felt that the Russians were not going to be sympathetic and cooperative. I was pressing for a pretty clean showdown when our position was strongest. The opposite group in the State Department was largely the men — Mr. Acheson's group, of course — with Mr. Hiss as a principal assistant in the matter... I got trimmed in that fight and, as a result, went to Brazil and that ended my diplomatic career.<sup>50</sup>

The tide which Berle had been unable to reverse in 1944 was in 1945 slowly ebbing. As a realization of Soviet intentions penetrated the American mind, American diplomacy hardened. Moral issues once again could be considered apart from the pressures of self-preservation.

## Notes:

- 1 The German Army quickly captured four million troops in its invasion of the Soviet Union. Many of these were anti-communists who welcomed German intervention. Some of the Baltic peoples interviewed in this study admitted that if Hitler had offered to restore their sovereignty, they would have joined with him in a common struggle against Russia. However, Hitler conquered, not liberated.
- 2 Herbert Feis, *Churchill, Roosevelt, Stalin: The War They Waged and the Peace They Sought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), p. 122. See also Robert E. Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1950), p. 709.
- 3 Jan Ciechanowski, *Defeat in Victory* (Garden City: Doubleday and Company, 1947), p. 186.
- 4 Public support of Russia should not be equated with being a Communist or fellow traveller. The Soviet Union actually was bearing the brunt of German arms while America and Britain virtually were impotent in the European theater at that time. However, there were excessive tendencies to credit the Soviets with the attributes of near-sainthood. In reference to Lippman, William C. Bullitt cited a *Daily Worker* article which criticized Arthur Krock but said this of Lippman: "... Fortunately, more far-sighted... . Walter Lippman... has been arguing rather consistently against those 'frightened of victory'." See *The Great Globe Itself* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1946), p. 259.
- 5 William Henry Chamberlin, *Beyond Containment* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1953), pp. 14-15.
- 6 Bullitt, *op. cit.*, p. 22.
- 7 Chamberlin, *op. cit.*, p. 15, citing *New Masses* (June 22, 1943).
- 8 Bullitt, *loc. cit.*
- 9 *Ibid.*, p. 257
- 10 Cordell Hull, *The Memoirs of Cordell Hull*, 2 vols. (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1948), p. 1266.
- 11 Winston S. Churchill, *Closing the Ring* (Vol. V of *The Second World War*. 6 vols.; Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1948-53), p. 283.
- 12 Ciechanowski, *op. cit.*, p. 228.
- 13 Fleet Admiral William D. Leahy, *I Was There* (New York: Whittlesey House, 1950), p. 185.
- 14 William H. Standley and Arthur A. Ageton, *Admiral Ambassador to Russia* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1955), p. 497.
- 15 Bullitt, *op. cit.*, p. 268.
- 16 Note from the acting Consul General to the Secretary of State, October 13, 1943. (Copy available)
- 17 Sherwood, *op. cit.*, p. 782.
- 18 Churchill, *op. cit.*, p. 381.
- 19 Ciechanowski, *op. cit.*, pp. 247-248.
- 20 Sherwood, *op. cit.*, p. 796.
- 21 United States Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers, The Conferences at Cairo and Teheran, 1943* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1961), p. 594.
- 22 *Ibid.*, p. 595.
- 23 *Ibid.*
- 24 Standley and Ageton, *op. cit.*, p. 303.
- 25 *Ibid.*, p. 381.
- 26 George F. Kennan, *Russia and the West under Lenin and Stalin* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1961), p. 363.
- 27 Note from the Acting Consul General of Estonia, Legation Document No. 768, to the Secretary of State, February 4, 1944. (Copy available).
- 28 Alfred Bilmanis (comp.), *Latvian-Russian Relations: Documents* (Washington: The Latvian Legation, 1944), p. 235.
- 29 *Estonian National Council 1917-1957* (Stockholm: Estonian National Council, 1957), p. 2.
- 30 E. J. Harrison, *Lithuania's Fight for Freedom* (New York: Lithuanian American Information Center, 1952), p. 59.
- 31 Walter Millis (ed.), *The Forrestal Diaries* (New York: The Viking Press, 1951), p. 14.
- 32a For the text of his statement, condemning Soviet aggression in the Baltic States, see *The Department of State Bulletin*, III (July 27, 1940), p. 48.
- 32 Sumner Welles, *The Time for Decision* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1944), p. 330.
- 33 *Ibid.*, p. 333.
- 34 *Ibid.*
- 35 Edward R. Stettinius, *Roosevelt and the Russians* (Garden City: Doubleday and Company, 1949), p. 173.
- 36 Sherwood, *op. cit.*, p. 782.
- 37 United States Department of State, *Foreign Relations of The United States: Diplomatic Papers, The Conferences at Malta and Yalta, 1945* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1955), p. 94.
- 38 *Ibid.*, p. 95.
- 39 *Ibid.*
- 40 Bryton Barron, *Inside the State Department* (New York: Comet Press Books, 1956), p. 165.
- 41 William Henry Chamberlin, *Beyond Containment* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1953), p. 36.
- 42 *Ibid.*, p. 45.
- 43 *Ibid.*
- 45 Note from the Acting Consul General of Estonia, Legation document No. 18, to the Secretary of State, April 6, 1945. (Copy available).
- 46 James F. Byrnes, *Speaking Frankly* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1947), p. 76.



- 47 Harry S. Truman, *Years of Trial and Hope* (Vol. II of *Memoirs*. 2 vols.; New York: Doubleday and Company, 1955-1956), p. 346.
- 48 United States Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers, The Conference of Berlin (The Potsdam Conference), 1945*, Vol. II (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1960), p. 1584.
- 49 *Foreign Relations of the United States, The Conference of Berlin (The Potsdam Conference)*, Vol. I, *op. cit.*, p. 26.
- 50 Chamberlin, *op. cit.*, p. 81.