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Book review

"Lithuania 700 Years" is a book written in six parts from the origin of Lithuania and its people to today and the prospects of national liberation. The language is clear and precise so that one does not have to be Lithuanian to comprehend the material.

In the first chapter titled "The Origin of the Lithuanian Nation" we encounter the nation's prehistory to which there is no ready solution. There have been many scholars fascinated by this topic and have evolved many ethnogenetic theories on this subject. The Lithuanians have been linked to various ancient peoples including the Romans, Greeks, Alans, Herulli, Thracians, Goths, and countless others. Some of the older theories have been based upon nothing more than superficial comparisons of languages and religious customs; while others dealt with the subject in an academic manner. Thus, we see that not only Lithuanians, but also other scholars tried to untangle this mystery.

The second chapter reveals Lithuania as a nation from its beginning history to 1914. We find that tribes of the Indo-European proto-nations lived in the Baltic area as far back as 2,000 B.C. They were scattered over a large unpopulated area without much interrelationship, thus going by separate names. The nation developed as a result of internal and external pressures. We follow the development from its early beginning through the formation of the Kingdom-, Grand Duchy (under which Lithuania reached its pinicle) to its decline by misgov-ernment after the death of Vytautas the Great and to its end in 1795.

All this made us aware of the intrigues imcom-passing the building of a nation which, remaining pagan, became a refugee for men of all creeds and one of the most powerful nations in Europe.

Chapter 3 deals with the birth of Independence. With Russia's calamitous defeat with Japan, Lithuania felt it was the prime time to exert itself. Efforts in the Duma were fruitless. With the outbreak of W.W. I and October Revolution, Lithuanians took the opportunity to declare their Independence. In addition, we see the struggle and suffering this nation endured to attain its rights. We see the futile scheming of other powers to keep Lithuania a pawn. After the treaties were signed, Lithuanians vigorously went about putting the nation in order, only to see destruction with the advent of W. W. II.

The loss of Independence and the resistance to the invaders is discussed in Chapter 4. For twelve years the people refused to accept the fact that their sove-reignty had been usurped, and thus resisted with all their might. To the Lithuanians the resistance meant annational decision; the categorical NO of the entire nation. The hidious crimes committed by the opposition and the fruitless attempt to combat this injustice is portrayed in detail.

With the loss of the freedom the refugees did what they could to fight for their homeland while in the Free World. Chapters 5 and 6 deal with the determination to open world eyes and face the facts of its blunders in W.W. n, and the Yalta and Teheran Conferences. The many political plays and the undauntless people who continued to work for Independence are factually portrayed.

I am grateful to Dr. Gerutis for writing this informative book which is, in my opinion, one of the most worthwhile books I have read. I recommend it to all who are interested in Eastern European history, and especially to the Lithuanian youth.

Valdemaras Šadauskas