

LITHUANIA UNDER NAZI OCCUPATION

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Towards the end of World War II and afterwards the Western and Northern European states, having been temporarily deprived of their sovereignty by Hitler's armies, regained freedom. The courageous activities of the anti-Nazi resistance movements in these countries were given wide publicity in the free Western World. The fact that the struggle against Hitler was carried out and won with the help of the Western allies will remain unforgotten in the history of France, Belgium, Holland, Denmark, and Norway. After a long and terrible occupation, the national freedom of the states and the personal liberties of the people within the countries, were both restored. But more than that was done. Considerable economic and financial aid, culminating in what is known as the "Marshall Plan," was given to these countries as a reward for their resistance to Nazi tyranny.

However, at the same time an even greater number of nations in Middle and Eastern Europe, with as noble a record of anti-Nazi resistance did not enjoy the same advantages. The Poles, who doubtless paid the highest price in blood and sufferings in their fight against Hitler, were sold into the even more terrible tyranny of the communists. Czechoslovakia, too, became a victim of Red totalitarianism. Last but not least — the Baltic states, including Lithuania, were surrendered to Stalin with the full knowledge of the Western powers and despite both the commitments of the Atlantic Charter and the Lithuanians' categorical rejection of Nazism and all totalitarian ideologies.

During the war, at the Teheran and Yalta conference, deep shadows were already falling on the hopes and aspirations of those who were fighting for freedom and who were opposed to any kind of tyranny. The political and military leaders of the West, repeating their verbal commitments for gaining freedom, justice, and democracy, were reluctant in their deeds and hesitated to recognize officially the anti-Nazi resistance movements in the Baltic states and Poland as legitimate testimony of the will of those nations to live in freedom and independence. The Western powers, which did have and possibly still do have the full confidence of the Lithuanians, failed to fully evaluate Bolshevism.

The small, captive nations do not dispose of millions of soldiers or large stocks of a-bombs. Their main weapon is their adherence to the principles of freedom and justice and belief in the final victory of those principles. The firm conviction that the free world will finally return to the universal application of its solemn principles inspires every Lithuanian to tell the freedom-loving world about the struggle of the Lithuanian nation against the prime evil of this century — the criminal totalitarianism of either the fascist or the communist brand. This particular article, limited in length describes the Lithuanian attitude toward the Nazis in the period 1941—1944.

The origin of the anti-Nazi resistance movement in Lithuania

No Lithuanian is ashamed to admit frankly that the first shots and bombs on June 22, 1941, which introduced the German-Soviet war, were welcomed by the majority of his countrymen. The natural, and quite human, fear of war was simply overshadowed by the fact that the war meant the end of the Bolshevik occupation. This occupation, which was full of several cruel crimes and tragedies committed by the Reds, left an impression which will last over the generations. More than 3,000 Lithuanians were tortured to death or shot; 12,000 prisoners were released and told the naked truth about the Red atrocities; and 40,000 people (including women, children, and aged) were deported to Russia in a most cruel fashion,

by order of the Kremlin and executioner Ivan Serov. This then was the human balance left after one year of Red rule. The war did not, of course, resurrect the dead nor did the deportees return — but the liberation of thousands of prisoners and the fact that tens of thousands came out of hiding clearly marked the end of the Red terror regime. There was hardly a family in the country which had not been touched in one or the other way the terror of the Red Regime, and it is therefore not at all surprising that the first salvos of the war sounded like resurrection bells to the people. There is no reason to be ashamed of this spontaneous and psychologically justified reaction, nor is there any reason for misinterpretation.

The German-Soviet war did not come as a complete surprise. The anti-communist Lithuanian underground organizations had definite news months before that war was inevitable. The Russians had pressed an ever increasing number of troops into the country and made no attempt to hide the fact that the Soviet Union wanted to intervene in the World War as soon as the "Capitalists," id est the Western Allies and Nazis alike, had "lost enough blood." Therefore a certain pre-war atmosphere was evident in Lithuania long before the war actually started.

The relatively well organized anti-communist underground movement, representing the anti-totalitarian views of the masses and the nation's desire to be independent, had waited for the war to start and the subsequent chance to get rid of terror and oppression. However, even at that time, their familiarity with the practices of Hitlerite Germany did not leave many illusions about freedom under a Nazi occupation. The Lithuanian nation, as well as its resistance organizations, knew very well that the fulfillment of their firm hopes depended on the Western Allies alone. The Western principles of freedom and justice were very well known; but the geopolitical situation of the country forced the Lithuanians to go their own way, as determined by local conditions. In view of the absence of direct and specific Western commitments for the attainment of Lithuania's freedom, the Lithuanian resistance organizations chose a strategic line based upon the moral principles of international justice and cooperation between nations and tactically aimed at the goal of saving as many Lithuanians as possible from death and physical destruction by the two neighboring totalitarian giants.

Fully convinced of the fact that, in the event of war, the whole nation would immediately rise as one man, the resistance movement planned the immediate take-over of the inner administration of the country and the initiation of a temporary government. There was not much hope that the Third Reich would respect such an act of self-determination — Hitler's acts of aggression in other parts of Europe were flagrant counter-proof — but the resistance was determined to face the new invader with a *fait accompli*. It was also thought that such an act would demonstrate to the entire free world that Lithuania was determined to obtain freedom and that she was not at all satisfied with the fact that one occupation power would replace another without the Lithuanian people being consulted.

This plan was executed precisely. The armed uprising against the Bolsheviks started with the first hour of the war. More than 100,000 active fighters had the support of the entire nation. In the evening hours of the first day at war, special units of the underground occupied the central radio building in Kaunas; and on the following morning, June 23, 1941, the Temporary Government of Independent Lithuania was publicly proclaimed. The first German units did not reach Kaunas until June 25 when the city and a considerable part of the country were already freed from the Red troops.

It must be said that the German Army, for as long as it was in charge of the country, respected the Lithuanian Government — it obviously was lacking instructions from the political leaders of the Reich, who were caught by surprise. In several cases the relations between the Army commanders and the Lithuanian administration were even more than correct. During this rather short period there were no essential obstacles presented by the Germans to hinder the restoration of normal life and the abolition of the remnants of the Bolshevik occupation. It soon turned out, however, that the German Army had no political jurisdiction whatever and that political leaders in the Reich had no sympathy at all toward Lithuania's desire for freedom. Quite to the contrary, the Nazis installed their own civil administration composed of uniformed party cadres, and the Lithuanian Temporary Government was forcibly abolished. This process of reshuffling lasted until late August, 1941, at which time there was no doubt left that Hitler-Germany regarded Lithuania as part of its war loot and subject to colonial experiments. The communist decree abolishing private property, which was cancelled by the Temporary Government, was restored and maintained by the Nazis. German Nazis imported from the Reich were appointed as managers of the more important enterprises. This was the beginning of a policy of extermination. Its aim after the war, which Hitler thought he would win, was the expropriation of all people in Lithuania in favor of Germany. The Lithuanians were to become serfs of the Nazis — or were scheduled for deportation to Russia.

Anti-Nazi Resistance

As previously mentioned, the anti-communist resistance movement had no illusions and was not in sympathy with Nazi Germany. The prohibition of the Temporary Government, the introduction of a Nazi occupation regime, the further maintenance and even reinforcement of the Red expropriation scheme by the Germans, and, last but not least, the large scale massacres introduced by the Nazi administration increased the Lithuanian distaste of national-socialism even more. However strong and justified the Lithuanians' hatred of Bolshevism was, they did not want to have anything in common with another brand of the same criminal gang. In August, 1941, a reshuffling of the Lithuanian underground movement had already taken place. In September 1941, the Movement of Lithuanian Freedom Fighters (LLKS) issued its first clandestine publication sharply attacking the new occupation power and the Nazi ideology.

The Lithuanian nation can be proud of the fact that none of its political movements was ready to collaborate with the Germans. Even the number of individual "Quislings" was small. It can be said that, except perhaps for Poland, Lithuania

was the only European country which remained absolutely "clean." The very few who did collaborate with the Germans, out of fear or because of opportunism did not represent any problem to the underground resistance. They were automatically isolated from the people and had no influence on the strictly anti-Nazi attitude of the broad masses. There is no Lithuanian parallel to such figures as Petain and Laval in France, Quisling in Norway, or De-grelle in Belgium.

It should not be forgotten, however, that a nation wants to live, even under an occupation, and that it wants to and must try to avoid chaos and disaster: schools must function, food supplies are essential, traffic must be maintained, etc. And it was of course inevitable that the officials of communal and public life had to communicate with the Nazi rulers of the country — in the vital interests of their own people. Eut all of those institutions mentioned above were, in fact, controlled by the underground movement. Many of the officials, including leading managers, were active members of the resistance. They had their specific directives and sought to achieve their aim: to keep the nation alive physically, economically, and culturally. They also knew various ways to prevent Lithuania from becoming a satellite and from being sucked dry by the Nazi war machine.

For all these reasons the desperate efforts of the occupation power to convert the Lithuanians into sympathizers of the Third Reich and of Nazi ideology failed to achieve results. The Nazis finally gave up and concentrated all their efforts on the economic exploitation of the country and the mobilization of manpower into their own armed forces.

The basic concepts of the Lithuanian underground

One of the main concepts of the Lithuanian underground with regard to fighting against the Nazis was predestined by the geographical situation of the country and by the fact that Soviet Russia had become an ally of the Western powers. Frankly speaking, and despite all of the Nazi cruelties, it must be admitted that the Nazi occupation was less terrible than the one year of Bolshevik occupation — at least for the overwhelming majority of the people. This is no compliment to Adolf Hitler because the massacre of the Lithuanian Jews (7% of the population) remains unforgotten, and there were enough acts of atrocities and cruelties against other strata of the population to make it clear to every Lithuanian that Nazism remained a deadly enemy of the Lithuanian nation. What is meant is this: the Nazi occupation was not so tough as to permit no solution other than an armed resistance as "ultima ratio." There was some armed resistance — but it was not all mandatory at the time.

There was enough spiritual strength and means left to the people to fight the occupier with methods of passive resistance and political warfare, and there also was the determination to turn towards an armed uprising when it became necessary. This latter intention was growing because the people wanted to demonstrate to the Western Allies that they were on their side, the side of freedom, and that they were determined to fight any kind of totalitarianism. The underground even had to strive hard to prevent such an outburst because there was absolutely no guarantee that an armed uprising, which would have cost streams of blood, would really have ended with a victory and the restoration of freedom in the country. The Western alliance with the Red Hitler-Stalin was the big shadow: an uprising would have helped not the West but probably the communists to come back to Lithuania and repeat their cruelties. Under such pessimistic circumstances, which unfortunately have been justified by the historic developments, the Lithuanian nation and its underground could not go the same way as the French resistance. A look at the map of Europe will convince every unbiased spectator, that the Lithuanian nation had no solution other than to behave the way it did.

Despite the principle of "Wait and See" dictated by the geographical situation, the Lithuanian underground adhered to other principles which likewise demonstrated its solidarity with the Western Democracies. The slogans were: "Not one man for Hitler's Armies," "Sabotage the delivery of goods to Germany," "Disseminate the truth about Nazi atrocities in Lithuania in the countries abroad"; and a sharp polemic against Nazi ideology was conducted in the underground press. Another aim of the underground was to clarify beyond any doubt the fact that Lithuania had been forcibly occupied by the Germans and that she was determined never to become a satellite or associate of the Reich — that she was opposed to the German aims. Those principles corresponded absolutely clearly with the facts, and history has confirmed their truth.

Not one man for the Nazi War Machine ..

During the first days of the war, several battalions of the former Lithuanian Army which had been forcibly incorporated into the Soviet Armed Forces succeeded in freeing themselves from the Reds. Entire units — respected by the German Army — placed themselves under the jurisdiction of the Temporary Government. These units represented a permanent force of some 2,500 soldiers known as the "Self-Defense Battalions." At that time, as said before, the aims of the Germans were not yet clear. Later these battalions were sent out of the country by the Germans where they were used as non-combat teams behind the front lines.

The existence of those units has nothing to do with the eventual sympathies of the Lithuanians for Germany. The few remaining soldiers who were under arms were direct victims of the Bolshevik atrocities — their relatives or even the men themselves had been tortured, tormented, or deported by the Reds.

Just before the war in June, the Bolshevik terror had reached its peak: the atrocities committed were indescribable; in numerous prisons absolutely all of the prisoners were slaughtered like cattle, civilians were killed in masses and deported

by the thousands. All these atrocities naturally touched the people tremendously, and so it came about that quite a number of them burned with revenge and took up arms to fight Bolshevism wherever possible.

But when the Nazi administration was introduced and total occupation was proclaimed by the Germans, there were no more "volunteers" for those units. It had become clear to everybody, step by step, that the Lithuanians' participation in active fighting would not change the situation. It would instead cost men and blood — men whose active strength and determination would probably be of great value later, when the hour of freedom would really come. Therefore the Lithuanian underground instructed the prospective "volunteers" not to join the "battalions" and organized numerous cases of desertion. The underground press, anti-communist as ever, pro-Western but deeply concerned over the Western mesalliance with Moscow, saw its main task in discovering and unmasking the real aims of the Nazis — their cruelty and their will to subjugate Lithuania. This line helped to persuade even the most justified haters of communism to refrain from joining the "battalions." Individual volunteers were so scarce that it can be said that more Poles and Czechs fought for the Germans than Lithuanians.

As long as the Germans were successful in the East, no efforts were made by the occupation forces to mobilize the Lithuanians for armed service. This changed after the hard winter of 1941-42. In 1942 the Nazis announced a mobilization of men for the so-called "transport service" in the East, applying to all males born in 1918—1922. The administration threatened deserters with death by shooting and reprisals against their family members. The Lithuanian underground press violently opposed the mobilization decree. It advised the people not to apply to the recruiting commissions and to prevent others from going there — because only if there were a general boycott would the Nazis be forced to abstain from reprisals. This appeal was a complete success. In all of Lithuania only 200 people applied — most of them lame and blind. The mobilization concerned only certain age classes; therefore the underground organized an issue of falsified identity cards (false birth dates) on a large scale. This was of course only a preliminary measure because proper birth dates could easily be determined by the Germans from the metrication offices. But the identity cards were a tremendous help during searches and unexpected checks by the German occupation organs.

The 1942 "Transport Service" mobilization was a flagrant failure. There were tendencies to introduce large scale reprisals on the part of the Nazi political party; however, the military command opposed such plans. Lithuania, deep in the rear of the front, was a relatively "quiet" country and the military had no desire to open a "second front" behind the battle lines.

So the Nazi administration was forced to retire to the old methods of recruiting people on "a private" basis by incitements or by force. But those efforts also got no results. The Germans had no legal basis for a mobilization because Lithuania was not an independent but an occupied country — by the will of the same Nazi politicians. So, even the few Lithuanian "volunteers" could not be recognized as full members of the German Army! Therefore they were induced as "volunteers" in various "auxiliary forces." This of course gave many people the fine and proud argument — "we will be honest soldiers but not hirelings." Then came 1943 with the Bolsheviks coming nearer and the Nazis getting nervous. They determined to mobilize the Lithuanians into special SS Legions (where no German citizenship was required as in the Army). In Lithuania the Germans place certain prominent people (among them one bishop) under tremendous pressure to sign an appeal to their countrymen to join a "Lithuanian SS Legion" which never materialized. But even this attempt failed because of stubborn attitude of the people and the underground. The Nazis answered with repressions (described below).

This fight of the underground was a complete success! The "Lithuanian SS Legion" was never formed. The Lithuanians failed to respond, despite the threats to introduce an all-out "Polish Policy," e. g., large scale massacres, concentration camps, punitive units, etc.

Toward the beginning of 1944, when there was no longer any doubt about the fact that Germany had lost the war, the occupation powers again tried to mobilize the Lithuanians for the armed forces. The situation had meanwhile changed considerably, with the Soviet armies coming nearer and the unrest and fear of the population growing. Therefore, in close connection with the underground movements in Latvia and Estonia and after due consultation with the Finnish General Staff (secret communication was established), discussions began on how to defend the Baltic area from a new Bolshevik invasion. It must be said that many illusions prevailed at that time about the possible intervention of the Western Powers.

When the Germans renewed their efforts to mobilize the Lithuanians for the Armed Services, the underground contacted Gen. Plechavičius, the future commander of the Lithuanian units, and reached an agreement with him that the underground would support his efforts. But there was the fundamental and mutual understanding that the new units, to be known as the Territorial Corps, were exclusively for the defense of Lithuania's territory from the Bolsheviks. Gen. Plechavičius committed himself to take immediate counter action if the Germans should try to deport the units outside of Lithuania — his action, in this event, should eventually be demobilization, it was agreed.

The Territorial Corps, consisting of several thousand men, was formed. But its history was short. The Germans did not keep their promise to leave the units in Lithuania. Gen. Plechavičius and his officers reacted promptly. After a short struggle and some "negotiations," the staff, including Gen. P., were arrested by the Gestapo and deported from Lithuania. The majority of the men in the army deserted — some in full arms. Several small units, however, were surrounded by German troops and forcibly incorporated into the German Army. Quite a number of soldiers and officers were shot to death by the Germans for their resistance to Nazi orders.

It is hard to say how many Lithuanians became members of the German armed forces in the way described above, but the number was relatively small. When the Bolsheviks finally occupied Lithuania, the Germans tried to make some Lithuanian companies fight against the Western Allies on the Western front. The results were discouraging: the Lithuanians deserted to the Western Allies on every possible occasion. In Italy an entire company defected to the British and was incorporated as part of the Gen. Anders troops into the Western Forces. This commando unit distinguished itself in the fight against the Nazis in Italy.

Nazi Efforts to Recruit Manpower

The mobilization of soldiers for the Nazi war machine in Lithuania failed, but similarly the Nazis tried to recruit manpower for the war industry in the Reich. These efforts also were absolutely rejected by the Underground. Recruitment on a mass scale, partly applying armed pressure, did not get any substantial results. The Nazi police had to go out on individual manhunts. At times, the individual reprisals became very strong, and the Lithuanians in the communal administration retreated to another measure: they rendered small contingents of criminals to the Germans right from the prisons — as it is practiced and possible under democratic laws. In addition, the Germans likewise deported political prisoners and "persons guilty of war sabotage" for work in the Reich. But all those "departures" for the Reich were sporadic, achieved under force and far from any kind of "voluntary application." The Lithuanians time and time again explained to the Germans that economic chaos would immediately spring up in the country if many people were departed into the Reich. So, also in the field of labor recruitment, the Nazis were faced with a wall from which they could only remove several small stones. Their repressions affected certain individuals, but did not frighten the majority. "Preserve yourself in Lithuania" — this slogan of the underground movement won. This firm rule was absolutely kept with the help of forged documents, permanent change of places of residence, etc.

Until the summer of 1943 the labor recruitment scheme was as unsuccessful as the mobilization efforts. There are no definite statistics about the number of people deported for work in Germany; there may have been a few thousand but no more. The situation changed slightly in the beginning of 1944. With part of the country already occupied by the Bolsheviks and fear spreading, some people actually "volunteered" for work in Germany. But their aim was not to aid the Nazis or to earn money in Germany, but to get as far away from the Bolsheviks as possible and closer to the Western Powers. This movement finally ended in a mass flight. The Western invasion of the European continent was the great hope for all the escapees — everybody knew that the days of the Nazis were now numbered anyway. But even under such circumstances, the Lithuanians had no desire to aid Nazi industry. The people did everything possible to avoid working for the Nazi war machine. Most worked in agriculture if there was no other solution.

Economic Sabotage

Lithuania's economy suffered considerably under the Nazi rule. All of the nationalization decrees issued by the Bolsheviks were reinforced, and the Nazis practically owned all industrial property, including goods on stock and individual farmsteads. The population had to live on meager food rations while the farmers were pressed with high delivery quotas. The introduction of the ruble by the Bolsheviks had caused the first inflation. Now came an even worse inflation through the introduction of the German Ostmark. The exchange rates of the ruble against the new payment certificates were fixed at a rate which meant the outright robbery of the country. It would lead too far to describe all this in detail. But the Lithuanians answered with their only possible weapon: silent sabotage of the occupier's economic efforts. Municipal authorities and individual farmers forged delivery statistics. Stocks of goods were distributed before the Nazis had time for a proper registration. Workers and employees were more or less free to take what they needed from the production output. A "Black Market" (read: normal market) immediately sprang up with the purpose of supplying the inhabitants of the towns with essential food and industrial goods. The underground not only tolerated such "economic activities" but in some cases even supported the organizers. The predominant aim of the Lithuanians was to prevent the feeding of the German war machine but, in view of the economic misery upheld and caused by the Nazis, not much agitation was necessary. The food rations allowed on food cards represented outright starvation norms. Forgeries of statistics, black marketeering, even theft were deprived of their original amoral and derogatory meaning and became features of anti-Nazi resistance, a part of the peoples' fight for freedom.

Such operations were greatly facilitated due to the fact that the Nazis had not enough people in Lithuania to enforce the economic controls. This fact was most obvious in agriculture which produced almost 80% of the country's gross output. Though the Nazis doubtless succeeded in robbing the country of many economic goods, they did not get even a fraction of what they should have, considering the "benevolence" of the Lithuanians, which they failed to approach. They got only the minimum amount necessary to prevent large scale terroristic executions. And the Germans were afraid to introduce such executions for fear that they might provoke outright fighting.

Resistance Activities

The resistance movement had thousands of members in every part of the country. It represented an organized mass movement which was active in every possible way, but primarily through the press. There were more underground papers and publications than there were official ones edited under the censorship of the Nazis. The underground press was printed in secret, special underground printing shops — sometimes under severe security precautions, even with the help of official printing specialists of the "official" press. The essential printing material was obtained from the German-controlled

stocks, often by means of staged robberies. The Lithuanian personnel of the stocks in most of the cases, was well-informed in advance about the "robberies" which then proceeded smoothly.

The number of copies of the underground publications in circulation was tremendous. The three main papers LAISVES KOVOTOJAS (The Freedom Fighter), NEPRIKLAUSOMA LIETUVA (Independent Lithuania), and I LAISV? (Toward Freedom) appeared bi-monthly and each printed 20,000 copies per issue. Besides these major editions, there was a multitude of other printed and dittoed publications. It can be said without exaggeration that there was a newspaper available, of one kind or the other, twice a month for every single Lithuanian.

The underground press conducted a harsh anti-Nazi propaganda campaign. Besides world news on the latest developments, there appeared special instructions on how to behave in general and in specific instances in dealing with Nazi activities. The underground press reacted immediately to each and every decree of the occupying power, and therefore every Lithuanian could feel that he was not alone in his feelings and struggle.

Besides the propaganda spread by the press and word, a special clandestine transmitter of the underground, under the name of "Radio Vilnius," commenced operations at the beginning of 1944. The transmitter was located near Kaunas, but the exact location was changed after each transmission. Later on our Western friends congratulated the Lithuanians for having successfully operated the only open propaganda station against the Germans in all of Nazi occupied Europe.

In 1943 a special emissary of the Lithuanian underground was dispatched across the Baltic Sea to Sweden, where he contacted authorities of the Western Allies. Contact was maintained with this emissary by means of a Morse-radio transmitter. This emissary, along with the Western authorities, established channels for the communication of information and of publications from Nazi occupied Lithuania to the free Western world. He also submitted a number of memorandums and requests for aid to the Western Allies. However, neither active nor passive resistance, neither fighting nor sympathy for the Western Allies, in which all the Lithuanians' hopes were placed, ever materialized.

It is nearly impossible to report all the details of the activities of the Lithuanian resistance movement. In summing up, it can be said that the Lithuanian anti-Nazi resistance was effective and that it was fully controlled by the underground movement. In this connection I will mention, in addition, the perfect underground centers for the fabrication of documents to protect people from being mobilized or deported to Germany as labor to protect them from arrests by the Gestapo, or to protect the Jewish Lithuanian citizens who were escaping from the ghettos.

Contacts were also maintained with the resistance movements in Latvia, Estonia, and Poland. During joint conferences with representatives of the respective underground movements the prospect of restoring national sovereignty in the countries of Eastern Europe with the help of the Western Allies after the final collapse of Hitlerite Germany was discussed. But, except for the strengthening of mutual solidarity, the conferences had no substantial results — due to the fact the West deliberately left Eastern Europe to Bolshevik despotism.

The Price

What is previously written has been kept in the cold style of reporting statistics and facts. But the reality was far from this "dryness" — it was dramatic. The Lithuanian nation and its underground suffered losses in men and blood in the struggle against the Nazis. It is true that not even one group of Lithuanians collaborated with the Nazis, but nevertheless the Gestapo succeeded in striking hard. Due to the betrayal of several individuals — there was a Judas even among the twelve apostles — quite a number of underground fighters and people connected with their work fell victim to the Gestapo and the SD; a large number of underground press distributors also was apprehended. When the Nazi efforts to mobilize soldiers from Lithuania failed, in the spring of 1943, the universities and colleges were closed. A large number of professors, artists, priests, students, pupils, and officials were arrested and deported to German concentration and destruction camps. Many Lithuanian municipality employees who "collaborated" with the Germans under special auspices of the underground and aided their own country, likewise ended up in the death camps. The silent resistance of the peasantry also resulted in heavy losses. A number of Lithuanians, with a pre-war record of anti-Nazi sentiment, were also shot or tortured to death in the camps. Besides these thousands, the Nazis killed more than 150,000 Lithuanian Jews; their only "guilt" was their Jewish origin. Their death is certainly one of the greatest crimes in the register of Nazi atrocities in Lithuania.

It is certainly hard to estimate how many people died in the struggle against Nazism. Most of these concentration camps are today under Bolshevik rule, and the Communists keep an understandable silence about the criminal activities of which they in fact are the inventors and Hitler the "talented" imitator. There are some figures available from former Nazi death camps in the West. Among the 73,296 victims in the Flossenbug camp there were 2,480 Lithuanians. There were prisoners of eighteen nations in that camp and the death rate of the Lithuanians ranked eighth. A great number of Lithuanians also died in the Stutthof concentration camp near Danzig (Gdansk), among them quite a number of well-known people.

The Lithuanian nation will always remember the victims of Nazi persecution with the most reverence and respect. But this feeling of mourning is not lightened by hope and expectation. The fighters for freedom and democracy have been left alone. No reward has been granted to the Lithuanian nation as a victim of Nazi terror. This is bitter. Even two-thirds of the

German nation have been rewarded today in various forms and by various means, while the nations of East Europe, who fought against the same Germans who were under Hitlerite leadership, have been forgotten. It is bitter to see that so many pro-Nazis today are being received as new "allies." It is not for lack of the "reward" however that the Lithuanians are bitter — we never were and never will be jealous of any nation's freedom and prosperity. But what about the millions who died? What about those who continue the struggle against the Bolshevik tyranny? Why have they been forgotten? It would be a poor resistance that was opposed to only one form of totalitarianism — namely, Naziism. More important than the fight against something is the fight for something — for freedom and human decency. That is why the Lithuanians fought Hitler; that is why they fought Stalin; and that is why they continue to oppose "collective tyranny." It is the memory of those who died which makes us ask, which makes their skulls glance through what once were eye-sockets at the principles of the Atlantic Charter — and ask: Why?