

RUSSIAN COMMUNISM IN PRACTICE* COMMUNIST-CONTROLLED ELECTIONS

•) "Communist Takeover and Occupation of Lithuania" Special Report No. 14 of the Select Committee on Communist Aggression. Eighty-Third Congress

On July 5, 1940, the Lithuanian Government published an official communique to the effect that the elections to the People's Diet would be held on July 14. The next day Paleckis, Acting President of the Republic, published a new electoral law.

The law on elections was based on the pattern of the electoral law of the U.S.S.R. The basic principle of the law was that the nomination of the candidates should be reserved for the Communist Party and its affiliated organizations. However, the voting should be equal, direct, secret, and carried out according to the principles of universal suffrage.

Full control of elections was in the hands of the Supreme Electoral Commission, appointed by the Government, the members of which were Communists.

Execution of the law on elections was entrusted to the Soviet Secret Police (NKVD) established under the name of State Security Department within the Ministry of the Interior. A. Snieckus, secretary general of the Lithuanian Communist Party, was appointed its Director.

On July 7, 1940, the Director of the State Security Department ordered the liquidation of all non-Communist parties and the arrest of their leaders and active members.

This left the Communist Party the only recognized party but in order to mislead the voters, it took on the name "Union of Working People of Lithuania."

The main concern of the Communist Party was that the greatest possible number of voters should vote. To accomplish this goal intimidation and police methods were used. The duty to vote was especially emphasized. The daily newspaper, Vilnius Balsas, stated in its editorial of July 9, 1940:

Persons who do not vote, who do not take part in elections, are not concerned with the future of the people. They are the enemies of the people. There is no longer a place for such persons in working Lithuania.

However, on July 14, 1940, very few people voted (15 to 20 percent). Absentism was so evident that the Communist Party decided to take some additional measures. On the evening of July 14, the Acting President of the Republic promulgated a decree extending the voting until 10 p.m., July 15. In it he warned:

Only the enemies of the people, only the enemies of this new Lithuania, may stay home and not participate in the victory march of the Lithuanian people.

The administration issued orders to county chiefs, police, and chiefs of townships to take all necessary measures, to organize transportation to polls and to warn the population of their duty to vote. Consequently, the next day the population took part in the "election" and cast ballots "freely" and with "enthusiasm".

On July 17, 1940, the Supreme Electoral Commission published the following statement on the results of elections:

1. In the elections to the People's Diet, which took place on July 14—15, 1940, 1,386,569 voters have submitted 1,386,569 envelopes: this represents 95.1 percent of all those who had the right to vote according to section 1 of above-mentioned law.

2. For the ticket of the Union of Working People's 1,375,349 voters, or 99.19 percent of all who cast ballots, voted.
3. No complaints on irregularity of voting were submitted.

ARRESTS, DEPORTATIONS AND MASS EXTERMINATION

The plan to enslave the Lithuanian nation was prepared in Moscow long before the occupation of Lithuania by the Soviet troops. A few hours after the mutual assistance pact between Lithuania and the Soviet Union was signed on October 10, 1939, the Deputy Commissar of the Soviet Union, General Serov, issued an order for the arrest and deportation of all anti-Soviet elements from Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. Under the cover of the mutual assistance pact, the Soviet Union was able to plant a large number of NKVD agents and other subversives in Lithuania. These elements jointly with the Lithuanian Communist Party prepared the careful execution of General Serov's order.

On July 7, 1940. A. Snieckus, the above-men-tioned Director of the Security Department and the secretary-general of the Lithuanian Communist Party, ordered the arrest of the leaders and active members of all non-Communist parties. As a result, about 2000 leading Lithuanians were arrested and imprisoned.

This was only the first step.

On November 28, 1940, the People's Commissar for the Interior issued a new order about negligence in accounting concerning anti-Soviet and socially alien elements. The elements to be "accounted" included all former members of anti-Soviet political parties, organizations and groups; all former members of nationalistic parties, organizations and groups; former gendarmes, policemen, and genera's; former army officers; persons expelled from the Communist Party for anti-party offenses; political emigrants, reemigrants and repatriates; all citizens of foreign countries, representatives and employees of foreign firms, and foreign legations; persons having personal contacts with people or institutions abroad; former workers of the Red Cross; former noblemen, estate owners, merchants, bankers, and employers of hired help.

On May 23, 1941, by an order of the Lithuanian S.S.R., an operational staff was formed "for direction, preparation, and execution of the operation of purging of the Lithuanian S.S.R. from the hostile and criminal and socially dangerous element".

Finally, the People's Commissariat of State Security of the Soviet Union on May 31, 1941, gave the order to make final preparations for deportations.

Between June 14—21, 1941, 34,260 persons were deported to the remote areas of Siberia and the Arctic.

.In 1944 the Soviets invaded Lithuania for the second time. The return of the Red invaders was followed by a new wave of deportations and arrests.

There were several waves of mass deportations, but the Lithuanian people were hardest hit by deportations carried out in 1948—49 when, in order to break the resistance of Lithuanian farmers against forcible collectivization of their land, about 10 percent of Lithuania's population was driven to Siberia.

The inhuman conditions in which the deportations were carried out were best described by Mrs. Galinska, one of the deportees, at the hearing of the Committee on Communist Aggression.

Another witness, Dr. M. Devenis, American citizen of Lithuanian extract, was arrested in Lithuania and deported to the Arctic area. The relevant portion of Dr. Devenis' testimony gives a vivid picture of these deportations:

Mr. McTigue. Do you recall anything happening on that transport?

Mr. Devenis. Well, an unusual thing happened. On the second day I was called to the hull of the toat. One of the guards*** got sick. They found out (hat I was a doctor, and they called me to treat that guard.

I experienced an unusual sight there. There were about 80 people, invalids, some without arms, without legs, with frozen noses, ears, and so on. I was wondering what was happening. If they were taking them to hospitals, they would take them in the opposite direction, but they were taking them north to the Arctic Ocean.

Later on, about several months after, when I was in Sovchoz, I met that guard, and I asked what happened with those people. He was rather friendly to me. He said, "What do you think? Don't you know the Russian Constitution? Everybody who eats is supposed to work. Why should we feed them? We just took them to the ocean and dumped them into the ocean..."

From the Testimony of Canon Antanas Paetraitis, one of small handful who survived Cherven Forest Massacre*

"One scene I will not forget until (I) die. There was one woman with a boy 4 or 5 years old, not more than that. She was arrested quite recently because both she and the child were dressed well. The boy began to ask for food and water, and, of course, nobody could give him anything . . . That mother carried her child and other people helped her to carry the child ... I saw that that woman was removed from the column with the child, and I thought to myself, 'Well, at least they had mercy on her with a child.' And I said, 'May the Lord be praised that child will not suffer any longer,' but then I heard voices behind me. I turned around and saw two NKVD and one was handing the pistol to the other and said, 'Here, shoot them.' So the other man apparently did not want to do that and so he said, 'Well, you can do that.' The other man said, 'No, but the NKVD commander ordered you.' So he took the pistol, hid it behind his coattail and jumped across the ravine and that woman was standing in front and the child was hugging his mother... And he aimed the pistol at the mother. The child understood there was something wrong and he yelled, 'Mother,' and hugged his mother. Two shots were fired.

The mother fell, and the child was still hugging her. The child fell on top of his mother. So he came up and lifted the child by the collar, and he fired two shots into the back of his head, and he tossed the child on top of the mother and left them there.

Two weeks later when we were returning, I saw the same scene, that same child with the mother . . ."

* "Baltic States Investigation" — U. S. Eighty-Third Congress.