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ONDERWERP: Deportations and Collectivisation in
ESTONIA and LITHUANIA

Economic and Political Situation in ESTONIA.

ag. 2/2

ag. 2/4

ag. 2/1
01.12. - ag. 2/4

~~ag. 2/2~~

ag. 2/1
01.12. - ag. 2/2

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Political/Economic

Deportations and Collectivisation in Lithuania,

1949

A. DEPORTATION

1. Extent

The following figures take no account of the constant flow of deportations from prisons in Lithuania, but deal only with the five major mass deportations. Naturally, no official statistics have been published; perhaps they have never been compiled. However, it may be taken as fairly certain that 150,000 Lithuanians were deported in 1941 (during the first Soviet occupation), in the September 1945 and February 1946 waves jointly. There was a fourth large wave of deportations in December 1947, for which no figure is available. It is also reported that 100,000 persons were deported from Lithuania in May 1948, and 60,000 in March and April 1949. The two latter figures may exaggerate, as they come from South Lithuania, which suffered worst; but allowing for the December 1947 wave, a round total of 300,000 deportees all told seems probable.

In May 1948, 4,500 Lithuanians are said to have been deported from the three small south-west countries of ALYTUS, VAVENA and LAZDIJAI alone.

2. Selection

Motives for deportation are in the main the following:-

- a) Suspect membership of any resistance movement.
- b) Family relationship to any partisan.
- c) Proved family relationship to any "Displaced Person" who has not returned home.
- d) Regular correspondence with persons abroad.
- e) Opposition to collectivisation.

3. When any Lithuanian has been selected for deportation, his whole family goes with him: wife, children and even parents, especially if they are living with him. In this way no distinction is made between age groups or the sexes; but in practice two-thirds of those deported are women, children or old people.

4. Peasants have been the main sufferers; firstly, many were deported because they were suspected of helping partisans; now the latest wave of deportations has affected persons proved or suspected of resisting collectivisation.

5. Persons selected for deportations are usually fetched from their homes by MVD troops, and driven, often in their own carts, to barbed-wire enclosures in the nearest town. Here they have to wait a day or so, without any shelter, until the collection is completed and all have signed a declaration of "voluntary removal" to the USSR (usually for 10 years). They are then conveyed by bus or lorry to the nearest railway station, and thence by goods train to Russia.

6. No information is available about the food given to deportees on the train. The amount they can bring themselves depends on the benevolence of the MVD men in charge of the move; sometimes they tell deportees to bring all they can, sometimes only what they can carry on their persons. "Decapitalisation" often takes place at the collection point; this means that Russians or Lithuanian "annihilators" confiscate deportees' personal possessions.

7. Brutality in the form of insults, pushes and blows, seems to occur frequently; but this again depends on the MVD man's frame of mind. In general, anyone trying to escape is shot down, and no allowance is made for weakness or illness. Any physical resistance leads to arrest and imprisonment. The following concrete cases of brutality have been reported:-

a) In the town of ALYTUS, during the May 1948 wave of deportations, an old teacher named GAVELIS who had heart disease, was fetched by the Russians, and fainted as he was climbing into the lorry. He was hurled into the lorry and driven off.

b) In the same wave, an old man named KRILAVICIUS, who had long been ill and bed-ridden, was nevertheless deported from the town of JEZNAS.

c) In February 1946, Mrs. BUJANAUSKIS of BALBIERISKIS village in PRIENAI County, with four small children, and Mrs. VITKAUSKAS of LEIPALINGIS market-town, with three small children were deported; although the temperature was 20° below zero, they were not allowed to wrap their children in warm clothes for the journey, because the Russians were in a hurry.

8. Deportees are subsequently allowed to write letters to their homes, and even to Western countries.

9. The areas in Russia to which Lithuanians have been deported in large numbers are:- VARKUTA (on the Arctic Ocean), ALTAI, the KRASNOYARSK area, KAZAKHSTAN and the DONBAS.

10. Lithuanians deported via a prison and a trial, are sent to punitive labour camps. On the other hand persons deported during one of the mass waves, without crime or sentence, are usually permitted to live freely in the area of their exile - but without the right to move from there. There they are sent to work in coal-mines (as in the DONBAS, and at VARKUTA), in the forests (as in the KRASNOYARSK area) or on kolkhozes (as reported from KRASNOYARSK, ALTAI and kazakhstan). The hardest and most inhuman living conditions are in the mines and forests: and it is here that the more dangerous elements, and Lithuanians who refuse to sign the declaration of "voluntary removal", are placed.

11. On arrival, deportees normally have to build their own barracks, as there is no accommodation for them. Everyone over the age of fifteen has to take part in the work. Their work is sometimes as much as 20 km. from their camps (especially in the Siberian forest camps, but also at kolkhozes); and deportees then have to cover this distance twice a day on foot.

A man who fulfils his norm of work receives 200 to 300 roubles a month and a normal ration of food, which consists mainly of a 1-kg. loaf of bread a day. The norm is based on the ability of a strong and healthy man; if it is not fulfilled, the pay and the ration are reduced. Those who are ill or otherwise unfit for work, get neither pay nor rations. Sanitation is as good as non-existent. Administration is done by Russians, usually men who have been sentenced and deported for criminal offences.

One Lithuanian woman wrote from a deportation camp that "she had become rich" because she had sown 150 potatoes; another wrote that she would be the happiest woman in the world if she had any underclothes to put on.

B. COLLECTIVISATION

12. It was one of the main purposes of the partisan movement to prevent the collectivisation of Lithuania. Early in 1947, the Russians began to establish single kolkhozes, sometimes by sending Russian settlers to take over farms belonging to Lithuanians who had fled abroad. Lithuanian peasants were also encouraged to form kolkhozes voluntarily, for which they obtained considerable tax relief.

13. The partisans opposed collectivisation bitterly. They would shoot down Russian settlers who did not obey partisan orders to flee back to Russia. Lithuanian kolkhoz hands were given orders that they would be regarded as traitors if they did not leave their kolkhozes. As a result, very few kolkhozes, only such as were near to a Russian garrison or well-policed town could survive.

14. During 1948 and the beginning of 1949, the Russians under-took comprehensive "cleaning-up" operations against the partisans. The partisan movement was reduced to a fraction of its former strength; with it, the chief obstacle to collectivisation was removed.

15. At the 4th Plenary Session of the Central Committee of the Lithuanian Communist Party in October 1948 it was decided to carry out intensive propaganda in favour of collectivisation among peasants. Countless propagandists, including members of the Supreme Council, travelled the roads to get the peasants to decide in favour of collective farms. The radio and the press published the names of peasants who spoke against collectivisation at these meetings, and branded them "kulaks". The mass deportations of March and April 1949 followed behind this propaganda campaign, and there is no doubt that the Lithuanians deported at this time were mainly opponents of collectivisation.

16. It is known that at the gathering of the Supreme Council of the USSR in March 1949, delegates from the various republics had to report on the state of collective farming in their own territories. The Lithuanian delegates brought poor figures; it seems likely that those in charge in Lithuania received a reprimand, since the effort to collectivise was all-out from then onwards. With the partisan movement dispersed, peasant resisters deported and the rest of the peasantry terrorised, the way was free for the introduction of kolkhozes.

17. According to official figures published, 5,454 kolkhozes have already been established, employing over 200,000 peasants, or 52% of the total. JURBASKAS County is said to be 100% collectivised, JONISKIS Country 93%, SIAULIAI 93% and ZARASAI 75%. The partisans are still trying to stop collectivisation, even threatening to kill peasants who give way to the authorities; but it seems unlikely that they can prevent complete collectivisation in the long run.

18. Passive resistance by the peasants in the form of denying produce is out of the question; it would only injure the peasants themselves, for it is always the State that decides how much each kolkhoz must deliver.

19. There is no uniform system of pay on kolkhozes. For instance, at LIUDVINAVAS Kolkhoz each hand gets 5 kg. of bread grain plus 6 roubles a day, while at AUSRA Kolkhoz in KEDAINIAI County each hand gets $9\frac{1}{2}$ kg. of bread grain and 3 roubles; at the GEGUZES PIRMOJI Kolkhoz in RASEINIAI County hands get 7 roubles and nothing else, while at BERGALE Kolkhoz near RAUDONDVARIS each hand gets an advance of $1\frac{1}{2}$ kg. grain plus 4 roubles and a promise of 8 kg. grain later. At the LENINO KELIAS Kolkhoz in PASVALIS County hands are promised 10 kg. of grain a day plus various extra payments and an extra sugar ration. On 6th November 1949 the Minister of Agriculture promised each kolkhoz hand an average of 5 to 7 kg. of grain a day. Thus the form of men's pay clearly depends on the age and resources of the kolkhoz; in its early days only an advance of pay is issued; the remainder is paid out some time later, when the farm's production over the year can be assessed.

20. Each man on a kolkhoz does have a small piece of land which he can till privately in his spare time; he is free to sell any of its produce which he does not consume himself.

21. There is no shortage of food in Lithuania, but clothing is very scarce and of poor quality. The question of accomodation on kolkhozes is far from solved; special "building brigades" are erecting stables, byres, sties, etc. for kolkhozes, while old farms are used as dwelling-houses. As for social amenities, there has been no change since collectivisation began.