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10 DOWNING STREET

Prime Minister

Some background  
on the Baltic  
Strait.

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## BALTIC STATES

The Baltic states comprise the present-day Soviet republics of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, on the extreme eastern shores of the Baltic Sea. While, in some respects, they have a common history, they are ethnically and linguistically diverse. The Lithuanian and Latvian languages belong to the Baltic branch of the Indo-European linguistic family. The Estonian people, on the other hand, belong to the Finno-Ugric family of peoples. More anciently, the area included such provinces as Courland (Kurland), Livonia, Selonia, and East Prussia. Under Russian imperial rule from the 18th century, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania were independent from 1917-18 until 1940, when, during World War II, they were overrun by the Soviet Union and incorporated as constituent soviet socialist republics.

## Physical and human geography

## THE LAND

The region is a section of the great North European Plain stretching from the Baltic Sea to the Ural Mountains. The coastal areas are flat and low lying, with few places rising above 300 feet (90 metres); inland there is some hilly land, but, except for Gaizins Hill (1,027 feet [313 metres]), no surface is higher than 950 feet (290 metres). The territory so described applies to the modern Baltic states. Historic Lithuania covered a far larger territory, comprising the whole of Belorussia and, for a time, part of the Ukraine. East Prussia, on the southern and southeastern shores of the Baltic Sea, was overtaken by German expansion in the late Middle Ages.

The Baltic region is crossed by a multitude of rivers emptying into the Baltic, including the Neman and the Western Dvina, and is dotted by more than 6,000 lakes. Almost a quarter of the area is forested. Because of the long occupation by man, animal life is restricted mainly to the smaller animals; but elk, bear, roe deer, wolves, and wild boar do occur, as well as hares and badgers.

Until 1945 the Baltic states were predominantly agricultural, but since then industrial production has increased considerably. Industry includes fishing and forestry as well as mining and manufacturing.

## THE PEOPLE

A group of nations speaking languages of the Indo-European family, the Balts live on the southeastern shores of the Baltic Sea and include the Lithuanians and Latvians (Letts) and several other peoples now extinct—such as the Prussians, who were Germanized at the beginning of the 18th century; the Curonians, who were Lettonized in the 16th century; and the Semigallians and Selonians, who died out in the 14th century. The eastern Baltic tribes, scattered in what are now Belorussia and western Russia, were Slavonized after the northward expansion of the Slavs between the 7th and 13th centuries AD. (The name Balts is derived from the Baltic Sea; it is a neologism, used since the middle of the 19th century.)

The Estonians belong to the Finno-Ugric family of peoples and constitute the core of the southern branch of the Baltic Finns, the other constituents of that group being the Livs and the Votes. The Livs occupy the northern tip of Courland and number fewer than 1,000. The Votes are still less numerous and live in a few villages in the vicinity of Narva. Formerly, they were said to have inhabited the whole of Ingermanland (Ingria), whereas the expansion of the Livs along the Baltic shores to the south reached Kurisches Haff (Kursky Zaliv) toward the end of the 9th century. They were later absorbed by the Latvians.

The Estonians and Livs intermarried with the early Germans and also with the Lapps, but the extent of the admixture is not known. Culturally, the Estonians were strongly influenced by the Germans, and traces of the original Finnish culture have been preserved only in folklore. The Latvians were also considerably Germanized, and the majority of both the Estonians and Latvians belong to the

Lutheran Church. The great majority of Lithuanians, historically long associated with Poland, are Roman Catholic. (Ed.)

## History

## FROM EARLIEST TIMES TO THE 18TH CENTURY

In prehistoric times, the Finno-Ugric tribes formed a long belt in northern Europe from the Urals to northern Scandinavia and south into Latvia. The predecessors of the modern Balts formed an equally long belt further south from a region west of the Urals to the Vistula region, including sizable territories of Russia, the Baltic region, eastern Prussia, and portions of northern Poland. About 1250 BC, during the Bronze Age, the western Baltic region was known throughout the civilized portions of Europe and the Near East as the land of fabulous amber. From the 1st to the 6th century AD, the Baltic peoples experienced their Golden Age, characterized by remarkable cultural progress and vigorous trade with the Roman Empire and the German lands. Western histories praised their industry, humanity, personal integrity, and warlike qualities. The Baltic trade diminished during the years of the decline of the Roman Empire and of the Great Migrations of Germanic tribes. The Balts then engaged alternately in trading and warring with the expanding Scandinavian tribes (from the 8th century) and the Slavs (from the 11th century).

At the dawn of written history the Estonians had eight independent districts and four smaller ones. The Livs had congregated in four major areas of northern Latvia and northern Courland. Among the Balts, the westernmost, or Prussian, group had formed 10 principalities. Yotvings (or Sudavians) and Galindians were considered as separate Baltic groups; they reached far into Slavic territories and were possibly related to the Neuri. Ancient Lithuanians were divided into two major groups, the Samogitians (or Zhemaitians) and the Aukštaitians, later united under one king or grand duke. The Curonians (Kurs), the westernmost Latvian group, had five to seven principalities that were sometimes united under one king, as were the principalities of the Zemgals (Semigallians). Further east were the Latvian Selonians and Latgals (or Latgallians), the latter divided at least into four major principalities ruled by local kings or chieftains.

The religion of the Balts was dominated by a friendly and benevolent god, called Dievs (Dievas), assisted by a number of lesser deities. The Estonians had their own major epic poem, the *Kalevipoeg*, while the Lithuanians, and especially the Latvians, had an immense collection of folk songs called *dainas* (singular, *daina*); their subject matter was the totality of human life, revealing strong individualism, high ethical standards, and a love of work and nature. Archaeological excavations have revealed a high level of artistic expression.

**Conquest of Latvia and Estonia.** In the 9th century, the Scandinavian vikings ravaged the Curonian and Estonian coastal areas and established strongholds and trading posts along the Baltic waterways to Russia. The Curonians managed to destroy a Danish fleet c. 853, and from c. 1040 to c. 1230 the Estonians and Curonians often attacked Danish and Swedish lands. In the east, the Slavs partly destroyed and partly assimilated the Yotvings and Galindians, the remnants of these people being mentioned in Russian chronicles as late as the 15th century. As early as 1030 the Russians took over the southeastern portion of Estonia, but the struggle continued throughout the next century. In 1132 the Estonians defeated a Russian army and in 1177 even attacked the Russian stronghold of Pskov. From time to time Latgallian lands were also invaded by the Russians, but in 1106 the Zemgals defeated two Russian armies.

The Slavic tribes were successful in bringing the Eastern Orthodox religion to eastern Latvia and in establishing alliances with local leaders. One of the oldest (1270) extant Gospels in Russia was written by Georgius, the son of a

The Baltic Golden Age

Christianization of Baltic peoples





Lithuania and the lands ruled by the Teutonic Order in the 14th and 15th centuries.

Adapted from: Westermann: Geographischer Atlas zur Weltgeschichte. Georg Westermann Verlag, Braunschweig.

Latvian priest. The first attempt of the Roman Catholics to bring Christianity to Prussia dates to 997. The first Danish church in Courland was built c. 1070, and the first Danish missionary was sent to Estonia c. 1171. In 1219-22, the king of Denmark, Valdemar II, conquered all of northern Estonia. The Germans conquered the rest of Estonia and Latvia from 1198 to 1290. In 1236 the Order of the Brothers of the Sword, founded in 1202 by Bishop Albert of Buxhoeveden, was defeated by the combined forces of the Lithuanians and Zemgals at Saule, and in 1260 its successor, the Livonian Order (a branch of the Knights of the Teutonic Order), was badly defeated by the Lithuanians and Curonians at Durbe. The Teutonic Order conquered all Prussian lands from 1236 to 1283. (By the end of the 17th century the Baltic Prussians had become completely assimilated by the introduced German population.) Livian territories were conquered by 1207, three of the Latgalian territories by 1214, and Estonia by 1227. Courland lost its independence in 1263, Zemgalia in 1290. The Zemgalian army retreated to Lithuania, and their envoys continued a diplomatic struggle in Rome as late as 1300. In 1343 the northern Estonians freed themselves from the yoke of Denmark, only to be subjugated by the Livonian Order in 1346.

The old order along the Baltic coast was replaced by a number of small feudal ecclesiastical states dominated by German knights and burghers: the State of the Livonian Order, the Archbishopric of Riga, the bishoprics of Courland (Kurzeme), Dorpat (Tartu), and Osel-Wiek (Saaremaa-Läänemaa), and the free city of Riga. Although loosely united in a Livonian confederation from 1418, the states often fought each other and suppressed the native population. The Confederation of Livonia was considered to be the bulwark of the Western world in the East and the intermediary between western Europe and Muscovy, but it was internally weak and a cultural desert, thus allowing the colourful native civilizations to survive.

**Independent Lithuania.** The Lithuanians succeeded in maintaining their independence and were united in 1236 under Mindaugas, who was crowned king of Lithuania in 1253, after accepting Christianity. Ten years later he was assassinated and Lithuania rejected Christianity. The country was not unified again until 1290, when the grand duke Vytenis was recognized as absolute ruler. He was succeeded in 1316 by his younger brother, Gediminas, who ruled until 1341. Gediminas extended Lithuania's territories from the Baltic Sea southward almost to the Black Sea and eastward to the Dnieper. Lithuania became a major power. Under Gediminas' sons Algirdas and Kęstutis, the Grand Duchy expanded to include Kiev in the east, and in 1370 the Lithuanians besieged Moscow. The Tatar conquest of Kiev had destroyed the influence of the Kievan Russian state over the other Russian principalities. This gave Lithuania an opportunity to expand to the east and southeast, while at the same time fighting off the Teutonic Order on its western frontiers. That a small non-Christian state was able to conquer and maintain control over such an extended area was partly the consequence of the skillful diplomacy of the Lithuanian leaders. The conquered Russian principalities were allowed to keep their autonomy and their Orthodox religion. The business of the state was conducted in Belorussian Slavonic.

In 1385 Jogaila, the son of Algirdas, concluded an agreement to unite Lithuania and Kievan Russia. He then went to Kraków, was baptized on February 15, 1386, married the Polish Queen Jadwiga, and on March 4 was crowned king of Poland, receiving the name Władysław II Jagiełło. The Lithuanians were baptized in 1387, and Władysław's cousin Vytautas, son of Kęstutis, became grand duke of Lithuania. On July 15, 1410, the Polish-Lithuanian forces inflicted a crushing defeat on the Teutonic Order at Tannenberg-Grünwald. Vytautas renewed the policy of eastward expansion, and during this time Lithuania reached its largest expansion (350,000 square miles; 906,700

The  
Lithuanian  
Empire

Partition of  
Livonia  
in the 16th  
century



500 square kilometres). When Vytautas the Great died in 1430, the heroic epoch of medieval Lithuania ended.

With the acceptance of Roman Catholicism, Lithuania was drawn culturally toward the West. The Teutonic Muscovy posed a threat to Lithuania's Belorussian conquests. The Federal union between Lithuania and Poland was of no advantage to the Lithuanian peasantry. The culturally more advanced Polish nation tended to assimilate the Lithuanians, and after the equalization of the aristocracy of the two countries in 1413, the Lithuanian nobility became polonized. The Lithuanian and Belorussian peasantry now met with a fate like that of the Latvian and Estonian peasantry before them: under the rule of a foreign aristocracy, they were restricted to farming and sank into serfdom. On July 1, 1569, at Lublin, the personal union between the dynasties of Poland and Lithuania was changed to a union of the two countries, and Lithuania was reduced to a subsidiary land under the Polish crown. When Poland was partitioned among Prussia, Austria, and Russia in 1772, 1793, and 1795, Lithuania was annexed by Russia.

Livonia, Estonia, and Courland from the 16th to the 18th century. While the internal strength of the Confederation of Livonia was gradually weakening, the importance of the corporations of the landed nobility and of the free cities increased. The towns enjoyed prosperity through the commercial activity of the Hanseatic League, predominantly in the trade with Russia. At the same time, the Latvian and Estonian populations, both rural and urban, were methodically deprived by their German overlords of their remaining rights and privileges. The Latvian and Estonian nobility had been exterminated long before, and only a few pockets of free peasantry remained. As early as 1522-24, Lutheranism began to gain ground among the German ruling classes. This was important to the non-German population, for the evangelical ministers did much to foster written literature in the Estonian and Latvian languages. With the establishment of Lutheranism in Latvian and Estonian lands, the Catholic ecclesiastical states became anachronisms.

When the Russian tsar Ivan IV the Terrible advanced claims on Livonia in 1558 in order to secure access to the Baltic Sea, the Confederation of Livonia broke down before the violent onslaughts of the Russian troops. The last able grand marshal of the Livonian Order, Walter von Plettenberg, who had managed to forestall the Russian advance in 1502, had no worthy successors, and the Germans had disarmed the Latvians and Estonians at the most crucial moment. The German leaders were forced to apply for protection to the kings of Sweden, Denmark, and Poland-Lithuania. During the Livonian War, Livonia broke up into three duchies of Livonia, Estonia, and Courland, Denmark holding the island of Saaremaa until 1645. The borders of the new entities were different from the original Estonian and Latvian settlements, but they remained the administrative divisions until 1917. Estonia, with its capital, Reval (Tallinn), came under Swedish rule; Livonia, with its capital, Riga, became a part of Lithuania; while Courland became a hereditary duchy nominally under Polish suzerainty. The nobility and the magistrates of the free cities retained their privileges. German was recognized as the official language; and German law and German administration remained.

In 1592, the Baltic lands became the object of the first Swedish-Polish war and of the struggle between Lutheranism and Catholicism. In 1629 Poland was forced to cede Livonia with Riga to Sweden, retaining only the southeastern province of Latgale.

The Swedish kings, particularly Gustavus II Adolphus (reigned 1611-32) and Charles XI (reigned 1660-97), accustomed to a free peasant class in their own country, sought to raise the Estonian and Latvian peasants from serfdom. Compulsory elementary education was introduced, the Bible was translated into Latvian and Estonian, a high school was opened in Riga in 1631, and a university was founded at Dorpat in 1632. Numerous Swedish administrative, judicial, and ecclesiastical reforms in favour of the peasantry fell short, however, of their intended accomplishments because of the frequent, devastating wars. The Estonians and most of the Latvians still regard the



Baltic States from 1561 to 1721.

Adapted from Westermann Grosser Atlas zur Weltgeschichte, Georg Westermann Verlag, Braunschweig.

association with the Swedish Empire as one of the better periods of their history.

In Courland the last master of the Teutonic Order of Livonia, Gotthard Kettler (ruled 1559-61), had preserved the duchy's relative independence with himself as duke (Herzog). His grandson, Jacob (sole ruler, 1642-82), the ablest duke of Courland, developed local industry, fostered foreign trade, and created a formidable navy. He also acquired two colonies, the island of Tobago in the West Indies and The Gambia on the West African coast, as well as an ocean station and several mining and agricultural settlements in Norway. His ships sailed to Brazil, Iceland, Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Indonesia, and in 1651 he planned to colonize Australia, then newly discovered. His son, Frederick Casimir (ruled 1682-1737), attempted to make his capital of Mitau (Jelgava) into a northern Paris; the Academia Petrina was founded there in 1775. When the Kettler dynasty became extinct, the Biron dynasty was founded in Courland by Ernst Johann von Biron. He ruled intermittently until his son, Peter, became duke in 1769, only to lose his duchy to Russia in 1795.

#### THE BALTIC COUNTRIES UNDER RUSSIA (UNTIL 1914)

With his victory over Sweden in the Great Northern War (1700-21), the Russian tsar Peter I the Great gained both Livonia and Estonia. He thus fulfilled an age-old Russian dream of "opening the window to the seas." The other Baltic lands passed into Russian hands from 1772 to 1795, except for a small portion of Lithuania, which was incorporated into Prussia. For the Germans of the Baltic lands their incorporation into Russia opened up great opportunities for increasing their privileges and power over the peasants and for advancement in the service of the tsar. For the great majority of Latvians and Estonians, and, later, the Lithuanians, it brought a deterioration of their legal status and increased exploitation.

Not until the 19th century did a process of social and national emancipation begin. Under the tsar Alexander I the Estonian and Latvian peasants were given their personal freedom (1816-19), but without the right to own land. By the middle of the century, however, they were allowed to acquire leased land as their personal property. The Baltic provinces thus began to develop an agrarian structure quite different from that in Russia. However, as the big landed estates remained untouched, most of the peasants were not able to acquire enough land to be self-supporting. In consequence, thousands of Latvians and Estonians migrated to the Russian interior, where land was available for settlement. In Lithuania the peasantry was not liberated until 1861—when the emancipation of

Social changes under the tsars

partition of  
Livonia  
the 16th  
century

the  
Lithuanian  
empire



Advances  
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Russian's own serfs took place. Tens of thousands of Lithuanians emigrated to the United States, Canada, and Brazil, followed by thousands of Latvians and hundreds of Estonians.

Considerable progress was made in education. By the end of the century there was almost no illiteracy in Estonia and Latvia, in contrast to Russia proper. A German-language university was reopened in Dorpat (Tartu) in Estonia in 1802. By the middle of the 19th century it had become a focal point for national revival among the Estonians and Latvians. A Polish-language university restored in Vilnius (Vilna) in 1803 served in a similar way for the Lithuanians. Educated Latvians, Estonians, and Lithuanians began to grow conscious of their national origins. Starting with an interest in the past and with the study of the national languages, folklore, and ethnography, the movement developed political aims.

The Lithuanians and Latgals had to fight particularly hard. They took part in the Polish rebellions of 1830-31 and 1863-65 and suffered considerable repression afterward. From 1864 to 1905 the policy of Russification extended to every part of their public life: it was forbidden to publish newspapers, periodicals, or books in Polish, while books in Lithuanian or Latgalian could be printed only if the Russian alphabet was used. Russian was the only language of teaching in the schools, and the Roman Catholic religion was persecuted. The Lithuanian resistance was able to capitalize on the fact that Lithuanian was also spoken in the eastern part of East Prussia, and the national movement flourished there under the leadership of Lutheran clergymen and teachers. On German territory the first Lithuanian daily newspaper was published, and Lithuanian books were printed to be smuggled into Russia. Beginning in the 1880s, the Lithuanian resistance to Russification also received strong support from the Catholic clergy.

In the Baltic provinces, the Russian government introduced a series of liberal reforms during the 1860s and 1870s, but after 1881 a general strategy of systematic Russification began that lasted until 1905. It extended to the whole educational system, the courts, and local administration. At the same time, however, it did much to strengthen the Baltic nationalities, especially the Latvians and Estonians. Railroad lines were built from the Baltic seaports to the Russian hinterland. A considerable merchant fleet was built and manned by Latvians and Estonians, and Riga became a world port, its population growing from more than 250,000 in 1900 to about 500,000 in 1914. Riga, Tallinn, and Narva also became important industrial centres. These developments changed the character of the urban population. The Baltic Germans, who had never comprised more than 10 percent of the population, declined in number and importance. Although the German influence remained strong in the sciences, as well as in the Lutheran Church, in the large landed estates, and in wholesale trade, industry, banking, and the professions, the advancing Estonians and Latvians crowded the Germans out of the trades, business, and civil service. Many of the German academicians, artists, and writers emigrated to Germany. The percentage of Estonians in the population of Tallinn rose from 51.8 in 1867 to 88.7 in 1897, and the percentage of Latvians in the population of Riga rose in the same period from 23.5 to 41.6.

Marxism appeared in the Baltic provinces in the 1880s, at first known as the "New Current." The Latvian Social Democratic Party was founded in 1904, and an independent Estonian sister party was established in 1906. Both parties maintained connections with the Russian and German Social Democratic parties. A Lithuanian Social Democratic Party was founded in 1895.

The Russian Revolution of 1905 was felt strongly in Latvia and Estonia. Bourgeois politicians, together with radical revolutionaries, raised the demand for national autonomy. When revolutionary forces spread into the countryside, looting and burning the manor houses, the government sent troops to put down the uprising. About 1,000 Latvians and Estonians were shot, and thousands of revolutionaries were sent to Siberia or fled abroad. The Revolution was followed by concessions from the Tsar in

the way of liberal reforms in all three Baltic regions, and the Baltic regions were allowed to send elected representatives to the new imperial Duma (legislature).

## LIBERATION AND INDEPENDENCE (1917-40)

**Estonian liberation.** The Russian Revolution of March (February, old style) 1917 overthrew the Tsar and brought a brief period of political autonomy for Estonia. On April 12 the Russian provisional government allowed all Estonian districts to be united into one province, and elections to the Estonian National Council (Maapäev) took place in June. After the October Revolution, the bourgeois majority parties of the Maapäev decided to break away from the Russian Empire, but the Bolsheviks appointed a Communist administration for Estonia. In February 1918 German forces advanced to Estonia. The Communists fled from Tallinn, and on February 24 the Maapäev declared Estonia's independence and formed a provisional government, which collapsed the following day when German troops entered Tallinn. On March 3, 1918, by signing the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, the Soviet Russian government effectively transferred sovereignty over the Baltic countries to Germany.

Germany capitulated on November 11, 1918, and the Estonian provisional government renewed its activities. The Soviet Russian government declared the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk null and void and, on November 28, Soviet troops began an invasion of Estonia, which had been denuded of all arms by the retreating Germans. The government of Konstantin Päts was successful in obtaining weapons and war materiel from the Allies. With the aid of a British naval squadron and a Finnish voluntary force, the commander in chief, Johan Laidoner, was able to open a counteroffensive in January 1919. By the end of February all of Estonian territory had been freed, and the Estonian Army penetrated into Soviet and Latvian territories.

**Latvian liberation.** In Latvia, the struggle for independence was even more difficult than in Estonia. The Latvian Provisional National Council in the Soviet-held portion of Latvia had proclaimed the autonomy of Latvia as early as November 30, 1917. The Latvian People's Council, representing peasant, bourgeois, and socialist groups, proclaimed the independence of Latvia on November 18, 1918. A government was formed by the leader of the Farmers' Party, Kārlis Ulmanis. The Soviet Russian government established a Communist government for Latvia, headed by Pēteris Stučka. The Red Army, which included Latvian units, took Riga on January 3, 1919, and the Ulmanis government moved to Liepāja (Libau), where it was protected by a British naval squadron. There were also German troops whom the Allies expected to defend East Prussia and Courland against the advancing Red Army. Their commander, Gen. Rüdiger, Graf von der Goltz, however, intended to transform Latvia into a German base of operations against the Soviets, the Allies, and the new Social Democratic government of Germany by building his own anti-Communist German-Russian force, supplemented by Baltic German volunteers, and to form Baltic regimes faithful to imperial Germany and Russia. On November 9, 1918, the Baltic German barons had created a short-lived Duchy of the Baltic. While some Latvian nationalist troops fought alongside the Estonians, other units were temporarily forced to fight alongside the Germans, who took Riga on May 22, 1919. Pushing northward, the Germans were stopped near Cēsis (Wenden) by the Estonian Army and 2,000 Latvian troops. The head of the Allied military mission, the British general Sir Hybert Gough, negotiated an armistice. The defeated Germans had to abandon Riga, to which the Ulmanis government returned in July. In the meantime, the Red Army, finding itself attacked from the north by the Estonians, from the west by the Latvians, and from the south by the Lithuanians, had withdrawn from most of Latvia.

In July, General Gough demanded that the German troops retreat to East Prussia. In the meantime, however, General von der Goltz managed to organize an anti-Communist West Russian army, reinforced by units of German monarchist volunteers and headed by an obscure adventurer, Pavel Bermond-Avalov. On October 8,

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Bermondts attacked the Latvian Army and occupied the suburbs of Riga. By November 11, however, the Latvians, assisted by an Anglo-French naval squadron, defeated Bermondts's army, which was also later attacked by Lithuanian troops. By December 15, all German troops had finally abandoned Latvia and Lithuania. Latvia remained in Red hands; but this Latvian province, too, was cleared by Latvians, Poles, and Baltic Germans, who in February 1920 were placed under the command of the British.

**Lithuanian liberation.** During World War I the Germans occupied a great part of historic Lithuania. On December 11, 1917, the Lithuanian National Council (Taryba), with tacit German approval, proclaimed the restoration of the independent state of Lithuania. On March 15, 1918, the German emperor, William II, recognized the "independence" of the former duchy of Courland, on March 23 of the "Kingdom" of Lithuania, and on September 22 of the entire Baltic area, to remain in close association with Germany. Because the Lithuanians were not allowed by Germany to act independently, they again proclaimed their independence on February 16, 1918, severing the ties with Germany. On November 11, 1918, a republican government was formed under Augustinas Voldemaras but, as the German armies withdrew, the Red Army occupied Vilnius on January 5, 1919, and installed a Communist government. The Germans remained in western Lithuania until December 1919. The Lithuanian Army took the offensive against the Reds in February 1919, and by the end of August the country had been cleared of Soviet troops.

A dispute with Poland had developed, however, over the possession of the Lithuanian capital city of Vilnius and the surrounding area. The city was largely Polish in population, while the district of Vilnius was predominantly Lithuanian. The head of state of Poland, Józef Pilsudski, himself a former resident of Vilnius, took Vilnius from the Red Army on April 19, 1919. Although the Lithuanians were able to regain the region in July 1920, the Poles took it back on October 7. For the next 18 years this region remained the principal trouble spot in northeastern Europe. As a theoretical state of war existed between Lithuania and Poland, northeastern and eastern European countries could not form a bloc between the Soviet Union and Germany. Relations between the two countries were normalized only on March 17, 1938, after a Polish ultimatum, but on October 10, 1939, the Soviet Union granted Vilnius to Lithuania.

**Soviet Baltic governments.** The Estonian Soviet government had been established on November 29, 1918; the Latvian Soviet government on December 17, and the Lithuanian Soviet government on December 15. The three were "recognized" by the Soviet Russian government on December 7 and December 22, 1918, but were dissolved in January 1920, when Lenin decided to sign peace treaties with the democratic governments of the Baltic states. The treaty with Estonia was signed on February 2, 1920, that with Lithuania on July 12, and that with Latvia on August 11, recognizing their independence "in perpetuity." At the same time, the Soviet Baltic agencies were converted into the nuclei of the Baltic Communist parties, with the aim of launching underground activities in the Baltic states in order to convert them into Soviet republics at a later date. Eight Latvian rifle regiments that had kept the German Army at bay near Riga from 1915 to 1917 had retreated to Russia at the time of complete German occupation of the Baltic region, and had become a sort of "praetorian guard" for Lenin. The Latvian (and Estonian) rifle divisions had played a crucial role in major battles during the Russian civil war against the tsarist forces; of these men, about 12,000 Latvian riflemen later returned to Latvia. Thousands of remaining Baltic Communists acquired important positions in the Soviet Russian administration, military forces, and economic life; almost all of them became the victims of Stalin's purges in the late 1930s.

**Consolidation.** There were serious internal problems faced by all three Baltic republics after the war: to reorganize their semifeudal, basically German and Polish, agrarian structures; to adapt their economies to the new conditions; and to establish constitutions. In Estonia and Latvia the governments had promised the distribution of

land parcels to the landless combatants during the war. Now both republics solved their agrarian problems with the expropriation of all the holdings of large estates, thus destroying the economic and political power of the Baltic German nobility, whose corporations were dissolved. Tens of thousands of the rural proletariat were given land, thus effectively eliminating Communist influence in Estonia and Latvia. The expropriated forest lands remained the property of the state and became an important source of income from lumber exports. In Lithuania, the large estates were mainly in the hands of Poles and polonized Lithuanian aristocrats. The land reform there was less radical than in Estonia and Latvia. The governments sponsored cooperatives to handle the collection and marketing of farm produce.

**Constitutional reform.** Constitutional reorganization in all three countries was radically parliamentary in character, the legislative body clearly predominating over the executive branch. In Estonia, for example, there was a single-chamber parliament (Riigikogu) with a system of proportional representation, and the prime minister was also the chief of state. In both Latvia and Lithuania, a president of the republic was elected by the parliament (in Latvia, called Saeima; in Lithuania, Seimas). In all three countries there were numerous political parties and groups (up to 35 in some elections), but in Latvia and Estonia the dominant organizations were the Social Democrats, the farmers' unions, and some nationalist and liberal groups, while in Lithuania there was a strong conservative Christian Democratic Party. The membership in the outlawed Communist parties in Latvia and Lithuania never exceeded 1,000. In Estonia the Communist Party was outlawed after a Soviet-supported coup d'état failed on December 1, 1924.

**The economy.** In seceding from the Russian Empire, the Baltic states had lost their economic hinterland. The situation was worsened by a wholesale destruction of industrial enterprises in Latvia and the waste of agricultural resources in all three countries during the war. They were also burdened with war debts. With the exception of Estonia in 1926, the Baltic states did not receive any financial assistance from the West despite the fact that, for instance, Latvia was one of the countries most devastated during the war.

Their economic recovery was a miracle, thanks mainly to the hard work, thriftiness, and perseverance of the Balts themselves. Estonia developed an entirely new industry with the opening of rich oil shale fields. The timber and related industries increased slowly in importance, as did the export of meat, dairy, and poultry products. Great Britain became the principal market for all three countries, and Germany a close second. Trade with the Soviet Union remained slight.

**Education and culture.** Freed from outside restrictions, cultural life expanded. Schools of all kinds increased. Each country had its own university, conservatory of music, academy of arts, and various types of higher technical schools. Literature, music, and the fine arts reached the level of the rest of Europe. Cultural policy was strongly Western in orientation; English was the first foreign language taught in the schools, German or French usually taught as the second foreign language. Germans, Russians, Jews, Poles, Belorussians, and other minorities had their own state-supported schools, churches, theatres, and cultural organizations, something the Baltic peoples had never enjoyed before the war.

**Political tendencies in the 1920s and 1930s.** The Baltic republics were admitted to the membership of the League of Nations on September 22, 1921. They subscribed to all conventions of a humanitarian, social, and cultural nature and to all schemes and conventions intended to maintain the status quo and keep the world free of war. They also attempted to form a bridge between the Western world and the Soviet Union. Schemes to establish regional security were actively supported by the Baltic states, but did not materialize because of the unwillingness of Germany, Poland, and the Soviet Union to subscribe to them and the hesitation of Great Britain and France to support them. In October 1936, Latvia was given a nonpermanent

Agrarian  
reform

Economic  
recovery

crisis  
of the  
Red Army



seat on the Council of the League of Nations, and in 1938 the Latvian foreign minister served as the president of the 101st meeting of the Council. The Soviet Union, Nazi Germany, and Poland attempted to alienate the Baltic states from each other. France at first tried to dominate them through Poland, and Great Britain supported the unsuccessful idea of a Scandinavian-Baltic bloc until the end of 1922. Serious problems emerged because political experience and democratic traditions were lacking, as were institutions that would have protected the interests of the state against those of particular groups. On December 16-17, 1926, an authoritarian presidential regime was established in Lithuania.

The numerous political parties in Estonia and Latvia prevented the formation of stable coalitions and led to frequent governmental crises during the 1920s. The life-span of the governments of Estonia during the years 1919-33 averaged eight months and 20 days. The political problem became even more pronounced in 1930, when the world economic crisis brought financial difficulties and unemployment that emphasized the need for stable government. Voices demanding constitutional reform were heard in both countries. Some small groups looked to Fascist Italy for guidance, and the Baltic German minority was infiltrated by Nazi agents. In Estonia the movement was led by the "Vaps" (Vabadussõjalaste Liit, or League of Freedom Fighters), which had grown from a group of war veterans into an anti-Communist and anti-parliamentary mass movement. The proposal of the Vaps won a majority of 72.7 percent in a referendum of October 1933. The acting president, Konstantin Päts, was expected to prepare for the election of a new president. Instead, he declared a state of emergency on March 12, 1934; the Vaps was dissolved, its leaders were arrested, and the parliament was soon also dissolved. After that Päts ruled by decree until 1938.

In Latvia a similar development occurred on May 15, 1934. After attempts at constitutional reform had failed and the country had become increasingly polarized between the far right and the far left, the prime minister, Kārlis Ulmanis, declared a state of emergency. He formed a government of national unity from representatives of almost all the important parties. From then on he governed without the parliament.

In neither Estonia nor Latvia was there any significant resistance to the suppression of parliamentary government. The new authoritarian regimes drew their main support from the well-to-do and the peasants, from the army, and the home guard. Both heads of state based their coups d'état on the need to prevent the interference of foreign powers in state affairs and to strengthen the position of the Estonian and Latvian peoples in their own countries. Both were quite successful in diminishing the power of the radical right as well as the influence of the radical left. Both strove to reorganize the society by setting up representative bodies of the professions, called chambers, patterned after the Italian Fascist model.

There were, however, marked differences in their styles of leadership. The Estonian president regarded his authoritarian regime as a regency for the restoration of the endangered democracy and worked for a conservative reform of the state. He legalized his regime by a referendum in 1936 in order to elect a constituent assembly to draft a new constitution. The candidates were chosen mostly from the ranks of the Patriotic League that he had founded in February 1935. The new parliament that convened on April 21, 1938, had in its lower chamber 63 members of the Patriotic League and a token opposition of 17. On April 23, 1938, Päts was elected the first president of the republic, and in May a new government was sworn in, headed by a separate prime minister.

In Latvia the dynamic "leader of the people," Ulmanis, did not bother to legalize his regime by popular referendum or even to organize a unified following. On April 11, 1936, he combined the office of prime minister with that of the president of the state and adopted the nationalistic theme of a "strong and Latvian Latvia." He also enlarged the state-run sector of the economy. The Germans felt themselves to be losing out to the Latvian majority, and German National Socialism found an increasing num-

ber of supporters among them. On the other hand, both Socialism and Communism lost their appeal among the population. Under the new regime no one was killed, and only a few hundred persons were temporarily imprisoned. The rural population and the business interests favoured the authoritarian regime because it brought prosperity; foreign trade showed a steady increase. In Latvia an entirely new electronics industry came into existence and made surprising progress.

In Lithuania a nationalistic one-party state emerged. The dictatorial tendencies of Prime Minister Voldemaras aroused opposition among conservative-ecclesiastical circles, which led to his removal by the president, Antanas Smetona, on September 19, 1929. Smetona now cast himself as a "people's leader" with the small Nationalist Party in full control of the state. His regime had the support of the army, the home guard, and the state-sponsored youth organization, Young Lithuania. The obvious model for the regime was Fascist Italy, and it led to the alienation and dissolution of other parties. Two unsuccessful attempts were made to return Voldemaras to power, and there were peasant strikes and workers' demonstrations. These events, coupled with the dispute with Germany over control of Klaipėda (Memel), forced Smetona to broaden his power base. On September 1, 1936, the President summoned the rump parliament to draft a new constitution, which was promulgated on May 12, 1938; it provided for a single-chamber Diet elected for five years by democratic suffrage, and for a strong head of the state elected for seven years by delegates of the nation.

The end of independence. The Baltic states had won their independence at a time when both Russia and Germany were defeated in war. They retained it as long as the two powers remained weak. Proposals for closer ties with Finland and Poland ran aground on the irreconcilable differences between Lithuania and Poland and on the refusal of Finland from 1922 to engage in affairs south of the Gulf of Finland. An Estonian-Latvian defense alliance was formalized in 1923 and renewed in 1934. When Lithuania joined the alliance in 1934 it became known as the Baltic Entente. All three Baltic states signed nonaggression pacts with the Soviet Union, which were renewed in 1934. They also signed nonaggression pacts with Germany in 1939. In the summer of 1939 the Baltic question was one of the issues in the ill-fated Anglo-French negotiations with Moscow. The Baltic states attempted to maintain absolute neutrality in the power struggle.

In a secret protocol to the German-Soviet pact of August 23, 1939, however, Estonia and Latvia were recognized as belonging to the Soviet sphere of interest, and on September 28, after the German victory over Poland, Lithuania was put in the same category. Moscow then demanded that the Baltic states should sign mutual assistance pacts with the Soviet Union and allow Soviet military bases on their territory. Completely isolated, the governments of the Baltic states realized that military resistance was useless. The agreement between Berlin and Moscow for a resettlement of Baltic Germans in Germany on September 28 made it clear to the Balts that Hitler had left their states at the mercy of Stalin. On September 28, October 5, and October 10, 1939, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania signed mutual assistance treaties with the Soviet Union and admitted Soviet troops that exceeded in numbers those of their own armies. The Soviets at first were satisfied to observe the limits of their bases, concentrating their attacks on Finland.

When the Germans took Paris on June 14, 1940, Stalin demanded that the governments of the Baltic states admit more Soviet troops and establish pro-Soviet regimes. On June 15, Lithuania was completely occupied by Soviet forces, and on June 17 Latvia and Estonia experienced similar fates. Soviet emissaries organized elections on July 14-15 in which only a single list of Soviet-sponsored candidates was allowed to stand. The new "parliaments," disregarding the constitutions of the Baltic states, immediately "voted" by a show of hands for incorporation of their countries into the Soviet Union; the requests were accepted by the Supreme Soviet on August 3, 5, and 6, 1940, respectively.

Arrests  
and de-  
portation

Rise of the  
one-party  
state in  
Lithuania

The  
geographic  
plight of  
the Baltic  
states

Under-  
ground  
resistance

The Vaps  
movement



Many Baltic political leaders were arrested, deported to Siberia, or killed, or were able to flee to the West. Beginning on June 14, 1941, there were mass deportations of the Balts, including women and children, to the polar or desert regions of the Soviet Union. In one year, Estonia lost more than 60,000 people; Latvia more than 34,000; and Lithuania about 35,000. Another, even larger, deportation of Baltic citizens was scheduled for July, but it did not materialize because of the German invasion.

After the Lithuanian revolt of June 23, 1941, and the subsequent German occupation of the Baltic region, the Baltic states and Belorussia were combined in July 1941 into a new territorial unit, Ostland, scheduled to be Germanized and added to the German Reich at a later date. Many Balts at first considered the Germans as their liberators and were willing to cooperate with them. They soon found out, however, that such a stance would not help them to regain their national independence or most of their nationalized property. All the Balts were considered by the German occupation authorities as second-class citizens. Lithuanians receiving the worst treatment. Whereas the Soviets had sought to annihilate the upper classes, the Nazis at first tried to wipe out the Jews and other "undesirable" elements among the Balts themselves. They killed at least 14,000 Lithuanians and 136,000 Lithuanian Jews. About 90,000 Jews were killed in Latvia and 4,500 in Estonia. Hundreds of Latvians and Estonians also lost their lives, and about 95,000 Lithuanians and 30,000 Latvians were sent to concentration camps.

On July 17, 1941, Alfred Rosenberg became the *Reichsminister* for the occupied eastern territories. Under him, the *Reichs kommissar* for Ostland resided in Riga and *Gebiets kommissars* in the capitals of each of the former Baltic States and in Belorussia. As was the case in the Soviet Union, the *Sicherheitsdienst* (SD) of the Nazis often wielded greater power than the administrative agencies. Indigenous, but generally powerless, self-governments were also formed in each of the Baltic countries. Disregarding international conventions, the German Reich proclaimed the compulsory draft of Baltic men and women into labour service and the German armed forces (camouflaged as *Schutzstaffel* (SS) "voluntary" units and police battalions). One Estonian division and one brigade, along with two Latvian divisions and a large number of other units, were sent to fight against the Soviets. At least 146,000 Latvians, 47,000 Lithuanians, and 50,000 Estonians were enlisted in military units of various kinds.

In May 1944, 4,000 mobilized Lithuanians clashed with the Germans. There were also sizable nationalist and Communist guerrilla movements in the Baltic countries, and more than 3,000 Estonians fled to Finland and enlisted in the Finnish Army and Navy. A Lithuanian provisional government, proclaimed on June 23, 1941, was disbanded by the German authorities on August 5 of the same year. On November 25, 1943, an underground nationalist Supreme Committee for the Liberation of Lithuania started its activities. A similar underground Central Council of Latvia came into existence on July 13, 1943, and on March 23, 1944, an underground Republican National Council of Estonia was founded. These bodies cooperated with each other and established ties with the Western powers through Finland and Sweden. In April, May, and July 1944, many of the Baltic nationalist leaders were arrested and sent to concentration camps, where a number of them perished. The Latvian underground nationalist armed force was annihilated by German forces in Courland in November-December 1944. On September 18, 1944, a short-lived Estonian nationalist government started its activities, and on May 4, 1945, a similar Latvian government was founded.

The Baltic countries were again devastated. Latvia, which had lost 650,000 people during World War I, lost another 450,000 during World War II. Estonia lost 200,000 and Lithuania 473,000 people. In the fall of 1944, as the Germans retreated and the Soviet Russians returned, large numbers of people were evacuated or fled before the advancing Soviet armies. Courland held out until the end of the war. About 33,000 Estonians, 115,000 Latvians, and 70,000 Lithuanians were deported or managed to flee

to western Germany; about 30,000 Estonians and 5,000 Latvians reached Sweden. During World War II, 18 Latvian vessels, a few Lithuanian ships, and more than 30 Estonian vessels served the interests of the Western Allies; most of these ships were victims of German submarines and airplanes. One Lithuanian, two Estonian, and two Latvian divisions fought with the Soviets, the soldiers, however, being partly or mostly non-Balts.

After the Soviets restored the Communist regimes in the three countries, they faced a nationalist guerrilla war that lasted until 1951. The Communists tried to eradicate the last vestiges of the private economy and faced considerable opposition among the rural population. New waves of deportations followed. Estimates of the numbers of those deported in the years 1941-49 run to about 570,000, including large numbers of peasants who resisted the collectivization of their farms. About 25-30 percent of these persons are said to have returned home after Stalin's death in 1953 and a general amnesty in 1955.

#### THE BALTIC STATES AS SOVIET UNION REPUBLICS

After the victory over Germany the Soviet authorities resumed their previous efforts to integrate the Baltic states into the Soviet Union. Most of the Communist leaders of the early days were replaced by officials who had grown up in the Soviet Union or been trained there.

Soviet policies



BALTIC REPUBLICS SINCE 1945.

**Collectivization and industrialization.** The rural population was forced into the *kolkhozy*, or collective farms, without regard for the consequences to agriculture. Resistance by partisans or guerrillas, which had persisted longest in Lithuania, was ultimately broken by special forces of the security police. Collectivization eliminated the independent farming class, which had been the political basis of the Baltic states. The Baltic region concentrated on dairy farming and cattle breeding; in the 1950s and 1960s Estonia and Latvia held first place among the union republics of the Soviet Union in milk production per cow.

The economies of the Baltic republics were integrated into the Soviet system of economic planning and development. This resulted in considerable growth in production, as a result of Soviet investment in the Baltic region. Some outstanding projects of the postwar period included the development of the Estonian oil shale industry, which supplies gas for Leningrad and Tallinn. Five giant power stations generate large quantities of electricity. Industrial establishments produce textiles, synthetic fibre, microbuses, electric trains, radio and television sets,

Rise of the one-party state in Lithuania

The geographic plight of the Baltic states

inter- and distance



refrigerators, and fine electronic equipment for the entire Soviet Union and foreign countries. There is also a large fishing and canning industry. Living standards remain relatively low, but they are higher than the average standard for the Soviet Union as a whole. Soviet citizens of other regions feel as if they are abroad while in the Baltic countries, and tens of thousands of them have attempted to settle there.

**Demographic changes.** Postwar political, industrial, and agricultural policies of the government of the Soviet Union have made fundamental changes in the social structure of the Baltic republics. From predominantly rural societies they became predominantly urban. In 1939, 65 percent of the Latvians lived in rural areas, as did 66 percent of the Estonians and 77 percent of the Lithuanians, but 40 years later the ratio was reversed, and 70 percent of the Latvians, 71 percent of the Estonians, and 64 percent of the Lithuanians were urban dwellers. Latvia and Estonia had achieved the highest rate of urban population in the Soviet Union.

Another demographic change was the immigration of Russians and other non-Balts. By the late 20th century almost half of the population of Riga was estimated to be Russian. The Russians manned the large military force stationed in the Baltic; they took over many of the top positions in government and most of the administrative posts; hundreds of thousands of them came in with newly created large industrial enterprises; they took over most of the shipping and transportation, commerce, trade, and customer services; and they penetrated the professions and even larger agricultural enterprises. Many fields of enterprise were subordinated directly to union ministries in Moscow. Feeble attempts by indigenous Baltic Communists to curb enforced Russification in the 1950s ended in their removal from top positions and their replacement by Balts from Russia and Russians themselves.

**Religion, education, and culture.** Under Soviet rule, the activities of the formerly influential Lutheran and Roman Catholic churches have been severely limited. Church attendance has declined markedly.

Education and culture in the Baltic republics have been "national in form, socialist in content." The native languages and literature, theatre and music, popular customs and national histories have all been promoted, but as part of a multinational Soviet culture and in terms of Soviet ideology. The severance of ties between the Baltic states and Russia after 1919 is explained as the work of Western imperialism, and the forced integration into the Soviet Union as a "liberation from the yoke of imperialism." In the new histories, the periods of independence of the Baltic peoples have been either ignored or condemned, but the ties with the Russians and the periods of Russian rule have been emphasized. The Balts are reminded daily that they are Soviet people, and they are encouraged to use the Russian language as their "second mother language." Most of the Baltic technical literature is now published only in the Russian language.

In 1980 the incorporation of the Baltic states into the Soviet Union had still not been recognized by the United States and many other countries, although some governments did accord it *de facto* recognition. Prewar Baltic legations are still active in Washington, D.C., and in several other Western capitals. (E.A.N.)

## Estonia

The Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic, one of the 15 republics of the Soviet Union, was proclaimed on July 21, 1940, and became a member of the Soviet Union on August 6, 1940. On the north and west the republic is bounded by the Baltic Sea and on the east by Lake Peipus (Chudskoye Ozero) and the Narva River; in the south it borders on Latvia and the Russian S.F.S.R.

Estonia has an area of 17,400 square miles (45,100 square kilometres), of which 9 percent is made up of some 800 islands and islets. The larger islands are Saaremaa (1,048 square miles [2,714 square kilometres]) and Hiiumaa (373 square miles [966 square kilometres]). The capital is Tallinn.

## PHYSICAL AND HUMAN GEOGRAPHY

**The land.** *Relief.* The Estonian landscape bears traces of glacial activity; the south is covered with moraine (glacial deposit) hills, and the central part abounds in elongated hills with flat tops. They are usually arranged in groups in the direction of glacial movement, for the most part from the northwest to the southeast. The northern part of Estonia is characterized by long narrow swells consisting of deposits left by glacial rivers that formed during the melting of ice. Extensive sandy areas mark what was once the glacier's edge.

The Estonian relief is thus generally undulating, with small hills and numerous lakes, rivers, and forests lending the scene mildness and picturesqueness, particularly in the south.

The mean absolute altitude is 160 feet (49 metres); only one-tenth of the territory lying at altitudes exceeding 300 feet (90 metres) above sea level. In the southeast is the Haanja elevation containing Mt. Munamägi (1,042 feet [318 metres]), which is the highest point in Estonia.

During the postglacial period a considerable part of Estonia was flooded by the Baltic Sea. Later, large areas emerged from under water as a result of the elevation of the mainland—a process still observable, particularly in the northwest, where a rise of approximately five feet (1.5 metres) in a hundred years has been recorded.

In northern Estonia is a low limestone plateau that falls abruptly to the sea. The sheer cliff stretches along the southern shore of the Gulf of Finland from Tallinn and continues beyond the republic's borders. It rises to its maximum height (544 feet, or 166 metres, above sea level) at Pandivere.

Estonia abounds in rivers, which carry their water to the gulfs of Finland and Riga and into Lake Peipus. The longest rivers are the Pärnu (88 miles, or 142 kilometres) and the Pedja (81 miles). Lakes occupy about 5 percent of the republic's territory. The largest lake is Peipus, with a surface area of 1,370 square miles (3,548 square kilometres).

**Climate.** The temperate and humid climate of Estonia differs sharply from the climates of many regions of the Soviet Union situated at the same latitude but in the depth of the continent. The republic lies in the path of air masses brought in by cyclones born in the northern Atlantic that carry warm air in winter and cool air in summer. The mean temperature in February is 23°–43° F (–5° to +6° C) and in July 61°–63° F (16°–17° C). Annual precipitation is 24–28 inches (610–710 millimetres), which, coupled with negligible evaporation and plain relief, leads to waterlogging. The Estonian climate is generally favourable to agriculture.

**Plant and animal life.** Mixed forests, with about 90 species of trees and shrubs, cover almost one-third of Estonia's territory. Most widespread are pine, fir, birch, and aspen; less common are oak, lime, maple, elm, and ash. Meadows occupy a considerable area, as do marshes and swamps.

About 60 species of mammals live in Estonia. The elk is the largest; roe deer, red deer, and wild pigs are also found. In the deep forests of the northeast, bear and lynx are encountered. Foxes, badgers, otters, rabbits, hares, and—along the riverbanks—mink and nutria (coypu) are fairly common. Among the sea animals, seals and fishes (cod, salmon, eel, plaice, and others) are of commercial importance. Birds are very numerous; 295 species have been identified, of which 60 are year-round residents.

**Minerals.** The most important mineral is bituminous shale; the output of Estonia accounts for 80 percent of the shale produced in the Soviet Union. Reserves and production of peat also are substantial, and large deposits of high-quality phosphorites, limestone, dolomites, marl, and clay exist.

**The people.** Estonians belong ethnically and linguistically to the Baltic-Finnish group of Finno-Ugric peoples.

The development of Estonia's economy has been attended by a considerable internal migration. The population in the northern, industrially advanced part of the republic has increased appreciably since the mid-1950s at the expense of the southern and western regions, which are

Russian  
immigra-  
tion

Glacial  
landforms

Towns

The  
chemical  
industry

Rivers  
and lakes



basically agrarian. There has also been extensive immigration from other territories of the Soviet Union, particularly the Russian S.F.S.R. The major towns are Tallinn, Tartu, Kohtla-Järve, Narva, and Pärnu.

**The economy.** Estonia is basically an industrial region, with agriculture also making a contribution.

**Fuel and power.** About 20 percent of the industrial workers of Estonia are employed in producing bituminous shale and phosphorites or in the power industry. Estonia, the only area of the Soviet Union that has a large shale processing industry, produces a great percentage of the Soviet Union's artificial gas, much of which is transported by pipelines extending from Kohtla-Järve to Leningrad.

Most of the electricity produced in the republic is generated by thermal power plants fired with bituminous shale. One station near Narva, the Estonskaya, which began to operate in 1968, accounts for much of the electricity produced in the Soviet Baltic republics. Other major power plants include a hydroelectric station at the Narva falls and a peat-fired plant at Ellamaa. The electrical power industry has great significance both for the economy of Estonia and for the whole northwest Soviet Union.

**Manufactures.** Estonia's industry uses both local resources and imported raw materials. About 20 percent of the industrial labour force is engaged in engineering and metalworking activities that provide oil-refining equipment, agricultural implements, mining machinery, gas pipes, and excavators. Technical and scientific instruments and electronic apparatus are also produced.

Shale processing underlies a developing chemical industry centred in Tallinn and Kohtla-Järve. Such products as benzene, adhesives, tanning agents, resins, formaldehyde, and detergents are made.

Estonia's natural resources provide a base for the production of building materials, including cement, mural blocks, and panels made either from shale ash or reinforced concrete. The main centres of this industry are Tallinn, Kunda, Tartu, and Aseri.

Timber and woodworking make up one of the oldest industries of Estonia. As a result of a disorderly exploitation of woodlands in former times the total wooded area decreased considerably. Many thousands of acres of new trees have been planted, but in order to satisfy its needs Estonia is nevertheless obliged to import from the northwestern regions of the Soviet Union about one-fourth of its requirements. Paper, pulp, plywood, matches, and furniture are among the republic's wood products. The main centres of production are Tallinn, Tartu, Narva, Pärnu, Kehra, Kuressaare (Kingssepp), and Viljandi.

Among consumer goods industries, textiles are the most developed. Seventy percent of all cotton cloth produced in the Soviet Baltic republics is manufactured in Estonia. The republic also produces wool, silk, and linen. Knitted and woven garments and shoes are also produced.

**Agriculture.** After 1945 Estonia's agriculture was collectivized. Instead of the former 120,000 small peasant farms there were by the late 20th century more than 140 collective farms and about 150 state farms. Agriculture accounts for 20 percent of the gross national product and engages a quarter of the labour force.

The land is generally fairly difficult to farm. Large areas have to be cleared of stones, and 70 percent of the natural pastures require draining. Cattle and pigs account for about two-thirds of the Estonian S.S.R.'s agricultural production.

Fodder crops for animal husbandry account for almost half the total crop production. Grain crops, legumes, and potatoes represent most of the balance.

An increased level of mechanization and the application of more advanced methods of work in agriculture have resulted in a considerable increase in labour productivity and in agricultural incomes.

**Transport and communications.** Transport systems in Estonia include railways, roads, rivers, and pipelines. Most of the republic's freight is carried by railways. River transport is of local significance only.

Estonia is connected by air with Moscow, Leningrad, the capitals of the union republics, and the Black Sea resorts.

**Administrative and social conditions.** Government. Es-

tonia has a state emblem, flag, and national anthem. It is a socialist republic, and its constitution (1940) declares it to be a sovereign entity, though in fact it has no power to carry on relations with foreign countries. The highest organs of state power are the Supreme Soviet, elected for a four-year term, and the Presidium, selected by the Supreme Soviet. The highest executive and administrative organ of government is the Council of Ministers. In the provinces government is effected through local soviets.

All political life in the republic is under the direction of the Communist Party of Estonia. The party concerns itself with the political and ideological education of the population, establishes policy for the development of the economy, and directs the activities of the Young Communist League of Estonia (Komsomol; created in 1921).

Trade unions do not, as in the West, represent the workers in negotiations with management; their efforts are directed more to providing incentives for increased production, maintaining labour discipline, and serving as an instrument of Communist Party policy.

**Welfare and education.** As a result of the development of industry and agriculture, the economic and social welfare of the population has increased substantially compared to the period immediately after World War II.

Scientific research in the republic is centred on the Academy of Sciences of the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic (founded in 1946), which has three departments: physics, mathematics, and technical sciences; chemistry, geology, and biology; and social sciences.

More than 40 newspapers are published in Estonia, some with a circulation of more than 1,000,000 copies. Book publishing also flourishes.

Estonian radio broadcasts diversified programs. The system possesses a mixed chorus, a symphony, and a variety orchestra. The republic has had a television centre since 1955, and television broadcasts from Moscow and Leningrad are also received in most areas.

**Cultural life.** The scope and importance of Estonian literature has steadily increased since the period of national awakening in the 19th century. The greatest achievements in the first half of the 20th century were made in the genres of realistic novel (Anton Tammsaare) and imaginative poetry (Marie Under, Betti Alver). Open to cultural and literary influences of western Europe, Estonian literature developed a diversity of styles, ranging from Neoclassicism to bold experimentation. Since World War II, the dominant theme has been Soviet reality, expressed in the form of Socialist Realism especially in the prose writings of Soviet Estonian authors (Juhan Smuul). During the 1960s, a younger generation of exceptionally talented poets (Paul-Eerik Rummo, Jaan Kaplinski) brought about a revival of Estonian poetry that continued into the '70s (Jüri Udi). A new and sophisticated genre, the so-called short novel, deals primarily with psychological problems (Enn Vetemaa, Mati Unt), sometimes projecting them into history (Jaan Kross). New developments can also be found in drama and short story. Both Estonian classics and the works of contemporary authors have been translated into many languages.

The beginning of professional theatrical art in Estonia is closely connected with the creation of the Vanemuine Theatre in Tartu in 1870. Tallinn has five theatres, including an opera and ballet theatre, a drama theatre, a youth theatre, and a puppet theatre. There are also professional theatres to be found in Pärnu, Viljandi, and Rakvere.

Tallinn is famed for its song festivals. There is an enormous stage for popular mass performances, and tens of thousands of singers and up to 200,000 spectators come to take part in these events.

(A. A. Ke./V.J.T./Ed.)

#### HISTORY

The Estonians are first mentioned by the Roman historian Tacitus (1st century AD) in *Germania*, in which he wrote of the keepers and tillers of the soil. Their political system was patriarchal, based on clans headed by elders. The first invaders of the country were Vikings, who from the mid-9th century AD passed through Estonia and Latvia on their way to the Slavonic hinterland. These Vikings were soldiers and merchants, and there is much evidence to

Glacial  
landforms

Towns

The  
chemical  
industry

Rivers  
and lakes

Communist  
Party  
of Estonia

Literature

Viking  
invasions



show that the Estonians learned from them; apart from ornaments, many of local make, archaeological finds in Estonia include Arabic, Byzantine, German, and Anglo-Saxon coins as evidence of trade. In the 11th and 12th centuries, the Danes and the Swedes tried to Christianize the Estonians, without success. Between 1030 and 1192 the Russians made 13 campaigns into Estonia but failed to establish supremacy there.

**German conquest.** Meinhard, a monk from Holstein, landed in 1180 on what is now the Latvian coast and for 16 years preached Christianity to the Livs, a Finno-Ugric tribe. His successor, Berthold of Hanover, appointed bishop of Livonia, decided that the sword must be used against the recalcitrant pagans. He was killed in 1198 in the first great battle, Albert of Buxhoeveden, who succeeded him as bishop, proved himself a shrewd colonizer, pacifying the "treacherous Livs" and forcing them to build the fortress of Riga. To popularize recruitment for his army, Albert dedicated Livonia to the Virgin Mary. In 1202 he established the Order of the Knights of the Sword.

By 1208 the knights were firmly established on both banks of the Daugava (Western Dvina), and Albert felt strong enough to proceed northward to the conquest of Estonia. In the following years the Estonians lost steadily in manpower while the knights replenished theirs with new crusaders from Germany. The Russian princes of Novgorod and Pskov also raided Estonia on many occasions, penetrating especially deep in 1212 and 1216. Finally, in a major battle in 1217, the knights defeated the Estonians and killed their commander, Lembitu. Northern Estonia and the islands, however, remained free for another 10 years. To complete the conquest, Albert concluded an alliance with King Valdemar II of Denmark, who in 1219 landed with a strong army on the northern coast, on the site of Tallinn. Moreover, in the summer of 1220, Swedes conquered part of western Estonia, but the garrison they left there was wiped out shortly afterward. The Danes landed on the island of Saaremaa two years later, but, after their castle was bombarded with catapults, they surrendered on a safe conduct. Prompted by this victory, fighting flared up all over Estonia, and the Estonians raided as far as Sweden in 1226.

In 1237 the Knights of the Sword joined the Teutonic Order, which assumed control of Livonia. Northern Estonia and the islands were under Danish rule; Livonia (i.e., southern Estonia and Latvia) was shared between the Teutonic Order and the bishops. The terms under which the Estonian localities submitted were not severe, but the conquerors violated them as their position became stronger, thus provoking a series of revolts. After major risings in 1343-45, the Danish crown sold its sovereignty over northern Estonia to the Teutonic Order in 1346. The Germans became the masters in the "Land of the Virgin" and, with minor exceptions, formulated its history in colonization, commerce, and the church for centuries to come. The Estonians, the Latvians, and the Livs became the serfs of their conquerors, with little to sustain their national feeling save their folklore and traditional crafts. In agriculture, however, the Germans made an improvement by introducing the three-field instead of the two-field system, and the towns enjoyed prosperity through the commercial activity of the Hanseatic League.

**Swedish period.** By the end of the 15th century two major powers were emerging around Livonia: Poland-Lithuania, already united in the south; and Muscovy, which had conquered Novgorod, in the east. A third factor, the Reformation, was to produce disunity and strife in this quarter, as in many others. More by diplomacy than by victory in battle, Poland gained Livonia on the dissolution of the Teutonic Order in 1561. Three years before, northern Estonia had capitulated to the King of Sweden. The Muscovite tsar Ivan IV the Terrible had captured Narva in 1558 and penetrated deep into Estonia, bringing devastation with him, and it was not until 1581 that the Russians were expelled by the Swedes. In 1559 the Bishop of Saaremaa had sold the Estonian islands to Denmark, but in 1645 they became part of the Swedish province. By the Truce of Altmark (1629), which ended the first Polish-Swedish War, Poland surrendered to Swe-

den the major part of Livonia, so that all Estonian lands then came under Swedish rule.

Prolonged wars left the country devastated, and many farms were unoccupied. The vacancies were partly filled by foreign settlers who were soon assimilated. This also gave the German nobility the opportunity to enlarge their estates, increase taxes, and exact more unpaid labour. The Swedish kings attempted to curb the power of the nobility and improve the lot of the peasants. Soon after Charles XI of Sweden came of age (1672), the nobles of Livonia were forced to show their title deeds, and those who failed to do so became tenants of the crown.

**The Russian conquest.** The "good old Swedish days" for Estonia were more a legend than reality, but they ended with the Great Northern War. The Russian tsar Peter I the Great was finally able to achieve the dream of his predecessors and conquer the Baltic provinces. After the defeat of Charles XII of Sweden at Poltava (1709), Russian armies seized Livonia. The barons did not resist, angered as they were against the Swedish crown for its policy of reversion of estates. By the Peace of Nystad in 1721 Sweden ceded to Russia all its Baltic provinces. The old Land of the Virgin was divided into the three *guberniyas* (provinces) of Estonia, Livonia, and Kurlandia (Courland). In 1740 a famous lawsuit by an Estonian peasant, Jaan the Miller from Vohnja, against his landlord ended in a decision by the College of Justice in St. Petersburg that the peasants had no right to sue their landlords. The peasants' lot became worse than ever.

In 1804, however, under the emperor Alexander I, the peasants of Livonia were given the right of private property and inheritance: a bill abolishing serfdom was passed in Estonia in 1811 and in Livonia in 1819. Other agrarian laws followed, in particular that of 1863 establishing the peasants' right of free movement; that of 1866 abolishing the landowner's right of jurisdiction on their estates, including the right to flog; and that of 1868 abolishing the *corvée*.

**Estonian national awakening.** The Estonian peasants benefitted by these reforms, and at the end of the 19th century they possessed two-fifths of the privately owned land of the country. With the growth of urban prosperity as a result of industrialization, the population increased. Improvement in education was such that by 1886 only about 2 percent of the Estonian recruits were unable to read. National consciousness increased too.

The accession of Alexander III marked the beginning of a period of more rigid Russification. The Russian municipal constitution was introduced in 1882; Russian criminal and civil codes replaced the old Baltic ones; in 1887 Russian was made the language of instruction, instead of German and Estonian. In 1893 the University of Tartu (Dorpat), which was then an important centre of German learning, was Russified. The first reaction of the Estonians was that poetic justice was being administered to their age-long oppressors, but they also feared the reactionary Pan-Slavism. In 1901, in Tallinn, Konstantin Päts founded the newspaper *Teataja*, in which moderately radical ideas were expressed. In 1904, thanks to Päts, the Estonians won a clear victory on the Tallinn town council.

In January 1905 a revolution started in Russia and spread immediately to Estonia. Tõnisson founded a National Liberal Party and organized its first congress in Tallinn on November 27. The 800 delegates soon split into a Liberal and a Radical wing, but both voted resolutions demanding political autonomy for Estonia. In December, Päts summoned a peasant congress in Tallinn, but martial law was proclaimed. Parties of workers scattered into the countryside and began to loot and burn the manor houses. Troops were drafted and repression started. 328 Estonians were shot or hanged. Päts and the Radical leader Jaan Teemant fled abroad, both being sentenced to death *in contumaciam*. At the elections to the first and the second Russian Duma, the Estonians returned five deputies.

**Independence.** The Russian Revolution of March 1917 brought autonomy to Estonia. An Estonian National Council, which came to be known as the Diet Maapäev, met on July 14 and on October 12 appointed a provisional government with Päts as premier.

German  
domina-  
tion

Repulse  
of the R  
army

Abolition  
of serfdom

Soviet  
ultimatu



The November coup d'état that brought the Communists into power in Petrograd made itself felt in Estonia. On November 28, 1917, the Estonian Diet decided to break away from the Russian state, but on December 8 the Russian Council of People's Commissars appointed a puppet Communist government headed by Jaan Anvelt, who seized power in Tallinn but never obtained control of the whole country. (He was shot in Moscow in 1937.) In February 1918 German forces advanced. The Communists fled, and on February 24 the provisional government declared Estonia independent. The following day German troops entered Tallinn. Estonian leaders, except Pääs, who was arrested, went abroad or underground. On March 3 the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk was signed, and, by a protocol signed in Berlin on August 27, sovereignty over the Baltic countries was transferred from Russia to Germany.

Germany capitulated on November 11, 1918. The Estonian provisional government again proclaimed the independence of Estonia. But the Soviet government declared the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk null and void. On November 28 the Red army took Narva and started the invasion of Estonia, which had been denuded of all arms by the retreating Germans. The government of Konstantin Päts obtained weapons and war materiel from the Allies. With the aid of a British naval squadron and a Finnish voluntary force of 2,700 men, the commander in chief Col. (later General) Johan Laidoner opened a counteroffensive in January 1919. By the end of February all of Estonian territory had been freed, and the Estonian Army penetrated into Soviet and Latvian territory.

On June 15, 1920, the constituent assembly (elected in April 1919), with August Rei as president, voted the new constitution with a single-chamber Parliament (*Riigikogu*) of 100 members elected for three years, with a system of proportional representation, and a chief of state (*riigivanem*), who was also the premier. Because no party had an absolute majority, government by coalition became the rule, and from May 1919, when the first constitutional Cabinet was formed, to May 1933, Estonia had 20 coalitions headed by 10 statesmen.

On December 1, 1924, 300 conspirators, mostly Russians working on the transit base at Tallinn or smuggled in, tried to seize communications and to call in Soviet troops but failed ignominiously. The Communist Party was outlawed, and the movement became virtually extinct. The world depression of the early 1930s caused unemployment and the falling off of agricultural prices. The strong government action necessary to cope with the situation was precluded under the 1920 constitution. A new constitution in 1933 gave sweeping powers to the president. Päts became acting president and was expected to prepare the ground for the first presidential election. Instead, he proclaimed on March 12, 1934, a state of emergency; opposition leaders were arrested and the political activities of all parties forbidden. For three years Päts ruled as a benevolent dictator. In December 1936 a new constituent assembly was elected. It prepared a third constitution with a chamber of 80 deputies elected by the majority system and a national council of 40 members. The election was held in February 1938. In April Päts was elected president for a term of six years.

**Independence lost.** The fate of Estonia was decided by the so-called Nonaggression Treaty of August 1939 between Nazi Germany and the U.S.S.R. A secret protocol to this treaty assigned Finland, Estonia, Latvia, and eastern Poland to the Soviet orbit. After the defeat of Poland this arrangement was revised on September 28, and a secret supplementary clause extended the Soviet sphere of influence to Lithuania. On the same day, the Soviet government imposed on Estonia a treaty of mutual assistance that conceded to the U.S.S.R. several military bases on Estonian territory, which were manned forthwith. A broadly based nonpolitical government under Juri Uluots was appointed. On June 16, 1940, a Soviet ultimatum demanded a new Estonian government, "able and willing to secure the honest application of the Soviet-Estonia mutual assistance treaty." The following day, Soviet armed forces occupied the whole country. On July 21 the Chamber of Deputies was presented with a resolution to join

the U.S.S.R.; it was unanimously adopted the following day in spite of being contrary to constitutional procedure. On August 6 the Moscow Supreme Soviet incorporated Estonia into the U.S.S.R. Meanwhile, Päts, Laidoner, and many political leaders were arrested and deported to the U.S.S.R. In the first 12 months of Soviet occupation, more than 60,000 persons were killed or deported; more than 10,000 were removed in a mass deportation during the night of June 13-14, 1941.

On June 22, 1941, Germany attacked the U.S.S.R. Large areas of Estonia were freed from Soviet forces by improvised Estonian units before the German front reached Estonia. For three years Estonia was under German occupation. It became part of the Ostland province. By February 1944, however, the Russians were back on the Narva front. A few thousand Estonian youths, who had escaped to Finland to fight the Reds in the Finnish Army rather than with the Germans, returned but of course could not save the situation. About 30,000 Estonians escaped by sea to Sweden and 33,000 to Germany; many thousands perished on the sea. On September 22, 1944, Soviet troops took Tallinn. It is estimated that about 20,000 Estonians were deported in 1945-46. The third large deportation took place on March 24-27, 1949, and comprised about 40,000 persons, mostly farmers who resisted collectivization.

After restoration of the Soviet regime, Estonia became nominally the 15th union republic of the U.S.S.R., subject to the laws and practices of the union. The Communist party and the administration were both permeated by ethnic Russians or by Russified Estonians.

(K.M.S./E.Ar./Ed.)

## Latvia

Latvia, which had been an independent republic since 1920, was constituted as one of the 15 republics of the Soviet Union on July 21, 1940, and was proclaimed a Soviet Socialist republic on August 5. Situated in the Soviet west on the shores of the Baltic Sea and the Gulf of Riga, it covers an area of 24,600 square miles (63,700 square kilometres). In the north it borders on the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic, in the east on the Russian S.F.S.R., and in the south on the Lithuanian S.S.R. The overall length of Latvia's borders is 1,120 miles (1,800 kilometres), of which 307 miles (494 kilometres) are coastal. The capital is Riga (Riga in Latvian).

### PHYSICAL AND HUMAN GEOGRAPHY

**The land.** *Relief.* Latvia is essentially an undulating plain, with fairly flat lowlands alternating with hills. The eastern part is more elevated, the most prominent feature being the central Vidzeme (Livonia) elevation, which reaches a maximum height of 1,020 feet (311 metres). In the southeast the highest point is 948 feet (289 metres). The Kurzeme (Courland) elevation in the west is cut by the Venta River into western and eastern parts. Between the central Vidzeme and Latgale (Latgalian) elevations lies the East Latvian Lowland, partly crossed by moraine ridges that impede drainage; there are many peat bogs in this area.

The shores of the Baltic and the Gulf of Riga are only slightly indented, and there are considerable stretches of excellent sandy beaches.

**Drainage and soils.** Latvia contains a multitude of rivers belonging to the Baltic drainage area. The largest are the Western Dvina, locally called the Daugava (with a total length of 224 miles [358 kilometres] in Latvia), the Gauja (Russian Gauya), the Venta, and the Lielupe. Amid the hills, many of which are forested, are numerous lakes, ranging from a few acres up to 12 square miles (30 square kilometres) in area. Soils are predominantly podzolic, though calcareous soils characterize the Zemgale Plain. Swampy soils are found in some areas, particularly the East Latvian Lowland. Erosion is a problem in the more intensely cultivated hilly areas.

Mineral resources are confined to gravel, sand, dolomite, limestone, clay, and peat. Oil has been discovered in the Courland Peninsula, but reserves have not yet been explored.

The  
Daugava  
River



**Climate.** The climate is influenced by the prevailing air masses coming from the Atlantic. Humidity is high, and the skies are usually somewhat cloudy; there are only 30 to 40 days of sunshine per year and 150 to 180 completely overcast days. Average precipitation is 22–24 inches (about 550–600 millimetres) on lowlands and 28–31 inches (about 700–800 millimetres) on elevations. Southwesterly and southerly winds prevail. The frost-free season lasts from 125 to 155 days. Summers are cool and rainy more often than not. The mean air temperature in June is 63° F (17° C) with occasional jumps to about 93° F (34° C). Winter sets in slowly and lasts from the middle of December to the middle of March. The mean January temperature ranges from 28° F (–2° C) on the coast to 19° F (–7° C) in the east. There are occasional drops to –40° F (–40° C).

**Plant and animal life.** About two-thirds of Latvia is covered with forests, meadows, pastures, swamps, and wasteland. Forests, which account for more than a third of the total area, are a dominating feature of the republic's natural scene; about 10 percent of the forests are cultivated. The larger forest tracts are to be found in the northern part of the Courland Peninsula, along the left bank of the Daugava, and in the northeast. Conifers (pine and spruce) predominate. Of the deciduous species, birch, aspen, and alder occur more commonly. Meadows are found everywhere, both in the river valleys and among the hills.

Latvia's fauna is typical for a region with mixed forests; there are squirrel, fox, hare, lynx, and badger. Somewhat less common are ermine and weasel. Conservation measures have resulted in an increase in the number of deer and elk and reintroduced beaver.

The numerous birds include the nightingale, oriole, blackbird, woodpecker, owl, grouse, partridge, finch, tomtit, quail, and lark. Storks and herons are found in the marshes and meadows.

**The people.** The bulk of the people are Latvians and Russians. The Latvians, or Letts, speak one of the two surviving Baltic languages, the other being Lithuanian. In 1935 about 68 percent of them were Lutheran, 26 percent Roman Catholic. The ancestors of the present-day Latvians were the Latgals (Latgallians), who in the 9th century lived in the northeastern part of the present republic and who absorbed the Kurs (Cours, Couronians) and Livs. Two other early Latvian tribes were the Selonians and the Zemgals (Semi-gallians).

**The economy.** Industrialization in Latvia began in the latter part of the 19th century, and by the late 20th century it was the most heavily industrialized republic of the Soviet Union.

**Energy.** Latvia produces approximately half of its own energy requirements, the remainder being derived from imported fuel and from the unified power system of the northwest regions of the Soviet Union. On the Daugava River stand the major hydroelectric stations—Plavīgas, Ķegums, and Riga. There are thermoelectric stations in Riga and other cities. All the stations are integrated in a single power grid, which in turn is incorporated in the power grid of the Soviet northwest.

**Industry.** Machine building and metal engineering are the leading manufacturing activities. Labour-intensive goods—that is, items utilizing small quantities of raw materials and much labour—such as radios and scientific instruments, are produced in quantity. Durable consumer goods, such as refrigerators, washing machines, motorcycles, and motor scooters, are also produced. The heavy engineering sector turns out ships, rolling stock, streetcars, power generators, diesel motors, and agricultural implements. The light consumer goods industry, concentrating on textiles, shoes, and hosiery, is sufficiently well developed that its products can be exported to other Soviet republics. There are many food processing enterprises.

**Agriculture and fisheries.** Agricultural specialization is in dairy farming and meat production. Of the agricultural land, some two-thirds is used for crops, the remainder mainly for pasture. Of the crops, grain is the most important, industrial crops (sugar beets and flax) occupying only a tiny percentage of the total crop area.

Collectivization of agriculture was accomplished, against

resistance, in 1947–50. In the late 20th century there were some 300 collective farms and 240 state farms. Agriculture is mechanized, permitting intensive farming.

Latvia accounts for a small percentage of the Soviet Union's fish catch.

**Transportation.** All types of transport are found in Latvia, which ranks first among the union republics in the density of its rail network. Much Soviet foreign trade is conducted via the seaports of Riga and Ventspils, which are open the year round. Riga has air links with Moscow and other large cities of the Soviet Union, and there is some internal air service.

**Administrative and social conditions.** **Government.** The highest formal organs of government in Latvia are the Supreme Soviet, members of which are elected for a period of four years, and the Presidium. The Supreme Soviet appoints the Council of Ministers and elects the Supreme Court and the Presidium. The latter exercises power between sessions of the Supreme Soviet. Administration is the responsibility of the Council of Ministers, which drafts economic development plans and oversees their implementation. For administrative purposes the republic is divided into *rayony* (districts) and cities. At the local level, government is exercised by district, city, and village soviets, elected for terms of two years.

Justice is administered by people's courts, the judges of which are elected for terms of two years.

The Communist Party of Latvia, like its counterparts in the other union republics, is in fact the only source of political power, under the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Western students of the Soviet Union conclude that the party is dominated by non-Latvians (mainly Russians and other Slavs) and by Russified Latvians who have lived in Russia for large parts of their lives.

**Education.** General literacy was achieved in Latvia in the 1890s. Teaching in the general schools is in Latvian or Russian or both. In Latvian-language schools the study of Russian is compulsory.

Scientific work is carried on at the institutes of the Latvian Academy of Sciences (founded in 1946), in higher educational establishments, and in research institutes.

**Cultural life.** Amateur art thrives in Latvia. Clubs and individual enterprises have drama groups, choirs, ensembles, orchestras, and dance companies. The song festivals that have been held in Latvia since 1873 are still very popular; every five years the local districts and towns hold their own festivals and then send their best choirs, orchestras, and dance companies to the national festival, held at a park in Riga. The republic has a conservatory of music, an academy of arts, and a number of specialized secondary educational establishments for students of music, painting, and the applied arts.

Noted Latvian composers include Jāzeps Medīns, Jānis Medīns, and Emīlis Melngailis.

Modern Latvian literature dates from the late 19th century; the national epic, *Lāčplēšis* ("Bear Slayer"), by Andrejs Pumpurs, was published in 1888. Jānis Rainis, who died in 1929, is generally considered to be the most important Latvian writer. Three houses now publish literature in Latvian, Russian, and other languages. Newspapers and magazines are published in Latvian and Russian. Like the other Baltic republics, Latvia is better supplied with radio receivers than the rest of the Soviet Union and receives foreign broadcasts. Television broadcasts are part local, part from Moscow; a large part of television transmission is in Russian. The Riga Film Studio produces full-length feature films as well as documentaries, short subjects, cartoons, and newsreels.

An important national tradition is the festival of Midsummer Eve (St. John's Eve, or Janu Nakts) and Day, which, though officially abolished by the government in 1960, continues to be observed. (P.V.G./Ed.)

#### HISTORY

The Latvians constitute a prominent division of the ancient group of peoples known as the Balts. The first historically documented connection between the Balts and the civilization of the Mediterranean world was based on the ancient amber trade; according to Tacitus, the Aestii (pre-

Collective and state farms

The Communist Party of Latvia

The Livonian confederation

Amber trade of the Aestii

Forest animals



Collective  
and state  
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LatviaThe  
Livonian  
confedera-  
tionAmber  
trade of the  
Aestii

decessors of the Old Prussians) developed an important trade with the Roman Empire. This trade, with Germanic tribes as middlemen, reached its peak in the first two centuries AD and was maintained, precariously, when the migrations of the Germanic peoples began. What isolated the Balts from direct contact with the Mediterranean world was the large expansion of the Slavs over central and eastern Europe. Trade routes then shifted farther to the east or to the west, and the eastern Baltic countries had to rely on their Scandinavian neighbours for trade and cultural relations.

The Varangian, or Viking, expansion southeastward to the steppes north of the Black Sea was along the Western Dvina and Dnepr rivers and so passed across the Latvian lands. During the 10th and 11th centuries these lands were subject to a double pressure: from the east there was the Russian penetration; from the west came the Swedish push toward the shores of Courland.

**German rule.** During the crusading period, German, or, more precisely, Saxon, overseas expansion reached the eastern shores of the Baltic. Because the people occupying the coast of Latvia were the Livs, the German invaders called the country Livland, a name rendered in Latin as Livonia. In the mid-12th century, German merchants from Lübeck and Bremen were visiting the estuary of the Western Dvina; and these visits were followed by the arrival of German missionaries. Meinhard, a monk from Holstein, landed there in 1180 and was named bishop of Üxküll (Ikšķile) in 1186. Berthold of Hanover, who succeeded Meinhard as bishop in 1196, was killed in 1198 because he used force against the "treacherous Livs" resisting Baptism. Then, the third bishop, Albert of Buxhoeveden, with Pope Innocent III's permission, founded the Order of the Knights of the Sword in 1202. Before they merged in 1237 with the Knights of the Teutonic Order, they had conquered all the Latvian tribal kingdoms. The history of the country as written by the Germans is thus a conqueror's account.

After the conquest, the Germans formed a so-called Livonian confederation, which lasted for more than three centuries. This feudalistic organization was not a happy one, its three components—the Teutonic Order, the archbishopric of Riga, and the free city of Riga—being in constant dispute with each other. Moreover, the vulnerability of land frontiers involved the confederation in frequent foreign wars: the network of German strongholds testifies to the lack of security no less eloquently than the earlier system of castle mounds built by the Latvians. The Latvians, however, benefitted from Riga's joining the Hanseatic League in 1282, as the league's trade brought prosperity. In general, however, the situation of the Latvians under German rule was that of any subject nation. The indigenous nobility was extinguished, apart from a few of its members who changed their allegiance; and the rural population was forced to pay tithes and taxes to their German conquerors and to provide corvée, or statute labour.

The rise of Lithuania in the 14th century and the union of the Lithuanian and Polish crowns (1386) created a power that could wage long and devastating wars with the fast-growing Muscovite state in the east; but these wars were partly fought out on Livonian soil, so that the Latvian people's sufferings increased. As the fortunes of the Teutonic Order declined, the knights exploited their subjects more and more ruthlessly, and by the 16th century the Latvian peasants were reduced to virtual slavery as the chattels of their landlords.

**The Poles, the Swedes, and the encroachment of Russia.** In 1561 the Latvian territory was partitioned: Courland, south of the Western Dvina, became an autonomous duchy under the suzerainty of the Polish crown; and Livonia north of the river was incorporated into Poland under the name Inflanty. Riga was likewise incorporated into Poland in 1581 but was taken by the Swedish king Gustavus II Adolphus in 1621; Vidzeme—that is to say, the greater part of Livonia north of Livonia north of the Western Dvina—was ceded to Sweden by the Truce of Altmark (1629), though Latgale, the southeastern area, remained under Polish rule.

The rulers of Muscovy had so far failed to reach the Baltic shores of the Latvian country, though Ivan III and Ivan IV had tried to do so. The Russian tsar Alexis renewed the attempt without success in his wars against Sweden and Poland (1653–67). Finally, however, Peter I the Great managed to "break the window" to the Baltic Sea; in the course of the Great Northern War he took Riga from the Swedes in 1710; and at the end of the war he secured Vidzeme from Sweden under the Peace of Nystad (1721). Latgale was annexed by the Russians at the first partition of Poland (1772), Courland at the third (1795). By the end of the 18th century, therefore, the whole Latvian nation was subject to Russia.

**Russian domination.** In the period immediately following the Napoleonic Wars the Russian emperor Alexander I was induced to grant personal freedom to the peasants of Courland in 1817 and to those of Vidzeme in 1819. This was remarkable insofar as it preceded the abolition of serfdom in Russia by more than 40 years; but it did not imply any right of the peasant to buy the land that his ancestors had tilled for centuries, so that the Latvian peasant's freedom was compared by wits to that of a bird. Consequently, there was unrest in the Latvian lands until the emancipation of the serfs throughout the Russian Empire (1861) brought the right to buy land in ownership from the state and from the landlords, who were still mostly German.

In step with the growing economic strength of the local peasantry came a revival of national feeling. This movement was led by idealistic, strong-willed men who soon saw how difficult and dangerous it would be to steer a course between the German aristocracy and merchant groups on the one side and the Russian administration on the other. During those years of intermittent hope and despair, the idea of political self-rule was conceived; and moreover, in order to meet the rapidly increasing intellectual demands of the people, educational establishments and other national institutions were required. The idea of an independent Latvian state was openly put forward during the Russian Revolution of 1905. This revolution, evoked as it was simultaneously by social and by national groups, bore further witness to the strength of the Latvian reaction to economic and political German and Russian pressure. Nine years later, World War I broke out.

**Independence.** After the Russian Revolution of March 1917 the Latvian National Political Conference, convened at Riga, asked in July for complete political autonomy. On September 3, however, the German Army took Riga. After the Bolshevik coup of November 1917 in Petrograd, the Latvian People's Council, representing peasant, bourgeois, and Socialist groups, proclaimed independence on November 18, 1918. A government was formed by the leader of the Farmers' Union, Kārlis Ulmanis. The Soviet government established a Communist government for Latvia at Valmiera, headed by Pēteris Stučka. The Red Army, which included Latvian units, took Riga on January 3, 1919, and the Ulmanis government moved to Liepāja (Libau), where it was protected by a British naval squadron. But Liepāja was still occupied by German troops whom the Allies wished to defend East Prussia and Courland (Kurzeme) against the advancing Red Army. Their commander, Gen. Rüdiger Graf von der Goltz, demanded control over the Latvian units as well. He intended to build a German-controlled Latvia and to make it a German base of operation in the war against the Soviets. This intention caused a conflict with the government of independent Latvia supported by the Allies. Von der Goltz had at his disposal—besides his German troops—the *baltische Landeswehr*, a combat-ready unit of predominantly Baltic-German volunteers including also Latvian units. On May 22 these forces took Riga. Pushing northward, the Germans were stopped near Cēsis by the Estonian army which included 2,000 Latvians. The British general, Sir Hubert de la Poer Gough, head of the Allied military mission, negotiated an armistice. The Germans had to abandon Riga, to which the Ulmanis government returned in July. In the meantime, the Red Army, finding itself attacked from the north by the Estonians, had withdrawn from Latvia.

Conquest  
by Peter  
the GreatRed Army  
actions



In July Gough demanded that the German troops should retreat to East Prussia. But von der Goltz now raised a "West Russian" army, systematically reinforced by units of German volunteers. These forces, headed by an adventurer, Col. Bermond-Avalov, were to fight the Red Army, co-operating with the other "White Russian" armies of Kolchak, Denikin, and Yudenich, supported by the Allies. But on October 8 Bermond attacked the Latvian troops and occupied the suburbs of Riga south of the river. By November 10, however, the Latvians, helped by the artillery of an Anglo-French naval squadron, cooperating with Estonian forces, defeated von der Goltz's and Bermond's troops, attacked finally also by the Lithuanians. Until December 1919 all German troops had abandoned Latvia and Lithuania. Only Latgale remained in Red hands; but this province was cleared by 33,000 Latvians under Gen. Jānis Balodis, 20,000 Poles under Gen. Edward Smigly-Rydz, and 6,000 men of the *Landeswehr*, which had been put under the command of the British Lieut. Col. H.R.L.G. Alexander (later Earl Alexander of Tunis).

A Latvian constituent assembly, elected in April 1920, met in Riga on May 1; and on August 11 a Latvian-Soviet peace treaty was signed in Riga, the Soviet government renouncing all claims to Latvia. The Latvian constitution of February 15, 1922, provided for a republic with a president and a unicameral parliament, or *saeima*, of 100 members elected for three years.

The multiplicity of parties in the *Saeima* (22 in 1922 and 24 in 1931) made it impossible to form a stable government; and in 1934 Ulmanis, prime minister for the fourth time since 1918, proposed a constitutional reform. This was angrily opposed by the Social Democrats, the Communists, and the national minorities. The German minority became Nazified, and Ulmanis had to suppress the Latvian branch of the *Baltischer Bruderschaft* (Baltic Brotherhood), whose program was the incorporation of the Baltic state into the Third Reich; but a Latvian Fascist organization called *Perkonkrust* (Thundercross) developed a fierce propaganda. On May 15, 1934, Ulmanis and Balodis issued a decree declaring a state of siege. The *Saeima* and all the political parties were dissolved. On April 11, 1936, on the expiry of the second term of office of Pres. Alberts Kviesis, Ulmanis succeeded him. The country's economic position improved considerably.

**The Soviet occupation and incorporation.** When World War II started in September 1939, the fate of Latvia had been already decided in the secret protocol of the so-called German-Soviet Nonaggression Treaty of August 23. In October Latvia had to sign a dictated treaty of mutual assistance by which the U.S.S.R. obtained military, naval, and air bases on Latvian territory. On June 16, 1940, Latvia was invaded by the Red Army. On June 20 the formation of a new government was announced; on July 21 the new *Saeima* voted for the incorporation of Latvia into the U.S.S.R.; and on August 5 the U.S.S.R. accepted this incorporation. In the first year of Soviet occupation about 35,000 Latvians, especially the intelligentsia, were deported to Russia.

After the German invasion of the U.S.S.R., from July 1941 to October 1944, Latvia was a province of a larger Ostland, in which Estonia, Lithuania, and Belorussia were also included. After the reconquest of Latvia by the Soviet Army, the Soviet regime was restored with August Kirhensteins as chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet. About 65,000 Latvians fled to Germany and to Sweden before the arrival of the Soviet forces, while during 1945-46 about 105,000 were deported to Russia. The extreme northeastern section of Latvia with its predominant Russian population was ceded to Pskov Oblast of the Russian S.F.S.R. in 1945. In March 1949, when collective farming was forcibly introduced, the third mass deportation took place, in which about 70,000 Latvians were sent to northern Russia and Siberia. In 1952 Kirhensteins was succeeded by Karlis Ozolins, who was dismissed in November 1959 as the leader of the "Nationalist Communist" faction that opposed Russian influence in Latvia. From then on, Latvia was subjected to increasing Russification.

(Ar.Sp./K.M.S./Ed.)

## Lithuania

The Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic, more popularly known as Lithuania (Lithuanian *Lietuva*, Russian *Litva*), was proclaimed on July 20, 1940, and became a member of the Soviet Union on August 3, 1940. It is bounded on the north by the Latvian S.S.R., on the east and south by the Belorussian S.S.R., and on the southwest by the Kaliningrad *oblast* (region) of the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic and by Poland. The waters of the Baltic Sea to the west add an important maritime element to the natural environment of the republic. Lithuania has an area of 25,200 square miles (65,200 square kilometres).

### PHYSICAL AND HUMAN GEOGRAPHY

**The land.** *Relief.* Underlying rock structures are of little significance for the contemporary Lithuanian terrain, which, basically, is a low-lying plain scraped by Ice Age glaciers that left behind thick, ridgelike terminal deposits known as moraines. The Baltic coast area is fringed by a region characterized by geographers as the maritime depression, which rises gradually eastward. Sand dunes line an attractive coast, and the Kuršių Marės (Kurisches Haff), a lagoon almost cut off from the sea by a thin, 60-mile (100-kilometre) sandspit, forms a distinctive feature. This is bounded on the east by the Žemaičių (Samogitian) Hills, which give way to the flat expanses of the central Lithuanian lowland.

The lowland consists of glacial lake clays and boulder-studded loams and stretches in a wide band across the republic from north to south; some portions of it are heavily waterlogged. The lowland is bordered in the southeast by the narrow Žiežmariai Plain, which was formed from an ancient glacial valley filled with sandy, gravelly, and pebbly deposits. The sandy portions have often been whipped up into dunes, which have become overgrown with pine trees. The elevated Baltic Ridge thrusts between these two lowland areas into the eastern and southeastern portions of the republic; its rumpled glacial relief includes a host of small hills and numerous small lakes. The Šventionų-Narochiaus and the Ašmenos Hills—the latter containing Juozapinė, at 964 feet (294 metres) above sea level the highest point in the republic—are located in the extreme east and southeast.

Lithuanian soils range from sands to heavy clays. In the northwest, the soil is either loamy or sandy (and sometimes marshy) and is quite heavily podzolized, or leached out. In the central region, weakly podzolized, loamy peats predominate, and it is there that the most fertile, and hence most cultivated, soils are found. In the southeast, there are sandy soils, somewhat loamy and moderately podzolized. Sandy soils, in fact, cover a quarter of Lithuania, and most of these regions are blanketed by woodlands.

Lithuanian rivers drain to the Baltic and generally have the slow, meandering characteristics of lowland rivers. The Neman (Nemunas), cutting north and then west through the heart of the country, is the largest. Its main tributaries are the Merkys, Neris, Nevėžis, Dubysa, Jūra, Minija, and Šešupė. The rivers have a total length of some 1,700 miles (2,720 kilometres), nearly a fifth of which is navigable. Most of them can be used for floating timber rafts and for electric-power generation. A distinctive feature of the Lithuanian landscape is the presence of about 3,000 lakes, mostly in the east and southeast. The boggy regions produce large quantities of peat that, dried by air, is used in both industry and agriculture.

**Climate.** The climate of the republic is transitional between the maritime type of western Europe and the continental type found farther east. As a result, damp air masses of Atlantic origin predominate, alternating with continental Eurasian and, more rarely, colder Arctic air or air with a southern, tropical origin. Baltic Sea influences dominate a comparatively narrow coastal zone. The mean temperature for January, the coldest month, is 23.4° F (−4.8° C), while July, the warmest month, has an average temperature of 63° F (17.2° C). Average annual rainfall is 25 inches (630 millimetres), diminishing inland. Rainfall reaches a peak in August, except in the maritime strip, where the maximum is reached two to three months later.

Free di-  
active  
vegetation

The  
central  
lowland

Fascist or-  
ganizations

Peat-  
moss

Emphasis  
on live-  
stock  
breeding



(three dis-  
tinctive  
vegetation  
zones)

**Plant and animal life.** The natural vegetation cover of Lithuania falls into three separate regions. In the maritime regions, pine forests predominate, and wild rye and various bushy plants grow on the sand dunes. Spruce trees add their colour to the hilly eastern portion. The central region is characterized by large tracts of oak trees, with elegant birch forests in the northern portions, as well as distinctive black alder and aspen groves. Pine forests again prevail in the south; indeed, about a quarter of the whole republic is forested, with a further quarter taken up by meadowlands. Swamps and marshlands account for about 7 percent of the total area.

Wildlife is very diverse, with about 60 mammalian species. There are wolves, foxes, otters, badgers, ermines, wild boars, and many rodents. The deep forests harbour elk, stag, deer, beaver, mink, and water rats. Common birds include delicate white storks, a variety of ducks, geese, and swans, cormorants, herons, hawks, and even an occasional bald eagle. There are many types of grouse and partridge, and the total number of bird species recorded approaches 300. The more than 50 species of fish include salmon, eel, bream, carp, and trout, with cod, plaice, and herring common off the coast.

**The people.** Ethnically, about 80 percent of the population are Lithuanians, but there are also Russians and Poles and lesser numbers of Belorussians, Ukrainians, Jews, Latvians, Tatars, Gypsies, and others. Urban dwellers make up over half the total population.

Natural increase, rather than any inward migration, has accounted for most of the recent population growth. Internally, however, there has been a modest but steady movement of people to the cities, accentuated in the case of the planned regional centres of Alytus, Kapsukas, Utena, Plungė, and Mažeikiai.

**The economy. Resources.** Lithuania possesses a good range of useful mineral resources, including sulfates, notably gypsum; chalk and chalky marl; limestones; dolomites; various clays, sands, and gravels; peat; some iron ore and phosphorites; and mineral waters. Oil deposits have been detected in the offshore regions. The power potential of the many rivers and the traditional resources of the great forests and the rich agricultural areas have added to the basic wealth of the republic, which is well placed geographically for trade purposes.

During the Soviet period, economic policy has emphasized industrialization; and, since the end of World War II, the machinery, shipbuilding, electronic, electrical, and radio-engineering, chemical, cement, and fish-processing industries have been completely overhauled. Traditional industries such as food processing and various branches of light industry have also expanded considerably. Since 1961 the Lithuanian power system has been part of the unified network covering the northwestern Soviet Union. Two major plants, one a hydroelectric station on the Neman and the other a thermal station at the town of Elektrėnai, increased output. Local resources have also stimulated building materials and construction industries to meet the demands of a growing and urbanizing population.

**Agriculture.** Lithuanian agriculture has maintained something of its traditional importance, with almost one-fourth of the economically active population still engaged in farming the approximately 740 collective and 310 state farms. The development of agriculture has been closely linked to land reclamation and swamp-drainage schemes. The chief agricultural trend is toward the production of meat and milk, together with the cultivation of flax, sugar beets, potatoes, and vegetables. Half the total production is made up of fodder crops; a large percentage consists of grain and leguminous crops; and most of the rest consists of potatoes and vegetables. Livestock breeding is still the leading branch of agriculture, however, with emphasis on dairy cattle and pigs. One feature of the Soviet period has been the injection of technology into agriculture, and most crop cultivation is mechanized, although at autumn harvest time large amounts of manual labour are still required.

**Economic regions.** Lithuanian planners, using as criteria environmental, economic, and transportation indexes, have divided the republic into four economic regions.

Occupying almost 30 percent of the total area, Eastern Lithuania, containing the capital, Vilnius, is characterized by a diversified and rapidly growing industry (primarily metalworking and mechanical engineering, woodworking, and branches of light industry) centred on the main cities and by a substantial rural economy. It also contains a number of well-sited health resorts, including Trakai and Ignalina, and is crisscrossed by highways linking the area with major Soviet cities.

Occupying slightly more than one-fourth of the republic's territory, the southern portion of central Lithuania contains more than half of the republic's developed water-power resources. Metalworking, mechanical engineering, and food-processing industries predominate; farming is intensive, with a concentration on stock raising and the growing of sugar beets. Kaunas, Alytus, and Kapsukas are the main centres.

Sprawling over the northern portion of the middle Lithuanian lowland and the eastern slopes of the Žemaičių Hills, Northern Lithuania occupies almost 30 percent of the republic and is noted for its fertile soils and its dolomite, gypsum, and limestone reserves. Farming is intensive, with almost half the winter-wheat sowing and most of the sugar-beet and flax crops located here. Industry is not very well developed. The main centres are Šiauliai, Panevėžys, and Rokiškis.

Occupying the remaining 15 percent of the republic, Western Lithuania lies along the Baltic Sea shores and has a distinctive maritime quality. Shipbuilding, ship repairing, fish processing, and oil refining are the main industries, with Klaipėda, Telšiai, Plungė, and Mažeikiai the main centres. There are many pastures, and horse breeding and the raising of dairy cattle and pigs, together with poultry farming and fishing, are well developed.

**Transportation.** Railways continue to be the main means of transport in Lithuania. Motor transportation has nevertheless increased sharply, and cars and buses account for almost all of the total number of people carried. Sea transport is an important factor, with freight transportation showing a rapid increase since World War II. River transport is also significant.

Vilnius is the main air-transportation centre, with links to other important Soviet cities and resort areas. The transportation network also includes a natural-gas pipeline that carries gas from the Ukraine and an oil pipeline that carries crude from Western Siberian oil fields to the refinery at Mažeikiai.

**Administrative and social conditions. Government.** The constitution of the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic, adopted on August 25, 1940, states that political power resides in the workers and peasants of the republic, acting through the local soviets, or councils of workers' deputies. This political foundation rests on a socialist economic system, with communal ownership of the means of production.

The Supreme Soviet, elected for four years and acting through a Council of Ministers, is the highest legislative body of the republic. Its Presidium exercises executive power between sessions. Locally, power is vested in various levels of soviets, down to the smallest village unit; all are elected for two-year periods.

Justice is administered through the Supreme Court and a local network of people's courts, with members elected for five and two years, respectively. Law enforcement is in the hands of the Lithuanian S.S.R. procurator, who is appointed for five years.

The Lithuanian Communist Party, a constituent of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, is the political organization of the republic. Its members and candidates for membership are supported by the activities of the Komsomol youth movement. As elsewhere in the Soviet Union, the trade unions play social and economic roles in formulating and implementing state policy.

**Social services.** Lithuanian society has benefitted from emphasis on the production of consumer goods and the improvement of social services, as well as on the building up of heavy industry. As a result, both average monthly income and the proportion of the national income set aside for social purposes have showed a steady expansion.

The  
central  
lowland

Fanning  
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emphasis  
on live-  
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The  
Lithuanian  
Communist  
Party



The latter provisions were important, as they augmented the standard of living by providing free education and medical services, as well as a range of ancillary services. The latter included the upkeep of kindergartens and day nurseries, sick leave, pension payments, and help in providing vacation and sanatorium accommodations. The urbanization process has meant a constant struggle to keep up with housing needs, and new techniques, including prefabrication, have been introduced.

**Cultural life.** As elsewhere in the Soviet Union, there is a high level of public interest in various forms of cultural life, exhibited in public libraries, museums, amateur cultural centres, theatres, and cinemas. The works of contemporary Lithuanian writers, poets, and playwrights are evolving in a milieu that blends a very old cultural tradition with the new social factors introduced over a relatively short period of Soviet life. Many Lithuanian critics feel that the poetry of Eduardas Mieželaitis, especially his collection *Zmogus* (1962; "Man"), illustrates a deep and optimistic human, as well as social, vision. Related concerns animate historical writing, as in the case of *Parduotos vasaros* (1957; "Bartered Summers"), a novel by Juozas Baltušis, and also the writings about the World War II invasion, notably the heroic poem *Kraujas ir pelėnais* (1960; "Blood and Ashes"), by Justinas Marcinkevičius.

The great majority of Lithuania's newspapers and magazines, which enjoy high circulations, are published in Lithuanian, and there are a number of broadcasting services, including a television service that is part of the East European Interservice network. Yet, in spite of such modern incursions, Lithuanian folklore continues to hand down a rich and original heritage from generation to generation. Lithuanian songs and a remarkable collection of fairy tales, legends, proverbs, and aphorisms have their roots deep in a language and culture that are among the oldest in Europe. The folk songs—*dainos*—are melodious and lyrical, while the communal folk dances, often related to everyday activities, are characterized by an elegant symmetry of design and motion. Lithuanian folk art is mainly embodied in ceramics, leatherwork, wood carving, and textiles; its colouring (which tends to avoid gaudiness) and its original geometric or floral patterns are characteristic features.

The Vilnius drawing school, founded in 1866, has had a strong influence on the republic's fine-arts traditions, while the composer and painter M.K. Ciurlionis, who died in 1911, also had a considerable influence on contemporary forms. During the Soviet period, a realistic note has been introduced into sculpture and painting, and Lithuanian contemporary drawing, noted for the use of natural colour and a highly refined technique, has won international acclaim. The republic's architecture has been affected by a rich heritage in rich monuments and old buildings and by styles, ranging from the Gothic to the Neoclassical, that have acquired a distinctive local character. While much attention is given to preservation of historical monuments, much of the energy of Lithuanian architects goes into the designing of new buildings, both industrial and domestic, and especially to cultural and educational centres.

Music, too, has a strong tradition in the republic, a special feature being the dances and singing festivals held in the towns and villages every summer. These build to a climax every five years in national singing festivals during which as many as 40,000 persons may compete.

(K.A.M./Ed.)

#### HISTORY

**Early history.** Lithuanians belong to the Baltic group of nations, which included also the Prussians to the west and the Latvians to the north. The Prussians were exterminated by the Teutonic Order in the 13th century. The Latvians, together with the Finno-Ugrian Estonians, were conquered during the first three decades of the 13th century by the German Knights of the Sword, who in 1237 joined the Teutonic Order. The Lithuanians, protected by the primeval forest that almost entirely covered their land, resisted the German pressure. Samogitia (Lithuanian *Zemaitija*), the cradle of the Lithuanian people, lying between Prussia and Livonia, two lands already in the

hands of the Teutonic Order, was an object of German covetousness, however. Under this threat the Lithuanian tribes united in the middle of the 13th century under Mindaugas. He and his family were baptized in 1251, and two years later, in his capital (probably at Kernave on the Neris), he was crowned the first (and only) king in Lithuanian history by the authority of Pope Innocent IV. Mindaugas and his two sons were assassinated in 1263, and Lithuania remained officially pagan.

Traidenis, ruler of Lithuania from 1270 to 1282, was probably the founder of the dynasty known as that of Gediminas, who began to rule in 1315. Although shortly after the destruction of Kievan Russia by the Tatars Lithuania had already begun to expand eastward and southward to the lands inhabited by Belorussians, it was Gediminas who really built the empire later known as historic (as opposed to ethnic) Lithuania. He made Vilnius the capital, as his letters of 1323 show. When he died in 1341, Lithuania's frontiers extended across the upper Dvina in the northeast, to the Dnepr in the southeast and to the Pripiet Marshes in the south, the warlike but small Lithuanian nation could not colonize this vast territory but maintained control over it because the ruling class had shown an undoubted political talent and a spirit of religious toleration.

Gediminas divided his empire among his seven sons. Soon, however, only two remained to continue their father's policy of expansion: Algirdas, with Vilnius as his capital, succeeded to the title of grand prince and undertook the defense of Lithuania against the Tatars and Muscovy; and Kestutis, with his seat at Trakai, reigned over ethnic Lithuania and defended it against the Teutonic Order. When Algirdas died in 1377 he left to his son Jogaila (Jagiello) an empire including Kiev, which had come under Lithuanian suzerainty in 1362; but Kestutis drove Jogaila from Vilnius in 1381 and proclaimed himself grand prince of Lithuania. Jogaila, however, captured Kestutis and his son Vytautas in 1382, and Kestutis died in prison; but Vytautas escaped and found sanctuary in the territory of the Teutonic Order. The German danger had become, moreover, especially serious because the knights had taken Kaunas in 1362, and Jogaila had promised them the whole of Samogitia to the Dubysa River in 1382. His Orthodox elder brothers tried, therefore, to convince him that Lithuania's interests lay in alliance with Muscovy and accession to the Orthodox Church, but his pagan younger brothers recommended a pro-Polish policy with acceptance of Roman Catholicism.

**Polish-Lithuanian union.** On August 14, 1385, at Krėvas (Krewo), Jogaila concluded with Polish ambassadors an agreement that he would forever unite Lithuania and Kievan Russia with the Polish crown if he could marry the 12-year-old queen Jadwiga of Poland and become king of Poland himself. He went to Kraków, was baptized on February 15, 1386, receiving the name Władysław, married Jadwiga, and, on March 4, was crowned king of Poland.

The Lithuanians outside the German-devastated Samogitia were baptized in 1387, and Jogaila granted the newly baptized boyars, or gentry, great privileges. In 1392 a reconciliation took place between Jogaila and Vytautas, who became lieutenant governor of Lithuania.

The claim of the Teutonic Order to be combating Polish-Lithuanian "pagans" deceived many a western European knight into moving east to save Christianity; but in the decisive Battle of Grunwald (Tannenberg), on July 15, 1410, the Polish-Lithuanian forces inflicted a crushing defeat on the Order. German supremacy in the Baltic countries was broken, though the first Treaty of Toruń (Thorn), concluded on February 1, 1411, was a moderate one. Samogitia was returned to Lithuania until the death of Jogaila and Vytautas. On September 27, 1422, however, the Order was forced to agree that Samogitia, by then Christian, was Lithuanian forever.

In the meantime, at Horodlo, on October 2, 1413, a new pact of union was concluded between Poland and Lithuania. The principles of the union remained unchanged, but the autonomy of the grand principality was made permanent. Later in the century a crisis arose in Polish-Lithuanian relations because the Lithuanian boyars elected one Alexander as grand prince, while the Poles chose

The first and only king

The country's folk heritage

Russification

Battle of Grunwald



his brother John Albert. The Polish-Lithuanian personal union lapsed, but, on the death of John Albert in 1501, the Lithuanians insisted that their grand prince should be king of Poland too. The Poles agreed, and the senates of the two countries decided at Piotrkow that thenceforth the king of Poland should always be grand prince of Lithuania. The Teutonic Order was no longer a menace, but in the east there appeared another and greater danger. Ivan III, the grand prince of Muscovy, in 1480 assumed the title of sovereign of all Russia; and the major part of historic Lithuania was Belorussian-speaking.

On July 1, 1569, at Lublin, a common Polish-Lithuanian Sejm, or Parliament, transformed the personal union into a real one. In the course of the ensuing two centuries, both the Lithuanian and Belorussian nobilities of historic Lithuania became Polonized, but the two peasantries continued to use their own languages.

**Russian rule.** While at the first (1772) and the second (1793) partitions of Poland only the Belorussian lands of the grand principality of Lithuania were annexed by Russia, at the third partition (1795) ethnic Lithuania suffered the same fate, the only exception being the province of Suwalki (Suwalki), the northern part of which was Lithuanian-speaking, which became part of the Kingdom of Prussia. In 1806 Suwalki was incorporated into the Duchy of Warsaw, which in 1815 was annexed by Russia. The Congress of Vienna added to the style of the Russian emperors the titles of king of Poland and grand prince of Lithuania.

When the Poles rose against Russia in 1830-31 the insurrection extended to the Lithuanian provinces before it was suppressed. The Polish rising of 1863 also spread into Lithuania, and its repression there was particularly severe, 180 insurgents being hanged and 9,000 deported to Siberia.

On March 25, 1839, the Uniates were forced to join the Orthodox Church, and the next year the Lithuanian statute was replaced by Russian codes. The tsarist government treated the Territory of the Northwest—as historic Lithuania was called after 1832—as an integral part of Russia. From 1864 to 1905 the policy of russification extended to every domain of public life. It was forbidden to publish newspapers, periodicals, or books in Polish or Belorussian, while books in Lithuanian could be printed only if the Russian alphabet was used. Russian was the only language of teaching in the schools. The Roman Catholic religion was persecuted.

When the manifesto of October 30, 1905, granted freedom of speech to the peoples of the Russian Empire, two daily newspapers appeared at Vilnius, one Polish (*Kurier Litewski*) and one Lithuanian (*Vilniaus Ziniu*). On December 4-5, 1905, a congress of about 2,000 delegates was held in Vilnius. The congress demanded territorial autonomy for Lithuania with a democratically elected *saeima*. The frontiers of the national Lithuanian state were to be drawn according to the freely expressed wish of the peoples concerned. Soon afterward, the teaching of the Lithuanian language in schools was permitted.

**Independence.** During World War I the Germans occupied a great part of historic Lithuania. On September 18, 1915, the German armies entered Vilnius. The German government authorized the gathering at Vilnius, on September 18-22, 1917, of a congress of 214 Lithuanian delegates and the election of the 20-member Lietuvas Taryba, or Council of Lithuania. The congress called for an independent Lithuanian state within the ethnic frontiers and with Vilnius as capital. On February 16, 1918, the Taryba proclaimed an independent Lithuanian state and the dissolution of all political connections that had existed with other nations.

Lithuania was still under German occupation when, on November 5, Augustinas Voldemaras was chosen prime minister of independent Lithuania. After the German troops had evacuated Vilnius, the city was entered on January 5, 1919, by the Red Army, and a Communist Lithuania government, appointed by the All-Russian Central Executive Committee on December 23, 1918, was installed. It was headed by Vincas Mickevicius-Kapsukas. The Voldemaras government moved to Kaunas, which, on January 17, however, was also occupied by the Red Army.

The Germans remained in western Lithuania, which from the end of October to December 15, 1919, was controlled by the German Army under Rüdiger von der Goltz.

**The Polish-Lithuanian dispute.** Józef Piłsudski, the head of the restored Polish state, proposed two alternatives for Lithuania. Either an independent state might be set up within purely ethnographic frontiers (that is, without Vilnius and its region, which was largely Polish), or a larger state might be set up including Vilnius; but in the latter case, some sort of a federal link with Poland would be indispensable. On April 20, 1919, the Polish Army led by Piłsudski took Vilnius from the Red Army, which enabled the Lithuanians to reenter Kaunas. In the following summer the Polish forces moved to the Western Dvina River in the north and to the Berezina in the east. Against Lithuania they occupied the demarcation line fixed by the Inter-Allied Committee presided over by Marshal F. Foch. This Foch line, "adopted by the Supreme Council on July 27, 1919, ran to the west of the Grodno-Vilnius-Daugavpils railways and more or less coincided with the eastern ethnic frontier of Lithuania. On July 12, 1920, when the Polish Army was retreating, the Kaunas government concluded in Moscow a peace treaty by which the Soviet Union "ceded" to Lithuania not only Vilnius but also Lida and Grodno. After Piłsudski's final victory, the Red Army, which occupied Vilnius on July 14, left it on August 26 while the Lithuanian Army entered the city. On September 5, 1920, the Warsaw government appealed to the League of Nations. A Polish-Lithuanian conference met at Suwalki, and a partial armistice was signed on October 7. Nevertheless, Piłsudski ordered Gen. Lucjan (Lucien) Żeligowski to seize Vilnius, and this was done on October 9. Żeligowski set up a government of central Lithuania. A new armistice, restoring the Foch line, was signed on November 29, 1920.

Meanwhile the Council of the League of Nations had made many attempts to settle the Polish-Lithuanian dispute and, at last, on February 3, 1923, adopted a final resolution fixing a Polish-Lithuanian line of demarcation almost identical with the Foch line, leaving the decision as to the frontier to the Conference of Ambassadors in Paris. On March 15, 1923, the Conference of Ambassadors recognized the line of February 3 as the final frontier between the two states. Lithuania, however, refused to accept this decision.

**Foreign and domestic relations, 1919-39.** Lithuania was received into the membership of the League of Nations on September 22, 1921. On September 28, 1926, a Soviet-Lithuanian treaty of nonaggression was signed in Moscow. On September 12, 1934, at Geneva, a treaty of good will and cooperation was concluded by Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. Lithuania's relations with Germany were jeopardized by Nazi propaganda in the Klaipėda (Memel) territory.

In March 1935, at a trial of Klaipėda Nazis, most of the accused were found guilty of high treason. On March 17, 1938, Poland demanded of Lithuania the immediate opening of the frontier, acceptance of the cession of Vilnius, and the establishment of normal diplomatic relations. Lithuania yielded to these demands. In February and May 1938 the Lithuanian government released the convicted Nazis and in October abolished martial law in the Klaipėda territory. On December 11, at the election of the Klaipėda Landtag, the Nazis won 25 seats out of a total of 29. On March 21, 1939, Lithuania was presented with another ultimatum, which meant the loss of its only port.

Meanwhile, the period of 1927-38 was that of restricted democracy. A new constitution, adopted on February 12, 1938, was to provide the basis for a return to parliamentary institutions. A coalition government was formed with the inclusion of the Christian Democrats and Liberals, but it had not enough time to reorganize the republic on a more solid basis.

**Independence lost.** A secret protocol to the German-Soviet treaty of nonaggression of August 23, 1939, stipulated that in the event of a territorial and political rearrangement in the areas belonging to the Baltic states, the northern boundary of Lithuania should represent "the

The first  
and only  
king

Classification

Battle of  
Grunwald

The Foch  
Line

German-  
Soviet  
protocol



boundary of the sphere of influence of Germany and the U.S.S.R." When they began World War II, the Germans made frantic efforts to induce Lithuania to attack Poland so that the former might thus become their ally and protégé. Lithuania chose to remain neutral, and the secret protocol to the German-Soviet treaty of September 28, 1939, revised the previous agreement by deciding that the territory of Lithuania fell within the sphere of influence of the U.S.S.R.

On October 10, 1939, a mutual assistance treaty was signed in Moscow, in accordance with which Lithuania was compelled to admit Soviet garrisons and to grant air bases. On June 15, 1940, Lithuania was confronted with an ultimatum demanding immediate formation of a "friendly" government. On the same day, the country was occupied by the Soviet Army. Many Lithuanian leaders either fled to the West or were arrested and deported to Siberia. An obscure journalist, Justas Paleckis, became premier. On July 21, a subservient Parliament unanimously requested the incorporation of Lithuania into the Soviet Union. On August 3, 1940, the Moscow Supreme Soviet readily acceded to the request, and Lithuania was declared a constituent republic of the U.S.S.R. In the night of June 14-15 the next year, 30,455 members of the Lithuanian intelligentsia (members of the national guard, civil

servants, etc.) were deported to Siberia. Including other deportees and about 5,000 political prisoners executed at the time of the hasty departure of the Soviet forces, the country suffered during the first Soviet occupation a loss of about 45,000 people.

A few days after the German attack on the Soviet Union (June 22, 1941), the whole of Lithuania was in German hands. On July 17, 1941, Hitler announced the creation of the Ostland province including the three Baltic states and Belorussia.

Vilnius was taken by the Soviet Army on July 13, 1944, and Lithuania was again under Soviet occupation by the middle of October. All non-Communist organizations were immediately dissolved. The period of methodical Sovietization and russification started. Fleeing before the Soviet armies, about 80,000 Lithuanians reached the western zones of Germany, but about 60,000 were rounded up in the eastern zone and sent to Siberia. In Lithuania, during 1945-46, about 145,000 Lithuanians were removed from their native land. The third mass deportation, ordered in connection with the forced collectivization of agriculture, took place on March 24-27, 1949, when about 60,000 Lithuanians were sent to northern Russia or Siberia. Lithuania had become a Soviet Socialist republic.

(K.M.S./M.G./Ed.)

Soviet  
occupation

## CAUCASUS

The great historic barrier of the Caucasus Mountains rears up across the wide isthmus separating the Black and Caspian seas, at that extreme southern portion of the European section of the Soviet Union where Europe and Asia converge. If the ranges are placed in Europe, then Mt. Elbrus, at 18,510 feet (5,642 metres) their highest peak, is also the highest point in Europe; but the environment of the whole region is so subject to Asian influences that there is a good case for assigning the Caucasus to southwestern Asia. Traditionally, the watershed of the Great Caucasus Range (Bolshoy Kavkaz), the backbone of the system, is regarded as part of the line dividing the continents.

The name Caucasus is a Latinized form of "Kaukasos," which the ancient Greek geographers and historians used, and the Russian "Kavkaz" is of the same origin. The ultimate derivation is thought to be from "Kaz-kaz," the Hittite name for a people living on the southern shore of the Black Sea. This ancient nomenclature reflects the historical importance of the region: the Greeks made the mysterious range the scene of the mythical sufferings of Prometheus, and the Argonauts sought the Golden Fleece in the land of Colchis, nestling against the range on the Black Sea coast. The ranges also filtered cultures of the ascendant civilizations of the Middle Eastern "fertile crescent" through to the north, besides nurturing their own distinctive societies. The peoples of the region have exhibited an extraordinary variety since early times: the Colchians, for example, as described by the 5th-century-B.C. Greek historian Herodotus, were black skinned, and the subsequent centuries witnessed successive waves of peoples migrating across Eurasia, adding to, and being molded by, the Caucasian cultural heritage. Not surprisingly, a larger quantity of different languages is spoken in Caucasia than in any other area of similar size in the world.

Caucasia is defined as the region including not only the soaring mountain ranges of the Caucasus proper but also the country immediately north and south of them. The northern country is called Ciscaucasia (Predkavkaz; i.e., Hither Caucasia); the southern is Transcaucasia (Zakavkaz, or Farther Caucasia). The whole region, which has an area of 170,000 square miles (440,000 square kilometres), is nevertheless predominantly mountainous. It extends from the lowlands of the Kuma and Manych basins southward to the political frontiers separating the Soviet Union from Turkey and from Iran and so comprises the southernmost divisions of the Russian S.F.S.R. (including Dagestan), the Georgian S.S.R., the Armenian S.S.R., and the Azerbaijan S.S.R., besides several minor administrative units constituted on an ethnic basis.

### Physical and human geography

#### THE LAND

**Relief.** The Great Caucasus extends for approximately 750 miles (1,200 kilometres) southeastward across the Caucasus from the Taman Peninsula (Tamansky Poluostrov) thrusting between the Black Sea and its northern extension, the Sea of Azov, to the Apsheron Peninsula (Apsheronsky Poluostrov), which juts into the Caspian past the oil-rich port of Baku. The vast plains and uplifted areas of Ciscaucasia stretch from its northern foothills to the Kuma-Manych depression lying west of the huge Caspian delta of the Volga. Western Ciscaucasia consists largely of plains: from the lowland north of the Kuban River, the delta of which adjoins the broad, low ridges of the Taman Peninsula, a plain slopes gradually southward up to the foothills of the mountains. Central Ciscaucasia comprises not only the Stavropol Highland (Stavropol'skaya Vozvyshennost'), mainly characterized by tablelands of limestone or sandstone and by deep valleys, but also the Mineralnye Vody-Pyatigorsk zone to the southeast (where Mt. Beshtau rises to 4,593 feet [1,400 metres] from a surrounding plateau) and, still farther southeastward, beyond the middle Terek River, the highlands backing the Terek and the Sunzha, with the Alkhan Churt Valley between them. Eastern Ciscaucasia is lowland traversed by the lower Terek and, to the north beyond the sands of the vast Nogay Steppe, by the Kuma. Both rivers flow into the Caspian.

The northern slopes of the Great Caucasus are not as steep as the southern. The middle of the system is comparatively narrow, but its western and eastern ends have widths of 100 miles (160 kilometres) or more. The watershed and a lateral range to the north of it, which together constitute the axis of the system, contain, in addition to Mt. Elbrus itself, such magnificent lofty peaks as Mt. Dombay-Ulgen, 13,274 feet (4,046 metres), in the western sector; Mts. Shkhara, Dykhtau, and Kazbek, all well over 16,000 feet (4,875 metres), in the central sector; and Mt. Tebulos-Mta and Mt. Bazar-Dyuzi, both over 14,000 feet (4,265 metres), in the east. Spurs tongueing north and south from the main axis in places reach heights approaching 10,000 feet (3,000 metres).

South of the Great Caucasus, on the Black Sea coast, lies the alluvial plain of Kolchida (ancient Colchis). On the Caspian side, in the basin of the Kura River, plains and such uplands as the long Shirak Steppe (Shirakskaya Step) succeed one another till the level falls sharply into an extensive depression, in the centre of which the Kura receives

The  
ethnic and  
linguistic  
heritage

The Great  
and Little  
Caucasus

Rocks of  
the Great  
Caucasus