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Civil Military Relations in Lithuania Under President Antanas Smetona 1926-1940

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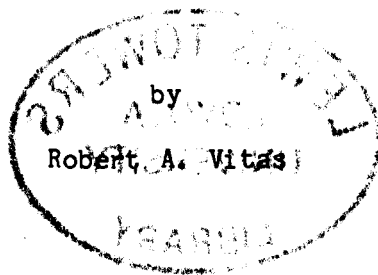
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CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS IN LITHUANIA
UNDER PRESIDENT ANTANAS SMETONA
1926-1940



A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of Loyola University of Chicago in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

May

1986

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Finally, the support and encouragement of my parents has been invaluable in this and other projects. It is to them that this study is dedicated.

VITA

The author, Robert A. Vitas, is the son of Jonas Vitas and Grace (Memenas) Vitas. He was born 12 September 1962 in Chicago, Illinois.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this thesis is to systematically study the interrelationships among the military, politics, and society in independent Lithuania during the authoritarian regime of President Antanas Smetona, 1926-1940.

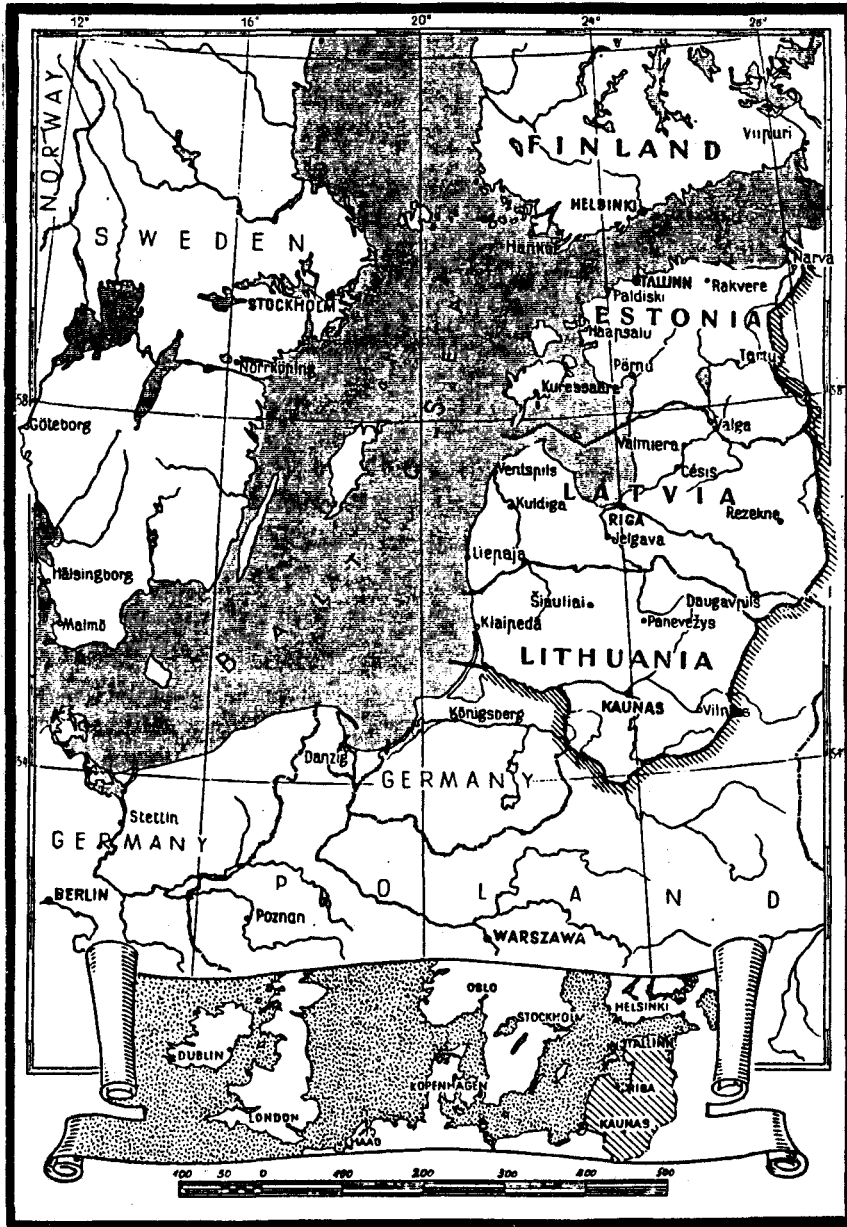
The military, which brought Smetona to power in a coup d'etat, played a leading role in politics and permeated society. In turn, the military became politicized and, further, was affected by societal vicissitudes. The problem must be addressed in order to fully understand socio-political dynamics in Lithuania at that crucial point in its political, historical, and socio-cultural development. It is this kind of systematic study which the academic community lacks, in either the English or Lithuanian languages. It is thus the aim of this thesis to fill the scholarly vacuum.

The issues involved, of course, have been addressed by many individuals: scholars, participants, observers. However, these merely provide pieces of a grand puzzle which no one has yet constructed. The problems with these pieces are as follows:

- 1) They are often quite small, sometimes just a few sentences in a book or article, which are minimally comprehensible when not viewed in the general context of events.

- 2) Bias takes two forms.

FIGURE 1.1: MAP OF THE BALTIC AREA



Source: John Alexander Swettenham. The Tragedy of the Baltic States: A Report Compiled From Official Documents and Eyewitnesses' Reports (New York: Praeger, 1954), faces title page.

A) Memoirs, biographies and historical accounts are often written by participants or other individuals who maintain an interest in seeing that information is presented in a light favorable to themselves or their faction.

B) Some accounts of Lithuanian affairs during the period of independence are written by Soviet scholars who paint a fascist portrait of the country in order to discredit the regime, the individuals involved, and help legitimize Soviet occupation.

These factors create obstacles which obscure objectivity. Objectivity can be created, however, by piecing many of these diverse -- and sometimes contradictory -- pieces together. Research to date has demonstrated that truthful accounts can be synthesized when critically examining large quantities of data.

The sources utilized are books, articles, biographies and memoirs, and documents. Because data is scattered in small quantities, a broad base had to be established and the sources carefully studied. This is reflected in the notes. Some of them contain a number of citations. This is because scattered information is distilled from many sources. If each source were cited individually, some passages would contain a note for every sentence.

It was decided that the scope of the thesis would be limited to the military per se. The National Guard, a civilian militia, and other parallel and auxiliary organizations are mentioned throughout the course of the study, but are not treated separately. The thesis would become unwieldy should they be included. They are best left to a separate, or

broader, work.¹ Nevertheless, the thesis should be able to stand on its own as a self-contained entity. The events of 1926-1940 should be understandable without an extensive knowledge of Lithuanian politics and history preceding or following that period. It would serve no purpose to produce another general summary of Lithuanian history, such as are found at the beginning of most monographs. Instead, those with interest in the topic are encouraged to consult Appendix A, which is reproduced from another work and summarizes pre-coup events in Lithuania.

While the bulk of the thesis serves as an interpretive case study, it commences with general propositions of civil-military relations and their adaption to Lithuania. It is this subject which the following chapter addresses.

¹Cf. bibliography for sources on the National Guard.

CHAPTER II

GENERAL PROPOSITIONS OF CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS

A. HISTORICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL OVERVIEW

Though the systematic scholarly study of civil-military relations is relatively new, the matter has been the topic of discourse and writing for centuries. For example, in the Republic, Plato writes much of civil-military relationships and politico-military affairs. He also discusses at length the utilization of military education to serve and guard the state.¹ In one passage, Socrates says to Glaucon:

If a man appears hard to bewitch and graceful in everything, a good guardian of himself and the music he was learning, proving himself to possess rhythm and harmony on all these occasions — such a man would certainly be most useful to himself and the city. And the one who on each occasion, among the children and youths and among the men, is tested and comes through untainted, must be appointed ruler of the city and guardian; and he must be given honors, both while living and when dead, and must be allotted the greatest prizes in burial and the other memorials. And the man who's not of this sort must be rejected.²

Chapter five of Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire is entitled "The Growth of Military Autocracy and the Influx of Orientalism: The Sale of the Empire by the Praetorians. The Rise of Septimius Severus." It deals with the period 193-197 A.D.³ Some

¹See especially Plato, The Republic of Plato, trans. Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1968), p. 91 [412c] - 102 [424d].

²Plato, p. 93 [413e -414a].

³See Edward Gibbon, The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, abridgement by D.M. Low (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1960), pp. 56-62.

excerpts from this chapter follow:

The Praetorian bands . . . licentious fury was the first symptom of the decline of the Roman empire. . . . They derived their institution from Augustus. That crafty tyrant, sensible that laws might colour, but that arms alone could maintain, his usurped dominion, had gradually formed this powerful body of guards, in constant readiness to protect his person, to awe the senate, and either to prevent or to crush the first motions of rebellion. He distinguished these favoured troops by a double pay and superior privileges.⁴

By thus introducing the Praetorian guards as it were into the palace and the senate, the emperors taught them to perceive their own strength, and the weakness of the civil government; to view the vices of their masters with familiar contempt. . . . The firmest and best-established princes were obliged to mix blandishments with commands, rewards with punishments, to flatter their pride, indulge their pleasures, connive at their irregularities, and to purchase their precarious faith by a liberal donnative. . . . Their consent was essentially necessary in the appointment of an emperor. . . . The fierce Praetorians increased their weight by throwing, like the barbarian conqueror of Rome, their swords into the scale.⁵

An analogy to the Lithuanian coup of 1926, discussed in the following chapter, may also be drawn from Gibbon:

The senate was commanded to assemble. . . . After Julian had filled the senate-house with armed soldiers, he expatiated on the freedom of his election, his own eminent virtues, and his full assurance of the affections of the senate. . . . Yet it was observed that, after the crowd of flatterers dispersed, and left him to darkness, solitude, and terrible reflection, he passed a sleepless night; revolving most probably in his mind his own rash folly, the fate of his virtuous predecessor, and the doubtful, and dangerous tenure of an empire which had not been acquired by merit, but purchased by money. He had reason to tremble. On the throne of the world he found himself without a friend, and even an adherent.⁶

Machiavelli, who claimed that "where there are good arms there

⁴Gibbon, p. 56.

⁵Gibbon, p. 57. Gibbon's emphasis.

⁶Gibbon, pp. 58-59.

are bound to be good laws,"⁷ devoted section fourteen of The Prince to the "military duties of the prince." There, among other things, he writes:

A prince . . . should have no other object, no other thought, no other subject of study, than war, its rules and disciplines. . . . A prince who knows nothing of warfare . . . can't hope for respect from his soldiers or put any trust in them.⁸

Laying the foundation for a perspective which would be capitalized on by the communist successors and critics of the Smetona regime, Lenin wrote:

The centralized state power that is peculiar to bourgeois society came into being in the period of the fall of absolutism. Two institutions are most characteristic of this state machine: the bureaucracy and the standing army. In their works, Marx and Engels repeatedly show that it is the bourgeoisie with whom these institutions are connected by thousands of threads. . . . The bureaucracy and the standing army are a "parasite" on the body of bourgeois society -- a parasite created by the internal antagonisms which rend that society, but still a parasite, "choking" all its vital pores. . . . In particular, it is precisely the petty bourgeoisie that is attracted to the side of the big bourgeoisie and is subordinated to it to a large extent by means of this apparatus, which provides the upper strata of the peasantry, small artisans, tradesmen and the like with comparatively comfortable,⁹ quiet and respectable jobs, raising their holders above the people.

Iskenderov also quotes Lenin with regard to military intervention in the political realm: "'The army cannot be, never was, and never will be neutral.'"¹⁰

⁷Niccolo Machiavelli, The Prince, trans. and ed. Robert M. Adams (New York: Norton, 1977), chap XII, p. 35.

⁸Machiavelli, chap. XIV, p. 42.

⁹Vladimir Lenin, "State and Revolution: The Marxist Teaching on the State and the Tasks of the Proletariat in the Revolution," in Essential Works of Marxism, ed. Arthur P. Mendel (New York: Bantam, 1979), pp. 122-123. Lenin's emphasis.

Modern events demonstrate the intertwining of politics and the military. President George Washington personally commanded troops in the field during the Whiskey Rebellion. During the American Civil War, Abraham Lincoln was, for all practical purposes, military dictator of the Union. He consulted with senior officers and decided military actions. The People's Liberation Army (PLA) of the People's Republic of China is an excellent example of a politicized military establishment. Since internal and external security issues are vitally important to China, the PLA is very much involved in policy debates.¹¹

B. THE MILITARY MIND: CONSERVATIVE REALISM

In order to more fully comprehend civil-military relations, it is necessary to delve into the military mind. It is often characterized as having a perspective of conservative realism, which arises from pessimistic Hobbesian philosophy regarding human nature. In capsule form, Hobbesian conservative realism dictates that people are in constant conflict -- a conflict found in contemporary domestic and international relations. Because man is naturally selfish, the Leviathan must establish order from above, by coercion, if necessary. Swords cannot be beaten into ploughshares.¹²

¹⁰A. Iskenderov, "The Army, Politics, and the People," in The Military and Modernization, ed. Henry Bienen (Chicago: Aldine-Atherton, 1971), p. 150.

¹¹James R. Townsend, Politics in China, 2nd ed. (Boston: Little, Brown, 1980), pp. 91-92. See Morris Janowitz, Military Institutions and Coercion in the Developing Nations (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), pp. 151-182 for the importance of the military in contemporary developing nations.

Hobbesian natural equality results in diffidence and desire for the same object by many men. This inevitably leads to conflict and war. Because all men are equal, a power must be created which can overawe all into submission.¹³ "During the time men live without a common power to keep them all in awe, they are in that condition which is called war, and such a war as is of every man against every man."¹⁴ Needless to say, war precludes all else, such as industry, art, and productivity. In order to remedy this situation, Hobbes concludes:

Considering what value men are naturally apt to set upon themselves, what respect they look for from others, and how little they value other men -- from whence continually arise among them emulation, quarrels, factions, and at last war, to the destroying of one another and diminution of their strength against a common enemy -- it is necessary that there be laws of honor and a public rate of the worth of such men as have deserved or are able to deserve well of the commonwealth, and that there be force in the hands of some or other to put those laws in execution.¹⁵

The implications for authority, power, and coercion are obvious. Hobbes cannot envision a society which is able to peacefully exist and simultaneously be founded upon orderly, procedural consensus and compromise. Also obvious is the sanctioning of authoritarian systems, which are preferable to debilitating socio-political conflict: "Sovereign power not so hurtful as the want of it, and the hurt proceeds

¹²Sam C. Sarkesian, lecture, Department of Political Science, Loyola University of Chicago, 11 November 1981.

¹³Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan (Indianapolis: Library of Liberal Arts, Bobbs-Merrill, 1980), part I, chap. 13, pp. 105-106.

¹⁴Hobbes, part I, chap. 13, p. 106.

¹⁵Hobbes, part II, chap. 18, p. 149.

for the greatest part from not submitting readily to a less."¹⁶

With this assumption in mind, the professional military man is suspicious of political activity, finding self-serving elements in bargaining, negotiation, consensus-building, and compromise. Order and stability, instead, are the highest priorities for the military man. He equates these qualities with the effectiveness of any given political order. What he views as bickering, graft, and corruption give way to an engineering approach, emphasizing discipline, skill, loyalty, and obedience.¹⁷ C. Wright Mills states the case in the following fashion:

Inside their often trim bureaucracy, where everything seems under neat control, army officers have felt that "politics" is a dirty, uncertain, and ungentlemanly kind of game; and in terms of their status code, they have often felt that politicians were unqualified creatures inhabiting an uncertain world.¹⁸

Civilian standards are inferior to military order, respect for authority, patriotism, duty, and self-sacrifice. Taken to its extreme, human nature is not perfectible and violence is thus inevitable: "Violence is the final arbiter of human relations."¹⁹

Huntington offers a succinct summary of the conservatively realistic military mind:

The military ethic emphasizes the permanence, irrationality, weakness, and evil in human nature. It stresses the supremacy of

¹⁶Hobbes, part II, chap. 18, p. 151.

¹⁷Sarkesian, lecture, 11 November 1981.

¹⁸C. Wright Mills, The Power Elite (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), p.174.

¹⁹Morris Janowitz, The Professional Soldier: A Social and Political Portrait (New York: Free Press, 1971), p. 242. Also 248-249.

society over the individual and the importance of order, hierarchy, and division of function. It stresses the continuity and value of history. It accepts the nation state as the highest form of political organization and recognizes the continuing likelihood of wars among nation states. It emphasizes the importance of power in international relations and warns of the dangers to state security. It holds that the security of the state depends upon the creation and maintenance of strong military forces. It urges the limitation of state action to the direct interests of the state, the restriction of extensive commitments, and the undesirability of bellicose or adventurous policies. It holds that war is the instrument of politics, that the military are the servants of the statesman, and that civilian control is essential of military professionalism. It exalts obedience as the highest virtue of military men. The military ethic is thus pessimistic, collectivist, historically inclined, power-oriented, nationalistic, militaristic, pacifist, and instrumentalist in its view of the military profession. It is, in brief, realistic and conservative.²⁰

C. THE MILITARY PROFESSION

How does this philosophical perspective translate into reality? One finds the answer in military characteristics and professionalism. Sarkesian lists six general characteristics of the military. The first is bureaucracy. The military is governed by standard operating procedures, regular relationships, and possesses autonomy regarding internal matters such as promotions. The second is hierarchy. There is a table of organization founded upon a top-down system of authority. Third is the profession. The military serves society regardless of financial reward. It is a total social system demanding expertise and constant education. Fourth, the sole client of the military is the state, with the former subordinate to the latter.

²⁰Samuel P. Huntington, The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations (New York: Vintage, 1957), p. 79.

Fifth, military professionalism holds a member to ultimate liability, that is, the possibility of giving one's life while serving for the sole client. Finally, absolute institutional and professional loyalty takes precedence over the individual.²¹

Huntington categorizes military professionalism in slightly different fashion, though with the same basic ideas. First is expertise. The military professional possesses specialized knowledge and skills from prolonged education and experience. He is an expert in what Harold Laswell terms the "management of violence." This is further subdivided into the contemporary land, sea, or air specialist. To remain a specialist, constant drill and practice are necessary. Finally, military expertise is universal; all professionals are alike regardless of the particular state they serve.

Second in the Huntington typology is military responsibility within a social context. The client of a professional in any field is society; his services are essential to its existence. Social responsibility -- the maintenance of military security in this case -- distinguishes professionals from those with mere intellectual skills. Strictly speaking, the professional must be devoted to what he is doing

²¹Sarkesian, lecture, 9 November 1981. For a short discussion of military professionalism see Amos A. Jordan, Jr., "Officer Education," in Handbook of Military Institutions, ed. Roger W. Little (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1971), pp. 211-213. A longer discussion is found in Jacques van Doorn, The Soldier and Social Change (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1975), pp. 29-46. Teitler devotes an entire book to the origins of professionalism. He writes that instrumental armed conflict since the seventeenth century forced the establishment of a professional officer corps. See G. Teitler, The Genesis of the Professional Officers' Corps (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1977), pp. 3-5.

and not performing solely for material gain. Further, the state regulates and monopolizes the military profession to assure that its power is utilized solely for socially approved purposes. This sense of social obligation and responsibility is based, finally, on long-standing custom and tradition.

The third characteristic of military professionalism according to Huntington is corporateness. In addition to the sense of organic unity among military professionals, there is also a consciousness of being separate from society. The profession itself applies and enforces standards to insure status and distinction from the layman. The commission is to an officer what a medical license is to a physician. Rank, which brings appropriate privileges, functions, and duties, is determined by one's peers. "Entrance into this unit is restricted to those with the requisite education and training and is usually permitted only at the lowest level of professional competence."²²

In sum, the military professional is unlike the warrior of previous ages, for whom military activity was a part-time undertaking, a hobby, or a mercenary service for booty. The military professional, the officer, must today be compared with the physician and the attorney. He is not an amateur practicing a trade or craft, but possesses a "higher calling."²³

²²Huntington, p. 16. See pp. 8-18 for the full treatment of this tripartite typology. Janowitz, The Professional Soldier, p. 220 discusses brotherhood and the military community.

²³Huntington pp. 7-8.

D. THE MILITARY AND POLITICS

The military professional, though, does not exist unto himself, but must relate with his client, that is, the state and its politicians. Inevitably, the question of properly relating politics with military professionalism arises. The Western tradition holds that civil authority is superior to that of the military. The military, according to theory, obeys and serves the state without question, regardless of its changing political makeup:

The effectiveness of civilian political control over the military is dependent only to a small extent upon the political beliefs held by the military profession. Yet, a democratic political system assumes that its military officers are positively committed to, if not enthusiastic about, the merits of civilian supremacy and civilian leadership.²⁴

As discussed above, though, the tension between the civilian and military minds can render this balancing act difficult.

Huntington attempts to address this tension. He first recognizes the crux of the problem of civil-military relations when describing the conflict between two imperatives faced by the military. The first is the functional imperative, which deals with external threats to the state. The second is the societal imperative, which arises from social forces, ideologies, and domestic institutions. In other words, while attempting to carry out its primary duties of protecting the state and the citizenry, the military must also deal with the context from which it emerges and within which it must serve. There is a constant battle for attention which each imperative demands of the

²⁴Janowitz, The Professional Soldier, p. 253.

military professional. Further, adjustment and balance between them is not automatic and inevitable; here a fine line must be tread. For example, if the societal imperative consumes a disproportionate amount of the military's resources and time, it is less capable of the functional imperative, leaving the state more vulnerable to external attack.²⁵ The officer corps is central to this dichotomy:

The principal focus of civil-military relations is the relation of the officer corps to the state. Here the conflict between functional and societal pressures comes to a head. The officer corps is the active directing element of the military structure and is responsible for the military security of society. The state is the active directing element of society and is responsible for the allocation of resources among important values including military security. The social and economic relations between the military and the rest of society normally reflect the political relations between the officer corps and the state.²⁶

Huntington discovers the solution in "objective civilian control," which maximizes military professionalism. Subjective civilian control civilianizes the military and injects social and political elements, rendering it less professional. Civil control is merely of instrumental value to civilian groups, and no independent military sphere exists. Objective civilian control, on the other hand, demands an autonomous military profession. The military is "militarized" and becomes a tool of the state. There is no military participation in politics; the military is politically neutral and sterile. It obeys any legitimate civilian governing group. In sum, low military political power and high military professional power insure both civil authority and military

²⁵Huntington, p. 2.

²⁶Huntington, p. 3.

security.²⁷ This, however, does not solve the civil-military dichotomy once and for all, for fundamental tensions will always exist and must constantly be managed:

The professional man who pursues the values of professional competence and obedience and the political man who pursues power as an end in itself are two distinct types. Yet elements of both exist in most human beings and in every group. The tension between the two, consequently, can never be removed; it can only be ordered so as to make it more or less endurable.²⁸

Janowitz does not make distinctions as neatly as Huntington:

According to the definitions of military honor, the professional soldier is "above politics" in domestic affairs. In an authoritarian society -- monarchical or totalitarian -- to be above politics means that the officer is committed to the status quo. Under democratic theory, the "above politics" formula requires that, in domestic politics, generals and admirals do not attach themselves to political parties or overtly display partisanship. Furthermore, military men are civil servants, so that elected leaders are assured of the military's partisan neutrality.²⁹

For Janowitz, to be "above politics" does not necessarily mean being non-political. Indeed an officer need not politically agree with his civilian superiors, though he must execute military-related directives. The political beliefs of any military establishment are long-term phenomena arising from socio-political factors, recruitment,

²⁷Huntington, pp. 80-85.

²⁸Huntington, p. 95.

²⁹Janowitz, The Professional Soldier, p. 233. Huntington tends to deal with the ideal, that is, two separate civil and military spheres. Janowitz, on the other hand, appears to take a more sociological "is" approach, which recognizes the need for civilian control while simultaneously contending that the two spheres must share fundamental views. The officer corps must reflect society, including politically. I am indebted to Dr. John Allen Williams of Loyola University of Chicago for this distinction.

and education. It would be unrealistic to expect an apolitical officer corps, recognizing that "for all professional officers, there is a special gap between private and expressed beliefs."³⁰

E. THE MILITARY INTERVENES

Yet, experience dictates that the military has on countless occasions become actively involved in politics, assuming various roles as political governors and actors. There is, of course, a moral barrier against usurpation where a long tradition of civil supremacy exists, though no civilian group can hope to match the cohesion, size, and arms of the military should it choose to intervene.³¹ This is especially true in non-Western and/or developing systems where the boundaries of military and society have yet to be concretized:

Military might is likely to be a decisive factor in politics in a society where there are no crystallized and universally accepted beliefs about the legitimacy of power: where there are doubts and disagreements about who should occupy the positions of command and what orders he is entitled to give.³²

In such a context, the military is still developing its own professional dimensions and attitudes toward politics. Further, where there is less institutionalization in general, authority is less apt to be accepted as

³⁰Janowitz, The Professional Soldier, p. 235. Sam S. Sarkesian echoes the belief that the military is never apolitical. The Western tradition claims that apolitical equals professional. For Sarkesian, non-partisan equals professional. Lectures, autumn 1983.

³¹Eric A. Nordlinger, Soldiers in Politics: Military Coups and Governments (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1977), pp. 93-94.

³²Stanislav Andreski, Military Organization and Society, 2nd rev. ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), pp. 105-106.

legitimate.³³

Military intervention usually occurs during a political crisis, such as perceived failure in governmental performance regarding the management of internal disorder. This loss of legitimacy is perhaps the reason most intervention occurs. Disgruntled officers find their excuse here. The defense and enhancement of military corporate interests may also be a factor. Intense domestic disturbances inevitably spill over into the military and politicize it, especially if it is utilized as a para-police force to maintain law and order. After some time of such activity, the military may assume that since it possesses the power to prop up an ailing regime, it also possesses the power to alter it. In developing systems, the prestige and functioning of the state are linked to that of the military. If these factors are low vis-a-vis the civil government, the military has an interest in taking corrective action. Since the military represents the power, sovereignty, and honor of the nation, the attitude may be that what is good for the military is good for the country.³⁴

Now that the military has intervened, a variable period of praetorianism is initiated. Nordlinger defines praetorianism as "a

³³Sarkesian, lectures, 13, 16 November 1981.

³⁴These thoughts are distilled from Crane Brinton, The Anatomy of Revolution, rev. and exp. ed. (New York: Vintage, 1965), p. 36; Nordlinger pp. 63-66; Monte Palmer, Dilemmas of Political Development: An Introduction to the Politics of the Developing Areas, 2nd ed. (Itasca, IL: Peacock, 1980), pp. 216-217; Amos Perlmutter, Modern Authoritarianism: A Comparative Institutional Analysis (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1981), pp. 54-55; Sarkesian, lectures, autumn 1981, 1983.

situation in which military officers are major or predominant political actors by virtue of their actual or threatened use of force."³⁵ He goes on to posit three levels of military intervention, which are found in Table 2.1:

TABLE 2.1: THE LEVELS OF MILITARY INTERVENTION

	<u>Moderators</u>	<u>Guardians</u>	<u>Rulers</u>
Extent of power	Veto group	Governmental control	Regime dominance
Political and economic objectives	Preserve status quo	Preserve status quo and/or correct malpractices and deficiencies	Effect political change and sometimes socioeconomic change

Source: Nordlinger, p. 22.

The military finds at least three basic methods for controlling political events. After the initial shock of intervention, the easiest level of rule is the first, that of being a moderating veto group without dealing with day-to-day administrative and political matters. Guardians and rulers, on the other hand, are the "men in mufti" who take an activist political stance. In all cases, though, Nordlinger holds that competitive and meaningful participatory structures are eliminated.³⁶

³⁵Nordlinger, p. 2.

Perlmutter takes an especially dim view of military intervention and its concomitant authoritarianism, on both practical and philosophical planes:

The symbiotic, conflictual, and cooperative relationship between civilian and military elites clearly typifies the era of the central state, the grand organization, the hegemonic party, the interventionist military, all of which operate at the expense of the society, the individual, and genuine political pluralism.³⁷

Others assume a mixed stance with regard to intervention. Sarkesian claims that the impact of military rule in the short-run is advantageous, bringing with it law and order, stability, security, and a respite from debilitating confrontation. Indeed, the military may set the preconditions for the establishment or return of democracy. However, in the long-run, political issues cannot be managed with military means. The military mind, as discussed above, is not compatible with the political arena. Further, because it must operate within the same environment, the military often performs no better or worse than its civilian predecessors. If the military must remain central to politics -- by its own judgement or that of others -- it is best to rule for approximately two years, then return to the barracks and act as a veto group. If it remains any longer it becomes embroiled in the same problems which beset its predecessors -- and led to their downfall at the hands of the very people now under domestic political attack.³⁸

³⁶Nordlinger, p. 7.

³⁷Perlmutter, p. 62.

³⁸Sarkesian, lectures, autumn 1981, 1983.

F. PROPOSITIONS VIS-A-VIS LITHUANIA

In any field, theory is supposed to transcend spatio-temporal parameters. Keeping in mind the above discussion, it is now necessary to turn to civil-military relations in Lithuania under President Antanas Smetona. While details differ from case study to case study, there is often a good deal of similarity among them regarding theoretical underpinnings and general propositions. The case dealt with here is no different. It is possible to view Lithuania not merely in itself, but in terms of its relationship to theory and other contexts. This can be seen in the succeeding chapters, for example, especially in the sections dealing with politico-military affairs and political socialization.

Arend Lijphart writes that there are six types of case studies in the subdiscipline of comparative politics: atheoretical, interpretive, hypothesis-generating, theory-confirming, theory-infirmiting, and deviant.³⁹ This particular study may best be classified as interpretive. Such case studies display primary interest in the case, utilizing established theoretical propositions. They do not strive to formulate general theory: "In these studies, a generalization is applied to a specific case with the aim of throwing light on the case rather than of improving the generalization in any way. Hence they are studies in 'applied science.'"⁴⁰ While far from perfect, it is at least

³⁹Arend Lijphart, "Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method," American Political Science Review, 65 (September 1971), 691-693.

⁴⁰Lijphart, p. 692.

hoped that some light may be shed on the often tense relationship between politics and the military in Smetona's Lithuania.⁴¹

The reader must be cautioned not to apply Western liberal standards to interwar East-Central Europe. The region had never had such a tradition, be it political, social, or economic. It should not be expected, therefore, that the military accept civilian superiority as it exists in the contemporary West. The new post-Versailles nations of that area were still developing relationships and borders among its various institutions. In this sense, the military did not really comprehend what its role should be vis-a-vis politics. It often overstepped its proper boundaries according to Western standards, thus assisting the growth of authoritarian regimes. Lithuania is one of several examples of this phenomenon.⁴²

It should also be stressed, though, that interwar Lithuania was not a developing system, as that term is used in contemporary scholarly discourse. While it was a reconstituted nation, carved out of the defunct czarist empire, it possessed attributes which distinguish it

⁴¹Case studies of all six types abound in the field of civil-military relations. One comparative study which is perhaps best described as a cross between interpretive and hypothesis-generating is Amos Perlmutter and William M. LeoGrande, "The Party in Uniform: Toward a Theory of Civil-Military Relations in Communist Political Systems," American Political Science Review, 76, 4 (December 1982), 778-789.

⁴²Perlmutter, p. 51 and Sarkesian, lecture, 6 November 1981 discuss the fundamental linkage between the modern authoritarian state and the military. When the Lithuanian coup occurred in December 1926, many Lithuanian-Americans who had supported the new state morally and materially became disenchanted. This was an example of Western liberal standards of military conduct being applied to a non-Western, non-liberal context.

from today's sub-Saharan nations, for example. There was an intense feeling of nationalism which found its roots in the Lithuanian kingdom of the thirteenth century, and which had been growing since the latter half of the nineteenth century during the Lithuanian national renaissance. While possessing ethnic and religious minorities, there were no major cleavages to be found as arise from the haphazardly drawn boundaries of the old colonial empires. There was also a developed infrastructure and educational system, which continued growth and refinement during the independence era. While primarily an agrarian country, Lithuania was nevertheless able to export agricultural goods and develop light industry. Thus while not a fully developed liberal Western system, Lithuania leaned further toward that pole than toward contemporary developing systems. The behavior of the Lithuanian military, however, did in some respects resemble that found in those systems today.

Civil-military relations in independent Lithuania must not be studied merely from a domestic perspective. There were legitimate external factors requiring the military to be in the forefront of public affairs. The country was located at a crucial and vulnerable juncture of Eastern Europe. There were dangers from the Soviet Union, Germany, and Poland. As such, national security was very much on the minds of politicians and citizens alike.

What also brought the military into public affairs was the juxtaposition of the professional military mind and the volatile political situation of 1926, both prior to and following the elections

of the third Seimas on 8-10 May. As the following chapter explains, the elections were polarizing in that the new Social Democratic-Peasant Populist coalition began instituting democratic reforms after six years of conservative Christian Democratic rule and a bitter campaign. Many perceived these moves to the "left" as politically and socially debilitating. Violent clashes occurred. Lithuania, which did not have a democratic tradition, simply could not adapt to the sudden political change. New civil liberties were quickly taken advantage of by radical elements. It was obvious to many -- including army officers -- that the consensus and compromise needed for a successful democracy necessarily led to degeneration and disorder. The coup of 17 December 1926, sponsored and encouraged by the minority Nationalist Association, was an attempt at creating a Lithuanian Leviathan to restore order in accordance with norms of the military mind. Hobbesian conservative realism was the philosophy of the Lithuanian officer corps -- as it is, to a greater or lesser extent, that of any corps.

Huntington posited two imperatives, functional and societal, in describing the tension between purely external military matters and the socio-economic-political context. This same tension was present in Lithuania during the Smetona regime and immediately preceding it, that is, the unstable seven month tenure of the Grinius-Slezevicius administration and the third Seimas. This, too, is the arena where the politicization of the military is easiest. Huntington recommended objective civilian control as a remedy. However, such military neutrality and sterility vis-a-vis politics did not exist under Smetona,

though Commander-in-Chief General Stasys Rastikis would make efforts to achieve such conditions. De facto, even if it would have supposedly been neutral, the Lithuanian army was a prop to the status quo as long as Smetona ruled, for he initially assumed power through extra-constitutional means.⁴³

The behavior of the Lithuanian officer corps did not even meet the standards of non-partisanship as set forth by Janowitz. As will be discussed in this study, different officers supported different political leaders and their respective factions:

The army, commanded by veterans of the war of independence, represented, in a sense, the repository of Lithuanian nationalism, and was thus the natural sponsor of an administration whose first watchword was the defense of the national cause abroad, particularly against Poland, and at home, against Communism, national minorities, and any government whose "weakness" might expose the country to external dangers. At the same time, the army was not of one mind in the actual policies to be followed. The older officers, trained in the Russian Imperial Army, tended to be more conservative and cautious in the pursuit of these general aims, while a younger group, which rallied around Voldemaras, was more openly anti-Polish and anti-minority, and more in favor of the institutions of Fascism as the best framework for the national mission of the state. The former group in general concurred with the policies of the Smetona government; the latter found those policies too cautious and more than once . . . attempted to overthrow it. Smetona, therefore, enjoyed⁴⁴ important, but not unanimous support from the military group.

This politicization and polarization of the officer corps reflects general politico-military tendencies in authoritarian contexts. While

⁴³Cf. Janowitz above.

⁴⁴Benedict V. Maciuika, ed., Lithuania in the Last 30 Years, Subcontractor's monograph prepared in the Division of the Social Sciences at the University of Chicago. HRAF Subcontract HRAF-1 Chi-1 (New Haven, CT: Human Relations Area Files, 1955), p. 58.

Palmer here writes of developing areas, the same holds true for Smetona's Lithuania:

Given the winner-take-all nature of political conflict . . . , distrust between diverse ideological and parochial factions within the military often generates the very real fear that successful political intervention by one faction will result in efforts to eliminate the major competing factions. Countercoups, therefore, often are perceived in terms of self-preservation.⁴⁵

In the period 1927-1940, opponents of the Smetona regime, often backed by the appropriate faction within the officer corps, attempted thirteen revolts. The 1926 coup, thus, did not solve the problems of partisan politics which it had set out to eliminate. Indeed it may have exacerbated them.⁴⁶

On the other hand, Smetona stayed in power partially due to the military's support. This reflects other politico-military tendencies. One scholar writes that the military in authoritarian systems sees to it that interelite struggles remain within the boundaries of the ruling party. It does not usually intervene against the party, but supports a particular faction in the internal power struggle. Indeed without the military or with a neutral military, an opposing faction may refuse to surrender, leading to debilitating -- possible bloody -- results. Military intervention is thus less of a threat to the ruling elite than from civilian political challenges.⁴⁷ When studying post-coup political

⁴⁵Palmer, p. 215.

⁴⁶Cf. Nordlinger, p. 209 where he writes of the confidence the opposition possesses in carrying out countercoups.

⁴⁷Perlmutter, pp. 52, 56.

dynamics, it is possible to discern two primary factions within the ruling Nationalist Association: the Smetona supporters and those following the right-wing radical Professor Augustinas Voldemaras. As will be discussed in chapter four, Voldemaras' faction made several attempts to depose, or at least weaken, Smetona; this to pave the way for Voldemaras' return to power -- a return which would never materialize. This faction was relatively small, for most officers eventually accepted Smetona's more stable and moderate course in domestic and foreign affairs.

Extreme politicization of the military may lead to its intervention in the political arena. As was discussed above, this most likely occurs during a period of extreme political crisis when domestic disturbances spill over into the military. Such a crisis occurred during the Grinius-Slezevicius administration discussed in the following chapter. This short-lived political leadership failed in dealing with disorder created by radical elements, especially the communists, and alienated a substantial segment of the officer corps by threatening budget and personnel cuts, along with actual discharges of officers deemed incompetent. The administration thus set the stage for its own downfall in a highly charged atmosphere. Domestic disorder and the threat to corporate interests, coupled with encouragement from the Nationalists, spurred some officers to act against the government. The perceived loss of governmental legitimacy in the eyes of the public was the rationale for that action.⁴⁸

The coup, regardless of detail, resembled a standard coup. The

Kaunas garrison carried it out rather easily since it was a concentrated force. Provincial units were powerless to act since their commanding officers were interned in the capital during President Grinius' birthday festivities. The lightning speed with which the conspirators carried out their plans prevented a civil war. A civil war was also averted perhaps because the population breathed a sigh of relief at the change and the perceived turn toward stability and order.

The Lithuanian army, however, did not rule. The following day power was turned over to Smetona, who was installed as president at a rump session of the Seimas on 19 December. Succeeding events render it difficult to classify the military's role in politics. Just as it is difficult to describe Smetona's regime utilizing standard nomenclature in chapter four, the same holds true for the military. It did not appear to be even a moderating veto group, to use Nordlinger's taxonomy, though it did experience divisiveness and political difficulties associated with the politico-military duties described in chapter five. Yet, it appears that the army was not acting on its own here, but on orders of the civilian leadership, seeking to maintain order through the district military command system. The military was thus a tool of the government, not vice versa, though the tensions are obvious throughout the study. There were still challenges, even from the most senior officers. For example, General Stasys Rastikis, commander-in-chief of the army 1935-1940, is described as both a force for

⁴⁸Cf. Nordlinger, pp. 63-66.

authoritarianism and democracy in chapter seven.

One thread which runs throughout this study is the tension and ambivalence among the politicians, the military, and the president who was head of both. Perhaps the only factor which guaranteed the relative obedience and trustworthiness of the military, along with civil rule, was the allegiance to both the person and office of the commander-in-chief, President Antanas Smetona. As Janowitz writes, "this image of personalized allegiance helps to make military honor compatible with civilian supremacy."⁴⁹

The following chapter deals with the rise of this focus of allegiance.

⁴⁹Janowitz, The Professional Soldier, p. 220.

CHAPTER III

SMETONA ASSUMES POWER

A. THE RISE AND FALL OF THE GRINIUS ADMINISTRATION

In order to fully understand civil-military relations during the regime of President Antanas Smetona, it is necessary to begin with the coup d'etat of 17 December 1926, in which the military dramatically entered the sphere of politics for the first time. In the spring of 1926, elections for the third Seimas were held. They were, to say the least, divisive. Many write that the elections were conducted outside the bounds of decency as factions smeared and libeled each other, with the result of sharply polarizing Lithuanian society along political and class lines. The results of the voting are found in Table 3.1.

As had been the case throughout the period of independence, the Nationalists were not recipients of a significant number of votes. Further, no party had an absolute majority. However, the Peasant Populists and Social Democrats had previously agreed to a coalition should circumstances permit. This was exactly what was done as Peasant Populist Kazys Grinius, a medical doctor, former prime minister, and long-time political activist, was elected president by the Seimas, replacing Christian Democrat Aleksandras Stulginskis after six years of rule. Grinius, in turn, selected Peasant Populist Mykolas Slezevicius, an attorney, to form a cabinet.

The new cabinet, headed by the Populist leader Mykolas Slezevicius, an energetic and idealistic stalwart of Lithuanian politics, who had

TABLE 3.1: THE THIRD SEIMAS OF LITHUANIA MAY 1926-APRIL 1927

<u>Faction</u>	<u>Number of seats</u>	<u>Percentage of vote</u>
Christian Democratic	14	16.4
Farmers Association	11	12.9
Labor Federation	5	5.7
<u>Christian Democratic bloc</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>35.3</u>
Peasant Populist	22	25.8
Social Democratic	15	17.6
Lithuanian Farmers Party	2	2.3
Nationalist Association	3	3.5
Minorities	13*	15.3

*This included three communists and five representatives from the Klaipeda Territory (Memel).

Source: Kazys Grinius, Apie 1926 m. gruodzio 17-os dienos perversma (On the Coup of 17 December 1926) (Chicago: Chicago Lithuanian Literary Society, 1954), p. 226.

headed a differently constituted coalition Cabinet during the dangerous years of the wars of independence (1919-21), immediately proceeded to reward coalition partners and supporters and initiated or planned a number of policies designed to cut expenditures; unfortunately, these seemed (and some were) devised to redress the domestic balance of power, which until then had favored the Christian Democrats. Some of the measures were intended to normalize certain democratic procedures. However, these policies estranged influential segments of society and irritated the citizenry, thus producing effects quite contrary to those intended. For example, the elimination of restraints on the right of assembly and on the press, which dated back to the war period of 1920, and an amnesty for prisoners convicted for violation of these restraints benefited the Communist Party almost exclusively. Its activities now aroused fears of Communist domination, especially since the Social Democratic Minister of the Interior, in the name of freedom, even allowed attacks on, and blackmail of, law-enforcement agencies. These fears were intensified by plans, advocated primarily by the Social Democratic coalition partner, to reconsider the place of religion in the schools . . . , to discontinue the clergy's salaries, and even to cut the size of the Church's landholdings. The dissatisfaction of the clergy and other groups with these developments, and with radically Leftist tendencies generally, was shared by many Army officers, who feared not only the regime's Leftism, but also for plans in the reduction in the armed forces, which they considered a threat to national security. Finally, the coalition incurred universal disfavor by allowing an increase of Polish schools . . . as a reward for Polish support. This favoritism was shown at a time when the Polish Government was closing down Lithuanian schools in the occupied Vilnius region; the country was very angry. These anxieties and emotions easily engulfed the youth, who began demonstrations against the government, and by the fall of 1926, the country was a powder keg.¹

Graham also cites a crop failure and renewed economic depression as additional components of the Lithuanian political crisis of 1926.²

The military directly felt the hand of the reform-minded Slezevicius government. It had become established practice that with

¹V. Stanley Vardys, "Independent Lithuania: A Profile," in Lithuania Under the Soviets: Portrait of a Nation, 1940-65, ed. V. Stanley Vardys (New York: Praeger, 1965), pp. 34-35.

²Malbone W. Graham, Jr., New Governments of Eastern Europe (New York: Henry Holt, 1927), p. 403.

each cabinet change, a new defense minister and chief of staff were also appointed. Since cabinets in Lithuania alternated relatively frequently, this created instability in military leadership and progress was next to impossible. Lieutenant Colonel Juozas Papeckys, an attorney, was appointed defense minister and Lieutenant Colonel Kazys Skirpa took the post of chief of staff.³ Skirpa, a recent graduate of the Belgian Military Academy, possessed a number of ideas for military reform, some of which elicited opposition from his fellow officers.⁴ Skirpa took swift action to dismiss incompetent officers. About ten officers were almost immediately discharged to the reserve, including two officers with prestige earned in the wars of independence: Colonel Vincas Grigaliunas-Glovackis and General Kazys Ladiga. Some senior officers soon realized that only a change in government would save them.⁵

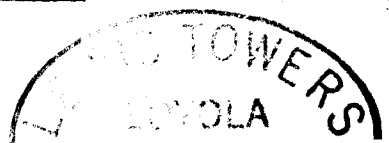
The Slezevicius government was a budget-cutting one. Papeckys and Skirpa spoke of reducing the army in size by one-third — even one-half. Concern grew, especially among aviation officers who earned high pay and a pension after only ten years of service.⁶ However,

³Stasys Rastikis, Kovose del Lietuvos: Kario atsiminimai (In the Battles for Lithuania: A Soldier's Reminiscences) (Los Angeles: Lietuviu dienos / Lithuanian Days, 1956), I, 202.

⁴Albertas Gerutis, "Independent Lithuania," in Lithuania 700 Years, 2nd rev. ed. (New York: Manyland, 1969), p. 220.

⁵Grinius, pp. 245-246. Smetona, upon returning to power, would return both men to the regular army.

⁶Konstantinas Zukas, Zvilgsnis i praeiti: Zmogaus ir kario atsiminimai. Medziaga istorikams (A Glance at the Past: A Person's and Soldier's Reminiscences. Material for Historians) (Chicago: Terra,



another author writes that charges of the army being greatly reduced and a large number of officers discharged were false.⁷ Nevertheless, fear on the part of officers was justifiable in light of statements made by some radical members of the Seimas. One of them was Social Democrat Steponas Kairys, who declared that he was an antimilitarist: "'The demand to reduce the military is just a minimal one. The Social Democrats seek the complete elimination of the military.'"⁸

It was not sufficient for officers to have knowledge of an agreement between the Social Democrats and Peasant Populists not to inject politics into decisions involving military policy. They still feared military reform legislation prepared for Seimas action upon reconvening in the fall of 1926. Among other aims, it sought the reduction of the influence of opposition parties in the military. As opposed to most of his colleagues, Skirpa, the chief of staff, felt that reforms were strengthening the military, not decimating it.⁹

The official state of war which had existed in Lithuania ever since the wars of independence -- even during peacetime -- was eliminated by the third Seimas. It had been both an embarrassment and

1959), pp. 456-457.

⁷Antanas Rukas, ed., Mykolas Slezevicius (Chicago: Terra, 1954), p. 161.

⁸M.K., Valstybininkas politikos sukuriuose: Prelatas Mykolas Krupavicius 1885-1970 (Statesman in the Whirlwind of Politics: Prelate Mykolas Krupavicius 1885-1970) (Chicago: Pope Leo XIII Fund, 1980), p. 106.

⁹Rukas, pp. 243-246, 251.

burden to the district military commandants, charged with carrying out its provisions of censorship and political restraint. This inevitably brought them and the rest of the officer corps into politics, though perhaps unwillingly. However, the elimination of the state of war was brought on too suddenly, without adequate provision for administrative transitory phases or machinery.¹⁰ This only served to contribute to the impression that the government had lost effective control over the country. This was especially due to increased communist activity, including various incidents, harassment, demonstrations, and physical assaults. General Stasys Rastikis writes that he began carrying a revolver in his pocket for the purpose of self-protection, though he was never the victim of any incident.¹¹

There was a perception that the government and police were ignoring criminal behavior by leftist groups, while occasionally utilizing physical force to disperse anti-communist students and demonstrators.¹² There were also rumors that Interior Minister Vladas Pozela, a Social Democrat, was actually a closet communist. Many of the old Christian Democrat civil servants hired during the Stulginskis administration were dismissed. All of this served to decrease morale in the provinces and the military, and increase feelings of uncertainty.¹³ It should be noted, though, that anger was not directed

¹⁰Rukas, pp. 148, 247.

¹¹Rastikis, I, pp. 202-203.

¹²Rastikis, I, pp. 202-203.

¹³Sam C. Sarkesian finds that people cannot long operate in such

personally at Grinius or Slezevicius, who both had long records of patriotic service to Lithuania, but that general discontent was a response to government inaction against disorder.¹⁴ Many feared that the Slezevicius government would follow the same destructive road as had Kerensky's provisional government in Russia in 1917. Of the many fears, the triumph of bolshevik elements in Lithuania was the greatest.¹⁵

A major event on the road toward the coup d'etat was the rightist student demonstration of 21 November 1926. It was organized by the Nationalist Association and included members of the Lithuanian Catholic Federation "Ateitis" and "Neo-Lithuania." Over two thousand participants listened to anti-government speeches and cheers. They then marched to the War Museum to honor the Unknown Soldier and sing the National Anthem. En route, the mounted police, administratively under the Interior Ministry, attacked the demonstrators with truncheons. Some police officers entered the grounds of the museum, but its director, the popular Brigadier General Vladas Nagius-Nagevicius, ordered them out. The University of Kaunas Senate condemned this police action and a condemning interpellation was made in the Seimas, signed by the Christian Democratic bloc, the Nationalists, and the Farmers Party.

 an atmosphere and are increasingly disposed to use drastic measures to eliminate it. Cf. various lectures at Loyola University of Chicago 1981-1985.

¹⁴Rastikis, I, pp. 202-203.

¹⁵Rapolas Skipitis, Nepriklausoma Lietuva statant: Atsiminimai (Building Independent Lithuania: Reminiscences) (Chicago: Terra, 1961), p. 414.

National sentiment was overwhelmingly in favor of the students, though in his memoirs, President Grinius writes that they behaved poorly and chose to fight the police.¹⁶

Did the Grinius administration lose its legitimacy in the eyes of Lithuanians? An interesting parallel may be drawn to Chile with regard to the perception of disorder:

In Chile in 1972 and 1973, the long and devastating strikes by the Confederation of Truck Owners against the Allende government created shortages in food and raw materials throughout the nation, which initially encouraged the government to bring the military officers into the cabinet and later played an important role in the breakdown of legitimacy preceding a military coup.¹⁷

Disorder contributes to feelings in favor of regime change -- drastic, if necessary. It is here where, just as in Chile, the Lithuanian military stepped into the political arena.

B. THE COUP D'ETAT OF 17 DECEMBER 1926

Despite the fact that the Lithuanian army was a relatively small one, the officers involved in the overthrow plot realized the advantages of such size with regard to political change, especially within a context where the populace is seeking relief. "If the civilian

¹⁶Grinius, pp. 254-255; M.K., pp. 16-17; Aleksandras Merkelis, Antanas Smetona: Jo visuomenine, kulturine ir politine veikla (Antanas Smetona: His Social, Cultural, and Political Activity) (New York: American Lithuanian National Association, 1964), pp. 318-319, Zukas, pp. 457-458. See Petras Maldeikis, Mykolas Krupavicius (Chicago: Lithuanian Christian Democratic Association, 1975), p. 187 for an account of the breakup of the demonstration and Rukas, pp. 155-158 for the government's version of the events.

¹⁷Gabriel A. Almond and G. Bingham Powell, Jr., Comparative Politics: System, Process, and Policy. An Analytic Study, 2nd ed. (Boston: Little, Brown, 1978), p. 88.

population is indifferent or disaffected, even a very small military can overthrow a civilian government. Indeed, it may be easier for officers to organize discontent in a smaller military organization."¹⁸ Even prior to the elections of May 1926, the problematic nature of military loyalty was brought out in a meeting between delegations of the Nationalists and Peasant Populists. Kazys Grinius asked Professor Augustinas Voldemaras, an extremist Nationalist, if the military would obey the Nationalists. Voldemaras reportedly responded, "Yes, the army is ours."¹⁹ Nevertheless, once in power, Grinius and the government did not heed such warnings, for they did not think the Nationalists could actually carry out a coup.²⁰

The Christian Democrats, who were ousted from power in the elections of 1926, were also partially to blame for the politicization of the military. The Christian Democratic press savagely attacked the new military leadership, while the military itself was unable to respond either in the press or the political arena. The military did bring lawsuits in some cases in which it felt it had been libeled, but such procedures took time -- time in which attacks in the press continued. Defense Minister Papeckys even went to the extreme of suggesting legislation whereby press courts would be established. They would have

¹⁸Almond and Powell, Comparative Politics, p. 133.

¹⁹Maldeikis, p. 193. See also Mykolas Krupavicius, "1926 m. gruodzio septynioliktoji," ("17 December 1926"), Draugas, 6 December 1956, p. 3.

²⁰Grinius, pp. 256-257.

three members representing the government, the press, and the judiciary utilizing simpler procedures so that cases could be decided in a matter of days. However, this never came to pass. In addition, the Christian Democrats attempted to bring into their fold any officer who had been dismissed by his new superiors or who had been punished for violations of military discipline. The aim: To hurt the authority and legitimacy of the new military leadership, and to set the officer corps against the government. Indeed, one author writes that the majority of the Central Committee of the Christian Democratic Party was of the opinion that the Grinius-Slezevicius administration must be forcibly ousted.²¹

Reverend Mykolas Krupavicius, a former agriculture minister in a Christian Democratic government, was reportedly twice approached by Antanas Merkys, a Nationalist attorney, to seek support for the coup. In his memoirs, Krupavicius writes that he refused to participate on both occasions.²² According to Petras Maldeikis, Krupavicius' biographer, General Kazys Ladiga, who had been replaced by Colonel Kazys Skirpa as chief of staff, went to Krupavicius complaining that he had been removed from the circle of officers plotting the coup because he was perceived to be a Christian Democrat and belonged to the "Ateitis" Catholic Federation. Krupavicius replied that the party does not support the idea of overthrowing the government. He advised Ladiga not to participate and go to his farm in the Birzai district; Ladiga took

²¹Zukas, p. 459. See also Rukas, pp. 248-249.

²²M.K., pp. 17-18.

this advice. Krupavicius became fearful that Lithuania would go the route of a South American dictatorship.²³ Nevertheless, many of the functionaries in the Internal Security Department were holdovers from the Christian Democratic era and had not yet been replaced by the new government. It is quite conceivable that they would not have hindered coup efforts.²⁴

Events had led to a situation where high-ranking officials in the Defense Ministry had no authority or respect among the officer corps. Further, they had seemingly little, if any, knowledge of the unrest occurring within the military.²⁵ In response to questioning by Seimas Defense Committee member Aleksandras Stulginskis, Chief of Staff Colonel Skirpa replied that the military was trustworthy.²⁶ On another occasion, however, during the debate over military reductions, an officer told Seimas deputy Rapolas Skipitis that the Seimas will not reduce the military, but that the military will reduce the Seimas.²⁷ It was, after all, not surprising that military men would make such threats. The precedent was broken on 22-23 February 1920 when a portion of the Kaunas garrison revolted over conditions -- and fired erratic

²³Maldeikis, pp. 195-196.

²⁴J. Sarunas, Gruodzio 17 dienos perversmas (The Coup of December 17) (n.p.: Lietuvos demokratijos draugai / Lithuanian Friends of Democracy, 1927), p. 5.

²⁵Sarunas, p. 4.

²⁶Rukas, p. 256.

²⁷Merkelis, pp. 320-321. See also Skipitis, Nepriklausoma Lietuva Statant, p. 415.

artillery rounds into the city.²⁸ Nevertheless, Slezevicius trusted the military, thinking it incapable of extreme political acts. He felt that officers and enlisted personnel would come to him with their problems as they had done when he served as prime minister in 1919.²⁹ The only trouble Slezevicius foresaw was political, not military. He intended to clean radical socialists out of the government — though the coup was to carry this task out for him.³⁰ Ironically, he cancelled Interior Ministry surveillance of suspicious officers, citing its undemocratic nature.

There were three groups of politicized officers. The first and largest consisted of those who sympathized with the Christian Democratic bloc. The second was of the opinion that Antanas Smetona, a nationalist, was the politician most able to restore order. He had an excellent reputation based on his performance as first president in 1919-1920. The third and smallest group consisted of supporters of Professor Augustinas Voldemaras, an ultra-Nationalist. This right-wing group was the most active and radical.³¹ On 20 September 1926, a small

²⁸Skipitis, Nepriklausoma Lietuva Statant, pp. 177-192 writes of the revolt. A. Novaitis was one of the officers placed under house arrest by the rebels. However, the leaders of the Kaunas revolt were mainly civilians and former NCOs of the Czarist army. Of the thirty arrested and sentenced, only seven possessed Lithuanian surnames. See his "1920 metu kareiviu sukilimas" (The Soldiers' Revolt of 1920"), Karys, April 1961, pp. 103-106.

²⁹Rukas, p. 326.

³⁰M.K., p. 106.

³¹Rapolas Skipitis, Nepriklausoma Lietuva: Atsiminimai (Independent Lithuania: Reminiscences), (Chicago: Draugas, 1967), pp. 110-111.

group of young officers, headed by Aviation Captain Antanas Maciuika, formed a committee to plot the coup. The committee, which included officers representing the Nationalists and Christian Democrats, decided to ask Smetona to be the new president.³² Colonel Vladas Skorupskis, a graduate of the Prague General Staff Academy, headed a group housed in the Senior Officer Courses responsible for planning the coup.³³

Though the officers were patriots who meant no harm to the country, they were inexperienced in politics and affairs of state. They had forgotten that those presently at the head of the military and government were experienced patriots who had saved Lithuania during the wars of independence in 1918-1920. Indeed, it had been Slezevicius who called for volunteers to defend the nation in late 1919. The officers had become blind tools of the opposition parties.³⁴

Those who master-minded the coup were better able to recruit junior officers. Senior officers viewed affairs of state with a cooler, more pragmatic eye. Only a few senior officers whose careers were foundering or who were inclined to intrigue cooperated with disloyal elements. Even Major Povilas Plechavicius, who would be invited to act as dictator during and immediately following the coup, wavered prior to

³²Skipitis, Nepriklausoma Lietuva, pp. 110-112. Skipitis believes that Smetona himself devised the title "Tautos Vadas" ("Nation's Leader").

³³E. Dirvele, Klasiu kova Lietuvoje 1926 metais (Class Conflict in Lithuania 1926) (Vilnius: State Political and Scientific Press, 1961), p. 171; Zukas, p. 458.

³⁴Rukas, pp. 252-253.

joining the plotters.³⁵ Most officers in the Kaunas garrison did not participate in the coup. They were concerned that a coup would invite counter-coups, perhaps a civil war -- even invasion by Poland.³⁶

What was the role of the Nationalist Association in the coup? The Nationalists, who had early expressed ambivalence toward agrarian and social reform, also possessed a lack of close contact with the Roman Catholic clergy. Consequently, because the country was overwhelmingly agrarian and Catholic, the Association had little support among the people. This is reflected in their poor showing in all three Seimas elections. However, because of its elitist, nationalistic stance, and because a nationalist president ruled during the wars of independence, the Nationalist Association had a good deal of influence among army officers.³⁷ The Nationalists cultivated support within the officer corps by accentuating patriotism.³⁸ In defending the coup, Jakstas writes that the Nationalists were not its initiators; it was the communists and anarchists who awoke the nation and stirred it to action.³⁹ Be that as it may, it is widely believed that coup officers

³⁵Rukas, p. 254.

³⁶Rastikis, I, p. 206.

³⁷Kazys Pakstas, Lithuania and World War II (Chicago: Lithuanian Cultural Institute, 1947) p. 20.

³⁸Rukas, pp. 238-239.

³⁹Juozas Jakstas, "Tautos pazangos partijos-Lietuviu tautininku sajungos istorijos bruožai 1916-1940" ("An Historical Sketch of the National Progress Party-Lithuanian Nationalist Association 1916-1940"), in Tautines minties kelias: Lietuviu tautininkijos istoriniai bruožai (Path of National Thought: Historical Sketch of Lithuanian Nationalism) Eds. Jonas Puzinas and Jonas Pranas Palukaitis. (Chicago:

made contact with Smetona long before 17 December 1926, and that the officers would not have carried out the coup if it were not for the encouragement of the Nationalists.⁴⁰

As was mentioned above, the new military leadership had dismissed Colonel Vincas Grigaliunas-Glovackis, a Christian Democrat who had distinguished himself during the wars of independence. In October 1926, along with Reserve Captain Pranas Klimaitis and Reserve Major Juozas Tomkus, he began editing and publishing Tautos Valia (National Will) in Kaunas. It was ideologically oppositionist, anti-communist, and occasionally fascist. It exhorted the people to actively oppose the government. Following publication of the eighth issue, the paper was banned and Grigaliunas-Glovackis was placed in the Kaunas hard labor prison.⁴¹ Prior to his silencing, though, he was involved in a secret conference at the offices of the Christian Democratic publication Rytas (Morning) on 16 October 1926. Among other participants were representatives of the Christian Democratic Party, the Nationalist Association, and the commanding officer of the second infantry regiment, Colonel Jonas Petraitis. This was one of many meetings to coordinate the coup.⁴²

It was soon an open secret. The coup officers began spreading

American Lithuanian National Association, 1979), pp. 121-122.

⁴⁰Merkelis, p. 327; Sarunas, p. 11.

⁴¹Dirvele, p. 167; Merkelis, p. 318.

⁴²Dirvele, pp. 170-171.

rumors that Poland was preparing for an invasion of Lithuania and that the military leadership was doing nothing to counteract it. General Ladiga and Major Plechavicius reported to Chief of Staff Colonel Skirpa that Polish troops were massing in the east at the demarcation line; this despite the fact that Section Two reported no such movement.⁴³ A number of junior officers wished to speak with Skirpa to investigate whether there was a method to alter the situation short of armed force. However, Nationalist Antanas Merkys urged them not to do so, for that would ruin the plot.⁴⁴ General Teodoras Daukantas would visit the editorial offices of Lietuvos Aidas (Lithuania's Echo) and inform the editors of coup preparations. Yet, Prime Minister Slezevicius trusted the ability of the military leadership to see that military discipline was maintained.⁴⁵ This is amazing considering the mounting evidence — evidence which should have been greeted with more decisive action on the part of the government. One example of evidence may be found in the prime minister's office itself. In addition to being head of government, Slezevicius was also minister of foreign affairs and justice. A former Christian Democratic minister experiencing legal difficulties approached Slezevicius with a proposal. He would give the government a list of conspirators in return for favorable treatment; Slezevicius refused.⁴⁶ Chief of Staff Skirpa was also apparently

⁴³Rukas, p. 257. Section Two was the equivalent of the U.S. Army's intelligence branch, G-2.

⁴⁴Rukas, pp. 272-273.

⁴⁵Rukas, p. 314.

unwilling to take action beyond warnings and reminders of an officer's honor and duty to obey the elected political leadership. He summoned a number of officers and informed them that they should not become involved with politics; punishment would follow breaches of discipline. Skirpa also requested the Lithuanian National Guard, a civilian militia, to report on events and morale in the provinces.⁴⁷ However, it was too late. The road to coup had already been paved.

17 December 1926 marked President Grinius' sixtieth birthday. The commanding officers of all major units stationed throughout the country were gathered in Kaunas on the previous evening in preparation for the next day's celebration. In this way, they were able to be interned, preventing organized resistance from provincial units.⁴⁸ At a meeting held on 16 December, only one officer, Colonel Oskaras Urbonas, the commander of the fourth artillery regiment in Vilkaviskis, spoke of a potential revolt within the army itself — a revolt being organized by the Nationalists and Christian Democrats. Then, on behalf of the Kaunas garrison, spoke Colonel Jonas Petraitis, the commander of the second infantry regiment. He stated that the men in Kaunas were absolutely trustworthy and that no revolt was being organized. Ironically, it was Petraitis, a Christian Democratic sympathizer, who would lead his men against the government several hours later. Defense Minister Papeckys

⁴⁶Grinius, pp. 255-256.

⁴⁷Rukas, pp. 250, 255.

⁴⁸Dirvele, pp. 174-175.

and Colonel Skirpa calmed the officers down, but did not issue any orders to quell potential stirrings, for despite reports of low morale and opposition, the commanding officers also stated that the army will continue to obey.⁴⁹

For purposes of this presentation, it is not necessary to enter into details of the actual coup.⁵⁰ It had been agreed in advance that Major Povilas Plechavicius would act as the dictator during the coup and in the interim period afterward.⁵¹ In the early morning hours of 17

⁴⁹Rastikis, I, pp. 203-204.

⁵⁰See Vladas Krivickas, The Coup d'etat of 1926 in Lithuania, Diss. Columbia University 1970 for a comprehensive presentation. See also Algis Budreckis, "Gruodzio 17 d. perversmas" ("The Coup of 17 December"), Karys, December 1962, pp. 290-293; P. Genys, "Atsiminimai is 1926 metu gruodzio 17 dienos" ("Reminiscences from 17 December 1926"), Karys, December 1962, p. 294; and various articles in The New York Times, 18 December 1926. Grinius, pp. 257-266; Rukas, pp. 258-267; Petras Stravinskas, Atsiminimai ir pasaulezvalga: Rastai ir credo. Antra knyga (Reminiscences and Worldview: Writings and Credo. Second Book) (Chicago: Committee to Publish P. Stravinskas' Works, 1982), pp. 30-32; and Bronius Balutis in Vytautas Sirvydas, ed., Bronius Kazys Balutis: Jo gyvenimas ir darbai (Bronius Kazys Balutis: His Life and Work) (Sodus, MI: J.J. Bachunas, 1951), pp. 89-95 write of their experiences during the coup. Aviation Lieutenant Steponas Darius recalls his participation in the coup in Petras Jurgela, Sparnuoti lietuviai: Darius ir Girenas. Ju gyvenimas ir pirmasis lietuviu skridimas per Atlanta is Amerikos Lietuvon (Winged Lithuanians: Darius and Girenas. Their Lives and the First Lithuanian Transatlantic Flight From America to Lithuania) (Chicago: Vincas & Konstancija-Kotryna Stulpinas, 1935), pp. 99-103. Photographs taken after the coup depicting tanks, patrols, and the coup officers with members of the new government are in Jurgela and Paulius Jurkus, Gen. Povilas Plechavicius (Brooklyn: Karys, 1978), pp. 35-36, 41; and P. Jurgelevicius, Kauno karo komendatura 1919-1929 (Kaunas Military Commandery 1919-1929) (Kaunas: Kaunas Municipal and District Commandery, 1930), pp. 31, 37.

⁵¹He first had to be released from the guardhouse during the initial stages of the coup. Different sources place him in the guardhouse for various reasons at the order of different superior officers.

December 1926, the men of the second infantry regiment were awakened by an alarm and informed that the bolsheviks were threatening the government. The presidential residence, the Seimas building and other vital centers had to be surrounded and "protected." This information was provided by the commanding officer, Colonel Petraitis, who had professed his men's loyalty but several hours before. Colonel Grigaliunas-Glovackis, the editor of Nation's Will, was released from the Kaunas hard labor prison and named the commanding officer of the Kaunas garrison. Aviation Captain Antanas Maciuika and several dozen officers dispersed the Seimas, which was in the midst of late night budget debates. Aviation, cavalry, and armored units participated, assuming control over strategic centers in Kaunas. They were assisted by students from the University of Kaunas who were members of opposition groups, namely the "Ateitis" Catholic Federation and the "Neo-Lithuania" Nationalist Fraternity. In response, Chief of Staff Colonel Skirpa led approximately eighty military policemen in opposition to the coup -- with shots fired.⁵² Nevertheless, Skirpa was captured. A Provisional Military Government (Laikinoji Karo Valdžia) was formed under the dictatorship of Major Plechavicius. Lithuania was declared to be in a state of war, Kaunas under a state of siege. Those who refused to obey the provisional government were to be turned over to military tribunals.⁵³

⁵²The popular version of the coup says that no shots were fired; this is false. However, it was without bloodshed.

⁵³Dirvele, p. 183; Merkelis, pp. 328-329; Rukas, pp. 160-161; Zukas, pp. 459-460.

President Grinius, with a tank in the yard of the presidential residence, was awakened in the middle of the night by a lieutenant and placed under house arrest. Important members of the Seimas, along with the entire cabinet, were placed under arrest and brought to military headquarters. The president of the Seimas, Dr. Jonas Staugaitis, was in hiding and discovered only several days later. The cabinet was ordered to tender its resignation. Plechavicius advised Grinius to resign as president. When Grinius informed him that he had broken his oath as an officer and advised him to send the men back to the barracks, Plechavicius attempted to explain himself. Upon departing the presidential residence Plechavicius remarked that all that was left for him to do was commit suicide.⁵⁴ After visits from several influential senior officers, including General Vladas Nagius-Nagevicius, imploring him to resign in the interest of the country and to avert a possible invasion by Poland, Grinius agreed. He stipulated though, that the new prime minister, Professor Augustinas Voldemaras, sign an affidavit promising that he will act within the bounds of the Constitution.⁵⁵ Grinius resigned after approving Voldemaras' cabinet. This was his last official act as president.

Military headquarters was in chaos. The government was under arrest and the coup officers were planning the future of the country

⁵⁴Grinius, pp. 259-260; M.K., p. 122; Zukas, p. 460.

⁵⁵This affidavit was to be broken many times. See Maldeikis, p. 199.

along with representatives from the Nationalist Association and the Christian Democratic Party. The collectivity, with Stasys Silingas as primary author, wrote a declaration, a public request by the military government asking Smetona to assume the reins of government. Smetona agreed in another declaration which they all helped write. The document mentioned the association between Smetona and the officer corps dating back to the wars of independence.⁵⁶

That day, 17 December, the Central Board of the Lithuanian National Guard issued the following instructions to its members:

National Guardsmen of Lithuania!

The Central Board of the National Guard of Lithuania, keeping in mind the new circumstances, having convened for a special consultation, on 17 December 14:00 hours unanimously decided:

To order all National Guardsmen to remain calm and not take any action without the knowledge of the Central Board, remembering that our spiritual calm carries over into Lithuania's calm;

to remind National Guardsmen that Lithuania's external enemy [Poland] is especially dangerous now. Therefore all National Guardsmen must be especially vigilant and prepared to defend Lithuania's borders at every hour.⁵⁷

The same day, the commanding officers assembled for President Grinius' birthday were informed of what had occurred and instructed to return to their units and carry on.⁵⁸ Nevertheless, during officers' mess at the second infantry regiment that morning, one officer loudly exclaimed: "Men, what good have we done? We have overthrown our legal government!"⁵⁹ Many officers who had participated in the coup later regretted

⁵⁶Merkelis, pp. 329-330, 338.

⁵⁷Jonas Matusas, Sauliu Sajungos istorija (History of the National Guard), 2nd ed. (Sydney, Australia: Mintis, 1966), p. 196.

⁵⁸Merkelis, p. 329.

⁵⁹Zukas, pp. 460-461.

their actions. Indeed Major Plechavicius, the interim dictator, apologized to former Prime Minister Slezevicius, even offering to stage a counter-coup; Slezevicius refused.⁶⁰

Slezevicius later informed General Nagius-Nagevicius that the enlisted men were more worthy than their officers, who had broken their oaths and stricken the nation.⁶¹ Evidently, the enlisted men were of the same opinion. The men in the Kaunas garrison were angry that their officers had deceived them. The officers, fearful of a counter-coup, were ordered to stay with the men at all times, even to sleep with them. Since lies had been used to rouse the men to action, they no longer trusted their superiors.⁶² The conspirators were prepared to destroy the bridges leading to Kaunas, for there were several provincial units suited up in full battle gear and prepared to rescue the legal government. However, Grinius' appointment of a new cabinet and his resignation from office stymied any action.⁶³ Several days after the coup, a delegation of NCOs proposed a counter-coup to the Peasant Populists. Grinius and Slezevicius politely refused.⁶⁴

⁶⁰Rukas, p. 315.

⁶¹Grinius, p. 270.

⁶²Grinius, pp. 269-270; Rukas, p. 273; Sarunas, p. 33.

⁶³Dirvele, pp. 181-182.

⁶⁴Zukas, p. 463. Within days of the coup, new Defense Minister Antanas Merkys visited a unit and shouted his greetings to the men ("Sveiki, vyrai!"). There was no response. Merkys was greeted by total silence. See Dirvele, pp. 181-182.

On 19 December 1926 a rump session of the Seimas convened, confirmed the new cabinet, and elected Smetona the fourth president of Lithuania.⁶⁵ The Nationalist-Christian Democratic compromise following the coup made it appear to be just another governmental crisis, instead of the radical step it actually was. The bloodless nature of the coup, along with the pseudo-constitutional means utilized in altering the government, helped downplay the entire incident.⁶⁶ On 12 April 1927, President Smetona, in an announcement by Prime Minister Voldemaras, dissolved the Seimas. According to the Constitution, the president was to announce new elections and reconvene the Seimas within two months; this was not done. Elections to the Seimas would not be held until 1936. In the meantime, decrees would be issued by the cabinet in place of formal legislation. The decade-long dissolution of the Seimas carried out in April 1927 was the more radical "second coup d'etat" which closed the democratic chapter of Lithuania's existence.⁶⁷ This was the military's immediate contribution to Lithuanian politics. It was to have a large role in those politics until the end of the independence period.

⁶⁵The new prime minister, Augustinas Voldemaras, had written six articles in Lietuvis (Lithuanian) from 25 June to 9 December 1926. Ironically, the final one was entitled "Valdzia pries istatymus" ("The Government Acting Against the Law"). See Augustinas Voldemaras, Rastai (Writings), ed. Morkus Simkus (Chicago: Lithuanian Renaissance League, 1973), pp. 621-665.

⁶⁶Grinius, p. 207; Bronis J. Kaslas, The Baltic Nations: The Quest for Regional Integration and Political Liberty (Pittston, PA: Euramerica Press, 1976), p. 108.

⁶⁷Kaslas, p. 109-110.

C. CONSEQUENCES OF THE COUP

Of course, varying analyses of the coup abound. However, there are some objective causes for the coup. "Though the Lithuanian village was the very source of democracy, its residents hardly knew anything of democratic institutions, basic democratic elements, and political parties."⁶⁸ The elections to the third Seimas in May 1926 strained Lithuania's democracy to the breaking point. Those who wished to circumvent democratic procedural arrangements were quite willing to use the situation to their advantage; the Nationalists succeeded. People cannot learn democracy overnight. Thus the government should have been better prepared to operate within a more liberal context subsequent to the lifting of various restraints.

Supporters of the coup mainly view the short-term context of Lithuanian politics and politico-military relations. Binkis writes that the nation entered into chaos, and that the military intervened to put an end to selfish, uncontrolled partisan politics.⁶⁹ Sapoka writes that society strongly supported the coup, for it was yearning for any kind of change.⁷⁰ Others write that it was unfortunate that the inept civil

⁶⁸Juozas Audenas, Paskutinis posedis: Atsiminimai (Final Meeting: Reminiscences) (New York: Romuva, 1966), p. 95.

⁶⁹Kazys Binkis, Antanas Smetona 1874-1934: Šesiu desimciu metu sukaktuvens pamineti (Antanas Smetona 1874-1934: Commemorating His Sixtieth Birthday) (Kaunas: Chief Committee to Commemorate the President's Birthday, 1934), p. 60.

⁷⁰Adolfas Sapoka, ed. Lietuvos istorija (History of Lithuania), 3rd ed. (Fellbach-Wurttemberg, Germany: Patria, 1950), p. 591.

government forced the military to become irrevocably involved in the politics which it so detested. Nevertheless, the young officers are viewed as "true patriots."⁷¹ Smetona himself wrote that the coup unified the military, rendering it better prepared to defend the nation.⁷²

Critics of the coup take a more long-term approach, explaining its detrimental effect on Lithuania for the duration of independence. In the first place, they state that there was no communist threat to the nation, either within or without the military. The communists were weak and disorganized. Indeed, the enlisted men would collect communist leaflets and bring them to their officers.⁷³ As far as Maldeikis is concerned, the coup was not a spasm of national unity. On the contrary, it was carried out by a small group of well-organized officers under the influence of the Nationalists.⁷⁴ Zukas places the entire blame on the shoulders of the guilty officers, citing their lack of comprehension of the essence of government. They had no right to interfere in

⁷¹Lietuviu tautos komitetas (Lithuanian National Committee), Desimts nepriklausomos Lietuvos metu (Ten Years of Independent Lithuania) (Chicago: L.N.C., 1928), pp. 7, 21.

⁷²Antanas Smetona, Pasakyta parasyta: 1927-1934 (Spoken Written 1927-1934) (Kaunas: Pazanga, 1935), I, 30. For a philosophical defense of the coup from the Nationalist perspective, see J. Tamosaitis, "Nuo gruodzio m. 17 d. ligi siu dienu" ("From December 17th Until Today"), in Pirmasis nepriklausomos Lietuvos desimtmetis 1918-1928 (First Decade of Independent Lithuania 1918-1928), ed. J. Barkauskas, et al. (Kaunas: Chief Committee to Celebrate the Decennial of Lithuanian Independence, 1930), pp. 139-159.

⁷³Grinius, p. 247; Rukas, p. 250.

⁷⁴Maldeikis, p. 201.

politics. Once the precedent is broken, it can happen again at any time. The revolts which occurred during the remaining thirteen years of independence received their impetus from the success of this first one. As far as Zukas is concerned, the military must be the backbone and foundation of the state -- not its helm.⁷⁵ Sarunas asks how junior officers are expected to be obedient when they act as Napoleons. The coup hurt military discipline and split the military along two planes. First, the officer corps became divided along party lines. Second, the enlisted men, who felt they had been used as blind tools, were split from their officers.⁷⁶ Rukas assumes a similar stance, adding that the coup hindered progress in military training and improvement. The military became a gendarme, which served to divide the nation and actually intensify debilitating forms of partisan politics.⁷⁷ General Stasys Rastikis writes that state and military affairs were managed by one political group for many years following the coup. This served to alienate a substantial portion of society from the state -- and the military.⁷⁸

⁷⁵Zukas, pp. 464-465.

⁷⁶Sarunas, p. 33.

⁷⁷Rukas, pp. 274-275. Smetona's biographer writes of the president's New Year's greeting to the military on 1 January 1927. Smetona stated that obedience and harmony were absolutely essential. All must work where assigned, with the junior obeying the senior. To say the least, it was an ironic statement considering the events which had transpired just two weeks before.

⁷⁸Rastikis, I, pp. 380, 383. As will be seen later in this study, Rastikis took steps to close this gap when he served as commander-in-chief from 1935 to 1940. He was quite successful.

The ambivalent nature of the coup and its participants is articulated well by interim dictator Major Povilas Plechavicius. He places the bulk of the blame for the coup on his own shoulders, adding that the incident follows him like a "shadow." He was left with no foundation to stand on, for it is spiritual death for an old soldier to raise his hand against the government. Yet, he still believes that he participated out of love for his country.⁷⁹

⁷⁹P. Plechavicius, "O skambink per amzius vaikams Lietuvos" ("Ring Through the Ages for Lithuania's Children"), Karys, January 1953, pp. 3-4. He adds an interesting historical sidelight in support of the coup. He believes that "pseudo-democracy" brought Europe to its knees in the face of Hitler and Stalin. This is most poignantly demonstrated by Chamberlain's appeasement in Munich in 1938.

CHAPTER IV

THE CONTEXT OF CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS

A. NATIONALISM AND THE NATIONALIST ASSOCIATION

The context of Lithuanian civil-military relations, as well as the context of politics during the Smetona era in general, was nationalism. Nationalism, of course, was a phenomenon widely prevalent in interwar East-Central Europe. While in the Lithuanian context, the Nationalist Association had a monopoly over official political nationalism, it was accepted by the general populace, including even the opposition. For example, Juozas Audenas, Peasant Populist agriculture minister in the last cabinet, implies a non-political nationalism in his memoirs. He writes that defense and national unity are most important in times of crisis. Above all else, the state and nation's interests must be guarded through calm, harmony, and keeping one's house in order.¹ Gilpin writes: "The power of modern nationalism lies in the fact that individual identity and state interest become fused; the nationalist becomes the patriot willing to sacrifice his own life for the good of the state."² In this sense, even the political opposition in Lithuania was nationalistic.

¹Juozas Audenas, Paskutinis posedis: Atsiminimai (Final Meeting: Reminiscences) (New York: Romuva, 1966), pp. 139-140.

²Robert Gilpin, War and Change in World Politics (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 98.

One scholar makes the point succinctly with regard to small nations:

Many Big Power ideologists condemn nationalism, and a number of scholars habitually use the term nationalism only in a negative sense. However, small nations must recognize and rely on nationalism as a primary source of their strength.

In theory, one must be able to distinguish sharply between nationalism on the one hand and imperialism, xenophobia, or the attempts to abridge the rights of nations on the other.

Nationalism has become an expression of a nation's will to live and its individualism. It has become a symbol of the dignity of peoples. It is the feeling of belonging to a national brotherhood. In many instances it is the strongest and most durable social bond.

From the point view of national defense and survival, nationalism -- a product of patriotic loyalty and uniting cohesion -- is the main source of strength. It fixes the basic loyalty, the political objectives, the strategy, and many techniques in the struggles to defend a nation.

Nationalism, adequately mobilized, is an impressive force. In situations of political and social conflict, it enhances national strength in various ways: (a) rallies the nation's forces, (b) unifies them, (c) clarifies the issues of the struggle, distinguishes friend from foe, and (d) provides a guiding philosophy, a sense of direction, an understanding of the goals to be achieved.

Small states and nations that do possess the precious inheritance of nationalism should recognize its value as a foundation of national survival. They should build their future on it.³

How did political nationalism manifest itself in Lithuania? The Nationalist Association grew out of the Lithuanian Democratic Party (Lietuvos Demokratu Partija), which had been founded in 1902. It later called itself the National Progress Party (Tautos Pazangos Partija) and the Agricultural Association (Zemdirbiu sajunga). In 1924 it renamed itself the Nationalist Association. The Nationalist Association was a

³V.V. Sveics, "Nationalism: A Source of Strength for Small Nations," in Fourth Conference on Baltic Studies: Summaries of Papers (Brooklyn: Association for the Advancement of Baltic Studies, 1974), p. 69. Sveics' emphasis. For an extended treatment of these ideas see his Small Nation Survival: Political Defense in Unequal Conflicts, (New York: Exposition, 1970), pp. 127-165.

small, young party without wide support among the people. It had no seats in the first and second Seimas. It was able to win three seats out of a total of eighty-five in the third. In 1926, the association had about 12,000 members. By 1938, membership, despite the fact that it was the only legal party, had increased by only about one thousand. Among the 13,000 registered members that year, 7,500 were farmers, 350 were tradesmen, 500 were industrial workers, 2,800 were professionals (including property and industrial owners, and bureaucrats), and 1,700 were teachers.⁴ The Association desired national unity, but on its own terms. Thus, while in quest of unity, its internal politics and policies were often unpopular and unsuccessful.⁵

Smetona was the Nation's Leader (Tautos Vadas). The Leader Principle was used elsewhere in Europe. The Italian "Duce" and the German "Führer" were explicit manifestations. It was implicit in Pilsudski's personal dictatorship in Poland and in the political development of the other Baltic states: Latvia and Estonia. Within Lithuania itself, this principle was often used in non-political

⁴Juozas Jakstas, "Tautos pažangos partijos-Lietuvio tautininku sąjungos istorijos bruožai 1916-1940" ("An Historical Sketch of the National Progress Party-Lithuanian Nationalist Association 1916-1940"), in Tautinės minties kelias: Lietuvos tautininkijos istoriniai bruožai (Path of National Thought: Historical Sketch of Lithuanian Nationalism). Eds. Jonas Puzinas and Jonas Pranas Palukaitis. (Chicago: American Lithuanian National Association, 1979), p. 155; Kazys Pakstas, Lithuania and World War II (Chicago: Lithuanian Cultural Institute, 1947), p. 21.

⁵Stasys Rastikis, Kovose dėl Lietuvos: Kario atsiminimai (In the Battles for Lithuania: A Soldier's Reminiscences) (Los Angeles: Lietuvos dienos / Lithuanian Days, 1956), I 497.

contexts. Commanding officers in the military had the title of "vadas" of their unit. The National Guard and the "Ateitis" Catholic Federation each had its respective "vadas." The cult of the National Leader was actually not begun by the Nationalists. According to one source, it began in the Christian Democratic newspaper Rytas (Morning), using the term in reference to Smetona on 20 December 1926.⁶ Smetona, who admired the strong executive in the US political system, formalized the Leader Principle (Vadizmas) in the Constitution promulgated in 1928, which authorized the President to execute "leadership of the state."⁷

Smetona exercised his powers as Leader through the leadership of the Nationalist Association. However, he was able to assert that he was not participating in partisan politics, since the Nationalists were organized into an "association," not a "party." In a speech to the Nationalist Congress on 5 January 1940, Smetona stated that a political party deals only with a certain portion of society and is operated according to principles of democracy. The Nationalist Association, on the other hand, is ruled from above by the Leader not according to pars (a portion of the nation), but in tota (the nation in its entirety).⁸

⁶Audenas, p. 115.

⁷Albertas Gerutis, "Independent Lithuania," in Lithuania 700 Years, 2nd rev. ed., Albertas Gerutis (New York: Manyland, 1969), pp. 228-229; Andrius Ryliskis, Fragmentai is praeities miglu: Atsiminimai (Fragments From the Mists of the Past: Reminiscences), ed. Povilas Gaucys (Chicago: n.p., 1974), p. 374. For biographies of other famous leaders, such as Lincoln, Gandhi, Woodrow Wilson, and Kaiser Wilhelm II, in addition to analytic and psychological essays, see Charles B. Strozier and Daniel Offer, eds., The Leader: Psychohistorical Essays (New York: Plenum Press, 1985).

⁸Audenas, pp. 116-117.

Smetona was also viewing the European context. He saw that, other than Czechoslovakia, there were no liberal governments remaining in East-Central Europe. In such a climate, the nation's leadership must be strong and vigilant. There was no place for traditional liberalism in the interwar atmosphere.⁹

Despite the negative connotation associated with interwar European "leadership," Smetona must be judged differently. Personally, he was a quiet, gentle person. Politically, he was a moderating counterweight to the more radical Augustinas Voldemaras.

Smetona saw some good in Fascism, but he considered it alien to Lithuania and therefore did not copy it too closely. He opposed National Socialism outright and condemned it publicly. It is, however, quite clear that Smetona was not a democrat.¹⁰

Under Smetona, political development was retarded and the political arsenal declined in the sense that new political figures could not develop. Political affairs were the exclusive preserve of Smetona and the Nationalists. In this sphere, "the nation was not allowed to speak."¹¹

⁹Edvardas Sulaitis, "A. Smetona apie kariuomene" ("A. Smetona on the Army"), Karys, June-July 1959, p. 162. For an overview of Lithuanian nationalism see Leonas Sabaliunas, Lithuania in Crisis: Nationalism to Communism (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1972), pp. 25-40.

¹⁰V. Stanley Vardys, "Independent Lithuania: A Profile," in Lithuania Under the Soviets: Portrait of a Nation, 1940-65, ed. V. Stanley Vardys (New York: Praeger, 1965), p. 36.

¹¹Audenas, pp. 103-105.

B. THE POLITICS OF THE SMETONA ERA

The Smetona regime is ambivalent with regard to scholarly analysis. Though authoritarian, there were many manifestations that the regime was a relatively benign one. Many pleas for commutation of the death sentence were approved by Smetona. They would be reduced to life sentences, and political prisoners were often released under amnesty after several years of serving the commuted sentence. Another example is aviation officer Antanas Maciuika. Maciuika was the officer who dispersed the Seimas on the night of the coup. He would later offer several challenges to the regime, demanding that Voldemaras be returned to the post of prime minister.¹² Nevertheless, Maciuika rose to the rank of lieutenant colonel, holding important posts in military and civilian life, even serving as one of the attorneys connected to the Lithuanian Supreme Court in 1939. Kazys Grinius, Jr., son of the deposed president, rose to the rank of colonel and served as military attache to Berlin 1937-1940.

The ambivalent nature of the politics of the Smetona era is brought out in the analyses of Pakstas, Vardys, and the US House of Representatives:

Some called the Nationalist regime of 1927-1939 a fascist dictatorship friendly to Moscow, others considered it as a special form of semi-democracy. This author is inclined to label it 'semi-democracy, semi-dictatorship' with a few totalitarian attributes. Though all political parties (except Nationalists) were closed in 1929-1930, 6,600 various cultural, professional and economic societies were functioning under mild police supervision; and a vast

¹²As will be discussed below, Voldemaras was forcibly removed from the post by Smetona in 1929.

majority of these societies was not dominated by the Nationalists. The opposition press was censored, but not liquidated. For instance, the Catholic daily 'The Twentieth Century' was the most influential, with the Liberal daily 'The News of Lithuania' next in importance. Most of the private Lithuanian and Jewish schools were still open and even subsidized by the government. President Smetona was held in great esteem by the orthodox Jews and by a part of the Polish minority interested to preserve their larger landed properties. A. Smetona had been assistant professor of Greek philosophy and was an admirer of Plato. With this background and his conservative humanistic leanings he was not suited to be a really totalitarian dictator. Thus, some foreign observers used to label Lithuania a 'dictatorship without a dictator.' In German literature this was called 'Eingeschraenkte Demokratie' (limited or restricted democracy). In short, the Lithuanian democratic opposition was too numerous and too influential to submit to the much smaller Nationalist group of totalitarian leanings.¹³

The regime that the Nationalists created defies easy definition. It certainly was not totalitarian; opposition, though outlawed, functioned unofficially, and many opposition leaders were strongly entrenched in the universities and schools and in a number of large state-supported cooperatives. Although controlled and hampered, several thousand associations continued their work and only a small part of the press was in Nationalist hands. Press censorship existed, but it was not absolute. Arrests of opposition leaders, although numerous in the early 1930's, almost ceased by 1938. Economic activity was completely free. Minorities were protected. Attempts to overthrow the regime were put down, yet capital punishment against conspirators was extremely rare and only Communists were held in prisons for extended periods of time. The regime was certainly more moderate than Mussolini's and gentler than Pilsudski's personal dictatorship in Poland. . . . Indeed, the Nationalist regime could not introduce totalitarianism, because the forces of democratic opposition were too strong and had to be handled by less extreme methods. A mild-mannered man, Smetona could not be compared to Mussolini, Hitler, or even Pilsudski. He kept the regime in power largely by using political patronage and cleverly playing off the competing governmental institutions and political forces, including his own supporters, against one another. The regime was constantly subject to pressures at home.¹⁴

It is even noteworthy that even strong opposition leaders to Smetona's rule found it impossible to label his regime as Fascist or

¹³Pakstas, p. 22. Pakstas' emphasis.

¹⁴Vardys, p. 37.

dictatorial in the accepted sense. . . . In the face of the extraordinary complexities that faced Smetona from Poland over Vilnius and, later from Germany over Klaipeda, to say nothing of internal stresses and strains, the semiauthoritarian rule he directed from 1928 to 1938 might well go down in the history of Europe as more the government of enlightened statesmanship than the government of one-man rule.¹⁵

C. PRIME MINISTER AUGUSTINAS VOLDEMARAS 1926-1929

While the regime of President Antanas Smetona may have been one of enlightened authoritarianism, it almost did not come to pass. In the first two years of his regime, he had to contend with the more radical Nationalist prime minister Professor Augustinas Voldemaras. Voldemaras was a brilliant, often arrogant and ascerbic, scholar who specialized in history, politics and languages. He spoke several languages fluently. While heading up the cabinet, he also served as minister of foreign affairs and, for the last few months of his rule, as minister of defense. His radicalism, aggressiveness, and arrogance caused him to lose support not only in military circles, but among the Nationalists as well.¹⁶ His extreme anti-Polish stance also contributed to this

¹⁵U.S. House of Representatives, Third Interim Report of the Select Committee on Communist Aggression, 83rd Congress, Second Session (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1954), pp. 128-129; see also pp. 126, 127. For accounts of the early development of Lithuanian political parties, see M. Kersis, Lietuviu politikos partijos (Lithuanian Political Parties) (n.p.: n.p., 1921); Martisius, Valstieciai liaudininkai arba valstieciu sajunga (Peasant Populists or the Peasant Association) (Kaunas: Liaudies politikos knygynelis / People's Political Library, 1923); Meskus (pseud. for Bishop Justinas Staugaitis of Telsiai), Musu politines partijos ir ko jos nori (Our Political Parties and What They Want) (Kaunas: Sviesa, 1923).

¹⁶Aleksandras Merkelis, Antanas Smetona: Jo visuomenine, kulturine ir politine veikla (Antanas Smetona: His Social, Cultural, and Political Activity) (New York: American Lithuanian National Association, 1964), p. 366.

disaffection. According to Voldemaras, "Lithuania had only two things in common with Poland, namely, the Catholic religion and 525 kilometers of demarcation line."¹⁷ Voldemaras was aware that his power base was eroding and took steps to rectify the situation.

[Voldemaras] endeavored to build a personal following among the younger nationalist officers who were favorably impressed by emergent fascism. . . . The majority of the senior officers favored conservative policies and usually stood by the chief executive [Smetona]. On the other hand, the dynamic personality of Professor Voldemaras continued to attract admirers among the younger officers who were displeased with Smetona's moderate course.¹⁸

Voldemaras and this group of younger officers condemned the government for being too conservative and not nationalistic enough. It would eventually develop that the Smetona regime, or any regime which did not include Voldemaras, must be opposed. Smetona, of course, would find such attitudes unacceptable and take steps against his opponents, including his own prime minister.¹⁹

On 6 May 1929, three leftist students attempted to assassinate Voldemaras as he was entering a theater in Kaunas with his family. Voldemaras escaped unharmed but one aide, Voldemaras' nephew Major Leonas Virbickas, was injured and another, Captain Pranas Gudynas, was

¹⁷Owen J.C. Norem, Timeless Lithuania, 2nd ed. (Cleveland: Viltis, 1967), p. 227. See also Benedict V. Maciuika, ed. Lithuania in the Last 30 Years, Subcontractor's monograph prepared in the Division of the Social Sciences at the University of Chicago. HRAF Subcontract HRAF-1 Chi-1 (New Haven, CT: Human Relations Area Files, 1955), p. 58.

¹⁸Sabalionas, pp. 257, 46 quoted in Kristina Vaicikonis, "Augustinas Voldemaras," Lituanus, 30, 3 (Fall 1984), 76.

¹⁹See Maciuika, p. 61; Norem, pp. 131-132.

killed. This incident further turned Voldemaras toward the clique of officers he was forming. The clique, formed within the Iron Wolf Sports Association (Gelezinio vilko sporto sąjunga), will be discussed in more depth in the following section.²⁰

Smetona, concerned about Voldemaras and the opposition he was fomenting among the younger officers, decided to end Voldemaras' political career. On 19 September 1929, after having served as prime minister for almost three years, Smetona dismissed the cabinet and appointed his brother-in-law, Juozas Tubelis, prime minister. Later that month, Voldemaras was forcibly evicted by the police from the apartment of the director of the Bank of Lithuania. Voldemaras had commandeered the residence for himself. He was exiled to Plateliai, later Zarasai. It was then that the secretive Iron Wolf organization mobilized more fully around Voldemaras and sought to return him to political power -- by force, if necessary.²¹

D. THE IRON WOLF PARA-MILITARY ASSOCIATION

During the cabinet crisis in which Voldemaras was removed from

²⁰Major Virbickas, the injured aide, writes that one of Voldemaras' relatives was injured in the attack. See Stepas Jakubickas, Kas yra Lietuvos atgimimo sąjūdis (What the Lithuanian Renaissance League Is) (Delhi, ONT: L.R.L. Canadian Region, 1978), p. 48. Andrius Bulota writes that Voldemaras' arm was injured, though this fact was never publicized. See his Limuzinas nr. 4: Dokumentine apysaka (Limousine No. 4: A Documentary Narrative) (Vilnius: Vaga, 1977), p. 95.

²¹See "Predict Lithuanian coup: Army reported to be ready to oust Premier Voldemaras," The New York Times, 31 January 1929, p. 3.

power, one hundred "wolves" were prepared to act against Smetona and the government on behalf of their mentor.²² What was the Iron Wolf? It was an organization patterned after the Blackshirts of Italy. The name of the organization was derived from the legend of the founding of the city of Vilnius. Gediminas, a grand duke of Lithuania, allegedly had a dream about a wolf in a suit of armor. A soothsayer then interpreted it to mean that Gediminas must build a great city; that city would become Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania.

Iron Wolf was founded in the fall of 1927. It was the Iron Wolf Sports Association (Gelezinio vilko sporto sajunga). Its motto was "National honor, State welfare!" (Tautos garbe, Valstybes gerove!). The organization's political program dictated that any government which seeks national unity, honor, the welfare of the state, honors religion and guarantees property rights must be protected.²³ Iron Wolf was Voldemaras' prop. Its official chief was Smetona, but the president had little actual influence over its members. Voldemaras was the actual head of the organization, who was designated sponsor and chief leader (globejas ir vyriausias vadas).

These extreme nationalists who operated semi-secretly wished to stabilize the post-coup situation, defend the regime, and keep opposition parties out of government.²⁴ A person who joined was a candidate

²²Andrius Bulota, Nuo baltojo zirgo iki svastikos (From the White Steed to the Swastika) (Vilnius: State Political and Scientific Press, 1962), pp. 85-86.

²³Bulota, Nuo baltojo zirgo iki svastikos, pp. 73-74.

²⁴Bulota, Nuo baltojo zirgo iki svastikos, p. 72.

for three months. If nothing unacceptable was discovered about him, he was allowed to give the oath, which included kneeling and kissing a dagger. Each member then secretly carried the dagger and possibly a firearm. This could have been a factor attracting youth to the organization.²⁵

The membership of Iron Wolf represented people from different walks of life: lawyers, physicians, police officers, Internal Security Department agents, bureaucrats, foresters, students. More important for this study though, is the presence of reserve and active army NCOs and officers in the rolls of the organization.²⁶ Captain Antanas Maciuika was a leading member of Iron Wolf. The day Voldemaras was removed as prime minister, he met with Maciuika three times, possibly seeking the army's support through the organization.²⁷ Another top member and supporter of Voldemaras was Reserve Lieutenant Algirdas Sliesoraitis,

²⁵Apolinaras Bagdonas, ed., Lietuvos policija istatymu ir tvarkos tarnyboje (Lithuania's Police in the Service of Law and Order) (Chicago: Lithuanian Police Club "Krivule," 1974), p. 150; Bulota, Nuo baltojo zirgo iki svastikos, p. 74; Merkelis, p. 366. Nationalist Association member and future prime minister Rev. Vladas Mironas presided at the first secret swearing-in ceremony. See Bulota, Nuo baltojo zirgo iki svastikos, p. 74.

²⁶Bagdonas, p. 149; B. Baranauskas, ed., Gelezinis Vilkas (Iron Wolf), vol 7. of an archival documentary file collected by the Lithuanian SSR Academy of Sciences (Vilnius: Mintis, 1965), pp. 22, 24, 58-59; Bulota, Nuo baltojo zirgo iki svastikos, pp. 77, 79; Lithuanian Christian Democratic Association, Arkivyskupas Mecislovas Reinys (Archibishop Mecislovas Reinys) (Chicago: L.C.D.A., 1977), p. 92.

²⁷Jonas Augustaitis, Antanas Smetona ir jo veikla (Antanas Smetona and His Work) (Chicago: Chicago Lithuanian Literary Society, 1966), p. 90.

who edited Tautos kelias (Nation's Road), the newspaper of the Voldemaras faction. Sliesoraitis headed up the staff of Iron Wolf in 1928 and 1929. Other members of the staff included Captain Maciuika, Major Leonas Virbickas, Captain Juozas Gineitis, Captain Pranas Gudynas, and aviation Major Jonas Pyragius. The staff of the Kaunas chapter included some members of the army's general staff.²⁸

The activity of wolves was dictated by secret instruction 3², which told them to "See all, Know all." They were to collect information on opposition parties and other organizations. They were also to monitor anti-state activity, especially by government workers. They would, for example, report on teachers and other bureaucrats, recommending whom to hire, fire, and promote. Iron Wolf attempted to purge the National Guard of elements with questionable loyalty to the regime. Thus Order (No. 1)⁵ instructing all wolves to join the Guard was issued on 5 January 1928. Procedures included secret and coded correspondence, along with passwords and high signs. There were standing assembly and action orders in case of emergency. Activity was guarded by such secrecy that there was one incident where a lower-ranking police official refused to unlock a drawer for his superior because it contained some of the organization's secret papers.²⁹

While Iron Wolf had been organized officially as a sports organization seeking to inculcate obedience and dispose of undesirable

²⁸Bulota, Nuo baltojo zirgo iki svastikos, p. 73.

²⁹Bagdonas, pp. 149-150; Bulota Nuo baltojo zirgo iki svastikos, pp. 68, 74, 82, 84.

elements through sports and drill, it assumed a broader dimension in August 1929 when sports became a secondary activity and more secret political activity assumed increased importance. It was now to be an internal regime army combating anti-nationalism and foreign anti-state elements. It was to defend any government which promoted nationalism -- and the authority of the leaders of Iron Wolf. Further, only Lithuanians could belong to the organization and expelled members were to be persecuted.³⁰ In the process, though, Iron Wolf became self-willed and arbitrary, and began to terrorize the opposition. Even before Iron Wolf was officially formed, it had experimented with such activity. In his memoirs, President Grinius writes that individuals, later members of Iron Wolf, blew up the "Varpas" press on 11 March 1927. It was here that the Peasant Populists printed the Lietuvos zinius (Lithuania's News) newspaper and other publications. The wolves were also known for breaking into homes and apartments at night, beating and threatening those whom they felt were not sufficiently loyal to the regime. They sometimes took victims outside city limits for late night interrogations.³¹

There was some reaction to the wolves' activity. A group of Catholic students, members of the "Ateitis" Catholic Federation's "Kestutis" Fraternity, organized armed protection for Catholic

³⁰Bulota, Nuo baltojo zirgo iki svastikos, pp. 73-74.

³¹Kazys Grinius, Apie 1926 m. gruodzio 17-os dienos perversma (On the Coup of 17 December 1926) (Chicago: Chicago Lithuanian Literary Society, 1954), p. 273.

leaders. Later, however, an informal arrangement was concluded whereby Iron Wolf would not attack Catholic leaders and "Kestutis" would remove its armed guards.³²

The terror assumed such proportions that the Vienybe (Unity) newspaper, published in the US by Lithuanian-Americans, called Iron Wolf Lithuania's Ku Klux Klan in 1928.³³ President Smetona, who as chief was supposedly the supreme authority of the organization, but who practically had no ties to it, became increasingly critical of the wolves.³⁴ The first strike was Voldemaras' ouster from government in September 1929. Subsequently, the liquidation of Iron Wolf commenced. Voldemaras was removed as sponsor of the organization and replaced by Colonel Brunonas Stencilis, the general secretary of the Interior Ministry. He was charged with disarming and disbanding the organization. Needless to say, the wolves were not pleased with these developments. It was as if there were now two organizations, with different groups of wolves obeying either Lieutenant Algirdas Sliesoraitis or Stencilis.³⁵

Though the organization was officially outlawed in 1930, it continued to operate secretly. The wolves were reorganized into groups of five (penketuku sistema) which were led by instructors. Captain

³²Lithuanian Christian Democratic Association, pp. 92-93.

³³J. Ziugzda, et al., eds., Lietuvos TSR istorija nuo 1917 iki 1940 (History of the Lithuanian SSR 1917-1940) (Vilnius: Mintis, 1965), III, 215.

³⁴Merkelis, pp. 366-367.

³⁵Bulota, Nuo baltojo zirgo iki svastikos, pp. 92-98; Merkelis, p. 374.

Juozas Gineitis, who worked for Captain Antanas Maciuika, was at the head of this network. During his vacation in the summer of 1930, Captain Leonas Virbickas travelled Lithuania and contacted various Iron Wolf instructors.³⁶ They continued to operate and terrorize various individuals, often challenging the regime itself. In 1930, several wolves attempted to assassinate Colonel Steponas Rusteika, director of the Internal Security Department of the Interior Ministry.³⁷

On 6 May 1934, the Voldemaras faction reorganized itself into the Lithuanian Nationalist Party (Lietuviu Nacionalistu Partija). While this made the wolves sound more respectable, a scant one month later they would carry out the greatest challenge to the Smetona regime, the Kubiliunas Revolt, which will be discussed below.³⁸

E. CHALLENGES TO THE REGIME

In one meeting of the cabinet of Prime Minister Antanas Merkys, Interior Minister Brigadier General Kazys Skucas remarked that there had been fourteen revolts against the regime in the thirteen years following

³⁶Bulota, Nuo baltojo zirgo iki svastikos, p. 92; Maciuika, p. 58.

³⁷Bagdonas, p. 151; Bulota, Nuo baltojo zirgo iki svastikos, pp. 104-114.

³⁸Jakstas, p. 141; Jakubickas, p. 20; Merkelis, p. 422. The Jakubickas book is a pro-Voldemaras work published by his faction, which reorganized itself in 1948 into the Lithuanian Renaissance League (Lietuvos Atgimimo Sajudis). This League still publishes the Free Lithuania (Laisvoji Lietuva) newspaper in Chicago. The Iron Wolf logo and motto are on the masthead. Jakubickas participated in the Kubiliunas Revolt as an NCO and was sentenced to fifteen years in prison. President Smetona amnestied him, along with many others, in 1937. See Jakubickas, p. 21.

the 1926 coup.³⁹ There were indeed many serious challenges to the regime, involving both military and non-military elements. The NCO revolt of 1934 was discovered in advance. Its aim was the restoration of Voldemaras and General Petras Kubiliunas to power as prime minister and chief of staff, respectively. The Suvalkai farmers strike of 1935 was violent and disruptive.⁴⁰

Attempted and unsuccessful revolts had obvious politico-military implications. On 21 February 1927, Dr Juozas Pajaujis, a Peasant Populist Seimas deputy, gave a speech condemning the coup. He was also conferring with a number of officers regarding the possibility of a counter-coup. The plot, however, was discovered by Smetona's security agents and Pajaujis, along with the other plotters, was arrested on 4 April. On 28 April he was sentenced to death, though Smetona later commuted it to life in prison. Subsequent to his arrest, leftist deputies issued an interpellation in the Seimas, charging that the government had violated the immunity of a Seimas deputy. Voldemaras

³⁹Audenas, p. 106.

⁴⁰For information regarding the Taurage revolt see Augustaitis, Antanas Smetona, pp. 62-63; Bagdonas, pp. 154-155; I. Lempertas, "Fasistines diktatoros Lietuvoje klasines esmes klausimu" ("On the Question of the Class Essence of the Fascist Dictatorship in Lithuania"), 175; Merkelis, pp. 358, 404-405; Rapolas Skipitis Nepriklausoma Lietuva: Atsiminimai (Independent Lithuania: Reminiscences) (Chicago: Draugas, 1967), pp. 121-129. Bulota, Nuo baltojo zirgo iki svastikos, p. 122 writes of the NCO plot. For the Suvalkai farmers strike see Juozas Kondratas, Tolimos pabares (Distant Fields) (Vilnius: Vaga, 1971), pp. 9-18; J. Macijauskas, Saule leidzias, saule teka: Atsiminimai (The Sun Sets, The Sun Rises: Reminiscences) (Vilnius: State Literary Press, 1961), pp. 124-125; Maciuika 61.

responded on 12 April, though the Seimas would continue, with a 4/5 majority, to vote no confidence in the government. At the same session, Voldemaras read President Smetona's decree dissolving the Seimas without issuing a new date for elections, as required by the Constitution. This was the second "constitutional" coup which placed Smetona and Voldemaras firmly in control of the government.⁴¹

Colonel Jonas Petraitis, who led his second infantry regiment during the coup, was named commanding officer of the second infantry division and commander of the Kaunas garrison in the summer of 1927. He was a good friend of the president, visited him often, and was almost on a first name basis with him. However, he was also a Christian Democrat and friend of Christian Democratic leader Dr. Leonas Bistras. Bistras urged Petraitis to bring the Christian Democrats into office and both began planning a revolt. In November 1927, Petraitis, along with Majors Juozas Grazulis and Ignas Slapsys, visited Smetona and informed him of discontent growing in the military, advising that the Seimas and democracy be returned. Smetona responded that it was too early. During a second visit with Grazulis only, Petraitis' advice became a demand, an ultimatum. He was subsequently discharged and asked to leave Kaunas to his farm in Daugai. Petraitis was still allowed to visit the city and did so. On one occasion, while wearing civilian clothing, he met and spoke with his friend and successor as commander of the second infantry

⁴¹Jakstas, p. 124; Merkelis, pp. 343, 358. Pajaujis was granted amnesty on 1 September 1929 under the condition that he leave Lithuania. He spent three years in Paris and then returned. In 1934 he founded and taught at the Institute of Commerce in Klaipeda.

regiment, Lieutenant Colonel Bronius Ivanauskas. Several days hence, Ivanauskas was discharged.⁴²

The coup of December 1926 had been motivated by patriotism. Subsequent regime challenges were motivated by two different forces. Some officers, sympathetic to opposition groups, wished to turn the country toward democracy. Others, officers loyal to Voldemaras, wished to institute a more rigid regime. Though officers could not formally belong to a political party, different factions possessed different officers expressing sympathies.⁴³

Different commentators claim varying results of the various challenges to the regime. Smetona's biographer writes that whereas the coup weakened the government, subsequent revolts actually made the government stronger, demonstrating the need for a strong regime. In Lithuania's case, partisan politics were not suited for affairs of state.⁴⁴ Most writers, however, write that challenges had negative effects on the state, the nation, and the military. As far as they are concerned, each revolt served to degrade and demoralize the officer corps as a whole. As officers were punished, otherwise good military men were lost. They became politicized and no longer trusted the

⁴²Petras Jurgela and Paulius Jurkus, Gen. Povilas Plechavicius (Brooklyn: Karys, 1978), pp. 65-66; Merkelis, pp. 358-359; Antanas Rukas, ed., Mykolas Slezevicius (Chicago: Terra, 1954), p. 272; Skipitis, Nepriklausoma Lietuva, pp. 130-133.

⁴³For example, see Bronys Raila, Paguoda (Solace) (London: Nida, 1974), II, 207.

⁴⁴Merkelis, p. 359.

political leadership. Other officers were persuaded that the only solution was to take the 1926 coup even further, bringing the government to the extreme right. Such a government, presumably, could maintain better control and discipline within the army and society.⁴⁵ The Kubiliunas revolt of 6-7 June 1934 sought such a solution.

F. THE KUBILIUNAS REVOLT OF JUNE 1934

According to General Stasys Rastikis, the motto of the Kubiliunas revolt could very well have been "Topple Tubelis' government!" Rastikis searches for political reasons for this anti-regime outburst. There was no national representation since the dissolution of the Seimas. There was no brake on governmental power. Indeed, not even Smetona could fully control his own government. Without the Seimas, there was no other political organ where political differences and frustations could be ameliorated; no sense of parliamentarianism existed.⁴⁶

The individuals who masterminded the revolt were members of the Voldemaras faction and Iron Wolf. The center of activity was the Air

⁴⁵Stasys Rastikis, Ivykiai ir žmonės: Is mano uzrasu (Events and Personalities: From My Notes), ed. Bronius Kviklys (Chicago: Akademines skautijos leidykla / Academic Press, 1972), pp. 215-216. See also Bulota, Nuo baltojo zirgo iki svastikos, p. 125; Grinius, p. 276.

⁴⁶Rastikis, I, p. 447. For accounts of the revolt and its aftermath see "Ex-premier sentenced: Waldemaras [sic] gets 12 years for plot in Lithuania," The New York Times, 19 June 1934, p. 7; K.U., "1934-tuju metu sukilimas" ("The 1934 Revolt"), Karys, May 1974, pp. 163-167, June-July 1974, pp. 209-212; "Lithuanian coup reported nipped," The New York Times, 8 June 1934, p. 10; Jonas Svoba, Seimine ir prezidentine Lietuva (Parliamentary and Presidential Lithuania) (Cleveland: Viltis, 1985), pp. 229-235.

Club (Aeroklubas) in Kaunas, frequented by air force officers. They included Major Jonas Pyragius, former chief of staff Lieutenant Colonel Juozas Narakas, Lieutenant Colonel Antanas Maciuika, Captain Vladas Morkus.⁴⁷ The name popularly attributed to the uprising implies that Chief of Staff General Petras Kubiliunas was the chief culprit. That is not the case at all, though. The Voldemaras faction was actually using him as an instrument, an intermediary.⁴⁸

Kubiliunas was a distinguished military man who had served with honor in World War I and during Lithuania's wars of independence. He was a graduate of the Czechoslovakian Military Academy and Lithuania's Senior Officer Courses. In 1930 he established the firing range at Gaiziunai. The following year he established the Grand Duke Vytautas Senior Military School (DLK Vytauto Aukstoji Karo Mokykla). He was appointed chief of staff on 10 February 1929 and soon earned respect and admiration as a military organizer, reformer, and educator. He was even close to the president, often accompanying him horseback riding. Despite these impressive facts and his good intentions, he was a poor politician who could not comprehend complex political affairs and interpersonal relations. He was uninterested in politics and lent his support to no political faction. Indeed he felt contempt toward political parties, which he felt ignored the interest of the nation in

⁴⁷J. Jakaitis, Isdavystes kelias (The Path of Treason) (Vilnius: Mintis, 1976), p. 12. See also Kazys Musteikis, Prisiminimu fragmentai (Fragments of Memories) (London: Nida, 1970), pp. 17, 19.

⁴⁸Jakubickas, p. 64.

favor of partisan advantage.⁴⁹

This political ignorance must be understood within the context of the relationship between Kubiliunas and Defense Minister Colonel Balys Giedraitis. There was a great deal of tension between the two men. Giedraitis, who had been appointed minister on 28 June 1930, was a good administrator, but slightly incompetent regarding military matters. This was juxtaposed with Kubiliunas, one of the most competent military professionals Lithuania ever produced. He was of the opinion that Giedraitis was holding back military arming and strengthening. The economic crises in Europe meant that Lithuania could not arm its military as quickly as it would have liked. However, since Kubiliunas concentrated only on military matters, he did not understand this. This animosity was exacerbated when budget shifts went against the defense ministry and in favor of the agriculture ministry, whose head was Prime Minister Juozas Tubelis. Kubiliunas blamed Giedraitis, whom he felt could not adequately defend the military's interests in the cabinet. In addition to disliking Giedraitis and Tubelis, Kubiliunas also disliked Interior Minister Colonel Steponas Rusteika, whose Internal Security

⁴⁹Merkelis, pp. 422-423; Musteikis, p. 12; Stasys Rastikis, Lietuvos likimo kelias: Is mano uzrasu (On the Roads of Lithuania's Destiny: From My Notes), ed. Jonas Dainauskas (Chicago: Akademines skautijos leidykla / Academic Press, 1982), pp. 233, 251. For biographical information see A. Sova, "Buve vadai ir tautiniai herojai" ("Past Leaders and National Heroes"), Karys, March 1975, pp. 92-94; A. Sova, "Generolas Petras Kubiliunas" ("General Petras Kubiliunas"), Karys, February 1976, pp. 49-53, March 1976, pp. 87-93; O. Urbonas, "Generolas Petras Kubiliunas" ("General Petras Kubiliunas"), Karys, June-July 1973, pp. 195-200. Cf. chap. 2 of this study for professional military contempt toward politics.

Department had begun surveillance of officers.⁵⁰

The Voldemaras group played on Kubiliunas' anger, urging him to frighten Smetona into replacing Prime Minister Tubelis with Professor Voldemaras. According to their logic, this would be beneficial for both domestic and foreign politics. If Voldemaras were prime minister, so the scenario went, relations with Germany would improve. In turn, it would purchase Lithuanian agricultural products, eliminating the economic crisis and rejuvenating agriculture. In this improved economic situation, the military would be able to arm and improve. Kubiliunas did not have to oust Smetona, whom he respected, but merely ask that new leadership be brought into government.⁵¹

With these aims in mind, on the night of 6-7 June 1934, the chief of staff confronted his commander-in-chief. The Internal Security Department had discovered the plot and warned the government. 152 military policemen and twenty-five soldiers were guarding the presidential residence. Thus the men commanded by Kubiliunas could not surround Smetona, and the president could speak with authority. The two companies that Kubiliunas marched through Kaunas, along with several tanks, were ordered back to their barracks by Kubiliunas himself -- a sign of his fidelity to the president. Kubiliunas was not willing to have Lithuanian troops fight among each other, for the cadets of the Military Academy and the men of the second infantry regiment were

⁵⁰Merkelis, pp. 423-424; Rastikis, Ivykiai ir zmones, p. 96.

⁵¹Merkelis, p. 424.

prepared to liquidate the revolt. Two delegations of officers headed by Kubiliunas would visit Smetona and demand changes in the cabinet. On both occasions, Smetona refused to negotiate and stated that he would not make such decisions under duress. Since Kubiliunas was a loyal officer, and since the commander-in-chief was calling his bluff, the revolt thus ended.⁵²

Meanwhile, Professor Augustinas Voldemaras had been flown from exile in Zarasai to Kaunas and waited at air force headquarters. However, it was soon realized that the attempt had failed. Under demands from the government, Colonel Juozas Narakas brought Voldemaras to military headquarters, where he was arrested by Defense Minister Giedraitis.⁵³

Though others organized the revolt, Kubiliunas lent his authority to it. Thus a court-martial sentenced him to death. Two other officers, Colonel Narakas and Lieutenant Colonel Jonas Backis, received the same sentence. In response to requests for clemency, Smetona commuted the sentences to life for Kubiliunas, twelve and fifteen years respectively for Narakas and Backis. Narakas was amnestied 8 April 1936, Kubiliunas and Backis 16 February 1937. Kubiliunas was allowed to live on his farm. A number of officers received prison sentences. Others were transferred to different

⁵²For details of the revolt see Jakstas, pp. 141-142; Merkelis, pp. 424-428; Musteikis, pp. 15-18; Norem, p. 137.

⁵³Jakstas, p. 142; Musteikis, pp. 18-19; Skipitis, Nepriklausoma Lietuva, p. 147. Jakstas writes that Voldemaras remarked to air force officers, "You brought me right into prison."

units. Approximately seventy officers were discharged. The fortunate ones were able to remain in the reserve. The unfortunate ones were demoted to enlisted grades, had their shoulder insignia cut off in front of the men, and were dishonorably discharged.⁵⁴ General Rastikis writes that "many stars fell from shoulders" following the revolt.⁵⁵

Although Kubiliunas and the Iron Wolf failed to bring about a change in the regime, Smetona decided to replace a number of ministers on 12 June. One of them was the new defense minister, General Petras Sniuksta, the longtime head of the military tribunal system. He had, according to Rastikis, a better working relationship with the military leadership.⁵⁶ Tubelis, however, remained as prime minister. The Nationalists were not prepared to relinquish relevant political power -- and were certainly not willing to allow Voldemaras to gain a foot in the political door.

There were other high-level changes in military attaches and unit commanders. The new chief of staff was Lieutenant General Jonas Jackus, a hot-tempered man who dealt with the rebels severely. However, a brain hemorrhage would incapacitate him soon after his appointment. The new commandant of the Military Academy was Colonel Jonas Cernius, who would become chief of staff the following year. Significantly,

⁵⁴Bulota, Nuo baltojo zirgo iki svastikos, p. 124; Jakubickas, p. 65; Merkelis, p. 428; Musteikis, pp. 20-21; Rastikis, Ivykiai ir zmones, p. 96; Skipitis, Nepriklausoma Lietuva, p. 148.

⁵⁵Rastikis, Ivykiai ir zmones, p. 97.

⁵⁶Rastikis, I, p. 487.

Major Aloyzas Valusis was named the commander of a cavalry regiment. Valusis was Smetona's first military aide following the coup -- and his son-in-law. The changes on the military chessboard meant that some individuals, such as Cernius, Stasys Rastikis, and Kazys Musteikis, a future defense minister, would become general officers out of sequence. This occurred at other grades as well. It was the inevitable result of political considerations playing a greater role in military appointments.⁵⁷ Further aspects of politico-military affairs will be discussed in the following chapter.

G. THE FATE OF VOLDEMARAS

A military tribunal sentenced Professor Augustinas Voldemaras to twelve years imprisonment. He was amnestied, though, in 1938 under the condition that he leave the country. After spending some time in Paris and Rome, he violated his exile and returned to Lithuania in 1939. He was seized at the border and sent once again to Zarasai in northeastern Lithuania. Voldemaras was exiled again in the spring of 1940. Following the Soviet occupation of Lithuania on 15 June 1940, Voldemaras, for some as yet unknown reason, returned to Lithuania. He was seized at the border and deported to the Soviet Union. Death came in a Moscow prison on 16 December 1942 -- almost exactly sixteen years after the coup.

Iron Wolf continued to operate under the guise of the Lithuanian Nationalist Party. The Voldemaras faction continued to subvert the

⁵⁷Augustaitis, Antanas Smetona, pp. 68-69; Merkelis, p. 427.

government and attempt to overthrow Smetona. However, Voldemaras and the wolves were never strong or organized enough to succeed.⁵⁸

⁵⁸Bulota, Nuo baltojo zirgo iki svastikos, p. 149 writes that some of the Kubiliunas rebels amnestied several years after the revolt began agitating in the officer corps to overthrow Smetona.

CHAPTER V

POLITICO-MILITARY AFFAIRS

A. A POLITICIZED MILITARY

According to Western tradition, the military is subordinate to civilian authority. This is one of the hallmarks of modern, liberal democracy. However, reality dictates that the two spheres cannot be wholly separated. For example, the political chief executive is also often the commander-in-chief of the military; the line is blurred. Defense belongs to politics and can be manipulated by it for selfish political ends. Indeed the military can become a blatantly political instrument.¹ General Stasys Dirmantas created an analogy between the military and a knife. According to him, a knife can be used to cut bread for the hungry -- or to stab a person.² The politico-military connection during the Smetona regime demonstrated the ambivalent position of the military in both state and society.

One school of thought says that the military had little influence in the politics of independent Lithuania. General Dirmantas stated that the "military never had decision-making authority in affairs

¹See Antanas Sova, "Del praeities ivykiu" ("About Past Events"), Dirva, 30 January 1974, p. 3.

²A. Reklaitis, "Lietuvos kariuomenei prisiminti: Pasikalbejimas su Ramoves pirm. gen. S. Dirmantu" ("Remembering Lithuania's Army: Conversation with Ramove President General Stasys Dirmantas"), Draugas, 21 November 1964, p. 3.

of state and the state was not militaristic."³ Gerutis writes:

Since the regime came into existence as a result of a military coup, the army was to become an important political factor. Though the President constantly reiterated the importance of the army in the life of the state, there were no tendencies among the army officers to take a direct hand in the affairs of state. The officers' group which organized the coup turned the government over to civilians, and repeated their faith in Antanas Smetona.⁴

Granted the state was not militaristic and government was turned over to President Smetona. Yet, Gerutis appears to hedge his bets with regard to the role of the military in politics, granting it the status of "important political factor."

A more realistic appraisal is made by those analysts who acknowledge the military's political role, attributing it to both internal and external factors. One example follows:

The domestic political order in Lithuania had a number of immediate consequences to foreign and defense policies. Lithuania under the Nationalist one-party regime of President Antanas Smetona can be described as a partially mobilized conservative authoritarian system, without formal sub-system (infrastructure) autonomy, but with considerable pluralistic and competitive processes persisting among the input structures of the system. The anti-industrial and traditionalist bias of the Smetona regime, its conservative agrarian-oriented economic policies in the long run imposed severe limitations on national military capabilities. Lithuanian society was only partially mobilized for the tasks of modernization, and this substantially affected national capabilities for self-defense. The army was mainly important for internal order, and the nation's security depended largely on the state of relations between Berlin, Moscow, and Warsaw. Furthermore, the nationalistic attitudes that the Smetona regime found necessary to promote, as means of maintaining unity and the regime itself, imposed severe limitations on the flexibility of foreign policy, especially on the handling of

³Reklaitis, p. 3.

⁴Albertas Gerutis, "Independent Lithuania," in Lithuania 700 Years, 2nd rev. ed., ed. Albertas Gerutis (New York: Manyland, 1969), p. 222.

the key Vilnius question. Finally, one-party rule affected decision-making capabilities and quality of leadership. On the one hand, the limited interest articulation and mobilization of society and, on the other hand, the logic of one-party rule resulted in a relative isolation of the Smetona regime from society and imposed severe constraints on wider consultation and recruitment of leaders.⁵

The gist of the citation is that Lithuania had no control over its external affairs. Its relatively small army, though undoubtedly the guardian of independence until 1940, would have been ineffective against a deliberate attempt to destroy the Lithuanian state. Within the domestic context, however, the army was needed to guarantee the existence of the Smetona regime. The alliance between the Nation's Leader and the military was crucial to the survival of the post-coup order.⁶

Western politicians lamented this state of the Lithuanian military. Many senior officers, according to one American analyst, were merely political figures not interested in, or suited to, their duties. Instability and political intrigue affected not only the officer corps, but the enlisted ranks as well. This would change only in the latter years of independence.⁷

⁵Thomas Remeikis, "The Impact of Internal Politics on Response Capabilities of the Lithuanian Regime to International Challenges, 1938-1940," in Second Conference on Baltic Studies: Summary of Proceedings, ed. Rimvydas Silbajoris, et al. (Norman, OK: Association for the Advancement of Baltic Studies, 1971), p. 65.

⁶Cf. Vladas Krivickas, The Coup d'Etat of 1926 in Lithuania, Diss. Columbia University 1970, p. 242.

⁷Stasys Rastikis, Ivykiai ir zmones, pp. 17-18; V. Stanley Vardys, "Independent Lithuania: A Profile," in Lithuania Under the Soviets: Portrait of a Nation, 1940-65, ed. V. Stanley Vardys (New York: Praeger, 1965), p. 38.

Changes among the "Big Three" of the military, that is the defense minister, the commander-in-chief, and the chief of staff, were closely tied to politics. With almost every change in the cabinet, the military would receive three new men to run its affairs. This politicization allowed little, if any, time for consistent planning and execution. The Nationalists, of course, attempted to capitalize most on these changes; however, as has been shown above, opposition parties were not above intrigue. Fragmentation and discontent in the army followed -- a reflection of the fragmented nature of society during the Smetona era.⁸

In view of the fluid and unpredictable nature of politics, the Nationalists wished to "nationalize" the military. According to them, if an officer had any dealings with the political opposition, this was an unwarranted intrusion of politics into the military. On the other hand, if an officer dealt with the Nationalist Association, it was not considered unacceptable, for it was a non-political association, not a party.⁹ Thus when assigning commanding officers of regiments and higher, loyalty and trustworthiness both politically and personally to Smetona were important criteria. As a result, strong personalities were unable to develop in the military. This passivity would have

⁸Rastikis, Ivykiai ir žmonės, pp. 17-18; V. Stanley Vardys, "Independent Lithuania: A Profile," in Lithuania Under the Soviets: Portrait of a Nation, 1940-65, ed. V. Stanley Vardys (New York: Praeger, 1965), p. 38.

⁹Stasys Rastikis, Kovose dėl Lietuvos: Kario atsiminimai (In the Battles for Lithuania: A Soldier's Reminiscences) (Los Angeles: Lietuvių dienos / Lithuanian Days, 1956), I, 500-501.

devastating consequences in 1940 when challenged by the Soviet Union.¹⁰

A short catalogue reveals the interconnection between the political and military spheres in Lithuania. The military's effect was felt beyond formal military boundaries. For example, there were many reserve officers holding positions in the important Interior Ministry. Colonel Kazys Skirpa, the chief of staff who attempted to halt the 1926 coup, was appointed military attache to Germany in 1928. He would also hold ministerial positions at the League of Nations and in Warsaw. In 1938 he was appointed minister to Germany.¹¹ Colonel Povilas Zadeikis was minister to the US from 1935 until his death in 1957. Lieutenant Colonel Juozas Papeckys was dismissed as defense minister following the coup, but was allowed to remain in the military. He was named to the board of the justice ministry in 1927 and two years later became a member of the Council of State.¹² General Petras Sniuksta, appointed defense minister in 1934 following the Kubiliunas revolt, was a member of the Council of State in 1935-1936 following his retirement from the military.¹³ Lieutenant General Teodoras Daukantas was named a member of

¹⁰Antanas Rukas, Mykolas Slezevicius (Chicago: Terra, 1954), p. 278. See also Bronius Bieliukas, "Tegul meile viens kitam dega musu sirdyse" ("Let the Love for One Another Burn in Our Hearts"), Karys, December 1975, pp. 374-375.

¹¹A. Gaigalaite, "Burzuaziniai nacionalistai hitlerines Vokietijos tarnyboje 1939-1941" ("Bourgeois Nationalists in the Service of Hitler's Germany 1939-1941"), Lietuvos TSR Mokslo darbai (Works of the Lithuanian SSR), Series A, 2 (11), (1961), 140.

¹²Aleksandras Merkelis, Antanas Smetona: Jo visuomenine, kulturine ir politine veikla (Antanas Smetona: His Social, Cultural, and Political Activity) (New York: American Lithuanian National Association, 1964), pp. 384-385.

the Council in November 1928 after holding the post of defense minister. In January 1931 he was named the first charge d'affaires to South America (Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay).¹⁴ The cabinet of Brigadier General Jonas Cernius in 1939 contained four general officers holding the posts of prime minister and ministers of defense, finance, and interior.¹⁵

Granted, officers were required to retire to the reserve prior to assuming political posts. However, many continued to wear uniforms while carrying out their political duties. This further blurred the line between political and military affairs. There was not really a civil-military dualism as found in the U.S. military establishment, for example. With the exception of four years, the defense minister was always an army officer whose political role was played out in the cabinet.

B. SMETONA AND THE MILITARY

During the wars of independence in 1918-1920, the two most popular names among Lithuanian military volunteers were that of Commander-in-Chief General Silvestras Zukauskas and President Antanas

¹³Rapolas Skipitis, Nepriklausoma Lietuva: Atsiminimai (Independent Lithuania: Reminiscences) (Chicago: Draugas, 1967), p. 188.

¹⁴Merkelis, pp. 365, 441.

¹⁵Rastikis, I, pp. 554, 557. The appointment of pre-coup officials to important posts demonstrates, as discussed in the previous chapter, the leniency of the regime. The Skirpa and Daukantas appointments, however, may have been measures to remove them from influence, or "kick them upstairs."

Smetona. This popularity helped ensconce the new National Leader following the 1926 coup. It was largely Smetona's popularity within the military as one of the nation's saviors that guaranteed the survival of his regime.

Smetona felt that Lithuania would remain strong as long as the military was obedient and unified. Further, the military had an honorable calling in guaranteeing the nation's freedom. He would constantly mention the following: chivalry, strength, virtue, bravery, obedience, harmony, the difficult wars of independence. The military, along with all of society, composed one body and one soul. However, as far as the maintenance of independence was concerned, the military possessed primacy. By default, if the nation was legally in a state of war with dangerous neighbors surrounding and threatening it, especially Poland, there were implications for the importance of the military's political role.¹⁶

Smetona viewed the military as performing an important role in national development and education. A soldier, as far as he was concerned, needed a deep and broad knowledge of national ideals and culture. This is to develop dutiful and productive individuals with a strong Lithuanian character, for it was spirit, and not numbers of men and types of weapons, which determined superiority.¹⁷

¹⁶Merkelis, pp. 354, 359; Edvardas Sulaitis, "A. Smetona apie kariuomene" (A. Smetona on the Army), Karys, June-July 1959, p. 162.

¹⁷Merkelis, pp. 413-414, 423. Major F.G. Beaumont-Nesbitt of the British Army's General Staff inspected the Lithuanian army in July 1927. He was impressed by its discipline and training. He stated, "With such a disciplined and well-trained army, you Lithuanians will

What were the ties between the president and the officer corps? This question is problematic, for even Smetona's biographer, Aleksandras Merkelis, is ambivalent regarding the answer. On the one hand, he writes that there were close and trustworthy ties between the president and the military, stemming from his status as first president. He would often eat lunch and dinner with the officers assigned to the presidential residence, even play cards with them.¹⁸ On the other hand, Merkelis criticizes the military for desiring the lion's share of control over domestic political life; the president's and the military's relationship was not always smooth.¹⁹ Another commentator repeats this opinion, stating that Smetona did not trust the officers. He only had to remember the revolt of his chief of staff, General Kubiliunas, to recall his fears.²⁰

The president participated in all major military events and ceremonies. 1928 and 1929 were especially busy years. The former was

overcome your enemies. While technically weaker, you will surpass them morally." See E.J. Harrison, ed., Lithuania 1928 (London: Hazell, Watson, & Viney, 1928), pp. 71-72. A. Reklaitis, "Lietuvos kariuomeni prisiminti: Pasikalbejimas su Ramoves pirm. gen. S. Dirmantu" ("Remembering Lithuania's Army: Conversation with Ramove President General Stasys Dirmantas"), Draugas, 23 November 1964, p. 5 writes in the same vein, stating that Lithuania's military preceded the formation of the Lithuanian state in 1253, for the Lithuanians were forced to band together to defend themselves against invaders.

¹⁸Merkelis, pp. 411, 458-459.

¹⁹Merkelis, p. 472. See also "Antanas Smetona ir kariuomene" ("Antanas Smetona and the Army"), Karys, 13 June 1940, pp. 634-635.

²⁰Petras Jurgela and Paulius Jurkus, Gen. Povilas Plechavicius (Brooklyn: Karys, 1978), p. 70.

the decennial of independence, the latter the celebration of ten years existence for many military units. Smetona also attended drills and maneuvers, and visited barracks. He was a frequent visitor at veterans' gatherings, especially honoring invalids as living monuments of a free Lithuania.²¹

As in the US, all officer commissions were formally issued by the president. In a pledge of almost personal loyalty to Smetona, each graduate of the Military Academy would kneel before the president and be touched on the shoulders with the officer's saber. The president would intone to each, "Do not raise this without purpose, do not lower it without honor" ("Be reikalo nepakelk, be garbes nenuleisk"). In 1929, the name of the Military Academy was changed to "Military Academy of the First Lithuanian President" (Pirmojo Lietuvos Prezidento Karo Mokykla), with Smetona's likeness on the Academy's flag.²²

Before leaving this section, a short synthesis of Smetona's speeches and writings regarding the military will be put forth. The first volume of his works was published in Lithuania, the second posthumously in the US.²³ On 18 May 1934, Smetona gave a speech

²¹Merkelis, pp. 411, 413.

²²Merkelis, pp. 364, 412; Vaclovas Sliogeris, Antanas Smetona: Zmogus ir valstybininkas. Atsiminimai (Antanas Smetona: Person and Statesman. Reminiscences) (Sodus, MI: Juozas J. Bachunas, 1966), p. 64. For a photograph of the commissioning of a new lieutenant, see H. Serafinas, ed., Vytauto Didziojo mirties 500 metu sukaktuvems pamineti albumas (Album Commemorating the 500th Anniversary of the Death of Vytautas the Great). (Kaunas: Spindulys, 1933), p. 166.

²³Antanas Smetona, Pasakyta parasyta: 1927-1934 (Spoken Written: 1927-1934) (Kaunas: Pazanga, 1935), I; and Smetona, Pasakyta parasyta: 1935-1940 (Spoken Written: 1935-1940), ed. Leonas Sabaliunas (Boston:

containing political implications at the graduation of the first class of the Senior Officer Courses. He said that the Leader (Vadas) is the foundation of political life everywhere in the world. The same principle operates in the military. Officers, however, must also comprehend other aspects of life. They must understand politics and teach youth within that framework.²⁴

As far as Smetona was concerned, the barracks were the home not only of the soldiers, but of the entire nation as well. There, young men from all over the country came together and grew in a spirit of unity. A soldier must be proud of his army and nation, for they compose one family. In addition, defense is the concern of everyone; every individual must conscientiously carry out his duties.²⁵

War and various external threats were frequent themes of Smetona's speeches. During war, he said, all activity revolves around the military. Thus in peacetime an officer must be aware of his nation's history, geography, and language in order to best carry out his wartime duties. Politics, in the broad sense of that term, must not be foreign to the officer.²⁶ In a speech to the University of Vytautas the Great Student Reserve Officers Fraternity "Ramove" on 21 October 1934, Smetona warned that the threat of war lurks everywhere and is

Lithuanian Encyclopedia Press, 1974), II.

²⁴Merkelis, pp. 412-413.

²⁵Smetona, I, pp. 20, 40; II, pp. 180-181.

²⁶Smetona, I, p. 35.

increasing. He said that the next war will involve entire nations. Thus military preparation must be broad and all-encompassing, using military development to develop national consciousness.²⁷ On another occasion he repeated that the entire nation must prepare for war. It must be re-educated on the basis of obedience and unity. Every school, organization, and activity must serve this purpose, for the military is strong only when the nation is united:²⁸

It would be a mistake to surmise that the nation's security depends solely on armed force. Good order in society, national consciousness and various spiritual goods are also great forces in resisting danger. We prepare them together, thus all must be good, cooperative workmen. The idea of national unity must predominate, not only in the defense of the Motherland, but in all the work we do.²⁹

As far as the president's formal powers vis-a-vis military affairs are concerned, they will be reviewed in the relevant appendices of this study. The following sections of this chapter deal with the formal powers of other very powerful individuals in independent Lithuania, namely the district military commandants who, in the formal state of war which existed, wielded considerable political power.

C. THE DISTRICT MILITARY COMMANDANTS

In all fairness to Smetona, he was not the first to give military commandants civil authority. As early as 1919, military commandants could issue orders under paragraphs six and seven of the

²⁷Merkelis, p. 423.

²⁸Smetona, I, pp. 39, 42.

²⁹Smetona, II, p. 295.

Special State Defense Statutes (Ypatingi valstybes apsaugos istatai), passed on 7 February 1919.³⁰ The police and civil administration were bound to execute these orders. The commandants could also overrule and countermand civil orders. Under paragraph ten, commandants could exercise control over assembly; paragraph twelve allowed them to restrict freedom of the press.³¹ Each administrative district (apskritis) had a civil head (apskrities virsininkas) and a military commandant (karo komendantas). During the period of independence there were anywhere from twenty-three to twenty-nine districts in Lithuania.³²

The commandants frequently used their power over assembly. For example, on 29 January 1930 the Kaunas commandant issued Order Nine, which stated that the civilian district head must receive a request for

³⁰See Laikinosios vyriausybės žinios (Provisional Government News) (Kaunas: Ministrų tarybos kanceliarija / Chancellory of the Cabinet), 7 February 1919, No. 4.

³¹Juozas Bulavas, Rinkimai ir "tautos atstovavimas" buržuazineje Lietuvoje (Elections and "National Representation" in Bourgeois Lithuania) (Vilnius: State Political and Scientific Press, 1956), pp. 49-50. See also M. Maksimaitis, "Buržuazinio teisetumo paneigimas administracinių-policinių organų antiliaudine veikla Lietuvoje 1919-1926 metais" ("The Countermanding of Bourgeois Law in the Anti-Populist Activity of Administrative and Police Organs in Lithuania 1919-1926"), Lietuvos TSR Mokslo Akademijos Darbai (Works of the Lithuanian SSR Academy of Sciences), Series A, 2 (13), (1962), 26-28, which discusses laws regarding organizations (Laikinosios Vyriausybės Žinios No. 15, October 1919), assembly (Laikinosios Vyriausybės Žinios No. 20, 21 February 1920), press (Laikinosios Vyriausybės Žinios No. 17, 30 November 1919 and Vyriausybės Žinios No. 197, 20 June 1925).

³²See Centralinis Statistikos Biuras / Central Statistical Bureau, Lietuvos statistikos metraštis (Lithuanian Statistical Yearbook) (Kaunas: C.S.B.), 1927-8, p. 1; 1932, p. 6; 1938, p. 13; and the Bureau's Visa Lietuva: Informacinė knyga (All Lithuania: Information Book) (Kaunas: Spaudos fondas / Press Fund), 1922, pp. 236-237; 1931, p. 24.

permission to assemble at least fourteen days prior to the meeting. The request had to include the program and abstracts of the speeches. Permission from the head had to be registered in the local police station twenty-four hours before the meeting. One week later on 6 February 1930, the Internal Security Department of the Interior Ministry issued Circular 17086, which required district heads to state an official positive or negative opinion regarding each requested meeting. In the spring of that year, the Kaunas Food Workers Association (Kauno maisto produktu darbininku ir tarnautoju sajunga) twice asked for permission to assemble. The civil district head labeled the organization "bolshevik." Upon receipt of this opinion, the military commandant rejected the request on 17 April 1930.³³

The commandants' power also had political implications. After various communist excesses in response to poor economic conditions, Kaunas military commandant Lieutenant Colonel Zigmas Talevicius issued an order on 27 August 1933 under the State of Emergency Statutes. Agitation would result in three months imprisonment or a five thousand litas fine. An attack upon the civil police would result in the criminal being brought before a military tribunal.³⁴ Two years later,

³³O. Ruzelyte, "Susirinkimu laisve ir jos suvarzymas darbo zmonems burzuazineje Lietuvoje" ("Freedom of Assembly and Restrictions for Working People in Bourgeois Lithuania", ed. H. Miskinis, et al. (Vilnius: Lithuanian SSR Academy of Sciences, 1976), pp. 101-103. See M.K., Valstybininkas politikos sukuriuose: Prelatas Mykolas Krupavicius 1885-1970 (Statesman in the Whirlwind of Politics: Prelate Mykolas Krupavicius 1885-1970) (Chicago: Pope Leo XIII Fund, 1980), p. 181 for an account of how the local military commandant gave Rev. Mykolas Krupavicius permission to speak at a meeting.

³⁴Merkelis, pp. 444-445.

FIGURE 5.1: LITHUANIAN ADMINISTRATIVE SUBDIVISIONS 1 JANUARY 1939



Source: Benedict V. Maciuika, ed. Lithuania in the Last 30 Years, Subcontractor's monograph prepared in the Division of the Social Sciences at the University of Chicago. HRAF Sucontract HRAF-1 Chi-1 (New Haven, CT: Human Relations Area Files, 1955), map 2.

in November 1935, Smetona would use the commandants to close down all opposition parties. This under a presidential act which allowed the commandants to restrict or close organizational activity threatening to the state.³⁵

The entire basis for the power of the regime, in general, and the commandants, in particular, was the state of war (karo stovis) which existed in the country, even during peacetime. The state of war was lifted by the Grinius-Slezevicius administration in 1926, but was reinstated three days after the coup on 20 December 1926. This was based on a "recommendation" by the cabinet and paragraph thirty-two of the Constitution. Presidential Act 517-a declared a state of war in all Lithuania and ended guaranties of constitutional civil rights.³⁶ Military and police methods were utilized during the entire state of war, especially during the Seimas elections of 1936.³⁷ General Petras Sniuksta, who served as defense minister from 12 June 1934 until 2 November 1935, disliked the state of war, especially since his commandants were forced to dispose of political cases and punishments.

³⁵See Vyriausybes Zinios (Government News) (Kaunas: Ministru tarybos kanceliarija / Chancellory of the Cabinet), No. 450, 12 July 1934; Bulavas, p. 90; Lithuanian Christian Democratic Association, Arkivyskupas Mecislovas Reinys (Archbishop Mecislovas Reinys) (Chicago: L.C.D.A., 1977), p. 45; M. Maksimaitis, "Tautininku fasistine diktatura" ("Nationalist Fascist Dictatorship"), in Burzuazijos diktaturos Lietuvoje valstybiniai-teisiniai aspektai (State and Legal Aspects of the Bourgeois Dictatorship in Lithuania), ed. H. Miskinis, et al. (Vilnius: Lithuanian SSR Academy of Sciences, 1976), p. 84; M.K., p. 127.

³⁶Vyriausybes Zinios No. 242/1582; Bulavas, pp. 88-89.

³⁷Bulavas, p. 57.

Indeed he resigned over this matter after becoming embroiled in differences with the ministers of justice and interior.³⁸

General Stasys Rastikis, commander-in-chief 1935-1940, fought long and hard to end the permanent peacetime state of war. Supporters of the state of war said that it was needed to maintain order in the troubled Klaipeda region; it would be politically unfeasible to maintain it in that region if it were not enforced in Lithuania Major as well. Rastikis surmises that perhaps the political leadership preferred to have the military commandants punish citizens administratively, rather than judicially. This was more efficient and allowed politicians to keep their hands clean of distasteful political cases. Rastikis wished to release the commandants of functions which he felt should properly have been handled by the ministries of interior and justice. He wanted them to deal strictly with military matters, such as management, draft enforcement, mobilization, and preparedness. The state of war made the commandants unpopular figures, for punishments for political offenses were made in their name, though the cases were managed by the civil police. The military even had to carry out the death penalty for civilian offenders, though there were not many such instances. Rastikis saw this as inconsistent with the calling of a soldier, the principles of military honor, and moral development.³⁹

Under pressure from Germany, which threatened not to conclude a

³⁸Sliogeris, p. 129.

³⁹Rastikis, I, pp. 408-409.

new and broader trade pact, the state of war was recalled on 1 November 1938. As a result, the military no longer had to deal with political offenses and more civil liberties ensued. However, Germany would use this to agitate in Klaipeda.⁴⁰

Administrative punishment was the tool used by military commandants under the state of war. It circumvented regular judicial channels and allowed them to unilaterally punish civilians. Many cases that the commandants dealt with were rather mundane, including curfew violations, public drunkenness, and disorderly conduct.⁴¹ Even prior to the Smetona regime, paragraph eight of the Special State Defense Statutes allowed a military commandant to punish a person deemed dangerous to the public order or who had participated in anti-state activity. There were four types of punishment: 1) exile out of the district, 2) three months imprisonment or fine, 3) sentencing to a concentration/hard labor camp for any length of time (though the camps were administered by the justice ministry), 4) exile out of Lithuania itself. Any citizen could be punished by any of these methods for not obeying mandatory directives of the commandants.⁴²

⁴⁰Martynas Ansysas, Kova del Klaipedos: Atsiminimai 1927-1939 (The Battle for Klaipeda: Reminiscences 1927-1939), ed. M.G. Slavenas (Chicago: Lithuanian Cultural Society, 1978), pp. 352-353; Maksimaitis, "Tautininku fasistine diktatura," p. 82; Rastikis, I, p. 409.

⁴¹See Karpenka, "Komendaturos isteigimas ir jos veikimas" ("Commandery's Founding and Activities"), in Kauno karo komendatura 1919-1929 (Kaunas Military Commandery 1919-1929), ed. P. Jurgelevicius (Kaunas: Kaunas Municipal and District Commandery, 1930), p. 57 for the 1926-1928 Kaunas district statistics regarding these minor violations.

⁴²A. Berzelionis, Dimitravo sienos netyli: Dokumentine apybraiza (The Walls of Dimitrava are not Silent: A Documentary Sketch) (Vilnius:

The following table, Table 5.1, gives statistics with regard to the number of individuals serving administrative punishments on 1 January:

TABLE 5.1: ADMINISTRATIVE PUNISHMENTS
BEING SERVED ON 1 JANUARY 1928-1936

<u>1928</u>	<u>1929</u>	<u>1930</u>	<u>1931</u>	<u>1932</u>	<u>1933</u>	<u>1934</u>	<u>1935</u>	<u>1936</u>
38	45	67	54	80	109	89	67	129

Source: Compiled and cross-checked from Bulavas, p. 93, Centralinis Statistikos Biuras, Lietuvos statistikos metraštis, 1929-30, p. 147; 1931, p. 353; 1932, p. 271; 1933, p. 291; 1934, p. 300.

In the period 1927-1940, a total of 6,329 individuals received administrative punishments (administracine tvarka nubausti).⁴³

D. MILITARY TRIBUNALS

One area where the military intruded into a traditionally civilian sector was the judicial sphere. The military tribunal was

Mintis, 1968), p. 8; Bulavas, p. 53; Karpenka, p. 54; Vyriausybes Zinios No. 49.

⁴³V. Sinkevicius, "Lietuvos valstieciu dalyvavimas revoliuciniame ir antifasistiniame judejime 1927-1940 metais" (Lithuania's Peasant Participation in the Revolutionary and Anti-Fascist Movement, 1927-1940"), Istorija, 15, 2 (1975), 41. Statistics from the Kaunas district display an increase in administrative punishments issued by the local military commandant in 1927, the year following the coup. There were seventy-six sent to camps as opposed to fifty-three the previous year. Sixty-seven were exiled from the Kaunas district as opposed to eighteen in 1926. The year 1928, however, displayed dramatic decreases in both categories: twenty-five and twenty-eight, respectively. See Karpenka, p. 58.

often used to try civilians for both political and criminal offenses. By way of introduction into procedural questions, the following is offered:

According to the Military Court Statutes promulgated on March 27, 1919, and subsequent amendments thereto, a military court is formed in order to speedily deal with serious offenders whose guilt is already quite clear and does not call for prolonged investigation. The object of a military court is to punish the offender as quickly as possible and thereby put a stop to the further spread of similar offences. A military court is formed in places where the army is actively combating the enemy or where a state of war has been declared. The Commander-in-Chief authorizes a military court to be formed, and in his absence the Minister of National Defence. In special cases, the aforesaid persons may delegate the formation of a military court to lower commanders. A Military court is composed of an officer president, two members from among officers, and two from among the men able to read and write. Officers appointed to a military court must have served not less than two years in the regular army, and of the men one must be a non-commissioned officer. . . . A court, the confirmation of sentence, and its fulfilment (only where the death penalty is awarded) must last not longer than two days. The condemned person within two days may appeal to the central Government for pardon. Civilians may be brought before a military court for espionage, if they are caught on the spot and their guilt is perfectly clear. For robbery and murder, if the offender is caught on the spot or not far away, the death penalty may be awarded instead of penal servitude. For Bolshevism, anti-State agitation, and agitation in favour of the enemy, among the troops, inciting to active non-fulfilment of State laws, or opposition to the Government, overt action against State order, rising against the Government, formation of Bolshevistic organizations or other organizations hostile to the Government, if the offender is caught in flagrante delicto, whether he is a soldier or civilian, the punishment may include imprisonment of two years or more, up to the death penalty. Furthermore, the Commander-in-Chief or the Minister of National Defence has the right to bring before a military court and punish according to the laws in force during war time persons accused of other offences, if such should be deemed of sufficient gravity, or to protect the interests of the army, or for the sake of public order and tranquility of the State.⁴⁴

The fact that civilians could be tried by military tribunals is

⁴⁴Harrison, pp. 65-66.

neither a new nor surprising phenomenon. One need only reflect upon the American Civil War to see such activity. A state of war permits such judicial alteration. Thus the key phrase, "a military court is formed in places . . . where a state of war has been declared," is accentuated. The peacetime state of war provided the authority to bring civilians before military tribunals for the aforementioned violations.

During the wars of independence, military tribunals were an efficient tool utilized by military commandants to clean the country of looters and bandits. In all fairness, it must also be recalled that the state of war was in effect during the Christian Democratic regime of President Aleksandras Stulginskis from 1920 until 1926, whereupon it was cancelled by the short-lived Grinius-Slezevicius administration. Smetona returned this practice and efficiently used it to bolster his regime, take distasteful political cases out of the hands of the civilian leadership, and neutralize the opposition without encumbering civil procedural requirements. All that was needed was an agreement among the ministers of interior, defense, and justice to transfer a civil suit to a military tribunal. In the period 1919-1940, seventy-five percent of all political suits were tried before military tribunals -- 22.5% in military field courts (karo lauko teismai) and 52.5% in army courts (kariuomenes teismai).⁴⁵

⁴⁵Bulavas, p. 91; A. Bulota and G. Feigelsonas, "Burzuazijos teismines represijos pries revoliucinio ir antifasistinio judejimo dalyvius Lietuvoje 1919-1940 m." ("Bourgeoise Legal Repression Against Participants in the Revolutionary and Antifascist Movement in Lithuania 1919-1940"), in Lietuvos Komunistu Partijos istorijos klausimai (Historical Issues of the Communist Party of Lithuania), vol 6, ed. K. Navickas, et al. (Vilnius: Mintis, 1967), p. 200; Skipitis,

An example of military justice for political offenses occurred in 1930-1931. At the end of the summer of 1930, all seventy high school student circles (moksleiviu kuopos) of the Lithuanian Catholic Federation "Ateitis" were closed by the Smetona regime. The Lithuanian bishops then issued a pastoral letter condemning the action. The letter was confiscated by the Interior Ministry. A group of Catholic students belonging to "Ateitis" issued an appeal to the Catholic public urging it to heed the bishops' statements. The authors and disseminators of this appeal were placed under arrest and tried before a closed military tribunal on 12-13 May 1931. Two priests and six students were issued various punishments.⁴⁶

Nepriklausoma Lietuva, p. 186. For legal specifics see Bulavas, pp. 55-56; Mykolas Romer'is, Lietuvos konstitucines teises paskaitos (Lectures in Lithuanian Constitutional Law) (Kaunas: Law Faculty at the University of Vytautas the Great, 1937), I, pp. 386-389; Centralinis Statistikos Biuras / Central Statistical Bureau, Valstybes statistikos kalendorius (Government Statistical Almanac) (Kaunas: C.S.B.), 1937, p. 37. See also Juozas B. Laucka, "Keletas zvilgsniu i Lietuvos 1922 metu konstitucija: Jos kilme ir pagrindiniai principai" ("Several Looks at Lithuania's 1922 Constitution: Its Origin and Major Principles", Aidai, May-June 1985, pp. 133-147.

⁴⁶Lithuanian Christian Democratic Association, pp. 96-97. See Jonas Demereckis, Savanorio ir kontrazvalgybininko atsiminimai (Reminiscences of a Volunteer and Counterspy) (Chicago: Author, 1976), pp. 100-105 for an account of someone sentenced to five years hard labor for a non-political crime by a military tribunal; the sentence was later commuted. For other accounts see J. Lankutis, et al., eds., Atsiminimai apie Vytauta Montvila (Reminiscences About Vytautas Montvilas) (Vilnius: Vaga, 1966), pp. 292-296; Michalina Meskauskiene, Zvelgiu i tolius (Looking in the Distance) (Vilnius: Vaga, 1969), pp. 419-422; Stasys Rastikis, Lietuvos likimo keliais: Is mano uzrasu (On the Roads of Lithuania's Destiny: From My Notes), ed. Jonas Dainauskas (Chicago: Akademines skautijos leidykla / Academic Press, 1982), p. 256.

E. INTERNAL SECURITY

While the military police would ordinarily maintain order among the soldiers themselves, it was not unknown for them to assist the civil police if necessary. General Povilas Plechavicius, who was chief of staff following the coup, successfully urged Interior Minister Colonel Ignas Musteikis to order the civil police to work closely and routinely with the military commandants. There were other ties between the police and the military. Military officers assisted in the training and administration of the civil police. Police officers were often former soldiers and reservists.⁴⁷

While General Rastikis forbade the use of troops to restore order during the Suvalkai farmers unrest, there were other cases when troops were utilized. Colonel Konstantinas Zukas, Peasant Populist deputy to the Constituent Seimas and former defense minister, attended a small gathering commemorating the decennial of that Seimas on 15 May 1930. Upon exiting, Zukas saw many people and police outside. Six days later, Colonel Kazys Skucas, the commander of the second infantry division and of the Kaunas garrison, criticized Zukas for participating in an "outlawed, horrible demonstration." Skucas had been under orders to disband it, using truncheons if necessary. However, at the last minute, President Smetona decided to call the attack off.⁴⁸ The Kaunas

⁴⁷Apolinaras Bagdonas, ed., Lietuvos policija istatymu ir tvarkos tarnyboje (Lithuania's Police in the Service of Law and Order) (Chicago: Lithuanian Police Club "Krivule," 1974), pp. 40, 47, 62; Jonas Juodvalkis, Mano dienos: Atsiminimai (My Days: Reminiscences), ed. Bronius Kviklys (Chicago: Anatolijus Kairys, 1973), pp. 100-101; Jurgela and Jurkus, p. 51.

workers' strike of 18-20 June 1936 was patrolled by troops assisting the civil police.⁴⁹

One other police function carried out by the military under the guise of the state of war was the censorship of publication. Under a state of war, nothing could be published without the approval of the military censor. This, however, was no secret; it was a fact generally known among the citizenry. The verso of books would often have "Permitted by the Military Censor" ("Karo cenzuros leista") printed on it. While it was a rather liberal censorship, there were, of course, those individuals who attempted to circumvent it. Professor Kazys Pakstas was a geography professor who, during the period 1928-1931, lectured on geography every other week in Riga, Latvia. When in Latvia, he would correspond with friends in the US and dispatch various reports regarding the situation in Lithuania so as to avoid military censorship. Granted his information was not inflammatory or of an anti-state nature, but he nevertheless found it necessary and expedient to issue his reports by this indirect method.⁵⁰

General Stasys Rastikis disliked the use of military personnel

⁴⁸Konstantinas Zukas, Zvilgsnis i praeiti: Zmogaus ir kario atsiminimai. Medziaga istorikams (A Glance at the Past: A Person's and Soldier's Reminiscences. Material for Historians) (Chicago: Terra, 1959), pp. 444-446.

⁴⁹Maciuika, p. 61; J. Ziugzda, et al., eds., Lietuvos TSR istorija nuo 1917 iki 1940 (History of the Lithuanian SSR 1917-1940) (Vilnius: Mintis, 1965), III, 303.

⁵⁰Bulavas, pp. 49-50; Juozas Eretas, Kazys Pakstas: Tautinio sauklio odiseja 1893-1960 (Kazys Pakstas: Odyssey of a National Herald 1893-1960) (Rome: Lithuanian Catholic Academy of Sciences, 1970), p. 90.

for such police and internal security assignments. Indeed he had received a promise from Smetona that the military would not be used to maintain domestic order except in cases of extreme emergency. Smetona, however, appeared not always to hold true to his promise, which made Rastikis even more resentful. Rastikis was of the opinion that internal order is best guaranteed by a democratic regime, and best managed by competent civilian authorities whom the police answer to. In this way, the attention of the military is focused on matters of external defense.⁵¹

Nevertheless, the Internal Security Department worked closely with the military commandants and tribunals. Indeed internal security work was often executed by military men not under the direct authority of the defense ministry. One of the most famous of these was Lieutenant Colonel Steponas Rusteika. By training he was a lawyer, but had spent his life in the politico-military sector. From 1920 to 1930 he was the military commandant of the Telsiai district. In 1930-1931 he was the director of the Internal Security Department, being promoted to the post of minister of the interior which he held until 1935. For the last five years of the independence period he was the deputy mayor of Kaunas. Another was Colonel Ignas Musteikis who served as interior minister from 15 May 1928 until 30 November 1929. The US State Department wrote that he resembled a Czarist Russian governor-general in appearance and in the execution of his duties.⁵² Finally, it was Colonel Brunonas Stencilis

⁵¹Rastikis, I, p. 407.

⁵²Merkelis, p. 421.

who, as general secretary of the interior ministry, was charged with the dissolution of the Iron Wolf organization, as discussed in the previous chapter.⁵³

The old school ties that were developed among military men in different agencies were partially responsible for the Kubiliunas revolt in June 1934. It was rumored that the close ties between Rusteika and Defense Minister Colonel Balys Giedraitis led to officers being commandeered to spy and report on fellow officers. Kubiliunas opposed this, claiming that it would destroy obedience and discipline. When Giedraitis did not oppose the scheme, Kubiliunas was further moved to act against the regime.⁵⁴ Kubiliunas once ordered Colonel Kazys Musteikis, who at that time was in charge of administrative matters for the military, to visit the then-Director of Internal Security Jonas Statkus and inform him that any officer or NCO discovered to be an agent would be dishonorably discharged. Statkus replied that no such activity was occurring, though rumors and discontent within the officer corps over this matter continued. Nobody was ever discovered or discharged.⁵⁵

Spying on fellow soldiers and officers was not a new occurrence in the Lithuanian military. There was mention of a secret military police as early as 1922 spying on soldiers and reporting to

⁵³For photographs of Stencilis and Rusteika see Serafinas, pp. 281 and 282, respectively.

⁵⁴Merkelis, p. 425; Kazys Musteikis, Prisiminimu fragmentai (Fragments of Memories) (London: Nida, 1970), p. 14.

⁵⁵Musteikis, p. 14.

superiors.⁵⁶ Following the coup, though, intra-military surveillance expanded. The government no longer trusted the officer's oath and words of honor. Many officers could not trust each other and, consequently, there were a number of resignations precipitated by such activity. Ironically, some of the first to leave the military were those officers actively involved in the coup.⁵⁷

In his memoirs, General Rastikis reports that Defense Minister General Petras Sniuksta did not enjoy receiving reports from the Internal Security Department which recommended punishment of officers for alleged political offenses. Sniuksta would read all the reports, but often found no justification for disciplinary action. Such reports would often flow back and forth among the the ministers of defense, justice, and interior consuming valuable time. Sniuksta would occasionally send these reports to Smetona, who agreed with Sniuksta's opinion, but advised to settle the matter among his fellow ministers. Though Sniuksta was angry at such interference from another agency, Rastikis reports that Sniuksta himself was fearful of the Internal Security Department -- another example of fear and distrust in the officer corps caused by the intrusion of politics into the military.⁵⁸

⁵⁶Kazys Kemezys, Po pasauli besiblaskant: Atsiminimai (Scurrying About the World: Reminiscences) (Sydney, Australia: Author, n.d.), p. 69.

⁵⁷Rukas, p. 276.

⁵⁸Rastikis, I, pp. 478-488; Ivykiai ir zmones, p. 77.

CHAPTER VI

THE MILITARY AND SOCIETY

A. EDUCATION AND SOCIALIZATION

In his memoirs, General Stasys Rastikis writes that the matter of national defense was downgraded upon conclusion of the wars of independence. In addition to instability in the senior grades and posts, and the politicization of the military, the political leadership, in particular, and society, in general, did not demonstrate proper concern with military matters. However, he also faults the military, especially the senior officers, for not displaying initiative vis-a-vis politicians and the citizenry. They did not attract sufficient attention to military concerns and did relatively little to improve military capability. The divorce of society from the military resulted in an attitude that the military could see to its own needs. This perspective even led to reluctance regarding mandatory terms of service under conscription.

Rastikis charges defense ministers as a whole for not supporting the general staff with regard to military preparedness and improvement. Further, some chiefs of staff contented themselves with peacetime administration, without considering wartime necessities. The modern warfare which would surface during the Second World War was not on the minds of the civil or military leadership. Nostalgia over the wars of independence took precedence over modernization and

strengthening for the future.

Rastikis called for a general effort, a national partnership among the military, society, and politicians to popularize the idea of national defense. Rastikis, as will be discussed more fully in the following chapter, approached the president and government officials over this matter, but was met with inaction. Thus he chose to take the initiative himself in such activities as the army-society festivals which will be dealt with below. His relatively successful campaign entailed a great deal of speaking and writing directed at soldiers, national guardsmen, and youth. Since the military belongs to society and must serve as its watchdog, both spheres must be brought closer together.¹

One method for drawing the military closer to society and vice versa was conscription. A Lithuanian male was drafted at the age of twenty and served twelve months if an infantryman or eighteen months in any other branch. Clergymen and individuals in poor health were not called. Deferments were granted to those attending gymnasium or higher education until that education was completed. They were also granted if conscription caused hardship in the family or if the target individual was the only able-bodied son, brother, or grandson in the family.²

¹Stasys Rastikis, Kovose del Lietuvos: Kario atsiminimai (In the Battles for Lithuania: A Soldier's Reminiscences) (Los Angeles: Lietuviu dienos / Lithuanian Days, 1956), I, 387-391.

²Vyriausybes Zinios (Government News) (Kaunas: Ministru tarybos kanceliarija / Chancellory of the Cabinet), No. 538, 30 June 1936. See also Lietuvos Sauliu Sajunga / Lithuanian National Guard, Musu kalendorius 1930 metams (Our Almanac for 1930) (Kaunas: L.N.G., 1929), pp. 160-161; Vanda Tumenas, ed., Justinas Tumenas (Chicago: Author,

One of the purposes of conscription was basic non-military training. Most enlisted men only possessed a grade school education, if even that. To compensate for this, they were taught various trades, reading, writing, history, and geography. It was also suggested that they read widely, including literature, agriculture, physical education, and theology. Such programs were instituted after several incidents whereby it was discovered that the education of the men was sub-standard even in the most basic areas. For example, in January 1929 Chief of Staff Colonel Povilas Plechavicius visited a number of units and discovered that almost one-half of the enlisted men did not know the words of the Lithuanian National Anthem and did not comprehend its meaning.³

Education was not limited to the enlisted grades. The Senior Officer Courses taught law, political economics, and finance among other subjects. Officers also received special training at the University of Vytautas the Great in Kaunas in fields as diverse as engineering, law,

1959), p. 50.

³Petras Jurgela and Paulius Jurkus, Gen. Povilas Plechavicius (Brooklyn: Karys, 1978), pp. 57-58; J.M. Laurinaitis, ed., Kareivis: Lietuvos gynejas. Lietuvos kareivio knyga (Soldier: Lithuania's Defender. A Book for the Lithuanian Soldier) (Kaunas: Headquarters Staff Military Education Board, 1926), pp. 189-191; Owen J.C. Norem, Timeless Lithuania, 2nd ed. (Cleveland: Viltis, 1967), p. 145; Juozas Vaiceliunas, Tevynes sargyboje: Lietuvos karininko-lakuno atsiminimai 1932-1941 (Guarding the Motherland: Reminiscences of a Lithuanian Officer-Pilot 1932-1941) (Sudbury, Ont: Author, 1955), pp. 21-22, 29-31. For personal experiences in the military see Aleksandras Pakalnis, Gyvenimo pakelei (Life's Roadsides) (Chicago: Author, 1979), pp. 73-96; and his Mes griztame: Jauno zmogaus dienorastis (We Return: A Young Person's Diary) (Chicago: Stasys Jankus, 1976), pp. 7-27.

chemistry, medicine, and veterinary medicine. The Student Reserve Officers "Ramove" Fraternity at that university initiated the idea of establishing a chair of military studies (karinio auklejimo katedra). "Ramove" received support from the military and Major Vytautas Bulvicius was appointed lecturer on national security matters.⁴

Of course, these educational-socialization efforts were conscious and deliberate:

The strongest state educational institution is military service. The result of its influence on the masses is huge. It gives ideological foundations; civic culture develops an entire list of social virtues. The educational value of military service in the first place is determined by the army's elite, its corps of instructors. Those masses of recruits who each year march into the barracks have not only to protect the religious culture of their parents, but to also deepen it, so that a new type of citizen is formed: obedient, loyal to the oath, having a subtle feeling of honor. To achieve that purpose it is necessary to have within the army a stable, well prepared and developed educational elite that well comprehends its tasks. Lacking that, even the best recruit training will not bring the republic good, trustworthy, selfless and strongly staunch and resistant soldiers. Also very important is the link which must exist between the army and society, which must manifest itself in the first place in cooperation with those organizations which operate in the sphere of military preparedness and various forms of national defense. The army and those organizations which work with it must be

⁴Jodauga, "Kariuomenes mokymas" ("Military Education"), in Lietuva 1918-1938: Leidiny 20 metu Lietuvos nepriklausomybes sukakciai pamineti (Lithuania 1918-1938: Publication Commemorating the Twentieth Anniversary of Lithuania's Independence), ed. Vincas Kemezys (Kaunas: Spaudos fondas / Press Fund, 1938), p. 85; Jonas Karka, ed., Vytauto Didziojo universiteto Kaune Studentu atsargos karininku korporacija "Ramove" 1933-1983: Atsiminimai (Ramove Student Reserve Officers Fraternity at the University of Vytautas the Great, Kaunas 1933-1983: Reminiscences) (Toronto: Ramove, 1983), p. 104; Rastikis, I, p. 529; Antanas Smetona, Pasakyta parasyta: 1935-1940 (Spoken Written: 1935-1940), ed. Leonas Sabaliunas (Boston: Lithuanian Encyclopedia Press, 1974), II 187. See also Andrius Bulota, Limuzinas nr. 4: Dokumentine apysaka (Limousine No. 4: A Documentary Narrative) (Vilnius: Vaga, 1977), p. 11; Petras Lelis, Lietuvos keliu 1910-1973 metai (Lithuania's Path 1910-1973) (Toronto: n.p., 1973), p. 118.

free from any kind of destructive partisan political warfare. The door to partisan political activity in the army and those organizations must be well shut. The foundation of military service is sacrifice, resignation from one's "I," obedience and preparedness, so that the strength designated for the protection of the life of the state and freedom are not wasted for the purposes of narrow, egoistic groups.⁵

Other commentators make similar statements regarding the positive aspects of military service. In a theoretical pamphlet, Toliūsis writes that the idea of democracy penetrates the military. A soldier is not a blind follower, but an informed, enlightened citizen-soldier. He advocates short military training for all in order to create a citizen militia -- a hallmark of democracy. The best fighters know what they are fighting for; education bolsters morale and effectiveness. Ultimately, the military should be the nation under arms.⁶ Steponaitis wrote that discipline develops upon educating village boys and men.⁷ General Stasys Dirmantas, also a professor of geodesy, referred to the Lithuanian army as a school of citizen responsibility, love of the Motherland and of its history.⁸ General Stasys Rastikis writes of a

⁵Mykolas Krupavicius Visuomeniniai klausimai: Straipsniu rinkinys is jo palikimo (Social Questions: A Collection of Articles From His Legacy) (Chicago: Pope Leo XII Fund, 1983), pp. 477-478. Krupavicius' emphasis.

⁶Z. Toliūsis, Demokratija ir jos priesai arba demokrato katekizmas (Democracy and its Enemies or the Democrat's Catechism) (Kaunas: Varpas, 1926), pp. 23-24.

⁷Antanas Steponaitis, Tevyneje ir pasauly: Prisiminimai ir apybraizos (In the Motherland and the World: Remembrances and Sketches) (Brooklyn: Lithuanian Franciscan Fathers, 1962), p. 146.

⁸A. Reklaitis, "Lietuvos kariuomenei prisiminti: Pasikalbejimas su Ramoves pirm. gen. S. Dirmantu" ("Remembering Lithuania's Army: Conversation with Ramove President General Stasys Dirmantas"). Draugas, 21 November 1964, p. 4.

national military, where the military and society exist hand-in-hand. Only in such fashion can there be reciprocal trust, support, will, and strength. The type of nation which supports the military determines the type of military produced. If discontent exists within the nation, it will spill over into the military.⁹ A National Guard publication wrote how the military takes different kinds of people and gives them a single mind and goal, while teaching and equalizing them. It also writes that all disciplines and fields of study are necessary for the creation of a good military machine. The cultural element composed of well-rounded people, not just the "fist and stick," is needed.¹⁰

Lanskoronskis views peacetime military service as a huge national school, with reciprocal interplay among good citizens, the military, and democracy. Physical, intellectual, and spiritual qualities are honed and refined through service. Military development is a continuation of national development, comprising the family, school, church, and society. He sees armed force composed of three elements: 1) material forces (land, population, weapons, fortifications, factories, transportation); 2) intellectual forces (education, development, preparation, organization, leadership, training); and 3) spiritual forces (love of the Motherland, honor, duty, sacrifice). All of these are needed to fight and survive under conditions of extreme

⁹Rastikis, I, p. 448. Lithuania's history bears this out.

¹⁰Lietuvos Sauliu Sajunga / Lithuanian National Guard, Musu kalendorius 1932 metams (Our Almanac for 1932) (Kaunas: L.N.G., 1931), pp. 50-55.

stress. With the emergent complexity of fighting, material goods are less effective without intellectual and spriritual support.¹¹

The socializing value of military service has long been recognized in various contexts:

The army is perhaps the most effective such institution [of socialization] and has been consciously used in the new nations, especially in Africa, as a primary agent of adult socialization to national political culture.¹²

¹¹Lanskoronskis, "Tautos parengimas karui" ("Preparing the Nation for War"), in Kareivis: Lietuvos gynejas. Lietuvos kareivio knyga (Soldier: Lithuania's Defender. A Book for the Lithuanian Soldier), ed. J.M. Laurinaitis (Kaunas: Headquarters Staff Military Education Board, 1926), pp. 119-120, 123-124. See also Mykolas Birziska, Lietuviu tautos kelias i naujaji gyvenima: Galvojimai apie tauta savyje ir kaimynu tarpe (The Path of the Lithuanian Nation Toward a New Life: Thoughts Concerning the Nation Within and in the Midst of Neighbors) (Los Angeles: Lietuviu dienos / Lithuanian Days, 1952), I, 110; A. Dilys, Kareivis: Lietuvos gynejas. Lietuvos kareivio knyga (Soldier: Lithuania's Defender. A Book for the Lithuanian Soldier), ed. J.M. Laurinaitis (Kaunas: Headquarters Staff Military Education Board, 1926), pp. 138, 140; K. Jankunas, "Kariuomenes inasas i tautos gerbuvi" ("The Army's Contribution to the Nation's Well-Being"), Karys, January 1982, pp. 1-6; Jurgela and Jurkus, p. 63; "Kariuomene ir visuomene jubiliejiniiais metais" ("The Military and Society During the Jubilee Year"), Karys, 26 January 1939, pp. 107-108; Patriotizmas ir patriotinis tautos auklejinimas (Patriotism and National Patriotic Education) (Kaunas: Vilnius Liberation League, 1935), p. 7; Rastikis, I, pp. 379-380. For a poem romanticizing the link between citizen and soldier, see J. Palionis, "Kariai ir tauta" ("Soldiers and the Nation"), Karys, 23 September 1939, p. 1333. For arguments for and against a regular, standing army see Br. Nemickas, "Kariuomene -- Lietuvos valstybingumo ugdytoja" ("The Army -- Developer of Statehood"), Karys, February 1972, p. 40; Sova, "Kariuomenes organizacija ir komplektavimas" ("Military Organization and Recruitment"), in Lietuva 1918-1938: Leidinys 20 metu Lietuvos nepriklausomybes sukakcial pamineti (Lithuania: 1918-1938; Publication Commemorating the Twentieth Anniversary of Lithuania's Independence), ed. Vincas Kemezys (Kaunas: Spaudos fondas / Press Fund, 1938), p. 72; Vanda Daugirdaite-Sruogiene, Lietuvos Steigiamasis Seimas (The Lithuanian Constituent Assembly) (New York: Lithuanian National Foundation, 1975), pp. 201-202.

¹²James A. Bill and Robert L. Hardgrave, Jr., Comparative Politics: The Quest for Theory (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1981), p. 113.

The use of Cuban troops on a large scale in combat, training, and indoctrination missions in Angola, Mozambique, Ethiopia, and elsewhere in Africa is viewed not only as a way of exporting revolution, but also as a means for indoctrination and ideological hardening of young Cubans.¹³

In addition to its role as defender of the nation, the military was used to socialize the populace. Conscious efforts were made to draw the military and citizenry closer together for two reasons: 1) to popularize it, and 2) to show that the armed forces served all Lithuanians, not just one group, i.e. the Nationalists. . . . The military through regular units and auxiliary organizations sought to maintain close ties with society. This form of socialization raised morale, bolstered the stability of the regime, gave people a sense of closeness with the men defending their freedom in a hostile international environment, and raised nationalistic consciousness. Furthermore, citizens could directly participate in these institutions -- and in a sense become a part of the regime itself.¹⁴

Socialization vis-a-vis the military proceeded both directly and indirectly. One indirect method proceeded merely from the fact of citizenship and residence. Both officers and men frequently came from the same place: the Lithuanian village. It was here that the wars of independence were fought and won, with people providing food, clothing, and shelter to their fighting brothers. At first there were some officers and NCOs who were Russians or Germans -- and often could not even speak Lithuanian. Gradually, the government trained its own people and the military became "more Lithuanian." This was a boost to

¹³Gabriel A. Almond and G. Bingham Powell, Jr., "Political Socialization and Political Culture," in Comparative Politics Today: A World View, 3rd ed., eds. Almond and Powell (Boston: Little, Brown, 1984), p. 33.

¹⁴Robert A. Vitas, "Smetona and Socialization: Lithuania 1926-1940," unpublished paper, Department of Political Science, Loyola University of Chicago, 6 December 1983, pp. 20, 22.

patriotism and enthusiasm. Further, the officer corps had a broader base than during the era of czarist rule. Even a farmer's son could become an officer.¹⁵

A soldier, at least in the beginning, was lured to the military by more than just idealism and patriotism. In order to encourage volunteers to join the Lithuanian army during the wars of independence, the government promised land to those who served until demobilization. Volunteers and the families of soldiers who were killed in the line of duty received eight to twenty hectares (nineteen to forty-eight acres), one hundred logs, and grain. The volunteers were second in priority after the landless and small landholders who had land confiscated following the abolition of feudalism in czarist Russia in 1861.¹⁶ "Everyone, except volunteers, had to pay for the land within thirty-six years, beginning the ninth year after receiving the land."¹⁷ The government was true to its word and began land reform under Agriculture Minister Rev. Mykolas Krupavicius following the cessation of hostilities. As of 1 January 1935, volunteers had been granted 10,421

¹⁵Vaiceliunas, p. 18 was an example of this. Reklaitis, p. 4; Antanas Smetona, Pasakyta parasyta: 1927-1934 (Spoken Written: 1927-1934) (Kaunas: Pazanga, 1935), I, 27.

¹⁶Vladas Bublys, "Zemes reforma" ("Land Reform"), in Zemes ukio gamybine kooperacija nepriklausomoje Lietuvoje 1920-1940 (Cooperative Agricultural Production in Independent Lithuania 1920-1940), ed. Jonas Glemza (London: Nida, 1972), p. 27; Pranas Pauliukonis, "Mykolas Krupavicius and Lithuanian Land Reform," Lituanus, 16, 4 (Winter 1970), pp. 40-43; Adolfas Sapoka, ed. Lietuvos istorija (History of Lithuania), 3rd ed. (Fellbach-Wurttemberg, Germany: Patria, 1950), p. 572.

¹⁷Pauliukonis, p. 44.

plots of land consisting of 104,210 hectares (257,503 acres). This was out of a total of 467,460 hectares (1,155,094 acres) of land at the disposal of the government. Thus military men received almost twenty percent of all land granted.¹⁸

Following the coup, Smetona made tours of Lithuania in 1927 and 1928. Chief of Staff Colonel Plechavicius, occasionally accompanying the president, would urge people to present requests to Smetona. Smetona's military aide, Captain Aloyzas Valusis, would take these requests and then dispatch them to appropriate agencies for action. Smetona's and Plechavicius' travels were enormously successful, with them always being warmly greeted and often being carried on shoulders back to their automobiles.¹⁹

Society also had other contacts with the military and vice versa. Youth groups often visited military installations and were allowed to fire weapons and eat the soldiers' mess. It was not unusual for some visitors to an air base to even be taken up for a short flight in a fighter plane. Films of maneuvers and drills were shown in movie theaters. On the other hand, the military participated in major civil activities and served as honor guards at the funerals of prominent

¹⁸1 ha = 2.471 acres. R. Mackevicius, Dvidesimt metu 1918-1938 (Twenty Years 1918-1938) (Vilnius: n.p., 1938), p. 70. For further details see Ladislovas Natkevicius, Lietuvos kariuomene (The Lithuanian Army) (New York: Lithuanian Development Corporation, 1919), pp. 163-164; Konstantinas Zukas, Zvilgsnis i praeiti: Zmogus ir kario atsiminimai. Medziaga istorikams (A Glance at the Past: A Person's and Soldier's Reminiscences. Material for Historians) (Chicago: Terra, 1959), p. 434.

¹⁹Jurgela and Jurkus, pp. 58, 75-78.

Lithuanians, such as poet Rev. Jonas Maciulis-Maironis in June 1932. The winters would see troops chopping ice on the Nemunas River.²⁰

There were also official civil-military ties. One link was the Arms Fund (Ginklu Fondas). Several members of the "Remove" Fraternity began writing articles in 1935 urging people to collect money to buy weapons for the army; radio programs also promoted the idea. The military supported it, for the official budget could not support all the purchases the military leadership desired to make. On 15 June 1935 a number of organizations met and formed the Arms Fund and the Association to Support the Armed Forces (Ginkluotoms Krasto Pajegoms Remti Sajunga), which sought moral and material support for the military. By the end of 1939, it had 141 chapters with about seven thousand members. These organizations collected money and were able to purchase rifles, machine guns, and other material.²¹

The Lithuanian military also possessed ties to Lithuanians beyond the country's borders. In 1927 the Knights of Lithuania, based

²⁰Jurgela and Jurkus, pp. 52-53; Pakalniskis, Mes griztame, p. 13; Vaiceliunas, pp. 16, 112-117. Jorge I. Dominguez, "The Civic Soldier in Cuba," in Political-Military Systems: Comparative Perspectives, ed. Catherine McArdle Kelleher (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1974), p. 236 writes that Cuban troops are employed in the sugar harvest. Socialization was sometimes cleverly executed. One book contains an illustration of a Lithuanian knight with the Knight's Cross on his robe slaying a speared dragon, while a Lithuanian maiden looks on from behind a shield decorated with the insignia of the Grand Duke Gediminas. See A. Marcinkevicius, ed. Neuzmirsk Lietuvos (Do Not Forget Lithuania) (Kaunas: Lithuanian National Guard, 1927), p. 99.

²¹Karka, p. 31. For example of such accusations see Meldutis Laupinaitis, As kaltinu: Trilogija (I Accuse: Trilogy) (Sao Paulo, Brazil: Author, 1954), pp. 17-18.

in the US, established the Lithuanian Military Support Committee (Lietuvos Kariuomenes Remeju Komitetas). On 3 July 1927 two of its representatives, K. Vesulas and Rev. Juozas Simonaitis, presented a gold saber to Commander-in-Chief General Silvestras Zukauskas as a symbol of gratitude for the work of the Lithuanian army. It was subsequently placed on display at the War Museum.²²

Did close civil-military ties contribute to militaristic attitudes? The answer to this question is problematic. Certainly, there was no resemblance to the militarism prevalent in Nazi Germany. If militarism was a phenomenon, it did not exist for the sake of militarism per se. There were very real external dangers facing Lithuania, thus national security was very much on the minds of soldiers and civilians alike. Organizations were sometimes administered in military fashion, for example, the "Ramove" Fraternity, the Lithuanian Scouts Association, Young Lithuania (Jaunoji Lietuva), and the National Guard. Uniforms were worn, rank was designated, and administration was based on a top-down principle. The symbol of Lithuanian judges contained the judicial scales supported by a sword. This went to unusual extremes on occasion; not only did policemen wear decorations, but some postal workers did as well.²³

²²Jurgela and Jurkus, pp. 71-73. See also Jonas Matusas, Sauliu Sajungos istorija (History of the National Guard), 2nd ed. (Sydney, Australia: Mintis, 1966), pp. 191-192. For a photograph of the presentation ceremony see Ignas Sakalas, ed., Lietuvos vyciai Amerikoje (The Knights of Lithuania in America) (Chicago: Knights of Lithuania, 1963), p. 39.

²³For photographs see Apolinaras Bagdonas, ed., Lietuvos policija istatymu ir tvarkos tarnyboje (Lithuania's Police in the

Youth was not bypassed in the exercise of socialization and militarism. In 1928 a letter was dispatched to middle schools urging youth to join a junior version of the National Guard (Tautos Gvardija). Military training under this program was to occur in conjunction with the Senior Officer Courses. However, this plan was never implemented.²⁴ However, a more formalized plan was implemented beginning in 1930. In that year, training in shooting, drills, and military discipline and courtesy were begun in schools and conducted by active and reserve officers. The children involved started from the fourth class of progymnasium, the fifth class of gymnasium, or the first course of specialized schools. Beginning in 1936, grade school students were acquainted with the military, its purpose and history, along with civic training emphasizing patriotism. School libraries received issues of Karys (Warrior), which was the weekly magazine of enlisted personnel. Training was not limited to students. During the summer months, the Military Academy conducted military courses for female teachers and for male teachers who had never served in the military.²⁵

Service of Law and Order) (Chicago: Lithuanian Police Club "Krivule," 1974); Antanas Gintneris, "Pastininkai sauliu darbo baruose" ("Postal Workers in the Work of of the National Guard"), in Nuo krivules iki raketos: Lietuvos pastininku atsiminimai (From the Staff to the Rocket: Reminiscences of Lithuania's Postal Workers) (Chicago: Lithuanian Postal Workers Association, 1968); B. Masiulis and K. Avizonis "Teisejas" ("Judge"), Lietuviu enciklopedija (Lithuanian Encyclopedia), vol. 30, p. 495.

²⁴Audrius Bulota, Nuo baltojo zirgo iki svastikos (From the White Steed to the Swastika) (Vilnius: State Political and Scientific Press, 1962), p. 67.

²⁵Lietuvos Sauliu Sajunga / Lithuanian National Guard, Sauliu kalendorius 1939 metams (National Guard Almanac for 1939) (Kaunas:

The Lithuanian Scouts Association, mentioned above, was also a component of the movement of the military toward youth. As of 1928, the Lithuanian government officially protected and sponsored the scouting movement under the general oversight of the Ministry of Education. In addition to providing policy and administrative guidance, it also provided a portion of the organization's funding.²⁶ The organization's founder, Petras Jurgela, was a Lithuanian-American who emigrated to Lithuania, founded the scouting movement, and then became an army officer, for a time serving as Colonel Plechavicius' aide. General Teodoras Daukantas, one-time defense minister and later diplomat, was chairman of the Lithuanian Scouts Assistance Society. Colonel Mykolas Kalmantas, chief of the National Guard from 1925 until 1935, also served a term as chief scouter 1925-1927.²⁷ Colonel Juozas Saraukas, long-time chief of the army's press and education section, served as chief scouter from 1935 until 1940. The president, by law, was the chief of the scouts -- an analogy to his position as commander-in-chief of the armed forces. In 1932 President Smetona awarded Sir Robert Baden-Powell, founder of the world scouting movement, the Order of Grand Duke

L.N.G., 1938), pp. 103-104. For a photograph of military training at the Vindeikiai grade school in the Kretinga district see J. Ziugzda, et al., eds., Lietuvos TSR istorija nuo 1917 iki 1940 (History of the Lithuanian SSR 1917-1940) (Vilnius: Mintis, 1965), III, 234. One child is lying on the ground pretending to be either dead or wounded.

²⁶Antanas Banionis, ed., White Badge (Boston: Lithuanian Boy Scouts-in-Exile, n.d.), p. 11.

²⁷For photographs of Kalmantas and Daukantas see Marcinkevicius, pp. 117 and 121, respectively.

Gediminas (First Class) on the occasion of his seventy-fifth birthday.²⁸

One scouting publication associated scouting with knighthood and chivalry, in addition to public service. Scouts were to join the vanguard of national renaissance.²⁹ The military press often praised the scouts. Troops even built a pontoon bridge for the 1938 jamboree, and the army's commander-in-chief awarded prizes at scout shooting competitions organized by the "Ramove" Fraternity. The Collegiate Division of the Lithuanian Scouts Association had especially close ties to the military. A number of reserve officers belonged to the organization and donated money to the Arms Fund. In one instance, female collegiate scouts donated a rifle to the second infantry regiment whose commanding officer, Colonel Juozas Tumas, was a sponsor of their organization.³⁰

B. THE MILITARY AND THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

The status of the Roman Catholic Church in Lithuania was ambivalent during President Smetona's tenure. The Church was given a number of privileges in the military and society. However, while Lithuania was 85.5% Roman Catholic, it was also persecuted by the Nationalists, who feared the Church as its largest potential enemy.³¹

²⁸Lithuanian Boy Scouts Association, Lithuanian Scouting (Chicago: L.B.S.A., n.d.), pp. 16-17, 21, 23.

²⁹Stasys Salkauskis, Skautai ir pasauležiura (Scouts and Worldview), 3rd ed. (Chicago: Collegiate Division, Lithuanian Scouts Association, 1953), pp. 7, 11, 15-16, 26.

³⁰Karys apie akademikus skautus ("Karys on the Collegiate Scouts"), Musu vytis (Our Knight), no. 2 (1984), pp. 19-22.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the high school circles of the Catholic Federation "Ateitis" were closed, as well as the Christian Democratic Party. Anti-Catholic action even went to the extreme of expelling the papal nuncio to Lithuania in 1931. In 1929, Prime Minister Augustinas Voldemaras prohibited members of "Ateitis" from enrolling in the Military Academy. This restriction was lifted the following year subsequent to protests from the military leadership and Voldemaras' dismissal.³²

Perhaps part of the answer for the stormy relationship between the government and the Church may be found in the contrast between their philosophies. Professor Stasys Salkauskis, who was the head of "Ateitis" from 1927 until 1930, wrote that politics must be firmly based on a Christian foundation, dominated neither by aggressive nationalism nor cosmopolitan internationalism. He stated that party politics was good and necessary, but that it should not degenerate into extreme partisanship; all positive political and non-political groups are equal. Finally, world Christian peace and unity should be striven for.³³

The contrast with Smetona and his nationalistic philosophy is obvious, and Salkauskis experienced his share of difficulty with the

³¹Tomas Zemaitis (pseud.) Dvidesimt metu (Twenty Years) (Vilnius: duplicated samizdat, 1978), p. 55.

³²Vaiceliunas, pp. 58-59.

³³Stasys Salkauskis, Ateitininku ideologija (The Ideology of "Ateitis"), 2nd rev. ed. (Putnam, CT: M. Juras, 1954), pp. 125-129.

regime over issues such as academic freedom, and freedom of the press and organizational activity. The Nationalists were not about to sacrifice what they saw as the good of the nation to excessive Christianity, though Smetona, at least on the surface, was a devout Catholic. Neither were the Nationalists about to allow party politics free rein, nor acknowledge the equality of all groups. Finally, at this point in Lithuania's history, the Nationalists saw their road as more beneficial than trans-national action. Poland, after all, was also a Christian country.

Nevertheless, the Lithuanian army was always very much influenced by religious matters. On 11 May 1919, the first military oath was administered by the local bishop in the Kaunas Cathedral square; mass was also celebrated. The oath itself committed the soldiers, in the name of God, to serve faithfully in the army, to be faithful to the Constitution, and to obey their superiors.³⁴ The bishop was also involved in the first blessing of the Military Academy that same year.³⁵ Lithuanian soldiers would always take the oath of allegiance during the course of a mass, which included the kissing of a crucifix.³⁶

³⁴Natkevicius, pp. 59-70. For a photograph of the bishop, in full garb, speaking to the men from the steps of the cathedral, see p. 72.

³⁵See Natkevicius, p. 132 for a photograph.

³⁶Pakalniskis, Mes griztame, p. 19; Vaclovas Sliogeris, Antanas Smetona: Zmogus ir valstybininkas. Atsiminimai (Antanas Smetona: Person and Statesman. Reminiscences) (Sodus, MI: Juozas J. Bachunas, 1966), p. 120.

According to General Stasys Rastikis, the military leadership was very much concerned with the religious and moral development of the men. As he interprets the oath, the officers and men committed themselves to be responsible first to God, then to their military obligations. Religious feast days were observed and included mass. Parades, bivouacs, and maneuvers were accompanied by outdoor mass. Unit flags were blessed and contained religious illustrations and mottos. Crucifixes and religious illustrations hung in barracks and other facilities. Army Chaplain Canon Adolfas Sabaliauskas wrote Catholic Soldier (Karys Katalikas), a missal and prayerbook. It was published by the army's press and education section and went through at least five editions.³⁷ In his memoirs, Colonel Vaclovas Sliogeris adds that morning and evening inspections were accompanied by prayer, often hymns. Religious instruction was routine, and troops marched to church in ranks.³⁸

Article seven of the concordat between Kaunas and the Vatican, signed on 27 September 1927, stated that the Lithuanian army is provided with all privileges provided to armies of the Holy See as stipulated by Canon Law.³⁹ There were other ties between the two entities. Many

³⁷Stasys Rastikis, Lietuvos likimo keliais: Is mano uzrasu (On the Roads of Lithuania's Destiny: From My Notes), ed. Jonas Dainauskas (Chicago: Akademines skautijos leidykla / Academic Press, 1982), pp. 259-261.

³⁸Sliogeris, p. 120.

³⁹Konkordatas tarp Svventojo Sosto ir Lietuvos Valdžios (Concordat Between the Holy See and the Government of Lithuania (Chicago: Draugas, 1928), p. 4.

priests were members of the National Guard; one of them was the noted writer Rev. Juozas Tumas-Vaizgantas, who was the first editor of the Guard's periodical Trinitas (Bugle).⁴⁰

Whether or not the various religious-military ties had any effect on the men is difficult to answer. One former air force officer, while praising General Rastikis for his devotion, writes that many of the officers he encountered were not very religious, sending the men to church while themselves not entering.⁴¹ What is important in this context are the ties between the two entities in a country which was overwhelmingly Roman Catholic and where religious activists, both clergy and lay, had played such important roles in the nation's renaissance as well as during independence. Perhaps the government had problematic relations with the Church, but it was certainly not a secularist government and did not expect its military to be so either. The Church, which played an important role in politics and society, played an equally strong role in the military.

C. ARMY-SOCIETY FESTIVALS

When General Stasys Rastikis was appointed commander-in-chief in

⁴⁰Aleksandras Merkelis, Juozas Tumas Vaizgantas (Chicago: J. Karvelis, 1955), I, pp. 269-271. Antanas Rukas, ed., Mykolas Slezevicius (Chicago: Terra, 1954), p. 176 brings out an interesting detail. During the funeral mass for former Prime Minister Mykolas Slezevicius in 1939, Reserve General Vincas Grigaliunas-Glovackis assisted at the altar wearing a surplice over his uniform. Ironically, he was one of the officers who participated in the coup which ousted the Slezevicius government.

⁴¹Vaiceliunas, pp. 79-81.

1935, he sought to remedy what he discerned as a gap between the military and society, one which had developed after the 1926 coup. Some of the reasons for this were discussed in the previous chapter. His plan to close the gap was three-pronged: 1) a press campaign to popularize the military and inform the public of its activities, 2) a similar radio campaign, and 3) open events which would bring the military and society closer together.⁴² "Rastikis felt that such experiences were beneficial for all parties concerned. They raised morale within the ranks and brought civilian support; they helped engender the idea of a unified national front -- a sphere in which there could be no opposition."⁴³

Petras Indreika writes that the idea for the army-society festivals (kariuomenes ir visuomenes susiartinimo sventes) arose from the "Ramove" Fraternity. The military agreed and the president, along with the government, supported its planning. The first such festival occurred on 15 May 1935 with senior civil, military, and diplomatic officials participating. The festival commenced with mass in the church of the Kaunas garrison, which was followed by ceremonies honoring war dead at the War Museum. Speeches and parades closed out the festivities.⁴⁴ Such festivals in Kaunas and the provinces enabled the citizenry to visit military installations and facilities, and witness

⁴²Rastikis, I, p. 383.

⁴³Vitas, "Socialization and Smetona," p. 21.

⁴⁴Karka, pp. 41-42.

how their fighting men lived. They could ride cavalry horses, fire rifles and automatic weapons, fly in fighter planes, and sample the mess.⁴⁵

There were other occasions when the military came into contact with society. 16 February, Lithuanian Independence Day, and 23 November, the anniversary of the army's founding, were always celebrated with large military parades and ceremonies. Each year, units throughout the country celebrated their anniversaries and staged unit holidays, which included sporting and shooting events, and banquets. President Smetona took time to visit some of these holidays; such visits resulted in even larger ceremonies.⁴⁶ The first Lithuanian World Congress occurred in Kaunas in 1935, bringing Lithuanians from many countries into the capital. This was the occasion for a massive military and air display for the guests and residents of Kaunas.⁴⁷

According to one commentator, the officers of the Lithuanian army had become praetorians, guarding the security of the regime and keeping it isolated from the citizenry, despite official propaganda and "banal" patriotic speeches.⁴⁸ The army's and state's affairs had been

⁴⁵Rastikis, I, p. 385.

⁴⁶Sliogeris, pp. 62-63.

⁴⁷Rapolas Skipitis, Nepriklausoma Lietuva: Atsiminimai (Independent Lithuania: Reminiscences, (Chicago: Draugas, 1967), pp. 406-407. For accounts and photographs of public military displays see V. Augustinas, photographer, "Kariuomenes ir visuomenes diena Kaune 1938 m." ("Army-Society Festival in Kaunas 1938"), Karys, August-September 1958, p. 218; Gintneris, p. 168, Lelis, p. 125. For President Smetona's remarks at the army-society festival on 26 May 1935 see Smetona, II, pp. 171-172.

effectively maintained in the hands of one political group, the Nationalist Association, since the 1926 coup. This was formalized in the outlawing of opposition political parties in 1935. A substantial portion of society had thus fallen away from the government -- and the military which kept it in power. It is interesting that the initiative for the army-society festivals came not from official sources, but from the "Ramove" Fraternity. General Rastikis credits the festivals, as well as other public military displays, with providing moral support to the army and giving it a sturdier foundation upon which to carry out its tasks. From the other perspective, society was perhaps better able to understand and appreciate the military which, despite being composed of its own sons, brothers, and husbands, had become somewhat of an alienated mystery and gendarme.⁴⁹

D. THE MILITARY MEDIA

In a theoretical article, Zlabis writes of the close ties between the military and press during both war and peace. Information is reciprocally exchanged and subject to mutual feedback between the military and nation. Military information and civic education proceed by way of the press. The pen is a mighty weapon, as the power of propaganda has demonstrated time and time again.⁵⁰

⁴⁸Rukas, pp. 278, 280.

⁴⁹Rastikis, I, pp. 380, 383-384.

⁵⁰Juozas Zlabis, "Spauda ir karas" ("The Press and War"), in Pirmasis Lietuvos žurnalistu sąjungos metraštis (First Yearbook of the Lithuanian Journalists Association), eds. V. Kemežys and J. Paleckis (Kaunas: L.J.A., 1934), pp. 62-64.

These facts were not lost on the military leadership, especially General Rastikis. He saw to it that the press corps was invited to drills and maneuvers throughout the country, in addition to various ceremonies and commemorations, and the commissioning of new officers at the Military Academy. The press never refused such invitations and Rastikis reports that both government and opposition press were objective in their accounts. Rastikis, who viewed the press as a partner, held news conferences and related plans for the future. He himself contributed a great deal to the military press on the necessity of civil-military cooperation.⁵¹

Two examples of the importance of the pen to the military follow. Issue number thirty-nine (1928) of Trimitas (Bugle), the National Guard periodical, recounted maneuvers which occurred in Kedainiai, approximately twenty-five miles north of Kaunas, on 12-21 September 1928. The account emphasized good relations between the soldiers and people, especially the farmers, during the course of the maneuvers. It also wrote that the people were patriotic and proud of their soldiers.⁵² In 1939-1940, Captain Jurgis Polujanskas wrote articles and analyses regarding the course of the European theater of World War II for the Lietuvos aidas (Echo of Lithuania) newspaper, a Nationalist daily.⁵³

⁵¹Rastikis, I, p. 383.

⁵²Jurgela and Jurkus, p. 55.

⁵³Bronys Raila, Paguoda (Solace) (London: Nida, 1975), III, 74.

Radio was also viewed as a partner of the military. Stations never refused to broadcast news of a military nature, and Sundays and holidays saw half-hour segments devoted to the military. They included lectures, announcements, news, concerts by military orchestras and choirs, and plays which were written and acted by officers and soldiers of all grades. The themes of the plays were taken from the wars of independence and general military life. The thrust was always patriotism and the self-sacrifice of the soldier. All broadcasting was done by military men under the direction of the army's press and education section. The broadcasts were listened to by civilians and soldiers, who were provided with barracks radios and speakers.⁵⁴ "Humor was a component of military broadcasting; this in a constant effort to humanize the face of the army -- and indirectly that of the regime."⁵⁵ The National Guard had its own separate half-hour program. Other organizations would later begin their own broadcasts, often imitating the military's examples and formats.⁵⁶

E. THE ACTIVITY OF BRIGADIER GENERAL VLADAS NAGIUS-NAGEVICIUS

One example of the link between the military and society was perfectly embodied in Brigadier General Vladas Nagius-Nagevicius. His cultural and social activity, coupled with faithful military service for a lifetime, made him one of the most popular figures in the Lithuanian

⁵⁴Rastikis, I, pp. 383-384.

⁵⁵Vitas "Socialization and Smetona," p. 21.

⁵⁶Rastikis, I, p. 384.

military.

He was born in Kretinga, Lithuania on 17 June 1881 and was a graduate of the Institute of Archeology and the Military Academy of Medicine, both in St. Petersburg, Russia. As a student, he participated in the Lithuanian national movement in Russia and was once jailed for that activity. He served with the Russian fleet in the Baltic and Black seas from 1910 until 1917. After the declaration of Lithuania's independence on 16 February 1918, he volunteered for the Lithuanian army and was appointed head of the army medical corps. He would hold this position until 1940, making dramatic inroads into the health and treatment of military men.⁵⁷

Though Nagevicius was a personal friend of Smetona, with the president occasionally visiting his farm, he did not actively participate in the 1926 coup, and never either approved or justified it. Indeed, shortly before the coup, General Nagevicius proposed that President Kazys Grinius, a medical doctor, be elected an honorary member of the medical organization *Fraternitas Lithuanica*. In a speech several years after the coup, Nagevicius stated that it was a sad event, and the country must return to normality and democracy. Be that as it may, Nagevicius also often played the unpleasant role of intermediary and peacemaker. One such occasion was immediately following the coup, when

⁵⁷Jonas Puzinas, "Vladas Nagius-Nagevicius," Encyclopedia Lituanica, 1975, vol. 4, p. 11. See also Henrikas Brazaitis, "Gen. dr. Vladas Nagiu-Nageviciu prisimenant" ("Remembering General Doctor Vladas Nagius-Nagevicius"), Dirva, 4 October 1984, p. 9 for a treatment of Nagevicius' early life.

Nagevicius delivered a letter from Smetona to President Grinius, pleading that Grinius step down to avert a Polish invasion. Grinius returned the letter to Nagevicius without a response.⁵⁸ A similar role took place in March 1938, following the Lithuanian government's acceptance of a Polish ultimatum demanding the restoration of diplomatic relations. During a demonstration in Kaunas involving seven to eight thousand people, the participants assembled on the grounds of the War Museum, of which Nagevicius was founder and director. He spoke on behalf of the government, requesting people to calm down in the face of this very unpopular move by the Smetona regime.⁵⁹

On one occasion, Nagevicius was an intermediary not merely within Lithuania's borders, but beyond them as well. The Lithuanian government had a practice of sending emissaries to visit Lithuanian colonies abroad. In 1938, Nagevicius was chosen to visit South Africa. After a discouraging beginning, he was able to bring a number of Lithuanians together in that obscure colony. He brought a book and film about Lithuania to acquaint the people with their homeland. Indeed, that year, Lithuanian Independence Day was celebrated in Johannesburg. The fruit of the general's visit was the organization of

⁵⁸Balys Matulionis, ed., Generolo gydytojo Vlodo Nagiaus Nageviciaus gyvenimo ir darbu apzvalga (Review of the Life and Work of Physician General Vladas Nagius Nagevicius) (Putnam, CT: Veronika Nageviciene, 1962), pp. 44-45, 216-217; Sliogeris, pp. 62, 76, 78-79.

⁵⁹Kostas Navickas, The Struggle of the Lithuanian People for Statehood (Vilnius: Gintaras, 1971), p. 102. See also Robert A. Vitas, "The Polish-Lithuanian Crisis of 1938: Events Surrounding the Ultimatum," Lituanus 30, 2 (Summer 1984), 69.

the South African Lithuanian Society (Pietu Afrikos Lietuviu Draugija).⁶⁰

At home, Nagevicius maintained his farm, Zemaitkiemis, near Babtai and Vendziogala, north of Kaunas. Over time, this area had become gradually polonized, and Nagevicius was determined to return a Lithuanian spirit to the area. He began holding festivals there, including Lithuanian songs, folkdances, traditions, and games. Eventually, it became not uncommon for two thousand to attend. Under Nagevicius' leadership and by force of his example, the area around Zemaitkiemis was gradually brought back under Lithuanian spiritual influence. It was this farm which received an array of distinguished visitors, including President Smetona, Kaunas Archbishop Juozapas Skvireckas, government and military officials, foreign diplomats, and leading members of society.⁶¹

General Nagevicius, in addition to being the director of the War Museum and head of the army's medical service, had a wide range of social and cultural activities.⁶² He urged his medical Fraternitas Lithuanica to assist the army's medical service morally, materially, and in terms of talent. He also sought to assist the other arm of the military, the navy. This was an interest stemming from his days in the Russian fleet. In 1923 he founded and was the first president of the

⁶⁰Matulionis, pp. 41-43.

⁶¹Matulionis, pp. 67, 215-216; Sliogeris, p. 79.

⁶²The following information is taken from Matulionis, pp. 35, 40-41, 65-66, 236-250, 263-265, 275 ff.

Sailors Association (Jurininku Sajunga). This organization helped found a sailors training school and arranged scholarships to allow sailors to train abroad. In 1927, General Nagevicius requested Mrs. Celina Mosinskis to establish the Lithuanian Womens' National Naval Assistance Society (Lietuvos Moteru Tautiniam Laivynui Remti Draugija). Its purpose was to develop interest in sea power and its importance to the state, and to assist in the navy's establishment. The society raised funds through donations, balls, lotteries, and picnics. It later helped establish the Navy Fund (Karo Laivyno Fondas), another example of society being brought into the sphere of military funding, provisioning and assistance.

In his continuing effort to preserve and promote Lithuanian culture, he founded a women's committee to revive the wearing of the Lithuanian folk costume. He also urged women to join in cultural and social work, to maintain Lithuanian traditions, and not to surrender to foreign influence. A women's organization he helped found would later become the famous Birute Society.

Other activities included the establishment of the Lithuanian Beautification Society (Lietuval Pagrazinti Draugija) to preserve historical areas. He also established the Animal Protection Society (Gyvuliams Globoti Draugija) and headed it for many years. The society drafted rules for the handling of animals which were later adopted by the government and enforced by the police. He organized Finnish-Lithuanian, Estonian-Lithuanian, and Latvian-Lithuanian friendship associations to promote more solidarity within the Baltic. His academic

work included archeological digs, articles, and presentations at international conferences. In the military sphere, he founded the Kaunas Officers Club (Karininku Ramove) and served on the Central Board of the National Guard.

The activity in which Nagevicius took most pride, however, was his work with military invalids and their association with the War Museum. He founded a number of committees to assist invalids and military hospitals.⁶³ Military invalids worked at the Museum, which was considered a national shrine. They were guards, honor guards, assistants, and guides. They were distinguished by their special, dark uniforms. The invalids executed public ceremonies daily and special ones on holidays. Many spectators gathered for these events, which included the lowering of flags and the honoring of the unknown soldier in the evening. Important foreign guests were received at the Museum, which was also a focal point for all national festivals, parades, and ceremonies. Nagevicius, who founded and directed the museum until the loss of independence, is most famous for these activities.⁶⁴

⁶³See Matulionis, pp. 35, 40, 65. For a publication honoring invalids see J. Viliusis, Vycio zenklas 1918-1938 (Knight's Cross 1918-1938) (Kaunas: Association of Invalids of Lithuania's Wars of Independence, 1938). An advertisement for products produced by an invalid sewing shop appears in Centralinis Statistikos Biuras / Central Statistical Bureau, Visa Lietuva: informacine knyga (All Lithuania: Information Book) (Kaunas: Spaudos Fondas / Press Fund, 1925), p. 403.

⁶⁴E. J. Harrison, ed., Lithuania 1928 (London: Hazell, Watson & Viney, 1928), pp. 78-79; Merkelis, Antanas Smetona, pp. 351, 361; Petras Pleskevicius, Mes nesem laisve (We Carried Freedom), 2nd rev. ed. (n.p.: n.p., n.d.), pp. 165-171. For a detailed description and explanation of the Museum see Matulionis, pp. 81-167. Even though the War Museum is now the Communist State Museum, it is still a focus for Lithuanian nationalism. On 14 May 1972 Romas Kalanta, a Lithuanian student, burned

The Museum was closed after the Soviet occupation of June 1940. It was reopened and functioned in a limited capacity during the German occupation of 1941-1944. When the Soviets invaded and occupied again in 1944, Nagevicius and his wife fled to Austria and later emigrated to the US. He died in Willoughby, Ohio on 15 September 1954.⁶⁵

F. CONCLUSION

Following the 1926 coup, there was a discernible gap between the military and society, mainly due to the fact that the army was controlled by one political group, for which it was forced to act as gendarme. For quite some time there was no action to remedy this incongruity between the citizens and their soldiers. General Stasys Rastikis, commander-in-chief 1935-1940, was one of the few who undertook positive steps, often using standard techniques of political socialization. He was partially successful in these efforts. As the independence period continued, albeit for a short time, soldier and civilian did grow closer together -- a vital ingredient for stability and strength in any political system. It is to General Rastikis whom this study now turns.

himself to death there in protest of the continued Soviet occupation.

⁶⁵Puzinas, p. 12.

CHAPTER VII

PERSONA PRIMA IN MILITARY AFFAIRS: DIVISIONAL GENERAL STASYS RASTIKIS, COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF 1935-1940

A. PREFATORY REMARKS

Persona prima is the title bestowed upon Rastikis by Aleksandras Merkelis, President Smetona's biographer. According to Merkelis, Rastikis rose like a meteor at a time when the military's prestige was at an all-time low following the Kubiliunas revolt of June 1934. People within and without the military looked to him with great hope. In return, Rastikis wished to raise the military's prestige by enhancing his own personal authority and popularity.¹ During his tenure at the helm of Lithuania's armed forces, he would take dramatic steps to reorganize and modernize them, while raising the citizenry's trust in their fighting men.² For example, Rastikis' efforts at socialization, discussed in the previous chapter, were notable. His importance to Lithuania, both military and nation, was such that his influence is felt throughout this study, as his memoirs are mentioned numerous times.

Those memoirs were published in four volumes between 1956 and

¹Aleksandras Merkelis, Antanas Smetona: Jo visuomenine, kulturine ir politine veikla (Antanas Smetona: His Social, Cultural, and Political Activity) (New York: American Lithuanian National Association, 1964), pp. 447, 537-538.

²Vaclovas Sliogeris, Antanas Smetona: Zmogus ir valstybininkas. Atsiminimai (Antanas Smetona: Person and Statesman. Reminiscences) (Sodus, MI: Juozas J. Bachunas, 1966), p. 134.

1982. They encompass 2,800 pages. The Rastikis memoirs are necessary reading for any student of independent Lithuania's military. They also give insight into life and politics in general. In many cases, the information there is found nowhere else. Professor V. Stanley Vardys, chairman of political science at the University of Oklahoma at Norman characterizes the work as the most important and useful of all the memoirs written by leading citizens of independent Lithuania, for they chronicle the internal politics of the period 1935-1940. Rastikis, according to Vardys, is an expert writer and master of the pen, whose work is readable and explains the complex well. Facts are well-recorded and attention to detail is scrupulous. His analysis is many-faceted, viewing any given question from all sides. Rastikis realized his role in history and wrote in such fashion; he was not merely arrogant as critics claim.³

Rastikis was one of the few general officers in the Lithuanian military who possessed a broad perspective. He realized the implications of the military in politics and society. When others, both officers and civilians, were advocating a greater role for the military in the political power structure, he advocated a strong voice for the military, but with strict subordination to civil authority. In this sense, he was a Western military man. Though he was serving at military headquarters in Kaunas at the time of the 1926 coup, he was not involved

³V. Stanley Vardys, "Generolo Rastikio memuarai ir jo vaidmuo Lietuvos politikoje" ("General Rastikis' Memoirs and his Role in Lithuania's Politics"), Aidai (Echoes), no. 4, (April 1973), pp. 147-148.

and learned of it the following morning along with most residents of the capital. Different scholars rate Rastikis differently. Some say he had no political ambition; others write that he had a secret desire for supreme power, if only indirectly.

B. BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Stasys Rastikis was born 13 September 1896 in Kursenai. He completed gymnasium in 1914. The following year he volunteered for the Russian army and was promoted to NCO. He saw combat in several locations throughout the Russian Empire and Eastern Europe. Rastikis graduated from the Military Academy of Tiflis (Tbilisi) in 1917 and remained at the front in the Caucasus until war's end. He returned to Vilnius in Spring 1918 and registered to serve in the Lithuanian army, which was still in the planning stages. That same year he entered the Kaunas Catholic Seminary. The following year Rastikis volunteered for service in the Lithuanian army, which was then fighting the wars of independence against the Poles, Bolsheviks, and a German-Russian force under Colonel Bermond-Avalov. He was seriously injured in combat with the Bolsheviks, and was forced to lie on the battlefield under cover of darkness while his own troops and the enemy exchanged fire. Upon being taken prisoner, he was kept in various hospitals, later in the Tula concentration camp and Moscow prisons. He was returned to Lithuania during a prisoner exchange in April 1921. In 1923 he was transferred to headquarters and worked in military intelligence from 1926 until 1930. Rastikis graduated the University of Kaunas Faculty of Veterinary Medicine in 1929 and the Berlin General Staff Academy in 1932.

After serving as an infantry officer, Rastikis was appointed chief of staff in 1934, several months after the Kubiliunas revolt. At that time, this was the senior uniformed officer in the country; he held the position while still a lieutenant colonel. On 1 January 1935, he was appointed to the newly reconstituted post of commander-in-chief, the new senior uniformed position. Rastikis was promoted to the grade of brigadier general on 23 November 1937. In the five years he served as commander-in-chief, Rastikis reorganized and strengthened the army in terms of combat readiness, administration, education, discipline, and decentralized mobilization. He served as acting defense minister for eight months in 1938 in the Mironas cabinet.

While Rastikis ostensibly held to the principle of military neutrality vis-a-vis politics, Smetona suspected Rastikis of forming a rival power center. He was relieved from duties in January 1940, promoted to the grade of divisional general two weeks before becoming eligible, and discharged to the reserve on 23 April. However, on 7 June 1940 he was returned to active duty and appointed commander of the Senior Officer Courses. During the Soviet ultimatum one week later on 15 June, Rastikis was appointed prime minister in a desperate move by the government, but was not allowed by Moscow to execute these duties. He later fled to Germany. His wife was held in a Kaunas prison until the German liberation. His three daughters, ages eleven, four, and one, along with Rastikis' other relatives, were deported to Siberia. His one-year old daughter would die soon thereafter in exile.

When the Germans launched Operation Barbarossa against the

Soviet Union in June 1941, Lithuanians revolted and formed a provisional government, with Rastikis as defense minister. The Germans soon liquidated this government, but offered Rastikis various senior positions during the German occupation. He refused each time, choosing instead to work in the War Museum in Kaunas.

When the Red Army re-occupied Lithuania in 1944, Rastikis fled to Germany where he lived in displaced persons camps. Soviet Lithuanian emissaries continued to harass him there, urging him to return to Lithuania. They used letters from his daughters as bait; Rastikis refused. In the beginning of 1948, British occupation forces arrested a Lithuanian NKVD agent who had been sent to assassinate General Rastikis and another former Lithuanian army officer.

In 1949 Rastikis and his wife emigrated to the United States. He remained active in the Lithuanian community while working in a Los Angeles factory. In 1951-1952 he taught Russian at Syracuse University. He worked at the European headquarters of the Supreme Committee for the Liberation of Lithuania in 1952-1953. He was transferred to the Washington headquarters in 1954. From 1955 until 1968 he was instructor of foreign languages at the US Army Language School and the Defense Language Institute, Monterey, California. He also gave lectures on military-related topics to the officers and men.

General Rastikis was awarded military decorations by the governments of Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Finland, Poland, Sweden, France, and Great Britain.

Divisional General Stasys Rastikis died in Los Angeles on 2 May

1985 at the age of eighty-nine.

C. THE RASTIKIS PLAN FOR MILITARY ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM

Upon being appointed chief of staff in Autumn 1934, Rastikis immediately took steps to rationalize the administration of the senior military leadership -- and to enhance his own power as senior uniformed officer. Throughout the period of independence, the military leadership had been the most unstable of all government entities. In the twenty-two years of independence, there were as many defense ministers and chiefs of staff. That period also saw twelve separate terms as commander-in-chief, though one individual, General Silvestras Zukauskas, served four of them. Clarification is needed, though. Between 26 January 1928 and 1 January 1935 there was no commander-in-chief. The position of senior uniformed officer was held by the chief of staff who, in addition to administering the headquarters staff, was also in the chain of command.⁴

Rastikis also had to contend with ambiguity regarding the specific spheres of power of the "Big Three" in the military, that is

⁴Stasys Rastikis, Ivykiai ir žmonės: Is mano uzrasu (Events and Personalities: From My Notes), ed. Bronius Kviklys (Chicago: Akademines skautijos leidykla / Academic Press, 1972), pp. 15-16. Sova discounts the thesis of instability. He writes that for all practical purposes, the leadership of the army can be divided into three phases. From 1919 until 1929 General Silvestras Zukauskas, a hero of the wars of independence, in effect ran the army. Indeed, in addition to three previous short terms as commander-in-chief, he served in that post from 5 June 1923 until 26 January 1928. From 1929 until 1934, Chief of Staff General Petras Kubiliunas ran the army, and General Rastikis held the reins of military power for the last five years of independence. See Antanas Sova, "Del praeities ivykiu" ("About Past Events"), Dirva, 30 January 1974, p. 3.

the defense minister, commander-in-chief, and chief of staff. Occasionally they would overlap; other times a void existed. Clashes among these three, especially if one or more of them had a strong personality, would reverberate throughout the entire military. The defense minister would sometimes make a military-related decision without consulting either the commander-in-chief or the chief of staff. Further, the defense minister was often of a lower grade and not as competent in military matters as the other two officers. However, he was still the superior and had the greater responsibility and authority.⁵

In his first meeting with the State Defense Board (Valstybes Gynimo Taryba) Rastikis presented his reorganization and strengthening plan. In the first place, there were several proposals for rectifying certain problems of foreign affairs. Smetona responded by stating that right was on Lithuania's side and nothing could be done. Rastikis also proposed a military alliance with the other Baltic states of Latvia and Estonia. Smetona rejected this also, saying that Lithuania's two northern neighbors were too sympathetic to Poland.⁶

The second phase of the proposal dealt with military reorganization. The president as before, was commander-in-chief of all armed forces. He had the authority to order the army commander-in-chief to

⁵Merkelis, p. 423, Stasys Rastikis, Kovose del Lietuvos: Kario atsiminimai (In the Battles for Lithuania: A Soldier's Reminiscences) (Los Angeles: Lietuviu dienos / Lithuanian Days, 1956), I, 485-486, 489-490.

⁶Merkelis, p. 438.

commence military operations when war was declared or Lithuania's territory was invaded. The defense minister was head of the entire military establishment (visos kariuomenes virsininkas) and prepared the nation and army for war. His deputy was either the prime minister or another minister designated by the prime minister. The commander-in-chief answered to the defense minister. The army commander-in-chief possessed responsibility for insuring that the army was combat-ready.⁷

Two bodies were to advise on and decide military matters. The first was the Military Board (Karo Taryba), chaired by the defense minister and consisting of the commander-in-chief, the chief of staff, the chief quartermaster and, if required by the minister, one of the commanding generals of the army's three divisions. The State Defense Board, mentioned above, was chaired by the president and consisted of the prime minister, the ministers of defense, foreign affairs, finance, interior, the commander-in-chief, and the chief quartermaster.⁸ The organization of the Lithuanian military establishment is found in Figure 7.1.

The third and final phase of the Rastikis Plan dealt with military finance. In his seven year plan to strengthen and modernize the army, he requested annually for special expenditures (nepaprastom

⁷For a short overview of the organization of the military under the statute of 12 May 1919 see Ladislovas Natkevicius, Lietuvos kariuomene (The Lithuanian Army) (New York: Lithuanian Development Corporation, 1919), pp. 32, 36.

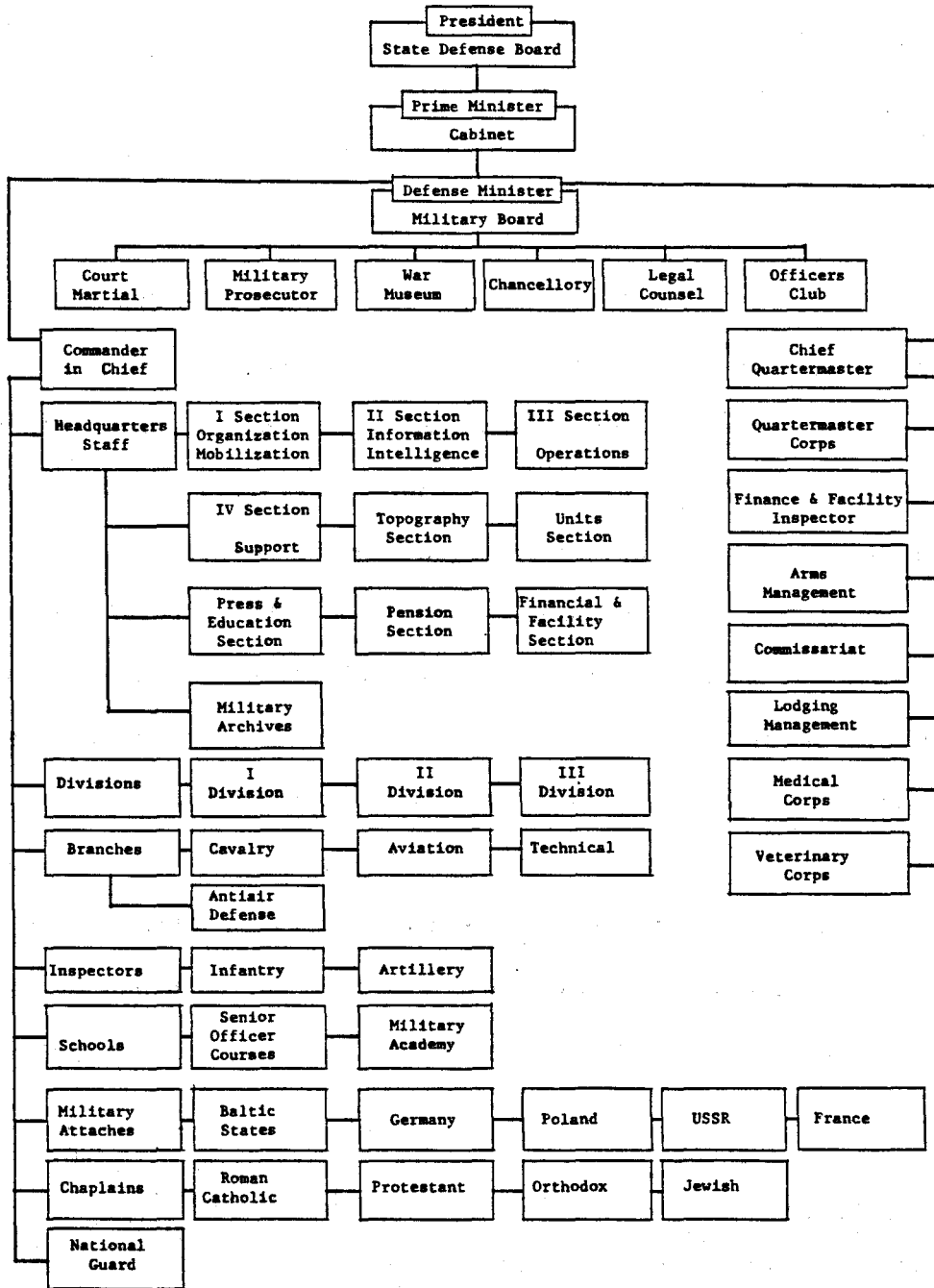
⁸Vyriausybes zinios (Government News) (Kaunas: Ministru tarybos kanceliarija / Chancellory of the Cabinet), no. 3259, 31 December 1934.

islaidom) 25 million litai, for a total of 175 million litai over and above the regular budget. The prime minister and finance minister, Juozas Tubelis, opposed such large increases in military spending on the grounds that they would be almost impossible for Lithuania's economy to bear, and that large foreign loans were undesirable. President Smetona attempted to work out a compromise between the two positions, but the clouds of war were approaching and he decided to approve Rastikis' request.⁹

The Rastikis Plan became operational on 1 January 1935. Lieutenant Colonel Rastikis was named commander-in-chief and Colonel Jonas Cernius was appointed chief of staff. Most officers were pleased with the 1935 reforms and felt that the young, energetic (thirty-eight years of age) commander-in-chief would be able to execute his plan to its fullest potential. It was adopted perhaps for two reasons: 1) superior argumentation on the part of its proponent, and 2) fear of another military uprising so soon after the Kubiliunas revolt, in which military spending had been a factor. One commentator, however, is critical of Rastikis' action, stating that he overstepped his authority, for budgetary matters are in the hands of the defense minister -- according to Rastikis' own plan. Nevertheless, during the course of the seven year plan -- which would only receive five years to operate -- military attaches in Kaunas observed that in terms of quality of education, arms, and men, Lithuania's army had surpassed those of the other Baltic

⁹Merkelis, pp. 438-439.

FIGURE 7.1: THE RASTIKIS PLAN:
MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT OF LITHUANIA
1 JANUARY 1935-15 JUNE 1940



Source: Translated from Stasys Rastikis, *Ivykiai ir žmonės*, p. 24.

states.¹⁰

The increased power which Rastikis received under the 1935 reforms proved to have more than just military consequences. Whether he wanted to or not -- scholars disagree as to his motives -- Rastikis was also placed in the middle of domestic political vicissitudes. This will now be discussed.

D. RASTIKIS AND POLITICS

Despite the fact that General Rastikis was married to President Smetona's niece, Elena Marija Smetonaite, the relations between the two men were mainly official. Very rarely did the Rastikises visit the First Family. More often they would visit socially with Marija Smetonaite Valusis, the president's daughter, and her husband, Major Aloyzas Valusis.¹¹ While Rastikis' relationship with the president was mainly professional, it should not be construed that he did not have strong political opinions. In his memoirs, he writes that he felt disdain for the excessive and sometimes unethical disputes which took place in domestic politics. He also disliked the peacetime state of war, which necessitated military censorship of the press and political intervention. As far as he was concerned, civil administration should

¹⁰Stasys Rastikis, "A.a. brigados generolas Jonas Cernius" ("The Late Brigadier General Jonas Cernius"), Lietuviu dienos (Lithuanian Days), September 1977, p. 5. For positive comments regarding the plan see Sliogeris, pp. 127, 133. For a critique see Jonas Augustaitis, Vardys ir Sova apie Rastikio atsiminimus (Vardys and Sova on Rastikis' Memoirs) (Chicago: Author: 1975), p. 10.

¹¹Sliogeris, p. 144.

not be in the hands of the military and political matters must be dealt with by the defense minister. The top military leadership should become involved only to the extent of coordination, that is, to maintain contact with leaders of all political parties and assure that they are attending to military-related matters.¹²

Rastikis became unpopular, especially among the Nationalists, when he took steps to de-politicize the military. For example, some elements referred to Rastikis as a revolutionary when he informed the president and defense minister that he would no longer allow the military to carry out civilian death sentences. He also wished to deemphasize the army's police function. During the Suvalkai farmers unrest in 1934, Rastikis was on vacation in Palanga on the Baltic. The interior minister, through the prime minister's office, requested military assistance in restoring order. The defense minister agreed to send several cavalry units to the Suvalkai region. Rastikis, however, discovered this and took swift action to countermand the orders. In the end, the army and farmers never clashed.¹³

While Rastikis advocated a strict separation between the political and military realms, and obedience to civil superiors, he also urged respect from politicians toward the military. He warned that the military must not be injected into politics. Further, civil superiors must be vigilant that the military not overstep its bounds. Rastikis

¹²Rastikis, I, p. 394. Cf. chapter 2 of this study for a discussion of the military profession's disdain for politics.

¹³Rastikis, I, pp. 407-409.

realized that a number of officers had been transferred to other ministries, sometimes for political duties, while remaining on active duty. Upon assuming his new duties, he informed them that they must either return to regular military service or retire to the reserve prior to continuing political activity. Many disliked this ultimatum and opted to join the reserve.¹⁴

Rastikis writes that the general public perceived him as a member of the government. He responds by saying that he was not, and did not attend cabinet meetings unless ordered by the defense minister to discuss military-related matters. Rastikis was not even of vice-ministerial rank; when the post of defense minister was vacant, the portfolio was assumed by the prime minister or another minister. When the Constitution of 1938 was being drafted by the Seimas, there was a suggestion that the commander-in-chief be designated a formal member of the cabinet with the right to attend meetings. Rastikis writes that he urged this provision not to be adopted, for it would detract from his military duties, cause him to be responsible for government actions, and pull him too far into the political sphere; the provision was not adopted. Rastikis participated only in sub-cabinet councils.¹⁵ Indeed his advice in such settings was often decisive. During the Polish ultimatum of 1938, for example, Rastikis' argumentation to accept the demand to restore diplomatic relations with Warsaw carried the day.¹⁶

¹⁴Rastikis, I, pp. 393, 410. He did not place political restrictions on reserve officers. See Rastikis, I, p. 396.

¹⁵Rastikis, I, pp. 489, 490.

Rastikis' determination to keep political forces out of the military evoked the wrath of the ruling Nationalist Association. In the first place, he was not pleased that the Seimas convened in 1936 was composed only of Nationalists. Further, he wished to eliminate political patronage, and the political basis for promotion and advancement in the army. For example, civilian district officials wished to control entry into the Military Academy. They wanted only those they approved of to gain entry. Rastikis ordered the only criterion for entry to be a competitive examination, with personal and political considerations omitted. Even innocent encounters with non-political groups could immerse him in difficulties. For example, if Rastikis received delegates from a Catholic organization, it could be construed as a manifestation of sympathy toward the Christian Democrats. His devout Catholic practice was also not politically beneficial.¹⁷

Aleksandras Merkelis, President Smetona's biographer, writes that General Rastikis perceived himself as untouchable, that is, he should be above criticism. He, along with another commentator, concludes that in twice refusing an offer to become prime minister, it is evident that Rastikis sought to maintain his power -- the real power based on the military -- by managing affairs from behind the scenes, without the responsibility and instability of the prime minister's

¹⁶See Robert A. Vitas, "The Polish-Lithuanian Crisis of 1938: Events Surrounding the Ultimatum," Lituanus, 30, 2 (Summer 1984), 66-67.

¹⁷Rastikis, I, pp. 409-410, 451-452, 495-496, 500.

post.¹⁸ One interesting indication supporting this line of thought is a photograph which appears in one book published while Rastikis served concurrently as acting defense minister for eight months in 1938. Under the photograph, the title of commander-in-chief precedes that of acting defense minister.¹⁹ One analyst interprets Rastikis' actions as indicative of simple fear; he was afraid to be a civil political leader with the position's accompanying vicissitudes.²⁰

One contemporary example of the political sphere being forsaken for the military may be found in Egypt. After Egyptian President Anwar Sadat was assassinated in 1981, Vice President Hosni Mubarak assumed interim power while waiting for new presidential elections. During that interim, however, Mubarak did not refer to himself as vice president or acting president. He did not assume a civil title, but instead declared himself commander-in-chief of the armed forces. Perhaps, Mubarak, as Rastikis, knew where the real power of his country was based.

At first, Smetona approved of Rastikis' increase of authority over the military. He felt this would be beneficial for military discipline and, perhaps, inject a note of stability into that troubled area. Indeed when initial differences arose between General Rastikis and the Nationalist Association, Smetona supported Rastikis, despite the

¹⁸Augustaitis p. 11; Merkelis pp. 544, 565.

¹⁹See photograph in J. Viliusis, Vycio zenklas 1918-1938 (Knight's Cross 1918-1938) (Kaunas: Association of Invalids of Lithuania's Wars of Independence, 1938), p. 7.

²⁰Conversation with Dr. Thomas Remeikis, head of political science at Calumet College, Indiana, August 1984.

criticism this evoked from his own political faction. Nevertheless, after some time, Smetona became worried that Rastikis may fall into the trap of partisan politics -- on the side of the Christian Democrats -- if he attempted to become persona prima in society, as he was in the military. In the minds of many in the regime, Rastikis had become a tool, albeit unwittingly, of the Christian Democrats. Thus during official reports, if Rastikis brought up non-military matters with the president, Smetona would politely inform him that he did not care to discuss them.²¹

Evidently, Smetona soon thought that Rastikis was searching for excessive popularity, influence, and authority in the non-military sphere. Sliogeris, another biographer of the president and a one-time military aide, writes that Rastikis would occasionally define his jurisdiction rather broadly. Merkelis asserts that Rastikis admired the commander-in-chief of the Estonian army, General Johan Laidoner, whom he met during a visit to commemorate Estonia's independence day on 24 February 1939. Laidoner was a greater figure than President Konstantin Pats. Merkelis is of the opinion that Rastikis desired similar status in Lithuania.²²

As far as Smetona was concerned, his quiet war with Rastikis for primacy began on 1 October 1936 when Secret Defense Ministry Section II

²¹Merkelis, pp. 539-540.

²²Merkelis, pp. 542-543, Kazys Musteikis, Prisiminimu fragmentai (Fragments of Memories) (London: Nida, 1970), pp. 74, 83; Sliogeris p. 130.

Memorandum Number 3760 was transmitted to the president. In it, Rastikis wrote that some communist-influenced reservists, while on active duty, would be disruptive and insubordinate. He suggested the following remedies: 1) utilize all patriotic organizations to form a united front in the fight against communism, 2) educate the masses, 3) utilize more propaganda, 4) control the press and the importation of Soviet films (Sovkinas), 5) government officials should take courses in ideology and give a loyalty oath, 6) only loyal and trustworthy Lithuanians should be hired for government service, 7) transgressors should be sent to labor camps, not the standard administrative punishments of exile or the guardhouse. While sensible observations and suggestions, Smetona did not like the fact that such political material was emanating from military headquarters. Indeed he interpreted these not as suggestions, but as directives. However, Smetona decided not to have a conflict with the military or change leadership at this juncture, instead opting to maneuver carefully with Rastikis until the appropriate and secure time arrived to remove him.²³

As the independence period neared its end, Rastikis became increasingly involved in political matters. This was especially true in events surrounding the government of Brigadier General Jonas Cernius, which will be discussed at more length in the following chapter. Cernius was appointed prime minister on 30 March 1939 after the German ultimatum, in which Lithuania was forced to cede the Klaipeda Territory,

²³Augustaitis, p. 13; Merkelis pp. 540-541.

was accepted. Rastikis actively urged Smetona to place members of the opposition in the new cabinet. Smetona, though skeptical, agreed. The evening the Cernius government was installed, Rastikis spoke over radio to calm the people after such a traumatic international humiliation. He informed the citizenry that the president had agreed to form a new government based upon a broader political foundation. Rastikis would receive many congratulatory letters and telegrams for this action, since people were becoming disenchanted with the one-party authoritarian regime.²⁴

In November of that year, the Cernius cabinet was weakened by a key resignation. Rastikis was politically active during this cabinet crisis also. Smetona, who had not been pleased with the behavior of several opposition ministers, was of the opinion that the Christian Democrats and Peasant Populists would not want to join a post-Cernius government. The president was irritated by Rastikis' declaration that the opposition must be included; he perceived this almost as a threat. Nevertheless, Smetona gave Rastikis permission to contact the opposition regarding their participation. Consent was secured and the cabinet of Antanas Merkys, the last government of independent Lithuania, was formed.²⁵

²⁴Augustaitis, p. 4.

²⁵Merkelis, pp. 540, 561-562; Rastikis, I, pp. 634-636. It must be noted that the last two cabinets of independent Lithuania were not officially coalition governments, since the opposition had been technically outlawed in 1935. However, it had continued to be active, albeit without the fruits of political power, until the Cernius cabinet.

How does Rastikis himself respond to charges of political interference? He writes that he respects President Smetona, though his assessment must be realistic and not tinged with any cult of personality. As far as Rastikis is concerned, he did not participate in any political adventurism. The charges that he desired political power and the decrease of presidential authority are false. It was his duty to popularize the military per se, not its leadership. However, in order to accomplish this, it was necessary for him to emerge as a strong and visible individual.²⁶

He did not expect all to agree with him. At the same time, though, he did not wish youth to develop into unthinking individuals. He wanted them to be critical in their analyses of all topics and come to their own conclusions. He also notes that he was forced to do this due to a general lack of concern with military matters. Thus the criticism of "too much talking" was unwarranted.²⁷

Rastikis wrote that senior military officials would be lax in their duties if they dealt only with military education and maintenance. In a blatant entrance into the civil realm, he states that, within the bounds of the national defense effort, the military must indirectly manage all agencies dealing even remotely with national security. This is the politico-military connection, though he writes that he recommended non-military action only when it was for the sake of

²⁶Rastikis, I, pp. 385-386; Rastikis, Ivykiai ir zmones, pp. 26-27.

²⁷Rastikis, I, p. 391.

preserving military morale and effectiveness.²⁸ Be that as it may, the perception that Rastikis was too political, especially in the wrong camp, eventually led to his demise. This will now be addressed.

E. THE FALL OF GENERAL RASTIKIS

Until mid-1938, President Smetona appeared willing to honor General Rastikis' opinion. However, by autumn of that year, Smetona began expressing dissatisfaction with what he perceived as the politicization of the commander-in-chief. The Nationalists' dissatisfaction had emerged even earlier. By the end of 1937, influential party members would go speak with Smetona and Prime Minister Juozas Tubelis regarding Rastikis, though the latter were unwilling to take action. Rastikis was suspected to be an opposition leader. This was compounded by the fact that Rastikis never had any ties to the ruling party, even informally. His popularity among the citizenry was viewed as dangerous. Rastikis' policy of dealing with all groups was made even more distasteful to the ruling elite when the opposition would take the initiative in capitalizing on the general's popularity.²⁹

The troubled relationship between Rastikis and the Nationalists

²⁸Rastikis, I, p. 395; Julius P. Slavenas, "General Stasys Rastikis as Commander-in-Chief," paper presented at the Sixth Conference on Baltic Studies sponsored by the Association for the Advancement of Baltic Studies at the University of Toronto, 11-13 May 1978, quoted in Rastikis, Lietuvos likimo kelias: Is mano uzrasu (On the Roads of Lithuania's Destiny: From My Notes), ed. Jonas Dainauskas (Chicago: Akademines skautijos leidykla / Academic Press, 1982), p. 451; Vardys, p. 150.

²⁹Rastikis, I, p. 495; Sliogeris pp. 142-143, 171.

began right at the beginning of his tenure. It had become accepted practice for the military leadership to deal only with the ruling party, not with any other political groups. This, perhaps, was natural, since one party had ruled single-handedly for an extended period of time. Rastikis stated that the military belonged to all groups; therefore, it should have relations with all of them. The Nationalists did not approve of such a posture. They understandably saw the position of commander-in-chief as an important foundation of the regime. In turn, the individual who occupies that post must not deal with those opposed to that regime. At first, Smetona supported Rastikis. For example, when Rastikis was appointed chief of staff in 1934, the Nationalists invited him to report to them on military matters. Rastikis refused, stating that then he would have to do the same for other groups; he would report only to his civilian superiors. Despite the pressure from his party, the president stood by the commander-in-chief.³⁰

The predisposing factor in Rastikis' downfall was his active political stance during the events surrounding the Cernius government. The general's demands that the opposition be included in that and the Merkys government were to prove fatal in the end. Antanas Merkys, appointed prime minister in November 1939, sought to bring Rastikis down; he had Smetona's approval.³¹

³⁰Rastikis, I, pp. 493-495.

³¹Juozas Jakstas, "Tautos pazangos partijos-Lietuviu tautininku sajungos istorijos bruožai 1916-1940" ("An Historical Sketch of the National Progress Party-Lithuanian Nationalist Association 1916-1940"), in Tautines minties kelias: Lietuviu tautininkijos istoriniai bruožai (Path of National Thought: Historical Sketch of Lithuanian Nationalism)

The precipitating factor was an article Rastikis authored for the December 1939 issue of Kardas (Saber), the officers' periodical. In it were political suggestions, including the necessity of having good relations with Moscow. There was also a statement that the commander-in-chief earned less money than a mayor. This was an indirect slap at Prime Minister Merkys, former mayor of Kaunas. Interior Minister General Kazys Skucas ordered the issue confiscated prior to distribution. This was a blow to Rastikis' prestige, who sought to restore it by way of several points: 1) the president must publicly declare satisfaction with the commander-in-chief's work. The commander-in-chief would then state that he operates according to the president's directives, and that no difference of opinion exists regarding affairs of state; 2) the Seimas, without alteration, was to approve Rastikis' proposal to amend the structure of the military leadership;³² 3) the prime minister was to utilize all available means to assure that General Rastikis' name not be used in a derogatory sense in streets and public places; 4) Colonel Skucas was to publicly apologize for the confiscation; 5) the commander-in-chief's budget proposals were not to be cut.³³

Eds. Jonas Puzinas and Jonas Pranas Palukaitis (Chicago: American Lithuanian National Association, 1979), pp. 151-152; Slavenas quoted in Rastikis, Lietuvos likimo kelias, p. 455.

³²The proposal was as follows: 1) the commander-in-chief is the head of the entire military establishment and participates in the cabinet with a vote, 2) the defense minister merely maintains the military. See Musteikis, pp. 70-72. According to Rastikis, he never wanted to be in the cabinet. See above.

³³Musteikis, pp. 76-77.

President Smetona, who had disapproved of the article as military intervention into the political realm, stated that he had always carried point one out. As for point two, the matter was in the hands of the Seimas Constitutional Commission. With regard to the third point, Merkys stated that he could not control people's conversations. The solution was for Rastikis to tone his ego down. In response to the fourth point, Skucas refused to apologize. The fifth point was deemed unacceptable. Rastikis was rebuffed in a meeting consisting of him, the president, Merkys, and Defense Minister General Kazys Musteikis. Rastikis, after being offered a raise in salary, meekly asked to be discharged from the regular army.³⁴

This was a far different manifestation by Rastikis from his stance before the fateful meeting. Between the points and his final rebuff, he staged yet another attempt to maintain his prestige intact. After issuing a request to the defense minister to be relieved as commander-in-chief, he stated, through Rev. Aleksandras Grigaitis, that he would return only if invited by the president as an indispensable official. However, since Defense Minister Musteikis had not relieved Rastikis, no invitation to return was necessary. Smetona, further, informed Grigaitis that no person was indispensable. Finally, he had asked Rastikis to stay on as commander-in-chief, but the general had refused.³⁵

³⁴Musteikis, pp. 77-80.

³⁵Musteikis, pp. 75-76.

Rastikis was temporarily discharged to the reserve, given a three month vacation, and raised to the grade of divisional general two weeks prior to becoming eligible in January 1940. Divisional General Vincas Vitkauskas, the commander of the first infantry division, was appointed temporary commander-in-chief. However, after Rastikis' vacation, Smetona decided to keep Vitkauskas permanently and advised Rastikis to choose some other post in the regular army. Instead, on 23 April 1940, Rastikis requested to be permanently discharged to the reserve; the request was granted. However, because of growing anxiety emanating from both the military and society over Rastikis' case, he was returned to active duty and appointed commander of the Senior Officer Courses on 7 June 1940 — without the authority to issue orders to line units.³⁶

Just one week after being returned to active duty, during the Soviet ultimatum, Rastikis would be asked to form a new government as prime minister. As the following chapter demonstrates, this was not to be.

F. CONCLUSION

Divisional General Stasys Rastikis remains a controversial figure to this day. Politically and psychologically his position in the

³⁶Augustaitis p. 6; Merkelis, pp. 565-567; Musteikis, pp. 80-81. During Rastikis' "vacation," he was secretly approached by an individual who claimed that a group was prepared to stage a show of force. This to pave the way for Rastikis' return to both military and political power. Rastikis refused and asked the individual not to execute the plans. See Rastikis, I, pp. 694-695.

schema of Lithuanian civil-military relations is problematic. Perhaps all that can be said with any certainty, other than historical facts, is that he was undoubtedly persona prima in military affairs, and approached such stature in society at large. His popularity as a patriot and professional was great among soldier and civilian alike. Indeed his reputation eclipsed that of most civil officials, including the defense ministers he nominally reported to.

Rastikis' goal was to increase the military's prestige by increasing his own stature, that is, to make himself popular so that the military, in particular, and national security issues, in general, would become popular and emerge to the forefront of domestic affairs. Rastikis was closely tied to the political realm, though more as a statesman, and not as a partisan politician. He chose to deal with all patriotic entities, not reserving a monopoly on virtue only to the Nationalist Association.

Who was more powerful, Rastikis or Smetona? Objectively, Rastikis possessed the greater potential power, for the soldiers and tanks were his. This strength could have been utilized for political adventurism. Granted, he was certainly a proud individual, often referring to himself in his memoirs in the third person. This perhaps can be justified, though, when taking into account his ascent at an early age and the phenomenal progress of the Lithuanian military under his tutelage. Of course, he made demands and interfered in politics. Yet, he remained patriotic, professional, and democratic. In short, when he was under attack from his civilian superiors and the ruling

party, he did not utilize his military power for the sake of personal gain, but remained loyal and obedient. No power play was staged, though others offered to carry one out on his behalf; he meekly requested to be released from his duties. This is evidence that he did not seek political power, while not ignoring the fact that he wielded much physical might.

His contributions to Lithuania and her military are enormous. He reorganized, strengthened, and modernized the armed forces while increasing their prestige and trust among the citizenry at a time when they had been utilized as the regime's gendarme. On a broader scale, especially among youth, he increased pride and patriotism. Several analysts even cite his role as a force against authoritarianism, giving him an important place in the history of democratic evolution in Lithuania.³⁷ A more enduring and invaluable contribution is found in his memoirs, which are unrivaled monuments of Lithuanian historiography.

Rastikis fully admits modest political intervention. However, it appears that this is an unavoidable role for any military leader. For example, the US Joint Chiefs of Staff must become involved in politics, budgets, the media, and other agencies, for national security is a matter too important to leave only to military men. It is a matter for all in any state. The union of politics and senior officers appears to exist as long as recorded history.³⁸ On the other hand, Rastikis'

³⁷Slavenas quoted in Rastikis, Lietuvos likimo keliasis, p. 455; Vardys p. 153.

³⁸Cf. Plato in chapter 2 of this study.

Western bent and benevolent methods of political socialization attest to the seriousness with which he regarded democracy, the political process, and his own responsibilities. He undoubtedly viewed them with more gravity than those officers who chose to recklessly tinker with politics, that is, the officers who brought Smetona to power in 1926. It must be recalled that when Captain Antanas Maciuika marched into the Seimas with a pistol on 17 December 1926, he intervened more into politics on that one night than Rastikis did in five years.

CHAPTER VIII

THE TWILIGHT OF INDEPENDENCE 1939-1940

A. THE CABINET OF BRIGADIER GENERAL JONAS CERNIUS

Adolph Hitler decided to add the Klaipeda (Memel) Territory to his empire in March 1939. An ultimatum was issued to the Lithuanian government demanding its cession to Germany. Kaunas, feeling powerless against the military might of the Third Reich, grudgingly accepted Hitler's ultimatum. On 22 March 1939, a treaty was signed by both governments which "reunited the Territory with the Reich." The Germans moved into the area very quickly, indicating premeditation, and Lithuanian private citizens, government officials, and army components suffered many losses in the sudden move to Lithuania-Major.¹

Following the annexation, morale decreased both in the military and society, while negative feelings toward the government increased. Even senior army officers, who were supposedly the props upon which the regime rested, stated that after two ultimatums -- the Polish ultimatum demanding the restoration of diplomatic relations had been accepted one year earlier in March 1938 -- the Nationalists were bankrupt, and changes were necessary in the civil leadership in order for the nation to survive. On 25 March 1939 Prime Minister Rev. Vladas Mironas, also

¹Juozas Audenas, Paskutinis posedis: Atsiminimai (Final Meeting: Reminiscences) (New York: Romuva, 1966), p. 127; Julius P. Slavenas, "Klaipeda Territory," Encyclopedia Lituanica, 1973, vol. 3, p. 137.

the head of the Nationalist Association, invited representatives of the Peasant Populists, the Christian Democrats, and the Voldemaras faction for a consultation. They warned Mironas of the changing and dangerous mood of the country. Mironas, in turn, discussed their points with President Smetona. Two days later the Mironas cabinet resigned.²

General Stasys Rastikis influenced events between the Klaipeda ultimatum and the appointment of a new cabinet. In the first place, he anticipated possible unrest in the military. He issued a declaration to the soldiers asking them to remain confident and to prepare to fight, even if it meant losing honorably.³ Second, he went on radio and stated that in view of recent events, Lithuania needed a "practical and elastic foreign policy." Further, "discipline, order, and unity must be maintained by all sections of the people." Also, "the economic, moral, and cultural forces of the nation must be strengthened."⁴

General Rastikis' third action was most important and possessed grave political implications. He, along with Defense Minister Brigadier General Kazys Musteikis and Chief of Staff Brigadier General Jonas Cernius, visited the president, advised him of potential unrest in the

²Audenas, p. 128; Kazys Musteikis, Prisiminimu fragmentai (Fragments of Memories) (London: Nida, 1970), p. 34; U.S. House of Representatives, Third Interim Report of the Select Committee on Communist Aggression, 83rd Congress, Second Session (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1954), pp. 153-154.

³Aleksandras Merkelis, Antanas Smetona: Jo visuomenine, kulturine ir politine veikla (Antanas Smetona: His Social, Cultural, and Political Activity) (New York: American Lithuanian National Association, 1964), p. 518.

⁴U.S. House of Representatives, p. 155.

nation, and "in the name of the military leadership" asked him to appoint a new government containing the opposition. The president asked Rastikis to accept the post of prime minister, partly to remove him from the opposition camp, for which the president believed Rastikis was working. Rastikis refused, stating that stability in the military was more important than stability in the civil government during such uncertain times. He added that it was easier to find a prime minister than a commander-in-chief. Rastikis concluded by suggesting General Cernius for the post. In turn, Smetona offered the post to Cernius who, though stunned, accepted the request out of loyalty to the president.⁵

Brigadier General Jonas Cernius was neither a politician nor a purely military man. He was born on 6 January 1898 in Kupiskis in the county of Panevezys. On 4 March 1919 he volunteered for the army and completed the first accelerated class of the Military Academy on 6 July of that year. He held various technical positions in the military and received his degree in engineering in Brussels in 1929. He graduated the Paris General Staff Academy (Ecole Superieure de Guerre) in 1932. Cernius was appointed commandant of the Military Academy in 1934 following the Kubiliunas revolt. The following year he assumed the post of chief of staff after adoption of the Rastikis military reorganization plan. He was raised to the grade of brigadier general in 1937. On 30

⁵Jonas Augustaitis, Vardys ir Sova apie Rastikio atsiminimus (Vardys and Sova on Rastikis' Memoirs) (Chicago: Author, 1975), p. 3; Merkelis, p. 520. Augustaitis, a blatantly anti-Smetona commentator, writes that the Cernius cabinet was a satellite of Rastikis. See Augustaitis, p. 17.

March 1939 Cernius was appointed prime minister of Lithuania.⁶ The US Minister to Lithuania, Owen J.C. Norem, characterized Cernius as a mild-mannered, pleasant, and patient man. However, he lacked experience in politics and had never openly favored any party. He was thus left without political backing and could not formulate strong policies in the face of the volatile international situation.⁷ Smetona's biographer points out that Cernius may have been too willing to believe in the good intentions of others.⁸

The Klaipeda ultimatum, the demarche by opposition parties, and the political request of the military leadership demonstrated that the authority of the president and his regime had been stricken. This led to the formation of the Cernius cabinet and, moreover, convinced Smetona to allow Cernius to request the opposition to join. The cabinet was referred to as the "Government of Unified Work" ("Vieningo Darbo Vyriausybe"). The leadership of the Peasant Populists and Christian Democrats approved those party members asked to enter the new government, but their status as members of the opposition, though obvious to the entire nation, was unofficial.⁹ Further, in his declaration to the Seimas, Prime Minister Cernius stated that the

⁶Vladas Mingela, "Gen. Jonas Cernius: 65 m. amziaus sukakties proga" ("General Jonas Cernius: On the Occasion of His Sixty-Fifth Birthday"), Karys, June-July 1963, p. 188.

⁷Owen J.C. Norem, Timeless Lithuania, 2nd ed. (Cleveland: Viltis, 1967), p. 157.

⁸Merkelis, p. 526.

⁹Audenas, pp. 127-130, 139.

cabinet would operate within the framework drawn by the president.¹⁰

In accordance with the professed desire of Prime Minister Cernius to work within the limits of the constitution and to establish a close relationship with [the Seimas], the Seimas, constituting almost entirely members of the Nationalist Party, gave the new Government "unconditional support." No disposition was prevalent to permit the emergence of any controversies between the opposition and the Government party on the future course of the new Government. Formation of a united patriotic front was not, therefore, attempted as a procedural device for the Government -- at least during the first weeks of the administration.¹¹

The composition of the Cernius cabinet was interesting. Of course, the inclusion of the opposition was definitely a departure from established practice. For example, all were startled at the inclusion of Dr. Leonas Bistras, a Christian Democrat. He had only recently been exiled from Kaunas to the provinces for his political activity. Now he was serving in the sensitive post of education minister.¹² The cabinet displayed remarkable balance: two Christian Democrats, two Peasant Populists, one Nationalist, one Voldemaras faction Nationalist, and one who was considered non-partisan, Foreign Minister Juozas Urbysys. What

¹⁰M. Maksimaitis, "Tautininku fasistine diktatura" ("Nationalist Fascist Dictatorship"), in Burzuazijos diktaturos Lietuvoje valstybiniai teisiniai aspektai (State and Legal Aspects of the Bourgeois Dictatorship in Lithuania), ed. H. Miskinis, et al. (Vilnius: Lithuanian SSR Academy of Sciences, 1976), p. 87. See also "Army man forming Lithuanian cabinet," The New York Times, 28 March 1939, p. 11; "Lithuania forms coalition cabinet," The New York Times, 29 March 1939, p. 15.

¹¹U.S. House of Representatives, pp. 154-155.

¹²Stasys Rastikis, Kovose del Lietuvos: Kario atsiminimai (In the Battles for Lithuania: A Soldier's Reminiscences) (Los Angeles: Lietuviu dienos / Lithuanian Days, 1956), I, p. 557.

is relevant for this study is the inclusion of four military men, including Cernius. Brigadier General Kazys Skucas was interior minister, Brigadier General Kazys Musteikis was defense minister, and Divisional General Jonas Sutkus was finance minister. Musteikis was allowed to remain in the regular army. Sutkus had retired to the reserve not long ago. Cernius and Skucas were required to retire to the reserve prior to accepting their political appointments. Yet, Cernius continued wearing his uniform while prime minister.¹³

That there was a link between the military and government is obvious. What is problematic, though, is the four generals' political classification. Juozas Audenas, who served as Peasant Populist agriculture minister in the subsequent Merkys cabinet, writes that the four generals were de facto Nationalists, since they served as army officers in a military which helped maintain the regime. US Minister to Lithuania Owen Norem classifies them as non-party ministers.¹⁴ This may be a question without a definite answer. This author, though, agrees with Norem. Granted the men were officers, but there were many who were at least informally members of the opposition. A commission does not necessarily mean that an officer is politically of the same stripe as the civilian leadership. This does not impugn his loyalty to the commander-in-chief. It is perhaps safest to classify the four generals as non-political, leaving open at least the possibility of some sort of

¹³Merkelis, p. 526; Rastikis, I, pp. 554, 557.

¹⁴Audenas, p. 130; Norem, p. 157.

latent political affiliation.

One writer characterizes the appointment of the Cernius cabinet as a psychological breakthrough. There was a great deal of enthusiasm for the new government. Various ministers began traveling the country in an attempt to bring the government and citizenry closer together following the decline of trust and confidence in the Nationalist regime. People began feeling more free and at ease with regard to political matters. Strictures on the media were loosened, permitting it to more honestly chronicle the public mood. However, great hopes bring with them great demands. While it was a popular cabinet, certain benefits were also expected, especially in the area of political freedom.¹⁵

B. PROBLEMS FOR CERNIUS

Unfortunately for Cernius and the nation as a whole, the cabinet would almost constantly be troubled with domestic and international crises. The nation was forced to adjust to the economic dislocation which emerged following Germany's ultimatum. In addition, approximately twelve thousand refugees from the Klaipeda Territory had to be absorbed. Cernius also had to maneuver through the troubled continental political situation. Despite external pressure, he was charged with executing a policy of strict neutrality.¹⁶

Another problem was constructed by Berlin and Moscow:

¹⁵Audenas, pp. 109, 149-150.

¹⁶U.S. House of Representatives, pp. 154-155.

When German Foreign Minister Ribbentrop signed the famous Russo-German Non-Aggression Pact in Moscow on August 23, 1939, the public announcement of the pact made no mention of a secret protocol signed between the two parties the same day. By terms of this secret protocol the Baltic area, including Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and the entire territory of the Polish Republic, was partitioned between the U.S.S.R. and Nazi Germany. The northern boundary of Lithuania provided the dividing line between the two spheres of interest. The Vilnius area was recognized as part of Lithuania. Finland, Estonia, Latvia, and the Polish territories east of the line of the rivers Narev, Vistula, and San were declared the sphere of influence of the U.S.S.R., whereas Lithuania and the Polish territories west of these rivers would constitute the German sphere of influence. The ultimate fate of Poland was also sealed in this secret protocol, which provided that "whether the interests of both parties make the maintenance of an independent Polish state desirable can be determined only in the course of further political developments." . . .¹⁷ Later Germany traded [Lithuania] away . . . to . . . the U.S.S.R.

This opened the way for Poland's dissolution. On 1 September 1939 the German blitzkrieg began swallowing that country. The Red Army moved into the Polish-occupied Vilnius territory on the 17th of that month. Ten days later, the two powers carried out the "fourth partition" of Poland according to the terms of the secret protocol. Lithuania was immediately mobilized, albeit temporarily, and began absorbing and interning Polish refugees and military personnel. In October, the Kremlin placed pressure on Kaunas to sign a mutual assistance pact, allowing the establishment of four Soviet bases in Lithuania. For the tiny country, this was a two-edged sword. On the one hand, Lithuania, under the provisions of the pact, received most of the Vilnius territory -- the territory for which it had been fighting nineteen

¹⁷Bronis J. Kaslas, "The Lithuanian Strip in Soviet-German Diplomacy, 1939-1941," Journal of Baltic Studies, 4, 3 (Fall 1973), 211.

years. On the other hand, the Soviet bases were Trojan horses in the subsequent occupation of the country.¹⁸

Prime Minister Cernius also had his share of domestic political difficulties. President Smetona admired Cernius because he was obedient and loyal. However, the president also felt that Cernius was too weak-willed for the post of prime minister. There was also the expected friction among Smetona, the Nationalists, and opposition ministers. Smetona felt that Christian Democratic Deputy Prime Minister Kazys Bizauskas was too partisan. Peasant Populist Agriculture Minister Dr. Jurgis Kriksciunas desired too much land reform as far as the president was concerned. Kriksciunas was able to receive cabinet approval for a land reform project -- a project rejected by Smetona as too radical. Christian Democratic Education Minister Dr. Leonas Bistras was especially disliked by Smetona and the Nationalists. Bistras was one of the toughest political opponents the regime possessed. Smetona refused even to receive official reports from Bistras. They were given either by Cernius or Deputy Education Minister Kazimieras Masiliunas, a

¹⁸For accounts of these events see Audenas, p. 150; Stasys Rastikis, Ivykiai ir žmonės: Iš mano užrasu (Events and Personalities: From My Notes), ed. Bronius Kviklys (Chicago: Akademines skautijos leidykla / Academic Press, 1972), p. 44; Rastikis, Lietuvos likimo keliais: Iš mano užrasu (On the Roads of Lithuania's Destiny: From My Notes), ed. Jonas Dainauskas (Chicago: Akademines skautijos leidykla / Academic Press, 1982), p. 225. Many officers and citizens did not understand why Lithuania did not invade and take back the Vilnius territory in 1939 when Poland was attacked and Berlin was urging Kaunas to move. This, though, would have violated Smetona's policy of strict neutrality. See Vaclovas Sliogeris, Antanas Smetona: Žmogus ir valstybininkas. Atsiminimai (Antanas Smetona: Person and Statesman. Reminiscences) (Sodus, MI: Juozas J. Bachunas, 1966), pp. 135-136.

Nationalist. Cernius attempted unsuccessfully to mediate. Of the opposition, the president did not complain only of Peasant Populist Justice Minister Dr. Antanas Tamosaitis. Finally, Smetona stated that Finance Minister General Jonas Sutkus was a weak manager of domestic and foreign economic matters.¹⁹

The Nationalist Association actively campaigned against the Cernius cabinet from its very inception. Every prime minister until then had automatically assumed the leadership of the Nationalist Association. Cernius, however, was not a Nationalist and thus deemed unacceptable for the position. The Nationalists also complained that the government had insulted and treated them shabbily. It was this opposition from the ruling party that ultimately sealed the fate of General Cernius' cabinet.²⁰

On 10 November 1939 General Sutkus resigned as finance minister. The president was able to capitalize on this new weakness and asked Antanas Merkys to quietly form a new cabinet. The Cernius government resigned on 21 November. Merkys presented his cabinet to the president for confirmation the following day.²¹ Thus ended the cabinet

¹⁹Audenas, pp. 130-131; Rastikis, I, pp. 557-558, 631.

²⁰Audenas, pp. 130-131; Juozas Jakstas, "Tautos pazangos partijos-Lietuviu tautininku sajungos istorijos bruožai 1916-1940" ("An Historical Sketch of the National Progress Party-Lithuanian Nationalist Association 1916-1940"), in Tautines minties kelias: Lietuviu tautininkijos istoriniai bruožai (Path of National Thought: Historical Sketch of Lithuanian Nationalism). Eds. Jonas Puzinas and Jonas Pranas Palukaitis. (Chicago: American Lithuanian National Association, 1979), pp. 147-148; Rastikis, I, pp. 557-558.

²¹Audenas, p. 132.

of the four generals. The only cabinet to be headed up by a professional military man was beset by such intense domestic and foreign challenges that it would last only eight months.

C. THE CABINET OF ANTANAS MERKYS

Reserve Lieutenant Colonel Antanas Merkys was not new to government service. He received his law degree from the University of Kiev and served as an officer in the czarist army. From 12 March 1919 until 19 June 1920 he held several posts in the defense ministry, including that of minister. After retiring from the military he served in the government of the Klaipeda Territory. He returned as defense minister following the 1926 coup and served in that post until 8 August 1927. Afterwards, he served as governor of the Klaipeda Territory, consultant to the Council of State, mayor of Kaunas, and Seimas deputy.²²

The Merkys cabinet, the final government of independent Lithuania, would have been composed solely of Nationalists had Smetona had his way. However, General Rastikis declared that the opposition must be included in this government as well. Smetona, though annoyed, viewed this as a serious threat and decided to once again place the cabinet upon a broader political base. Thus another case of political intervention on Rastikis' part. Two military men were included: Brigadier General Kazys Musteikis continuing on as defense minister and

²²A. Maziulis, "Antanas Merkys," Lietuviu Enciklopedija (Lithuanian Encyclopedia), 1959, vol. 18, p. 255.

Brigadier General Kazys Skucas remaining as interior minister.²³

There was one problem with Merkys' Government of Societal Consolidation (Visuomenes konsolidacijos vyriausybė). Merkys was not well liked by either army officers or the Nationalists. The government was neither supported by society nor consolidated by it. However, Smetona also realized that Merkys would succeed in eliminating Rastikis, as the previous chapter described.²⁴

The final cabinet meeting of independent Lithuania took place during the night of 14-15 June 1940. The president himself was presiding, for the government was considering an ultimatum from Moscow. The ultimatum included a demand for the arrest of General Skucas for allegedly ordering the kidnapping of Red Army soldiers stationed in Lithuania, though it was apparent that they had themselves deserted. Another point of the ultimatum was permission to allow an unlimited number of Soviet troops into Lithuania for the purpose of "guaranteeing" the Soviet-Lithuanian mutual assistance pact. Finally, the Kremlin called for the formation of a government acceptable to it. General Rastikis was invited to the meeting and appointed prime minister. He began forming a government, but word soon arrived from Moscow that Rastikis was unacceptable.

²³Audenas, pp. 132-133; Merkelis, pp. 561-562.

²⁴Jonas Augustaitis, Antanas Smetona ir jo veikla (Antanas Smetona and His Work) (Chicago: Chicago Lithuanian Literary Society, 1966), p. 102; Merkelis, pp. 561-562; Rastikis, Ivykiai ir zmones, pp. 45, 47. See also Leonas Sabaliunas, "Lithuanian Politics Under Stress: Ideological and Political Developments Before the Soviet Occupation," Lituanus, 14, 3 (Fall 1968), 29-42.

What is more important for this study is the behavior of Rastikis and Commander-in-Chief Divisional General Vincas Vitkauskas. They stated that since there were already Soviet bases in Lithuania, and that tanks and troops were massing on the border, it would be futile to fight. Both advised that the ultimatum be accepted as a means to contain damage.²⁵ This is ironic, considering the martial rhetoric emanating from the military leadership all through the independence period, including Rastikis' speeches.²⁶ The president, while urging to fight, also did not wish to invite opposition from his own military during the crisis. The cabinet decided that the president should leave the country and turn presidential power over to Prime Minister Merkys.

The Red Army began occupying Lithuania on 15 June 1940. Merkys was forced two days later to name communist sympathizer and journalist Justas Paleckis as new prime minister and de facto president. Paleckis was the puppet who assisted in rigging the elections of a People's Diet which petitioned Moscow for membership in the Soviet Union. Thus -- at bayonet point -- Lithuania became the fourteenth Soviet Republic. The Lithuanian army became the People's Army, later the 29th Territorial Corps of the Red Army. It became evident that Vitkauskas, whose brother was mistakenly shot for alleged bolshevik activity in 1919, and who had always been identified with the progressive movement, was disloyal. He

²⁵Musteikis, pp. 105-107.

²⁶For examples see Meldutis Laupinaitis, As kaltinu: Trilogija (I Accuse: Trilogy) (Sao Paulo, Brazil: Author, 1954), p. 18; Merkelis, p. 518.

assisted the Red Army in its occupation of Lithuania and participated in the new regime's power play.²⁷

D. CONCLUSION

To this day, the behavior of the military leadership during Lithuania's hour of need provokes the anger of soldier, officer, and civilian. Many feel that politics sucked the life-blood out of the military establishment, rendering it incapable of executing even symbolic opposition to the Soviet occupation. To use Huntington's nomenclature, the societal imperative had drawn attention and resources away from the functional imperative. There had always been a great deal of rhetoric regarding patriotism and preparation for war, but when it came to time to fulfill those promises, the military leadership proved it possessed a lack of will, though many in the ranks were willing to fight. Political intervention into the military sphere and vice versa, while not the only factors in the impotence of the Lithuanian military in June 1940, were certainly contributing ones. This was certainly not a novel manifestation. General Rastikis, during the Polish ultimatum of March 1938 and the German ultimatum of March 1939, also urged acceptance

²⁷In a questionnaire which officers were required to complete upon occupation, Vitkauskas stated that he had been a candidate for membership in the Communist Party. See Stasys Rastikis, Kovose del Lietuvos: Kario atsiminimai (In the Battles for Lithuania: A Soldier's Reminiscences) (Los Angeles: Lietuviu dienos / Lithuanian Days, 1957), II, 74. For Vitkauskas' memoirs see his "Paskutiniai burzazijos valdymo metai Lietuvoje" ("The Last Years of Bourgeois Rule in Lithuania"), Svyturys (Beacon), 15 January 1958, pp. 11-12; "Ta neuzmirstama vasara" ("That Unforgettable Summer"), Svyturys (Beacon), 30 June 1960, pp. 11-13, 15 July 1960, pp. 10-12. They are mainly polemic in tone.

in place of armed opposition.²⁸ One commentator writes that the politico-military link "consumed part of the limited martial and intellectual resources necessary for dealing with international dangers."²⁹ Smetona had been surprised at Rastikis' and Vitkauskas' advice during the final cabinet meeting. His biographer concludes that the military had been rendered passive by the Nationalist regime -- including the surprised president himself.³⁰ Laupinaitis gives an especially angry denunciation. He states that officers relished parading and displaying medals, but did not wish to fight. According to him, the army was decorative and generals existed merely for parades and representation. The "straw" generals were deserters.³¹

Would it have been feasible for Lithuania to fight? One parallel example may be found in the Finnish-Soviet War of 1939-1940. The Finns opposed a Soviet invasion. Despite the fact that Finland emerged in the Soviet sphere of influence, with foreign and domestic policy dictated in large measure by the Kremlin, and that it lost a portion of its territory, it still remains a separate country. In his

²⁸See, for example, Robert A. Vitas, "The Polish-Lithuanian Crisis of 1938: Events Surrounding the Ultimatum," Lituanus, 30, 2 (Summer 1984), 62-65.

²⁹Thomas Remeikis, "The Impact of Internal Politics on Response Capabilities of the Lithuanian Regime to International Challenges, 1938-1940," in Second Conference on Baltic Studies: Summary of Proceedings, ed. Rimvydas Silbajoris, et al. (Norman, OK: Association for the Advancement of Baltic Studies, 1971), p. 66.

³⁰Merkelis, p. 577.

³¹Laupinaitis, pp. 24-25, 30, 41-42.

memoirs, Finland's Marshal Carl Gustav Mannerheim reports that 24,923 soldiers and 700 civilians lost their lives. The total killed was 25,623 for a rounded-off figure of 26,000.³² During the first Soviet occupation, 36,000 Lithuanians were either murdered, tortured to death, or exiled to the eastern regions of the Soviet Union. Just from a numerical point of view, it may have been worthwhile for Lithuania to at least symbolically oppose the Soviets, while taking into consideration different political and topographical circumstances. Nevertheless, this remains a problematic and controversial question among commentators to this day.³³

The author of this study does not advocate suicide for the Lithuanian nation. In the face of a deliberate effort by the USSR to destroy Lithuania, it could have done so relatively easily. It would have been foolish to oppose the Red Army to the last drop of blood in a re-enactment of the Margiris syndrome. Margiris was a grand duke of the Lithuanian duchy who, along with his men, chose to commit suicide in his burning castle at Pilenai rather than surrender to the Crusaders in 1336. If contemporary Lithuanians would have seen that continued opposition would only hurt the country, the sensible course would have been surrender following a decent interval. This for three reasons: 1) Pure honor for the nation and its military. 2) The Red Army had not yet

³²P. Zilyis, Suomiu-sovietu karas 1939-1940 (The Finnish-Soviet War 1939-1940) (Brooklyn: Karys, 1967), pp. 159-160.

³³For a discussion of Baltic military preparations see Edgar Anderson, "Military Policies and Plans of the Baltic States on the Eve of World War II," Lituanus, 20, 2 (Summer 1974), 15-34.

fully recovered from the Stalinist purges of the 1930's. It was still weak. That is why Stalin attempted to forestall Hitler's inevitable attack for as long as possible, and when Hitler did attack, his initial victories were not that difficult. 3) Lithuania was defending its own territory. Soviet enlisted men, literally prisoners in their own army, could not have mustered the same level of morale as the Lithuanians. Keep in mind that they commenced fighting fiercely only after their own Russian soil had been violated. In a word, Lithuania should have developed a strategy for "sensible" opposition, opening the possibility for success, but without inviting suicide.³⁴

As was stated in chapter three, the military both saved and destroyed the nation in the 1926 coup. The ties with society strengthened it. The ties with politics, the gendarme role, and participation in political adventurism destroyed its martial will and spirit. Consequently, military schizophrenia rendered the nation defenseless at a time when it required defense most.

³⁴On 30 November 1985 the author of this study presented a paper, "Kariuomenes vaidmens teoretiniai aspektai prezidento Antano Smetonos laikais" ("Theoretical Aspects of Military Affairs Under President Antanas Smetona"), at the Fifth International Lithuanian Symposium on Science and Creativity, Chicago. I am indebted to the discussant at the political science panel on independent Lithuania, Dr. Leonas Sabaliunas of Eastern Michigan University's political science department, for helping me clarify my thoughts regarding the Margiris syndrome, in particular, and the issue of Lithuanian opposition, in general.

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863 pp.

APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A

A HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL OVERVIEW OF PRE-COUP LITHUANIA

This appendix reprints excerpts from:

Benedict V. Maciuika, ed., Lithuania in the Last 30 Years. Subcontractor's Monograph prepared in the Division of the Social Sciences at the University of Chicago. HRAF Subcontract HRAF-1 Chi-1 (New Haven, CT: Human Relations Area Files, 1955), pp. 28-55. The author of this particular section of the book is Anton W. DePorte.

DePorte does not utilize footnotes, but gives sources at the conclusions of his sections. Those sources are:

Henry de Chambon, La Lithuanie Moderne (Modern Lithuania), 2nd ed. (Paris: Editions de la Revue Parlementaire, 1933), pp. 123-128;

Malbone W. Graham, Jr., New Governments of Eastern Europe (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1927), pp. 359-408, 720-749;

Stanley W. Page, "Lenin, the National Question and the Baltic States, 1917-19," The American Slavic and East European Review, 7, 1 (February 1948), 15-31;

Royal Institute of International Affairs, Information Department, The Baltic States: A Survey of the Political and Economic Structure and the Foreign Relations of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania (London: Oxford University Press, 1938), pp. 16-33, 39-45, 56-69, 89-91, 93-96;

U.S. House of Representatives, Third Interim Report of the Select Committee on Communist Aggression, 83rd Congress, Second Session (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1954), pp. 64-87, 118-127, 174, 178.

This appendix quotes directly from Maciuika.

HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

The Lithuanian people, like the Latvians, are descendants of one of the eastern branches of the Indo-European race, and their language, which is the oldest spoken tongue in Europe in terms of its grammatical forms, is closely related to Sanskrit, Greek and Latin. It is assumed that it was the ancestors of the present Lithuanians and Letts who are mentioned by ancient historians, as early as Herodotus, as inhabiting the eastern shores of the Baltic and engaging in trade, particularly in amber, with other peoples.

The name of Lithuania first appears in history in a German chronicle of 1009, but it was not until 1236 that the numerous principalities of Lithuanian peoples were united under the rule of King Mindaugas. The chief force promoting their unification was the external threat posed to the Lithuanian tribes by the incursion into their area of the German Knights of the Sword early in the 13th century. After victories had been won over the Knights at the battle of Siauliai (1236), and over Ruthenian princes and Tartar hordes, Mindaugas was baptized a Christian in 1251, and, two years later, he was crowned King of Lithuania by a papal emissary. His conversion, whose principle motive was to take from the Knights their claim to being the bearers of Christianity into a pagan region, did not bring the German invasions to a halt, and following the apostasy of the King the nation was not to become Christian for another century.

A period of disorder followed the assassination of Mindaugas in 1263, but Gediminas (1316-1342) succeeded in reuniting the state, and founded his capital of Vilnius at the confluence of the Neris and Vilnele rivers. Gediminas maintained a defensive policy against the Teutonic Knights, who continued their pressure from the west, while extending the Lithuanian state in the east to Kiev, Pskov, and Novgorod. Under the joint rule of Kestutis and Algirdas, the latter defeated the Tartars in 1362, and secured Lithuanian control of Kiev and Podolia, although he failed to capture Moscow.

In 1386, Algirdas' son, Jogaila, was elected to the throne of Poland on condition that he marry the Polish Queen Jadwiga. Thus began the personal union of the two countries under the Jagellonian dynasty which lasted until 1572. At the same time, Lithuania finally adopted Roman Catholicism (1387). While Lithuania was under the direct rule of Jogaila's cousin, Vytautas the Great (1392-1430), a Lithuanian-Polish force crushed the Teutonic Order at the great battle of Tannenberg (1410), with the important result that Lithuania, in contrast to the territories to the north, was spared domination by the "German Barons" who were the descendants and heirs of the Knights. The medieval Lithuanian empire now reached its height, including the upper Volga and

Oka rivers, and Smolensk, Vyazma, Mozhaisk and Kursk, with a population of some five million people. During this reign, Christianity became an integral part of the Western European cultural and religious community, but, at the same time, the diverse Lithuanian state was notable for its religious and linguistic freedom.

During the 16th century, however, Lithuania lost a number of her eastern provinces to the rising power of Muscovy, and this new danger impelled her to seek a closer association with Poland, with whom, to that time, she had been joined only in a personal union. By the Pact of Lublin (1569), Lithuania ceded her Ukrainian territories to Poland, and recognized Courland and Latgalia as being a condominium of the two states; each, however, retained its separate government, armed forces, treasuries and law courts. The Lithuanian state knew a considerable degree of prosperity in the 16th century, and the Pact of Lublin provided a short-lived security, but increasingly the Lithuanian nobility, imitating the example of their peers in Poland, tended to acquire more and more rights at the expense of the central authority of the state. Partly because of the internal weakness of the Lithuanian-Polish Commonwealth, it was defeated by the Russians in a long war which ended with the Peace of Andrusovo (1667), by which Lithuania lost the province of Smolensk.

Despite the attempts of some Lithuanians to break the connection with Poland and form new relations with Sweden, the Lithuanian state tended increasingly to become the junior partner in the commonwealth, and the Lithuanian nobility became ever more polonized and divorced from their own nation. The weakness of the joint state became constantly more apparent during the 18th century, and, in the first partition of Poland (1772), important portions of eastern Lithuania were lost to Russia. Despite the last-minute efforts of the Commonwealth to reform itself, the second partition of Poland took place in 1793, costing Lithuania more eastern territory, including a small part of "ethnographic" Lithuania. By the final partition of 1795, Russia seized the whole of Lithuania, except for the territory south of the Nemunas River, the province of Suvalkai, which was taken by Prussia, but which, in 1815, was also assigned to Russia.

Five major revolts occurred in Poland and Lithuania in the succeeding 120 years, the most important being those of 1831 and 1863. Beginning with Nicholas I, an ever more drastic policy of russification was applied to Lithuania: schools and monasteries were closed; the Lithuanian system of law was replaced in 1840 with the Russian Code; in 1865 the printing of books in Latin characters was banned; the Catholic Church, some of whose clergy had been active in the rebellion of 1863, was attacked directly and indirectly. But these very attacks on the Lithuanian language and national character only impelled the population to cling to them more ardently, and, towards the middle of the century, there began a literary and cultural renaissance -- based on books smuggled into Lithuania from across the German frontier. Then, as was

so often the case in eastern and central Europe, cultural nationalism soon led to nationalist political manifestations.

From the beginning, the resistance of the peasantry -- which formed the overwhelming mass of the population -- was focused and led by a number of Lithuanian Roman Catholic priests, who resisted both the russification of the country and the attempts of many priests and members of the ecclesiastical hierarchy -- including both Poles and pro-Polish persons of Lithuanian origin -- to polonize the Lithuanian church and people. In addition, as a result of the emancipation of the peasants in the Suvalkai area in 1807, and in the rest of the country in 1861 and 1863, a new type of national intellectual leader began to emerge from among them. Prior to 1865, the leaders of the rebellion had been largely polonized noblemen who joined with their associates in Poland proper in efforts to restore in some form the Polish-Lithuanian union--and their own privileges within it. The new leaders, however, were social reformers as well as nationalists, who aimed at agrarian reform, the democratization of Lithuanian society, and the defense of the Lithuanian national culture against both russification and polonization. Among this group were Dr. Jonas Basanavicius (1851-1927), whose magazine Ausra (Dawn) appeared in 1883 in Tilsit, Dr. Vincas Kudirka (1858-1899), and the Rev. Juozas Tumas (1869-1933).

It is therefore very important to note that as increasing amounts of the land in Lithuania passed into the hands of the peasantry during the nineteenth century, and as the Lithuanian nobility, fearful of reform, increasingly identified its cause and interests with the socially conservative nobles of Poland, the importance of the noble class in Lithuania dwindled, and the national movement developed apart from them. As will be seen below, when independence was at last established, the nobility in effect retired from Lithuania into Poland, allowing the establishment of the new Lithuanian state on the democratic and reformist bases envisioned by the nationalist leaders of the late nineteenth century.

To an even greater extent than elsewhere, it is significant that the national movement in Lithuania received important assistance and inspiration from Lithuanians living abroad, and particularly from the large number in America.

Political parties emerged in Lithuania at the end of the nineteenth century, and first manifested their desire for an autonomous, democratic, ethnographic Lithuania, within the Russian Empire, during the Revolution of 1905. It was not until 1917, however, that this program was capable of realization, and then in the midst of a most complex situation including war, revolution and counter-revolution, the Lithuanian leaders were able not only to win autonomy but actually to establish an independent republic. Their success, however, was due in large measure to the successive collapses of the Russian and German empires, and to the intervention of the Western allies, and it was

limited from the first by the Polish seizure of Vilnius, which destroyed all hopes for cooperation between the two states, and by the occupation of Klaipeda (Memel) at the expense of Germany in 1923.

A democratic republic, however, was established after the war, on the political basis of a liberal constitution and a multi-party system, on which parliamentary government maintained itself for several years, and on the economic basis of an agrarian reform (1922) which, by partitioning the large estates -- owned in many cases by polonized, often absent nobles -- for the benefit of landless peasants, and those with small holdings, in effect provided that the country would be a nation of small farmers. In addition, the State assumed the responsibility of providing for the economic welfare of its citizens. In 1926, however, a military and conservative coup d'etat set aside the constitution in favor of an authoritarian regime, first under Professor Voldemaras, and later under President Antanas Smetona. These governments suppressed all other parties and established regimes which, at least in vocabulary, borrowed considerably from the contemporary German and Italian models. The increasingly dangerous international situation, which after 1936 involved the withdrawal of Great Britain and France from effective participation in the affairs of eastern and central Europe, left Lithuania and the other Baltic states -- and eventually Poland herself -- in the hands of Germany and the Soviet Union. When these two states divided eastern Europe between them in August and September, 1939, the fate of Lithuania, which was finally assigned to the Soviet zone, was sealed, though the U.S.S.R. did not actually seize and annex the country until the Allied defeat in the West in June, 1940, permitted her to do so without fear of retaliation or resistance from any quarter. . . .

THE FOUNDATION OF THE LITHUANIAN STATE

The political history of modern Lithuania began, with the establishment of political parties, even before there was an independent Lithuanian state and, in fact, it can perhaps be dated from the Grand Assembly which met at Vilnius on December 4-6, 1905, during the Russian revolution of that year. The 2000 delegates at the Assembly represented all parts of the country as well as the already existing political parties, including the Christian Democrats, National Democrats, Liberals or Progressives, and Social Democrats. This body proclaimed as the goal of the national movement the establishment of ethnographic Lithuania as an autonomous state within the Russian Empire, which was to be reorganized on a federative basis. Vilnius, they stated, was to be the capital, and the Parliament was to be elected by general, secret, direct ballot, in which women would be entitled to vote.

This program fell far short of achievement in 1905, and even more so in the years of reaction which followed in the Russian Empire, but the Imperial Duma provided a training ground for Lithuanian, as for other minority leadership, and provided also a focus for the evolution of parties and other agencies which contributed to the growth of national sentiment. The actual reestablishment of the independence of the Lithuanian state was to come, in effect, largely as a by-product of the First World War. But, if the principal causes to that end were the successive defeats of the Russian and German Empires, and the establishment of a Bolshevik regime in the former -- events occurring independently of the wishes or actions of the Lithuanian people -- a significant factor in the winning of independence was the determination of the leaders to achieve as much of their prewar program as the circumstances permitted.

The nucleus from which the Lithuanian independence movement was to grow was the Central Committee of Relief for War Sufferers, which was organized in 1914 with the consent of the Imperial Russian Government, and which included such men as Martinus Ycas, a member of the Duma, and Antanas Smetona. By September, 1915, however, the German armies had occupied most of Lithuania, and the three years of their occupation witnessed both the economic and military devastation of the country, and some attempts at cultural germanization in order to bring it permanently within the orbit of the Reich. One of the first results of the German occupation was the division of the Relief Committee into two branches, one of which established itself at Petrograd, the other, including Smetona, remaining at Vilnius.

The latter worked at first to soften the rigors of the German occupation, and also to oppose the efforts of those Poles who, in their representations both to the Allies and to the Central Powers on the

subject of Polish independence or autonomy, sought to perpetuate the Polish-Lithuanian union to the disadvantage of Lithuania. As early as 1916, the Vilnius Committee memorialized the German authorities, not only for the redress of specific grievances, but also setting forth their claims for an independent, ethnographic Lithuania. These efforts met with no success at first, but, during 1917, the Germans, noting the failure of the Provisional Russian Government to come to an agreement with the Lithuanian nationalists . . . , apparently decided to make use of the latter for their own purposes, and permitted a national movement to develop within the country. On September 18, 1917, a broad conference of more than 200 Lithuanians, selected by the leaders of the nationalist movement for their loyalty to that cause, met by invitation -- in default of elections -- at Vilnius, under the presidency of Dr. Basanavicius. A Taryba (National Council) of 20 members was named, with Smetona as its President, and, despite the German occupations a resolution was adopted to the effect that Lithuania should become an independent democratic state within her ethnic frontiers, and that a Constituent Assembly should be summoned. If, however, Germany would recognize the Lithuanian state, the latter would then consider entering into some special relationship to the German Empire since, it was stated, "the interests of Lithuania, in normal times, are rather in the direction of the West than the East or South." On December 11, under the pressure of the military situation, the Taryba, which by then had become the focus of national sentiment within Lithuania, dropped its demand for a Constituent Assembly, and asked for German assistance and a "perpetual and solid alliance" with the Empire, including a customs and monetary union.

During the early part of its existence, meanwhile, the Petrograd branch of the Relief Committee had occupied itself with extending material aid to its compatriots in Russia, and with the setting up and coordination of committees in Sweden, the United States and elsewhere which, if they originally were engaged in charitable activities, soon began to develop in a political direction. After the March Revolution of 1917, a Lithuanian National Council at Petrograd decided, despite the demands by extremists for complete independence and the calling of a Constituent Assembly, to seek a rapprochement with the Provisional Russian Government. The latter, however, was less conciliatory to the Lithuanian national movement than to those of Finland, Estonia and Poland, and when the Bolsheviks finally suppressed the Lithuanian Council, a conference, attended by representatives of all except extreme Left-wing parties, met at Voronezh to replace it. This body recognized the Taryba at Vilnius as the supreme organ expressive of the general will of the Lithuanian people. But, in the more free atmosphere of revolutionary Russia it went far beyond the Taryba in proclaiming the goals of the national movement: the Lithuanian demand for independence, based both on historic state right and on the general trend towards self-determination, should be brought before the Powers for recognition; the frontiers of the state were outlined, including an outlet to the Baltic; and, while the rights of the future Constituent Assembly were

reserved, they clearly called for a system of guarantees of civil liberty, protection of national minorities, and universal, equal, secret and direct suffrage based on proportional representation. This program was important for several reasons: first, it synthesized the claims for Lithuanian independence in terms both of state right and of self-determination; second, for the first time it linked the Lithuanian national cause to republicanism; third, its demands for civil liberties went far beyond the claims which could be asserted by a Taryba existing under German occupation; and fourth, it laid down the concrete bases of peace. As compared to the projects for Letto-Lithuanian federation put forth by groups in the United States, or monarchical plans emanating from emigrants in Berne, it is striking that the Voronezh program laid down the lines along which the Lithuanian national and constitutional movement would, in fact, develop.

The Taryba itself soon discovered, however, that its policy of conciliating the Germans, as expressed in the declaration of December 11, was not achieving the desired results for, according to the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk (signed on March 3, 1918, but known some time in advance), the Bolshevik government had been obliged to cede Lithuania and Courland to Germany, for future disposition by the Central Powers. After much controversy, therefore, the Taryba, on February 16, 1918, issued a new declaration which unequivocally proclaimed -- rather than demanded -- the independence of the country. But on March 23 the German Government granted de jure recognition to the Lithuanian state -- on the basis of the declaration of December 11. Recognition was not followed, however, by any transfer of authority to the Taryba, and, indeed, the hollow nature of the gesture was soon shown in the German proposal to establish a Hohenzollern prince on the Lithuanian throne.

After great controversy in the Taryba, and the withdrawal of some of its members who objected even to a tactical departure from the republicanism of the Voronezh program, that body, in connivance with the clerical party in Germany -- which opposed too great an aggrandizement of the Protestant house of Hohenzollern -- offered the crown of Lithuania, on June 14, 1918, to Duke William of Urach, a prince of the Catholic dynasty of Wurtemberg who was alleged to be a descendant of the medieval Grand Duke Mindaugas. The German General Staff, however, prevented the Duke's acceptance of this invitation from being implemented, but as military defeat came nearer in the West the authority of the military waned, and on October 20 the new German Chancellor, Prince Max of Baden, informed the Taryba that full legislative and administrative power would be granted to a Lithuanian government as soon as it could be formed, and that the German forces would depart as soon as possible. On November 2, therefore, the Taryba withdrew the invitation to Duke William, leaving the form of Government to be decided by the future Constituent Assembly. It is significant to note that there was no monarchist party in Lithuania thereafter, indicating that the episode of King Mindaugas II was merely the expedient answer of the Lithuanian nationalists to the greater threat of

a Hohenzollern monarch, and that it had no lasting popular or political basis.

At the same time, the Taryba adopted a provisional constitution whereby that body retained legislative power, but vested executive authority in a directory of three persons: A. Smetona, J. Staugaitis, and S. Silingas, who were to act through a Cabinet responsible to the Taryba. This constitution also provided a bill of rights which established the absolute equality of all citizens without discrimination because of sex, national origin, religion, or class. Six White Russians and three Jews were added to the Taryba at this time, increasing its membership to 29. On November 5, the directors asked Professor Augustinas Voldemaras to form a non-party government, but when the latter departed for the Paris peace conference later in November, Mykolas Slezevicius succeeded him as Prime Minister.

By the armistice of November 11, 1918, the Allies had required the Germans to maintain their forces in the Baltic states and elsewhere to hold back the Bolshevik tide which, they feared, might otherwise fill the vacuum left by the retreating Germans. The latter, however, began a rapid and unauthorized evacuation, looting the countries they passed through and attempting to oblige the new Baltic governments to turn to them for support against the Russians. By January 5, 1919, however, the latter had reoccupied Vilnius, and during the next two months much of the rest of the country, and the Lithuanian Government was obliged to retire to Kaunas. As early as December 8, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Lithuania and Belorussia, acting within Russia, had established a "Provisional Revolutionary Workers Government of Lithuania," under one Mickevicius-Kapsukas, and on December 22 the Bolshevik government recognized the independence of Soviet Lithuania under this group.

In the political propaganda and also in the literary creations of the new Soviet regime in Lithuania, the assertion is constantly made that the Soviet Lithuanian government of 1919 was a popular regime in that country, that it was destroyed by foreign intervention, and that the events of 1940 only restored a system which was deeply rooted in the memories and wishes of the people. It is therefore important to observe that the Vilnius Soviet Government of 1919 was maintained only by the presence of the Red Army which, however, by acting in the name of that government, attempted to transfer a war of foreign aggression into a civil conflict. The measures taken by this government -- establishment of local soviets, nationalization of land and industry -- were not popular in the territory under its control, and Bolshevik personnel was so scarce at Vilnius that it was necessary to include Mensheviks in the government. On February 20, the Lithuanian Soviet Government -- apparently conceding the unreal nature of its existence -- voted to merge with Belorussia, and the Polish reconquest of Vilnius in April put an end to the Provisional Revolutionary Workers Government.

Though some attempt was made even in 1919 to blame this failure on the strength of the Poles and other extraneous factors, a considerable polemic ensued in Izvestia and elsewhere on the causes for the collapse of the Soviet regime in Lithuania. Among other factors, it was said that there had been no real control even of the city, too little internal government, too little Cheka activity in a region filled with counter-revolutionaries, too small a proletariat -- and what there was was too moved by nationalist currents. The Red Army was accused of arousing distrust because of "its disorderly requisitions." In short, the reality of 1919 was far indeed from the political and literary myth which has been assiduously cultivated since 1940 in an attempt to vest the latter regime with a historical and legal continuity which it did not possess.

One of the first acts of the Voldemaras government had been to issue a call for a popular militia, and even before the Germans had entirely left the country many peasants brought out the weapons which they had collected during the battles of 1915. The resulting units were commanded by Lithuanian officers who had served in the Russian Army, and by a few Prussian Lithuanian officers. General mobilization was proclaimed in March, 1919, but the new Lithuanian army was able only slowly to resist the oncoming Red Army. By the end of 1919, under pressure from these Lithuanian units, which won an important battle over the Red Army at Griva, near Daugavpils, and from Polish forces to the south, the Red Army had been driven from most of Lithuania, and on July 12, 1920, peace was signed between the two states in the Treaty of Moscow. The R.S.F.S.R. proclaimed again that, since

. . . all peoples have the right to free self-determination, including the right of full secession from the State of which they were a part, Russia recognizes without any reserve the sovereignty and independence of the State of Lithuania with all juridical consequences resulting from such recognition, and voluntarily and forever renounces all sovereign rights possessed by Russia over the Lithuanian people and territory.

The fact that Lithuania was ever under Russian sovereignty does not place the Lithuanian people and their territory under any obligation to Russia.

The precise meaning to the Soviet leaders of such a declaration had already received some demonstration in the events of early 1919. But having found the military or political seizure of Lithuania impossible in the circumstances of 1919 and 1920, the Bolshevik regime granted a fairly generous treaty to the new Republic, including the payment of three million gold rubles, and the cession of the Vilnius area to Lithuania. In addition, the two parties undertook to prevent activities on their respective territories which aimed at the overthrow of the government of the other.

The defeat of the Bolsheviks during 1919 had not entirely

cleared Lithuania of foreign forces, for Polish, German adventurer and White or anti-Bolshevik Russian troops continued to occupy and ravage parts of the country. The Lithuanian forces inflicted a number of defeats on these German and White forces in November, 1919, but they were ultimately withdrawn to East Prussia only after the intervention of an Allied military mission in December.

A more serious threat was the Polish army which, having fought with the Lithuanians against the Bolsheviks, had seized Vilnius in April, 1919. The Poles, however, were driven from the city by the Russians in the summer of 1920, and the Soviet Government then transferred the area to Lithuania by the Treaty of Moscow. Under the auspices of the League of Nations, Poland and Lithuania agreed, on October 7, to accept a settlement which assigned Suwalki to the former and Vilnius to the latter. But two days later, an ostensibly unauthorized Polish force under General Zeligowski seized Vilnius and established an "independent Republic of Central Lithuania," which, after a Polish-conducted plebiscite in 1922, joined the Polish state. After fruitless negotiations and proposals for compromise, the Conference of Ambassadors, on March 15, 1923, finally accepted the status quo in the Vilnius area. The Lithuanian government, however, refused not only to accept this decision, but even to establish diplomatic relations with Poland, which would have implied acceptance. The Polish-Lithuanian frontier therefore remained practically closed until 1938, and no Lithuanian government dared to consider proceeding to a normalization of relations. As a result, Lithuanian foreign policy was burdened with a "permanent" antagonist from the beginning, and was therefore the more obliged to turn to Germany or the Soviet Union as a makeweight against Poland. At the same time, attempts at closer relations between the three Baltic states foundered on Latvian and Estonian fears of becoming embroiled in the Lithuanian quarrel with Poland, and hopes for a regional entente or bloc to include not only the three states, but Finland or Poland or both, broke, at least in part, on the same obstacle.

The settlement of the Latvian-Lithuanian frontier, which had been left to the parties by the Treaty of Moscow, occasioned no serious difficulty, and was decided by a court of arbitration, under the presidency of Sir James Simpson, in March, 1921.

By the Treaty of Versailles, the Germans had ceded the territory of Klaipeda (Memel) to the Allied [sic] for ultimate disposition. But, while the latter were still discussing its statute and future relations with Lithuania, whose sole important outlet to the sea it was, a pro-Lithuanian group within the city, with "volunteer" support from across the frontier, rose and seized control of the territory from the small French garrison which held it in the name of the Allies — on the same day, it should be noted (January 10, 1923), on which French forces entered the Ruhr. After further negotiations, the Allies, as in the case of Vilnius, accepted this fait accompli, although the Memel

Convention of 1924 granted a certain degree of autonomy to the territory, under international guarantee.

Though the Lithuanian state had been recognized by Germany as early as 1918, and by the R.S.F.S.R. in the treaty of 1920, the Allies had hesitated officially to sanction the disruption of the Russian state while they still entertained hopes for its restoration under a non-Bolshevik regime. By 1921, however, such hopes were dwindling rapidly and, with the establishment of the Lithuanian frontiers at least de facto by that time, there was little reason to continue to deny recognition. On September 22, 1921, therefore, the three Baltic states were admitted to the League of Nations. On July 28, 1922, the United States became the first of the major Powers to recognize Lithuania de jure, and, on December 20, Great Britain, France, Italy, and Japan did the same.

From the above account, it can be seen that, if the Lithuanian nationalist leaders pursued their goal of independence with skill and dexterity in an almost incredibly complicated situation, their final success was due, above all, to the fact that the intervention of the western Allies, who were relatively disinterested in the particular disputes of the area, provided a balancing force against the local contending forces: Russian, German, Polish. The very existence of the Lithuanian state was menaced by all of these latter states, and, considering the disparity of strength between it and any of them, its continued existence would depend on the maintenance of the Allied "presence" as a counterweight to the uneasy three-sided balance of the interested parties. The preservation of the Lithuanian state, therefore, in the same way as its creation, would be a by-product of the general international situation in Europe and, in particular, of the maintenance of the status quo system erected in 1919 and 1920.

FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC DEVELOPMENTS, 1922-1926

A. FOREIGN POLICY

Even before the three Baltic states had fully established their independence from Russia, it was evident that, because of their size, origin and geographical location, they would confront many common problems of foreign policy. It therefore seemed equally clear that they could best meet problems by some degree of cooperative action. As early as 1918 Estonian leaders had proposed the formation of a series of groupings to maintain the freedom of the Baltic Sea and to provide for common defense, and later the three Baltic republics and Finland attempted, without success to pursue joint peace negotiations with the R.S.F.S.R. The first Baltic conference was held at Helsinki in January, 1920, attended by representatives of Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland, and it considered the co-ordination of foreign policy, common defence, and the neutralization of the Baltic Sea. In August, the same agreed to adopt a draft arbitration convention and to set up a permanent Council of Plenipotentiaries to co-ordinate their policies.

At this point, however, there emerged the Vilnius dispute between Poland and Lithuania, as outlined in the preceding chapter, and for Lithuania this quarrel became the principal concern of their foreign policy. Despite the failure of attempted compromise solutions at Geneva, the annexation of the area to Poland in 1922, and the acquiescence of the Conference of Ambassadors in 1923, the government at Kaunas stubbornly refused to accept or recognize the loss of the territory. A technical state of war therefore continued to exist between Poland and Lithuania; diplomatic relations were not established between them; and their common frontier remained practically closed. Meetings continued to be held among representatives of Finland, Poland, Estonia and Latvia, and the later [sic] two states signed a Treaty of Defensive Alliance in 1923, but, since Lithuania refused to enter into any type of understanding which implied her renunciation of the Vilnius area, while the other Baltic states were unwilling to be drawn into an agreement which might involve them in difficulties with Poland, the Vilnius dispute effectively destroyed the prospects, not only for the greater "Baltic Union" of Powers, but even for an effective entente of the three republics themselves.

At the same time the Vatican's recognition of the Vilnius archdiocese as a Polish ecclesiastical province in 1925 was a severe blow to the clerical Lithuanian government and had important domestic political repercussions, as will be seen below. In addition the continuation of strained relations with Poland tended to draw Lithuania closer to the U.S.S.R. -- with whom Lithuania had no common frontier --

despite the fact that fear of that state was the principal factor tending to unify the policies of the two other Baltic republics, Finland and Poland. The major achievement of the Slezevicius cabinet of 1926 was a conclusion of a Treaty of Non-Aggression with the Soviet Union, by which the latter reaffirmed its recognition of Vilnius as a Lithuanian territory.

A second problem which tended to isolate Lithuania from her immediate neighbors was the question of Klaipeda or Memel, the port and territory ceded by Germany to the Allied Powers in the Treaty of Versailles, and garrisoned by them, pending final disposition, until 1923. It was originally understood that the territory would be ceded to Lithuania, despite the preponderance of Germans in the city, but, as the Allies continued to hesitate, Lithuanian opinion, already exasperated by the loss of Vilnius, became insistent on a favorable settlement of the Klaipeda question. When, therefore, it was rumored that a free city on the model of Danzig, might be established, a rising of Lithuanians took place on January 10, 1923 — the day on which the French entered the Ruhr. Within five days, the French garrison was overwhelmed and a Diet was summoned which established a local government and voted the union of the territory with Lithuania. The Allies, in effect, accepted this fait accompli, and the Lithuanian government, while rejecting a convention which granted to Poland special rights in the port, eventually signed the Memel Convention of May 17, 1924. By this the Allied Powers ceded the Memel Territory to Lithuania, and the latter agreed with them that the region should be governed by a Directory responsible to a popularly elected Diet, and by a Governor appointed by Kaunas who could veto those laws adopted by the Diet which he considered to transgress its autonomous authority or to be contrary to the Lithuanian Constitution. Since the Diet was always controlled by a German majority, it is not difficult to understand that this arrangement let [sic] to constant friction between it and the Governor, and that the latter, responsible to Kaunas, more than once acted in a manner which seemed to overstep the autonomy granted to the territory. The gravity of such incidents then depended on the extent to which the German government was able or inclined to assert a protective interest in its co-nationals in Memel.

It is clear from this brief account that the freedom of action of Lithuania in foreign affairs was severely limited, even beyond the measure imposed by her size and general geographical position, by the special quarrels which more or less definitively cut her off from both Poland and Germany. In addition, the Vilnius dispute stood in the way of the cooperation of the three Baltic republics, with each other, which seemed dictated by their common position between Germany, Poland and the Soviet Union, and also of the cooperation of the three republics with Poland, as seemed implied by their common dangerous position between Germany and U.S.S.R. Thus, the problems of Lithuania stood at the heart of the weakness and disunity of a region whose only hope of survival and independence, in the long run, depended on cooperation and stability; and, if this was not immediately seen during the 1920's, when the power

of Great Britain and France could, in effect, maintain the central European states despite their proximity to the temporarily weakened Germany and Russia, the re-emergence of the latter two states in the 1930's, at the expense of the West, would demonstrate the ultimate consequences of these local disputes. Finally, as will be seen, the situation of Lithuania nearly surrounded by enemies meant that foreign policy was inextricably intertwined with domestic, and that the already strong national feeling of a new liberated people was magnified greatly in the face of three powerful and hostile neighbors.

B. POLITICAL PARTIES

It had been intended in November 1918, that an elected Constituent Assembly should adopt the definitive constitution of the country, but the war against the R.S.F.S.R. in 1919 forced the temporary abandonment of this plan, so that on January 17, 1919, a Provisional National Conference, made up of some 200 delegates from throughout the country, met at Kaunas, to which the Lithuanian government had been driven, and validated the decisions of the incumbent government. In addition, they laid plans for a Constituent assembly, and elected eight more members -- mainly from the working class -- to the Taryba, which then numbered 37 and included representatives of practically all national and class groups in the state, including the Belorussians and Jews, though the Poles refused to participate. On April 4, the Taryba modified the provisional constitution to abolish the directory of three, and then elected Antanas Smetona as the first President of Lithuania.

It will be remembered that as early as the Grand Assembly of 1905, there were already in existence several Lithuanian political parties, of which the most important was the Christian Democrats, the National Democrats or Populists, and the Social Democrats. These parties remained in existence through the war and, though the provisional government of 1919 and 1920 usually included representatives of all parties except the Communists, certain differences began to appear as the situation became more stable, and the elections to the Constituent Assembly approached. Since it is the interplay of the parties which comprises the political history of the country during the first years of its existence, it will be useful to consider briefly their basis and composition.

The oldest and most important Lithuanian party was the national and clerical Christian Democratic Party, founded in 1890. Its main element was the peasantry, but it included also voters of all classes, and particularly a large number of Roman Catholic clergy, who formed in many cases its local leaders among the peasants. The party had long defended Lithuanian ecclesiastical fights against the Polish and polonized clergy, and continued to defend them against lay and socialist

forces during the period of independence. The Christian Democrats were strongly anti-Communists, but moderately democratic in policy and favored agrarian reform in the early 1920's, though they insisted on the sanctity of private property and the right of the expropriated landowners to compensation. But they also supported the right of workers to organize and strike. The party's prewar anti-Polish bias, of clerical origin, later exacerbated by the Vilnius situation, strongly colored its views on foreign policy in the period of independence. The leaders of the party included Bistras, Dr. Karvelis, and Father Krupavicius.

Closely allied to the Christian Democrats, and forming a parliamentary bloc with them until 1926, were the Peasant Union, led by MM. Stulginskis, Miksys and Petrulis, and the Federation of Labor founded in 1919, and led by Drs. Ambrozaitis and Milcius, and MM. Radzevicius and Kasakaitis. Both parties were largely off-shoots of the Christian Democrats, designed to draw into the orbit of the latter voters from other classes and elements of the population than the peasantry. The Federation included some non-socialist workers and a number of small landowners and settlers.

The Populist or People's Socialist Party, formed in 1902, as the Lithuanian Democratic Party, was based largely on the same social classes as the Christian Democrats, and shared the national and social policies of the latter. They differed, however, in that they took a lay view of problems affecting the relations of Church and State. Their leaders included MM. Grinius, Slezevicius and Staugaitis.

Associated for a time with this party in a "Liberal" bloc were the Peasant Party and the Nationalists, the latter of which, including former President Smetona and Juozas Tubelis, emerged into separate existence only in the elections of 1926.

The Social-Democratic Party, led by M. Kairys and Professor Cepinskis, was also of pre-war origin, and was associated with the Second Internationale. It represented urban workers primarily — thereby limiting its influence in a predominantly agrarian country — and its policy included plans for the nationalization of banking and industry.

The Communist Party had only a brief legal existence in Lithuania after the war. It won a few seats in the 1922 Seimas under the name of the Labor Rally, but was soon declared illegal and remained so until June, 1940.

It should not be forgotten, however, after an enumeration between the parties in 1920, that, with the exception of the Communists, all of them were in effective agreement on a number of essential points: a republican form of government; some measure of state paternalism in economic affairs; agrarian reform; and a nationalist outlook of foreign

affairs.

The first Lithuanian elections were held on April 14-16, 1920, when deputies were chosen to the Constituent Assembly on the basis of a system of proportional representation. . . .

The success of the conservative agrarian party, the Christian Democrats, is not surprising in the Lithuania of 1920, though it seems clear that the influence of the Social Democrats extended considerably farther than the very small urban proletariat. The 112 members of the Seimas included ten lawyers, ten writers, eight physicians, seven civil employees, six army officers, three engineers, three representatives of the Cooperatives, three artisans, twenty-two farmers, thirty professors and priests, and ten others. But a striking feature of this Seimas and its successors was the absence of members of the noble class, either in a party of their own, or as leaders of other parties, due to the fact that the largely polonized nobility of Lithuania had, by 1920, largely chosen to become absorbed in the Polish state. Their absence meant that the proponents of agrarian reform controlled nearly every seat in the body.

The new Seimas put forth a provisional constitution which President Smetona proclaimed on June 10, and the existing government thereupon transferred its powers to the Seimas. The latter then named Kazys Grinius as Prime Minister, and Aleksandras Stulginskis, its own presiding officer, as Acting President of the Republic. This government remained in office until the adoption of the permanent constitution on August 1, 1922, and its promulgation a week later.

The principal strictly legislative work of the Constituent Assembly was the agrarian reform law, largely the work of the Christian Democrats and Populists, which was adopted on February 15, 1922. . . . The primary task of the Assembly, however, was to draw up the definitive constitution of the State, and this it completed in two years.

C. THE CONSTITUTION OF 1922 AND THE ORGANS OF GOVERNMENT

The Constitution beginning with words, "In the name of the Almighty God," proclaimed that Lithuania was an "independent democratic Republic" with the "sovereign Government" of the state "vested in the people." All citizens are equal before the law, none were to receive special privileges, and all were guaranteed that no right should be "restricted because of race, creed or nationality." Freedom of worship and conscience were accorded, and no one's religion or convictions shall "form the basis for justification of an offense or for refusing to perform public duties." The clergy, however, were exempted from

military obligations. Freedom of speech and press, of assembly "without arms and without disturbances of the public peace," and freedom to form "societies and associations" if there [sic] were not "contrary to the penal laws" were all guaranteed. Any citizen could petition the Seimas (Parliament) and legislation could be initiated by the people. Property rights were guaranteed and property "may be condemned, in the manner prescribed by the law, only in the event of public need."

The Seimas, whose membership would be fixed by the law, was to be elected according to proportional representation for three years, by general, direct, equal, secret ballot. In an emergency, the President of the Republic could extend the life of the Parliament with the consent of the latter. The Seimas enjoyed the usual legislative authority, and could declare and end war, but the executive could act independently in the event of undeclared war against Lithuania. Subject to confirmation by the Seimas, the President, acting with the Cabinet, could declare or rescind a state of emergency. In this case, the constitution provides for the "temporary" suspension of the main civil rights, though against [sic] subject to parliamentary confirmation.

The President of the Republic was elected by secret ballot of an absolute majority of the Seimas, for three years, and was ineligible to more than two successive terms. The President "invited" the Prime Minister to form a Cabinet, and could ask the Seimas to re-consider any law, unless the latter had declared it to be urgent by vote of two-third of all the members. The President could also dissolve the Seimas, but was then obliged to face re-election by its successor, which had to be chosen within sixty days. He was also commander-in-chief of the armed forces of the Republic.

The Cabinet Ministers were jointly and severally responsible to the Seimas, and could be overthrown on a vote of "no confidence." The Cabinet was to draft proposed laws, and any member, if he disagreed with his colleagues, could submit a separate opinion in writing to the Seimas.

The complete independence of the judiciary was fixed and irrevocable. No decision of the Supreme Court was subject to modification except by judicial authority, but the courts were required to "pass upon the legality of acts proceeding from the administration," and "no law which is contrary to the Constitution shall have force." In addition, "All citizens are equal before the Courts."

In addition to these general governmental features, it was provided that minorities could autonomously administer the affairs of their national culture, including education, charity, and mutual aid, and that they had the right to elect bodies to do so, and to impose dues upon their members to meet these ends. They could also call upon the national treasury for their share of funds allotted for education and charity. Education of children was declared the "supreme right and

natural duty" of the parents, and all schools were to be placed under state supervision. Religious education was made compulsory in the schools, with instruction in the religion of the student, but schools established for children of parents not belonging to any religious organization were exempt from this requirement. Further, the State Treasury would support private religious schools.

The Lithuanian economy "shall be so regulated" as to afford employment to all citizens. In addition, "There shall be established by law bureaus of agriculture, commerce and industry, labor and other bureaus, whose cooperation with the State government for the standardization of the economic life shall be prescribed by law".

"The principle of private ownership shall be made the basis for the management of land."

The State was obliged to protect workmen during illness, old age, in cases of misfortune, and when unemployed.

The structure of government laid down in this constitution resembles closely those of the other two Baltic states, each of which has a unicameral legislature -- largely from reasons of economy -- which, in effect, was intended to form the preponderant weight in the administration. The regime, therefore, was to be democratic in that all organs were politically responsible to the Seimas, yet conservative in that judicial control and other checks were provided against abuse of power. In the areas of religious and educational policy, no state church is provided for, but the interests of the preponderant Roman Catholic Church are fully protected through compulsory religious education, state subsidy to all schools, and the absence of provision for a civil register of births, marriages and deaths. The elaborate bill of rights is drawn in part from the Weimar Constitution, and, like the similar portion of the latter, it represented the work mainly of a clerical party which sought to safeguard religious liberty while providing for a broad program of social and humanitarian reform. The Lithuanian constitution, therefore, has been called a "de-socialized version of the Weimar constitution," in that it foreshadows a benevolent regime of Christian state socialism based on individual initiative in industry and individual land tenure in agriculture. The state is therefore committed at the same time to the defense of the rights of property, and intervention in the economic system to the extent of according protection to the working class against the perils of that system.

Many of the actual organs of administration of the Lithuanian government, however, had already come into existence before the adoption of the Constitution of 1922. Among these was the Cabinet, whose membership, according to the Constitution, was to be fixed by statute, but which usually included these departments: National Defense (always held by a military officer), Interior (with control of the police and

the administrative machine), Finance, Agriculture, Education, Justice, Communications and Foreign Affairs. Early cabinets also included special Ministers, in charge of Jewish and White Russian affairs.

The judiciary had been assigned important powers by the Constitution in regard checking abuses of authority on the part of the administration, but the organization of the courts and the system of law were carried out only very slowly in Lithuania. In 1919, the newly-created district courts, or tribunals of first instance, were empowered to apply the imperial Russian Code, and the translation of the latter was begun.

But it was only in 1925 that the Supreme Court was created and the principle, if not the actual use of the jury system was introduced into the country. At the same time, the Petrulis ministry appointed a commission of jurists to revise the criminal statutes on the basis of the Swiss code. The translation of the Russian statutes and their modification continued throughout the period of independence but, in fact, no complete and autonomous Lithuanian code was ever evolved.

The Constitution made considerable provision for organs of local self-government, based on democratic elections, which were endowed with authority to impose taxes for local expenditures. These provisions were implemented by a statute of 1925 which divided the country into 20 districts (later 23, when the Klaipeda Territory was integrated into the administrative system) with an average population of 100,000. Each district was subdivided into about 15 communes, and these, in turn were composed of "seniunijas." At each level, a council composed of representatives elected by the constituent units was in charge of the affairs of the division in question. But the Constitution provided that the functions and competences of these bodies was to be fixed by law, their activities were to be supervised and coordinated by the central administration, and any disputes between them and the latter were to be settled by the courts. Therefore, despite the pyramid of elected councils, the central administration, through its appointed "prefects," effectively controlled the district administration. As would be demonstrated by the coup d'etat of 1926, when the new government easily established its authority throughout the country by gaining control of a few central offices in the capital, the administrative system was highly and thoroughly centralized in the organs at Kaunas.

D. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

. . . In the Constituent Assembly, where the Christian Democrats and their allies controlled an absolute majority of the seats, they nevertheless had shared power in most of the cabinets of the period with the liberal group, and had cooperated with the latter both in the

adoption of the agrarian reform act and the drafting of the Constitution. With the completion of these two basic acts, however, the Christian Democrats tended to become more conservative, and new issues came to the fore -- such as popular insistence on a speedy solution of the Klaipeda question -- which made difficult the attempt of the Christian Democrats to govern alone in the first constitutional Seimas. As a result, new elections were held in the spring of 1923.

The small gains of the Christian Democratic bloc permitted it to maintain its conservative regime through most of the normal three-year life of the second Seimas. But in the elections of May, 1926, restiveness at long one-party control, an economic depression, and, above all, nationalist discontent at the failure of the incumbent party to prevent the Vatican from concluding a concordat with Poland which recognized Vilnius as a part of the Polish ecclesiastical province, combined to bring about the defeat of the Christian Democrats.

A new coalition of the Populist bloc and the Social Democrats now assumed power, and the outstanding event of this regime was the Treaty of Neutrality and Non-Aggression concluded on September 27, 1926, with the Soviet Union. The domestic policy of the government, however, was less successful and raised a series of important enemies against it. Thus, the dismissal of a number of Christian Democrats from the civil service aroused both that party and the opponents of a "spoils system;" reductions in the military budget alienated the army officers; changes in the mode of state payment to the clergy were not well received by the latter; increasing toleration of Communist activity alarmed all conservatives; and concessions made to the minorities, on whom the cabinet relied for its bare parliamentary majority, and particularly to the Poles on educational affairs, raised the hostility of nationalists -- many of whom had turned against the Christian Democrats in the election precisely because of their inability to deal with the Polish question. As a result, a number of army officers, with at least the tacit consent of many Christian Democrats, on the pretext of an imminent Communist rising brought about a coup d'etat on the night of December 16-17 1926, which, while it preserved the constitutional forms, brought to power the Nationalist Party, a small group of conservative landowner[s] and industrialists, led by the "elder statesmen" Smetona and Voldemaras. The former, who had left his academic chair at the University of Lithuania to enter the Third Seimas as one of the three representatives of the new party, then became President of the Republic; the latter became Prime Minister.

APPENDIX B

APPENDIX B

INDEX TO CIVIL-MILITARY LEGISLATION IN INDEPENDENT LITHUANIA

Vyriausybes zinios (Government News) was published in Kaunas by the Chancellory of the Cabinet (Ministru tarybos kanceliarija). It was the official organ which published all legislation, presidential acts, and directives from the various ministries and agencies. It is the reference for all acts cited herein.

I. STATES OF AWARENESS, READINESS, AND EMERGENCY

A. Special State Defense Statutes

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B. Statute Eliminating the State of War

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C. State of Readiness Statute

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D. State of War Statute

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E. Statute to Defend the State and Nation

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F. Amendment to the State of Readiness Statute			
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G. Acts of the President of the Republic--State of Readiness			
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H. Amendment to the Special State Defense Statutes			
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	73		653
	156		1100
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	532		3698
	557		3872
I. Amendment to the Statute to Defend State and Nation			
Tautai ir valstybei saugoti istatymo papildymas			
Number	437	Statute	3044
	684		5092
J. Amendment to the State of Emergency Statute			
Neapaprastojo meto istatymo pakeitimas			
Number	194	Statute	1318
	450		3143
	557		3873
	644		4701
	662		4849
K. Neutrality Statute			
Neutralumo istatymas			
Number	632	Statute	4535

- L. Acts of the President of the Republic--Defense
 Respublikos Prezidento aktai--Gynimo metas
 Number 671 Statute 4950
 677 5011
- M. Acts of the President of the Republic--Neutrality
 Respublikos Prezidento aktai--Neutralumas
 Number 660 Statute 4839
- N. Acts of the President of the Republic--State of Readiness
 Respublikos Prezidento aktai--Sustiprinta apsauga
 Number 637 Statute 4643
 649 4734
 671 4950
- O. Statute Governing the Economy During a State of Emergency
 Nepaprastuoju metu tautos ukiui tvarkyti istatymas
 Number 661 Statute 4840

II. MILITARY CONSCRIPTION

- A. Calling of Volunteers for National Defense
 Pasaukimas savanoriu i krasto apsauga
 Number 1 Statute 3
 1 4
- B. Conditions for Entry into the National Defense
 Salygos istojimo i Lietuvos krasto apsauga
 Number 1 Statute 5
 5 58
- C. Instruction for Calling Volunteers
 Instrukcija savanoriams saukti
 Number 1 Statute 6
- D. Instructions for Calling the Military
 Kariuomenes saukimo instrukcijos
 Number 4 Statute 43
 112 1019
- E. Calling of Novices to the Military
 Naujoku saukimas kariuomenen
 Number 4 Statute 50

- F. Provisional Statutes for the Calling of Novices
Laikini naujoku saukimo istatai
- | | | | |
|--------|----|---------|-----|
| Number | 13 | Statute | 159 |
| | 46 | | 458 |
| | 56 | | 531 |
- G. Regulations for Calling and Accepting Novices
Naujoku saukimo ir emimo taisykles
- | | | | |
|--------|-----|---------|------|
| Number | 15 | Statute | 190 |
| | 39 | | 415 |
| | 331 | | 2269 |
| | 394 | | 2697 |
- H. Statute of Military Conscription
Karines prievoles istatymas
- | | | | |
|--------|-----|---------|------|
| Number | 57 | Statute | 533 |
| | 91 | | 760 |
| | 109 | | 843 |
| | 146 | | 1056 |
| | 168 | | 1181 |
| | 196 | | 1330 |
| | 250 | | 1651 |
| | 284 | | 1834 |
| | 298 | | 1988 |
| | 323 | | 2204 |
| | 406 | | 2803 |
| | 431 | | 2987 |
| | 538 | | 3734 |
- I. Statute for the Calling of Novices
Naujoku saukimo istatymas
- | | | | |
|--------|----|---------|-----|
| Number | 45 | Statute | 456 |
|--------|----|---------|-----|
- J. List of Physical Disabilities
Ligu ir kuno trukumu sarasas
- | | | | |
|--------|----|---------|-----|
| Number | 57 | Statute | 538 |
|--------|----|---------|-----|
- K. Statute Governing the Calling of Males Born 1902
Vyrų gimusių 1902 m. saukimo kariuomenen istatymas
- | | | | |
|--------|-----|---------|-----|
| Number | 109 | Statute | 845 |
|--------|-----|---------|-----|
- L. Statute for the 1926 Novice Contingent
1926 metu naujoku kontingento istatymas
- | | | | |
|--------|-----|---------|------|
| Number | 221 | Statute | 1448 |
|--------|-----|---------|------|
- M. List of Recruiting Stations
Naujoku saukiamuju nuovadu sarasas
- | | | | |
|--------|-----|---------|------|
| Number | 353 | Statute | 2411 |
|--------|-----|---------|------|

- N. List of Clergymen Exempt from Conscription
 Dvasininku, kurie atleidziami nuo karines prievoles, sarasas
- | | | | |
|--------|-----|---------|------|
| Number | 333 | Statute | 2203 |
| | 370 | | 2528 |
- O. Amendment to the Statute of Military Conscription
 Karines prievoles istatymo pakeitimas
- | | | | |
|--------|-----|---------|------|
| Number | 146 | Statute | 1056 |
| | 284 | | 1834 |
| | 406 | | 2803 |
| | 431 | | 2987 |
| | 538 | | 3734 |
| | 661 | | 4842 |
- P. Amendment to List of Clergymen Exempt from Conscription
 Dvasininku, kurie atleidziami nuo karines prievoles, saraso pakeitimas
- | | | | |
|--------|-----|---------|------|
| Number | 503 | Statute | 3493 |
|--------|-----|---------|------|
- Q. Statute Concerning the Military Requisitioning of Animals
 Naturaliniu karo prievoliu istatymas
- | | | | |
|--------|-----|---------|------|
| Number | 431 | Statute | 2983 |
| | 469 | | 3287 |
| | 513 | | 3556 |
- R. Amendment to the Regulations Governing the Care for Indigent Families of Conscripted Males
 Karine prievole atliekanciu vyru beturtems seimoms aprupinti taisykliu pakeitimas
- | | | | |
|--------|-----|---------|------|
| Number | 551 | Statute | 3836 |
| | 567 | | 3935 |
- S. Amendment to the Military Service Statute
 Karines tarnybos istatymo pakeitimas
- | | | | |
|--------|-----|---------|------|
| Number | 561 | Statute | 3893 |
| | 582 | | 4047 |
| | 673 | | 4967 |
- T. Amendment to the Statute Concerning the Military Requisitioning of Animals
 Naturaliniu karo prievoliu istatymo pakeitimas
- | | | | |
|--------|-----|---------|------|
| Number | 431 | Statute | 2983 |
| | 469 | | 3287 |
| | 513 | | 3556 |
| | 661 | | 4841 |

III. STUDENT CONSCRIPTION

- A. The Calling of Schoolboys to the Military
Moksleiviu pasaulimas kariuomenen
- | | | | |
|--------|---|---------|----|
| Number | 2 | Statute | 12 |
| | 3 | | 12 |
- B. Provisional Regulations Governing the Training and Service of Student Recruits
Laikinos aspirantu rekrutu, tarnybos ir mokymo taisykles
- | | | | |
|--------|-----|---------|------|
| Number | 259 | Statute | 1674 |
|--------|-----|---------|------|
- C. Regulations Governing the Service of Student-Recruits
Kariunu-aspirantu tarnybos taisykles
- | | | | |
|--------|-----|---------|------|
| Number | 358 | Statute | 2443 |
|--------|-----|---------|------|
- D. Student Service Statute
Aspirantu tarnybos istatymas
- | | | | |
|--------|-----|---------|------|
| Number | 358 | Statute | 2443 |
| | 420 | | 2909 |
| | 420 | | 2914 |
| | 461 | | 3226 |
- E. Reserve Junior Lieutenant Course Statute
Atsargos jaunesniuju leitenantu kursu istatymas
- | | | | |
|--------|-----|---------|------|
| Number | 487 | Statute | 3403 |
|--------|-----|---------|------|
- F. Amendment to the Student Service Statute
Aspirantu tarnybos istatymo pakeitimas
- | | | | |
|--------|-----|---------|------|
| Number | 259 | Statute | 1674 |
| | 358 | | 2443 |
| | 420 | | 2009 |
| | 420 | | 2914 |
| | 461 | | 3226 |
| | 568 | | 3948 |

IV. RESERVE PERSONNEL

- A. Reserve Officers and Military Managers Statute
Istatymas apie atsargos karininkus ir karo valdininkus
- | | | | |
|--------|----|---------|-----|
| Number | 22 | Statute | 272 |
|--------|----|---------|-----|
- B. Regulations Governing Reserve Officers Exercises
Atsargos karininku pratimu taisykles
- | | | | |
|--------|-----|---------|------|
| Number | 261 | Statute | 1687 |
|--------|-----|---------|------|

V. COURTS-MARTIAL

A. Military Court Statutes

Karo teismo istatai

Number	5	Statute	62
	8		103
	23		985
	273		1767

B. Provisional Army Court Statutes

Laikini armijos teismo istatai

Number	10	Statute	130
	273		1768

C. Amendment to the Provisional Court Statutes

Laikinuju kariuomenes teismo istatu pakeitimas

Number	10	Statute	130
	273		1768
	459		3199
	463		3249
	634		4593

VI. MILITARY ORGANIZATION

A. Military Leadership Statute

Kariuomenes vadovybes istatymas

Number	465	Statute	3259
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VII. SOLDIERS IN POLITICS

A. Statute Prohibiting Soldiers from Political Activity

Draudziamasai istatymas dalyvavimui kariams politikoje

Number	5	Statute	63
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VIII. ESPIONAGE

A. Provisional Statute Governing the Dissemination of Military Information

Laikinosios vyriausybes isakymas del ziniu platinimo apie kariuomene

Number	4	Statute	52
--------	---	---------	----

IX. LAND REFORM AND THE MILITARY

- A. Statute Providing Land to Soldiers
Istatymas kariskiams zeme aprupinti
- | | | | |
|--------|----|---------|-----|
| Number | 8 | Statute | 95 |
| | 15 | | 189 |
| | 23 | | 284 |
| | 40 | | 425 |
| | 47 | | 465 |
- B. Amendment to the Land Reform Statute: Military Invalids Association
Zemes reformos istatymo pakeitimas: Karo invalidu sajunga
- | | | | |
|--------|-----|---------|------|
| Number | 602 | Statute | 4210 |
|--------|-----|---------|------|
- C. Amendment to the Land Reform Statute: Lithuanian National Guard
Zemes reformos istatymo pakeitimas: Lietuvos Sauliu Sajunga
- | | | | |
|--------|-----|---------|------|
| Number | 559 | Statute | 3888 |
| | 602 | | 4210 |
- D. Amendment to the Land Reform Statute: Military Volunteers
Zemes reformos istatymo pakeitimas: Kariai savanoriai
- | | | | |
|--------|-----|---------|------|
| Number | 640 | Statute | 4656 |
|--------|-----|---------|------|

X. NATIONAL GUARD OF LITHUANIA

- A. Lithuanian National Guard Statute
Lietuvos Sauliu sajungos istatymas
- | | | | |
|--------|----|---------|-----|
| Number | 70 | Statute | 624 |
| | 71 | | 637 |
- B. National Guard Statute
Sauliu sajungos istatymas
- | | | | |
|--------|-----|---------|------|
| Number | 166 | Statute | 1154 |
| | 490 | | 3423 |

XI. CIVIL DEFENSE

- A. Statute for Protection Against Air Attack
Istatymas apsaugos nuo pavojiaus is lektuvu
- | | | | |
|--------|-----|---------|------|
| Number | 479 | Statute | 3358 |
| | 493 | | 3445 |
| | 517 | | 3598 |

- B. Regulations Governing the Establishment of Decontamination Teams
Taisykles degazuotoju komandoms steigti
Number 517 Statute 3597
- C. Compensation for Expenditures Associated with the Statute for Protection Against Air Attack
Islaidu, susijusiu su Istatymu apsaugos nuo pavojaus is lektuvu vykdymu, apmokejimas
Number 623 Statute 4442
- D. Amendment to the Statute for Protection Against Air Attack
Istatymo apsaugos nuo pavojaus is lektuvu pakeitimas
Number 479 Statute 3358
493 3445
517 3598
606 4247
- E. Regulations Governing the Organization of Air Surveillance Teams
Orinio puolimo sekeju bureliams organizuoti taisykles
Number 542 Statute 3767
- F. Regulations Governing the Acquisition of Decontamination Equipment
Degazuotoju turtui isigyti taisykles
Number 616 Statute 4360
- G. Regulations Implementing the Statute for Protection Against Air Attack
Istatymui apsaugos nuo pavojaus is lektuvu vykdyti taisykles
Number 517 Statute 3598
647 4719
- H. Regulations Governing Shelter Construction
Sleptuvems rengti taisykles
Number 647 Statute 4720
543 3777
- I. Amendment to Regulations Governing Farm Shelters: Anti-Aircraft Protection
Trobesiu pastogems laikyti taisykliu pakeitimas:
Prieslektuvine apsauga
Number 551 Statute 3837
647 4721
673 4971

XII. ARMS FUND

A. Arms Fund Statute			
Ginklu fondo statutas			
Number	494	Statute	3447
	502		3488
B. Postal Tariff Amendment: Arms Fund			
Pasto tarifo pakeitimas: Ginklu fondas			
Number	535	Statute	3723
C. Amendment to the Arms Fund Statute			
Ginklu fondo statuto pakeitimas			
Number	494	Statute	3447
	633		4539
D. Regulations Implementing the Arms Fund Statute			
Ginklu fondo statutui vykdyti taisykles			
Number	502	Statute	3488
	651		4752

XIII. CIVIL CONTROLS AND CENSORSHIP

A. Motion Picture Censorship Statute			
Kinofilmu cenzūros istatymas			
Number	390	Statute	2673
B. Amendment to the Motion Picture Censorship Statute			
Kinofilmu cenzūros istatymo pakeitimas			
Number	466	Statute	3265
	617		4374
	644		4695
C. Levies on Motion Picture Censorship and Advertising			
Kinofilmu cenzūros ir reklamos rinkliava			
Number	413	Statute	2861
	415		2882
	438		3056
D. Instruction Implementing Motion Picture Censorship			
Kinofilmu cenzurai veikti instrukcija			
Number	464	Statute	3258

- E. Statute for the Punishment of Participants and Accomplices in Foreign Organizations or Organizations of Occupied Lithuania Organizacijų, sudarytu okupuotoje Lietuvoje ar svetimose valstybese, dalyviams ir ju padejėjams bausti istatymas
- | | | | |
|--------|-----|---------|------|
| Number | 304 | Statute | 2033 |
| | 313 | | 2115 |
- F. Association Statute Istatymas apie draugijas
- | | | | |
|--------|----|---------|-----|
| Number | 15 | Statute | 185 |
|--------|----|---------|-----|
- G. Press Statute Spaudos istatymas
- | | | | |
|--------|-----|---------|------|
| Number | 17 | Statute | 210 |
| | 197 | | 1339 |
| | 232 | | 1510 |
| | 510 | | 3538 |
- H. Amendment to the Association Statute Draugiju istatymo pakeitimas
- | | | | |
|--------|-----|---------|------|
| Number | 15 | Statute | 185 |
| | 522 | | 3626 |
| | 527 | | 3662 |
| | 541 | | 3760 |
| | 557 | | 3870 |
| | 583 | | 4054 |
- I. Regulations Implementing the Association Statute Taisykles draugiju istatymui vykdyti
- | | | | |
|--------|-----|---------|------|
| Number | 553 | Statute | 3843 |
|--------|-----|---------|------|
- J. Regulations Amalgamating Similar Associations Artimus tikslus turincioms draugijoms jungti taisykles
- | | | | |
|--------|-----|---------|------|
| Number | 573 | Statute | 3992 |
|--------|-----|---------|------|

APPENDIX C

APPENDIX C

MILITARY PROVISIONS FROM THE CONSTITUTIONS OF 1928 AND 1938

In total, Independent Lithuania lived under five Constitutions promulgated in 1918, 1920, 1928, and 1938. The latter two were promulgated by the Smetona regime following the 1926 coup. The Constitution of 1928 contained more paragraphs for the president than for the then-defunct Seimas, illustrating the presidential, not parliamentary, democracy which Lithuania lived under. It should also be noted that the military answered only to the president, not to any legislative oversight organ in addition to the chief executive.

CONSTITUTION PROMULGATED 15 MAY 1928

III. The Seimas

33. The consent of the Seimas is required to begin or end war. Military operations can be begun without the consent of the Seimas if an enemy country declares war on Lithuania or an enemy, without declaring war, violates Lithuania's borders.
34. In case of war, armed rebellion, or other dangerous disturbances in the State, the President of the Republic, on the recommendation of the Cabinet, can implement a state of war or another special state in the entire State or parts thereof, temporarily halt constitutional guaranties of civil rights (12 [inviolability of the person], 13 [inviolability of residence], 15 [free, private post and communication], 16 [speech and press], 17 [assembly], 18 [association] paragraphs), and take measures to resist or eliminate danger, using armed force, if necessary.

IV. The Government

50. The President of the Republic appoints and removes all senior officers and civil officials, whose appointment and removal is mandated to him by law.
55. The President of the Republic is the Commander-in-Chief of all the armed forces of the Republic.

V. The Judiciary

70. . . . Appropriate courts try soldiers for violations in conjunction with official service. Extraordinary courts may be established only in case of war or a state of war.

VIII. Life of the Republic

76. All citizens of the Republic participate in the defense of its territory according to the law.
77. Armed forces are organized to defend the Republic. The organization, recruitment, type, and term of service of the armed forces are defined by law. Protection and maintenance by the State are guaranteed to families of soldiers or to soldiers themselves, who lost their health or lives in connection with military service.

CONSTITUTION PROMULGATED 12 MAY 1938

XVIII. The Defense of the State

133. All citizens defend the State.
The bulwark of defense is the military.
134. Citizens are appropriately prepared to defend the State.
The national economy is managed in conjunction with the needs of State defense.
135. The President of the Republic is the Commander-in-Chief of all armed forces.
The structure of the armed forces, the organization and authority of its leadership are determined by law.
136. The President of the Republic appoints and removes the Commander-in-Chief of the Army.
Suits brought against the Commander-in-Chief of the Army in connection with an official violation can be done so with the consent of the President of the Republic.
137. There is established alongside the President of the Republic a State Defense Board to decide State defense matters.
The composition and authority of the State Defense Board is determined by law.
138. During a period of State Defense (Valstybes gynimo metu), State defense matters are managed by orders of the President of the Republic, which have the force of law.
While not yet changed by order of the President of the Republic during such a time, laws regarding State defense matters are still in force.
An order of the President of the Republic requires the signature of the Prime Minister.
139. When there is a threat to public order or State defense, an extraordinary state -- State of Readiness (Sustiprintas valstybes apsaugos metas) or a State of Defense (Valstybes gynimo metas) -- may be declared in the entire State or a portion thereof.
An extraordinary state is declared and revoked by the President of the Republic on recommendation of the Cabinet.
140. A declaration of an extraordinary state brings with it the authority to restrict or halt civil rights enumerated in the section dealing with citizen rights and obligations, except the right enumerated in § 20 [freedom of conscience]; the authority to use extraordinary means to defend the State and to place

extraordinary duties upon the residents.

Extraordinary courts can be established by law during an extraordinary state.

141. Mobilization, war, and peace are decided by the President of the Republic upon recommendation of the Cabinet.
When the Seimas is functioning, the matter of peace requires its consent.
142. Courts-martial try regular army soldiers and civilian accomplices for violations.
143. The state protects and maintains soldiers who lose their health in connection with military service, and also the families of soldiers who lose their lives or health in connection with military service.
In cases determined by law, the State maintains citizens who lose their health in connection with participation in the defense of the State, and also the families of those citizens who lose their lives while participating in the defense of the State.

APPENDIX D

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APPENDIX D

SENIOR CIVIL AND MILITARY OFFICIALS

PRESIDENTS

1. Antanas Smetona	4 April 1919	--	19 June 1920
2. Aleksandras Stulginskis	19 June 1920	--	7 June 1926
3. Kazys Grinius	7 June 1926	--	17 December 1926
4. Antanas Smetona	19 December 1926	--	15 June 1940

PRIME MINISTERS

1. Augustinas Voldemaras	11 November 1918	--	26 December 1918
2. Mykolas Slezevicius	26 December 1928	--	12 March 1919
3. Pranas Dovydaitis	12 March 1919	--	12 April 1919
4. Mykolas Slezevicius	12 April 1919	--	7 October 1919
5. Ernestas Galvanauskas	7 October 1919	--	22 June 1920
6. Kazys Grinius	22 June 1920	--	22 February 1922
7. Ernestas Galvanauskas	22 February 1922	--	18 June 1924
8. Antanas Tumenas	18 June 1924	--	3 February 1925
9. Vytautas Petrulis	3 February 1925	--	25 September 1925
10. Leonas Bistras	25 September 1925	--	14 June 1926
11. Mykolas Slezevicius	14 June 1926	--	17 December 1926
12. Augustinas Voldemaras	17 December 1926	--	24 September 1929
13. Juozas Tubelis	24 September 1929	--	24 March 1938
14. Vladas Mironas	24 March 1938	--	27 March 1939
15. Jonas Cernius	30 March 1939	--	21 November 1939
16. Antanas Merkys	21 November 1939	--	17 June 1940

DEFENSE MINISTERS

1. Augustinas Voldemaras	11 November 1918	--	19 December 1918
2. Silvestras Zukauskas	19 December 1918	--	24 December 1918
3. Mykolas Velykis	24 December 1918	--	16 March 1919
4. Antanas Merkys	16 March 1919	--	21 August 1919
5. Povilas Zadeikis	21 August 1919	--	10 October 1919
6. Pranas Liatukas	10 October 1919	--	23 February 1920
7. Antanas Merkys	23 February 1920	--	19 June 1920
8. Kostas Zukas	19 June 1920	--	7 April 1921
9. Jonas Simkus	7 April 1921	--	4 February 1922

10. Balys Slizys	4 February 1922	--	20 June 1924
11. Teodoras Daukantas	20 June 1924	--	25 September 1925
12. Leonas Bistras	25 September 1925	--	15 June 1926
13. Juozas Papeckys	15 June 1926	--	19 December 1926
14. Antanas Merkys	19 December 1926	--	11 August 1927
15. Teodoras Daukantas	11 August 1927	--	6 October 1928
16. Augustinas Voldemaras	6 October 1928	--	24 September 1929
17. Jonas Variakojis	24 September 1929	--	28 June 1930
18. Balys Giedraitis	28 June 1930	--	13 June 1934
19. Petras Sniuksta	13 June 1934	--	2 November 1935
20. Stasys Dirmantas	2 November 1935	--	24 March 1938
21. Stasys Rastikis	24 March 1938	--	5 December 1938
22. Kazys Musteikis	5 December 1938	--	17 June 1940

COMMANDERS-IN-CHIEF

1. Silvestras Zukauskas	27 May 1919	--	7 October 1919
2. Pranas Liatukas	7 October 1919	--	23 February 1920
3. Silvestras Zukauskas	23 February 1920	--	14 June 1920
4. Jonas Galvydis-Bikauskas	14 June 1920	--	7 July 1920
5. Kostas Zukas	7 July 1920	--	7 April 1921
6. Kazys Ladiga	1 August 1920	--	5 October 1920
7. Silvestras Zukauskas	6 October 1920	--	29 May 1921
8. Juozas Kraucevicius	29 May 1921	--	11 February 1922
9. Juozas Stanaitis	11 February 1922	--	5 June 1923
10. Silvestras Zukauskas	5 June 1923	--	26 January 1928
Vacant	26 January 1928	--	31 December 1934
(Chief of Staff the senior uniformed officer)			
11. Stasys Rastikis	1 January 1935	--	1 January 1940
12. Vincas Vitkauskas	1 January 1940	--	17 June 1940

CHIEFS OF STAFF

1. Jurgis Kubilius	23 November 1918	--	4 December 1918
2. Pranas Liatukas	24 December 1918	--	4 March 1919
3. Edvardas Adamkavicius	4 March 1919	--	26 April 1919
4. Silvestras Zukauskas	26 April 1919	--	27 May 1919
5. Mykolas Velykis	29 May 1919	--	7 October 1919
6. Stasys Nastopka	7 October 1919	--	13 July 1920
7. Maksimas Katche	13 July 1920	--	21 August 1920
8. Birontas	21 August 1920	--	23 August 1920
9. Konstantinas Klecinskis	23 August 1920	--	13 April 1921
10. Maksimas Katche	13 April 1921	--	7 October 1922
11. Jonas Gričius	7 October 1922	--	6 November 1923
12. Juozas Radus-Zenkavicius	6 November 1923	--	29 February 1924
13. Jonas Gričius	29 February 1924	--	7 May 1925

14. Kazys Ladiga	7 May 1925	--	16 September 1925
15. Jonas Gricius	16 September 1925	--	19 October 1925
16. Kazys Ladiga	19 October 1925	--	22 July 1926
17. Kazys Skirpa	22 July 1926	--	24 December 1926
18. Teodoras Daukantas	24 December 1926	--	11 August 1927
19. Povilas Plechavicius	11 August 1927	--	10 February 1929
20. Petras Kubiliunas	10 February 1929	--	7 June 1934
21. Jonas Jackus	7 June 1934	--	21 September 1934
22. Stasys Rastikis	21 September 1934	--	1 January 1935
23. Jonas Cernius	1 January 1935	--	30 March 1939
24. Stasys Pundzevicius	30 March 1939	--	17 June 1940

APPROVAL SHEET

The thesis submitted by Robert A. Vitas has been read and approved by the following committee:

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The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the thesis is now given final approval by the Committee with reference to content and form.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

Feb 25, 1986
Date

Sam C. Sarkesian
Director's Signature