

# **Lithuania under the Soviet Occupation, 1940–41**

## **Observations and Operations by the United States**

Mallory Needleman

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**Abstract:** Throughout World War II, an independent Lithuania was occupied three times—twice by the Soviet Union and once by Nazi Germany. During the first Soviet occupation (1940–41), the international community granted the small country support in rhetoric but little in practicality. The United States, for example, refused to acknowledge the aggressive Soviet takeover, though it refrained from providing extensive support to Lithuanian-located refugees without American citizenship. In March 1941, the U.S. Department of State sought to analyze the daily life of Sovietized Lithuania and sent John F. Mazionis through the country’s closed borders. This article details power struggles within Lithuania imposed by Soviet Russia and by extension Nazi Germany.

**Keywords:** Soviet occupation, Second World War, U.S. foreign relations, Department of State, Lithuania, John F. Mazionis, *USS American Legion* (APA 17)

**L**ithuania has a centuries-long history of being governed by outside forces. It was a victory, then, when it declared independence at the close of World War I, having been mercilessly ruled by both Russia and Germany consecutively since the late eighteenth century. By the mid-1920s, many consulates and legations opened in Kaunas, Lithuania’s then-provisional capital,

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and its diplomats were hosted in more than 20 countries across the world.<sup>1</sup> Lithuania's foreign relations were forming tenderly until its growing statehood was abruptly halted. On 15 June 1940, forces of the Union of the Socialist Soviet Republics (the USSR or the Soviet Union) invaded. By August, they demanded that Lithuania cut its political ties. Not even 20 years old, all diplomatic headquarters in Kaunas were to close by September.<sup>2</sup> Lithuania fell under a ruthless Soviet authority.

For most Lithuanians, it was a triumph in 1941 when the Nazis ousted the Soviets after their violent one-year reign. In frenzied hopes to establish self-governing rule, Lithuanian political and military leaders, as well as social elites, immediately leaned into Nazi Germany's "assistance" as its new occupying power. To the chagrin of Lithuanians desperate for independence, and with the obliteration of the local Jewish population, Nazi control lasted throughout the Holocaust. The constructs of power and control by a superpower, and between superpowers, are pervasive within this time and place, and thus this article will seek to illuminate that which is often engulfed by larger stories. Simultaneously, this article brings to light the life of one man who contributed greatly to the field of American intelligence on Lithuania, through both diplomatic and military achievements, between 1940 and 1941.

This man was John F. Mazionis, who, in the summer of 1940, was a British employee of the American legation in Lithuania. That summer, he supported the extraction of American citizens from Lithuania, and then, as with other members of foreign diplomatic offices, fled Kaunas during the forced Soviet takeover and was restationed in Moscow. Mazionis reentered Lithuania from his Moscow post in early 1941 and reported on the atmosphere in Soviet-occupied Lithuania. Months later, in the summer, he began working at the American legation in Stockholm, Sweden, drafting and submitting reports on Lithuanian subversive underground movements. This article details the geopolitical power struggles within Lithuania as imposed by Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany, with Mazionis as a contextual focal point.

## **Methodology**

This article is historical in nature, organized chronologically and thematically. This method draws a clearer picture of the personal and professional profile of John Mazionis leading up to 1940 and then delving into his activities, both overt and covert, through 1941. For Mazionis, his preserved Department of State personnel file is the only place to uncover a full profile; to date, he is named only in four academic sources.<sup>3</sup> Geohistorically, the events of the subject matter occurred in present-day Russia, Lithuania, Sweden, and America. In an unsurprising assessment, these countries played large and antithetical roles in the Holocaust. A cross-reference of resources is conducted to the best of this

writer's ability. In this way, attempts to obfuscate the truth by a field of study, or specific source, is countered, questioned, and noted.

## **The Start of World War II, the Soviets, and Lithuania**

The German-Soviet Nonaggression Pact (or the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact) was signed on 23 August 1939, five months after the Germans seized Klaipėda from Lithuania. The neutrality pact assured each party (Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia) of, as its title details, nonaggression. Also signed on this day was a protocol hidden from the public. The secret protocol, or addendum, detailed the partitioning of the Baltic States and Poland (including the reincorporation of Vilnius into Lithuania) between Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany. The original protocol was amended a month later, moving Lithuania from under Germany's purview to Russia's.<sup>4</sup>

Around this time, the United Kingdom and France granted assurances of protection to Poland.<sup>5</sup> Germany relied on the assurances provided in the public Nonaggression Pact and invaded Poland on 1 September 1939. World War II thus began, as Germany effectively attacked the United Kingdom and France via Poland, thereby transforming life across the world. Due to the geopolitical crisis of its neighbor, Lithuania faced a humanitarian emergency of its own as refugees, Jews and non-Jews alike, fled Poland and moved into Lithuania. It was a near reversal in their historic hostilities when Lithuania agreed to support the stateless persons from Poland after the September 1939 German attack—evacuees totaling more than 100,000 in all of Lithuania by 1940.<sup>6</sup>

At the same time, Soviet troops moved into Vilnius, a territory disputed between Lithuania and Poland, though by 1939 it was under Polish authority. The Soviets took the city in accordance with the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. Shortly thereafter, a treaty of mutual assistance between Lithuania and the Soviet Union was signed on 10 October 1939. In this agreement, the Soviets annexed Vilnius back to Lithuania in exchange for a Soviet military presence—18,000 soldiers—inside Lithuania's borders.<sup>7</sup> Immediately following, bases were erected across the country, including an airbase in Paneriai (Ponary), the wooded outskirts of Vilnius. Construction included pits, roughly 15–20 meters in width and 5–6 meters in depth, excavated to house future fuel tanks for aircraft.<sup>8</sup> Left abandoned during the Soviet retreat in June 1941, the pits converted into a necropolis for nearly 100,000 murdered Jews and others killed by gunshot at the hands of Nazis and Lithuanian collaborators during the following three years.

The Lithuanian government was not forthcoming to the public about this Soviet military occupation. In fact, it “had not prepared either militarily or morally” for such a prospect, as Lithuanian political leaders were emphatically concerned with the question of “which neighbor Lithuania should join in the

event of a crisis.”<sup>9</sup> The vacillation of the leadership stifled decision making, and thus the government remained passive to the Soviet demands and complaints that grew more erratic over time. By the spring of 1940, the Soviets accused Lithuania of not only establishing anti-Soviet alliances with fellow Baltic countries but also accused Lithuanian President Antanas Smetona of hosting secret meetings with German Führer Adolf Hitler. Finally, on 25 May 1940, the Soviet Union accused Lithuania of kidnapping Soviet soldiers.<sup>10</sup> Three weeks after the false kidnapping claims, on 14 June 1940, the Soviet Union delivered an ultimatum to Lithuania.<sup>11</sup> Before an answer could be given, Soviet forces invaded the following day.

In one fell swoop, the Soviets breeched the Moscow Peace Treaty of 1920, the Soviet-Lithuanian Nonaggression Pact of 1926, and the Soviet-Lithuanian Mutual Assistance Agreement of 1939.<sup>12</sup> In all, this was not an ideal situation for Lithuania, as it was slowly losing everything. In fact, under the 1939 Mutual Assistance Treaty, Vilnius was not even given to Lithuania in whole; much of the territory was appropriated by the USSR, which was also in violation of the 1920 Moscow Peace Treaty.<sup>13</sup> In a mire, President Smetona acquiesced to the June 1940 Soviet invasion and, fearing his presence in Lithuania could no longer help the country, fled to Germany hours later.<sup>14</sup>

## **John F. Mazionis**

John F. Mazionis was born on 17 June 1907 in London to Lithuanian nationals who had recently relocated to England. After Lithuania proclaimed its independence in 1918, his parents returned to Lithuania in July 1920, residing in Kaunas with their British-born children (John and his sisters). At age 17, Mazionis dropped out of Kaunas’s Aušra Boys’ Gymnasium in April 1924, having accepted a messenger position for the recently opened American consulate.<sup>15</sup> With help from his boss at the consulate, Mazionis earned his high school diploma in 1930, despite working full time.<sup>16</sup> Such a dual effort surely was not easy, as the consulate had 10 employees—and only one messenger.<sup>17</sup> His role at the consulate required him to be available at all hours to complete a gamut of tasks. Robert W. Heingartner, consul to Lithuania from 1926 to 1928, kept a diary that included personal and professional commentary. According to the diary, Mazionis—referred to at times as simply “John the messenger”—could be expected to bury the consul’s dog on a summer Tuesday, retrieve and deliver diplomatic pouches on damp and dark midnights in November, and even work late nights on Sundays.<sup>18</sup>

After nearly 10 years of employment at the consulate, Mazionis demonstrated his value and was promoted to clerk.<sup>19</sup> Mazionis was vital enough to the office that he was even included in a 1931 staff photograph (and again in 1938).<sup>20</sup> Given a promotion in both title and salary in 1933, he could finally

afford to enroll in college. That fall, he began attending Vytautas Magnus University (renamed from University of Lithuania). Mazionis began his tenure in 1933 as a university student while simultaneously working at the consulate. Six years later, in 1939, he graduated with a degree in economic sciences. Thus, by the time he earned his degree, Mazionis had no elaborate skills or expertise in international affairs but rather a strong work ethic, fluency in English and Lithuanian, and years of employment with the American foreign office in Kaunas.

### **Petsamo and the USS *American Legion***

By the summer of 1940, 32-year-old John F. Mazionis was a vital employee at the U.S. legation in Kaunas, serving under Minister Owen J. C. Norem (Bernard A. Gufler served as chargé d'affaires when Norem left the post on 30 July 1940), and had been promoted from clerk to managing matters of citizenship, protection, and Veterans Administration.<sup>21</sup> His necessity bloomed under the 1940 Soviet invasion, when 102 American citizens in Lithuania needed to evacuate the newly Soviet controlled area. The region eventually became a battleground between Germany and the Soviets, as well an area in which Nazi Germany would enact its ideological aims of eradicating Jewry through any means necessary. In addition, more than 700 other American nationals in Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Germany, and the Netherlands—both of prominence (including foreign royalty and families of American diplomats) and of refugee status—were also in need of an escape.<sup>22</sup>

The civilians caravanned from their respective areas to Petsamo, a small area between Finland and the then-Soviet Union, that sits on the Barents Sea. There, they embarked the USS *American Legion* for America, which was sent from the United States for this mission. A vital conductor of this international move was none other than Mazionis, who, according to then-chargé d'affaires, Bernard Gufler, was cool, calm, courageous, and loyal.<sup>23</sup> Notably, as he was assisting hundreds of others with their escape, Mazionis's sisters fled Lithuania for Australia on their own, thanks to their British citizenship, though Soviet authorities denied his parents, both Lithuanian nationals, permission to leave.<sup>24</sup>

As for the *American Legion*, unknown to its civilian passengers, the vessel secretly boarded valuable wartime cargo. In fact, it was kept secret even in the *Department of State Bulletin*, an official record of U.S. foreign policy, which noted only that the vessel carried passengers and nothing more.<sup>25</sup> According to the U.S. Naval History and Heritage Command, a Swedish-made Bofors twin-mount 40 millimeter antiaircraft gun was covertly placed onboard.<sup>26</sup> While this achievement in itself was enormous, the apex was still to come.

Prior to the *American Legion* departing Petsamo, the United States informed Germany of its intended route and departure date to ensure its safe passage through wartime waters. Germany refused a confirmation of the *American*

*Legion's* safe passage, offering only assurance that Germany, at the time, found no reason to be hostile—though made no promises that it would not reverse that decision. The United States, then, had to decide if the mission was safe for both the passengers and the secretly loaded weapon, which, if discovered by the Germans, would be disastrous. Ultimately, the United States proceeded with its original route without further trouble.<sup>27</sup> The *American Legion* is noted as having successfully removed more than 800 civilians from battleground harm and is considered the last neutral ship to leave Petsamo during World War II.<sup>28</sup>

This logistical feat and its residual impact proved to be quite tremendous. No less than three governments in the midst of war cooperated with the U.S. government to secure the Bofors gun: the British, Swedish, and Finnish. The weapon was immediately replicated stateside and placed aboard American battleships by late 1942. The gun significantly upgraded the anti-aircraft capability of the ships of the U.S. Navy. Thus, the United States's mission success was twofold: the government safely extracted its citizens from warzones and secretly procured a weapon that was instrumental in future battle successes.<sup>29</sup> Mazionis would later write that the achievement, as of 1953, had yet to be equaled.

## **Lithuania's Sovietization and the Lithuanian Activist Front (LAF)**

Up to this time, the body of the Lithuanian government, the Seimas, was a parliament comprised of multiple political party representatives. After the Soviet invasion, it was dismantled and Soviet-rigged elections replaced the multiparty parliament with strictly Communists.<sup>30</sup> A month later, during 14–15 July, the Sovietized Seimas—renamed “The People's Diet”—assembled and, by 21 July, approved of and declared Soviet rule in Lithuania.<sup>31</sup> Most Western nations did not recognize the annexation by the Soviets of Lithuania, including America. That July, U.S. Acting Secretary of State Benjamin Sumner Welles issued a press release declaring the United States was “opposed to predatory activities no matter whether they are carried out by the use of force or by the threat of force.”<sup>32</sup> Unfortunately, the announcement of nonrecognition did not come with much reverberating support and the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic (LSSR) became part of the USSR on 3 August 1940. Thus, the limits of American principles were exposed. Lithuania quickly lost its 22-year independence and its formal international recognition was smothered by Soviet rule.

Sovietization in Lithuania ensued rapidly, and the Soviets forced Lithuania to cut all of its international ties. Following the success of the repatriation mission, diplomat Charles E. Bohlen of the U.S. embassy in Moscow arrived in Kaunas in late August. He oversaw the legation closure, as the Soviets demanded that all foreign offices in Lithuania must shutter.<sup>33</sup> Mazionis joined Bohlen on his return to Moscow, taking with them the legation's diplomatic pouches.

There, he worked on passport and citizenship needs under the consular section, consisting of senior staffer E. Allan Lightner Jr.<sup>34</sup>

At the same time, Lithuanian representatives were recalled from abroad.<sup>35</sup> However, with most of the international community following a nonrecognition policy regarding Lithuania's incorporation into the USSR, Lithuania's diplomatic corps abroad retained their credentials (though they were fairly powerless), and they did their best to refuse orders from the Soviets. With the swift Soviet takeover, Lithuanians were left shocked, angry, and without a way to reckon the loss or to fight back. Michael MacQueen remarks on the problems of a Lithuanian nationalist zeal without any claim to an independent country: "Lithuania had to confront why their people had, over centuries, been swallowed up by others, and in the process nearly been eradicated as a cultural presence."<sup>36</sup> As Lithuania underwent its rapid transformation into a Soviet Republic, some Lithuanian diplomats at posts abroad, including Lithuanian representative to Germany, Colonel Kazys Škirpa, formed a prototype government-in-exile, the National Committee. It aimed to "organize a broad anti-Soviet front" and was the precursor to what became known as the *Lietuvių Aktyvistų Frontas* (the Lithuanian Activist Front, or the LAF).<sup>37</sup>

The LAF as a resistance organization against the Soviets began during a meeting between National Committee members in Škirpa's Berlin apartment on 17 November 1940. Škirpa helmed the group and, in his own words, the LAF from its start had the backing and support of the Nazis—and the German military intelligence service, the Abwehr, at that.<sup>38</sup> The Soviets frequently arrested (and traditionally deported) anyone deemed anti-Soviet, criminal, or socially dangerous, and life under the Soviets grew exponentially erratic. Such aggression, coupled with rapid Sovietization complemented the prevalent, yet unsubstantiated, Judeo-Bolshevik myth, which encouraged a widespread anti-Semitic illusion that the Jews not only controlled Lithuania but also were indivisibly united with the Soviets.<sup>39</sup> Thus, for non-Jewish Lithuanians, a jingoist yearning for Lithuanian identity and independence festered into an underground political and social anti-Soviet, as well as anti-Semitic, movement.<sup>40</sup>

The resistance organization was built on both passive and active resistance. This included propaganda and armed units, all established within various government and civic institutions and boasted 2,000 members at its inception.<sup>41</sup> Between late 1940 and early 1941, the LAF's foreign-based leadership agreed that a revolt was to occur when its leadership determined that conditions were right.<sup>42</sup> To achieve this goal, they collected arms, made plans, and absorbed armed resistance units. Moreover, the LAF's propaganda became "saturated" with Nazi-style anti-Semitism.<sup>43</sup> In fact, on behalf of the LAF, Škirpa argued to Nazi leadership in Berlin that it was in Germany's interest to "sponsor an

anti-Bolshevik national liberation movement and a restored Lithuanian state.”<sup>44</sup> They saw Nazi Germany as the only power capable of defeating their occupier, the Soviet Union, and hoped that opportunities to reestablish an independent Lithuania might arise.

In December 1940, the LAF distributed within Lithuania about 800 copies of a leaflet titled “From Bolshevik Slavery to a New Lithuania” (“Iš bolševikinės vergijos į naująją Lietuvą”). The content included a list of problems inside Lithuania, including the complaint that under Lithuanian independence, Jews were not restrained (*pazaboti*).<sup>45</sup> Historian Saulius Sužiedėlis remarks that Bronys Raila, the LAF’s chairman of propaganda, complained, “the countless ‘Jewish breed,’ coddled by [President Antanas] Smetona, had made Lithuania one of the most Jewish states in Europe.” He called for a state purified of “Jews, parasites, and traitors” and declared that the LAF “is determined to completely separate the Jews from the Lithuanian state.”<sup>46</sup> On 24 March 1941, the LAF disseminated their “Directives for the Liberation of Lithuania” across the country: “We must create an atmosphere that is so stifling for the Jews that not a single Jew will think that he will have even the most minimal rights or possibility of life in the new Lithuania.”<sup>47</sup>

### **Lithuania in March 1941: An American Diplomat’s Report**

In Moscow, Mazionis was assisting with visas in the consular section, which was managed by Lightner. Lightner later remarked that they “had lots of business with the Russian foreign office to try to make arrangements to get people out [of Russia],” which included, in his words, “horse trading.”<sup>48</sup> In one anecdote, to secure exit permits for those with American citizenship, their office withheld entry visas for Russian technicians who needed to leave for training in the United States. He recalls explaining to the Soviets’ office, “[W]e are extremely busy these days and just haven’t been able to get around to it, but if you could possibly manage to answer our notes 15 through 35 with respect to the Americans waiting to visit the Embassy, it might help us to get to the visa cases.’ The effect was magical.”<sup>49</sup> In another example, the deft diplomat used his skills to again benefit the American office and Department of State at large that, six months into the Soviet invasion, still had no ear to the ground regarding the occupied areas. This included Lithuania, which by then was boasting a homegrown, foreign organized, anti-Semitic, and anti-Soviet movement, the LAF.

Mazionis, having left his parents in Lithuania (who, by 1941, were aged and ill), notes he was eager to visit. He writes in 1953, “Upon my request and with the strong and repeated demarches by the Chief of the Embassy Consular Section [Lightner], at the Soviet Foreign Office, I was eventually granted permission by the Soviet government to visit my parents in Lithuania.”<sup>50</sup> In

these horse trading deals, Lightner managed to negotiate Mazionis's return to the country, resulting in yet another twofold success for Mazionis (the first being the Petsamo mission): he not only visited his parents, a perfect cover and personal comfort but also completed an intelligence-gathering mission within heavily shrouded Lithuania. Despite being watched and followed by the Soviets during his stay, Mazionis used his Lithuanian acquaintances in the press and within various walks of life to gain a clear understanding of the situation in Lithuania at the time.<sup>51</sup>

Mazionis traveled to Kaunas, and may have gone to Vilnius, given the details of his report. He explicitly describes the "large gasoline tanks," which were in the process of being installed underground in many parts of the country.<sup>52</sup> This included Vilnius, where they were later used for mass murder under Nazi occupation. In terms of his sources, they were predominantly members of subversive underground organizations; they were versed in the political and social environment of the local populace—in other words, he very likely met with LAF members. He names their Berlin-based leadership and details their roles, including Škirpa ("the strong man"). He even compliments their "extensive system of espionage."<sup>53</sup> Relying on his experience and sources, he writes that the local populace resented the Soviet occupation and blamed the local Jewry for many ills.

His report features so much anti-Semitism that it is perhaps difficult to say if his personal beliefs influenced his reporting, or if he was reporting on experiences as matters of fact. He uses gross generalizations to describe the Jewish population on the first pages alone.<sup>54</sup> They are the "strongest" supporters of the Soviets, they are the "wealthiest" in Lithuania, and "[a]ll the shops in Kaunas have Jewish commissars" whose employees are predominantly Jewish. He writes that the hatred of the "Reds" is "deep" with Lithuanians—so much so, that even teenage boys carry pistols (to fight the Soviets, who apparently are supported strongly by the Jews). Mazionis also comments that the Jewish population comprises about 7–8 percent of the population in total, essentially suggesting there is a disproportionate amount of employed (wealthy) Jewish merchants to regular Lithuanians. He concludes by writing, "the new regime is usually described as 'the Jewish Government'," thus doubling down on the pervasive Judeo-Bolshevik myth.<sup>55</sup>

Shortly after the visit, upon his return to Moscow, Mazionis submitted a report dated 22 March 1941 on "the situation in Lithuania" through his superiors at the Office of the Secretary of State. Its contents were, and are, so valuable to understanding Lithuania during this tumultuous time that it was published 54 years later for public consumption and historical considerations.<sup>56</sup> The report was as necessary as it was robust, and for this, Walter C. Thurston, minister counselor of the embassy in the Soviet Union, told Mazi-

onis that the State Department “appreciated highly” the information submitted.<sup>57</sup> This compliment is the only identifiable direct product of the report; to date, no other operations or inquiries were conducted by the State Department (or any other U.S. government office) as a result of Mazionis’s findings. The indirect historical value of his report is that, as is now known, it was a dark foreshadowing of later events.

By the summer of 1941, Mazionis finished his time in Moscow. He, along with two other clerks, took holiday leave to Stockholm, which proved to be permanent.<sup>58</sup> They left Moscow on 19 June. At the same time, Lithuania was ripe for a contentious, and even predictable, explosion. Mazionis’s report in March predicted this suspense: “The general spirit of the people is one of expectancy and eagerness for war between the Soviets and the Nazis. Although the people desire to see the Germans in Lithuania instead of the Reds.”<sup>59</sup> He stresses that locals hoped “Lithuania may arise again as an independent state.”<sup>60</sup> The expected war arrived in June—though not before massive arrests and deportations by the *Narodnyi Komissariat Vnutrennikh Del* (People’s Commissariat for Internal Affairs, NKVD) spread raucously across Lithuania. Between 15,851 and 20,000 people labeled “anti-Soviet elements” (men, women, and children) were rounded up and deported in cattle cars, predominantly to Siberia.<sup>61</sup>

The deportations pushed an anxious society toward catastrophe; the terror they created convinced Lithuanians that the country was facing imminent destruction.<sup>62</sup> The colossal expulsions by the Soviets cemented local rancor and hostilities against Jews, as Lithuanians cemented their affiliation of Jews with the Soviet oppressors. Jews were blamed for everything: “Sovietization, arrests of Lithuanians, destruction of the army, separation of the Catholic Church from the State.”<sup>63</sup> Just days before the Nazi invasion, the LAF published another statement, harkening back to their March 1941 proclamation, as well as (unknowingly at the time) Mazionis’s secret report:

The crucial day of reckoning has come for the Jews at last. Lithuania must be liberated not only from the Asiatic Bolshevik slavery but also from the Jewish yoke of long standing. . . . All Jews, without any exception, are strictly ordered to immediately leave Lithuania.<sup>64</sup>

How they were to leave Lithuania remained ambiguous, but the overall message was clear.

The Nazi sortie into Lithuania was the beginning of Operation Barbarossa, the premeditated German military attack into the eastern front that breached the 1939 Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. At the time of the June 1941 offensive, an estimated 203,000–207,000 Jews lived in Lithuania, including the recently annexed Vilnius region.<sup>65</sup> By that December, a mere 43,000 Jews remained.<sup>66</sup> The

striking drop in population between June and December 1941 was fundamentally due to mass murder perpetrated by the Nazis and their local collaborators.

The Jewish population's dramatic plummet stresses the actions, and their consequences, of local Lithuanians throughout the Holocaust. However, causation also can be rightfully attributed to, in part, the superpowers of the milieu—both in exploitations (by the Soviet Union and, later, Nazi Germany) and diminutive execution (the United States). In less than three years (1939–41), ideology and politics metastasized in the Lithuanian consciousness, and materialized as a tangible and concrete warzone. The power struggles within Lithuania as imposed by Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany, with Mazionis as a contextual focal point, offers historical insight to the confined time of the first Soviet occupation, but can also be considered supplemental evidence of the often unintended destructive path that can emerge if an entity, particularly a superpower, abuses the theoretical and literal uses of its authority.

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## Notes

1. Alfred Erich Senn, "The Formation of the Foreign Office, 1918–1921," *Slavic Review* 21, no. 3 (September 1962): 507, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3000451>.
2. "Diplomatic Signs in Kaunas City, 1919–1940" [Diplomatijos ženklai Kauno mieste 1919–1940 m.], *Diplomatinis Kaunas*, last accessed 19 October 2018. An interactive map, newly released by the Lithuanian government, showcases diplomatic offices in Kaunas between 1919 and 1940. This is one of few sources to identify which offices were forcibly closed by the Soviets. They include the United States, Sweden, Argentina, Hungary, France, Spain, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Denmark, Finland, Norway, Latvia, Estonia, and Italy. Others, such as Czechoslovakia, Belgium, and Poland, closed earlier.
3. In a scheduled file destruction, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) destroyed administrative files of 1912–35 for foreign-located U.S. offices, eradicating most other primary sources regarding Mazionis's time in Kaunas.
4. V. Stanley Vardys and Judith B. Sedaitis, *Lithuania: Rebel Nation* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997), 46–47.
5. "The British War Bluebook: Agreement of Mutual Assistance between the United Kingdom and Poland-London, August 25, 1939," Avalon Project—Yale Law School, last accessed 18 October 2018.
6. Tomas Balkelis, "War, Ethnic Conflict and the Refugee Crisis in Lithuania, 1939–1940," *Contemporary European History* 16, no. 4 (November 2007): 463–62, 466, 471, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777307004122>; and Andrzej Żbikowski, "Poles and Jews in the Vilnius Region in 1939–1941," *Darbai ir dienos* [Deeds and days], no. 67 (2017): 151–61, <http://dx.doi.org/10.7220/2335-8769.67.7>.
7. Bronis J. Kaslas, "The Lithuanian Strip in the Soviet-German Secret Diplomacy, 1939–1941," *Journal of Baltic Studies* 4, no. 3 (Fall 1973): 216, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01629777300000241>. Gen Stasys Raštikis, delegate for Lithuania in the negotiations, denies that Vilnius was a trade for Soviet bases. He maintained Vilnius was returned to Lithuania as per the Treaty of Versailles in 1920, and that the guise of any Soviet benevolence should be recognized as incorrect. See Constantine R. Jurgėla, *Lithuania: The Outpost of Freedom* (National Guard of Lithuania in Exile, 1976), 186–87.
8. Ernst Klee, Willi Dressen, and Volker Riess, eds., *"The Good Old Days": The Holocaust as Seen by Its Perpetrators and Bystanders* (Old Saybrook, CT: Konecky & Konecky, 1988), 42.
9. Alfonsas Eidintas and Vytautas Žalys, *Lithuania in European Politics: The Years of the First*

- Republic, 1918–1940*, ed. Edvardas Tuskenis (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 180–81.
10. Vardys and Sedaitis, *Lithuania*, 47.
  11. Thomas Remeikis, "The Decision of the Lithuanian Government to Accept the Soviet Ultimatum of June 14, 1940," *Lituanus* 21, no. 4 (Winter 1975).
  12. For an in-depth publication on the first months of the occupation, see Algirdas Jakubcionis, Stasys Knezyz, and Arūnas Streikus, *Occupation and Annexation: The First Soviet Occupation (1940–1944)*, vol. 1, *The Crimes of the Totalitarian Regimes in Lithuania* (Vilnius, Lithuania: Margi Rastai, 2006).
  13. Jurgėla, *Lithuania*, 197.
  14. Eidintas and Žalys, *Lithuania in European Politics*, 182–83; and Alfonsas Eidintas, *Antanas Smetona and His Lithuania: From the National Liberation Movement to an Authoritarian Regime (1893–1940)*, trans. Alfred Erich Senn (Leiden, Netherlands: Rodopi, 2015), 126–27, <https://doi.org/10.1163/97890004302044>.
  15. "John F. Mazionis, Personnel File, 1953," Application and CV for Civil Employment, Record Group 59, General Records of the Department of State, National Archives, Washington, DC.
  16. He notes only a single "Principal Officer," but, between 1924 and 1930, there were three changes of authority: Harry E. Carlson (1924–26), Robert W. Heingartner (1926–28), and Hugh S. Fullerton (1928–32).
  17. Robert W. Heingartner, "Prologue: A Letter from Harry Carlson, the American Consul in Kaunas, to Robert W. Heingartner," in *Lithuania in the 1920s: A Diplomat's Diary* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2009), 11.
  18. Heingartner, *Lithuania in the 1920s*, 161, 188, 219.
  19. Hugh S. Fullerton published a fascinating article on Lithuania, and the U.S. consulate-legation between the 1920s and 1930s. Hugh S. Fullerton, "Lietuvos Respublikos," *American Foreign Service Journal* (May 1933): 166–70.
  20. Fullerton, "Lietuvos Respublikos." The U.S. Embassy in Lithuania prominently displays the photograph on its website, last accessed 19 October 2018. See "History of the U.S. and Lithuania," U.S. Embassy in Lithuania. For the 1938 photograph, see the *American Foreign Service Journal* 15, no. 4 (April 1938): 240.
  21. The offices of the U.S. representation in Kaunas changed from consulate to legation on 31 May 1930.
  22. Crown Princess Martha of Norway, as well as Bernard Gufler's wife and children.
  23. "John Mazionis, Personnel File, 1953," Letter from Gufler to Mazionis, General Records of the Department of State, National Archives, Washington, DC.
  24. "John Mazionis, Personnel File, 1953," Application and CV for Civil Employment.
  25. "Repatriation of American Citizens," *Department of State Bulletin* 3, no. 60 (17 August 1940): 115.
  26. "American Legion (AP-35), 1941–1946," Naval History and Heritage Command, 28 November 2017.
  27. "Note to Germany on the Course of the 'American Legion'," *Department of State Bulletin* 3, no. 61 (24 August 1940): 152–54.
  28. "American Legion (AP-35), 1941–1946."
  29. "Note to Germany on the Course of the 'American Legion'," 152–54.
  30. Vardys and Sedaitis, *Lithuania*, 52.
  31. Eidintas and Žalys, *Lithuania in European Politics*, 185; and Karen Sutton, *The Massacre of Jews in Lithuania* (Jerusalem, Israel: Gefen Publishing House, 2008), 81–83.
  32. "Welles Declaration, Department of State Press Release, 'Statement by the Acting Secretary of State, the Honorable Sumner Welles,'" 23 July 1940, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, NARA, RG 59, accessed 19 October 2018.
  33. Bohlen was restationed to Tokyo immediately after. "The Foreign Service Personnel Changes," *Department of State Bulletin* 3, no. 63 (30 November 1940): 467. Although inaccessible to this writer, Bohlen's memoir likely illuminates this time. Charles E. Bohlen, *Witness to History, 1929–1969* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1972).
  34. "John Mazionis, Personnel File, 1953."

35. *Foreign Relations of the United States Diplomatic Papers, 1940, General*, vol. 1, ed. Matilda F. Axton and Shirley L. Phillips (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1959), Document 427.
36. Michael MacQueen, "The Context of Mass Destruction: Agents and Prerequisites of the Holocaust in Lithuania," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 12, no. 1 (Spring 1998): 27–28, <https://doi.org/10.1093/hgs/12.1.27>.
37. Eidintas, *Antanas Smetona and His Lithuania*, 128.
38. "From K. Škirpa's Notes about the Foundation of the LAF and Its Links with Nazi Organizations," in *Documents Accuse*, comp. Boleslovas Baranauskas and Kazys Rukšėnas, ed. E. Rozauskas, trans. L. Valeika and A. Aukštikalnienė (Lithuanian), trans. Vl. Grodzenskis (German), English version ed. Vl. Grodzenskis (Vilnius, Lithuania: Gintaras, 1970), 66–67.
39. Eidintas, *Jews, Lithuanians and the Holocaust*, 162; Dieckmann and Sužiedėlis, *The Persecution and Mass Murder of Lithuanian Jews during Summer and Fall of 1941*, 101; and MacQueen, "Mass Destruction," 35.
40. Stasys Zymantas (Žakevičius), "Lithuania Militants," *Lituanus* 2, no. 7 (June 1956).
41. Arūnas Bubnys, *Lietuvių antinacine rezistencija, 1941–1944 m* [Nazi resistance movement in Lithuania, 1941–1944], trans. Vjolė Arbas (Vilnius, Lithuania: VAGA, 2003), 47.
42. Algirdas Martin Budreckis, *The Lithuanian National Revolt of 1941* (Boston, MA: Lithuanian Encyclopedia Press, 1968), 35.
43. Joseph Levinson, ed., *The Shoah (Holocaust) in Lithuania* (Vilnius, Lithuania: Vilna Gaon Jewish State Museum, 2006), 163.
44. Saulius Sužiedėlis, "Lithuanian Collaboration during the Second World War: Past Realities, Present Perceptions," in *Kollaboration in Nordosteuropa: Erscheinungsformen Und Deutungen Im 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Joachim Tauber (Wiesbaden, Germany: Harrassowitz, 2006), 148; and "Memorandum by the Head of Political Division (Doc #650, 321/193369-70)," in *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918–1945. Series D (1937–1945)*, vol. 12, *The War Years: February 1–June 22, 1941* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1962), 1054–55.
45. Kazys Škirpa, *Sukilimas Lietuvos Suverenumui Atstatyti Dokumentinė Apžvalga* [Uprising for the restoration of Lithuania's sovereignty] (Washington, DC: privately published, 1973), 123.
46. Sužiedėlis, "Lithuanian Collaboration during the Second World War," 149. See also "Foreign Saviors, Native Disciples: Perspectives on Collaboration in Lithuania, 1940–1945," in *Collaboration and Resistance during the Holocaust: Belarus, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania*, ed. David Gaunt, Paul A. Levine, and Laura Palosuo (Bern, Switzerland: Peter Lang, 2004), 333–41.
47. In 1991–92, during an interview published across a few issues of a Lithuanian magazine, Saulius Sužiedėlis announced the discovery of an original copy of the "Directives" inside the Edvardas Turauskas Papers, Hoover Institution Library. See "1941 Metų Sukilimo Baltosios Dėmės. Pokalbis Su Sauliumi Sužiedėliu," *Akiračiai* 233, no. 9 (1991): 6–7; 234, no. 10 (1991): 8–9; and 235, no. 1 (1992): 8–10. A copy of the document is reprinted in Liudas Truska and Vytautas Vareikis, *The Preconditions for the Holocaust: Anti-Semitism in Lithuania, Second Half of the 19th Century—June 1941*, vol. 1, *The Crimes of the Totalitarian Regimes in Lithuania: The Nazi Occupation* (Vilnius, Lithuania: Margi Raštai, 2004), 245. The document itself is located in the Edvardas Turauskas Papers, Hoover Institution Library, CSUZ 75015-A, Box 5, "Lietuvai išlaisvinti nurodymai," 24 March 1941.
48. E. Allan Lightner Jr., interview with Richard D. McKinzie, Oral History transcripts, 26 October 1973, Harry S. Truman Presidential Library and Museum, Washington, DC, 26, hereafter Lightner interview.
49. Lightner interview, 26–28.
50. "John Mazionis, Personnel File, 1953," Application and CV for Civil Employment.
51. "John Mazionis, Personnel File, 1953," Application and CV for Civil Employment.
52. Senn, "Lithuania in March 1941," 153.

53. Senn, "Lithuania in March 1941," 157.
54. Senn, "Lithuania in March 1941," 153.
55. Senn, "Lithuania in March 1941," 153.
56. Senn, "Lithuania in March 1941," 153.
57. "John Mazionis, Personnel File, 1953," Application and CV for Civil Employment.
58. "John Mazionis, Personnel File, 1953," Application and CV for Civil Employment.
59. Senn, "Lithuania in March 1941," 155.
60. Senn, "Lithuania in March 1941," 154. Christoph Dieckmann and Saulius Sužiedėlis concur: "For many Lithuanians, the only realistic hope for liberation from Stalin's tyranny lay in a Soviet-German conflict." Christoph Dieckmann and Saulius Sužiedėlis, *The Persecution and Mass Murder of Lithuanian Jews during Summer and Fall of 1941* (Vilnius, Lithuania: Margi Raštai, 2006), 3:98.
61. Anton Weiss-Wendt and Ugur Ümit Üngör, "Collaboration in Genocide: The Ottoman Empire 1915–1916, the German-Occupied Baltic 1941–1944, and Rwanda 1994," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 25, no. 3 (2011): 435n81, <https://doi.org/10.1093/hgs/dcr057>; and Eugenijus Grunskis, *Lietuvos gyventojų tremimai 1940–1941, 1945–1953 metais* [The deportations of Lithuania's inhabitants, 1940–1941, 1945–1953] (Vilnius, Lithuania: Pasaulio Lietuvių Bendromene, 1996), 38–53.
62. Weiss-Wendt and Üngör, "Collaboration in Genocide," 420.
63. Alfonsas Eidintas, *Jews, Lithuanians and the Holocaust*, trans. Vijolė Arbas and Edvardas Truskensis, 2d ed. (Vilnius, Lithuania: Taurapolis, 2012), 145.
64. Jürgen Matthäus, "Key Aspects of German Anti-Jewish Policy," *Lithuania and the Jews: The Holocaust Chapter, Symposium Presentations* (Washington, DC: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Center for Advanced Studies, 2004), 18; and *Documents Accuse*, 124–25.
65. Yitzhak Arad, "The Murder of the Jews in German-Occupied Lithuania," in *The Vanished World of the Lithuanian Jews*, ed. Alvydas Nikžentaitis, Stefan Schreiner, and Darius Staliūnas (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2004), 176.
66. Arūnas Bubnys, "The Holocaust in Lithuania: An Outline of the Major Stages and Their Results," in *The Vanished World of the Lithuanian Jews*, 212.