

REPORT FROM LITHUANIA

October 1946

This report was given by a foreign observer who has an excellent knowledge of conditions in the southern Baltic states and of the Russian Military organization in Lithuania:

1. Army

There has been a substantial reduction of man power (certain age brackets) in various Lithuanian Units in cooperation with Russian operations. The twenty divisions (20 Div.) that were in the country at the close of 1945 are still in existence. The newer units being formed are in camp depots. But only the higher ranking officers and some of the staff personnel are on actual duty. (about 2,000 men per Div.) In the fall of 1946 eighty thousand men returned from the Red Army and proceeded to strip various military depots of their field equipment.

2. Air Corps

The air-defense which was organized in the fall of 1946 is still very weak. The field crews have been very much limited. The Russians have two bombers, and between three and four hundred pursuit and fighter planes at various fields. Some of these air-fields are located in Kowno, Siauliai, (Schaulen) Panevezys, (Poniewicz) Klaipeda, (Memel) and Wilno.

During the early summer special labor troops with the assistance of the local population were at work repairing damaged German airfields. One airfield in the Kjeidany region, north of Kowno has been closed to civilians because of the Russian experimental work in connection with flying bombs.

3. Coast Artillery

There are heavy coastal fortifications around Klaipeda and Pillau which have been constructed by the Russians. The danger zone is 8 km in depth and is heavily fenced in by barbed wire to keep out all unauthorized persons. Klaipeda is still a U-boat base, and the boat bunkers which were not damaged are now used by the Russians.

About 2,000 officers, engineers, and technicians from Riga and the Lithuanian Coastal Artillery zone have been detailed to Pillau for further construction of coastal fortifications.

4. Political Troops

The MVD now has a membership of 60,000 men. In view of the reduction of Russian army personnel in Lithuania the MVD was increased by 10,000 men since 1945. This addition was made to the MVD troops to help enforce a more rigid control over the land and especially curb the activities of the Lithuanian partisans.

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