

The patriotic thunder of Lithuania

Hundreds of years of war and peace. First, a handful of pagan tribes. Later, a grand duchy. Lithuania, even though a small and perhaps relatively insignificant country now, is impressively rich with its history and traditions. Of course throughout the history of Lithuania, many hardships have arisen, yet the attempts to destroy the Lithuanian culture were to no avail. Such a rich experience kept in our hearts thanks to the patriotism burning in many of brave Lithuanians' hearts. Such a case of patriotism was showcased from 1944 to 1953, when Lithuanian patriots attempted to stand up against the might of the Soviet Union. Who would have been mad enough to try and face off against the dragon that was the Soviet Union?

A young man chooses to fight for the independence of his country. Outgunned, outnumbered, seemingly on a suicide mission with just a desperate wish to save the nation from an inevitable death. I think many foreigners would think of such an act as suicide. Yet I feel such bravery is what kept the nation alive. In the years 1944 and 1945 around 30,000 equipped men gathered in the forests of Lithuania, later on joined about 20,000 more. What followed was almost 10 years of constant fighting. One after another the young men were killed, locked up in gulags and sent to Siberia. What is shocking, I think, is the fact that it was known, that one could end up dead or in jail. Even though the war was lost, I think, the resistance was not just a spark, but a great thunder, showing how patriotic the Lithuanian nation is. It kept the wish of liberty alive and well in our peoples' minds.

It is mindboggling how hard one can love his country and how unconditionally one can fight for it. Unfortunately I feel today Lithuania would not have as many brave people wanting to step up for their home nation. It is true that there are many patriotic young people, yet I think many still ought to learn from the past and dedicate at least a small piece of their heart to their own country. It is immensely important to love the nation you are born to, to speak your own language, to love your people. It is the basis for any country. The post-war resistance, I think is the ultimate example to draw strength from for us, Lithuanians.

Every Lithuanian, even a young one, feels a certain pain when thinking of the Soviet occupation in the 20th century. But not even once did the nation stop fighting in the past. The partisans in Lithuania not only tried to keep it free, but have kept the nation breathing. Perhaps it was their

single dream to see Lithuania as it is now - free. A true Lithuanian should never forget the partisans.
It is to be hoped that one will always feel respect to the fathers of our liberty.

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