

Šarūnas Liekis

1939

THE YEAR THAT  
CHANGED EVERYTHING  
IN LITHUANIA'S HISTORY



Amsterdam - New York, NY 2010

**Acknowledgements xiii**

**Introduction 1**

**Historiography 5**

**Chapter 1**

THE INTERWAR LITHUANIAN REPUBLIC: BETWEEN PAST AND PRESENT

History 15

Economic Dimension 26

Political Dimension 31

Social Dimension 34

Defence Potential: The Main Parameters 36

The Determinants of Mobilisation 38

Lithuania 39

Germany 42

The USSR 44

Poland 45

**Chapter 2**

A DEVELOPING CRISIS

Memel 49

Politics in the Klaipėda District 56

Flotten Parade 60

The Vydūnas Affair: A German-Lithuanian Cultural Stand-off 67

The Beginning of the End: A Creeping Takeover 73

The Distant Victory: Rallying the Forces 82

Plans and Reality 84

Embraced by Nazi Germany 91

## **Chapter 3**

### **A NEW FOCUS**

- International Politics and the Shift into the Soviet Sphere of Influence 115**
- The Soviet Takeover of Vilnius 131**
- The Takeover of Vilnius by Lithuania 154**
- The Mobilisation 158**
- The March on Vilnius 163**
- The Social Situation 177**
- The Economic Situation 180**
- Political Crimes 191**
- The Suwalki Triangle 200**

## **Chapter 4**

### **THE POLISH AND JEWISH QUESTIONS AND THE NEW AUTHORITIES**

- How did the Suwalki Jewish Crisis Start? 207**
- The New Old Polish Question in Lithuania 213**
- The Catholic Church and the Polish Question in Vilnius 220**
- The Concordat with the Vatican and its Application  
in the Vilnius Area 223**
- Possible Solutions to the Vilnius Issue 231**
- Drifting into Soviet Hands 234**
- The Patterns of Anti-Jewish Violence prior to 1939:**
  - The Lithuanian Case 242**
- Jewish–Polish Relations Facing the Lithuanian Administration  
in Vilnius, 1939–1940 256**
- The Failure to Revive the Vilnius Jewish Community in 1939 287**

## **Chapter 5**

### THE END OF THE REPUBLIC

Growing Tensions **309**

The Lithuanian Army and Its Readiness for Conflict **314**

The Beginning of the End **328**

**Endnotes 343**

**References 372**

**Index 382**