

LATVIJAS VĒSTURNIEKU KOMISIJAS RAKSTI

14. sējums

**THE HIDDEN AND FORBIDDEN  
HISTORY OF LATVIA  
UNDER SOVIET AND NAZI  
OCCUPATIONS 1940–1991**

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Symposium of the Commission  
of the Historians of Latvia

Volume 14

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raksti

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HISTORY OF LATVIA  
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OCCUPATIONS 1940–1991**

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of the Historians of Latvia

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Inesis Feldmanis (1941–1945)  
Irēne Šneidere (1940–1941)  
Aivars Stranga (Holocaust)  
Heinrihs Strods (1944–1991)

### Volume 14

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## Foreword

Latvia experienced a series of tumultuous and calamitous events during the twentieth century. A number of these have been the subject of intense controversy and debate. The main issues of contention concern those periods when Latvia was occupied by the two totalitarian regimes of Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia. The first Soviet occupation, which lasted from 1940–1941, was followed by four years of Nazi rule, which ended with the return of the Red Army in 1944–1945. The second Soviet occupation lasted more than four decades, until the reestablishment of Latvia's independence in 1991. The mass destruction of the Second World War, along with the brutal policies implemented by both occupying powers, resulted in wide-scale economic dislocation, human suffering, bloodshed and loss of life.

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Latvia, along with the other newly liberated countries of Central and Eastern Europe, undertook sweeping economic and political reforms. Latvia's leaders also undertook to bring about the objective evaluation and research of the country's tragic history. In 1998, the President of Latvia established an international history commission to investigate a whole series of controversial issues, including the crimes of the Holocaust during the Nazi German occupation, and the mass deportations and repressions against civilians committed under Soviet rule. The Commission's history experts established that both occupying regimes inflicted unspeakable suffering and wilfully killed a great number of innocent people.

Since its inception, the Commission has held numerous international scholarly conferences and issued 13 volumes of proceedings. Their aim has been to accumulate objective evidence and offer balanced insights into Latvia's twentieth-century history. Gradually, myths and misconceptions promulgated by the propaganda publications issued during the Nazi Germany and Soviet Russian occupations are giving way documented facts and verified figures.

The Commission of the Historians of Latvia has been actively cooperating with museums, archives and educational institutions. It has received widespread praise for its work, both in Latvia and abroad. This English-language publication presents a compilation of research conducted over the past few years by historians residing in Latvia, the United States, Sweden and Germany. Such an international perspective is essential for providing differentiated analyses of Latvia's history.

I have no doubt that this publication will be of great interest to all those who wish to learn more about some of the most trying times that Latvia has ever experienced. As a new member state of the European Union and the NATO Alliance, Latvia is eager to foster a stronger sense of Pan-European brotherhood. This will only be possible if the people of Europe hold a common vision of the future, based on common, overriding values and a common understanding of past events.

*Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga*

President of the Republic of Latvia

## Introduction

If you stand on the terrace in front of the chapel in Rīga Forest Cemetery and let your eyes glide along the tree-lined mall, your view will be cut short by a black massive monument. The lines of trees go on; it is your view that stops. That was not always so. During Latvia's early independence and for a while afterward your eye could follow the mall to the far end and meet a red granite memorial with a man's face in relief and the name Jānis Čakste (1859–1927), the gravesite of independent Latvia's first President. The monolith now blocking the view marks the gravesite of the Communist Prime Minister of the Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic Vilis Lācis (1904–1965), a popular writer during the independence and holder of the Stalin Prize for Literature during the Soviet era in Latvia. It was placed there on purpose – to stop the eye short, to hide the Čakste memorial and to demonstrate that even in death the Soviet regime had triumphed. Čakste was hidden and – forbidden. Yet it was not that simple. Though carefully tended, the Lācis monument did not become a memorial of the people. It was rather the hidden Čakste that people remembered and flocked around on Memorial Day for the Dead in November and other occasions to lay down flowers and light hundreds of candles. The regime had the visitors watched, but still they came. The regime tried its best to bury Čakste for good and planted a row of fast-growing trees in front of the memorial to block even the close up view. It did not succeed. The trees came down with the end of the regime. Lācis still blocks the view from the chapel, but Čakste is no longer hidden behind him.

We have given this collection of scholarly essays the title *The Hidden and Forbidden History of Latvia under Soviet and Nazi Occupations 1940–1991* because much of the history of the country and its people was indeed both hidden and forbidden. It was hidden not only from the population, but even more – from the outside world. The population still had its memory, of course, and could find its way around; the outside world, however, was shown only the occupants' version of history – twisted and distorted to their own ends. That was true during the two Soviet occupations (1940–41 and 1944/45–1991) and the occupation by National Socialist Germany in 1941, which ended in Western Latvia with the German capitulation on 8 May 1945. Neither of the occupying powers was interested in the Latvian nation's point of view or even documentable truth. At times the Communists found the Nazi version useful to their own ends, such as in regard to atrocities attributed to Latvians during World War II. It was forbidden – and dangerous – to carry out research that would contradict the officially established historical point of view. This volume attempts to clear up the view.

The essays offer a small selection of the work supported by the Commission of the Historians of Latvia from 1998 to 2004 to bring the hidden and forbidden history to light and make it available to scholars and reading public in the English language. The Commission was established by the President and the Prime Minister of Latvia and charged primarily with the task of setting forth unequivocally and clearly the crimes against humanity during the rule of the occupation regimes. It pursues its mission through international conferences and publications, the promotion of historical research and the development of appropriate historical curricula in schools and universities. The Commission is, however, not a political or judicial body. Its primary charge is to encourage and support historical research of the occupation period in Latvia. Research to date has been assembled in thirteen volumes of conference reports and research articles. Most of it has been written in Latvian. This, the fourteenth volume, constitutes an attempt to summarize and illustrate the Commission's basic findings to date.

The Commission carries out its mission in four Sub-Commissions: the Soviet Occupation of 1940–41; the German Occupation 1941–44/45; the Holocaust in the Territory of Latvia 1941–45; the Soviet Occupation from 1944/45. The articles in our volume are organized according to this scheme. Each one is introduced by an overview written by the Sub-Commission's chair and followed by a number of articles dealing with specific important aspects of the occupation. Most of these articles, selected by the Sub-Commission chairs, have been published previously in the Commission's Latvian-language publications, but are for the first time made available in English translation. We want to stress that the opinions expressed and the conclusions reached by the individual authors are their own.

Although the book's arrangement by period is a logical one in terms of both chronology and the Commission's setup, there are several main concerns and topics that are reiterated in many of the contributions regardless of the exact period. These are in part determined by a perceived urgent need to respond to Western misconceptions and official Russian positions that are still based on Soviet ideological myths, as well as to reveal the extent of crimes against humanity perpetrated under both occupation regimes. These are primarily:

- The illegality or legality (as maintained by Soviet historiography) of the Soviet occupation in 1940 and its relationship to the 1939 Nazi–Soviet agreements.
- The Holocaust in occupied Latvia and the role of the local populations in it.
- The participation of Latvians in German repressive and military forces.
- The question of genocide, especially mass deportations, at the hands of the Soviet occupiers.
- The problem of resistance to and collaboration with both occupation regimes.

- The question of sovietization, Russification and colonization of the Baltic.
- The manipulation and falsification of historical facts to ideological ends by both occupying regimes.

Some important aspects of this volume must be noted. Because of the extended imposed isolation from the Western world and historical scholarship, most Latvian historians are only now starting to find their way about Western historical discourse. The difficulties of communication are not only linguistic and methodological; above all they have to do with perspective. The desire is paramount to set the historical record straight after so much deliberate concealment and manipulation of historical facts and creation of historical myths by both occupying powers. Thus the topics and problems that Latvian historians are addressing may at first sight seem repetitive, self-defensive, contentious and tangential to mainline concerns of Western scholarship. On the other hand, the articles bring to light many previously unknown documents and formerly secret files and reveal the ways in which historical evidence was twisted to fit the end of the occupiers. This, of course, is true of much of recent East European historiography, yet it would be remiss to dismiss the historiography of this so-called New Europe as outdated or revisionist before careful examination of its findings and a simultaneous reexamination of assumptions and data bases on which previous Western assessments of East European history during Nazi and Soviet rule was based. This reexamination is especially urgent in areas where the East European and Western points of view seem to diverge most: the Jewish Holocaust, collaboration with the Nazis, the nature of Soviet rule and its impact on the affected societies and nations. The Baltic states offer in this regard a special case because of the succession of three occupations in the brief period of five years and under wartime conditions.

The lead article by the U.S. historian and member of the Commission, Alfred Erich Senn, "Baltic Battleground," attempts to set the scene across the Baltic and to provide insight into the complex and cumulative effects of the three occupations on the three Baltic nations and their societies. Though he places his emphasis on the nature of Soviet rule and on the origins of the Holocaust, his essay does much more: it provides a credible explanation of the ways in which social psychology was affected and manipulated by the occupying powers.

Although the German–Soviet Non-Aggression Treaty of 23 August 1939 and the Friendship and Border Treaty of 28 September 1939 are not topics addressed directly, they form a point of departure for the analysis of the Soviet takeover on 17 June 1940. The analysis is provided by Irēne Šneidere, both in her introductory essay to 1940–41 and her study of the June and July events in Latvia just prior to the annexation to – or

incorporation into – the Soviet Union on 5 August 1940. Arguments about the conspiratorial and illegal nature of the takeover are bolstered by the secret Nazi–Soviet agreements, the massive use of military force, the well-documented infiltration of Soviet secret agents, the undermining of Latvian institutions, the deception and intimidation of the population. Under these circumstances, Soviet historians' claims that Latvia and the other Baltic nations underwent a democratic "socialist revolution" and voluntarily joined the Soviet Union sound hollow.

Rudīte Vīksne's detailed analysis of the repressions carried out by the occupiers and their local collaborators throughout the year 1940–41 reveals the methods by which compliance with the occupation regime was enforced. Jānis Riekstiņš describes, in bureaucratic detail, the preparation and execution of the 14 June 1941 mass deportation of over 15,000 people. The deportation in many ways became the decisive event that fixed hatred and fear of Communism and the Soviet regime in the minds of the people. This event, more than any other oppressive measure, determined society's initial positive attitude toward the German occupation, as well as its continued dread of the Soviet regime's return.

Early collaboration with the Nazi regime is perceived by Latvian historians basically in the light of the first year of Soviet rule – as a shocked reaction to Soviet persecutions and crimes against humanity, rather than as Latvian proclivity for fascism, typical of Soviet propaganda. Knowing the pre-history of Latvian–German relations, including the battles of World War I, there is every reason to accept the Latvian historians' view as believable. This view informs Inesis Feldmanis' introductory essay on the "German Times." He, furthermore, believes that the generally negative attitudes about the Latvian role during the German occupation were strongly influenced by the World War II "winners' position" taken especially by the Soviets, who excluded any mention of their own culpability in the Nuremberg War Crimes Trials. He also traces Nazi equivocation about Latvian independence and shows how early collaboration turned to both active and passive resistance in the hopes of Western intervention, but at the same time facing the threatening return of the Red Army.

The early collaboration with the German occupiers also led to the involvement of ethnic Latvians in the mass murder of Latvian Jews. The involvement is not at issue. What is at issue is the question about the initiation and the execution of the Holocaust: who did what, when and why. Aivars Stranga summarizes the latest Latvian findings about the Holocaust on Latvian soil, "the gravest crime in the modern history of Latvia," and agrees with scholars who maintain that it was initiated and administered by the Germans, though they tried to make it appear as a local enterprise. It was administered especially by the infamous *Einsatzgruppe A* of the German *Sicherheitsdienst* (SD) and Police, as well as the German Army, but with the involvement and participation of ethnic

Latvians. In the end, an estimated 65–70,000 Latvian Jews were killed, most of them already in 1941, out of a pre-war population of about 92,000.

There was no “Germanless Holocaust” in Latvia despite memoirs and scholarly literature to the contrary. Much depends on what happened during the so-called *interregnum* between the Soviet departure and German arrival in the last days of June and early days of July 1941. The article of Juris Pavlovičs, “The Change of Occupation Powers in Latvia in Summer 1941: Experience of Small Communities,” supports the view held by most Latvian historians that the – usually very brief – *interregnum* was not marked by mass retributions of ethnic Latvians against the Jews. On the other hand, the article also explains how, in the small communities, the Latvian pre-occupation local and district administrative infrastructure, though having suffered from the Soviet mass deportation, was quickly reestablished and how the Germans could take advantage of the existing chains of command to carry out their intentions without the appearance of their own involvement.

The anatomy of how this was done is provided by Dzintars Ērglis in his detailed case study of the murder of five Jewish youths by members of the Latvian police in the area of Krustpils. It is, however, also significant that only one of the perpetrators was actually convicted by Soviet authorities for this specific crime, though all received sentences on various other counts. Rudīte Vīksne’s article on the notorious Arājs Commando also points out that the Soviet judicial system with its insistence on coerced confessions oftentimes makes finding out the truth difficult. Nevertheless, she tries to draw a portrait of members of the Commando, which has been most directly implicated in the Holocaust and other crimes against humanity during German occupation. She analyzes 352 Soviet court cases against identified members and, contrary to earlier assumptions that the Commando mainly consisted of well-educated volunteers driven by revenge, she concludes that, especially from 1942 on, recruits came from socially and morally marginalized groups with incomplete secondary education, oftentimes driven by selfish motives. What is significant in these and other similar studies is the attempt by Latvian historians to pin down individual details of the Holocaust in occupied Latvia: its localities, perpetrators, victims and the mechanisms of execution.

The Soviet Union viewed Latvian military involvement on the German side in the Great Patriotic War as treasonous. Two main questions are still debated. To what extent was the participation voluntary? And to what extent did the Latvian units perform crimes against humanity? The Latvian *Schutzmannschaft* battalions and the “Latvian SS Volunteer Legion” were both organized under the auspices of Heinrich Himmler’s SS organization. In his detailed analysis of the battalions, Kārlis Kangeris reveals the many oftentimes conflicting reasons and motivations for the formation of these battalions in late 1941 and in 1942. Although in propaganda ostensibly “voluntary,” various

enticements and ruses were used in their formation, including monetary rewards. His article documents the extensive literature to date and lists a number of future research themes. It is clear that most of the battalions were used as combat units and later formed the basis on which the Legion was founded. Some others were clearly employed for repressive police actions, but scholarly opinions in regard to their criminal actions against the Jews and civilians are still widely divergent. Both Kangeris and Inesis Feldmanis, in his article on the Latvian Legion, present these national units as part of a broader scheme. Himmler's so-called *Waffen SS* subsumed soldiers of many nationalities with different motivations and goals. Feldmanis strictly rejects suggestions that soldiers of the Latvian Legion, which was established in early 1943, committed war crimes and any notion that they fought for Hitler's Germany or National Socialism. They were later considered and treated as combat units by the Western Allies.

For most of the population of Latvia, the Germans were at best inconvenient and expedient allies against the Soviet Union. Though for many they represented the lesser of two evils, the ultimate hope of much of the population for restoring independence lay with the Western Allies and their principles proclaimed in the Atlantic Charter and the United Nations Declaration. Uldis Neiburgs describes just how widespread – and to some extent misguided – this hope was. This hope also inspired various resistance groups against the German occupation power, especially the Central Council of Latvia, which established information channels to the Western Allies. Antonijs Zunda surveys historical literature dealing with national resistance against the Germans, including the attitudes of Soviet historians, who in principle recognized only Soviet resistance as legitimate. Later the same hope for Western intervention continued to inspire Latvian national partisans, who fought against overwhelming odds against Soviet forces at least until 1949, when a mass deportation deprived them of their rural infrastructure.

Heinrihs Strods deals with the broad issues of resistance during the second Soviet occupation, starting with armed resistance by the National Partisans, continuing with various forms of non-violent resistance and ending with the emergence of the so-called “singing revolution.” He concludes that resistance was both widespread and persistent and indicates the failures of the Communist Party and the Soviet state to achieve social cohesion by totalitarian and oppressive means. The other side of the coin is revealed by Aldis Bergmanis, Ritvars Jansons and Indulis Zālīte in their article on the work of Soviet repressive agencies. The agencies were successful in their counterinsurgency actions against the National Partisans, oftentimes employing methods that violated the 1907 Hague Convention on Warfare, though the ultimate blow was delivered by the 1949 mass deportation, which numerically by far exceeded the deportation of 1941. Eventually, however, the Soviet secret services failed in maintaining isolation from the outside world and establishing all-embracing social control.

The second Soviet occupation has been variously described by the terms “sovietization,” “Russification” and “colonization”. All three terms have a certain validity, for all describe the regime’s attempts – and eventual failure – to bring about complete radical social and ethnic change by force. In his introductory essay Heinrihs Strods has chosen the term “sovietization” as the all-embracing concept. Under this term he subsumes administrative, political, economic and cultural subjugation, as well as the establishment of military and communication control, colonization by immigration and destruction of traditional social structures through genocide and Russification.

Jānis Riekstiņš uses two terms – “colonization” and “Russification” – to describe the massive demographic changes brought about by Soviet regime and its policies. He points out that throughout the second Soviet occupation mechanical increase – immigration from other parts of the USSR – outpaced natural increase and seriously unbalanced the ethnic composition of Latvia. The percentage population of the titular nation decreased from 75.5% in 1935, when the last pre-war census was taken, to 52% in 1989, the last census during the Soviet era. Both Riekstiņš and Strods point out the military nature of the occupation, including the settlement of retired military personnel throughout the country. They also stress the fact that the Latvian Communist Party was controlled by Moscow’s interests and its proxies in the membership, which was overwhelmingly Russian. They also point to industrialization as a tool of colonization and Russification, with the result that, especially in the larger Latvian cities, the titular nation was relegated to minority status.

While the cities became Russianized, the overwhelmingly Latvian countryside became an economically and socially depressed area. Daina Bleiere’s article describes in painful detail how this was achieved by the Soviet regime in the late 1940s. Forcible measures, including the mass deportation of 1949, led to collectivization and proletarianization of traditional rural society that had been the mainstay of Latvian national cohesion and economy during independence.

To eradicate vestiges of collective memory, Communist Party ideology imposed its historiographic model on Latvian history and subsumed it as part of Soviet and CPSU history. In the case of Latvian history, the “inevitable course of history” leading to socialism was complemented by the “historical inevitability” of integration into Russia. Aleksandrs Ivanovs details how this was achieved through institutional and personnel changes, but he also points out the survival of traditional Latvian historiography of earlier historical periods even during the severest sovietization. The survival of such a tradition allowed Latvian historians to break the bonds to sovietized historiography as soon as the political bonds to the Soviet Union were loosening in the late 1980s.

Our volume illustrates just how far Latvian historians have gone after the restoration of independence toward restoring an independent historiography. It has been a process

of returning to the basic historical premises forbidden during the Soviet era, primarily the premise that the Latvian nation deserves its independent statehood. Other premises follow, including the premise of Soviet occupation of 1940, which Soviet historiography described as a “socialist revolution” and the premise of the illegality and criminal nature of Soviet actions during the occupation. The premise of the illegality of both Nazi German and the second Soviet occupation likewise follows. The accessibility of formerly secret files in Latvian archives and, though with severe restrictions and limitations, in Russian archives as well, allow Latvian historians to bring forth the formerly hidden confidential documents and reveal the actual nature of the Soviet occupation and its motive forces – not as an expression of the will of the people, but rather as a continuous act of alien oppression.

At the same time, the accession of Latvia and other former Soviet block nations to NATO and the European Union, has made it necessary to account for the role the Latvians and other East Europeans played during the Nazi occupation, especially in terms of the Holocaust and participation in German military forces, two of the topics that still haunt both historical and political thinking. Here, unavoidably, three radically different historical experiences and historical perspectives – those of Western Europe, the former Soviet Union and the newly independent East European countries – create a zone of disagreement and turbulence. This volume points to one of the basic causes of this disagreement and turbulence: the persistent presence of both Soviet and Nazi historical ideology, which treated Latvia and Latvians as historical objects and excluded any notion of Latvian independence or Latvians as sovereign subjects of history. After the first Soviet occupation, it was easy for the Germans to play the role of “liberators” and manipulate Latvian patriotism; it was just as easy for the Soviet Union to play the same role in the eyes of the world after the Nazi occupation, while severely suppressing any expression of patriotism as collaborationism and “fascism.” Once these ideological causes are understood, it should be possible to start developing a historical discourse that accounts for the real victims and the actual perpetrators of both occupations. This, we hope, is only a beginning of such a discourse.

In the Forest Cemetery in Rīga, the monument of Vilis Lācis still blocks the far view to the monument of Jānis Čakste. But nothing impedes access any more. History cannot be changed, but our understanding and perception of history can and must be changed as we gain access to its sources and clear away the ideological impediments that block our view.

*Valters Nollendorfs*  
*Erwin Oberländer*



*Alfred Erich Senn*

## **Baltic Battleground**

*And in this seat of peace tumultuous wars  
Shall kin with kin and kind with kind confound?  
Disorder, horror, fear and mutiny  
Shall here inhabit, and this land be call'd  
The field of Golgotha and dead men's skulls.*

– William Shakespeare, *King Richard II*, iv, i, 140

The fifth decade of the twentieth century was a time of storm, stress and suffering for the peoples of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia. In the single generation since they had emerged onto the European map after World War I, they had made great progress in forming modern, self-conscious nations, but then as a battlefield of World War II they together fell under successive foreign occupations: a Soviet occupation in 1940–41, an occupation by Nazi Germany in 1941–44, and then a second Soviet occupation that extended for more than two generations. These occupations built on one another, each deepening the social and emotional mutilation inflicted by the previous one. Warfare, deportations, prison camps, mass executions, the horrors of the Jewish Holocaust, forced emigration and flight, the intimidation of survivors – all ravaged the some six million people living in this region. Only in the 1990s, after the reestablishment of independence, could the survivors and their progeny even begin to study the nature and consequences of that grim decade when they could not control their own history

The purpose of this introductory essay is to sketch the three republics' common experience in World War II and immediately after, picturing the general Baltic background against which the more specialized essays in this volume examine Latvia's share of that suffering. The essay does not pretend to offer a complete history. Its major emphases are on the nature of Soviet rule and on the origins of the Holocaust.

The Baltic republics' "time of troubles" formally began on 23 August 1939, with the signing of the Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact. In a secret protocol, Germany and the Soviet Union divided Eastern Europe between them, assigning Latvia and Estonia

to the Soviet zone and leaving Lithuania to Berlin's care. On 28 September 1939, a second agreement gave most of Lithuania to Moscow but left the southwest part of that republic to Germany. In June 1940 the Soviet Union ignored this last provision when it sent troops into Lithuania, and on 10 January 1941, Germany accepted a cash payment of 7.5 million dollars to give up its claim to the disputed territory. The Soviets essentially could do what they wanted in the Baltic.

With this free hand, the Soviet government, in September and October 1939, forced the republics to sign "mutual assistance" pacts that provided for Soviet troops to be stationed in each state. In June 1940 Moscow demanded that the republics reorganize their governments and that they accept additional Red Army troops within their borders. Barely seven weeks later, the USSR Supreme Soviet accepted Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia as the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth republics of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. In their time, Soviet historians argued that the presence of Soviet troops had simply enabled Lithuanians, Latvians, and Estonians to decide their own destiny and to carry through "simultaneous revolutions." In fact, Moscow's special agents, who arrived in the baggage of the Red Army, had directed "revolutions from above" that had incorporated the republics into the Soviet party-state long before they were formally incorporated into the governmental structure of the USSR.

## The Party-State

*... [the Communist Party] ... is the vanguard of the working people in their struggle to strengthen and develop the socialist system and is the leading core of all organizations of the working people, both public and state.*

– Constitution of the USSR, 1936

To understand the work of those agents – Andrei Vyshinsky in Latvia, Andrei Zhdanov in Estonia, and Vladimir Dekanozov in Lithuania – it is necessary first to consider the nature of the Soviet regime itself in the 1930s and then to examine the Soviet program for carrying revolution abroad in 1939 and 1940. The first concerns the decision-making structure that Soviet authorities brought to the Baltic, and the second lays out the measures and procedures for the process of incorporating new territorial acquisitions.

The Soviet state was a "party-state": the party wielded absolute power; the state administration, as V. I. Lenin and his successors built it, was "an instrument" (*orudie*) in the hands of the party. After the Bolshevik seizure of power in 1917, Lenin had created a new type of administration in which the Communist Party constituted the sovereign

authority, higher than the constitutionally defined governmental administration. This can be conceived of as two pyramids, one inside the other. The larger, outer pyramid represented the structure of the party; the smaller, inside pyramid represented the structure of government as defined by the constitution, "The Stalin Constitution" of 1936. Josef Stalin ruled the Soviet Union in the 1930s without benefit of a formal post in government; his position as the First Secretary of the Party, at the apex of the greater pyramid, gave him his power and authority.

In 1940 Stalin's agents reproduced this system in each of the Baltic republics. Most observers thought that the local constitutional structure, even as it changed in July and August, represented the decisive arena of action, but as in Moscow, constitutional officers received orders and instructions from their superiors in the party structure.<sup>1</sup> Once established in power, the Communist Party First Secretaries of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia wielded authority far superior to any constitutionally defined office. At the same time, the party structures were parts of the larger structure of the All-Union Communist Party.

In all three Baltic republics Moscow's representatives operated according to the plan of action drawn up by the Politburo – an institution of the Communist Party and not the Soviet government – to incorporate the lands taken from Poland in the fall of 1939. There, under the protection of the Red Army, local Communists divided the territory into a Belorussian and a Ukrainian section and established "a new revolutionary order." Provisional administrations in Belostok and Lviv arranged the elections of "People's assemblies." As prescribed in the Politburo's orders, the key issues in the election campaigns were the establishment of the Soviet order, the incorporation of Western Ukraine into the Ukrainian SSR and of Western Belorussia into the Belorussian SSR, land reform, and the nationalization of banks and large industry.<sup>2</sup>

The Soviet intentions of annexing the land taken from Poland were clear from the start, but in the Baltic republics the authorities chose to act more cautiously and carefully. In a somewhat analogous situation, in 1920 Soviet Russia signed a peace treaty with the Caucasian state of Georgia, and the following year Soviet troops overthrew the Georgian government to establish a Soviet Socialist Republic. As the situation unfolded, Lenin had advised, "I ask you to remember that the internal and international situation of Georgia demands from the Georgian Communists, not the application of the Russian pattern, but the skillful and flexible creation of a distinctive tactic based on the greatest compliance with all kinds of petty bourgeois elements." In practice this should involve "a slower, more careful, more systematic transition to socialism." The Soviet occupation of Georgia in fact proceeded more harshly, but the tactic of temporary compromise for the sake of masking revolutionary goals constituted a fundamental weapon in Soviet foreign policy.<sup>3</sup>

The party-state, the plan for “people’s assemblies,” and “a slower, more careful, more systematic transition to socialism” – these were the fundamental points in the programs which the three Soviet agents carried into the Baltic in 1940.

## The So-Called “Simultaneous Revolutions”

*For a revolutionary... the main thing is revolutionary work, and not reform,— for him reform is a byproduct of revolution. Therefore in revolutionary tactics under a bourgeois regime, reform becomes a weapon to break down this regime.*

– J. V. Stalin, *Foundations of Leninism*

Upon settling in the Baltic capitals, the three Soviet agents – Vyshinsky, Zhdanov, and Dekanozov – immediately brought the Baltic states into the fold of the Soviet party-state, carefully separating temporizing public reform policies from their longer-term revolutionary plans. Amid rampant rumors that the Soviet Union intended to annex the three states, they organized in each republic a “People’s Government,” headed by non-Communists. Finding acceptable candidates, to be sure, could take time; as Latvian Prime Minister Augusts Kirchenšteins told an American diplomat a week after the coming of the Red Army, “Several cabinet posts remained vacant because no candidate acceptable to the Soviet authorities could be found.”<sup>4</sup> Behind the scenes Moscow’s agents worked to strengthen the local Communist Parties and to help the parties take over their societies’ repressive forces – neutralizing the police and the military while gaining control of security forces and organizing people’s militias.

The new leadership in all three republics emphatically denounced the former authoritarian regimes, spoke of the desirability of close and friendly relations with the Soviet Union and called for land reform, while at the same time insisting on their respect for private property and for individual peasant landholding. As Lenin had suggested twenty years earlier in regard to Georgia, they avoided making radical policy statements; an American diplomat in Rīga reported, “At mass meetings of labor youth, speakers warn against premature demands which will obstruct the cause and insist that all activities contrary to the directives of the new government and the Communist party are harmful.”<sup>5</sup> The government’s seemingly moderate programs raised hopes and expectations among many that the Soviet Union would perhaps be satisfied with organizing the Baltic republics along the lines of the Mongolian People’s Republic.

Following the Politburo’s directives concerning the territories taken from Poland, the local Communist Parties systematically collected political power in their own hands.

While undermining established institutions, this involved creating new organizations and institutions, mobilizing social and cultural support for the new regime, and restructuring the educational system to control the socialization of the young. When analyzing public reactions, Soviet commentators usually claimed the unreserved support of workers and poor peasants. Since the so-called middle peasants, small holders, might fear the call for land reform, the new governments protested their opposition to the collectivization of agriculture. They tried to mollify small businesses by declaring that they recognized the right to earned property, but they fully expected opposition from larger businesses and factories. They calculated that their moderate economic program would make it difficult for potential opposition to organize itself because it could not see the regime's ultimate goals.

At the beginning of July, the authorities in all three republics announced the creation of new parliaments to be elected according to Soviet election practices – with just one single slate of candidates. After the elections had produced their planned results, the sessions of the new legislatures proclaimed the establishment of Soviet Socialist Republics. With that the governments began to act more forcefully, enacting policies they had originally denied, such as nationalizing the land, banks and large industry.

In this new aggressive spirit, the governments employed violence and even terrorism against their perceived enemies. In Latvia and Estonia, where the former leaders, Kārlis Ulmanis and Konstantin Pāts, had remained at their posts, the Soviet authorities had temporized. In Lithuania, where the former dictator Antanas Smetona had fled the country when the Red Army moved, they struck more quickly and forcefully: On 11–12 July, just before the new elections, they arrested a number of former Lithuanian political leaders and immediately deported many of them into the Soviet Union. After the proclamation of the Soviet order, the authorities promptly arrested and deported Ulmanis and Pāts. Gloating that the former ruling circles were “trembling,” awaiting “punishment for their misdeeds,” the new rulers calculated that such forceful action against “enemies of the people” would intimidate and silence less daring antagonists.

The fact that the three Baltic states were still formally independent when the authorities began deporting Baltic citizens into the interior of the Soviet Union underlines the interpretation that the Soviet party-state had already incorporated the three Baltic republics. In addition, even before the elections of mid-July, the Soviet State Bank was making claims on Baltic gold reserves in Great Britain and in the United States. The votes of the “People’s Assemblies” was only a minor formality in the process of the Soviet takeover of the Baltic states.

At the beginning of August, the Supreme Soviet of the USSR agreed to the annexation of the three Baltic “Soviet Socialist Republics.” Soviet premier Vyacheslav Molotov declared that the Soviet Union was retaking territory that the western powers had torn

from it in 1919–20, but Soviet historians henceforth insisted that the three states had experienced simultaneous and spontaneous socialist revolutions. These revolutions were of course synchronized to the point of holding elections on the same days and even designating in advance that Lithuania should be the fourteenth Soviet republic, Latvia the fifteenth, and Estonia the sixteenth. But they were hardly spontaneous.<sup>6</sup> At the same time, what in fact were Moscow-directed and enforced revolutions from above were already cultivating a seed bed of fear, hatred, and violence.

## A Dysfunctional Society

*Anti-Semitism is growing extraordinarily.  
This is happening not just among the peasants  
but also among the workers.*

– Lithuanian security report, 21 July 1940

The Soviet authorities proclaimed equality for the people and for all nationalities, but under the title of “the class struggle” they also brought governmental violence, dividing the society according to Marxist economic-social analyses into exploiters and exploited. As practiced in Stalin’s time, this policy meant identification of class enemies, more emphatically called “enemies of the people,” together with arrests, deportations, and executions. It stimulated conflicts between individuals and groups and at the same time presented itself as the sole arbiter that could settle these conflicts and maintain order.

The independent Baltic republics had been essentially “national states,” each dominated by the major nationality in its population, and the new Soviet regimes proclaimed simultaneous national and class revolutions aimed at destroying the old regimes and “denationalizing” the republics. To develop new elites, they looked especially to the minority nationalities. They expected some support from the local Russians, but they expected nothing from the Germans, whom they allowed Nazi Germany to “repatriate.” In Lithuania there was a significant number of Poles, especially in the Vilnius region (which Moscow had turned over to the Lithuanians in 1939), ready to support policies that would undermine the position of the Lithuanians, but the Soviet authorities feared that too many of those same Poles nurtured dreams of restoring Poland within its boundaries of 1939. For Soviet purposes, the Jews offered the greatest potential.

In 1940 Jews constituted an estimated 8 or 9 percent of Lithuania’s population, some 5 percent of Latvia’s, and less than 1 percent of Estonia’s. In the 1930s the Jews in all three of the republics had concerns about the development of extreme national

groups, but the Jews of Lithuania seemed to be the most dissatisfied with their social and economic conditions – perhaps because they had originally expected the most. They argued that the Lithuanians had reneged on promises of national and cultural autonomy made at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, and they objected to programs that aimed at strengthening the social and economic power of ethnic Lithuanians. Despite their concerns, however, the Jews in the Baltic countries, according to Dov Levin, “were better off than in other Eastern European countries such as Poland and Romania.”<sup>7</sup>

Whatever memories they had of the former authoritarian regimes, the Jewish communities at first reacted favorably to the new regimes. Levin declared, “Upon the establishment of Soviet rule the Jews felt much greater physical security than previously. They were also greatly relieved by the cancellation of all restrictions and discriminatory measures that had been in effect against the Jewish minority.” An émigré in the United States spoke more enthusiastically, exclaiming, “Under Russia we were free.” Ben-Cion Pinchuk put it more cautiously: “Pogroms and Nazi terror, not enthusiasm for Communism, were the dominant forces that drove the Jews towards the Soviets.” (The American envoy in Lithuania characterized Soviet policy as “tolerant of but not friendly to” the Jews.) Ironically this acceptance coincided with the deportation of significant numbers of Jews from the Belorussian and Ukrainian territories seized from Poland.<sup>8</sup>

The twin Soviet goals of national and class revolution, however, soon aroused more mixed feelings. In Lithuania, state security agents reported that while younger Jews showed great enthusiasm for the new social order, older, more conservative and more propertied Jews looked with some trepidation at the prospect of “class revolution” and just hoped that the new government could survive and not have to yield to a more radical program. (According to Levin, Jews owned 57% of the industrial plants nationalized in 1940 by the Soviet Lithuanian government and 83% of the businesses.) Nevertheless, as Zvi Gitelman has declared, “Despite misgivings about the Bolsheviks’ militant atheism, their persecution of Zionism, and nationalization of property, many Jews welcomed the Red Army as a liberator.”<sup>9</sup>

Young Jewish men seemed particularly enthusiastic about the new order, and a number of writers have spoken of young Jews’ rebelling against their own heritage and the culture of their elders. As Jan Gross depicted the allure of the Soviet program,

Those for whom institutions, practices, and customs of traditional Jewish life felt oppressive ... welcomed the change. They sensed that the new regime offered an easy way out of the confining limitations of the Jewish community. Not exclusively by the so-called opportunities afforded Soviet citizens but also, perhaps primarily because under the impact of Sovietization the social control mechanisms of the Jewish community were so swiftly and utterly destroyed.

Zvi Kolitz spoke more harshly of “the Jewish members of the NKVD, imbued with the self-hating spirit of the *evseksiia* [Jewish sections in the All-Russian Communist Party].”<sup>10</sup> At any rate, the Soviet regime sharpened divisions within the Jewish communities.

The Jews who supported the new regimes gained an unprecedented prominence in public life in all three Soviet republics. Levin, for one, explains this as a natural development: “The appointing of Jewish functionaries at all levels of the state apparatus no doubt derived mainly from pragmatic considerations ... [I]t was possible to use the services of members of the Jewish intelligentsia who were attached to pro-communist bodies such as MOPR and Kultur Lige.” Zvi Kolitz declared, “There is no doubt that the Jewish communists in Lithuania, whose number was estimated at 900 out of 2500 were very active in expropriating properties and in the choice of the deportees. They were helped by Jewish members of the NKVD, who arrived together with the Red Army.” According to Levin, “There is no doubt that Jews constituted close to half, if not more,” of the membership in the *komsomol* organization (Communist Youth League).<sup>11</sup> Young Jewish men obviously felt a new empowerment, and on the streets they asserted both their own new public rights and their understanding of government policies.

The majority populations who had dominated public life in the Baltic republics now perceived the Jews as the new executive elite that was destroying the social institutions of the national states, and anti-Jewish sentiments intensified. As Levin describes the situation in Latvia, “The conspicuous position of Jews in the new regime and its political and administrative apparatus caused the Letts to identify the whole of the Jewish community with the hated Soviet regime.” According to Gitelman, in the eyes of the Lithuanians “Jews who welcomed the Red Army were seen as traitors”; Aba Gefen, a survivor, declared that Lithuanians viewed “the loss of independence was a national tragedy and they could not understand why their Jewish fellow citizens, who had lived well in Lithuania, rejoiced at the destruction of their state.” An American diplomat who visited Soviet Lithuania in March 1941 reported “a strong, anti-Semitic feeling in the whole country, and the new regime is usually described as the ‘Jewish government’.”<sup>12</sup>

While the repressive actions of the Soviet regime – arresting, deporting, and even executing “enemies of the people” – stimulated the growth of a culture of violence built on fear and hatred, pro-German propaganda worked to turn such popular resentment into a call for vengeance against the Jews. A Lithuanian group in Germany, the Lithuanian Activists’ Front (LAF), proclaimed that “one must create in the land a heavy atmosphere against the Jews so that no Jew could even dare to think that in the new Lithuania he could have even minimal rights and the general possibility of making a living. The purpose is to force all Jews to flee Lithuania together with the red Russians.” Lithuanian commentators have argued that such propaganda did not call for

killing Jews, but a proclamation issued in Berlin in March 1941 – it is not clear exactly by whom – declared that “on the day of reckoning Lithuania’s traitors could hope for forgiveness only if they could prove that they had each eliminated [*likvidavo*] at least one Jew.”<sup>13</sup> The Jewish population of Lithuania as well as of Latvia became the target of strong anti-Soviet passions and emotions, and Jews had all the more reason to fear the prospect of German invasion.

The tensions in the Baltic area reached new intensity in June 1941 when the Soviet authorities carried out mass deportations in all three republics. (In January 1941, an American diplomat in Berlin had predicted mass deportations sometime in the spring.) By this time the Soviet regime had expanded its definition of “enemies of the people” from individuals to economic classes, to specific occupations, and to religious and social groups. No nationality escaped; the deportations carried away proportionately more Jews than Latvians or Lithuanians; few of the deportees ever returned to their homelands. Some trains stood several days in the stations holding their human cargo in cattle cars while awaiting departure orders, and frightened, angry relatives could only grieve and sorrow, swearing some sort of vengeance. Rumors that the authorities planned an even larger scale deportation at the end of the month intensified both the rage and the fear in the republics.<sup>14</sup>

In subsequent years the various national groups nurtured different memories of Soviet rule and of the deportations. Jews who survived the experience have suggested that, in view of the anti-Jewish violence in Lithuania and Latvia in the summer and fall of 1941, the deportees were the “lucky” ones. For Lithuanians, Latvians, and Estonians, who mourned the loss of friends and relatives, the deportations marked the culmination of a year of torment and suffering. The year of Soviet rule had inflicted shattering damage on the social fabric that had sustained peoples in the Baltic .

## The Years of the German Occupation

*The State is real, the Individual is wicked;  
Violence shall synchronize your movements like a tune,  
And Terror like a frost shall halt the flood of thinking.*

– W. H. Auden, *Journey to a War*

On 22 June 1941, barely a week after the massive arrests and deportations in the Baltic, the region became one of the first battlefields of war between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, and it immediately witnessed the horrific development of the Holocaust. The Soviets had gloated about the fear they had inspired among “enemies of the

people,” and while fleeing before the advancing Germans, Soviet officials yet executed a number of political prisoners. Fueled by stories of this new violence, anti-Soviet emotions exploded in a bloodlust intensified by Nazi-inspired images of frightened “Jewish-Bolsheviks” running to escape popular retribution. In all three republics local activists attacked retreating Soviet troops, and the violence also targeted civilians identified with the Soviet regime. This demand for vengeance quickly led to a wave of mass killings of Jews regardless of age or sex.

Most authors agree that the experience of the Soviet occupation probably constituted the strongest factor in the explosion of violence against the Jews in the Baltic. There had been tensions between Gentiles and Jews in the region before 1940, but in Ezra Mendelsohn’s words, “Anti-Semitism was certainly present, though it was not, by East European standards, too oppressive.” As Azreal Shochat wrote, “The special ferocity which the population demonstrated toward Lithuanian Jews during the Holocaust was undoubtedly the outcome of the very complex political situation created by the Soviet occupation in 1940 and 1941.” The Soviets had disrupted the old social order and had raised the level and expectations of violence in all three Baltic republics. The communists had, to be sure, controlled that violence, maintaining a state monopoly on its exercise, but the deportations of 14 June, together with the Soviets’ execution of prisoners as they fled the region, contributed the final sparks to the piles of emotional timber.<sup>15</sup>

In the anomie left behind after the flight of the Red Army, the violence quickly spread, in a pattern identified by Charles Tilly as passing “from scattered attacks to coordinated destruction to opportunism.”<sup>16</sup> Analysts differ sharply concerning the actual start of the killings: were they spontaneous or did the Nazis inspire and direct them? The incoming Nazis encouraged the first popular violence against the Jews; special units, *Einsatzgruppen*, who were among the first invading forces, had the task of stimulating local collaborators to attack and kill the Jews. The Nazis then took control and systematized the killings on a more massive scale. Nazi propaganda identified the Jews as the most important local supporters of the Soviet order. “Only the Bolsheviks and the Jews were the masters,” declared one booklet published in Lithuania in 1941, “we were at the bottom with no rights” (*mes tebuvo me paskutiniai pastumdėliai*). Whether spontaneous, misled, or calculated, the killings constitute a horrendous chapter in the history of the Baltic region.<sup>17</sup>

For most Jews in 1941 there was no escape. When Jews tried to flee Lithuania ahead of the German invasion, Soviet guards at the eastern border of “Soviet Lithuania” and “Soviet Latvia” at first refused them passage and forced them to turn back. The returnees then faced accusations that they had tried to flee because of their association with the Soviet regimes. The Nazi regime adopted its “final solution,” calling for the

destruction of the Jewish people, in January 1942, and a number of authors have seen its roots in the killings in the Baltic in 1941.

The Nazi authorities in "Ostland," as they called the occupied Baltic together with Belorussia, ruled through an unsure collaboration and competition of military, police, NSDAP party officials, and civil authorities that involved a mass of contradictory aims. The Nazis wanted to destroy the Jewish communities and to kill off the Jewish population, yet they drove the Jews who had survived those first terrible months into ghettos, where they planned to profit from them economically. And then they still carried out mass executions.

In contrast to Soviet rule, the Nazi administrations manipulated and exploited local nationalist sentiments. The local majorities at first welcomed liberation from the Soviet yoke, but the new occupation brought more suffering and threats. Some Nazi commentators spoke of building a human defense wall for the Reich by deporting locals and settling Germans in their place, and at the same time they recruited support among the local populations. The occupation authorities took over enterprises "nationalized" by the Soviets and at the same time demanded gratitude from the population for having rescued them from Bolshevism. Like the Soviet officials before them, Nazi occupation authorities demanded that the local populations prove that they were "worthy" of being ruled by the invaders. And like Communist rulers in the Baltic, the Nazis aimed at winning obedience by instilling fear. From the viewpoint of the local populations, Nazi occupation policies became a package of forced labor, executions, deportations, and death camps.

Resistance developed, but it is extremely difficult to discuss "resistance" and "collaboration" satisfactorily in academic terms. It is easy enough to use the terms "Quisling" and "partisans" as the antipodes, but "resistance" and "collaboration" as terms have highly charged emotional connotations that hinder general agreement on their meanings. One person might consider that mental reservations concerning the demands of official ideology constitute "resistance"; some may even argue that it is possible to "resist" from a position within an oppressive system. At the other end of the spectrum, some insisted on defining resistance as physical action, arguing that anything less constituted "collaboration"; the Jewish man or woman risking life by fighting as a partisan sometimes considered Jews who stayed in the ghettos to be "collaborators" – they should have joined the partisans. In the middle, many simply hoped that no one would notice them.

In 1941 and 1942, the German Wehrmacht appeared invincible; after the Soviet victory in Stalingrad in 1943, the course of the war changed. As the Red Army moved westward, the question of the future of the Baltic states assumed more urgent proportions. In each of the countries, local political leaders formed organizations that they

hoped could develop into governments – the Central Council of Latvia, the Supreme Committee for the Liberation of Lithuania, the National Committee of the Estonian Republic – but neither Nazis nor Communists would accept such thoughts.

The post-war fate of the Baltic states was a major, but “unofficial” subject of controversy at the Moscow and Teheran conferences in the fall of 1943. The Soviet Union insisted that this was an internal Soviet question and that there existed no “Baltic problem”; the western powers, particularly the United States, refused to recognize the Soviet claim, although they considered the reoccupation of the Baltic region to be a fundamental Soviet war aim. Insofar as they would discuss the matter, Soviet spokespersons insisted that the three Baltic “parliaments” had “requested” annexation, and in any case, as heirs of the Russian Empire, these spokespersons declared that this territory should have become part of the Soviet realm already in 1917–21. The subject was finally left off the official agenda of the victorious powers, and Soviet propaganda intensified: both Johannes Vares and Justinas Paleckis, the chiefs of state of Soviet Estonia and Soviet Lithuania respectively, published articles distributed throughout Europe, insisting that the Baltic peoples had chosen their course and that this, in Vares’s words, promised “a prosperous happy future within the brotherly family of the Soviet peoples.”<sup>18</sup>

In the summer of 1944 Soviet troops were again in the Baltic region, and the Baltic peoples experienced their third foreign occupation in five years.

## The Second Soviet Occupation

*Anyone who wants to carry on the war against the outsiders,  
come with me. I can't offer you either honors or wages;  
I offer you hunger, thirst, forced marches, battles and death.*

– Attributed to Giuseppe Garibaldi

During the war the Western powers had nurtured hopes that they would not have to face a Baltic problem at the end of conflict. In 1940 the United States had refused to recognize the Soviet annexation of the three republics and dissuaded the British Government from recognizing the act. After the German invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941, this policy of “non-recognition,” as it came to be called, became an encumbrance on the relations between the members of the “Grand Alliance,” as Winston Churchill called the anti-Nazi bloc. Some hoped that perhaps the Soviet Union would not reincorporate the territories or at least it could find some peaceful way to win the acceptance of the local populations – but that was not to be.

Evidence of Soviet intentions mounted steadily. In October 1943, J. Edgar Hoover, the head of the American FBI, notified the US Department of State that Soviet intelligence was investigating how Baltic émigrés in the United States were maintaining contacts with people still in the Baltic. The Soviets, he added, were also interested in why the United States military organizations were training individuals in the study of Lithuanian language. "It has been indicated that similar information is desired regarding Estonians [sic] and Latvians," he concluded, "inasmuch as our confidential source advises that the USSR intends to take over Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia."<sup>19</sup>

The western powers were nevertheless surprised when Baltic citizens, whom the Germans had forcibly moved to Central Europe as forced labor, objected to being returned to Soviet rule. A flood of refugees from the Baltic in the last months of the war added to their numbers. Classified as "Displaced Persons," "DPs" in Baltic lore, these people eventually settled in various parts of the western world and formed a continuing lobby urging that the western powers maintain their policy of "non-recognition" of the Soviet incorporation of their homelands.

Soviet leaders had in fact never swerved from their claim on the region. During the war, as they planned their return to the Baltic, they even created new institutions in anticipation of the postwar era. In 1944, for example, officials in Moscow created the Lithuanian sports organization *Zalgiris*, named for the Lithuanian name for the region in which Lithuanian and Polish forces had defeated the Teutonic Knights in 1410. When the Soviet army returned to the Baltic in 1944–45, the Communist Party had its cadres ready to rebuild Soviet administrations.

In contrast to their reception in 1940, this time the Soviet authorities met open opposition. Moscow had to commit Soviet forces to the pacification of the region. (The western powers made some effort to help and encourage the partisan resistance.<sup>20</sup>) The fighting was heaviest in the first year or two after the destruction of the Third Reich, but with time, the Soviet authorities crushed the resistance. The Soviets organized "people's defenders" among the local population – Lithuanians called them *stribai*, a contraction of the Russian *istrebiteli* (destroyers); Latvians knew them as *iznīcinātāji*. The Soviets then insisted that the fighting represented "civil war" and not "resistance to foreign rule." The fighting and tactics were cruel and inhumane, and one Lithuanian estimate suggested that the person joining the partisan resistance in 1947–48 had a life expectancy of perhaps six months. The Soviet authorities again resorted to their ultimate weapon with recalcitrant populations – deportations. The major deportation of Lithuanians took place in May 1948 (over 40,000 and then 29,000 more in March 1949), of Latvians (43,000) and Estonians (20,700) in March 1949.<sup>21</sup>

The Soviet policy of deportations obviously aimed at undermining the self-identity of the nations targeted. In her time, Anna Louise Strong, the troubadour of the Soviet takeover of Lithuania in 1940, had described the Soviet deportation of Lithuanian leaders as a step toward what she considered the beautiful merger of all peoples of the Soviet Union into one great nation. Lithuanians frequently quote Mikhail Suslov, for a time Stalin's viceroy in Lithuania, as saying that there would remain a Lithuania but no Lithuanians. The Nazi regime had aimed at destroying the Jewish nation, and it had considered the forceful dispersal of the Baltic nations. The Soviets dreamed of dissolving the Baltic nations into a greater Soviet nation.<sup>22</sup>

By the early 1950s, the Soviets believed that they had wiped out the last pockets of resistance. Nevertheless the continued unrest in the Baltic populations may well have been the reason for the Soviet Union's decision to reject the request of the International Olympic Commission for permission in 1952 to route the Olympic torch relay from Greece to Helsinki up the eastern shore of the Baltic Sea.<sup>23</sup> Soviet officials did not want foreign visitors to witness the developments and problems in the Baltic republics.

Stalin's death in 1953 marked a turning point in the history of the Soviet system. His successors protested their loyalty to Lenin, but with time, as they became aware of the developmental problems in the authoritarian Soviet system, they experimented with relaxing some of its more objectionable characteristics. This soon provided the Balts with space in which to reassert their identities, and the Soviet regime discovered new springs of resistance within the societies that it had created and dominated. Soviet police reports expressed concern about the infiltration of official institutions by individuals who had "bourgeois nationalistic" sympathies; in the latter 1950s, for example, the Soviets purged the administration of the university in Rīga. At this same time, republican Communist Party leaders feared the possibly disruptive consequences of Moscow's decision to allow individuals deported to Siberia to return to their homelands. The development of new forms of resistance in each of the Baltic republics still awaits complete historical investigation.

The Baltic republics played a major role in the ultimate collapse of the Soviet system. In the last days of the USSR, more than one Russian commentator speculated that without the Baltic republics, there would be much less unrest among the other republics. Interestingly, in 1929 the American minister to the Baltic states had declared that "it is generally understood in all border states and, one hears, in Russia itself, that once the Red Army steps over the frontier the knell of the Bolshevik regime will sound to all listening ears." In contrast to such views, in the 1970s a western commentator had suggested that the three Baltic republics were "on the road not to assimilation, but to physical extinction."<sup>24</sup> In 1991, however, it was not the Baltic republics that passed into "the dustbin of history."



**UNDER SOVIET UNION  
1940–1941**







*Irēne Šneidere*

## **The First Soviet Occupation Period in Latvia 1940–1941**

Significant periods of history remain alive in popular memory and oftentimes earn their own designations. The first Soviet occupation period of 1940–41 in Latvia has thus become known as *Baigais gads*, the Year of Terror.<sup>1</sup> In the course of one year, the totalitarian communist regime that had become firmly entrenched in the Soviet Union and was based on mass-scale terror against civilians was forcibly imposed on Latvia. Open military aggression against the Baltic states – Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia – is a component of World War II. However, the occupation of the three Baltic states and the crimes against humanity committed by the Soviet regime in the territory of Latvia still remain in the shadow of “World War II in Europe.”

The successor state to the Soviet Union, the Russian Federation, on its part still refuses to admit not only the fact of the occupation itself, but also the fact that the Soviet regime committed crimes against humanity, which, as is generally known, are not subject to a statute of limitation. In compliance with the Criminal Law adopted in the Republic of Latvia in 1998, persons accused of murdering innocent civilians and of organization and execution of mass deportations must be held responsible.<sup>2</sup>

The Soviet Union, emphasizing its leading role in the Anti-Hitler coalition, not only denied having committed any crimes against humanity, but attributed its own crimes to others and vilified those who dared to speak of these crimes, calling them “traitors of the fatherland” or “Nazi collaborators.” A vivid proof of the efforts of the leadership of the Soviet Union to hide its crimes is the fifty-year denial of its guilt in the execution of approximately 22,000 Polish officers and policemen in Katyn, Kharkov and Mednoye in April–May 1940.<sup>3</sup> As has been established, this mass murder was committed in compliance with a resolution adopted by the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) on 5 March 1940.<sup>4</sup>

This tragedy found an echo in Latvia as well, where approximately 1000 Polish officers and soldiers found themselves in the autumn of 1939. In accordance with the 15 August 1940 Order No. 001011 of the USSR People’s Commissariat of the Interior (NKVD), the interned Poles were to be transferred from Latvia to special camps.<sup>5</sup>

Moreover, already before the occupation of the Baltic states a resolution was passed in the spring of 1940 to prepare camps “freed” of Polish citizens to receive approximately 60,000 prisoners of war from Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia.<sup>6</sup> It proves that the Soviet Union was preparing for possible resistance to military aggression in the Baltic states. This, however, did not happen.

It is significant that only in 1990 the fact of the execution of Polish prisoners of war and the responsibility of NKVD for this crime was officially admitted in the Soviet Union. On the initiative of Mikhail Gorbachev, the Main Military Prosecutor’s Office of the USSR brought criminal charges for mass murder. The case has not been closed yet; however, no investigation has taken place either. It is one more proof that the Russian Federation, as an heir of the Soviet Union, has not yet reassessed its recent past and denounced the crimes committed by the communist regime. Evaluating the attitude of Russia towards Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, Iurii Afanas’ev wrote in the mid-1990s that “the independence of the Baltic states still remains something external and foreign to Russians. The independence of the Baltic as an accomplished fact does not yet contribute to the recovery of Russia’s own identity.”<sup>7</sup>

## Two Worlds – Two Historiographies

Between the two World Wars Latvia and the other two Baltic states, Estonia and Lithuania, were independent neutral states and members of the League of Nations. Latvia had a democratic constitution (*Satversme*) adopted in 1922. It guaranteed personal freedom and extensive rights of ethnic minorities. It had a functioning multi-party system and proportional representation in the Parliament (*Saeima*). Until May 1934, Latvia was a parliamentary republic. After the 15 May 1934 *coup d’etat*, organized and carried out by Prime Minister Kārlis Ulmanis, an authoritarian regime was established in Latvia, similar to regimes in other East European states. Inesis Feldmanis, analyzing the social and political forces on which the authoritarian regime relied, with a good reason defines it as “nationally conservative dictatorship.”<sup>8</sup> Aivars Stranga, however, points to the “pro-totalitarian trends” intrinsic in the 15 May dictatorship.<sup>9</sup> Yet, in spite of its clearly anti-democratic character, the regime was not overly repressive. It can be described as mild.<sup>10</sup> In the course of its existence not a single person was sentenced to death for political reasons. Moreover, Latvia did not threaten any of its neighboring countries. On the contrary, in the 1930s it was forced to maneuver its foreign policy between two states that threatened Europe and the whole world: the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany. Already in 1932, Latvia signed a non-aggression treaty with the USSR, and on 7 June 1939 it managed to conclude a similar agreement with Germany. Soon thereafter, on 23 August 1939, Germany and the USSR signed a mutual non-aggres-

sion treaty (the so-called Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact). However the following course of events *vis-à-vis* Latvia was dictated not by the treaty itself but by the secret protocol attached to the treaty that paved the way for World War II and the annihilation of Latvia. Thus the secret deals between Germany and the Soviet Union on the division of spheres of influence in Eastern Europe and the Baltic decided the destiny of the sovereign state. Under the conditions of World War II, Latvia was powerless in the face of the designs of these two super-powers. On 17 June 1940 the troops of the Soviet Union, the Workers and Farmers Red Army, occupied Latvia. The first Soviet occupation lasted for one year until it was replaced by the Nazi German occupation regime in early July 1941.

After the war, Western scholars, including those of Baltic origin, addressed diverse aspects of the first year of Soviet occupation.<sup>11</sup> If the early works were clearly politicized, by the 1960s and 70s, on the whole, a more analytical approach became evident.<sup>12</sup> The range of topics increased as well. Regarding the loss of independence of Latvia (Lithuania and Estonia) two points of view emerged. One group of scholars thought that the destiny of the Baltic states in 1940 had been determined by their geopolitical situation, their location between Germany and the Soviet Union. Therefore, it would not have mattered what these small states on the Baltic coast did or did not.<sup>13</sup> Other scholars, in contrast, maintained that the Baltic states had done too little to help themselves. They had failed to establish an efficient defense system. The latter view was represented, among others, by Latvian-American historian Edgar Anderson. Although “it would be idle to pretend that the Baltic states were a factor of first importance in European affairs,” Anderson argued, “nevertheless located as they were between Russia, Poland and Germany, if united, they could have played a respectable role in Northeastern Europe. Their fate during the months that followed, then, would probably have been somewhat different.”<sup>14</sup>

Latvian exile historians focused their attention on the terror of the Soviet regime against the Latvian population that was launched right after the occupation, raged during the entire first phase of “Soviet rule” and reached a climax on 14 June 1941 in an unlawful mass deportation. The list of persons deported in 1940–41 was published as early as 1952.<sup>15</sup> On the basis of information provided by German prisoners of war released from Soviet captivity after World War II, Ādolfs Šilde wrote a book on the destiny of the deported Latvians in Gulag camps.<sup>16</sup> While on the whole they properly presented the forms of the Soviet repressions and the methods of the repressive body, the Latvian SSR People’s Commissariat of the Interior (NKVD; as of March 1941 the People’s Commissariat for National Security, NKGB), exile authors tended to exaggerate the scope of the repressions. Thus the total number of victims of the Soviet repressions of 1940–41 was estimated as high as high as 35,000.<sup>17</sup> Such imprecisions were mostly

caused by the lack of sources. One more shortcoming must be mentioned: they focus on repressions against ethnic Latvians only, although repressions affected all ethnic minorities living in Latvia (Russians, Jews, Belorussians, etc.).

Meanwhile, in occupied Latvia, the events of 1940–41 were falsified in the spirit of Soviet ideology until as late as the mid-1990s. The only officially endorsed concepts were that of Socialist Revolution and Socialist Transformations. All social sciences (history, law, economy, demography, etc.) were forced to remain within the framework of these concepts.

The official concept of Soviet historiography was based on the following postulates: a revolutionary situation had developed in Latvia in the summer of 1940; under the leadership of the Communist Party of Latvia, a Socialist Revolution took place; confronted by a revolution, the old (“bourgeois”) government stepped down; the democratically elected *Saeima*, acting according to the demands of the working class, changed the political system by promulgating Soviet rule and establishing the Latvian SSR. It passed laws on land reform, on the nationalization of banks, industrial enterprises and buildings. None of these postulates described the actual situation in Latvia at that time. The whole concept was a kind of artificially elaborated “variation” of Vladimir Lenin’s theory of Socialist Revolution: the refusal of the working class to go on living as usual; crisis in the ruling layer; increasing activity of the working class.

In order to deemphasize the role of the Red Army in the annihilation of the Republic of Latvia, it was pointed out that Soviet troops arrived to enforce the fulfillment of the Mutual Assistance Treaty, also called the Agreement on Military Bases, concluded on 5 October 1939, which the Latvian government was ostensibly violating in bad faith. Moreover, it was declared that “the selfless assistance granted by the peoples of the Soviet Union to the working people of Latvia played an important role. The presence of the Soviet troops in the territory of Latvia and the far-sighted foreign policy of the USSR saved the working people of Latvia from the threat of imperialist intervention and disrupted the intention of the counterrevolutionary bourgeoisie to unleash a civil war.”<sup>18</sup>

Reference works should be placed in a special category of Soviet historiography. They not only formulated officially endorsed conclusions but also demonstrated certain principles of selecting events, persons and figures. They imposed on historians not only the approach, but also the framework of selecting the facts. An interesting phenomenon can be observed in Soviet historiography concerning the years 1940–41: the more time had elapsed from the respective events, the firmer entrenched became the concept of “Socialist Revolution.” The widely known official publication of the Soviet government, *Falsifiers of History*, printed in 1948, declared that Soviet troops were brought into Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia in June 1940 “by way of arranging a

victory over the Nazis in order to preclude these states from becoming a colony of Hitler's Germany deprived of their rights. [...] Only enemies of democracy or madmen could interpret such an action on the part of the Soviet government as aggression."<sup>19</sup> There was not a single word there about any "Socialist Revolution" in the Baltic states. The Russian-language *History of the Latvian SSR*, published in 1955, did not have a separate chapter on a Socialist Revolution either; it spoke about the restoration of Soviet rule and the first steps in the construction of socialism.<sup>20</sup> It was only in 1958 that Volume 3 of the *History of the Latvian SSR* contained a chapter on the victory of the Socialist Revolution and the beginning of the construction of socialism.<sup>21</sup> Almost 30 years later, an edition of the *History of the Latvian SSR*, did not essentially amend or add anything to the former concept of Socialist Revolution. The only aspect that made this publication different from the previous ones was a timid and veiled reference to the 14 June 1941 deportation without specifying the date of the tragic operation or the number of deportees. The assessment of the deportation clearly reveals the dominating "class-conscious approach":

A certain number of former large industrialists, leaders of bourgeois political parties, Russian White Gguards, commanders of Home Guards [*Aizsargi*], police officers, officials of political administration and their families as well as urban declassed elements were deported from Latvia. Repressions affected also a certain part of the officers of the former army of bourgeois Latvia.<sup>22</sup>

## Early Post-Soviet Historiography

In the late 1980s and early 1990s the research situation began to change dramatically in Latvia. The change was first and foremost made possible by the collapse of the USSR and the reassertion of independence. In the West, these processes caused a sharp increase of interest in the topic of World War II as a whole, as well as in the destinies of the Baltic states in particular. In other words, developments in Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia found their place in the European context.<sup>23</sup>

It was at this time, when the Cold War was coming to an end, that a single historiographic mainstream about the first Soviet occupation in Latvia began to emerge, into which Latvian historians successfully integrated, eventually taking the leading position. However, it would be wrong to assume that casting off stereotypes of the old concepts was easy and quick. The interpretation of 1940–41, no doubt, depended on contemporary political developments as well. Thus in 1988–90 the Communist Party of Latvia was still in power, and the slogan "for Socialism with a human face" was in force. Historical interpretations were therefore dominated by the idea that under Stalin's rule mistakes were committed "in the process of constructing Communism."

It was only after national independence was restored in 1991, when the events of the first Soviet occupation were assessed through the prism of the annihilation of Latvia's independence, military aggression of the USSR and forcible imposition of the Soviet regime. Since then, Latvian historians have come a long way – from publications of mostly an unmasking character to serious analytic studies.

Much serious basic research had been carried out in Latvia by 1998, when the Historians' Commission of Latvia launched its work. Collections of documents on the occupation of Latvia and the policies of the occupation regime can be mentioned in the first instance.<sup>24</sup> A huge step was taken in 1993 with the publication of a volume on the international situation and foreign policy of Latvia in the late 1930s.<sup>25</sup> The authors analyze events in a balanced manner "dividing responsibility" among all involved parties (the Soviet Union, Nazi Germany, United Kingdom, Latvia). While the authors correctly reproach Latvian statesmen for their inability to act in the best interests of preserving Latvia's national independence in a complicated international situation, they evade the question of why other European leaders failed to act appropriately. As the large European states yielded to the demands of one aggressor, Nazi Germany, Latvia was forced to maneuver between two – the USSR and Germany. When these two powers joined forces at the beginning of World War II, Latvia eventually had to give in to the Soviet Union.

Concerning the first year of Soviet occupation, Latvian historians in the early 1990s tended to focus on the first phase of this period – the summer of 1940. This phase is marked by the following significant events: the military occupation of the territory of Latvia; the formation and actions of the collaboration government headed by Augusts Kirhenšteins;<sup>26</sup> the farce of the-so-called Parliamentary elections; the unconstitutionally passed resolutions on the change of power; and finally, the formal completion of the annexation: the admission of the Latvian SSR into the USSR on 5 August 1940.<sup>27</sup>

Research into the first period of the Soviet occupation in Latvia benefited from collections of documents that had been published in Russia in the early 1990s under the conditions of democratization. They not only adequately reflected the foreign policy of the Soviet Union in the first phase of World War II, but also allowed to look at events in and around Latvia from a new perspective through their documents and comments.<sup>28</sup>

Latvian historians addressed the terror of the Soviet regime as well. The scholars were fortunate to have access to very well preserved files of criminal cases of inhabitants of Latvia arrested by the USSR and Latvian SSR repressive authorities in 1940–41, as well as after World War II. This documentation makes possible not only to reveal the scope of terror, but also determine the destinies of the repressed. Research has greatly been enhanced by a register of Latvia's residents repressed by the Soviet regime that comprises data on more than 49,000 persons.<sup>29</sup> The entire

body of documents has certainly not been completely scrutinized as yet in its entirety. Nevertheless, in recent years large steps have been made towards uncovering the crimes and identifying the victims of the Soviet regime, using as a basis criminal cases initiated for political motives.

## Repressions against the Inhabitants of Latvia

One of the main directions of research for the Historians' Commission of Latvia has been the scope, specifics and causalities of Soviet repressions against various groups of the inhabitants of Latvia: ethnic minorities,<sup>30</sup> particular professional groups<sup>31</sup> and regional populations.<sup>32</sup> Historians have also analyzed such sensitive issues as repressions against women.<sup>33</sup> The main aspect that makes these studies different from all others is that they focus on people and their destinies under the totalitarian Soviet regime. As a rule, authors not only state the bare fact that a person was repressed, but also, based on criminal cases and other sources, recollections included, analyze the process of investigation, the charges, verdicts passed by a court or an extra-judicial body, the life of the convict in a hard labor prison camp and after his/her release, provided the repressed person survived the incarceration.

As was mentioned before, the Soviet repressions reached their climax on 14 June 1941 in a mass deportation of Latvia's residents. The State Archive of Latvia has made a huge effort to compile a list of the deported.<sup>34</sup> However, the book *Aizvestie* (The Deported) is not merely a list of the arrested and administratively deported persons: it is truly a book in remembrance of those who suffered or perished. The authors have studied and analyzed the preparation, implementation, scope, as well as the demographic, social and economic consequences of this unlawful operation. Jānis Riekstiņš underlines in the introduction to the book that "the deportation of Latvia's residents as a component of state terror practiced by USSR was planned already at the time of the occupation of Latvia."<sup>35</sup> Right after the occupation, collection of compromising facts began. This was done with the help of materials obtained in the course of nationalizing private property, issuing USSR passports, as well as liquidating non-governmental organizations.<sup>36</sup> Reports by secret agents and voluntary aides of NKVD and NKGB were also widely applied.

People were deported without having any charge brought against them, without a trial or a chance to defend themselves, which was in violation of the 1929 Geneva Convention that prohibited mass-scale forcible displacement or deportation in occupied territories.

It is known that at railway stations, where the potential deportees were brought together, heads of families (usually men) were informed of their arrest, forcibly separated from their families and transferred to Gulag camps in Vyatlag, Norillag, Sevrallag, Usollag and other places to be sentenced and to serve their terms. Hundreds of deportees

were sentenced to death. Because of excessively hard working and living conditions, insufficient food rations and diseases, more than 3,400 incarcerated residents of Latvia died in these hard labor prison camps, officially called Reformatory Labor Camps.

The deported families were also placed in very harsh living conditions. They were deported to the Krasnoyarsk District and Novosibirsk Region. It was only after Stalin's death that the conditions for the incarcerated and deported persons slowly began to improve. Only a few families were lucky to reunite.

Practically all researchers into the 14 June 1941 deportation – historians, lawyers and demographers – agree that it was a crime against humanity. In recent discussions of international law there is a tendency to qualify these crimes as genocide, which has no statute of limitation.<sup>37</sup>

Research into the 1940–41 repressions have helped to disperse several myths, which in the course of time had taken deep root in public consciousness and were perceived as historical facts. It is on the twisting road of the history of Latvia that Kārlis Kangeris with good reason seeks the answer to the question why these myths are still alive:

[.] the new occupation ruler, National Socialist Germany, tried to benefit from the negative experience that a large proportion of Latvian population had gained from “the actually existing Socialism,” i.e. Communism and Bolshevism, giving its own specific interpretation to events and facts of life. After the defeat of Germany on the battlefield, it was again the turn for the Soviet rulers to govern Latvia, whose propagandists in turn gave a specific Soviet interpretation to the preceding “German period.” Thus with the help of propaganda the interconnected events and developments of the three occupation periods have become so entangled in the historical consciousness of the Latvian people that today it is not easy to tell the truth from a propaganda-fostered assumption that with time may become a myth.<sup>38</sup>

One of such myths is the assumption that Jews were happier than any other group of the population about the arrival of the Red Army in June 1940 (they were said to be “kissing tanks”) and played the dominating role in the Communist Party of Latvia and in the repressive system and the administrative apparatus of the Latvian SSR. It was not that Jews in general were overjoyed at the arrival of the Red Army; what in fact dominated their feelings was a sense that the Red Army would be able to protect them from an invasion of Nazi Germany.<sup>39</sup> Such hope proved to be futile.

As concerns the alleged domination of Jews in the structures of the Latvian Communist Party, this assumption is equally groundless. The ethnic composition of the repressive institutions of the Latvian SSR presents a more complicated problem that has not been completely clarified yet because of lacking documentation. It is clear, however, that the apparatus of the NKVD consisted both of “local cadres” as well as specialists transferred

from elsewhere.<sup>40</sup> Thus, it may be assumed with complete assurance that mostly ethnic Russians were transferred to work in the national security institutions in Latvia. Yet, it was certainly not possible to do without any “local cadres” altogether, ethnic Latvians for the most part. The interrogators’ names also attest that ethnic Russians and Latvians constituted the vast majority of the personnel of the repressive institutions. It is paradoxical that on the one hand proportionately more Jews were deported on 14 June 1941 – 11.7% – than members of any other ethnic group, but on the other hand, ethnic Jews, who occupied high positions in the Latvian SSR People’s Commissariats of the Interior and National Security endorsed the majority of resolutions on the deportation of Latvia’s residents.<sup>41</sup> In the eyes of the public, these few high-ranking officials personified the repressions carried out by the regime. This may be one of the reasons why in 1940–41 some resistance groups, apart from anti-Soviet proclamations, came out with anti-Semitic slogans as well.<sup>42</sup> This aspect, however, has not been addressed in scholarly literature as yet.

Regretfully, the number of people deported on 14 June 1941 has not yet been established with certainty.<sup>43</sup> Publications in the West after World War II traditionally maintained that more than 20,000 persons were deported.<sup>44</sup> In Latvia the number of deportees was for the first time mentioned in public only in 1988. Based on data provided by the KGB of the Latvian SSR, it was calculated that “the operation embraced 14,476 persons.”<sup>45</sup>

It should be noted that after Stalin’s death the number of deportees was mentioned also in documents of the KGB of the Latvian SSR and the Central Committee of the Latvian Communist Party; however, the figure fluctuated between 15,000 and as many as 18,000–19,000 persons.<sup>46</sup> The deportee remembrance book *Aizvestie* operates with the figure 15,424 persons,<sup>47</sup> but, as the authors themselves have remarked, the list includes also heads of families who were arrested before or after 14 June.<sup>48</sup> However, it has not been specified how many such persons have been included in the list.

The situation is similar with the total number of the victims of Soviet terror. As was mentioned above, 35,000 named in exile Latvian sources is an exaggerated figure. In the early 1990s, Heinrihs Strods mentioned a different figure: 28,370.<sup>49</sup> However, at that time scholars had not yet gained access to documents from the archives of the former KGB. Currently, based on research results, it can be said that in the first period of the Soviet occupation 20,000–21,000 persons were repressed. It must be noted however, that this is the bottom figure, as calculations are based only on those documents that are stored in Latvia. Researchers have no access to criminal cases of Latvia’s top officials; it is likewise not known how many persons were arrested by the militia (for offenses such as illegal possession of weapons that under the given circumstances cannot be unambiguously classified as criminal offenses); we also cannot be certain that files on some particular categories of the 1940–41 arrestees have not remained in Russia. Furthermore, as has been established in the course of research, in late June and early

July 1941 some Latvian civilians were executed without having criminal cases brought against them. An order by a commander of a withdrawing Red Army unit to shoot at civilians cannot be classified as a judicial base. However, a few verdicts by tribunals of Red Army units, by which Latvian civilians were sentenced to death, have survived.

Another assumption that dominated for many years was that highest-ranking political figures and state officials of the Republic of Latvia were the first victims of Soviet repressions. It may seem to be true, because arrests of this category of people indeed began in late July 1940. Only the latest research carried out under the auspices of the Historians' Commission has made it possible to identify groups of Latvia's residents, that were repressed already in late June 1940 and the first days of July. The first victims of repressions were persons who in the 1920s and 1930s had worked against the Communist movement in Latvia (e.g., agents of the State Political Administration) and those who had opposed the political system of the USSR (for the most part, members of Russian emigrant organizations).<sup>50</sup> It seems to have been a primitive form of revenge sanctioned by the state.

Research into the repressions of 1940–41 has clearly revealed that they did not have the explicit class character that Soviet historiography attributed to them. Repressions affected various social groups. Everything was primarily done to paralyze any possible resistance. In this, the repressive institutions were to a large extent successful. Resistance groups began to emerge in Latvia in the autumn of 1940. However, the majority of them were soon discovered and their members arrested. Research into the scope of resistance to the Soviet occupation regime and, more important, the spread of resistance ideas in the public, is only in its beginnings.<sup>51</sup> In the context of a complete analysis of the Soviet occupation regime it is very important to find out how this regime was understood and perceived by the public.

Units of the Red Army were received in Latvia in 1940 with mixed feelings: with caution, hostility, joy or indifference. However one thing is clear: the vast majority of the population felt relief as the Soviet regime fled in June 1941. Therefore the Nazi German occupation was perceived as a release from "the yoke of Communism," a sentiment that the Nazis successfully exploited in their propaganda without delay.

It would be premature to declare that Latvian society has learned to assess the first period of the Soviet occupation without being influenced by the layers of assumptions formed in the preceding years. In Latvia different assessments of the past are still being applied as a tool in political struggle, in settling accounts and sustaining ethnic tensions. For example, a left-wing member of the *Saeima* insists that "there has been no [Soviet] occupation and that this view is shared by the majority of the ethnic Russian community."<sup>52</sup> It is for this reason that research into the repressions by the Soviet regime must continue, because these repressions heavily affected the ethnic Russian minority of the Republic of Latvia as well.



*Irēne Šneidere*

## **The Occupation of Latvia in June 1940: A Few Aspects of the Technology of Soviet Aggression**

The two world wars in the twentieth century were fateful for Latvia and its population. In the wake of World War I the Republic of Latvia emerged; World War II destroyed it.

In the course of World War II, Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania were occupied three times: in June 1940 they were occupied by the Soviet Union, in July 1941 by Nazi German troops and in 1944 and 1945 – again by the Soviet Army. The Republic of Latvia and the other two Baltic states were pulled onto the crossroads of World War II against their sovereign will through the secret protocols that were attached to the Non-aggression Treaty between the USSR and Germany signed on 23 August 1939, the so-called Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, and the subsequent Friendship and Border Treaty of 28 September 1939. In compliance with these treaties the three Baltic states came into the sphere of influence of the USSR. On 5 October 1939, based on this secret deal and under the threat of immediate occupation, the Soviet Union forced Latvia to sign a Mutual Assistance Pact. In accordance with the Pact the USSR located military bases of the Red Army in the territory of Latvia. In 1941, the former President of Latvia, Kārlis Ulmanis, already under arrest, emphasized in his written statement given to an interrogator of the USSR People's Commissariat for National Security:

Latvia was very unwilling to sign that agreement [...] I was concerned about the possible increase and spread of Communist propaganda in Latvia; I was also concerned about creating the impression and the opinion in Latvia, as well in international estimation, that by signing this treaty Latvia had lost the ability of independent political action.”<sup>1</sup>

For the Soviet side however, the conclusion of the treaty was the first step in the implementation of its aggressive intentions. The process was brought to an end on 17 June 1940 when Latvia was occupied. It was only one day after the government of Latvia had received information about the intentions of the USSR.

## The 16 June 1940 Ultimatum by the Soviet Union

On Sunday, 16 June, events happened very fast, first in Moscow and then in Rīga. Speed was advantageous to the Soviet Union, since in this way the government of Latvia was actually denied any freedom of action.

On the next day, 17 June, the official newspapers of both countries published the note of the Soviet government, whereby the USSR government, without providing any explanations, accused Latvia of violating the 5 October 1939 Pact and put forward the following demands:

- (1) to form without any delay a government in Latvia that would be capable and willing to guarantee proper implementation of the USSR–Latvia Mutual Assistance Pact;
- (2) to guarantee without any delay unhindered entrance of Soviet troop detachments into the territory of Latvia in order to be stationed in the most important centers of Latvia in numbers sufficient to ensure the implementation of the USSR–Latvia Mutual Assistance Pact and to prevent possible acts of provocation against the Soviet garrison in Latvia.<sup>2</sup>

However, the text published in the newspapers omitted the last paragraph of the note that states: “The Soviet government shall expect the reply from the government of Latvia by 16 June 23.00. The failure of the Latvian government to submit a reply by the stipulated deadline shall be regarded as a refusal to fulfil the above-listed requirements of the Soviet Union.”<sup>3</sup>

The full text of the note was read out to the Ambassador of Latvia in Moscow, Fricis Kociņš, by the Chairman of the Council of the People’s Commissars of the USSR, Vyacheslav Molotov, on 16 June at 14.00. It was emphasized that Moscow would expect a reply from the government of Latvia by 23.00, and force would be used should the reply fail to come. The negotiations for the formation of the new government on the part of the USSR would be chaired by a specially appointed official. In the course of the audience, which lasted less than half an hour, Kociņš twice requested Molotov to extend the deadline. The same request – to extend the allocated time for the replacement of the government and to abstain from publishing the statement in newspapers – was reiterated later the same day at 19.45 when Kociņš submitted the reply of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Latvia, Vilhelms Munters, to Molotov. As a result of this discussion only one, the last, paragraph of the text was omitted from the published text. However, the respective paragraph does not change the substance of the document.

The Soviet note must be unambiguously regarded as an ultimatum proposed to the government of the Republic of Latvia. In jurisprudence, an ultimatum is interpreted as “the final and ultimate proposition made in negotiating a treaty, a contract, or the like.

The word also means the result of a negotiation, and it comprises the final determination of a party concerned in the matter in dispute.<sup>4</sup> In international law the notion “ultimatum” is defined as “a categorical demand put forward by the government of one state to the government of another state with threat to resort to repressive action should the demand fail to be met in the stipulated time.”<sup>5</sup> The 16 June 1940 note of the USSR government fully falls into this category. Moreover, the government of Latvia was given only nine hours to accept the demands and reply to the USSR government. The Latvian government saw it exactly as an ultimatum and convened for an extraordinary meeting with incomplete attendance on 16 June at 19.00. The members of the government discussed the dramatic situation for three hours. The minutes of the Cabinet meeting state solely that “the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Vilhelms Munters, informed about the ultimatum submitted by the Chairman of the USSR Council of Commissars to the Latvian Ambassador in Moscow on 16 June 1940 at 14.00 (13.00 according to Latvian time).”<sup>6</sup> The government of Latvia decided to meet the demands. Based on international law, Dietrich André Loeber believes that in this particular case the ultimatum meant “intervention in the domestic affairs [...] of another country” and concludes that it is to be regarded as a violation of international law and even a crime according to international law.<sup>7</sup>

The government of Latvia unconditionally accepted the provisions of the ultimatum. At 22.30, Ambassador Kociņš went to the Kremlin to inform Molotov in person. However, that was not their last meeting. A few hours later, already on 17 June at 1.30, Molotov submitted a statement to the Latvian Ambassador that outlined the procedure according to which the troops of the Red Army were to cross the Latvian border. That was the last meeting between the two men. Kociņš remained in his post until September 1940, when he was arrested by the USSR People’s Commissariat of the Interior.<sup>8</sup>

At dawn on 17 June, troops of the Red Army crossed the border of the Republic of Latvia and very quickly seized all major cities without meeting any resistance on their way. In a telegram to Moscow, the Plenipotentiary Representative (Ambassador) of the USSR in Latvia, Vladimir Derevyansky, gave a very detailed description of the developments in the capital on that day:

At about 1 pm the advance tank units began arriving in Rīga and quickly took over the city and its most important facilities. The authorities had not expected an such an immediate arrival and action, for at 12.30 Ulmanis was still traveling unperturbed through the city. [...] We allowed radio broadcasts on the condition that henceforth the content of the broadcasts would be coordinated with us and that no disloyal statements *vis-à-vis* the USSR and the Red Army would be tolerated.[...] We required a special authority to be set up for the provision of our troops with everything necessary; the authority was established under the leadership of General Hartmanis.<sup>9</sup> The President and Ministers so far remain in their positions.<sup>10</sup>

This brief excerpt alone allows concluding that the government of Latvia had in fact lost its freedom of action along with the occupation of Latvia. The military and civilian representatives of the USSR kept control over the life of the country and did not hide the fact.

## **Andrei Vyshinsky as the Authorized Representative of the USSR**

On 18 June 1940, the Deputy Chairman of the USSR Council of People's Commissars and the First Deputy of the People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs, Andrei Vyshinsky, arrived in Rīga. This man was widely known as the main prosecutor in the show trials of the "enemies of the people" in the Soviet Union in the 1930s. From 1935 to 1939 he was the USSR Prosecutor General.<sup>11</sup> While the official reason for Vyshinsky's arrival in Latvia was to control the fulfillment of the provisions of the USSR ultimatum of 16 June, the actual purpose of this high-ranking state and Communist Party functionary (from 1939 until his death in 1954 he served as a member of the CPSU CC<sup>12</sup>) was much more serious: to bring about the annexation of Latvia. All activities of this Soviet emissary to Latvia were subordinated to this purpose. However, he himself remained in the shadow, as the public had to have the illusion that, apart from a change of government, nothing special had happened. Besides, after the formation of the new government, Kārlis Ulmanis, who since 1936 had been fulfilling the functions of both the President and the Prime Minister, formally was allowed to remain in his post as President. Thus an appearance of continuity of power in Latvia was created, mainly in the eyes of the international community.

The new government was formed as early as 21 June. Its composition was approved in Moscow. Vyshinsky had brought with him almost a full list of cabinet members. All that remained to do in Rīga was to clarify the membership of a few persons only.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, Vyshinsky provided the text of the declaration that was unanimously endorsed by the new government headed by the political dilettante, Professor of Jelgava Agricultural Academy, Augusts Kirhenšteins.<sup>14</sup> In the morning of 21 June, Stalin, Molotov and other leaders of the USSR received the regular report from Vyshinsky:

The night passed quietly. Our units have been patrolling in the city [Rīga] all these nights. [...] Right now, at 10.30 according to Latvian time, a meeting of the Cabinet of Ministers is taking place to discuss the new governmental declaration, the text of which I am about to give them. I am expecting your instructions in this regard.<sup>15</sup>

Most probably the final version of the declaration's text was approved by Moscow, since the new government approved it within one hour.<sup>16</sup> The government headed by Kirhenšteins continued to fulfill all instructions of the High Emissary as well as of the USSR Embassy without any objections.

As its actual head, Vyshinsky used the government for achieving the goals of his mission. However, this goal was carefully hidden behind the veil of democratic demagoguery. Thus the declaration of the Kirhenšteins government regarding its activities stated that “the new government considers its duty to promote and raise material and spiritual well-being, to guarantee freedom and the people’s rights, to ensure the realization of the interests of all citizens irrespective of their property status, religion, education or ethnic background.”<sup>17</sup> Beautiful words! The behavior of Stalin’s government during the occupation and annexation of Latvia can be described as refined cunning. All possible measures were taken to create a deceptive impression in Latvia and abroad that all transformations were lawful and carried out by Latvians themselves, based on the will of the majority of the population. To a great extent this aim was reached. This is attested not only by the congratulations, which in late June 1940 foreign ambassadors (including those of the UK and USA) sent to Kirhenšēins on his becoming the Prime Minister, but also by the reports of ambassadors of Latvia. It is important to note that the diplomatic corps of the Republic of Latvia abroad (except for the staff of the embassy in Moscow who understood the situation better than those in other countries) took the July events in their native country rather calmly. Thus, on 11 July 1940, the Latvian Ambassador in the UK, Kārlis Zariņš, reported to Rīga:

Nothing much is being said in the press and in public discussions about us, except for bare facts. Occasionally the reporters from Stockholm and Helsinki try to paint the situation in dark colors, as they always do, however there are no comments. In private circles the interest is great. I am often asked about what exactly is happening in the Baltics and whether we are still masters in our own home or have come completely under the Russian bayonet... I keep to a restrained line and use as an excuse lack of detailed information due to the interruption of communications.<sup>18</sup>

It was only on 21 July that not only the true goals of Vyshinsky’s mission but also its complete success became obvious. The so-called People’s Saeima (Parliament) elected in a single-party Soviet-style election, passed declarations on the establishment of Soviet rule in Latvia, on a request for the incorporation of Latvia into the USSR and on the nationalization of land, large industrial and commercial companies and banks. These decisions were contrary to the provisions of the 1922 Constitution of Latvia that stated that issues related to national sovereignty, system or territory could be decided only by a referendum.<sup>19</sup>

### **“We’ll Build Ourselves a New World ...”<sup>20</sup>**

This is a line from the “Internationale,” the national anthem of the USSR, which was also the anthem of the Communists of the world and was played rather often in the summer of 1940. Yet, the members of the Communist Party of Latvia (CPL) were given

a walk-on role only. Moreover, the leadership of the Party had been imprisoned for anti-state activities and was released from prison on 21 June 1940 by a decree of the Kirhenšteins Cabinet.

However, the membership of the Party and its public import was insufficient for the government of the Soviet Union to rely exclusively on it: the CPL rather resembled a small group of conspirators. Its sad state of affairs was also caused by the fact that, in 1936, the CPL had been accused of Trockism, its leading bodies abolished by the Executive Committee of the Comintern (the Central Committee was replaced by a temporary secretariat) and a “cleansing” of the ranks had been carried out. From that moment on until the summer of 1940 the admission of new members had been suspended. In his reports to Moscow Vyshinsky fails to mention the Latvian communists at all, probably for fear of causing Stalin’s discontent, as he was well familiar with the leader’s negative attitude towards ethnic Latvian communists in the Soviet Union. At the time when the Kirhenšteins government was formed, none of its members was a communist. However, in June the Communist Party of Latvia was legalized and became the only political party in Latvia, since the restoration or founding of other parties was not permitted. Only in early July were communists included in the government. Significantly, it was on 18 September 1940 that the Politburo of the CPSU CC approved the composition of the Politburo of the CPL CC, although formally it was incorporated into the CPSU only on 8 October.<sup>21</sup>

The First Secretary of the Communist Party of Latvia, Jānis Kalnbērziņš, speaking at the IX Party Congress in Rīga in December 1940, described the situation in the Party after the Soviet occupation as follows: “After the legalization the situation in the Party was very unsatisfactory. There was no register of members, Party committees did not know the size or composition of their membership. The Central Committee was not familiar with its cadres and the local organizations.”<sup>22</sup> By the way, none of the delegates at the Congress, almost one-third of whom were officers of the Red Army,<sup>23</sup> talked about a socialist revolution and the leading role of the CPL in it. The historical concept of a “socialist revolution” emerged much later, after World War II.<sup>24</sup>

The Secretary of the CPSU CC, Andrei Andreyev, in his long report addressed to Stalin and Molotov regarding the situation in the Baltic Republics in early 1941, wrote:

The Party organizations of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia came out of the underground in a very weak condition. [...] In order to consolidate the performance of the central institutions I find it necessary to send Party staff members from the USSR, 50–60 persons to each Republic, to serve there in second and third-level positions.<sup>25</sup>

However, in June and July 1940 Vyshinsky did not base his efforts solely on military force. He had at his disposal loyal executors of his instructions from the ranks of both

the local population and ethnic Latvians residing in the USSR. Since the early 1920s, the special services of the USSR had been looking for – and finding – “loyal persons” in various social strata in Latvia. The representative agencies of the Soviet Union were also involved in these efforts. The government of Latvia was familiar with this specific sphere of their activities. Thus a report of June 1929 pertaining to the work of the Trade Mission of Soviet Russia notes:

The USSR People's Commissar of Trade focuses his attention on the influx of currency. Trusts also occasionally need to have fictitious export operations on their balance sheets to become entitled to import foreign goods and sell them for excessively inflated prices. This allows concluding that the trade operations of the Trade Mission were of no particular significance, especially in Latvia. The Trade Mission of Soviet Russia in Latvia served in substance as a branch of the Authorized Representation [Embassy] and assisted it in special assignments, such as recruitment of political personnel by methods of commercial corruption, etc. The Trade Mission of Soviet Russia in Latvia was headed by Shevcov. In practice he did not deal with matters concerning trade mission; instead his task was to maintain contacts with the local circles.<sup>26</sup>

This “maintenance of contacts with the local circles” was successful. The circle of “acquaintances” of the personnel of the Embassy of the USSR was also very broad.

I want to emphasize in particular that representatives of the widest variety of social strata not related to the Communist Party came to the attention of USSR special services. The Soviet Union managed to create a thoroughly positive image of itself among a part of the intellectual elite, which was fed unsubstantiated illusions about the situation in the USSR and its goals.

In an autobiography written in 1940 we can read the following lines: “In 1928 I joined the Aizsargi [Home Guard] organization, and as a member of this organization I fulfilled the instructions of the Party and the Soviet power.”<sup>27</sup> The phrase – “fulfilled the instructions of the Party and the Soviet power” – may be difficult to comprehend from today's perspective. It meant association with Soviet special services. This was how Pēteris Blaus admitted his association with the special services of the USSR. In the Kirhenšteins government he was the Minister of Public Affairs.

Search for loyal partners of cooperation activated in 1938. The timing coincided with the arrival in Rīga of the First Secretary of the USSR Embassy, Ivan Chichayev. He began his career after the October 1917 *coup d'état* as a Cheka agent and in 1923 was transferred to the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs. After World War II, when “socialist revolutions” were organized in Eastern European countries, Chichayev worked in Czechoslovakia where he most probably applied the experience he gained in Latvia in 1940.

In his memoirs, Chichayev speaks very highly of his cooperation with Vilis Lācis, who became the Minister of Interior in the Kirhenšteins government. He wrote: “We were greatly assisted by V. Lācis. [...] Discussions with him were very interesting and useful: they cast light behind the scenes of Ulmanis clique and helped to explore the mood of different social strata and the domestic situation.”<sup>28</sup>

Deputy Minister of the Interior of the Kirhenšteins government, Vikentījs Latkovskis, who returned to Latvia from Soviet Russia in 1921 as a “sleeper” of the NKVD, underlined in his unpublished memoirs in 1955 that he restored his earlier links with the intelligence service of the Soviet Union in 1938 (i.e. 17 years later) because “a need had arisen to activate these efforts. Therefore my meetings with the respective officials took place on a regular basis, and a rather extensive network of informers had been set up, with whose help I in fact knew the political mood in all strata of the Latvian population.”<sup>29</sup>

Still it was not enough to have these “sleepers” in Latvia; moreover, Moscow did not altogether trust the locals. In the spring of 1940, an intensive search for ethnic Latvian members of the CPSU who had survived the “Great Purge” and who could be used in Latvia immediately after the occupation was launched all over the USSR.

It has never been a secret that a significant number of ethnic Latvians who had been residing in Russia arrived in Latvia together with Soviet troops. What was a carefully kept secret, though, was the manner and the timing of their arrival, i.e. before or after the occupation. Answers to these questions can be found in autobiographies handwritten in 1940–41 that were carefully hidden before Latvia regained its independence in 1991. A few excerpts:

On 9 May 1940, I was again drafted in the active military service by the Political Division of the Leningrad Military District and assigned to a group formed by the CPSU and the USSR NKVD [People's Commissariat of the Interior] to be sent to Latvia. On 11 June 1940, together with this group, I was transferred from Leningrad to Rīga and placed at the disposal of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Army Council.

On 13 June 1940 I was drafted into the Red Army of Workers and Farmers for a brief refresher training course and transferred to Latvia. After the restoration of Soviet rule in Latvia I was appointed Deputy Chairman of the Propaganda and Agitation Department of the CPL Central Committee.

On 9 June 1940 I was drafted into the Red Army of Workers and Farmers for a brief refresher training course and on 12 June I was placed at the disposal of the Head of the Political Division of the Corps, who, in compliance with a directive, placed me at the disposal of the CPL Central Committee.

In early June I was mobilized into the Red Army. In early July I arrived in Rīga, Latvia, with the Army.

In 1940 I was mobilized in a special call-up for the war [*spetsial'nyi voennyi sbor*], but later the Political Division of the Red Army of Workers and Farmers and CPSU CC transferred me to Rīga and placed me at the disposal of the Political Division of the Baltic Military District.<sup>30</sup>

Thus, already in June and July 1940 persons who, as they were described at that time, “could be entrusted with Socialistic transformations in Latvia,” were transferred to state institutions of the Republic of Latvia. Instead of arriving openly together with the Red Army troops on 17 June they came illegally with special units, for the most part before the occupation, and until their legalization were accommodated in the military bases of the USSR. It was a blatant violation of the 5 October 1939 Mutual Assistance Pact on the part of the USSR.

Thus on 22 June Andrei Vyshinsky and the Ambassador of the USSR in Latvia, Vladimir Derevyansky, in a jointly signed telegram informed Moscow of developments in Latvia and reported: “The new ministers are not provided with trustworthy assistants. Together we are selecting cadres, however, there is a need for 10–15 persons to be transferred from Moscow to be placed in different ministries. We are dealing with the selection of cadres for editors and different state institutions.”<sup>31</sup> Such assistants, consultants or advisers were placed in all state institutions. In view of the fact that a few months after the occupation the state institutions of the Republic of Latvia still continued to exist, the task of these advisers was to supervise their work and prevent any deviation from the instructions received. Not a single decision was to be made without the approval of these assistants.

In especially important institutions new advisory positions were created. Thus in July 1940 the post of Advisor to the Ministry was created in the Ministry of the Interior. Minister Vilis Lācis explained the need for such a position as follows:

In order to concentrate in one person's hands the supervision over the work of the many divisions of the Ministry of the Interior, particularly those of military character, the Ministry needs to establish a new position, that of an adviser to the Ministry. Such a position has become even more necessary in view of the intentions to incorporate into the Ministry the former Criminal-Political department of the Ministry of Justice, which is also a strictly militarized unit.<sup>32</sup>

The newcomers arrived in great numbers. Thus in the 2 January 1941 meeting the Politburo of the CPL CC discussed the issue of the leading personnel in the party, the Young Communist League, the trade unions, councils (soviets) and economic

organizations. As a result of the debates the decision was made to ask the CPSU CC to send to Latvia another 263 persons, instead of merely 50–60, as Andrei Andreyev had proposed.<sup>33</sup> While during the initial phase of the occupation, in order to cover the true intentions, the transferees had been ethnic Latvians who could speak the Latvian language, after the annexation of Latvia, ethnic background was no longer taken into consideration. The lists of personnel transferred to Latvia contain an increasing number of Russian names.

All these wide-range preliminary measures taken by the CPSU CC together with the USSR People's Commissariat of the Interior, the Political Division of the Red Army and the Intelligence Service of the Army before and after the occupation of Latvia ensured the formation and operation of Kirhenšteins' collaborationist government.

Thus, as a result of open political and military threat and through the subversive efforts of the special services of the Soviet Union, the occupation of the Republic of Latvia and its annexation into the USSR was carried out and brought to conclusion on 5 August 1940 with the incorporation of the Latvian SSR into the USSR as its 15<sup>th</sup> Republic.



*Rudīte Vīksne*

## **Soviet Repressions against Residents of Latvia in 1940–1941: Typical Trends**

Repressions against the inhabitants of Latvia served as the main tool to ensure the functioning of the Soviet regime. Repressions were launched right after the occupation of Latvia on 17 June 1940, when the Republic of Latvia formally still existed. Repressions served both political and economic goals and took the form both of direct repressions – arrests and administrative deportation – and indirect ones – dismissals, economic reprisals (confiscation of property), etc.<sup>1</sup>

Since 1991, when Latvia regained independence, there have appeared many publications on the repressions against civilians in the first year of occupation. However, for the most part the focus has been on research into the fate of individual professional or ethnic groups. A general overview about repressions against officers of the Latvian army is provided by Ainārs Bambals and Ēriks Jēkabsons.<sup>2</sup> Irēne Šneidere has studied repressions against state officials,<sup>3</sup> Tālivaldis Vilciņš – those against scholars and scientists,<sup>4</sup> Dzintris Alks – against medical personnel,<sup>5</sup> Ainārs Lerhis – against the former diplomats of Latvia<sup>6</sup> and Arturs Žvinklis – against parliamentarians of the Republic of Latvia.<sup>7</sup> Ēriks Jēkabsons has studied the impact of repressions on ethnic minorities in Latvia.<sup>8</sup> Latvia's historians and archive personnel have exerted much effort to identify the victims of 14 June 1941 deportation, which was the climax of the 1940–41 repressions.<sup>9</sup>

This study, which is based on the files of criminal cases of the former KGB that are stored in the State Archive of Latvia, attempts to find out which groups of population were the most dangerous in the eyes of the Soviet regime and among the first to be affected by repressions.<sup>10</sup> It also tries to clarify the scale and trends of political repressions in the period between 17 June 1940 and the mass deportation on 14 June 1941. Regretfully, the accurate number of the repressed cannot be established as yet for three reasons: (1) The files on persons who were transferred to Moscow and tried in the Soviet Union (these for the most part were high-ranking state officials and military personnel), are not in Latvia. (2) It is known that in the course of the evacuation of prisons (at the beginning of the war) many inmates perished or their files got lost.<sup>11</sup> (3) Many persons were executed at the beginning of the war before the investigations of their cases had been completed.

The period under consideration can be divided into two phases: from 17 June to August 1940 and from Latvia's annexation on 5 August 1940 until June 1941. In the first phase political repressions were carried out by the political police structures of the Republic of Latvia. At first, the new regime gradually replaced the administration and then the rest of the personnel of these institutions. On 21 June 1940, after the formal approval of the new government, formed in compliance with USSR requirements, Vilis Lācis became the Minister of the Interior, while the offices of Deputy Minister of the Interior and Head of the Political Police Division were taken by Vikentījs Latkovskis.<sup>12</sup>

By that time, the USSR practice of applying criminal law as a tool of political repression had already been established, although it formally came in force in the territory of Latvia (and also Lithuania and Estonia) only as of 26 November 1940. On that date a decree by the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Council, the Criminal Code and Criminal Proceedings Code of the USSR allowed punishing Latvia's population for their political, public and other activities performed in the period before 17 June 1940. That means that the criminal code was applied retroactively.<sup>13</sup> However, beginning right after the occupation of Latvia, arrests of Latvia's citizens followed the pattern already established in the USSR.

## Repressions June–August 1940

The first victims of Soviet political repressions were 37 citizens of Latvia – 27 civilians and 10 border guards – who were captured and taken to the USSR as hostages in the course of an armed invasion of the territory of Latvia in the night from 14 to 15 June – already before the occupation of Latvia.<sup>14</sup>

In the first month following the occupation on 17 June, the main form of repression was dismissal from politically important jobs. The largest group of dismissed officials (21 persons) were directors of departments, followed by bank officials (15 persons) and heads of various state institutions (10 executives). Staff members of the diplomatic service of the Republic of Latvia also lost their jobs.<sup>15</sup>

Political arrests were also common. According to criminal files available in Latvia, 24 Latvian citizens were arrested in ten days of June,<sup>16</sup> including 7 members of the Russian organization Natsionalno-Trudovoi Soiuz Novogo Pokoleniia (NTSNP, National Workers Union of the Young Generation), 13 illegal border crossers and 4 members of the Pērkonkrusts (Thundercross) organization.<sup>17</sup> The latter were in fact left to continue serving their terms in prison, where they had been incarcerated for anti-state activities by the previous regime. Although according to the Amnesty Law passed by the new government on 21 June 1940, persons convicted for criminal offenses against the state were to be freed, in practice only Communists and other left-oriented persons were

released, and the law was not applied to members of the Thundercross organization.<sup>18</sup> This practice was based on the Commentary to the Amnesty Law that entitled the Minister of the Interior to decide whether the respective person was considered to be dangerous to state security.<sup>19</sup>

Although formally the total number of the arrested in June was 24 persons, strictly speaking, only 7 members of NTSNP and one who was arrested after the Soviet attack at Masļenki are to be regarded as the first victims of actual political repressions of the occupation regime. The members of Thundercross had not completed their terms in prison yet, and the frontier-intruders were not considered political prisoners. The reasons are simple: (1) the occupation regime had not yet fully established its repressive apparatus and, furthermore, wanted to avoid excessive intimidation of the population before the “official” promulgation of Soviet rule; (2) the NTSNP was an ethnic Russian organization opposed to the USSR, and the security agencies used the first opportunity to eliminate it.<sup>20</sup>

As of July, repressions affected an increasing number of persons. According to sources available in Latvia, 147 residents of Latvia were arrested and several deported to the USSR in July. In this month, population groups that the occupation regime wanted to isolate first were specified. There is no accessible documentary evidence as to the intended procedure of the imminent repressions, however, according to a radio address by the newly appointed Minister of the Interior Vilis Lācis on 23 June 1940, “the most important challenge for the Ministry of the Interior was to cleanse the state apparatus from reactionary elements and enemies of the people completely and in a determined manner.”<sup>21</sup> As shown by criminal files, that is exactly what happened. Many officials of the Political Police Division, police officers, prison wardens, as well as the head of the Central Prison were arrested. Right after the occupation, the new authorities took over the archives of the Political Department, Ministry of War and other institutions. Therefore, a large proportion among the arrested consisted of political police and intelligence service agents (including informers) who could be identified on the basis of archive materials. The newly appointed head of the Political Police Division, Latkovskis, and his assistants now also had the chance to arrest former members of the Communist Party who had agreed to cooperate with the Political Department. Members of the Thundercross organization can be distinguished as the second largest group that constituted about one fourth of the arrested. The members of this organization were arrested on the basis of a card file created by the Political Department in the 1930s. In fact, the majority of the arrested members of Thundercross had been convicted for activities harmful to national interests already by the Ulmanis government, had served their terms and now were arrested again for the same offenses.<sup>22</sup> Some of those arrested, like the members of NTSNP, were soon transferred to the Butirki or Lefortovo

prisons in Moscow, and it was only there and even then after certain delay the order of their arrest was produced. It was a violation of their rights even according to Soviet law. The issuance of the order of arrest was deliberately delayed because in early July the PSRS NKVD had no legal basis to arrest citizens of Latvia.<sup>23</sup> Members of various ethnic Russian organizations comprised the third largest group of the arrested. The arrest of many of them was a socially motivated act of revenge against former enemies from the Russian Civil War (the White Guards) more than 20 years earlier.

Basically all of the arrested were incriminated for offenses committed before the occupation, apart from a few officials of the Ministry of the Interior, who, among other offenses, were charged with destroying classified documents in the night of 17 June 1940 and with participation in the prevention of disorders at the 17 June 1940 rally. A few of the persons arrested in July were charged with offenses committed after the occupation, such as sabotage, attempts to flee to Sweden and anti-Soviet propaganda.

In July, it became clear that the new regime was not going to tolerate any “differently thinking” individuals. Five persons were arrested for an attempt to nominate an alternative list of candidates for the parliamentary elections of 14 and 15 July, i.e. for something that was thoroughly legal even according to the new law on parliamentary elections.<sup>24</sup> They were charged with “having joined forces on the instruction of the Farmers’ Union of Latvia in order to nominate a list of landowners for the parliamentary elections to compete with the list of the Working People of Latvia, thus undermining Soviet rule,” although Soviet rule had not yet been proclaimed.<sup>25</sup> On 16 September former Latvian Minister of Education, Atis Ķeniņš, was arrested and charged with a similar offense.<sup>26</sup>

While in June the repressions had been limited to the dismissal of the top officials of government and state institutions, in July the arrests and deportations of the political elite of the Republic of Latvia began. Former Minister of Foreign Affairs Vilhelms Munters was deported in July.<sup>27</sup> After Soviet rule was proclaimed on 21 July 1940 and there was no longer any need for a figurehead President of Latvia, on 22 July President Kārlis Ulmanis was deported to the USSR.<sup>28</sup> The former Minister of War, General Jānis Balodis, met a similar fate.<sup>29</sup> The Deputy Director of State Chancery, Roberts Bulsons,<sup>30</sup> Minister of War Krišjānis Berķis,<sup>31</sup> and others were arrested and exiled.

On 5 August, when Latvia was formally accepted into the USSR, the process of Latvia’s incorporation was completed and the repressive authorities could expand their activities on a more “legal” basis. After the “admission” of Latvia into the USSR and approval of the Constitution of the Latvian SSR on 25 August, all structures of state administration were replaced. On 30 August 1940, a decree was issued to establish the Latvian SSR People’s Commissariat of the Interior. In September 1940, a structure of security bodies was elaborated following the model of the USSR. In September and October, the entire personnel of penal institutions was replaced.<sup>32</sup>

In August, the number of the arrested grew, and the range of persons subjected to repressions increased. Altogether 295 criminal files on persons arrested in August have survived in Latvia. In the course of this month, arrests basically continued to center on all previously described groups: police officers and prison personnel, officials of the Political Department and intelligence services, as well as members of various ethnic Russian organizations constituted the largest proportion of the arrested. The proportion of Thundercross members decreased, since most of the membership had been already arrested in July. In August, several members of the judiciary were arrested. They were accused of having taken part in trials of Communists in the 1930s. The number of those arrested for anti-Soviet propaganda increased as well.<sup>33</sup> For many of the arrested the offense was incriminated retroactively, i.e. as having been committed in the Republic of Latvia. Five persons were arrested for profiteering with currency exchange, which also qualified as a political crime.

While in the previous months repressions for the most part had affected members of different organizations of ethnic Latvians and Russians, in August people of other ethnic backgrounds also were subjected to arrests. For example, one member of the Zionist organization Trumpeldor was accused of “enticing working youth away from the Young Communist League and orienting them toward an anti-Leninist solution of the Jewish issue by founding a Jewish state in Palestine.”<sup>34</sup> Another was charged with “taking an anti-Leninist position on the issue of the foundation of an artificial Jewish state in Palestine and thus enticing the masses of working Jewish people and youth away from class struggle and pushing them toward emigration to Palestine.”<sup>35</sup> Members of various cultural and educational organizations of ethnic Poles and Lithuanians also suffered repression for political reasons.

Soldiers of the Polish army and Polish police officers who had been interned in Latvia in September 1939 were arrested as well.<sup>36</sup> For instance, the interned Polish officer Eduard Perkovich was charged with having taken an active part in the struggle against the Red Army in 1919 as an officer of the Polish Army and having been awarded a state decoration by the Polish government for it. From 1928 to 1932 he had served on the Lithuanian–Polish border as commander of a border guard regiment. In 1939, as the Soviet troops entered the Western part of Belorussia, Perkovich together with a group of officers had fled from Poland to Latvia where the government of Latvia had interned him. Until the moment of his arrest he was in the Ulbroka Camp. There Perkovich established contacts with the UK attaché to Latvia and aided in the escape of former Polish officers–intelligence agents from the camp. Since the evidence obtained against Perkovich was insufficient for his case to be considered in the War Tribunal, it was transferred to the extra-judicial Special Commission (Assembly).<sup>37</sup>

Speaking about the August repressions in general, the conclusion must be drawn that they for the most part consisted of reprisals for activities before the occupation of Latvia. Typical in this regard is the charge made against the 60-year old attorney Heinrihs Rūsis that reads as follows:

Being a supporter of the capitalist system, from 1906 on he has actively resisted revolutionary ideas. The practical form of his activities was working for the Cadets' paper "Latvija" and from 1909 to 1912 serving as the editor of the paper and member of the Cadets' Party.<sup>38</sup> From 1926 to 1934 he was member of the fascist party "The Farmers' Union."<sup>39</sup> From 1934 until the moment of his arrest he was president of the Supreme Council of the Lutheran Church that helped the Ulmanis government to fight against the revolutionary movement.<sup>40</sup>

However, there were also cases of persons being arrested for activities targeted against the USSR occupation regime, such as tearing down the Soviet flag or dissemination of anti-Soviet leaflets.

## Repressions from September 1940

Transformations that took place in the national security bodies in September 1940 for logical reasons did not affect the structure of arrests in these months, for everything had in fact taken place in compliance with instructions from Moscow even earlier. As testified by criminal cases of those arrested in September, no significant changes took place in September compared to the previous months. Police officers and agents of police and intelligence services (informers) still dominated in the arrest structure, yet the number of those charged with anti-Soviet propaganda increased every month. The commander of the Aizsargi (Home Guard),<sup>41</sup> retired General of the Latvian Army, Kārlis Prauls,<sup>42</sup> and Head of the Latvian Boy Scout organization, retired General of the Latvian Army, Kārlis Goppers, were arrested in September.<sup>43</sup>

In October, the scope of arrests increased dramatically. In Latvian archives there is evidence of 506 persons arrested in October. Such an increase was related to the 3 October 1940 order of the USSR Deputy People's Commissar of the Interior, Vsevolod Merkulov, to disband battalions of the border guard brigade that guarded the border with the USSR. Soon thereafter more than former 100 border guards were arrested.<sup>44</sup> Probably the trend was also affected by transformations in the prison system: the former personnel that had still been employed in low-ranking jobs was replaced, and the construction of a new underground prison was nearing completion.<sup>45</sup> The prison was inaugurated on 3 November, and thus more incarceration space became available.

In October a new group of arrested emerged: school students who after the beginning of the school year had established resistance groups and tried to protest against

the occupation. Usually their practical activities took the expression of writing slogans and proclamations of the type “Latvians Must not Yield to the Occupants.” But these activities had tragic consequences, as these amateurishly organized groups were soon discovered and their members arrested. The majority of these youngsters perished in Gulag camps.<sup>46</sup>

In the following months, i.e. between November 1940 and June 1941, close to 300 persons were arrested each month (236 in December, 268 in January 1941, 290 in February, 281 in March, 285 in April and 272 in May). The arrests remained centered on the same groups of population. Terror was targeted both against existing as well as potential opponents of the Soviet regime. Collaborators were not spared either. Thus a member of the Supreme Council of the Latvian SSR, People’s Commissar of Education, Jūlijs Lācis, was arrested in January 1941. He was charged with having worked in the newspaper *Jaunākās Ziņas* (The Latest News), which in 1933 had printed slanderous information about the USSR, the Communist movement and the work of the People’s Commissariat of the Interior.<sup>47</sup> Information gathering and surveillance was increased by security agencies. In October 1940, the USSR People’s Commissariat issued the directive “On the Application of Archive Materials in Operative KGB Work.” Heads of archive departments of the Baltic People’s Commissariats of the Interior were also instructed to register “counterrevolutionary elements.”<sup>48</sup> Party and Soviet institutions were instructed to activate collection of compromising materials. The services of voluntary informers, popularly called “KGB informers” were also activated, thus giving many people the opportunity to take personal revenge.

With each month, the sense of insecurity about the future increased and an atmosphere of fear prevailed, because there were no clear criteria for the basis on which repressive measures could be applied. In practice, anyone who had worked in a state institution or been a member of a legal organization in the period of Latvia’s independence could expect to be arrested.<sup>49</sup> Repressive institutions arrested anyone who even tried to demonstrate dissatisfaction with the new regime. It must be remarked that the economic and social policies of the new regime caused increasing discontent among the population, that, however, for the most part took the form of disorganized, spontaneous activities, such as laying flowers in the National Cemetery or at the Freedom Monument on Independence Day (18 November), tearing down the USSR flag or hoisting the national flag of Latvia. Many persons were arrested for resisting measures related to the nationalization of property, for example, hiding goods from nationalized shops or tools and other materials from nationalized workshops and factories.

Several persons were arrested for tearing off posters for the by-election to the USSR Supreme Council (12 January 1941) or replacing the names of candidates with different names on the paper ballots, thus demonstrating their negative attitude toward

the regime. Telling jokes about the Soviet Union or uttering critical remarks about the life of workers and collective farmers in the USSR, as well as singing or dissemination of the “Internationale” with changed lyrics and failure to report on the existence of anti-Soviet groups were also reasons for arrests.

In the late 1940 and early 1941, organized resistance began to emerge, but was soon uncovered. In the spring of 1941, many members of the Latvian National Legion, the Fatherland Guards and KOLA (Latvian abbreviation of Combat Organization for the Liberation of Latvia) were arrested. In 1941 the arrests of military personnel intensified.<sup>50</sup>

## Conclusions

The summarized materials reveal the criminal nature of the Soviet regime. By violating international human rights standards the regime during its one-year rule repressed more than 3000 residents of Latvia. Approximately 15% of these were arrested while ostensibly the fundamental law in the country still was the Constitution (*Satversme*) of the Republic of Latvia, which remained in force until 25 August 1940, when the Constitution of the Latvian SSR was adopted. Women constituted 5% of the arrested. Approximately 60% of the arrested were between 20 and 40 years of age, while 5% were younger than 18. The materials in the interrogation files of the arrested lead to the conclusion that the Soviet regime wanted in the first instance to eliminate the former state officials and persons who worked against the USSR and the Communist Party.

The criminal cases of the arrested of 1940–41 for the most part were reviewed in the War Tribunal of the Special Baltic Military District and an extra-judicial body, the Special Commission (Assembly) of the USSR People’s Commissariat of the Interior, or, more rarely, in the judicial collegiums of district courts. The Special Commission passed verdicts for counterrevolutionary crimes in absentia, i.e. it only “reviewed” the submitted lists of names.

In the course of the interrogation the arrested frequently were physically or mentally abused. Charges for the most part were based on confession, as witnesses were rarely interrogated during the investigation and even more rarely summoned to trials. It was on very rare occasions that the accused were allowed to use the services of an attorney. Indictments consisted of abstract and vague phrases. For many of the accused the only charge was “struggle against the revolutionary movement” or membership in an organization of the period of independent Latvia that was referred to as “fascist” or “counterrevolutionary.” More often than not the penalty was based on Articles 58–4 (for assisting international bourgeoisie), 58–6 (spying), 58–10 (anti-Soviet propaganda), 58–11 (membership in a counterrevolutionary organization), 58–13 (active work or active struggle against the working class and revolutionary movement performed while being in

a responsible or undercover position under the czarist rule or under counterrevolutionary governments during the civil war) of the Criminal Code of the Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic (RSFSR).

The unlawful character of such accusations has been accurately described by the former Minister of Justice of the Republic Latvia, Hermanis Apsītis, who was arrested on 19 October 1940 and tried in Astrakhan. After the Judicial Collegium of the Astrakhan District Court had sentenced him to death in October 1941, he wrote an appeal, in which he listed the violations of law and unlawful activities of the court:

My work in different positions in the Republic of Latvia cannot be qualified as an offense, since I worked in these positions in an independent state, whose sovereignty was recognized and more than once asserted by the Soviet Union. The Soviet regime and the Communist Party had declared its respect for the principle of self-determination of nations even before the foundation of the USSR. Thus, as of 18 November 1918, Latvia as an independent state had laws of its own, and the laws of another country, the laws of the RSFSR included, were not binding for any official of this state, nor were they obliged to be familiar with or to obey these laws [...] Since I, as an officer of the court, as a soldier and later as a governmental official, was not bound by any laws of a foreign state, it is completely incorrect to judge my thoroughly lawful activities retroactively on the basis of Paragraphs 4 and 13 of Article 58 of the Criminal Code of the RSFSR. Each criminal offense implies an intention to commit the respective offense, while I had and could not have had such an intention, as it was in Latvia and not in the USSR that I was fulfilling my lawful functions. In theory, I could have violated the laws of the USSR only as of 5 August 1940, i.e. as of the moment of Latvia's accession to the Soviet Union, something I obviously did not do.

The application of Paragraphs 4 and 13 of Article 58 is incorrect also because some necessary elements of these articles are missing. Thus, for instance, Latvia's government could never have been counterrevolutionary as there has never been any revolution in Latvia. [...] All the time I was and still am regarded as a citizen of Latvia, rather than a Soviet citizen (see the indictment). Thus, even if it was concluded (which would be contrary to the truth!) that I have committed a political crime in Latvia before the arrival of the Soviet troops, only a competent Latvian court in the territory of Latvia, rather than a court of another state beyond Latvia's borders and on the basis of laws of another state, would have been entitled to try me. [...] <sup>51</sup>

Apsītis was executed on 19 January 1942.

Although all information concerning sentences and penalties has not yet been summarized, it is clear that even a large part of those not sentenced to death did not survive the abominating and inhuman conditions in their places of incarceration. The families of many of those arrested during the year were deported on 14 June 1941.



*Jānis Riekstiņš*

## **The 14 June 1941 Deportation in Latvia**

*Marxist ideology grew into the belief that everything that meets the interests of the revolution, proletariat and Communism was morally sound and virtuous. Based on such morale, POWs in the Civil War were executed, the rural community was exterminated, concentration camps were established and peoples were displaced. The priority of an illusionary future justified resorting to violence and repressions without feeling shame for the choice of methods and ignoring the categories of the good and evil in the fight for the power. The true values: freedom, the rule of law, co-operation, kindness and love were found irrelevant as they only weakened the awareness of one's class.*

– Alexander Iakovlev<sup>1</sup>

Archive documents and memories of the victims testify that the persecution of those who thought differently, abolishment of the freedom of expression and press, expropriation of property, arrest and deportation of innocent people, torture and physical annihilation of the arrested were an integral element of the Communist regime.

Based on Stalin's thesis on "the intensification of the class-struggle with the advance towards socialism,"<sup>2</sup> the work of the repressive institutions was oriented and aimed at ruthless struggle against the actually non-existent "anti-Soviet underground" and ceaseless searching for, registration and isolation of so-called socially dangerous elements. Prosecutors' offices and judicial bodies that were politicized by the ruling Communist Party, as well as the Main Directorate of Reformatory Labor Camps under the USSR People's Commissariat of the Interior (NKVD) that had been established in 1930s and is known as GULAG, were extensively engaged in state terror. However, the chief players in the repressions were the People's Commissariat of the Interior and the People's Commissariat of State Security (NKGB) founded in 1941.

Apart from such extra-judicial Soviet surrogates as "groups of three" and "groups of two," which applied only one type of punishment – execution by shooting, in 1934 a Special Commission (Assembly) under the USSR People's Commissariat of the Interior

was established. In the autumn of 1941 it was authorized also to pass death sentences. Such verdicts were final and not subject to appeal.

After the Russian Civil War, deportations began to be widely applied in the USSR as a form of repression. These were targeted both against concrete categories of the population as well as entire peoples. A typical feature of the deportation was to exile thousands of people in an administrative manner without trial or verdict from frontier territories to remote districts of the USSR where they were subjected to the so-called special settlement regime.

It was typical for the deportations of the late thirties and early forties that many persons, mostly men, were arrested and sent to the so-called Gulag reformatory labor camps, where their cases were investigated and transferred to the Special Assembly (Commission) of the NKVD, which decided whether to sentence a person to death or to 5–10 years of incarceration in the camp. Family members of the arrested were exiled to remote districts in Siberia or the Kazakh SSR where they were settled in appointed places under the supervision of NKVD's Special Command posts. As concerns the post-World War II deportations, including the 25 March 1949 deportation from Latvia, men were no longer arrested and sent to Gulag camps; instead the entire family was transferred to the place of forced settlement together.

The USSR authorities passed special resolutions, made plans and allocated funds for each deportation operation separately to ensure the secrecy and efficiency of the procedure. All such resolutions passed by the USSR authorities blatantly violated the constitutions of the USSR, Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic (RSFSR) and other Soviet Republics that declared the equality of all citizens irrespective of their ethnic background and the immunity of their person and property.

The preparation and implementation of the deportations were under the charge of the USSR People's Commissariat of State Security and the People's Commissariat of the Interior. The local activists of the Communist Party and the People's Soviets were also involved.

A typical feature of deportations was to transfer a large number of people, mostly the so-called socially dangerous elements, from the USSR frontier territories to Siberia, the Kazakh SSR and other remote districts in the USSR. In other words it can be described as the "cleansing" of Soviet frontier territories.

## **Preparations for Deportations**

The scenario of Stalin's deportation policy was very uniform. Recommendations on the necessity to remove this or that category of socially dangerous elements from a region of the USSR were submitted by the heads of the USSR People's Commissariat of the

Interior and the USSR People's Commissariat of State Security to the leadership of the Communist Party and to Stalin in person. The USSR Council of People's Commissars or the Presidium of the Supreme Council passed a resolution on the deportation of the respective group of people. Sometimes deportations were carried out without any resolution having been passed by the USSR top authorities. Thus on 5–6 February 1945, ethnic Germans and so-called aliens were deported from Rīga in such a manner. The next step was for the NKVD and NKGB to issue relevant orders, directives and instructions and to do all the paperwork and practical preparation for the deportation.

In compliance with Stalin's deportation policy, already in 1930 ethnic Koreans were deported from the Far East regions as persons potentially disloyal to the Soviet regime. Slightly later, ethnic Finns, Chinese, Germans, Iranians and other groups were deported from various frontier territories of the USSR.

In 1940, deportations started also from the so-called sphere of influence established in the secret protocol of the 23 August 1939 Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact. In compliance with the 29 December 1939 resolution of the USSR Council of People's Commissars, approximately 275,000 ethnic Poles were deported from the Western territories of Ukraine and Belorussia in three phases: on 10 February, 13 April and 29 June 1940.

Deportations from USSR frontier territories continued in 1941. On 14 May 1941, the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) <sup>3</sup> and the USSR Council of People's Commissars passed a top-secret Resolution No. 1299-526 "On the Arrest of Counterrevolutionary Organizations in the Western Regions of the Ukrainian SSR."<sup>4</sup> The deportation took place on 22 May 1941, followed by deportations from Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Moldavia on 14 June and a little later, on 19 June, also from Belorussia.

This crime had been prepared well in advance. In the autumn of 1940, the NKVD was established in Latvia according to the USSR model, followed by the foundation of NKGB in February 1941. Repressions against citizens of Latvia took place with the active participation of prosecutors' offices and judicial institutions, politicized by the Communist Party as well as the Military Tribunal of the Baltic Special Military District.

With a decree of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Council, legislative acts of the RSFSR, including the Criminal Code, came into force in the territory of Latvia on 16 November 1940.<sup>5</sup> The latter authorized Soviet repressive authorities to punish Latvian citizens according to Soviet law, even for their activities before 17 June 1940, i.e. before the occupation of Latvia.

The NKVD and NKGB of the Latvian SSR identified many thousands of "socially dangerous" elements on the basis of archive materials of Latvia's Ministry of War: the Home Guard (Aizsargi<sup>6</sup>), various institutions, political parties and organizations; documents related to the nationalization of enterprises, houses and farms; data obtained in the course of issuing USSR passports; reports by secret agents; press publications

in the Republic of Latvia; statistics and other types of reference materials. Their fate was thus sealed.

One of the most essential documents by the USSR repressive authorities pertaining to the preparation of the 14 June 1941 deportation is the draft resolution “On Measures to Cleanse the Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian SSRs from Anti-Soviet, Criminal and Socially Dangerous Elements” submitted by the USSR People’s Commissar for State Security, Vsevolod Merkulov, to the CPSU Central Committee and the USSR Council of People’s Commissars on 16 May 1941:

In view of the fact that in the Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian SSRs resides a considerable number of former members of various counterrevolutionary nationalist parties, former police officers, gendarmes, landlords, factory-owners, high-ranking civil servants of the former Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian state apparatus and other persons who engage in destructive anti-Soviet activities and are used by foreign intelligence services for spying purposes, the Central Committee of the All-Union CP(B) and the USSR Council of People’s Commissars has decided the following:

1. To allow the People’s Commissariats of State Security and the People’s Commissariats of the Interior of the Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian SSRs to subject the following categories of population to confiscation of their property, arrest and incarceration in camps for a term of five to eight years and, after the serving their term in camps, to settlement in remote areas of the USSR for the period of 20 years:
  - a. active members of counterrevolutionary parties and members of anti-Soviet nationalist white-guard organizations<sup>7</sup>;
  - b. former Home Guards, gendarmes, police and prison personnel, as well as acting rank-and-file police and prison personnel on whom there is compromising material;
  - c. former large landlords, factory-owners and high-ranking civil servants of the former Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian state apparatus;
  - d. former officers of the armies of Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia and the White Army on whom there is compromising material;
  - e. Criminal elements that continue to engage in criminal activities.
2. To allow the People’s Commissariats of State Security and the People’s Commissariats of the Interior of the Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian SSRs to subject the following categories of population to arrest and deportation to exile settlements in remote areas of the USSR for the period of 20 years and to the confiscation of their property:
  - a. family members of the persons listed in article 1 (a, b, c, d), who share a household with such persons or are their dependants at the moment of their arrest;

- b. families of the members of counterrevolutionary nationalist organizations whose heads<sup>8</sup> have passed into illegal status or are in hiding from authorities;
  - c. families of the members of counterrevolutionary nationalist organizations whose heads have been sentenced to capital punishment;
  - d. repatriates from Germany and ethnic Germans who, having applied for repatriation to Germany, have refused to depart and on whom there is material on their anti-Soviet activities and suspicious contacts with foreign intelligence services.
3. To allow the People's Commissariats of the Interior of the Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian SSRs in an administrative manner to deport prostitutes who had been registered with police authorities of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia and continue to practice prostitution to the Northern territories of Kazakhstan for the term of five years.
4. To place the Special Commission of the USSR People's Commissariat of the Interior in charge of reviewing cases of persons to be arrested and deported in compliance with the present resolution.
5. To instruct the USSR People's Commissariat of State Security and the People's Commissariat of the Interior to elaborate a special instruction pertaining to the arrest and exile of persons listed in the present resolution, providing in it for the following:
  - a. a special camp shall be set up, to which persons listed in Article 1 of the present resolution shall be transferred from Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia right after their arrest;
  - b. the paperwork for the implementation of the resolution of the Special Commission shall be done after the concentration of the arrested in the above-mentioned camp;
  - c. persons listed in Article 2 of the present resolution shall be transferred to the place of settlement right after their arrest and their cases shall be formulated in the Special Commission of the USSR People's Commissariat of the Interior at a later date;
  - d. the places of settlement shall be in Omsk and Novosibirsk regions, Krasnoyarsk Territory, and Aktyubinsk, Pavlodar, North Kazakh and Kustanay Districts in the Kazakh SSR.
6. To instruct the Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian CP(B)s and Councils of People's Commissars to take over the leadership for the implementation of the provisions of the present resolution from the USSR People's Commissariat of the Interior and People's Commissariat of State Security.
7. To instruct the CP(B)s and Councils of People's Commissars of the Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian SSRs to elaborate and implement without delay measures to consolidate the subordinate Party and Soviet institutions and essentially to enhance the work of the Party and Soviets.

8. To instruct the USSR People's Commissariat of the Interior and People's Commissariat of State Security to assist the institutions of the People's Commissariats of the Interior and the People's Commissariats of State Security of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia in the implementation of the measures under the present resolution. The following steps shall be taken in this regard:
  - a. the USSR People's Commissar of State Security, Comrade Merkulov, and the USSR Deputy People's Commissars for Interior, Comrades Serov and Abakumov, shall be sent on a mission to Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia;
  - b. 208 ethnic Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian students of the Higher School of the USSR People's Commissariat of State Security shall be sent on a mission to assist in the operation and investigation;
  - c. temporarily, during the preparation and implementation of the operation, a blockade shall be set up on the Lithuanian–Belorussian border by stationing 400 border guards.
9. The operation of arrests and deportation in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia shall be completed in three days.<sup>9</sup>

The USSR People's Commissar of the Interior, L. Beria, and the USSR People's Commissar of State Security, V. Merkulov, submitted this document to Y. Stalin on 16 May 1941.

During this period, the USSR NKVD was also drafting a directive "On the Deportation of Socially Alien Elements from the Baltic Republics, Western Ukraine, Western Belorussia and Moldavia."<sup>10</sup>

The procedure of the deportation was described in the "Instructions Regarding the Manner of Conducting the Deportation of the Anti-Soviet Element from Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia" of the USSR People's Commissariat of the Interior.<sup>11</sup>

By 26 May 1941, 15,000 such persons were registered in Latvia.<sup>12</sup>

On 7 June 1941, the USSR Deputy Commissar for the Interior, Sergei Kruglov, informed the USSR People's Commissar of Health Care, Miterev, in a secret letter on an upcoming transfer of trains with people due for special settlements from Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Moldavia in compliance with a governmental resolution.<sup>13</sup> Kruglov asked Miterev to instruct the People's Commissariats for Health Care of the respective republics to allocate medical personnel to attend to the deportee trains. On the same day, 7 June, the USSR Deputy People's Commissar of the Interior, Vassili Chernyshev, informed the Krasnoyarsk division of the NKVD that on 15 June 6,850 persons due for special settlement would be deported from Latvia to Krasnoyarsk Territory.<sup>14</sup>

On 11 June 1941, the Chairman of Labor Camps and Special Settlements Department of the USSR NKVD's Central Authority for Camps (GULAG), the Deputy Chairman of the Central Finance and Planning Department of the USSR NKVD and the Chairman

of the Finance Division of the Administration and Finance Department of the USSR NKGB signed a “Calculation of Costs of the Transfer of 85,000 Persons from the Territories of the Baltic and Moldavia.”<sup>15</sup> 18,500,000 rubles were allocated for the deportation of 14 June 1941. Train routes and departure stations were chosen in advance.

On 14 June 1941, i.e. on the very day when the operation was in full swing, the USSR People’s Commissar of the Interior, Lavrenty Beria, signed the “Plan of Measures to Transfer, Settle and Employ the Special Contingents of Deportees from Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Moldavia” that had been drafted by the Chairman of the GULAG, Victor Nasedkin, and in fact was a detailed scenario of the 14 June deportation and served as the key document, on the basis of which the operation was carried out.<sup>16</sup>

The Central Committee of the Latvian Communist Party (Bolsheviks)<sup>17</sup> and the Latvian SSR Council of People’s Commissars drafted various instructions on the registration and ownership of the deportees’ property. These instructions envisaged “the confiscation by way of nationalization” of all valuable property and were carried out in the prescribed manner.

In early June 1941, personnel of the central offices and municipal and regional sections of the Latvian SSR NKGB and of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Section of the headquarters of the Baltic Special Military District prepared the files of citizens due to be arrested and deported. The main documentary basis for the arrests was the “Certification of Compromising Materials and the Documentary Proof” drafted by the municipal and regional sections of the NKGB and endorsed by the top officials of the Commissariat, Commissar Semion Shustin, his deputies Jānis Cinis, A. Brezģins and others. By “compromising material” was meant fighting in the Russian Civil War against the Soviets, service in the Army of Latvia, employment in state institutions, membership in various political parties and social organizations and the person’s property status. Commanders of the Home Guard received special attention. The arrest of the head of the family served as a basis for the deportation of the family. Deportations affected ethnic Latvians, as well as Russians, Jews, Germans and other ethnic groups.

## The Deportation

To manage the deportation, the so-called operative groups of three, sometimes of four, as well as operative groups of NKGB, were established in all districts and municipalities in Latvia in early June 1941. These groups, together with Red Army troops, militia officers, Workers’ Guard<sup>18</sup> and activists of the Communist Party and Soviets, carried out the detention and transfer of people to the so-called loading stations. This being accomplished, the head of the operative group reported to the chairman of the regional or municipal section of the Latvian SSR NKGB the surnames of the deportees, personal

belongings confiscated and transferred to the respective section of the NKGB, property that had been dispossessed, any incidents that had occurred, etc. Sometimes the reports contained a note that the person to be deported had not been found or had not been arrested because of serious illness or another reason.

During the deportation, the NKVD and NKGB, the CPL CC and the Latvian SSR Council of People's Commissars sent their authorized representatives on a mission to the respective districts. Thus, for instance, the authorized representative of the CPL CC and the Council of People's Commissars in Tukums District, Evgenii Beloglazov, wrote in his 19 June 1941 report to the Secretary of the CPL CC, Jānis Kalnbērziņš:

The preparation, organization and implementation of the operation and the drafting of an operative plan were carried out by the district group-of-five consisting of the following officials: C[omrade]. Leimanis, Chief of the State Security authority; C. Vasenkovs, the authorized representative of the LSSR People's Commissariat of State Security, C. A. Mazjecis, Secretary of the District Committee of CPL and C. Beloglazov, authorized representative of the LSSR Council of People's Commissars.

The operative group of five performed the operation in compliance with a plan that had been elaborated in advance, strictly coordinated and adapted to local conditions. Operative groups consisting of 4–5 people were set up, their leaders were appointed and instructed, [operative] files on the people to be arrested were handed out and operative groups received additional instructions on specifics of each concrete case. The operation was launched simultaneously at midnight in the city and parishes of the district on the night from 13 to 14 June 1941.

Heads of family to be arrested for deportation	148
actually arrested for deportation	131
Family members to be arrested for deportation	318
escaped and dodged arrest	11
had left for Rīga (were not found at the site)	4
had left for Jelgava (were not found at the site)	1
ill	1

In general the operation was completed by 6 a.m. in the city, but in some parishes it lasted as long as 6–8 p.m. on 14 June. The train with the arrested was detained and stood for about two days at station Tukums II.<sup>19</sup>

The Secretary of the Daugavpils city committee of the CPL described the deportation as follows:

The active membership of the Party and the Young Communist League as well as non-party activists, 204 people altogether, were engaged in the arrests. The best LCP(B) members and candidates, 32 people in total, were sent on a mission to rural

areas. At 19.00 the active city staff was convened for a meeting. In the course of the meeting the decision to cleanse the city from counterrevolutionary elements was announced, and the activists received detailed instructions on their functions in the upcoming operation. The activists enthusiastically welcomed the news about the upcoming cleansing of the city, and there was not a single person among them to display cowardice or to try to abstain from participation even for objective reasons [...] 100 persons, students of the Leningrad Militia School, had been sent on a mission to assist in the operation in the city.<sup>20</sup>

At the very outset of the deportation men were separated from their families, many for good, and locked in separate waggons. None of the deportees had been formally tried in court.

In his 17 June 1941 Report No. 2288/14 to the CPSU CC, the USSR Council of People's Commissars and the USSR NKVD "On the Results of the Operation of the Removal of the Anti-Soviet, Criminal and Socially Dangerous elements from Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia," the USSR People's Commissar for State Security, Vsevolod Merkulov, wrote that in Latvia 5,625 persons had been arrested, 9,546 deported, altogether 15,171 persons being repressed.<sup>21</sup> On 23 August 1988, the Chairman of the KGB of the USSR, V. Chebrikov, confirmed the figures in his report to a Commission of the Politburo of the CPSU CC "On the Deportation of Some Categories of Citizens from the Western Territories of the USSR in the 1940s and 1950s," stating that 15,171 persons had been deported from Latvia in 1941.<sup>22</sup>

The documents in the State Archive of Latvia indicate that on 14 June 1941 altogether 15,424 persons were deported from Latvia, of these 5,263 were arrested and 10,161 transferred to exile settlements.<sup>23</sup> The State Archive of Latvia also has materials on the plans of the arrest or administrative deportation of 711 persons, of whom it is known that they were not deported or else there is no documentary evidence of their arrest or deportation.

## **In Gulag Camps and Forced Settlement**

The citizens of Latvia arrested on 14 June 1941 were transferred to so-called reformatory labor – actually hard labor – camps in Vyatk, Norilsk, Usolye, the Northern Urals and some other destinations. It was only at the sites of incarceration that the deportees were presented with an arrest order as a security measure and the so-called investigation started. As a result, a charge was produced, usually consisting of crimes qualified in Article 58 of the Criminal Code of the RSFSR. As a rule, these were the so-called counterrevolutionary crimes committed in the independent state of Latvia, as well as the spreading of anti-Soviet propaganda during the first year of the Soviet occupation.

Practically no proof of guilt was found. Neither was there a court trial. In the indictments the investigators and prosecutors usually suggested and demanded the “highest measure of penalty” – execution, or incarceration for the period of up to 10 years. Thereafter the case was transferred to the Special Commission of the USSR NKVD, which reviewed the case in the absence of the accused on the basis of lists submitted beforehand. Sometimes the cases were reviewed also in the regional court.

Many inmates sentenced to capital punishment died before the actual execution because of hard labor, illness and inhuman conditions. According to the State Archive of Latvia, of the 5,263 persons arrested on 14 June 1941 700 were shot while 3,441 died in incarceration. It means that only about one fifth survived the incarceration.

In compliance with a directive issued by the USSR repressive authorities in 1942–44, the incurably ill inmates were released from incarceration and transferred to exile settlements.

In 1948, the USSR Ministry of the Interior began to organize special camps with much stricter regime and harsher living and working conditions. Many of the arrested on 14 June 1941 were transferred to such camps.

In compliance with the 21 February 1948 decree of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Council on the intensification of repressions, many of the former inmates who had been released from incarceration were again arrested and deported to exile settlements. As a rule, persons arrested on 14 June 1941 were not allowed to return to Latvia after serving their term and instead were either transferred to an exile settlement in a remote area of the USSR or to the settlement where their families were located. The families of the arrested were deported to the Krasnoyarsk Territory, Novosibirsk Region and the northern areas in the Kazakh SSR.

The Chairman of Labor Camp and Special Settlement Division of the GULAG of the USSR NKVD, Kondarov, wrote in a report on 20 September 1941 that 6,000 deportees from Latvia had been settled in Krasnoyarsk Territory, 2,580 in Novosibirsk region and 656 in the Kazakh SSR (together with deportees from Lithuania and Estonia).<sup>24</sup> These figures, however, are rather inaccurate, since there was no accurate register of the deportees to special settlements in the USSR NKVD system at that time. It started to develop on the basis of the 20 November 1942 Order No.002559 of the USSR People's Commissar for the Interior, Lavrenty Beria.<sup>25</sup> In 1949, the 1<sup>st</sup> Special Section of the USSR Ministry of the Interior created a centralized database on the deportees to special settlements comprising the files on 1,619,946 deportees.<sup>26</sup>

In autumn 1941, the deportees were advised that they had been exiled for the period of 20 years; however, in 1948 they were told they had been exiled for life. The deportees had to register in special command posts of the NKVD, from 1946 on – Ministry of the Interior (MVD), on a regular basis; they had to work in local kolkhozes and sovkhoses,

forestry enterprises and do other types of work; they had no right to leave their places of settlement. Children who had been deported together with their parents were registered in the special settlement register upon reaching 16 years of age.

In 1941–42 many deportees were transferred to hard labor in the far north. Living conditions were exceptionally harsh. Mortality was high. According to the State Archive of Latvia more than 1,900 of the persons deported from Latvia on 14 June 1941 died in special settlements.

## **Return and Rehabilitation of the Survivors**

After World War II, many deportees appealed to the authorities for permission to return to Latvia. Most of the appeals were turned down, even if the person because of whom the applicant had been deported had already died, been executed or released from incarceration.

Due to the initiative and efforts of the personnel of the Orphanage Department of the Latvian Ministry of Education more than 1,300 children (orphans and semi-orphans) were transferred back to their homeland from Siberia in 1946.

Deportees to special settlements, mostly women, who returned to Latvia without permission from the authorities were declared runaways and those who were found were sentenced to three years in reformatory labor camp, followed by deportation to the earlier place of settlement.

Conditions of the deportees began to change only after Stalin's death in 1953. In 1953 the Special Commission was abolished, the directives and regulations of USSR top authorities and repressive institutions on arrests, deportations, penalty measures and special settlement regimes were amended or revoked. Various commissions were set up to reconsider cases of the repressed. However, the USSR authorities did not yet condemn or recognize as unlawful the deportations and other types of repressions. The discussion did not go beyond admission of some violations of the so-called rule of the law and mistakes committed in the practical execution of various directives.

Although in the initial period of the so-called Khrushchev Thaw the regime in special settlements was somewhat relaxed and some of the deportees were taken off the special settlement register, a general mass-scale release of the deportees was still out of the question. On 5 October 1957, the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the Latvian SSR issued a confidential decree "On the Prohibition for Convicted Former Heads of Bourgeois Latvia's Government, Leaders of Bourgeois Political Parties, Anti-Soviet Organizations and Active Members of Latvian Nationalist Underground Who Have Served Their Terms to Return to the Latvian SSR."<sup>27</sup> However, gradual release of the repressed took place also in this period.

The condemnation and recognition of Stalinist deportations as unlawful, as well as the rehabilitation of the victims of the deportations and the restitution of or the compensation for their property began only in the late 1980s. In Latvia, the process was enhanced by the national renewal movement.

The Rehabilitation Department of the Ministry of the Interior, the Special Commission at the Council of Ministers, the Prosecutor's Office and the Supreme Court that prepared the rehabilitation documents had done a great amount of work in this respect. On 8 June 1989, the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the Latvian SSR passed a decree "On the Rehabilitation of the Persons Deported from the Territory of the Latvian SSR in the 1940s and 1950s."<sup>28</sup> A little later other essential decisions were taken, including a resolution on the restitution of or compensation for unlawfully seized property.

## Research

Only during this period of national renewal in the late 1980s did Latvian scholars gain access to archive documents related to the deportations and could begin systematic research into these darkest pages in Latvia's history. Up to that time, the deportations could be studied only in the West.

Already during World War II, data on the deportees of 14 June 1941 were collected and taken to the West. Research papers, as well as the memoirs of the deported, were published there. No doubt, the most important study of that period is the list of the 14 June 1941 deportees, *These Names Accuse*, published abroad in 1952 and republished in 1982.<sup>29</sup>

In 1995 and 1996, based on the latest documentary studies, the State Archive of Latvia together with the Division of the Rehabilitation of Unlawfully Repressed Citizens under the Ministry of the Interior elaborated and in the form of a supplement to the journal *Latvijas Arhīvi* (Archives of Latvia) published "The Lists of the Repressed" that contain data on the deportees of 14 June 1941 and 25 March 1949.<sup>30</sup>

In 2001, the State Archive of Latvia issued a book, *Aizvestie: 1941. gada 14. jūnijs* (The Deported: 14 June 1941), that contains accurate data on all the deportees of 14 June 1941. Based on documentary evidence, the book describes the preparation and implementation of the deportations, as well as the destinies of many of the arrested. The book also features new research results, photographs, maps showing the places of incarceration and settlement and the structural analysis of the deported population.<sup>31</sup> Currently the State Archive of Latvia is working on a book on the deportees of 25 March 1949.

On 12 and 13 June 2001, the Commission of the Historians of Latvia, the State Archive of Latvia, the University of Latvia and its Institute of the History of Latvia held

an international conference “The Deportation of 14 June 1941: Crime Against Humanity” in Rīga. Altogether 31 speakers took the floor at the conference: historians, lawyers and other experts, as well as eyewitnesses from nine states (Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, the USA, Israel, Russia, Moldova, the Ukraine and Sweden). The speakers analyzed the preparatory work, implementation and consequences of the deportations of 1941 committed by the USSR totalitarian regime in the occupied Baltic states and other parts of the USSR.

Thus, for example, Pēteris Zvidriņš and Edvīns Vītoliņš from the Demography Center of the University of Latvia analyzed the demographic consequences of the 14 June 1941 deportation, concluding that the direct summary loss of the deportation constituted almost 600,000 human-years (289,300 for men and 296,700 for women). The calculation was based primarily on the data provided by the Center for the Documentation of the Consequences of Totalitarianism on the gender and age structure of the 14 June deportees and the statistical data on the life expectancy in the respective period. The researchers described also the impact of the deportation on the birthrate, concluding that the total summary loss of vitality potential caused by the 14 June 1941 deportation constituted 890,000 human-years.<sup>32</sup>

In their presentations at the conference researchers from the Baltic and other Eastern European countries also analyzed the causes and goals of the deportation, the mechanism of terror of the Communist regime and the expressions of collaboration in their countries. An important element of the conference was to provide a comparative typological analysis of deportations with focus on the common and distinctive features of deportation in different countries as well as the common and distinctive elements of the 1941 and the subsequent deportations. One of the important conclusions of the conference concerns the question of genocide:

In the course of investigating the archival material concerning the deportations the conclusion has been reached that actions in their places of imprisonment and forced banishment taken against persons deported from Latvia without proper adjudication doubtless correspond to the characteristics of genocide stated in Article 2 of the 9 December 1949 United Nations Organization “Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide” (which Latvia has acceded to): killing members of the group; causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part.<sup>33</sup>



**UNDER  
NATIONAL SOCIALIST GERMANY  
1941–1945**







*Inesis Feldmanis*

## **Latvia under the Occupation of National Socialist Germany 1941–1945**

The Nazi occupation of Latvia is traditionally referred to in Latvia as the “German Times.” It is a complicated and very controversial period in Latvian history. The Nazi occupation replaced the first Soviet occupation, which had been a painful experience for thousands of Latvians. The state of Latvia had been *de facto* liquidated, and thousands of its residents had been subjected to terror and deportations. Not realizing that the Nazis had sold out Latvia to the Soviet Union in 1939, Latvians hoped that Germans would restore Latvia’s independence. This hope turned out to be futile. A sovereign Latvia was not part of Nazi initial plans. The Germans treated Latvia as occupied Soviet territory and envisaged the subjugation and Germanization of the country. Latvia became a *Generalbezirk* (General District) of the *Reichskommissariat Ostland*. The so-called Self-Administration of the Land, established in March 1942, was an executive authority with very limited powers. It was in no position to decide any important political issues independently. The sovereign German rule in the General District of Latvia was exercised through a *Generalkommissar*, who was subordinated to the *Reichskommissar* of Ostland. Nazi repressive structures in Ostland were almost completely autonomous from the civil administration.

The German occupation regime in Latvia ignored international law. It bears full responsibility for the grave crimes against civilians committed in the territory of Latvia. Nazi terror had a clearly political and racial character. Apart from the Holocaust against the Jews, extermination of Gypsies and the mentally ill also took place. German repressions were aimed at Communists and Soviet activists, as well as members of national resistance groups. Residents of Latvia were recruited in the repressive system of the occupants, mobilized in military formations and transferred to labor service in Germany.

Nazi economic policy was aimed at plundering Latvia empty. Germans wished to squeeze from Latvia maximum economic benefit. Raw materials, timber, food and other material values were shipped to Germany in large amounts. A fixed amount of grain, butter, bacon, eggs, etc. was requisitioned for the German army. According to Latvian economic historian Arnolds Aizsilnieks, losses incurred by Latvian economy under Nazi occupation rule constituted 660 million USD, based on the prices of 1940.<sup>1</sup>

It is, no doubt, difficult to give an unambiguous assessment of the “German Times” in Latvia. The key to the understanding of this period lies in an impartial assessment of the whole range of interconnected events and a balanced perception of the past. It is absolutely clear that we cannot accept the rather widely held opinion in the historiography of World War II, which can be described as the “winners’ position,” and is based on the so-called Nuremberg consensus among the USA, UK, France and USSR. It focuses on one paradigm of evil only – Nazism.<sup>2</sup> The mood and behavior of Latvia’s population and its attitudes towards the German occupation rule to a large extent were affected and determined by the first Soviet occupation and the aspirations to recover national independence. Thus World War II events in Latvia cannot be understood and impartially assessed without keeping in mind the existence of at least two paradigms of evil: Communism and Nazism. Their objective reality and their position between the victors and the defeated do not allow Latvians to look back at the past from a one-sided, incomplete and distorted perspective.

There is another reason why adherence to the principles of Nuremberg does not contribute to the establishment of historical truth. According to these principles crimes in World War II were committed solely by the Nazis and their henchmen, among whom the Eastern European peoples also were included to a large extent.<sup>3</sup> However, any historian who studies the history of World War II is well aware that the crimes of Nazi Germany were not the only crimes committed. Different types of crimes were committed by other countries as well, the Soviet Union in particular. However, the Soviet Union did its utmost to hide them.

In September 1945, a special governmental commission for matters pertaining to the Nuremberg process was set up in the USSR under the charge of Deputy Commissioner for Foreign Affairs, Andrei Vyshinsky.<sup>4</sup> Among the functions of this Commission was the assignment to control, direct and correct the work of the Soviet prosecutors and the entire delegation in Nuremberg and to prevent by any means the emergence of facts and issues undesirable for the USSR. The Kremlin was afraid that in the course of the Nuremberg process materials and documents might come to light that would reveal the Soviet Union as guilty of war crimes, crimes against peace and humanity.<sup>5</sup>

Shortly after the Nuremberg Tribunal had started its work on 20 November 1945, representatives of the USSR, United Kingdom, USA and France concluded a secret agreement on the prevention of debates on several specific issues in the trial of the main Nazi war criminals.<sup>6</sup> Minutes of the 26 November 1945 meeting of Andrei Vyshinsky’s Commission reveal which international crimes of its own the Soviet Union tried to keep secret. The annex includes a list of nine items, which had to be prevented from being reviewed in the court. Among them were: the non-aggression treaty concluded

between the USSR and Germany on 23 August 1939 and the attached secret protocols concerning the division of spheres of influence in Eastern Europe that ushered in World War II and annihilated the independence of the Baltic states; the visit of the USSR Commissar for Foreign Affairs Vyacheslav Molotov, to Berlin in November 1940 (during this visit, concluded on 27 September 1940, plans were discussed for the division of Europe and the world and conditions of the USSR joining the tripartite Pact of Germany, Italy and Japan); the Soviet Baltic Republics; Soviet–Polish relations in September 1939, etc.<sup>7</sup> It is also known that, on the basis of the quadrilateral agreement, the Tribunal rejected a copy of the Soviet–German 1939 secret protocol that the defense attorneys of Nazi criminal Rudolf Hess had submitted in March 1946.<sup>8</sup> The formal reason for the rejection was that the original of the protocol had not been supplied and that the defense had refused to state how the copy had been obtained.<sup>9</sup> From then on for more than forty years the Soviet Union denied the existence of the Soviet–German secret protocol.<sup>10</sup>

## Historiography

The German occupation policy in Latvia has been addressed by many historians. Before the 1990s, serious study and assessment of this topic was possible only in the West. In Latvia all historical literature on Nazi criminal policies was largely politicized and ideologized. It reflected the occupying power's perspective on the "German Times" in Latvia and as such was very fragmentary, incomplete, one-sided and in many instances – deliberately distorted. As Heinrihs Strods has accurately pointed out, in the Soviet period research was subjugated to "one aim only: to unmask Nazi German criminals and their henchmen, among whom exile Latvian political organizations and their leaders were also placed."<sup>11</sup>

Typical examples of such type of historiography are the book *Latviešu tautas cīņa Lielajā Tēvijas karā* (Struggle of the Latvian People in the Great Patriotic War), which was published in 1966,<sup>12</sup> and the reference work *Latvijas PSR vēsture* (History of the Latvian SSR), published in 1986.<sup>13</sup> The latter, speaking about the situation in Latvia in the summer of 1944, says the following:

Feeling their hour of retribution approaching, the occupants in their despair began to plunder and destroy industrial enterprises, schools, hospitals, public buildings and apartment houses. Latvian bourgeois nationalists joined them in wild hatred urging "to leave nothing but piles of ashes to the Communists." ... Hatred against the ruthless invaders and their repulsive local henchmen and aspirations to safeguard the freedom and independence of their land [!?] inspired the best sons and daughters of the Latvian nation to a holy war."<sup>14</sup>

In contrast, quite a few works written by Latvian exile authors in the first four decades after World War II display a trend to keep alive the myths created by Nazi propaganda. This trend was particularly typical of authors who had in some form cooperated with Germans in the period of Nazi occupation, but by no means universal. Apart from publications of this content and orientation, serious scholarly works whose academic value is beyond doubt were also published in the respective period. As an example can be mentioned the well known monograph of Arnolds Aizsilnieks *Latvijas saimniecības vēsture 1914–1945* (History of Latvian Economy 1914–1945), which contains a lengthy chapter on the Nazi occupation period,<sup>15</sup> as well as a multi-volume publication *Latviešu karavīrs Otrā pasaules kara laikā* (Latvian Soldier in World War II).<sup>16</sup> The compilers of this publication represent an interesting, largely substantiated, but at the same time disputable opinion on the Latvian Legion: “The Latvian Legion was a specific military unit: its members were mobilized by a foreign power, however they voluntarily fought only for the good of their own people. And the entire Latvian nation stood behind them at that time.”<sup>17</sup>

Through the efforts of Latvian historians in Latvia and in exile, as well as German historians, tangible progress in research on the German occupation period was achieved in the 1990s. Several collections of documents were compiled and published that have considerably enlarged the source basis and enabled historians to provide a more objective picture of history free from earlier deformations.<sup>18</sup> Several monographs written during this time comprehensively and competently analyze the most typical features of Nazi occupation policies in Latvia.<sup>19</sup> Various periodicals feature dozens of articles, among which the studies of Kārlis Kangeris deserve mention for their professional approach and mastery of sources.<sup>20</sup> He operates with a very broad range of archive materials that allow him to treat a number of issues with authority. Kangeris is familiar with almost all the main issues related to the occupation period. Particularly important is his contribution to the study of the destinies of Latvia’s residents in World War II. Kangeris notes that “as a result of the two occupations the population of Latvia decreased from almost 2 million in mid-1940 to 1.5 million in mid-1945.”<sup>21</sup>

Among monographs, the 1992 book by Latvian exile author Haralds Biezais *Latvija kāškrusta varā. Sveši kungi – pašu ļaudis* (Latvia under the Rule of the Swastika. Alien Overlords – Our Own People), deserves special mention. It consolidates the critical and negative attitudes towards the Latvian Legion found in exile historiography. In contrast to the view that had dominated for many years – that the Legion had been necessary in order to fight for the restoration of Latvia’s independence (for example, Arturs Silgailis<sup>22</sup>), Biezais sees the formation of the Legion as a tragedy for the Latvian people. He points out that the Legion was established in a criminal manner, by violating international law. According to him, the responsibility for it lies with Germans as the

carriers of the occupation rule; however “all Latvians who voluntarily engaged in politics in the occupation period must be held co-responsible.”<sup>23</sup> He regards the fact that the Latvian legionnaires belonged to SS troops as a grave humiliation and an obstacle for the relations with other nations.<sup>24</sup>

A couple of years later Heinrihs Strods' work *Zem melnbrūnā zobena* (Under the Black-and-Brown Sword) was published in Latvia. It addresses several important issues related to the “German Times.” Although, on the whole, the book outlines a concrete direction in the interpretation of World War II events in Latvia, its contribution to research is minimal, even deceptive. Several reviewers have pointed out that the author's interpretation of history is the main shortcoming of the work. Thus, the German historian Ernst Benz reproaches Strods for interpreting the German “Drang nach Osten” as a phenomenon of *realpolitik* that had emerged in the Middle Ages and reached its climax in Nazism, a view contrary to the latest trends in European historiography.<sup>25</sup> Benz finds some of the author's main conclusions rather simplified and naive, such as Strods' statement that the Nazi's *Generalplan Ost*<sup>26</sup> “was a continuation of German imperial policy in Latvia,” whose “basic components have found expression in German ‘Drang nach Osten’ policy for centuries,” or that the General Plan and the plans “for the rearrangement of the Baltic area” were the same old plans of German imperial rule in the Baltic, differing only in being amended from the positions of the Nazi racial policy.<sup>27</sup>

The Commission of the Historians of Latvia, which was founded in the autumn of 1998, has ushered in and brought about new activity in historical research and historiography in Latvia. Research of the most important aspects of “the German times” have been activated and fostered. As a result a true boom of research has even set in: many Latvian and foreign historians have been involved in this research. Right now as many as six doctoral students at the University of Latvia are writing their dissertations on war-related subjects. Over the last five years, four international conferences have been held and several collections of papers have been published, including the monograph of Dzintars Ērglis' *Latvijas Centrālās padomes vēstures nezināmās lappuses* (The Unknown Pages of the History of the Central Council of Latvia), that analyzes several important aspects of the Latvian national resistance movement in the final phase of World War II and the immediate post-war years.<sup>28</sup>

## Research Problems and Solutions

The majority of Latvian historians try to present the destiny of their nation in World War II as impartially as possible. They actively look for answers to questions that arise in the course of their research. Highly important questions regarding the change of power in the territory of Latvia in the summer of 1941 after the German attack on the Soviet Union

and the beginning of the Nazi occupation have not yet been fully answered. One group of authors insists that after the hasty retreat of the Soviet troops in late June 1941 and early July, a period of power vacuum, the so-called “interregnum,” set in, in the course of which members of Latvian Self-Defense “were shooting Jews without the Germans being present or knowing anything about it.” Other historians believe that Germans were in full control of the situation from the very start and no prolonged “interregnum” period ever existed.<sup>29</sup> While a condition of power vacuum can be understood and defined in different ways and placed in different chronological frameworks, the latest detailed research for the most part tends to confirm the latter of the two views.<sup>30</sup> Thus, for example, Juris Pavlovičs, who has specialized in the particular topic, believes that even in the northern part of Kurzeme, where the period of interregnum was longer than anywhere else in Latvia, it lasted for five to seven days only,<sup>31</sup> but in Valmiera District it was three or four days long.<sup>32</sup> In the towns of Latgale, the period of interregnum lasted for one or a maximum of two days in places where the Wehrmacht had closely followed in the steps of the Soviet troops, and up to six or seven days in Preiļi and very remote rural areas.

The well-known Holocaust researcher Andrievs Ezergailis holds to a slightly more radical view, insisting that in the majority of Latvian towns the change of power was a matter of hours, rather than days. He believes that in Bauska the period of the interregnum (28 June) did not exceed 30 minutes, while in some towns in northern Kurzeme and Vidzeme the period between the retreat of the Soviet troops and the arrival of Germans could have lasted only for a day or two. This, however, is a rather simplified interpretation of the period of interregnum between the departure of the last Red Army troops (the old occupants) and the arrival of the first Wehrmacht soldiers (the new occupants). It is important also to record the moment when the new occupants take over the control of the situation and the population begins to obey their orders. Ezergailis has partially performed this task, too. He notes that, for example, “in Bauska on 1 July the control was taken over by the German Commandanture I (V) 859.” Ezergailis is right in saying that in practice, in the whole territory of Latvia, “in military aspect and in terms of control the German occupation did not allow the native population any possibility to do anything without the Germans.” He rejects the possibility that in Latvian towns where there existed a brief period of interregnum Jews and Communists could have been executed without the Germans knowing it: “In Latvian towns executions started approximately three to four weeks after the arrival of the Germans.”<sup>33</sup>

Just as important as it is to establish accurately the beginning of the German occupation in different regions of Latvia, is to find out how ruthless and powerful the Nazi occupation rule was. In historical literature there dominates a belief in the vast

resources and omnipotence of this regime. An insight into the works written in the Soviet period leaves no doubt about the Soviet view. The reference book *Latvijas PSR vēsture* (History of Latvian SSR), published in 1986, states:

The population [of Latvia] was deprived of any rights and the life, honor and property of any citizen was dependant on the will of this or that that German civil servant. Capital punishment was applied on mass-scale as a penal measure. The German Nazis created a situation, in which each individual felt persecuted. Suspicion was sufficient reason to throw a person in the torture chamber and kill him after inhuman torturing.<sup>34</sup>

Ezergailis, too, has taken a very unambiguous position. He writes about the military takeover: “Iron control was established in all towns and parishes. Already in the first hours of the occupation order was given to hand over all weapons. Failure to obey the order was threatened with capital punishment.”<sup>35</sup>

However, careful study of archive materials in Germany raises doubts whether this issue can be understood and treated from such a simplified perspective. Doubts arise whether the German civilian administration in Latvia, clearly a weak institution, was at all able to ensure the full and unconditional implementation of Berlin’s policies. It is as yet difficult to give a clear answer. However, many facts testify that the capacities of the Nazis had certain limits. For instance, in Latvia and also in Estonia Nazi authorities not infrequently were forced to admit their impotence in fighting draft dodging and medical checkups for the Legion. Thus, in December 1943, the Reichskommissar for Ostland, Hinrich Lohse, complained to SS Reichsführer Heinrich Himmler that more than 4000 Latvians and 2000 Estonians had disobeyed the order to report to the recruitment stations and that police measures had proved to be ineffective.<sup>36</sup>

The outlined issue should be dealt with step by step, by trying to clarify several closely related aspects. The entire Nazi repressive system and the overall public control in Latvia should be focused upon first. Attention must be directed toward the structure of Nazi prisons and concentration camps and the mechanisms of their functioning. The development of the police apparatus should also be seriously studied, with special focus on the formation of Latvian police battalions and their functions. This particular theme has been comprehensively studied and assessed by Kārlis Kangeris in recent years. He has set out to find substantiated and considered answers to questions why the Latvian police battalions were formed, what role they played in the occupation repressive system, and what were the similarities and differences in the formation of police battalions in Latvia, Lithuania and Ukraine. The recently published and prepared research papers contain several conclusions worth noting. In these Kangeris points out that with the formation of the police battalions Himmler “won a victory for his point

of view that the creation of military units of Latvians (and other non-German peoples) were to take place only under the charge of the Reichsführer SS.<sup>37</sup> Kangeris, quotes a Latvian report of the time that members of the Latvian police battalions were but “mercenaries, who work for pay.”<sup>38</sup>

It is not less important to establish and clarify the scope of Nazi terror and repressions. The figures featured in historical literature are often exaggerated and lack credibility. Apart from Holocaust scholars who are trying to find out the number of Jews killed in Latvia, historians Uldis Neiburgs and Kaspars Zellis have begun to identify the persons of other ethnic backgrounds who perished or were repressed in the Nazi occupation period and to create an adequate database comprising several parameters: surname, name, date of birth, place of residence, occupation, accusation or charge, place of repression, result of repression, etc. The main function of the emerging database is to provide empirical evidence for research into the Nazi occupation period and to identify the main repressed groups. Both historians have come to the conclusion that “in the present phase it seems that the main repressed groups are those arrested in 1941–42 who were charged with Communist activities in the period of the Soviet occupation and eventually released; inmates of concentration camps in the territory of Germany, etc. Difficulties are caused by the fact that it is not always possible to distinguish between the reasons (political or criminal) for the repression of the concrete person.”<sup>39</sup>

Another important research topic is the resistance movement in Latvia during World War II. Through the efforts of Uldis Neiburgs, Dzintars Ērglis and Ēriks Jēkabsons new and on the whole laudable results have lately been achieved.<sup>40</sup> Yet, surprisingly, none of these young historians has even attempted to address the theoretical aspects of resistance or to view the phenomenon in the context of overall developments in Europe. No sufficiently clear, balanced and comprehensively substantiated answers have yet been given to the questions: what constituted resistance in Latvia during World War II, what was its essence and which groups can and which cannot be included to prevent the very notion of resistance from becoming discredited. There are also many uncertainties regarding the form of activities and the actual goals of different resistance groups.

It is an irrefutable fact that during World War II Latvia was occupied twice. Thus the peculiarity of Latvia's situation dictates that only those groups should be regarded as part of resistance that expressed readiness to fight against both occupants and set the restoration of Latvia's independence as their goal. Such criteria would leave outside the framework of resistance the local Communist underground and the Red partisans who, although fighting against the Germans, were in favor of the restoration of the Soviet occupation. From the perspective of Latvia's national interests they were

collaborators rather than members of the resistance movement. One and the same term cannot apply to groups with diametrically opposite goals. In this case one must certainly speak about different phenomena. Why cannot the so-called “Soviet resistance movement” be referred to as “the Communist and subversive movement”? This name would accurately describe the essence of the movement, particularly considering that Communist underground groups and organizations in Latvia often merged or cooperated with groups which were sent in across the front from the rear regions in the USSR.<sup>41</sup>

The activities of the leader of the Latvian nationalist organization Pērkonkrusts (Thundercross), Gustavs Celmiņš, under the German occupation and his ties with the resistance movement have been viewed controversially in Latvian historiography. For example, Ezergailis points out that after 17 August 1941, when the Germans banned Pērkonkrusts, Celmiņš “led a part of the group in struggle against the Nazis.”<sup>42</sup> Celmiņš claims that his group Free Latvia was “the most widespread, strongest and the only one that came near to being a resistance movement in West European sense.”<sup>43</sup> Aivars Stranga represents a different opinion, underlining that “there exist opinions that he [Celmiņš] had been involved in the resistance movement. It is rather an exaggeration: although the Germans did arrest him in 1944 and transferred him to a concentration camp as ‘an inmate of honor,’ there is no evidence about any resistance activities on his part, except for the dissemination of a few leaflets.”<sup>44</sup>

The young historians Uldis Neiburgs and Dzintars Ērglis have expressed doubts about both of these views and regard them as “exaggerated from one, as well as from the other side.” They suggest that the resistance movement should be studied more thoroughly and “hasty and categorical conclusions should be avoided.”<sup>45</sup> Stranga’s more recent statement also deserves attention. In one of his latest publications he no longer denies Celmiņš’ ties with the resistance movement, but thinks that it still “does not answer the question as to what dominated in his eventful career, collaboration or resistance, and which was more effective – heading ‘the chief committee’ for recruiting Latvians into police battalions under German leadership or participation in resistance.”<sup>46</sup> It must be added that for the assessment of Celmiņš’ activities, it is essential to use documents from German archives that contain diverse and comprehensive evidence about the Latvian political figures of the “German Times.”

The situation in Nazi-occupied Latvia was so complicated and the forms of resistance and collaboration so diverse and often closely interlinked that it would be worth while to introduce a few new terms (or existing terms that have not been applied to date), which would more accurately describe various types of activities. Apart from such descriptions as “collaboration” (ordinary cooperation with occupants) or “collaborationism” (treasonous cooperation), a term “tactical collaboration” could be applied,

meaning cooperation with the occupation regime aimed at achieving goals that in some way served the interests of the Latvian people. It can be discussed whether tactical collaboration can be regarded and defined as a certain form of resistance. It is certainly also necessary to identify those persons who could be described as “tactical collaborators.” One of the candidates for this honor, no doubt, is the Director-General for Justice of the Self-Administration of Latvia, Alfreds Valdmanis. Historians possess evidence that his famous memorandum “The Latvian problem” that called for the formation of Latvian military units and granting of autonomy to Latvia<sup>47</sup> was meant formally to demonstrate the desire to cooperate with the Germans and at the same time put forward unacceptable demands to win time and hamper the implementation of the goals of the German occupation.<sup>48</sup>

The attitude of individual historians towards Valdmanis and his activities in the Nazi occupation period is, however, clearly critical and negative. Haralds Biezais regards him as a genuine and staunch supporter of German policies<sup>49</sup> and describes him as the most striking collaborator.<sup>50</sup> Although the sources contain controversial evidence, on the whole they do not confirm such an unambiguously negative assessment. Many documents assert that several high-ranking German officials strongly distrusted Valdmanis and not at all regarded him as a friend of the Germans. Thus, for example, in November 1943 the Minister of Ostland, Alfred Rosenberg, described him as “the main voice of the Latvians’ demands.”<sup>51</sup>

One of the main problematic issues pertaining to the “German Times” is the formation and activities of the Latvian Legion (official name: the “Latvian SS Volunteer Legion”). It is very important to study the Legion in order to refute the rather widespread disinformation regarding the membership of Latvians in German military units during the Nazi occupation period. There is no reason at all to associate the Latvian Legion, whose formation began in early 1943, with war crimes committed by some earlier military or paramilitary units. The link forged by Soviet and continued by official Russian propaganda – Self-Defense – police (*Schutzmannschaft*) battalions – Legion – attributes blame on the grounds of formal membership and is not based on facts.<sup>52</sup> Latvian legionnaires did not take part in repressive activities but fought exclusively at the front against the Red Army, the army of the state that had annihilated Latvia’s independence, carried out repressions against civilians and threatened to occupy their country for the second time. Not a single Latvian legionnaire has ever stood trial for war crimes committed in the context of the Legion’s activities. The Legion was formed approximately a year after the last large-scale massacre of Jews in Latvia.<sup>53</sup>

In recent years several Latvian authors (Inesis Feldmanis, Uldis Neiburgs etc.)<sup>54</sup> have analyzed and assessed the Legion’s history in the context of the existence and

functioning of military formations in all Nazi-occupied or governed countries. Such an approach, being historically substantiated, allows to underline the specifics of Latvia's situation and opens possibilities for comparison. It shows that the Latvian Legion was no exception in Europe. Already at the outset of World War II, Waffen-SS troops incorporated volunteers from the "Germanic" nations, for instance, from Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Belgium. In the final years of the war these Waffen-SS troops gradually lost their initially elite character and from "the Fuehrer's Guard" turned into "a multinational army." The aggravation of Germany's military position, heavy casualties, as well as the crises in the volunteer movement among the Germanic nations forced the SS leadership to reject "the racist views and criteria" in recruiting of the SS units and to accept "non-Germanic nationals" as well. In 1944, the Waffen-SS counted more than 910,000 men, of whom approximately 57% were not ethnic Germans from Germany (*Reichsdeutsche*)<sup>55</sup>. Almost all European nations were represented in the ranks of the Waffen-SS.<sup>56</sup> Of 38 divisions that made up the Waffen-SS troops at the end of the war, not a single one consisted entirely of ethnic Germans, while in 19 divisions the majority were foreigners.<sup>57</sup>

The involvement of the Latvian Legion on the German side, no doubt, was related to collaboration. It contained an element of cooperation with the Nazi occupation regime. However, this situation was largely triggered by the aggressive and criminal policies of the Soviet Union in the Baltic in 1940–41 and rooted in the results and socio-psychological consequences of these policies. Such cooperation was encouraged by Latvian aspirations to regain Latvia's independence lost as the result of the Soviet occupation. Germany was an ally dictated and forced upon Latvians by conditions. In World War II nobody, not even the great powers, could choose their allies based on ideological beliefs or moral considerations. Everything depended on the current interests of those involved.<sup>58</sup>

Comparative studies show that an important theme in the cooperation of Latvians and members of other European nations with Germany was "participation in the Crusade against Bolshevism." However, unlike, for example, the Germanic volunteers, Latvian legionnaires did not fight for National Socialist ideas and the "New Europe" propagated by the Nazis. They were not the Fuehrer's "political soldiers." The belief in National Socialism as the ideology of the future was completely alien to them. Neither the ideological, nor the military goals of Germany appealed to the Latvian soldiers. They needed Germany as an ally to make the fight against Bolshevism possible.

Latvian (and Estonian ) Waffen-SS divisions cannot be placed in the same category as the German Waffen-SS divisions. The "SS" designation of the Latvian Legion was a mere formality. Latvian soldiers were neither members of the Nazi party, nor of

the SS organization. The US Displaced Persons Commission also clearly stated on 1 September 1950 that “the Baltic Waffen SS divisions (the Baltic Legions) in terms of their goal, ideology, functions and qualification are to be regarded as separate units different from the German SS; therefore the Commission does not consider them as a movement hostile to the US government.”<sup>59</sup> A principal decision or simply a statement about the non-Nazi character of Latvian and Estonian SS divisions on a sufficiently high level was in fact probably made much earlier. It is attested by an interesting episode in the postwar history of Europe. In the period between the summer of 1946 and 1949 Latvian guards (from the ranks of the former Latvian SS Legion), together with Estonians, Lithuanians and soldiers of other ethnic backgrounds, under American supervision ensured the security of the trials of Nazi war criminals (the so-called Nuremberg “follow-up processes”).<sup>60</sup>

The context of the Latvian Legion’s history raises also several other questions that have not yet received sufficiently detailed and comprehensive coverage in historical literature. For instance, little is known about the contacts between the Latvian legionnaires and the national resistance organization “Latvia’s Guards”<sup>61</sup> or the role of the Self-Administration of Latvia in the mobilization of Latvia’s population and its chances to oppose the formation of the Legion, at least until Latvia would have gained political autonomy. The importance of this issue is shown by the fact that a legion was never established in Lithuania because of the stance taken by the Self-Administration and the public. Was a similar situation possible in Latvia? What would have happened if the Self-Administration had said a strict “no” to the formation of the Legion? Latvian historians still avoid raising such a question. They must do so, however, even if that would mean entering into the realm of hypothetical history that did not happen. A large degree of clarity could be achieved in this regard also through comparative research into the policies of the Nazi occupation regime in Latvia and Lithuania.

In the context of all these pending questions and tasks it would be worthwhile to get a brief insight into how the German officials themselves explained their failures in Lithuania. After the failure of the so-called “check-up” (mobilization) campaign in the spring of 1943 the *Generalkommissar* of Lithuania, Theodor von Renteln, submitted a survey to the Ministry for Ostland, where he listed as many as 15 reasons why Lithuanians had been so inactive and why many of them had ignored the possibility to apply to the would-be SS legion.<sup>62</sup> From the *Generalkommissar*’s perspective of essence were: (1) the mentality of the Lithuanian people (Lithuanians were not fit for fighting, he wrote); (2) the negative attitude towards the mobilization into the German army among the Catholic clergy and intellectuals (who strived for the restoration of Lithuania’s independence); (3) the hostile attitudes towards Germany among the

Lithuanian political and military elite since the mid-1930s. As an important reason von Renteln mentions also the fact that in June 1941 the Soviet terror had raged for a shorter period in Lithuania than in Latvia or Estonia. Furthermore, in 1943, Lithuanians, compared to Latvians and Estonians, felt less threatened by Bolshevism because the Eastern front was still rather far from Lithuania.<sup>63</sup>

In connection with the formation of the Latvian Legion German-Latvian relations became increasingly centered on the issue of Latvia's autonomy, a topic that has not yet received adequate attention. Thorough research into this topic would allow better understanding of the essence of the German occupation policy, to reveal its short-sightedness and lack of co-ordination, as well as to show how deep were the differences of opinion among various Nazi institutions on various matters, and the ways and means of dealing with them. From the very outset Nazis rejected the "rules of the game" proposed by the Latvians: "autonomy" in exchange for "a Legion,"<sup>64</sup> and launched the mobilization of Latvia's population without fulfilling any of the conditions. However, as Germany's military situation grew worse, in the autumn of 1943, some high-ranking Nazi officials, such as *Reichsführer* SS Heinrich Himmler, spoke of the need to grant Latvia and Estonia national independence.<sup>65</sup> This idea met eager support from the Chief of SS Staff Gottlob Berger,<sup>66</sup> and the *Generalkommissar* for Latvia Otto Drechsler retreated from his initially negative approach,<sup>67</sup> not excluding a compromise solution that envisaged the establishment of a mixed, German-Latvian government in Latvia.<sup>68</sup> The Ministry for Ostland even drafted a decree for the Führer's signature on granting national independence to Latvia and Estonia,<sup>69</sup> but Minister Alfred Rosenberg gave an order in this connection to elaborate plans for the closing down of the *Reichskommissariat* Ostland.<sup>70</sup> Individual German diplomats in turn suggested that granting autonomy to Latvia and Estonia could be presented as a reaction to the Moscow Conference of Ministers of Foreign Affairs that had taken place in October 1943.<sup>71</sup> Information had come to the notice of the German intelligence services that in the Conference the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the United Kingdom and the USA, Anthony Eden and Cordell Hull had *de facto* recognized the incorporation of the Baltic states into the USSR.<sup>72</sup> On the other hand, the idea of autonomy could not have failed to meet opposition in influential Nazi circles. Opposed to granting of autonomy to Latvia and Estonia were the *Reichskommissar* Hinrich Lohse<sup>73</sup> (who was afraid to lose his job) and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Germany, Joachim von Ribbentrop. Several documents confirm that it was Ribbentrop's opinion that to a great extent affected Hitler's position, and Hitler eventually rejected the idea.<sup>74</sup>

Apart from the research topics just mentioned, serious attention is being focused on many others as well. Several Latvian historians (Edvīns Evarts, Inesis Feldmanis, Jānis Taurēns, Antonijs Zunda) have analyzed the historiography of the Nazi occupation

period in their publications.<sup>75</sup> Their contributions help to identify topics that still require increased attention and allow nuanced assessments of the approach of foreign authors to the “German Times” in Latvia. The young historian Edvīns Evarts has focused his efforts on the work of the Self-Administration of Latvia and the Nazi economic policy in Latvia.<sup>76</sup> Uldis Neiburgs also seems to have chosen a perspective topic of research. On the basis of documents of the USA and UK foreign affairs and military intelligence institutions he tries to reveal the official position and knowledge of the Western Allies regarding developments in Latvia during the Nazi occupation period.<sup>77</sup> Neiburgs also studies the propaganda of the Nazi regime and the attitude of the population toward the Western Allies. He has drawn an important conclusion that the German occupation regime essentially failed to affect the predisposition for the Western countries that had consolidated in the Latvian population in the interwar period.<sup>78</sup>

The future prospects in researching German occupation policies lie in several directions: thorough historiographic analysis; broadening of research topics; identification of new sources; deeper critical analysis of existing sources; application of innovative methods to source studies; search for alternative views; and maximum exhaustion of the opportunities opened by social history. Research must try to encompass the main historical events and phenomena, as well as the driving forces and motivations behind the behavior of concrete persons. It could also be worthwhile to consider rejecting some traditional approaches to the assessment of Nazi policies and activities, such as bringing to the forefront various Nazi plans, often even those that were not yet given final approval at the highest level, and using them as a basis to reveal and characterize the essence and aims of occupation policies. But policies and the character of the regime should be assessed primarily on the basis of concrete implemented rather than intended measures. Intentions may attest only to possible orientations of policy that may become a reality only when appropriate circumstances occur. As circumstances change, so do the intentions; new plans come to the forefront and the former ones become utopian.

Very useful and necessary are comparative studies. Latvia's history in the Nazi occupation period must be viewed on the overall background of events in all of Europe. The developments in Latvia must be compared to the situation and analogous processes in other countries. Both the occupants' policies and the actions of the Latvian population must be studied. All developments related to the Nazi occupation period must be assessed exclusively on the basis of democratic and liberal values. Studies must imply an approach to history that is understood in contemporary society; otherwise it will not be possible to utilize the research results to refute the misinformation and deliberate disinformation about the role of Latvians in World War II that is widely circulating in Europe. The situation in which Latvia constantly seems obliged to make excuses for its

history must be ended. During the war, Latvia in fact was neither a master of its own destiny, nor the creator of its history. It was an object rather than a subject of history. Latvia's history was to a large extent dictated and shaped by external forces – the occupying powers.

Successful research into the Nazi occupation period in a way depends on achievements in the study of the preceding period. Serious study of the psychological impact of the first Soviet occupation (1940–41) on Latvia's population is very necessary and important. It would allow better understanding of the behavior of Latvia's population during the Nazi occupation. The key to the understanding of the "German Times" to a large extent lies in the changes of the states of mind and moods of the masses that the first Soviet occupation brought about. The studies of Andrievs Ezergailis,<sup>79</sup> Danute Dūra, Ieva Gundare and Dzidra Zujeva<sup>80</sup> in this regard are to be seen as a good starting point.

Latvian historians have still much to do to make possible a comprehensive, strictly scholarly and encompassing work on the "German Times" in Latvia in the context of European history that would be free from all kinds of myths and would allocate each issue the place it deserves by its importance and significance. However, the achievements of the recent years leave no reason to doubt that it is a matter of the next few years. The most important and urgent task of Latvian historians can be expressed in two simple words: organize and include.



*Juris Pavlovičs*

## **Change of Occupation Powers in Latvia in Summer 1941: Experience of Small Communities**

Latvia, June 1940: a small East European state is occupied by the Soviet Union. The country has a population of 1,900,000, 25% of them ethnic minorities. Agricultural production dominates over industry. The economy is adapted to the interests of local consumption. Only slightly over 20% of Latvia's citizens reside in the four largest cities; all other urban areas are local economic and administrative centers with populations under 10,000.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, the level of literacy is very high, and there is a well-developed system of transportation and communications that services the rural areas. The country is divided administratively into 19 districts and 517 civil parishes, well connected with district centers and the capital. During the occupation the country loses national independence and most of the attributes of national identity and becomes the 15<sup>th</sup> republic in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Latvia, June 1941: Latvia, now called the Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic, is occupied by Nazi Germany. In the course of three weeks, Latvians experience the change of regimes with the ensuing condition of interregnum in the most complicated form of the phenomenon: the replacement of one occupation regime by another, no less criminal and ruthless than the previous one. The psychological tension built up by the first occupation, the war, the interaction of collaborators of both sides and other groups of economic and political interests together with the collapse of central authorities make the overall picture of developments so complicated as to make its comprehensive analysis impossible in a brief paper.

For this reason, I focus primarily on Latvia's civil parishes and small towns, i.e. rural communities with population under 10,000 that in 1941 were the home of 80% of the total population in the country (hereafter referred to as "small communities"). My goal is to contest two myths that have grown out of popular science bestsellers regarding developments in the interregnum condition between the two occupation powers. According to one of the myths, at least one of the forces involved in the change of regimes is bound to have a Grand Plan, which, disregarding the reigning chaos, is pursued with super-human precision.<sup>2</sup> The other myth, ignoring the ethnic and social

differences, compares the population of any region affected by the change of regimes to an amorphous organism that reacts to the interregnum as to a strong external irritation, which may cause any society to lose its internal stability and turn into a raving crowd overwhelmed by mass psychosis.<sup>3</sup> I attempt to prove that interregnum in twentieth-century Europe did not necessarily involve the transformation of the population into conspirators and psychopaths. An individual did not cease to be a part of the nation; he just was no longer subordinated to non-existing authorities and temporarily recognized only the rules of his community or its substitute.<sup>4</sup> Under the conditions of a change of regimes planned measures were impossible; any coordinated activity tended to develop rapidly into series of uncontrolled multi-phase improvisations.

## **The Small Communities of Latvia before 22 June 1941**

Both self-government and social transformation began in the Latvian countryside. In 1866, the basic rural administrative unit in Latvia, the civil parish (*pagasts*) ceased to be an appendage of the local German baronial manor and won the right of self-government. Only the landowners were fully enfranchised for local elections by the legislation of the Russian Empire, thus making them a privileged group and building a barrier of status that was difficult to surmount.<sup>5</sup> It brought about the emergence of an economic rural elite. The abolishment of the feudal system of administration did not imply the rejection of archaic traditions, however: the restrictions on mobility and self-sufficiency of the baronial manor that had existed until the middle of the nineteenth century had made the parish into a closed community. It was organized hierarchically, suspicious of outsiders and upstarts from its own ranks. However, at the end of the nineteenth century the relics of feudalism were a luxury that small rural communities could no longer afford. The rapid development of Russian economy brought about major social changes: the disenfranchised landless rural population migrated to the rapidly growing cities and changed their ethnic composition, which became increasingly Latvian; the general level of education and political awareness rose rapidly. Left radical ideas spread among the former rural residents, who now formed the new city proletariat, and in turn found their way back to the countryside. As a result, during the 1905 Revolution the elites of the parishes and the already sufficiently Latvianized towns came face to face with a broad range of claimants for elite status who refused to recognize private property as a basis of political influence.

The short-lived collapse of centralized power in the Russian Empire in 1905 presented the first period of interregnum that the small Latvian communities experienced in the twentieth century. In late 1905, when the paralysis of all administrative levels

allowed the small communities to become *de facto* independent, the conservative parish councils were for a few months replaced by the so-called “action committees” that were set up with the participation of the entire socially active local population.<sup>6</sup> The traditional elite was either completely ousted from power or forced to share it with the representatives of the landless population. The “action committees” that, depending on the region, were set up in 80–95% of parishes, were a national-scale reaction to a crisis situation. The ruthless suppression of the 1905 Revolution and the continuing explosive urbanization, however, set back political development of the small communities until the establishment of the independent state of Latvia in 1918.

Because of a devastating war that had ravaged the country for five years, huge population losses and a radically changed international political situation, the new state faced enormous economic and social problems. It was no longer a major producer for the Russian hinterland, which itself was tormented by a savage civil war: its major cities had lost their factories and skilled workers; its infrastructure was in ruins. The introduction of a democratic form of government and a major agrarian reform that broke up the baronial estates and created thousands of new farms at least partially alleviated the problem of relations between landowners and the landless. However the economic weakness of Latvia complicated the situation. The disappearance of large-scale manufacturing in the cities combined with the transformation of rural laborers into small landowners, meant almost complete loss of the upward and outward mobility in society that is necessary for the functioning of a dynamic market economy. However, the once flourishing left radicalism survived due to both the support from the USSR and its allure as an alternative model of a social system that promised everyone the chance to change his/her status.

The new national elite came to be dominated by civil servants and politicians rather than business people. Towns ceased to be centers of economic activity, and commercial competition was replaced by the struggle of traditional elite groups for jobs and orders financed from the state budget. The parish and rural town elites that now included also a number of hired professionals, could no longer protect their interests without having a support-base in the capital and thus grouped around one of the largest political parties in power, while their opponents preferred opposition parties.<sup>7</sup>

Early democratization in the small communities and the lessening of the role of the traditional elite were, however, brought to a halt by the Ulmanis coup d'état in 1934, the establishment of a moderate authoritarian regime and the abolishment of political parties. The elites of the small communities lost their political autonomy, since the heads of civil parishes and town mayors were no longer elected but appointed and dismissed by the order of the Minister for the Interior.<sup>8</sup> Under the conditions of authoritarianism the leaders of the small communities, usually major landholders, became a closed caste

dominated by supporters of the Ulmanis regime, in which there was place neither for the opposition nor for individuals with independent views.

The Soviet occupation of 1940 and the ensuing loss of influence by the traditional elite initially caused no strenuous objections in civil parishes and towns in Latvia. There was hope both for the stabilization of economy that had suffered from wartime restrictions and for social change, including the development of a dynamic upwardly mobile society. The prospect of taking the place of the former traditional elites right away or in the near future ensured for the Soviet regime at least 20–30 active supporters per 1000 members of the small communities.<sup>9</sup> Compared to the cities, in many parishes in Latvia hardly anybody was either truly familiar with Communist doctrines or loyal to them in the summer of 1940.

The new Soviet elites, particularly in rural areas, consisted of those who previously could never have hoped to take leading administrative positions. Poorly educated, arrogant, fully dependent on orders from central authorities, having no necessary skills, they could not have won the respect of traditional rural communities even if they tried. They were regarded as outsiders, either unwelcome strangers or insolent local marginal characters.<sup>10</sup> Already a few months after the establishment of the Soviet regime, the rising prices, the lack of high quality goods and the primitive propaganda that ignored Latvian mentality and culture, split the small communities into ardent supporters and opponents of the new regime with a broad layer of indifferent population in between. Lacking professional staff, however, the Soviet civil servants in the small communities very often remained in their positions until the change of regimes and even beyond it.

After 14 June 1941, when suddenly, without previous warning, the USSR institutions of the interior deported more than 15,000 persons, for the most part entire families, from Latvia to remote Eastern areas, antipathy for or opposition to the Soviet regime was replaced by shock and fear for one's life. Everyone who had taken active part in the public life of the community during the independence period concluded that an operation of mass-scale extermination of the population had been launched and could soon affect him, too. Thousands of members of the former traditional elite or the military formations of the independence period fled into the forests to save their lives. Even before 22 June they all laid their hopes on the collapse of the Soviet regime, not because of their political beliefs, but in order to survive.

## **The Small Communities in the First Days of the War**

Whatever plans the Soviet regime had in the summer of 1941, it turned out to be absolutely unready to respond to the sudden attack by the German army on 22 June. The Soviet Union found itself face to face with problems of a huge scale, for its very

existence was threatened. At least in the first days of the war, however, in a manner typical of all totalitarian regimes, both the official propaganda and officials of all ranks tried to pretend that nothing serious had happened and everything was going according to plan.

In practice, already on 23 June, at the latest on 24 June, district authorities began to lose control over remote parishes and tried to enforce obedience to orders with the help of mobile armed units.<sup>11</sup> Similar to the situation in 1905, the frustration of the central authorities and their preoccupation with military problems resulted in the small communities quickly becoming autonomous, self-governing territories where, in the absence of troops, at least seven groups of active local residents interacted and conflicted with each other. The social mosaic in the small communities on 22 June 1941 presented the following picture:

#### **A. The Soviet elite**

1. The political elite: the leadership of the ideological, administrative and militarized institutions who could no longer imagine their continued existence without loyal service to the regime.
2. The economic elite: the new heads of the local nationalized enterprises who, provided they did not fulfill political functions as well, regarded their jobs only as a good source of revenue without far-reaching consequences.<sup>12</sup>

#### **B. The traditional elite**

1. The refugees of 14 June: that part of the traditional elite that had gone into hiding, fearing arrest. They regarded all developments as their personal conflict with concrete representatives of the local Soviet elite.
2. Political altruists: local intellectuals and technical experts who were later joined by some military persons. Before 1918, this category as a rule had not belonged to the elite. All they wanted was to restore Latvia's independence, however they would not have minded to receive rewards for their efforts.

#### **C. Claimants for elite status**

1. Soviet activists: members of the auxiliary police that had been set up in 1940 and of the Young Communist League, as well as other supporters who had not won any positions but because of ideological or practical considerations were ready to take part in the suppression of the opposition.
2. Declassed career climbers: ambitious individuals from miscellaneous social backgrounds, usually dismissed professionals or young people who saw in the Soviet regime an obstacle for their career. Being confident that in case of the change of regime they would be entitled to the status of the new dominating elite, many of them were ready to do anything to assure Nazis of their loyalty.

**D. Politically neutral** employees of local enterprises and shops, as well as members of non-political public organizations who wished to preserve intact their personal or corporative property and inventory of their enterprises and tried to protect them from destruction or plunder.<sup>13</sup>

It became obvious from the first days of the war that the Soviet elite of parishes and towns was not capable of performing a responsible social role in a crisis situation. Soviet administrative institutions, being artificial creations, were capable of normal functioning in parishes and towns only as long as they were supported by armed units of repressive structures. However, martial law, although promulgated, was not enforced in rural areas. In outlying areas curfew and restrictions on movement were declared to be in force not earlier than 27 June, and even then they were presented in the form of a recommendation rather than that of an order.<sup>14</sup> Apart from the requisition of horses and motorized vehicles that took place from 22 to 24 June and the confiscation of radio antennas and radio receivers that was carried out from 24 to 26 June, almost no changes occurred in the daily life of the small communities. In order to preserve an illusion of stability, shops and institutions maintained the previous working hours until the moment of evacuation.<sup>15</sup> The formation of military patrols and sentry posts was possible only in district centers where army garrisons were located and the so-called workers' guard assembled, manned from the ranks of auxiliary police. After 25 June, as soon as the bulk of the workers' guard moved to district centers and towns, Soviet officials in parishes lost control over the situation. Civil parishes came under the charge of hastily formed armed groups of Soviet activists that could come under the leadership of any sufficiently ambitious supporter of the regime; however their control did not extend beyond the territory of the central administrative and business buildings. Depending on the region, laws had ceased to operate within 2–5 days before the complete collapse of Soviet regime, and the population was forced to obey the orders of any armed Soviet activist.

In the largest part of the territory no direct clashes between German and Soviet units took place in the initial phase of the war. There were army movements accompanied by frequent German air raids against the columns of the Red Army. Having to do without the support of anti-aircraft artillery and aviation, Soviet troops suffered huge losses. They were already defeated in Lithuania and withdrew from Latvia within one week (26 June–3 July).<sup>16</sup> After every serious encounter, large and small Red Army units abandoned their weapons and ammunition and flowed in the northeast direction along the main roads. Like any army of that time deprived of supplies, the soldiers looted the nearest shops and farmsteads.<sup>17</sup> Fortunately, the period since the beginning of the war had been too short for Soviet soldiers to become so demoralized under the impact of battles as to launch mass-scale murders of civilians. On 27 June, the order to evacuate

Western Latvia was issued, followed on 2 and 4 July by analogous instructions regarding the other regions of Latvia.<sup>18</sup> The evacuation rather resembled flight. All Soviet officials and activists who deemed it necessary to flee to Russia scrambled to find means of transportation, emptied cash registers and warehouses and departed in great haste within 5–10 hours after the evacuation order arrived at the district center. The personnel of the People's Commissariat of the Interior, withdrawing from district centers, as a rule killed all local residents who had been arrested within the last days.<sup>19</sup> The number of victims could amount to several dozen, particularly in East Latvian towns. In spite of the hostile attitude on the part of many local residents, the evacuation proceeded unhindered almost everywhere. The majority of Soviet parish-level economic elite, considering themselves not guilty for the crimes committed by the regime, decided to stay. Not only refugees, but also local residents, who were horrified by the arbitrariness of the Red Army and Soviet activists, needed several hours to realize that the representatives of the authorities had departed.

## The Interregnum

At the latest 12 hours after the order to evacuate was given, towns and parishes in Latvia were left with no administrative structures that would control citizens' activities, provided the Wehrmacht had not arrived earlier. For a brief period each individual enjoyed absolute freedom of action. There are three ways how to define such an interregnum and its chronological framework. One extreme option is to declare that the interregnum sets in at the moment when one system of civil administration collapses and lasts until adequate administrative bodies on the national scale are established, a process that could take several months or even longer.<sup>20</sup> To consider that the change of power in any place can be completed within a few hours between the departure of the old regime and the arrival of representatives of the new regime would be another extreme. What is offered here is the proposition that the interregnum is a period between the disappearance of the existing command structure in a concrete territory and its restoration in an analogous and adequately efficient form. In short, the power in any concrete territory belongs to those who are capable of unrestricted utilization of the resources of the respective territory, despite applied violence. The country that obeys the orders of an alien power is occupied even if there is not a single occupant within its borders.

Depending on the population's capability to organize itself the command structure can be restored either from above or from below. In Latvia it took place from below, at first on the level of parishes, then on that of districts and only then on national scale. While in the districts the interregnum lasted for 2–7 days, the incorporation of all districts into a single vertical command structure required approximately two weeks. The rapid

restoration of a centralized system of administration took place without the intervention of German military authorities. The German authorities dictated only guidelines and allowed the process of passing them down to take its own course. Thus they could use the population's initiative to their own ends.<sup>21</sup>

As the interregnum set in, the small communities in Latvia, as was the case in France in 1940, had already turned into isolated groups of 1000–10,000 individuals each that were held together by their shared compact territory and traditions.<sup>22</sup> However, unlike France, there were no functioning local authorities left here. The only temporary institution of local authority that could be quickly established using earlier experience and whose efficiency was tested in practice in a majority of parishes and towns was the institution of action committees that followed the model of 1905.

Yet there was one important difference between the committees of 1905 and 1941. In 1905 there had been no war on Latvian soil; the collapse of power had been gradual; and initially the community's safety had caused no concern. By comparison, in 1941, in the first days after the evacuation of Soviet troops and officials, the small communities had no information whatsoever about subsequent developments.<sup>23</sup> Radio broadcasts of both warring parties brandished propaganda slogans; having captured a territory, Wehrmacht units hurried on without explaining anything; the restoration of local telephone communication lines required time. The only thing that the population wanted, having just survived the 14 June repressions and the arbitrariness of the Soviet regime, was to save their lives and property and was thus willing to support anyone who could guarantee it. Therefore, in 1941 almost all action committees were strongly militarized and turned to economic matters only after the roving Red Army soldiers and Soviet activists no longer posed any threat. The establishment of action committees usually was stretched over several phases. Voluntary firemen and the most active employees of local enterprises exerted immediate efforts to preserve the community's material resources. These measures of precaution had a reason: the population of towns, having observed that there was nobody to fulfill police functions, began to plunder the unguarded shops and warehouses.<sup>24</sup> The speed at which action committees were organized depended on the capability of the local community to form an armed unit of their own and to choose leaders. There were three options how things could develop: (1) An organization, usually non-violent, secret and anti-Soviet, that had been established before 22 June, established control over the community's territory right after the evacuation of the Soviet troops through the prestige of their members. (2) The refugees of 14 June and other armed local residents (their number as a rule not exceeding 50 per parish and 200 per town or large parish) came together in an administrative building of the community and chose leaders.<sup>25</sup> As in 1905, it implied a compromise between the traditional elite and the claimants for the status, depending on

the proportion of the active supporters of each group. (3) Finally, the economic functions of the action committees could be separated from the military ones, placing the defense of the community under the charge of the former soldiers of the Latvian Army. This was a unique trend in the Baltic states in 1941 that was not observed anywhere else in Europe. In 1940, the army of occupied Latvia had been incorporated into the Red Army as a separate corps, and as the war broke out, it was partially demobilized rather than engaged in military action.<sup>26</sup> In at least one third of Latvian territory, primarily in the northeastern region, the small communities were defended by self-organized units consisting of soldiers of the former national army.

The level of political culture in rural areas was sufficient for the temporary leaders of the small communities to proclaim the establishment of action (security, order, defense) committees or headquarters, to document the fact officially, announce the agreement of the representatives of the community and to divide administrative functions. Fear rather than aggressiveness lay at the basis of the militant stance of the committees. Only in 10–15% of Latvian territory, in the proximity of the main withdrawal routes of the Red Army, large quantities of abandoned conventional armament, even some tanks could be found.<sup>27</sup> Everywhere else the small communities initially had only hunting guns at their disposal. Within a few days, driven by the hope for the restoration of Latvia's independence, groups of underground opposition in the small communities under the leadership of local political altruists turned into partisan units. They searched for weapons and detained straggling Soviet soldiers and activists. Some units consisted exclusively of Latvian military persons who had been demobilized or who had deserted. Partisan groups that before 22 June had consisted of a few desperate individuals suddenly embraced several thousands of members and proved to be unexpectedly efficient in curbing both looting by the Red Army and criminal excesses.<sup>28</sup>

The majority of Latvia's population that was active in the interregnum period was too busy in partisan activities, fighting for power in their communities or protecting property to persecute personally disliked compatriots. The Soviet political elite as a rule had managed to evacuate; their remaining supporters were regarded as marginal declassed characters who did not warrant retribution. In the interregnum period deliberate expressions of violence involving loss of human life were very rare, and even according to the most pessimistic calculations in the entire territory of Latvia the overall number of victims of politically motivated murders committed in that period did not exceed a few dozen. In some exceptional cases, when representatives of the Soviet elite particularly hated by the majority had missed the chance to evacuate, the spontaneously gathered mob decided to hold a lynch court, regarding them as accomplices in the 14 June deportation.<sup>29</sup> Overaggressive former military persons and police officers, upon becoming leaders of the small community or partisan group, assumed the right to punish their

political opponents; however, arrest was their preferred penalty. It could happen that an armed refugee, having just returned home ran into his personal enemy from the ranks of Soviet activists and killed him. Although it is practically impossible to deduct them from the total figure of the victims of warfare, there were almost no murders of criminal nature taking place in the small communities in the interregnum period. The vast majority of Latvia's population respected the rule of law to a sufficient extent and was incapable of murder other than that implied in their functions in the service of organizations that were regarded as legitimate.

### **The Subjection of the Small Communities to German Military Administration**

The units of the German army that entered Latvia in late June 1941 had little in common with the image of the omnipotent, irrepressible juggernaut of armored vehicles that had been created by the world media after the 1940 operation in France. In fact, these were mobile motorized units, usually without any tanks and poorly armed. In many places the only German soldiers that the local residents met were motorcyclist or bicyclist reconnaissance groups, while some parishes did not see any German military at all until mid-July. It must be taken into consideration that the Wehrmacht was unremittingly hurrying forward and had no time for a planned occupation of Latvia. German troops reached the western part of Latvia on 23 June; by 26 June the entire southern border of Latvia had turned into a front line; and on 29 June the Wehrmacht had already arrived in all four major Latvian cities. By the evening of 6 July the strategic and by 8 July also the tactical occupation of Latvia's territory was completed.<sup>30</sup> The German troops had succeeded in demoralizing the Red Army and forcing it out of Latvia, but, at least initially, had insufficient numbers of either soldiers or experts for establishing order and taking over the entire territory. Under the conditions of rapid advance the plans elaborated in Berlin were reduced to a range of local improvisations. In such a situation it was important for the Wehrmacht to gain support from the local population, certainly making clear beforehand who would be entitled to assist and how.

From July 2 on, the work of the action committees was channeled in the direction desirable for German military authorities through the medium of former Latvian officers serving in the German Army. In fact, the Nazi occupation administration could have hired both the traditional elite and claimants for elite status as heads of economic and police auxiliary services or else, following the example set by the Soviet regime, could have filled administrative positions with potentially loyal persons. Instead, the German military authorities chose to take no risks and simply restored to their jobs all former heads of districts, towns and parishes who had held these positions before the Soviet

occupation in 1940. The Nazis did not care about the true support for their ideology on the part of non-Germans; what the military authority needed were administrators who could guarantee effective work and had an understanding of bureaucratic correspondence. Thus unawares, the traditional rural elite of the period of the authoritarian regime had turned into one of the war trophies of the Wehrmacht.

As was mentioned earlier, the action committees in the small communities usually represented a number of interests. The economically active members of the community were motivated by the concern for the safety of their property and supported the plans of the political altruists and 14 June refugees to maintain order and to form armed defense units. However, even after the meetings to establish committees had taken place, the new leaders realized that they would not be able to hold their jobs for long without receiving adequate authorization from the new occupation regime. Being accustomed to obeying the district center, the communities tried to contact the new occupation regime and receive instructions at most two days after the Soviet regime had left. At the same time, as soon as the defense of the community's territory was provided for, heads of the action committees began to declare themselves wardens of the community's enterprises and other property that had been left without supervision.<sup>31</sup> That was the last thing that the action committees managed to do.

On the second, but not later than on the third day after the arrival of the Wehrmacht in the administrative center of the respective district, each parish was informed about the order issued by the Latvian civil servant Juris Zankevics, who had been appointed Director of the Local Authorities Department on the instruction of the German officials.<sup>32</sup> All who had been in charge of the local authority institutions of the small communities on the last day of independence were ordered to report back to work without delay, should the person desire it or not, and start restoring the community's economic life. Only those who had been deported on 14 June could be replaced by other persons. Irrespective of the way the order was passed on, it was obeyed in all regions of Latvia without delay. Within one or two days the traditional rural elite had restored parish councils. The action committees fell into oblivion, and some of their leaders took the vacant posts in parish administrations. Claimants for elite status did not dare to voice open protests.<sup>33</sup> In towns the execution of the order could be delayed for a few days, since here the action committees not infrequently were led by ambitious and aggressive national partisans or military personnel. As far as can be surmised, in case of a conflict, the city councils of the independence period were restored by an order from the district center or by the local German commandant. All district-level officials who could be located were found and sent back to their posts by Zankevics' Local Authorities Department, having coordinated their reappointment with the local German Commandant's Office. By 15 July almost all parish, town and district councils of the independence period were

restored. The vertical command structure was functioning again, and Latvian economy began to work in the interests of the Nazi regime. As long as the heads of rural local authorities were able to meet the requirements of the occupation administration their positions were secure.

In the summer of 1941, the Wehrmacht had no concrete plans concerning the use of Latvian armed units. Everything hinged on whether, depending on place or time, they were needed as soldiers, intelligence units, policemen or guards and whether, from the German perspective, their armament was excessive or insufficient. In some regions the local Latvian units in fact served as auxiliary troops of the Wehrmacht for a certain period; however, they did so only as long as there existed a threat of a Soviet counterattack or expeditionary force operations.<sup>34</sup> Everywhere else in Latvia the national partisans were assigned to capturing Red Army soldiers, detention of Soviet activists, safeguarding the Wehrmacht's food supplies and guarding the main roads and warehouses. In order to ensure supplies, intelligence and support in each small Latvian community, in early July the German military authorities, assisted by former officers of the Latvian Army, established the so-called Latvian Commandanture in each district center. The Latvian Commandanture formally qualified as the highest authority in the district, but in fact it served as a powerless affiliate of the local German Commandanture. The Latvian Commandantures that were run by former military personnel coordinated the armed units of the small communities that were called Self-Defense forces as of July. Thus as early as of 10 July the Wehrmacht had at its disposal an amorphous 6000-man large paramilitary organization. For two months the district Latvian Commandantures were in charge of about 100 Precinct Commandantures (these were set up only in places where there was a sufficient number of Latvian officers) and up to 400 parish Self-Defense groups that often chose to be called commandantures, too.<sup>35</sup> It does not mean that all members of these units were well armed: a third or even a half of the Self-Defense combatants had only handguns or broken old-fashioned rifles.

The majority of rank-and-file of the armed Latvian units regarded their service only as a duty to protect their community, especially because until late July a great number of Red Army units were still hiding in the woods. The minority, some commanders included, who were claimants of elite status and had not achieved actual power by mid-July saw their last opportunity for a career by becoming participants in Nazi terror: the Holocaust and other atrocities against the civilian population. In Latvia, as everywhere else, participation in crimes against humanity was reserved for marginal elements.



Kārlis Kangeris

## **“Closed” Units of Latvian Police – *Lettische Schutzmannschafts-Bataillone*: Research Issues and Pre-History**

Already in late July 1941 the *Reichsführer* SS and Chief of German Police, Heinrich Himmler, realized that the forces of German police and SS alone were not adequate to govern the conquered regions of Eastern Europe. For this reason he deemed it necessary to form additional defense units in these regions. These were to be recruited from ethnic groups found fit (*genehm*) for this purpose by the Germans.

Thus in the course of time the German authorities formed special closed police units – the *Schutzmannschafts-Bataillone*, as distinct from detached local auxiliary police – in the occupied territories of the Soviet Union, the so-called *Reichskommissariats* Ostland and Ukraine, as well as in the Eastern part of occupied Poland, the *Generalgouvernement*. As of 1942, the size of one battalion was fixed at 501 men. Their members were recruited from among the local residents. According to Georg Tessin, altogether 206 such battalions were formed in Ostland, Ukraine and *Generalgouvernement* during the war, although these data should be treated with extreme caution.<sup>1</sup>

As early as 25, resp. 31 July 1941, Reichsführer Himmler ordered the local uniformed auxiliary police to be called *Schutzmannschaft*.<sup>2</sup> Initially, when the German civilian administration was being established and police structures consisting of local residents created, three types of public order squads were formed in the General District (*Generalbezirk*) of Latvia.<sup>3</sup> When the final version of the regulations was completed on 6 November 1941 – “*Schutzmannschaften in den Ostgebieten*” – groups of firemen and auxiliary guards of order were added.<sup>4</sup> Thus, altogether, there existed five groups of *Schutzmannschaft* in Ostland:

- (1) *Schutzmannschaft (Einzeldienst) in den Städten (Stadtsschutzmannschaft)* – those in detached municipal public order service.
- (2) *Schutzmannschaft (Einzeldienst) auf dem Lande* – those in detached rural public order service.
- (3) *Schutzmannschaft in geschlossenen Einheiten* – those in the “closed” units of public order service.
- (4) *Feuerschutzmannschaft* – the firefighting service.
- (5) *Hilfsschutzmannschaft* – the auxiliary public order service.

The document, issued by the Supreme Commander of the German *Ordnungspolizei*, Kurt Daluege, provides accurate details concerning the closed units. It specifies that these units should be divided into battalions, companies and platoons and that supervising German officers (*Aufsichtsoffiziere*) should be attached to them, etc.<sup>5</sup> This laid the foundation for large-scale formation of closed units in the General District of Latvia in early 1942.

## Issues of Research into Non-German Police Battalions

After the changes that took place in Eastern Europe in the early 1990s, many new archive materials pertaining to the German occupation period have become accessible for historical research. A survey of scholarly literature written in the last ten years shows that, on the whole, Holocaust-related studies have been those that have availed themselves best of the new research opportunities. Thus, further domains of research have emerged in Holocaust studies. One such field is the study of local activities and initiatives – the decision-making process from “below.” It rejects the assumption that all developments were centrally steered according to one and the same model. This has been a factor in concentrating research into the procedure of events in the various countries of Eastern Europe, paying attention to questions, such as to what degree, if any, violence against Jews has any connection with local traditions, etc. Another direction deals with detailed analyses of the category of perpetrators (*Täter*). Here the focus is on questions such as the role of the personality and culture in behavioral patterns, the influence of cognitive/ideological factors and how a person’s motives are influenced by the pressures of a given situation.<sup>6</sup>

Concerning the issue of the activities and role of Latvian police battalions, this topic fits into both of the research directions that focus on East European countries as well as on perpetrators.

As an introduction to research on Latvian police battalions, a more detailed analysis of the scholarly works dealing with the activities of police battalions of different ethnic groups will be presented, in order to reveal the main issues that have been raised in research to date so that we may compare the similarities of battalions in *Reichskommissariats* Ukraine and Ostland, and bring to light the specifics of the formation of the battalions in the General District of Latvia. However, there is to date no large-scale comprehensive study of the police battalions in Eastern Europe.

The first author to place special emphasis on police battalions in recent times is the US historian Richard Breitman. His work, *Himmler's Police Auxiliaries in the Occupied Soviet Territories*, is dedicated specifically to this issue. Breitman emphasizes

Himmler's aspirations to form paramilitary forces under his command from among the residents of the Baltic General Districts and Ukraine. According to Breitman, Himmler successfully countered the attempts of both civilian and military institutions to take command of these forces and disrupted the plans of the local residents to involve the police battalions to further their national goals. Members of these police battalions, instead of fulfilling the usual duties of the police to maintain public order, turned into mobile murderers, combatants of partisans or served in military units outside their native environment. Himmler also needed the police battalions for the massive operations to exterminate civilians. Extermination operations were specially targeted against Jews, Gypsies and other groups that were of lesser worth, according to Nazi racial theory, as well as against partisans. A further motive was to achieve the continued involvement of non-Germans in the extermination of Jews in an effort to continue by other methods the work done by pogroms, which had been secretly inspired by Germans directly after 22 June 1941.<sup>7</sup>

In his article, "Himmler and the 'Terrible Secret' among the Executioners," Breitman has tried to explain why Himmler resorted to the manpower of local residents in the occupied Soviet territories to carry out mass murders.<sup>8</sup> As one possible reason he makes the claim that mass murders left an impact on the psyche of executioners of German origin. Himmler had received complaints from the persons in charge of executions about this problem. According to post-war testimony given to Americans by Erich von dem Bach-Zelewski, who in 1941 had been Supreme Commander of SS and Police for Russia-Middle (*HSSPF Russland-Mitte*) and in charge of combating partisans, Germans and Central Europeans had shown themselves unsuited to carrying out mass executions. (This suggests a possible reason for the decision by the Germans to build extermination camps.) According to Bach-Zelewski, Stalin on the other hand had always had at his disposal people suited for such jobs, ethnic Latvians for example.<sup>9</sup> Breitman writes:

The Nazi concept that certain nations or races were suited to conduct mass murder and that others were not does help to explain the Nazi-inspired pogroms carried out by Eastern Europeans, whose nationalism, anti-Communism and anti-Semitism were exploited for Nazi purposes. SS officials then made use of Latvian, Lithuanian and Ukrainian execution squads inside and outside of their own homelands [...]. Although some non-Germans undoubtedly persecuted or killed Jews on their own initiative at times, there is compelling evidence that the SS and police authorities controlled the general policy toward Jews in the Soviet territories and elsewhere.<sup>10</sup>

Breitman's thesis, though questionable, probably should not be entirely rejected, but it needs further scrutiny. The notion that the Chinese and Latvians were the best Communist enforcers and executioners is a Nazi stereotype that can be traced back to Alfred

Rosenberg and was later used by Hitler himself.<sup>11</sup> However, with regard to the formation of Latvian police battalions, such a thesis lacks any ground. A very important or even the decisive factor in the formation of Latvian police battalions was the demand of the German Army for an increasing supply of manpower.

In his book *Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders*, which has been very influential in forming public opinion on the Holocaust, the US historian Raul Hilberg underlines the important role of the Baltic peoples in the implementation of National-Socialist power and racial policies in the East.<sup>12</sup> On the basis of some examples he maintains that Latvian battalions were involved in the persecution and murder of Jews in Latvia itself, as well as in Belorussia, the Ukraine and Poland. Hilberg interprets the notion of "voluntarism," very loosely and broadly placing everyone who in some way served or worked for Germans in the category of volunteers.<sup>13</sup>

The US historian Christopher R. Browning's study of the German 101<sup>st</sup> Reserve Police Battalion is the first detailed study of the activities of one such closed unit and an analysis of the motivation of its individual members. Browning's central question is: How could quite ordinary men turn into mass murderers?<sup>14</sup> In order to find out, Browning believes that the question must be approached from various aspects and answers provided only through "multi-causal" explanations. In order to establish the motives of perpetrators, the impact of both ideology and culture, as well as the effects of a given situation on an individual must be analyzed. Since not all victims of German murders were Jews and since not all murderers of Jews were Germans, a multiplicity of causes must be considered before the behavior of any murderer can be evaluated.<sup>15</sup>

On the other hand, the US historian Daniel J. Goldhagen in the book *Hitler's Willing Executioners*, a work that has attracted much public attention, maintains that a mono-causal explanation is possible, at least as far as the Germans are concerned. Although Goldhagen admits that the non-German peoples who assisted Germans in murdering Jews have not been sufficiently studied to date, his statements imply that the behavior of non-German murderers could also be explained mono-causally:

The most important national groups who aided the Germans in slaughtering Jews were the Ukrainians, Latvians and Lithuanians, about whom two things can be said. They came from cultures that were profoundly anti-Semitic, and the knowledge that we have, little as it is, of the men who actually aided the Germans suggest that many of them were animated by vehement hatred of Jews.<sup>16</sup>

Activities of the police troops recruited among the local residents in Belorussia and the Ukraine were the focus of the work of the US historian Martin Dean.<sup>17</sup> According to Dean, the police of these occupied regions played a major role in "the second phase of murdering" in the summer and autumn of 1942. Without assistance of local police

forces it would have been much more difficult for the Germans to carry out their intentions. It was not only operations against the Jews and partisans that the police units took part in; they also played an important role in operations for commandeering food reserves and “capturing” laborers to be shipped to Germany. In order to understand the Holocaust, one must pay attention to collaboration in the East: “While the participation of the local residents in these horrible crimes in no way lessens the responsibility of the Germans, it was an important feature in the carrying out of the Holocaust in these regions.”<sup>18</sup> Dean also doubts whether racial hatred was the only motive that drove local residents to take part in Nazi crimes.

Ukrainian police structures, including police battalions, are the subject of a special study by German historian Frank Golczewski.<sup>19</sup> He excludes the possibility that German occupation policy in Eastern Europe could have followed any logical, serious general plan. It is also clear that the Germans needed assistance from the local residents in governing the occupied regions. In Ukraine, the participation of local police formations was a very essential element of occupation administration. However, from this fact alone, one must not draw a wrong far-reaching conclusion that the full responsibility for the crimes committed by German occupants should be dealt to the local “aides.” According to Golczewski, the issue of responsibility must not be oversimplified. One must take into account the images of “the internal enemy” created by Nazi propaganda, political seduction, various kinds of threats and pressures, as well as many other aspects. Similarly, the behavior of the local residents should be analyzed with respect to their motives. Simple explanations of reasons behind human behavior, such as nationalism, are not sufficient for an understanding of events in the German-occupied Ukraine. For far-reaching conclusions, one must start with a careful examination of facts.<sup>20</sup>

The German historian Peter Longerich in his voluminous work *Politik der Vernichtung* has dedicated one short chapter to police battalions. The author underlines that “apart from guarding prisoners-of-war and important military facilities, police battalions for the most part were engaged in large-scale murders of Jews and Communists, in ‘cleansing’ and anti-partisan operations, whose victims likewise were Jews suspected of being ‘supporters of gangs’.”<sup>21</sup> As a typical example of the involvement of police battalions in operations against Jews this work mentions the Lithuanian 12<sup>th</sup> Police Battalion.<sup>22</sup>

There are also scholars who maintain that anti-partisan operations in the German-occupied territories of the USSR had been first and foremost aimed at the extermination of Jews.<sup>23</sup> It is indeed true that the anti-partisan program included the instruction to exterminate all Jews residing in villages that were the targets of anti-partisan operations. However, the total balance of all anti-partisan operations reveals that in the

course of 55 operations approximately 14,000 Jews were killed, constituting 9% of the 150,000 total number of victims of these operations. While Jews were indeed murdered during the large-scale anti-partisan operations, on the whole it was only "a side effect" of such operations, as has been proved by Christian Gerlach in the case of Belorussia.<sup>24</sup>

A general survey of the police battalions stationed in Lithuania is offered by Arūnas Bubnys in his study on the German occupation,<sup>25</sup> as well as by Petras Stankeras in his work on the police system in Lithuania from 1941 to 1944.<sup>26</sup> Stankera's work has an apologetic tendency, generally holding back on the participation of individual battalions in criminal operations. Both authors have made an attempt to establish the accurate total number of battalions formed in Lithuania, the result being 25 battalions (previously the total figure featured in literature was 23<sup>27</sup> or as many as 35<sup>28</sup> battalions.) In his other works, Bubnys has focused on individual Lithuanian police battalions. For instance, the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 25<sup>2nd</sup> Battalions had been directly or indirectly used in anti-Jewish operations as well. On other occasions, the main function of the battalions was guarding military facilities.<sup>29</sup> The 253<sup>rd</sup> Battalion had been involved primarily in combating Soviet and Polish partisans, although in some individual cases the battalion had to take part in operations for capturing of laborers.<sup>30</sup> The 5<sup>th</sup> Lithuanian Police Battalion operated in Lithuania, the USSR and Latvia and, in the author's opinion, did not take part in any war crimes or crimes against Jews.<sup>31</sup> The 13<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> (later renamed 256<sup>th</sup>) Police Battalions were assigned to anti-partisan activities in the territory of the USSR.<sup>32</sup> In one of his latest studies Bubnys has analyzed the participation of Lithuanian police battalions in the Holocaust.<sup>33</sup> It follows from this work that at least 20 of the 25 Lithuanian police battalions had in some way taken part in the Holocaust, the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Lithuanian Police Battalions emerging as the actual "murderer team." The participation of other battalions in murdering operations had only been sporadic or limited to guarding Jews or the execution sites.

A brief survey of Lithuanian police battalions is in Knut Stang's work,<sup>34</sup> which otherwise focuses on Lithuanian auxiliary police formations in the first months of occupation. Stang has also made a special study of the activities of 2<sup>nd</sup>, i.e. 12<sup>th</sup>, police battalion.<sup>35</sup>

Data on Estonian battalions can be found in the book on Estonian "freedom fighters" edited by August Jurs,<sup>36</sup> as well as in the multi-volume publication on Estonia during World War II.<sup>37</sup> These works for the most part focus exclusively on military activities and anti-partisan battles of these battalions. The Estonian Historians' Commission in its Report 2001 has reached the conclusion that at least four Estonian police battalions were involved in crimes against humanity as well as genocide crimes: these are the 36<sup>th</sup>, 286<sup>th</sup>, 287<sup>th</sup> and 288<sup>th</sup> Estonian Police Battalions.<sup>38</sup>

The fundamental work on Latvian police battalions is Volume 2 of the series *The Latvian Soldier in World War II*.<sup>39</sup> The basic data provided in this book have subsequently been used in Igors Vārpa's monograph on the Latvian Legion.<sup>40</sup> The main tendency in both works is to focus exclusively on the battles of the police battalions against Communism, i.e. Bolshevism, avoiding activities of the battalions that do not fit into this scheme. The role of Latvian police battalions in the extermination of Jews has been addressed by Andrievs Ezergailis, albeit briefly.<sup>41</sup> The author dwells in more detail on the activities of the 20<sup>th</sup> Battalion, which, among its other functions, was assigned to guard duty for the Rīga Ghetto, and the role of the 18<sup>th</sup> Battalion in the 1942 operation for the extermination of Jews in Slonim. Members of the 18<sup>th</sup> Battalion were tried for the alleged crimes in Soviet Latvia in 1961. Ezergailis questions the methods and results of the Soviet judicial investigation and trial. He also mentions the activities of the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 272<sup>nd</sup> Battalions in Warsaw where they performed guard duties outside the Ghetto and during the large-scale "cleansing" operation, i.e. the deportation of Jews August–October 1942.<sup>42</sup> In general, Holocaust literature features very controversial information on the activities of the Latvian battalions in Warsaw.

Information on the activities of Latvian police battalions in Belorussia has now become available in a survey by the Belorussian historian Alexey Litvin. According to Litvin, 26 Latvian police battalions operated in Belorussia during the German occupation. They "have remained in the historic memory of the Belorussian people [...] as members of punitive expeditions, many of them speaking Russian and conspicuous by their ruthlessness towards Belorussians."<sup>43</sup> Although Litvin bases his work on sources from various archives, his selection of documents and the numeration of the battalions in his list are astonishing. For example, he mentions battalions No. 208, 231, 347, 432, 546 and 869; in fact there were no Latvian battalions with such numbers.

One particular anti-partisan operation in Belorussia – *Aktion Winterzauber* – in which eight Latvian police battalions took part is the focus of the Canadian scholar Ruth Birn.<sup>44</sup> She concludes that the Security Police and SD carried out criminal deeds against civilians during the *Winterzauber* operation; police battalions were not engaged in the operation.<sup>45</sup>

The Latvian historian Haralds Biezais describes in great detail the formation of Latvian police battalions. He emphasizes two aspects in this regard: (1) the active role of some Latvian officers in the formation of closed military units and (2) the compulsory character of the 9 February 1942 order and the related "Grand Recruitment Campaign" (*Großwerbung für die lettischen Schutzmannschaften*). He even refers to "formal compulsory mobilization."<sup>46</sup>

However, one cannot side with Biezais' views on "formal compulsory mobilization." There is no doubt that in 1942, recruitment to the Latvian police battalions took place

on the basis of voluntary application. In 1942, recruits were enticed by posters, appeals on the radio, appeals and articles in the press and recruitment meetings.<sup>47</sup> While some persons did receive call-up papers (*Gestellungsbefehl*), these were persons who had previously voluntarily applied for service in police battalions. Recruitment to Latvian police battalions from 1943 onwards is a different matter.

## Conclusions and Hypotheses

Having assessed the existing publications on police battalions, we can put forward 10 domains for future research on Latvian "closed" police battalions.<sup>48</sup>

1. *To what degree were the police battalions voluntary?* In historical literature Latvian police battalions are often described as "pure" volunteer units (e.g., Hilberg). Biezais, however, defends the view that, after the "Grand Recruitment Campaign" of February 1942, one can no longer speak about volunteering. The following questions arise: What was the procedure for the formation of police battalions? How should the concept "voluntarism" be interpreted? (What does "voluntarism" mean under the conditions of occupation in general?) How many battalions consisted of volunteers and how many of men who had been "transferred" from other units or mobilized by force?
2. *Why were Latvian police battalions formed?* Was it because of the lack of ethnic German personnel to govern remote districts? Was the formation determined by the needs of the army for replacements at the front? Did Himmler need special units for mass-scale murders? Were police battalions also part of Himmler's plans for the formation of an SS army?
3. *How much substance is there in Breitman's thesis that police battalions were meant to continue the extermination of Jews that had been started by pogroms?* Is such a thesis maintained to continue propagating the view that local residents (in this case, Latvians) were engaged in such activities on their own initiative and voluntarily?
4. *How much substance is there in another of Breitman's theses: that Nazis considered certain nations of Eastern Europe, in particular Latvians, as suited for conducting mass-scale execution, while others, such as Germans and other West Europeans, were deemed unsuitable as executioners?*
5. *Did Latvians themselves have any input at all with respect to the formation of the closed units?* How effective were the attempts to form their own military units and incorporate these into the German army?
6. *What was the role of the Latvian police battalions in the repressive system of the occupation regime:*

- a. in anti-Jewish measures and extermination of Jews (including the guarding and liquidation of ghettos);
  - b. in the anti-partisan struggle;
  - c. in other repressive measures against civilians (“procurement” of a labor force, different guard services, commandeering of agricultural products, etc.)?
- The activities of each battalion should be studied separately in this respect.
7. *What was the importance of Latvian police battalions at the front?* In this regard as well, the activity of each battalion engaged at the front should be studied separately.
  8. *What was the demographic and social structure of the membership of Latvian police battalions?* In this respect biographical data should be studied.
  9. *What was the motivation for volunteering for service in police battalions?* What did the volunteers know about their future “official duties”? What in particular did they know about the extermination of Jews? The validity of the statement by the Latvian Self-Administration of the Land that members of Latvian police battalions were “merely mercenaries who are paid for their work” should be closely examined in this respect.<sup>49</sup>
  10. *What were the common features and what were the differences in the formation of police battalions in Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia and the Ukraine?*

Before we can draw conclusions and offer generalizations about the activities and role of Latvian police during the German occupation, all factual material must be carefully identified and studied, as was recommended by Golczewski regarding the case of the Ukraine. Without reliable factual basis, no conclusions, generalizations and comparisons, nor assessments are of value. Future research will reveal elaborations to be made to the existing picture and indicate whether prevalent views on the role of Latvian police battalions in the repressive structures of the German occupation period and particularly in the Holocaust need to be revised.<sup>50</sup>

## Periodization of the Formation of Latvian Police Battalions

According to Volume 2 of *The Latvian Soldier in World War II*, the first Latvian police battalion in the General District of Latvia was formed on 4 September 1941 and the last on 23 July 1944.<sup>51</sup>

I divide the formation of Latvian closed police units into three phases:

**The first phase** covers the period from September 1941 to January 1942. In this period the German civilian administration was set in motion and an adequate police

structure in the General District of Latvia was established. On the basis of police companies (*Hundertchaften*), the formation of larger units, i.e. battalions, was launched. By the end of 1941 five battalions had been formed in Rīga (by the numbering fixed in January 1942, these were the 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Battalions). These battalions consisted of volunteers.

**The second phase** is the period of the so-called Grand Recruitment Campaign (*Großwerbung*) that was ushered in by a proclamation in the newspaper *Tēvija* on 11 February 1942 signed by Supreme Commander of SS and Police for Ostland, Friedrich Jeckeln. This campaign was regulated by instructions issued by the Chief of SS and Police in Latvia, Col. Knecht.<sup>52</sup> The Self-Administration of Latvia also took an active part in propaganda work. Under the auspices of the Self-Administration, the Main Committee for the Organization of Latvian Volunteers was established, headed by Gustavs Celmiņš. Committees for the organization of volunteers emerged in all towns and many rural parishes. The campaign received massive support from both the press and radio. In Kurzeme and Latgale, the campaign lasted until mid-to-late May, while elsewhere in Latvia it ended already in late March or early April. The propaganda was aimed at Latvians to volunteer for service in closed units. By September 1942, a total of 16 battalions (Nos. 21–28, 266E, 267–273), comprising 7,967 men, were in place.

**The third phase** is marked by methods other than specific recruitment of volunteers for police battalions. The necessary personnel was either transferred from detached service (policemen of Groups A and B), or from the Home Guards (*aizsargi*, Group C),<sup>53</sup> or from contingents that had been called for military service within the framework of general mobilization operations. The remaining 27 Latvian police battalions (Nos. 271, 274–282, 284, 285, 311–313, 316–322<sup>54</sup>), as well as the 7 so-called Latgalian Battalions (Nos. 283, 314, 315, 325–328) make up the balance of this phase.

Thus, in the General District of Latvia, from 1941 to 1944 altogether 48 Latvian police battalions and seven so-called Latgalian (ethnic Russian) battalions were formed.

No accurate figure has been established for the total number of ethnic Latvians, who served in police battalions in the period from September 1941 to the end of the war. This remains to be calculated. The method according to which the number of battalions is multiplied by the size of the battalion, i.e. 501 men, is not applicable in this case. In view of this, we can only pinpoint numbers on any given date, e.g., on 24 April 1942: 7,390 men,<sup>55</sup> on 18 August 1943: 9,700 men, on 1 January 1944: 10,303 men and on 1 July 1944: 14,884 men.<sup>56</sup>

## Where Were Latvians Fit to Serve: In Army Units or in Police Battalions?

The formation of the closed police battalions in the General District of Latvia was not as simple as it is sometimes assumed in literature. Thus the story goes that from the first days of the occupation Latvians, ostensibly “voluntarily” and in large numbers, applied for service in German repressive bodies. The formation of police battalions in the General District of Latvia, however, differed considerably from similar processes in Estonia and Lithuania and are not directly comparable. For example, it became clear only in early February 1942 that no special German army units would be formed out of Latvians.<sup>57</sup> At the same time, in late 1941, without awaiting a definite decision from the Führer, Himmler launched organizational measures to prepare for the formation of battalions.

As we analyze the decision-making process, five main actors come to the foreground: (1) The Führer of Greater Germany, Adolf Hitler; (2) the SS: Reichsführer SS Heinrich Himmler, Head of Operative Group A, Walter Stahlecker, Supreme Commander of SS and Police, Friedrich Jeckeln; (3) the Wehrmacht; (4) the German civilian administration: *Reichsminister für die besetzten Ostgebiete*, Alfred Rosenberg, and the Commissioner General in Rīga; (5) Latvian groupings.

1. The final and decisive order for the formation of military units came from Hitler. Of significant importance for the involvement of East Europeans in the German army (or in police battalions) was Hitler's statement of 16 July 1941 that no alien military forces were to be allowed to exist west of the Urals and that Germany would undertake the defense of this area against any possible threat:

It must be and remain an iron principle: It must never be tolerated that a person who is not a German carries weapons! This is of particular importance; although at first glance it may seem easier to allow a subjugated nation to bear arms, this is wrong! This is bound inexorably at some future date to backfire on us. Only a German may carry weapons and neither a Slav, nor a Czech, nor a Kazakh nor a Ukrainian may do so!<sup>58</sup>

2. During his visit to Rīga on 30–31 July 1941, Himmler for the first time voiced his plans to form police units from Lithuanians, Latvians, Estonians, Ukrainians, etc., and to deploy them outside the area inhabited by the respective nation.<sup>59</sup> According to the Commander of Operative Team A, Walter Stahlecker, formation of such units was possible immediately, provided they were to be deployed in the former Russian districts (*altrussische Gebiete*). After the completion of this

assignment, these units could continue to be deployed outside their native area, this time as police formations. Stahlecker requested a principal decision to be made in this respect as the army was "pushing" for a quick resolution of the issue.<sup>60</sup> For reasons unknown, the discussions on the formation of battalions neglected the following recommendations made by Stahlecker in his voluminous survey of 15 October 1941 on the activities of Operative Group A:

2) The issue on the participation of the Baltic peoples in the war against the Soviet Union remains unclear.

Recommendation:

a) either that they participate in the ranks of Wehrmacht without their own units, which would mean their eventual Germanization, or

b) that they are prohibited from involvement other than in police service in their native areas and that this is strictly observed.<sup>61</sup>

As seen from this recommendation, he did not envision any separate military units for the Baltic peoples (Latvians), either within the Wehrmacht, or within police structures. Police functions should be fulfilled in the area inhabited by the particular people. This suggestion is directly opposed to Himmler's intentions to attract local residents into police units to be deployed outside their native area.

3. In the course of mustering the police battalions, the German Wehrmacht emerged as the main driving force. It lacked sufficient numbers of ethnic German personnel to "pacify" and govern districts in the rear, as well as to fill all the gaps at the front. It demanded relief by utilizing the local population for army needs. Even Stahlecker was in favor of involving Latvian units (*Sonderkommandos und Freiwilligen-Bataillone*) in the district of the Army Group North to combat partisans. A cautiously formulated request by the Army Group of 16 August 1942 was turned down. The Army Headquarters prohibited the formation of national units and their deployment at the front; it also vetoed the acceptance of Baltic volunteers into German units.<sup>62</sup> The utilization of the Baltic peoples was allowed as rearguard, in the framework of the so-called security divisions (*Sicherungsdivisionen*), their number being limited to one company. Here, attempts were made to abide strictly by Hitler's principle that only Germans were allowed to carry weapons. Instructions were one thing, but practical reality was a different matter. Thus, already in September 1941, Estonian security divisions the size of a battalion were in place, and in the following winter, Baltic units were already fighting at the front. Himmler interpreted Hitler's order that only Germans were allowed to carry weapons as applicable to army, i.e. Wehrmacht units only. Based on this

interpretation, he succeeded in achieving that on 25 November 1941 security battalions within the army and police battalions in the rear were released from subordination to the army and placed at the disposal of the Supreme Commander of SS and Police for the North.<sup>63</sup> Precisely the “liquidation” of these divisions, i.e. their release from subordination to the army, supposedly inspired Himmler to concentrate these forces and eventually to form them into troops under his personal subordination.<sup>64</sup>

Thus, gradually the following practice became established: the Wehrmacht demanded reinforcements and Himmler provided battalions formed from residents of the occupied territories. In this way both the needs of the army and Himmler’s personal ambitions were fulfilled. A question arises whether Himmler would have had the chance to form so many closed police battalions if not for the growing demands of the army, because in 1941–42 Himmler’s position was in no way sufficiently powerful to be able to dictate the course of events single-handedly.

4. The German civilian administration, with Reichsminister für die besetzten Ostgebiete Alfred Rosenberg himself in the lead, supported the idea that the Baltic populations should be given the chance to take part in “the crusade” against Bolshevism. While initially Rosenberg may have talked about the formation of Baltic legions, later he denied the need for an Estonian-Latvian division. He believed it to be sufficient to make use of these men in units not larger than a battalion.<sup>65</sup>

The formation of a Latvian division, however, was advocated by the Commissioner General for Latvia, Otto Heinrich Drechsler. The Head of his Political Division, Werner Kapp, elaborated a special memorandum on this issue “The Voluntary Latvian Formation,” in which he suggested the following:

The Latvian nation must be given the chance to form one volunteer unit, the size of which should not exceed that of one German division. This unit should be incorporated into the Wehrmacht and made use of in the struggle against Bolshevism at the front.<sup>66</sup>

For this purpose Kapp proposed also the establishment of a Committee for the organization of volunteers that would carry out recruitment campaigns. Eventually such a committee was indeed created, The Main Committee for the Organization of Latvian Volunteers, however with a completely different function: to recruit young men for service in closed police units.

As already noted, Rosenberg was in favor of involving the Baltic peoples at the Eastern front, if not as national divisions, then at least in formations the size

of a battalion. The institution of the Commissioner General for Latvia did not beat about the bush and advocated the formation of a national Latvian division subordinated to the Wehrmacht. Two things must be noted. These discussions were not about rearguard service outside native territories but about combat units. It is, moreover, nowhere mentioned that Latvians in particular had a propensity for conducting mass-scale executions.

Reichsführer SS Himmler and his Chief of Staff Gottlob Berger were categorically against such plans. They insisted that formation of legions in the Baltic and Ukraine would never be acceptable. Only police battalions, in great numbers at that, may be formed.<sup>67</sup>

5. From the very outset of the occupation, some groups of Latvian had shown interest in taking part in the struggle against Bolshevism. On 25 July 1941, Gustavs Celmiņš submitted a very concrete proposal, calling for the formation of two Latvian divisions that would be part of Wehrmacht and fight on the Eastern front.<sup>68</sup> The Commissioner General in Rīga supported the proposal, though in a modified form. Latvians were eager to fight at the front, not to serve in the rear. Hitler's statement of 16 July 1941, that weapons must not be handed to non-Germans and that no "alien forces" may exist west of the Urals, contradicted such aspirations. Himmler's plans to create an SS empire of his own and his own army likewise were out of tune with the aspirations of the local populations. These aspirations were likewise not in line with the general opinion of the German government that once the local populations were permitted their own national military units, they would be in a position to make their own demands.

"The struggle" among National Socialist institutions for the opportunity to make use of Latvian "male reserves" was eventually resolved in Himmler's favor. By January–February 1942, when the issue was in the phase of its final resolution, Himmler had already prepared the ground for the formation of closed police units. The 6 November 1941 decree laid the foundation for the system and eventual formation of closed units. A month later, on 4 December 1942, the 50 numbers of battalions allocated to Ostland were distributed among general districts. Latvia received numbers from 16 to 28.

However, one eventually gets the impression that Himmler was not that sure whether the battalions would be formed at all, or when that could happen. This is testified by the fact that regulations about the structure, type and composition of the battalions were under preparation at the time when the actual formation was already proceeding at full speed. Regulations concerning the ranks of police officers of 30 May 1942, the rights of the commanders of Latvian battalions of 26 June 1942, and the subordination of

battalions of 29 July 1942 were issued when the formation of battalions had already been completed and some of them were already deployed in “the places of their operation.”<sup>69</sup> In late May 1942 it was also not yet known where the men of the formed battalions were to be given their uniforms and weapons.<sup>70</sup>

Of decisive importance for the final decision in favor of closed police battalions in Latvia (as well as in Lithuania and Estonia) was Stahlecker’s report of 25 January 1942. It was submitted to the Head of the Main Authority for State Security, Reinhard Heydrich, who, in turn, submitted the report to Reichsführer SS Himmler. On the very same day Himmler received in audience the Supreme SS and Police Commander for Ostland, Friedrich Jeckeln, whom Stahlecker had acquainted with the main aspects of his report. In his meeting with Himmler, Jeckeln was to insist that the formation of military units from alien peoples was acceptable within the framework of the SS only.

Let us look closer at Stahlecker’s lengthy report.<sup>71</sup> He had met the Supreme Commander of Army Group North and his Chief of Staff, who had stated that the “formation of new Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian units would greatly relieve the Army Group North.” In this regard, Stahlecker had remarked that engaging in common struggle eventually could bring about various political liabilities that could prove risky with respect to Latvians and Lithuanians, while less so with respect to Estonians. “For this reason, the correct option politically would be to establish military formations subordinate only to the Reichsführer SS.”<sup>72</sup>

The formation of Estonian units the size of a regiment or brigade was believed not to be dangerous. However, the precondition was that “they must not fall into the hands of some untested Wehrmacht officers but be part of the Waffen SS.” Formation of larger units within the SS could also serve to prove to the Wehrmacht that SS units were ready and able to come to assistance in time of need. What was true of Estonians was also true of Latvians, “who likewise were ready at any time for active combat against the Russians.” Experience had also proved Latvians to be superior to Estonians in their military capabilities.

In this regard, it is of the utmost importance to note that Stahlecker did not familiarize Jeckeln with the discussions and considerations about the possibility of forming larger military units. Jeckeln’s task was to see to the formation of units no larger than the size of a battalion.

On the very same day, 25 January 1942, after his discussion with Jeckeln, Himmler met Hitler in order to acquaint him with Stahlecker’s report.<sup>73</sup> After these talks Himmler informed Jeckeln of the results:

In spite of the general shortage of weapons that would not allow us to arm adequately non-German units for battles at the front, the Führer on the whole is not in favor of the creation of such armed formations. The Führer has agreed to the increase in the number of “closed” police units.<sup>74</sup>

In order to be rid of uncertainty once and for all as to whether Latvian and Estonian units were to be formed within the Wehrmacht or only as closed police units, Himmler once again spoke to Jeckeln and the Supreme Commander of the Wehrmacht, Keitel, on 8 February 1942. The outcome was unambiguous: Hitler had approved closed police units as part of the SS only.<sup>75</sup> A day later the Supreme Commander of the Army Group North was duly informed:

The Führer has decided that in the future the formation of Ukrainian and Baltic units should cease and deployment of able-bodied units on the battlefields or their involvement in security functions should be suspended.<sup>76</sup>

It also seems to be a direct or indirect result of the 25 January 1942 discussion between Himmler and Hitler that the Supreme Command of the Wehrmacht issued a general instruction to the effect that "the incorporation of residents of the former Baltic countries into the Wehrmacht, especially in the struggle against Bolshevism, was no longer an option."<sup>77</sup> Thus in February 1942, only Himmler, i.e. the SS, had the authority and power to form military units from local residents of Latvia.<sup>78</sup>

Stahlecker's letter to Heydrich, i.e. Himmler, clearly reveals Himmler's strategy aimed at achieving the formation of closed police battalions in the Baltic. First of all, basic regulations for the formation and organizational structure of battalions were elaborated and approved on 6 November 1941, in the expectation that Hitler would also approve them at some future date. All that remained was to await the moment when the Army Group North would again ask for help and then to produce new Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian units. When that moment arrived, Himmler could present himself as a "savior" by having forming "closed" police units. This also disrupted the attempts to integrate (Estonian and Latvian) units into the Wehrmacht.<sup>79</sup> Here also came to light the plans of the SS to create its own army in order to, on the one hand, subject non-German soldiers to its influence and control and, on the other hand, to demonstrate to the Wehrmacht that SS units were capable of active involvement at the front.<sup>80</sup> In this context, the SS in theory admitted the possibility that larger (even brigade size) Latvian and Estonian units could be formed, meanwhile in practice holding onto the battalions. Formation of larger units could, on the one hand, be the cause of Hitler's (and the Wehrmacht's) discontent about attempts to bypass his instructions regarding not arming non-Germans and, on the other hand, openly reveal the far-reaching plans of the SS to form its own army.

It was only in early January 1942 that the leadership of the Latvian Self-Administration was acquainted with the plans of the impending organization of battalions. For some persons (such as Alfreds Valdmanis) this may have come as a surprise. Valdmanis argued that Latvians had no knowledge of the SS and "*Schutzmannschaft* system," were soldiers only and, for this reason, the highest-ranking local commander of the

German army should be consulted.<sup>81</sup> Others, with Oskars Dankers, Gustavs Celmiņš, Voldemārs Veiss and Roberts Osis in the lead, supported the proposal of the Supreme Commander of SS and Police for Ostland, Jeckeln, to launch a campaign to recruit volunteers for police battalions. As Haralds Biezais has pointed out, “on Jeckeln’s own prompting they requested Jeckeln to use the term ‘voluntarily’ according to the rules of the propaganda game.”<sup>82</sup> When the formation of separate Latvian army units was rejected, this grouping was ready to accept any other option, which would result in the engagement of Latvians in some kind of military formations.

Thus, as of 6 January 1942, the Latvian group supporting any form of involvement of Latvians in fighting Bolshevism had to face the fact that police battalions would eventually be formed. After discussions between Jeckeln and Osis, Latvians had no other option but to decide on which strategy would be more successful: either to promise high wages and benefits to volunteers, or to turn the recruitment campaign into “a people’s movement.”<sup>83</sup> The Latvian Self-Administration was not to associate the formation of battalions with “the pursuit of any other aims.”<sup>84</sup>

After Hitler approved (on 25 January 1942) the formation of new closed police battalions, in Latvia everything transpired quickly. On 4 February 1942, a meeting took place in the office of the Commander of Public Order Police, Knecht, on organizational issues related to the formation of police battalions. A representative of the Commissioner General for Latvia, Drechsler, objected to such a campaign (which was to recruit some 20,000 men into battalions), arguing that this would tangibly affect the economy in Latvia. Participants of the meeting noted these objections, but at the same time rejected them on the grounds that an order (*Befehl*) had been already issued.<sup>85</sup> On 6 February 1942, Jeckeln informed the Director of the Latvian Self-Administration, General Dankers, that he was to expect an invitation “to form new voluntary units of public order service.”<sup>86</sup> A day later Dankers met the Commissioner General to discuss who would sign appeals for the campaign.<sup>87</sup> On 9 February 1942, the Commander of Public order Police in Latvia, Knecht, issued an instruction for “the grand recruitment campaign” which assigned persons in charge: Dankers was placed in charge of recruitment propaganda, while Osis was to be responsible for the technical side of the campaign and the formation of new battalions.<sup>88</sup>

In order to turn “the grand recruitment campaign” into a Latvian cause, on 7 February the Director General for Domestic Administration and Personnel, Dankers, hosted a meeting of Latvian public representatives to discuss issues pertaining to the organization of “Latvian units of public order.”<sup>89</sup> Unanimity was not achieved, as hoped for, by the supporters of the battalions (Dankers, military representatives and members of the radical Thundercross) because Director General for Justice, Valdmanis, and the representative of young officers, Ēriks Pārups, voiced categorical objections: as long as the Republic

of Latvia was not restored and the goals of the struggle remained undefined, Latvians should not to be called upon to bear arms. The meeting was cut short and resumed on 10 February.<sup>90</sup> In the meantime, Dankers had met with the Supreme Commander of SS and Police, Jeckeln, and the Head of SS and Police for Latvia, Walther Schröder, who rejected all Latvian demands. Participants of the meeting had to face facts. Thus the meeting ended without making any formal decision or declaration on the formation of police units.<sup>91</sup>

Thus, on 11 February 1942, the first appeal signed by Jeckeln urging Latvians to apply to police battalions was published, stating that recruitment would begin on 12 February, was published. On the Latvian side, the appeal was signed by Oskars Dankers, with none of his official positions mentioned.<sup>92</sup>

In the end, the result was as the Germans had wished: Latvian officials signed appeals and launched a recruitment campaign. On the one hand, this was a "people's movement," since the entire nation was "mobilized" for the recruitment campaign; on the other hand, this was not so, as the Self-Administration was in no position either to demand the formation of larger Latvian units (its own army), or to relate this to any other demand (such as autonomy, restitution of private property, etc.). Thus, in the end, the recruitment campaign turned into a combination of both options discussed by Osis and Jeckeln: voluntary membership in police units upon signing a contract guaranteeing good wages that, at the same time, could be viewed as "a people's movement" (involvement of Dankers and military personnel in the volunteer recruitment campaign).

The interests and goals of the Latvian people were neglected. On 11 November 1942, the Self-Administration had to draw the conclusion that members of the Latvian police battalions were "merely mercenaries who were paid for their work."<sup>93</sup> This conclusion was drawn by none other than Colonel-Lieutenant Roberts Osis himself, who was the Latvian representative responsible for the formation of the closed units.



*Inesis Feldmanis*

## **Waffen-SS Units of Latvians and Other Non-Germanic Peoples in World War II: Methods of Formation, Ideology and Goals**

World War II broke out on 1 September 1939 as a European war of a restricted scale. In the first phase of the war Germany reaped unexpectedly great success. Thanks to its Blitzkrieg strategy, by early 1942 Germans had subjugated the largest part of Europe.<sup>1</sup> In a short time Poland, Norway, Denmark, Luxemburg, Holland, Belgium, France, Yugoslavia and Greece were defeated, and large territories of the USSR were occupied. National Socialism seemed to have gained the upper hand in Europe. The German Führer Adolf Hitler was at the height of his power.<sup>2</sup> The Nazis seemed to be heading for a quick and imminent victory in the war. There was hardly any force in sight capable of stopping their march of victory.

At that time many countries cooperated with Nazi Germany. In the early phase of the war, the Soviet Union gave it invaluable economic, political and other kinds of assistance. Italy and Japan became the main allies of Germany. On 27 September 1940 Germany concluded the Pact of Three with these countries, later on joined by Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, Bulgaria and Croatia. Finland also chose to cooperate with Germany and signed the Anti-Comintern Pact. Each of these countries had goals of their own. Hungary wished to recover the territories it had lost by signing the Trianon Peace Treaty in 1920. Romania needed Germany to ensure itself against the territorial aspirations of the USSR and to reconquer Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina that it had lost in the summer of 1940. After the Winter War (30 November 1939–12 March 1940) Finland likewise felt constantly threatened by the Soviet Union.

The populations of the occupied territories were engaged in broad and comprehensive cooperation with Nazi Germany.<sup>3</sup> The types, forms and expressions of such cooperation were very diverse. Historians traditionally distinguish between cooperation in general (collaboration) and treasonous cooperation (collaborationism).<sup>4</sup> Yet each occupied country had specifics and peculiarities of its own. In many cases it is practically impossible to draw a firm line between collaboration and collaborationism. It is particularly difficult to do so in the Baltic states, which in a short period of time had endured two occupation powers and occupations. During “the German time” the majority

of Latvia's population remained loyal to the *de facto* annihilated state of Latvia,<sup>5</sup> which, in spite of the Soviet occupation in 1940 and incorporation into the USSR, continued to exist as a subject of international law.<sup>6</sup> Thus the activities of Latvia's population during the years of the German occupation should be assessed from the vantage point of Latvia's national interests and on the basis of laws then in force in Latvia.

A widespread form of collaboration was the enlistment of Latvians in German armed forces. This enlistment included the military troops of the SS, the Waffen-SS, in whose framework the "Latvian SS Volunteer Legion" was formed in 1943.<sup>7</sup> In recent years, with increasing resoluteness, Latvian historians have tried to consider and assess the formation and operation of the Latvian Legion in the context of the existence and functioning of military formations of all Nazi-occupied and governed countries. Such an approach is historically justified and opens broad possibilities of comparison. It shows that the Latvian Legion was nothing exceptional, as about 57% of the 910,000 men in the service of Waffen-SS in 1944 were not Germans born in Germany (*Reichsdeutsche*).<sup>8</sup> Almost all European nations were represented in the ranks of the Waffen-SS.<sup>9</sup> None of the 38 divisions that constituted the SS army at the end of the war consisted exclusively of Germans, while in 19 the majority were foreigners.<sup>10</sup>

The comparative method also allows emphasizing and bringing out the specifics of Latvia's situation on the background of overall developments in Europe. Latvian legionnaires fought on the Eastern front exclusively against the Soviet troops, i.e. the army of the state which had annihilated Latvia's independence, carried out repressions against civilians and in 1944 threatened to occupy it again. Although the USSR was an ally of the UK and USA, the Latvian struggle was in no way targeted against the entire anti-Hitler coalition. Like much of the Latvian public, Latvian legionnaires cherished positive feelings towards the Western Allies and hoped that they would insist on the restoration of Latvia's independence. In the particular historical situation, however, that was an illusion. The Western Allies yielded to the pressure from the USSR and did not object to Latvia and the other Baltic states remaining part of the USSR. Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia found themselves being the only occupied European states whose independence was not restored after World War II. It was only in 1991 when the Baltic states regained their national independence.

Latvian historians face a very important challenge to refute the rather widespread disinformation regarding the participation of Latvians in German military units during the Nazi occupation. Above all, there is no reason to associate the Latvian Legion, which was organized in early 1943, directly with the war crimes committed by earlier military or paramilitary units. It is primarily Soviet propaganda that forged the link: Self-Defense troops – Police Battalions – Legion. This linkage establishes guilt by association and is contrary to fact.<sup>11</sup> Latvian soldiers did not take part in repressive operations. Not a single legionnaire has ever been brought to trial for war crimes committed in the context

of the Legion's operations. The Legion was established a year after the last mass-scale massacre of Jews in Latvia.<sup>12</sup> Even if at the end of the war persons that had committed war crimes filtered into the Latvian Legion from the structures that had earlier been subordinated to SD, it does not make the entire Legion a criminal unit.<sup>13</sup> Even the 1 October 1946 verdict of the Nuremberg War Tribunal, which has rather accurately fixed the range of persons who qualify as part of the criminal SS organization, makes an exception for those mobilized against their will, provided they had not committed war crimes.<sup>14</sup>

## Non-German Units in the Waffen-SS: Recruitment

At the beginning of World War II, the Waffen-SS consisted exclusively of volunteers from Germany,<sup>15</sup> who were selected on the basis of special criteria. The SS soldiers had to be not merely combatants, but also “political soldiers” and “fanatic carriers of the National Socialist worldview.” The supreme commanders of the German armed forces (*Oberkommando der Wehrmacht*) as a rule fixed the annual quotas for volunteers to SS units, these, however, being very modest could not have satisfied the great ambitions of the SS leadership.<sup>16</sup> As of 1941, the principle of voluntary membership in the formation of SS troops was more and more often violated. SS units began to take in mobilized soldiers as well. By 1943 such practice had become rather standard.<sup>17</sup>

The SS leadership looked for other possibilities as well to enlarge their troops. Therefore the potential of recruits from outside Germany that was not accessible to the Wehrmacht was widely exploited. Special attention was focused on the “ethnic Germans” (*Volksdeutsche*) residing abroad, who gradually were recruited into Waffen-SS units on mass scale. Such recruitment was made possible because the SS leadership succeeded in legalizing the initially secret recruitment campaigns of volunteers in Central and Southeast European countries: Hungary, Romania, Croatia and Serbia. According to British historian Robin Lumsden, in the final phase of the war the Waffen-SS had as many as 185,000 foreign “ethnic Germans” in their ranks.<sup>18</sup> They constituted more than 20% of the total. For many of them enlistment into the Waffen-SS had been voluntary in a formal sense only. Germans residing abroad were easily influenced by the leaders of their “ethnic groups” (*Volksgruppen*), who, as a rule, worked in the interests of the SS and, if the need arose, resorted to pressure.<sup>19</sup>

In the spring of 1940, the SS leadership launched recruitment campaigns for volunteers in the “Germanic lands” (Norway, Denmark, Holland and Belgium). This was in full harmony with the basic postulates of Nazi ideology, since the “Germanic peoples” were recognized as “racially superior peoples.” Initially, the success was modest. The situation changed after the German attack on the USSR on 22 June 1941, when the recruitment campaigns for “Germanic” volunteers were channeled into a new, more ef-

ficient and purposeful ideological direction. Anti-Communist postulates and the idea of a “crusade” of United Europe against Bolshevism came into the foreground. However, in each particular country the recruitment campaigns carried different emphasis. In Norway, for instance, Nazi propaganda appealed to the sense of unity of the Scandinavian peoples, underlining that the aggressive policies of the Soviet Union, having taken a striking expression in the attack on Finland in November 1939, “threatened the Nordic countries and their culture.”<sup>20</sup>

The number of the “Germanic” – and in the final years of the war also “non-Germanic” – volunteers from West and North European countries grew steadily.<sup>21</sup> In 1941, there were 12,000 volunteers from these countries in the ranks of Waffen-SS units.<sup>22</sup> According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Germany, of these 2,399 were Danes, 1,180 Finns, 15,721 Flemish, 4,814 Dutch, 1,883 Norwegians, 39 Swedes, 135 Swiss and Lichtensteinians.<sup>23</sup> In the next few years, the growth was particularly rapid. In spite of a certain crisis in recruitment of “Germanic” volunteers in mid-1943,<sup>24</sup> by late 1944 the Waffen-SS had already more than 137,000 West Europeans.<sup>25</sup> Their ethnic composition was as follows: 50,000 Dutch, 23,000 Flemish, 20,000 Italians, 15,000 Valonians, 11,000 Danes, 8,000 French, 6,000 Norwegians, with Spaniards, Swedes, Swiss, British and Luxemburgers altogether constituting 4,000 recruits.<sup>26</sup>

If one does not take into account German propaganda and the pressure from local fascist or Nazi parties or groups that the potential volunteers were subjected to, most of the West European recruits to a great extent were genuine volunteers. With the 200,000 East Europeans, who also fought in the ranks of Waffen-SS in the final years of the war, the situation was different.<sup>27</sup> Starting with 1942–43, when the German military situation became worse, there gradually emerged within the Waffen-SS divisions, brigades or regiments of Ukrainians, Belorussians, Russians, Latvians, Estonians, Hungarians, Kazakhs, Croatians, Romanians, Bulgarians and other nationalities. Muslim units were a special phenomenon of the Waffen-SS, such as the Waffen-SS unit of eastern Turks, the brigade of Tatars from mountainous regions, or the regiments or divisions of Balkan Muslims. From the “Führer’s Guard” the Waffen-SS had turned into “a multi-ethnic army.” SS units completely lost their elitist character and racial and ideological “purity.”

Of the East European recruits, many had been mobilized or forced to serve in Waffen-SS units. While, certainly, there were also genuine volunteers, the others can be regarded as such only formally or conditionally. In all instances the Nazis applied the term “volunteers” to conceal the real substance of what was in fact happening and to hide the fact that, in the process of forming non-German units, international law and the Hague Regulations Respecting Laws and Customs of War on Land were violated on a very regular basis.<sup>28</sup> The propaganda aspect was also important in this regard. Pretending that the formation of non-German military units in Eastern Europe was

taking place in a “legal” way and on irrefutably voluntary basis, Nazis could create and support the myth of the Waffen-SS troops as a European army, in whose ranks half a million foreigners were voluntarily fighting to safeguard Western culture from the attack of “Asian Bolshevism.”

## The Latvian Legion within the Waffen-SS

Of all East European states, Latvia and Estonia found themselves in special circumstances. It was in these countries of all others that the German occupation authorities almost completely ignored the voluntarism principle in the formation of the Legions. Only a very small proportion of Latvians and Estonians – the exact figure has not been established – applied voluntarily. This fact was recognized even by the USSR Commissar for State Security, Vsevolod Merkulov, in a wartime letter (written on 24 July 1943) to the Secretary of the Latvian Communist Party (Bolsheviks), Jānis Kalnberziņš.<sup>29</sup> After World War II, the US Displaced Persons Commission reached a similar conclusion. The Commission’s Coordinator for Europe, Robert J. Corkern, points out in his 28 November 1950 memorandum:

In the case of the Baltic Waffen SS units it [the Commission] received evidence showing membership in these units was due to conscription, a method by the Hitler regime, and that members of the Baltic SS were impressed for the most part for actual fighting on the eastern front.<sup>30</sup>

In Estonia, which the Nazis regarded as the Baltic country most friendly towards Germany, the formation of the Legion began in August 1942, and in Latvia half a year later. On 23 January 1943, the Führer Adolf Hitler “permitted and ordered”<sup>31</sup> the SS-*Reichsführer* Heinrich Himmler to establish “a volunteer Latvian SS Legion.”<sup>32</sup> Altogether, five mobilization campaigns were carried out in Latvia between March 1943 and September 1944.<sup>33</sup> The first campaign lasted from March to August 1943 and supplied the Legion with as many as 17,971 men.<sup>34</sup> The second (October–November 1943) and third (December 1943–January 1944) campaigns contributed approximately 12,000 combatants to the Legion.<sup>35</sup> According to historian Kārlis Kangeris, in February 1944 the Baltic general provinces were placed at the disposal of Himmler as “a reserve of supplies for the SS Legions,” and he had the exclusive authority to launch check-ups and call-ups.<sup>36</sup> However, no summaries or comprehensive reports about this period have survived.

The formation of the Legion in Latvia took place at the time when the Germans were no longer regarded as “liberators.” An eyewitness, Latvian author Zigmunds Skujiņš, has poetically but very accurately described the period: “The time spent in the claws of the Reich’s eagle had reduced the honey of expectations to dregs.”<sup>37</sup> Reports by the Com-

mander of Security police and SD in Latvia, *Obersturmführer* Rudolf Lange, also mention the growth of anti-German sentiments among the Latvian population.<sup>38</sup> In spite of this, many Latvians found mobilization into the Legion acceptable under the concrete historical circumstances, considering that Latvia was facing the threat of a second Soviet occupation. Others “went into the Legion” as an act of reconciliation with fate, yielding to the hypnotic power that any formidable force possesses. From the psychological perspective it is completely understandable, because resistance to such a force threatens with immediate loss of all hope, while submission seemingly still leaves a chance of survival and escape.

In the course of World War II, two Latvian divisions, the 15<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup>, were established in the framework of the Waffen-SS. The total membership exceeded 52,000.<sup>39</sup> The 15<sup>th</sup> Division was the first to be formed in 1943. The formation order was issued on 15 February; at the end of the year the division entered battle at the front as a closed unit.<sup>40</sup> The 19<sup>th</sup> Division was established in January 1944.<sup>41</sup> Both divisions were among the most distinguished among non-German Waffen SS units.<sup>42</sup> It is especially true of the 19<sup>th</sup> Division, which was acknowledged in reports of the Wehrmacht’s Headquarters 14 times. For the first time its merits were mentioned on 29 February 1944, and for the last time on 1 January 1945.<sup>43</sup> Ten of the Division’s soldiers (more than any other non-German Waffen-SS unit) were decorated as Knights of the Iron Cross.<sup>44</sup> In the final phase of the war, this division was engaged in the defense of the Kurzeme region in Western Latvia, alongside German troops. This fact raised the soldiers’ fighting spirit, as they believed to be fighting for their homeland. The Red Army troops were not able to conquer Kurzeme before the capitulation of Nazi Germany.

Latvian legionnaires were forced to fight under very unfavorable conditions. The Self-Administration of the Land, which had been founded in March 1942, had failed to achieve even autonomy for Latvia. All efforts in this respect had failed. For instance, in December 1942 the Latvian Self-Government submitted to the *Generalkommissar* Otto Drechsler a request to restore Latvia’s national independence. Should the request be granted, the formation of an army numbering at least 100,000 was offered by way of general mobilization of men born from between 1907 and 1925.<sup>45</sup> However, the events followed a completely different course. The Nazis rejected the “rules of the game” offered by the Latvians: “autonomy” in return for “Legion.”<sup>46</sup> The Germans launched a mobilization of Latvia’s inhabitants without fulfilling any counterdemands. The Directors General, moreover, actively took part in the formation of the Legion.<sup>47</sup> It was, no doubt, grave political imprudence, even a mistake. On the other hand, the chances of successful opposition were clearly minimal, since all actual power rested with the Germans, who were the masters of the situation. Germans, not Latvians, made the key decisions, having at their disposal sufficient means to carry them out. Latvians were allocated merely the role of assistants.

Nazi policies in Latvia were clearly shortsighted. Independent and sovereign Latvia was not part of their preliminary plans. They envisaged subjugation and Germanization of Latvia. However, in the course of time, certain ambivalence and equivocation set in. Emphases changed, and various contradictory tendencies within the framework of German policies became apparent. Thus, as the military situation of Germany deteriorated, individual high-ranking officials, such as Himmler in September 1943, spoke about the need to grant Latvia and Estonia national independence.<sup>48</sup> This idea met eager support of the SS Chief of Staff Gottlob Berger, who remarked that Latvians and Estonians deserved to govern themselves.<sup>49</sup> In the Ministry for German Occupied Eastern Provinces and the *Reichskommissariat Ostland* debates began as to how best to utilize the military potential of Latvians and Estonians and how to mobilize their forces against Bolshevism most effectively. *Reichskommissar* Hinrich Lohse still objected to autonomy for Latvia and Estonia.<sup>50</sup> *Generalkommissar* Otto Drechsler, however, retreated from his previously negative attitude that he had still maintained in late 1942 when he received Valdmanis' memorandum. He, too, became a supporter of the idea of autonomy, without, however, excluding a compromise solution that envisaged the formation of a mixed, German-Latvian administration in Latvia.<sup>51</sup> The Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Provinces even drafted a Führer's decree, by which Latvia and Estonia would have been granted national independence,<sup>52</sup> and Minister Rosenberg elaborated the procedure for the abolishment of *Reichskommissariat Ostland*,<sup>53</sup> thus angering *Reichskommissar* Lohse.<sup>54</sup> None of these initiatives, however, were carried through as Hitler eventually rejected them all.

## Non-German Waffen-SS Soldiers: Motivation and Goals

As of 1941, an important motive for cooperation with Nazi Germany shared by almost all European peoples was "the crusade against Bolshevism." Anti-communism can be regarded as the most important driving force behind the Waffen-SS volunteer movement. A persuasive study in this regard is the opinion poll carried out in 1960s by German historian Hans Werner Neulen among the Waffen-SS veterans of various ethnic backgrounds. 67% of the interrogated Flemish and Norwegian veterans, 70% of Finns, 83% of Valonians, 92% of Spaniards and 100% of Latvians admitted their anti-Communist sentiments as the main reason for their fighting on the German side.<sup>55</sup> Spanish nationalists, for instance, had not forgotten the intervention of the Soviet Union in their civil war in the late 1930s and regarded it as their enemy. The anti-Communist mood among Norwegians and Finns was fostered by the aggressive policies of the USSR exhibited in the attack on Finland in November 1939. Latvians and Estonians had had a bitter experience in the first year of the Soviet occupation. The Baltic legionnaires chose to fight against the Soviet Union in order to prevent it from reoccupying their countries,

terrorizing and murdering their inhabitants. For Latvians and Estonians, Germany was an ally dictated and forced upon them by the existing circumstances. In World War II no one, not even the great powers, "could afford to choose their allies based on ideological considerations."<sup>56</sup> Everything depended on the immediate interests and needs.

Many "Germanic" volunteers initially found acceptable the Nazi-propagated idea of the "New Europe." They fought in the ranks of the Waffen-SS to win for their countries the opportunity to participate actively on more or less equal basis in the German-controlled and governed Europe after the war. However, in the course of the war it gradually became increasingly clear that, in case of a Nazi victory, even the Germanic peoples would have very slight prospects of complete political sovereignty and national independence. Plans for the transformation of post-war Europe that the Nazi leadership put forward, although for the most part presented as ideas only, were consistently oriented at absolute German rule and domination on the continent. As a result, a contradiction developed between the political aspirations of the "Germanic" volunteers (restoration of national sovereignty, united and equal Europe) and Nazi war aims that were defined in general and vague terms: conquering "living space" in the East, building a German "Eastern Empire" and creation of a "Greater Germanic" empire.<sup>57</sup> It was one of the main causes of the crisis among the "Germanic" volunteers that acquired clear outlines in mid-1943 and was not completely overcome until the very end of the war. Each fifth "Germanic" volunteer left the ranks of the Waffen-SS.<sup>58</sup>

Among the voluntary SS soldiers recruited in West European countries, a large proportion came from extreme right political movements. They openly demonstrated their affinity with the ideas of fascism and Nazism. According to data at the disposal of some historians, approximately 60% of Norwegian volunteers were members of the fascist organization *Nasjonal Samling*.<sup>59</sup> A similar situation gradually emerged also in Holland. At first, Adrian Mussert, head of the local National Socialist Movement, hampered the recruitment of SS volunteers, having plans of his own for the future of Holland. In February 1941, he changed his attitude and allowed members of his organization to become SS soldiers. This caused an influx of Dutch volunteers.<sup>60</sup>

In East and Southeast Europe, interest in Nazi ideas was much more modest. In these regions, the cooperation with Germany was dictated by other motives that differed from place to place. For example, the Balkan Muslims were driven into SS divisions mostly by the desire to take revenge on their recent enemies, the Serbs, leading to many atrocities.<sup>61</sup> Ukrainians in their turn were fighting for the freedom of their country.<sup>62</sup> The Estonian and Latvian legionnaires were guided in their struggle against the USSR mostly by their aspirations to regain their national independence that had been lost as a result of the Soviet occupation. Neither the ideological, nor military goals of Germany appealed to them. They were not fighting for the "New Europe."

It is difficult to imagine how the formation of the Latvian Legion would have been possible if the USSR had not carried out its aggressive and criminal policies in 1940–41 that caused a socio-psychological shock and deep resentment in the public. The mood of Latvian soldiers in the context of these developments becomes evident from a report by the German Commander of the 15<sup>th</sup> Division, Adolf Ax. On 27 January 1945 he wrote:

They are Latvians above all! They wish to achieve a sovereign Latvian nation state. Forced to choose between Germany and Russia they have chosen Germany, because they strive at cooperation with Western civilization. They regard German overlordship as the least evil. Their hatred for Russia was deepened by the occupation of Latvia. They believe the struggle against Russia to be their national duty.<sup>63</sup>

The Latvian legionnaires' eagerness to fight against the USSR was encouraged and stimulated also by various other motivations. Many Latvians, officers in particular, who had been raised and whose personalities had developed in the patriotic atmosphere of independent Latvia, felt disgraced and humiliated by the short-sighted policy of the State of Latvia and Prime Minister Kārlis Ulmanis, which had given free hands to the Soviet Union to occupy their homeland without any resistance. Psychologically their motivation for entering the struggle against Bolsheviks was also strongly affected by a factor that could be formulated as follows: "my enemy's enemy is my friend."<sup>64</sup>

Many Latvian soldiers saw the Legion as a core of a would-be national army of Latvia and closely associated their participation in the war against the USSR with the struggle for the restoration of Latvia's independence. The legionnaires' views and sentiments are clearly revealed in their letters home. According to censors' reports, letters by the soldiers from the 15<sup>th</sup> Division very often contained the idea that in order to fight "apart from the negative goal" – defending against Bolshevism, they needed "a positive goal" as well – autonomy of Latvia.<sup>65</sup> In the summer of 1944 as the front line approached the Latvian border, this positive goal, however, had assumed secondary importance, the main concern being the direct threat to their homeland.<sup>66</sup>

Several documents attest to very clear anti-German sentiments in the units of Latvian legionnaires who had been trained in Latvia. They came out in discussions among officers on the possible necessity to defend Latvia against Germans as well. Such information, for instance, can be found in the 1 August 1943 report by the Head of Security Police and SD in Latvia, Rudolf Lange. On 26 October, the Head of the Political Division of *Reichskommissariat Ostland*, Friedrich Trampedach, submitted an excerpt of this report to the Minister of Occupied Eastern Provinces, Alfred Rosenberg,<sup>67</sup> raising the question whether the existence of the Latvian Legion was a sufficient reason to make a decision on the "form of government" of Latvia (meaning autonomy).<sup>68</sup>

A considerable number of Latvian legionnaires were associated with the national resistance organization Latvia's Guards.<sup>69</sup> Evidence has survived that in the autumn of 1944, when the Soviet troops approached Rīga, the leadership of this organization planned to defend the city with the help of Latvian Legion units, provided they retreated through the city.<sup>70</sup> In an interview on 2 May 1997, one of the former members of Latvia's Guards, speaking about these intentions, said:

As soon as the units [of the Latvian Legion] would enter the city, they would renounce their allegiance to the Germans. Then an independent Republic of Latvia would be proclaimed and Rīga would be defended both against Russians and Germans alike. Thus from the legal perspective, Russians, as they entered Rīga, would have occupied an independent state rather than liberated Soviet Latvia.<sup>71</sup>

In conclusion it should be emphasized that the assignment of Latvian and Estonian military formations to the Waffen-SS was a mere formality, and their SS divisions essentially differed from German SS divisions.<sup>72</sup> Latvian legionnaires were not "the Führer's political soldiers." The conviction that National Socialism was an ideology of the future was completely alien to them. The US Displaced Persons Commission declared in 1950:

The Baltic Waffen SS Units (Baltic Legions) are to be considered as separate and distinct in purpose, ideology, activities and qualifications for membership from the German SS, and therefore the Commission holds them not to be a movement hostile to the Government of the United States under Section 13 of the Displaced Persons Act, as amended.<sup>73</sup>

A principal decision or simply a conclusion about the non-Nazi character of Latvian and Estonian SS divisions on that or some other level of the US administration was in fact probably made much earlier. It is attested by a very interesting episode in the post-war history of Europe.

In the period between the summer of 1946 and 1949 Latvian guards, together with Estonians, Lithuanians and soldiers of other ethnic backgrounds, under American supervision ensured the security of the trials of Nazi war criminals (the so-called Nuremberg "follow-up processes"). Units of Latvian guards, many of whom came from the former Latvian Legion's 15<sup>th</sup> Division and other military formations, were responsible not only for the security "around the external perimeter" of the Nuremberg Palace of Justice and the prison of Nazi war criminals.<sup>74</sup> At least some of them also took part in even more responsible duties, such as escorting the accused from the interrogation facilities to the courtroom and guarding the facilities of special importance during the tribunal. Latvian historian Bonifācijs Daukšts has established that several hundred Latvian soldiers were to some extent involved in securing the Nuremberg trials of Nazi criminals.<sup>75</sup>



*Uldis Neiburgs*

## **Western Allies in Latvian Public Opinion and Nazi Propaganda during the German Occupation 1941–1945\***

Propaganda of the National Socialist regime and the attitude of the Latvian population towards the Western Allies during the German occupation (1941–45) have received hardly any attention in historical literature to date. Historians have for the most part focused on the diplomacy of the USA, UK and USSR pertaining to the Baltic states during World War II.<sup>1</sup> Little is known, however, about information available to the Western Allies concerning the situation in Latvia under German occupation.<sup>2</sup> My paper aims to provide an insight into the official position of the German occupation regime vis-à-vis the USA and UK as expressed in Nazi propaganda and to describe Latvian public opinion about the Western Allies during World War II. My research is based on unpublished and published archival documents of the security and military authorities of the German occupation regime, the Latvian national resistance movement, foreign affairs and military intelligence institutions of the Western Allies, as well as official and underground wartime press publications and relevant historical literature.

### **Western Allies and Nazi propaganda**

The entrenchment of the Nazi occupation regime in Latvia in late June and early July 1941 meant not only the exploitation of the territory and inhabitants of Latvia for the war aims of the Third Reich, but also the subjection of the public to National Socialist ideology, which was contradictory to the traditions cultivated in the free state of Latvia in the 1920s and 1930s. According to the fundamental postulates of Nazi propaganda, Germans were liberators from Bolsheviks, while the British and Americans were pictured as the allies of Communist Soviet Union. Latvian public opinion was guided to perceive Nazi Germany as the sole salvation from the threat of Bolshevism. For this reason Latvians had to do their utmost to bolster the victory of the National Socialist

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regime. In order to preclude pro-Western orientation in the Latvian population, Nazi propaganda blamed the USA and UK for starting the war and reproached them for cooperation with Communists and Jews and the betrayal of Latvia's interests. These ideas were purposefully propagated through wartime radio broadcasts, official press, propaganda posters and newsreels. The same propaganda methods were applied in Latvia that had proved successful in the Third Reich, differing only in nuances and the target audience.

The Reich Ministry for People's Education, Science and Propaganda under the leadership of Joseph Goebbels elaborated concrete propaganda strategies. At the beginning of the war an important role was assigned to the Eastern and Anti-Bolshevik (and Anti-Comintern) Department of the Ministry, headed by Eberhard Taubert, whose radio-station "Vineta" began broadcasting in the Latvian language from Königsberg after the German attack on the USSR on 22 June 1941.<sup>3</sup> One of the first transmissions emphasized:

In the 1920s your [Latvian] government pursued a policy that eventually placed you in Bolshevik hands; this policy was targeted against Germany and even against the UK [...] The position of the UK is no less hostile vis-à-vis Latvia than vis-à-vis Germany, [...] but keep in mind that Germany is not going to discriminate between Communist henchmen and those who sympathize with Britain.<sup>4</sup>

After the offensive of the German army on the Eastern front and the establishment of Reichskommissariat Ostland, radio broadcasts in the Generalbezirk of Latvia<sup>5</sup> shifted their emphasis towards providing encouragement to soldiers on leave from the front and in National Socialist spirit offering the local residents solutions to their daily problems. Although, on the whole, the Soviet Union bore the brunt of the attacks of the Rīga Radio station, the UK, USA and pro-Western elements were important targets as well. The radio declared Bolshevism and "the capitalist plutocracy" the two enemies of Germany.<sup>6</sup>

The activities of the Propaganda Division of Wehrmacht's headquarters (OKW) in the occupied Eastern territories were specified in a directive approved by the Chief of Staff, General Alfred Jodl, who ordered the application of the "Barbarossa" version of propaganda.<sup>7</sup> To disseminate and control propaganda the so-called Propaganda Companies (*Propagandastaffel*) were set up. They consisted of active propagandists, press representatives, censorship officers and partly also units of radio broadcasters. Initially, this authority was in charge of the press and radio and the dissemination of leaflets and posters. During the German occupation period the spread of propaganda posters printed in the Generalbezirk of Latvia and their impact on the public seems to have been rather limited. Only a part of them has survived to our day. This certainly

hampers full reconstruction of this particular form of propaganda; nevertheless, the outlines of propaganda directed against the Western Allies can be clearly discerned.<sup>8</sup>

The early propaganda work in Latvia in the summer of 1941 was directed on behalf of Division IV (SD) of the *Reichssicherheitshauptamt* (RSHA) by Operative Group (*Einsatzgruppe*) A under the leadership of SS Brigadeführer Walter Stahlecker. Members of this group took part in censoring of the early issues of newspapers. The official press of occupied Latvia was published right after the arrival of the German troops and managed to win a larger audience than other propaganda tools.<sup>9</sup> The opinion of the press regarding the Western Allies in substance followed the guidelines of the speeches by the Führer Adolf Hitler and his propaganda chief Joseph Goebbels. In compliance with totalitarian standards these speeches constituted also the official position of the state and permitted no deviations or ambiguities. A large part of articles dealing with foreign policy were copied from the newspaper *Deutsche Zeitung im Ostland*, which was published by the Reichskommissariat Ostland in the German language. Latvian journalists for the most part simply reiterated the propaganda featured there.<sup>10</sup> Propaganda targeted against the Western Allies first and foremost was shaped as war propaganda aimed at mobilizing forces to fight for the “New Europe” with the help of media. The image of the Western Allies was always presented as an antipode of the image of National Socialist Germany to prove that “Moscow Bolsheviks, just as their allies, the British and American plutocrats, are now the greatest enemies of every Latvian.” They “are trying to lessen the readiness of the Latvian people to bear sacrifices and to channel their thoughts away from the only correct path.”<sup>11</sup>

At the beginning of the German occupation, propaganda targeted against the Western Allies was not a priority. That can be explained with the obvious German war successes, which made Latvian support unnecessary or even undesirable. When it became clear, however, that the German *Blitzkrieg* had suffered a fiasco and the support of the population of the occupied territories would be necessary, the propaganda machinery started addressing this topic in earnest. Although the struggle against the Bolsheviks, for which public support was needed, remained foremost, the negative image of the Western Allies was not neglected either. It served other goals as well: it helped to create a positive image of Germany, an impression of “the just war,” the illusion of invincibility, etc.<sup>12</sup>

In July and August 1941, the central newspaper *Tēvija* (Fatherland), as well as provincial papers, urged the population of Latvia to sign an appeal to the Latvian community in America “to describe to all Latvian-Americans the Bolshevik regime of horror in Latvia, to express unanimous joy of the Latvian people for regaining their freedom thanks to the mighty army of Greater Germany and to call on Americans to abstain from supporting Jew-Bolsheviks as Roosevelt’s government had begun to

do.”<sup>13</sup> At the conclusion of the campaign the press wrote that in the course of one month 200,000 signatures had been collected in urban and rural areas of Latvia.<sup>14</sup> Bound in nine volumes together with photographs illustrating the atrocities committed by “Jews-Chekists” they were taken to Berlin to be shipped to the USA. The collection of signatures probably was a part of a larger campaign aimed at creating a negative attitude in the American public towards supporting the USSR; however, after the USA entered the war in December 1941, such efforts were probably no longer topical.

By 1 September 1941, control over the entire territory of Latvia was transferred from the German military authorities to the civilian administration. It was placed in charge of propaganda activities in December. The former head of the Rīga propaganda group, Gustav Dressler, was appointed Head of the Propaganda Division of the Generalkommissariat of Latvia, thus ensuring continuity of propaganda guidelines in the work of the civilian administration.

In 1942, the topic of Western betrayal gained currency. Thus the official press wrote about the visit of the USSR Minister of Foreign Affairs Vyacheslav Molotov to London in May 1942, emphasizing Molotov’s demand to include the Baltic states as parts of the USSR on the post-war political map. On 18 June 1942, *Tēvija* published a proclamation “The Self-Administration of the Land of Latvia Protests against the Villainous British–Bolshevik Deals,”<sup>15</sup> which was meant to counter the idea that Latvia voluntarily had joined the USSR and at the same time to express the determination to fight for a better future under the leadership of the Führer of Greater Germany Adolf Hitler.<sup>16</sup> The aim of this and similar articles was to present Western countries as the allies of the USSR willing to meet the Soviet requirements in full. Shortly before the celebration of the national day on 18 November 1942, the newspaper *Deutsche Zeitung im Ostland* harshly criticized the pre-war Latvian government for its pro-British orientation. Head of the Propaganda Division of the Generalkommissariat in Rīga, Gustav Dressler, wrote on 17 June 1942 that Latvians were among the nations doomed to risk their lives for British interests without any doubt in their minds.<sup>17</sup> The 18 November issue of *Tēvija*, in an article under headline “Latvians, Britain Desires Your Death,” printed an excerpt from the 6 February article in the British newspaper *The Times* that spoke about the rights of the USSR to the territory of the Baltic states, which, while being strategically important for the Soviet Union, were of no interest to the UK.<sup>18</sup>

In addition to publishing excerpts from Western sources on the destiny of the Baltic states (that were often influenced by Soviet propaganda), the Propaganda Division of the Generalkommissariat in Rīga printed color posters under the slogan “*Parole der Heimat*” [Password of the Homeland]. One such poster pictures the British Prime

Minister, Sir Winston Churchill, telling fairytales to three Baltic girls in ethnic costumes about “the British fighting for the liberty of the small nations,” at the time when Sir Stafford Cripps, the British Ambassador to the USSR, was telling the magazine *World Review* in June 1942 that nobody doubted that the Baltic states belonged to the Soviet Union.<sup>19</sup>

A specially favored topic of Nazi propaganda was the Moscow conference of October 1943,<sup>20</sup> where Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union, the UK and the USA, Vyacheslav Molotov, Anthony Eden and Cordell Hull, discussed the political division of Europe after World War II. Articles about the upcoming meeting of the Allies in Moscow declared that information regarding the minimum demands of Moscow had been obtained from reliable sources, “the incorporation of the Baltic states into the Soviet Union” being one of them. The other demands on the part of Moscow were the incorporation of “Eastern Poland extending as far as the so-called Curzon line, Bessarabia and the part of Finland that the Bolsheviks had demanded already before the 1939 Winter War,” as well as the acquisition of “increased influence over the friendly disposed governments of Romania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and Iran.”<sup>21</sup> The fact that after the war these demands were indeed satisfied leads to the conclusion that, in this particular case, German propaganda was based on impartial information. However, against the background of other wartime propaganda, this Soviet demand initially might have seemed as trumped up.<sup>22</sup> During the Moscow conference in October 1943, Rīga Radio insisted that the UK and the USA had yielded to all of Moscow’s demands, having thus betrayed the small nations to whom they had once extended guarantees. The USA was reported to have expressed satisfaction that all ethnic prejudices had been overcome in Moscow.<sup>23</sup> On 13 November 1943, a special propaganda rally was held in Rīga to protest against the resolutions of the Moscow conference.<sup>24</sup>

Because of German setbacks in the war, increasing numbers of people from the occupied countries, Latvians included, were recruited to fight in German military forces. Public support was necessary for the recruitment. Therefore, unlike in previous years, on 18 November 1943 the celebration of Latvian Independence Day was allowed with relatively great pomp for wartime conditions, with press coverage of the event.<sup>25</sup> On 18 November, the Head of the News Service of *Deutsche Zeitung im Ostland* H. Schiller declared that malevolent British policies had turned the Latvian people away from its close historical ties with Germany.<sup>26</sup> On 19 November, *Tēvija* published a speech by the Director General for the Interior of the Latvian Self-Administration, Oskars Dankers, in which he, referring to the recent Moscow conference, did not forget to remind that “the British and Americans cared very little about a fair outcome for the destinies of European peoples” and called on the nation to dedicate concerted effort to the fight against Bolshevism.<sup>27</sup>

Rīga Radio transmissions also emphasized that it would be a folly to expect the Americans and the British to preclude Soviet plans to annihilate the Baltic states. Germans were the only true friends, the radio maintained. The spiritual affinity of the Latvian and German peoples was set against the depravity and evil of the UK and USA. To illustrate, it was mentioned that the two Western states had recently given the Baltic to the Soviet Union and that Latvians residing in the USA had recently had their passports of the Republic of Latvia confiscated.<sup>28</sup> In late 1943 and early 1944, anti-American and anti-British statements as well as reports on liberalization of German policies became more frequent and criticism of the USSR intensified in Rīga Radio broadcasts. On 13 January 1944, Rīga Radio called on Latvians “to fight against all indecisive persons, against Bolshevism, against capitalist plutocracy, against Freemasons, against Latvian chauvinists and against Anglophiles.”<sup>29</sup> The press did not devote nearly as much attention to the first summit of the three great powers, the UK, USA and USSR in Teheran in November–December 1943.<sup>30</sup> In the course of this conference, Roosevelt remarked to Stalin that the USA was not going to go to war against the Soviet Union because of the Baltic Republics.<sup>31</sup> The impossibility of any assistance from the Western Allies was analyzed in detail in a speech by the Director of the Department of Art and Public Affairs, Žanis Unāms, in Rīga Opera House on 1 May 1944 that was published in the newspaper *Daugavas Vēstnesis* (Daugava Messenger). He remarked that “it was a political reality that at the Teheran conference the ambitions of Moscow had grown much larger and the Allies had again given in to the Bolsheviks” and that “the prevailing public sentiment in Britain and especially America would make war against Bolshevism absolutely impossible either in the immediate future and even the next few years.”<sup>32</sup> Referring to current developments in wartime international politics, principles of the self-determination of peoples incorporated in the Atlantic Charter signed on 14 August 1941 by US President Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Churchill<sup>33</sup> were described as empty declarations that had lost any significance in face of the ever increasing demands from the Soviet side.<sup>34</sup> Leaflets dedicated to the Atlantic Charter with the headline “American Assistance for Stalin!”, disseminated in the first months of 1944, underlined:

In their front against Europe, Bolsheviks are fighting with the very same weapons they had received from USNA [US of North America], i.e. the same country, which in the much-advertised Atlantic Charter is said to defend the freedom of peoples. With these very weapons the Bolsheviks are not only trying to destroy us, but would exterminate the whole of Europe, if only they could. [...] The price that Wall Street is paying the Kremlin for the approval of such a deal means giving the continent of Europe to Bolshevism! Ten billion dollars is the Judas wage for which Roosevelt, one of the signatories of the Atlantic Charter, has sold Europe to Stalin.<sup>35</sup>

After the opening of the second front in Normandy on 6 June 1944, the press presented warfare on the Western Front as a super-human struggle of the Germans and other Europeans to prevent the annihilation of Europe by Bolsheviks and their aides, saying that “with their invasion the British and Americans, apart from fostering their own conquest plans, are trying to make it easier for the Bolsheviks to get into Europe, our land included,”<sup>36</sup> and that “our soldiers are now forced to fight on the Eastern Front against the tanks that the Americans have supplied to the Bolsheviks, and Bolsheviks are bombing Baltic cities from American aircraft. Bolshevik and British-American war goals have been mutually agreed upon, and they all are targeted at the extermination of our people and Europe.”<sup>37</sup>

In September 1944, Rīga Radio reported that the Western Allies had spread rumors about the attacking Soviet troops being accompanied by a representative of the Red Cross to achieve more humane treatment of civilians by the Red Army. However, the report countered, the facts were different and there was no reason to believe in the miracle, with which Washington and London were tricking the Baltic peoples.<sup>38</sup> Several propaganda posters that were distributed in August and September 1944 also attest that official propaganda was turning its attacks on the possible support for the Baltic states by the Western Allies. One such poster pictured the inability of the USA and UK to prevent Soviet aggression in Latvia:

Silly Billy [Antiņš] believed that the British and Americans would do all they could to preclude the Bolsheviks from attacking Latvia. The “patriotic” rumormongers even presented such an outcome as a sure course of action, written black on white! [...] The German soldier is the only trustworthy friend Latvia can rely on in a difficult moment. Away with cowardly scandalmongers! What Latvia needs now are men, not prattlers.<sup>39</sup>

Although the rhetoric of official propaganda now spoke of the protection of Latvia instead of the protection of Latvians, such changes were allowed in the name of the main unalterable propaganda goal: the mobilization of all possible forces, by now already for the prevention of the defeat of Greater Germany in the final phase of the war. After the fall of Rīga on 13 October 1944, only the Kurzeme region remained unconquered by the Red Army. *Tēvija*, which now was printed in Liepāja, dedicated several articles to the February 1945 international Yalta conference of USSR, USA and UK leaders, underlining that “the British and Americans have fully approved of everything that Stalin has already accomplished in Europe. Stalin has made the two Western politicians reassert that Europe shall be given to Bolshevism.”<sup>40</sup> Although wartime difficulties decreased the quantity of Nazi propaganda materials, the basic postulates remained unchanged until the very capitulation of Nazi Germany on 8 May 1945.

## Western Allies in the Eyes of the Latvian Public

In the interwar period of the 1920s and 30s, the image of the UK and USA as powers friendly to Latvia had developed among the Latvian political elite and society at large. Even the failure to intervene when the USSR annihilated Latvia's independence on 17 June 1940 did not harm this image.

In July 1941, Soviet occupation was replaced by Nazi occupation in the territory of Latvia. The aspirations of the Latvian public to restore state institutions of independent Latvia in the summer of 1941 failed, because allowing the Baltic states to enjoy even restricted autonomy was not part of the Third Reich's plans. A German civilian administration replaced the military administration in August, and the territory of Latvia was incorporated as a *Generalbezirk* into the *Reichskommissariat Ostland*. Based primarily on incoming reports from the Operative Groups (*Einsatzgruppen*), the *Reichssicherheitshauptamt* (RSHA) made regular reports concerning public sentiment and the work of the security police in the occupied Eastern provinces.<sup>41</sup>

Thus on 3 August 1941, it was reported that despite losses among Latvian intellectual circles [meaning the Soviet repressions of 1940–41] the inhabitants of Rīga and smaller towns displayed a clearly pro-Scandinavian orientation.<sup>42</sup> On 27 September 1941, the Commander of SD and Security Police Operative Group A, SS *Brigadeführer* Stahlecker, stated that the enthusiasm that had been in the air in Latvia in the first weeks after the arrival of the troops, had gradually abated. He also wrote that "according to reports from Bērzmuiža, where the farm of [former President Kārlis] Ulmanis was located, his supporters are spreading whisper propaganda that Britain is expected to win the war and all the like-thinking persons have to prepare for it."<sup>43</sup> On 23 October 1941, the German Military Counter-Intelligence Service (*Abwehr, Fremde Heere Ost*) reported that a large part of the intellectuals,<sup>44</sup> in spite of the military weakening of Britain at that particular moment, hoped the situation would change after some time, and it was the British position that could serve as a foundation from which to restore Latvia's independence.<sup>45</sup>

The news that the USA had entered the war gave new food for thought regarding the outcome. In his 14 January 1942 report about developments in the USSR, Stahlecker wrote:

The Führer's great speech and the declaration of war on the USA has caused no surprise here. After the war broke out between Japan and the USA, Germany could have been expected to take such a step. Latvians react to it differently. On the one hand, there is an opinion, among the urban population in particular, that in view of these developments Germany is bound to lose the war, but the collapse of the Soviet Union is likewise to be reckoned with. The impact of the USA and UK as partners on the Soviet Union has definitely increased, and they most probably will be able to

influence the Soviet Union so much that it will no longer firmly insist on its demands, particularly those concerning the Baltic states, and as a result the Soviet Union may become weakened to the extent that it will no longer resist the aspirations of the British block.<sup>46</sup>

In January 1942, the Security Police and SD Operative Groups reported:

Rumors are spreading among the Latvian population that President Ulmanis, who had been deported to Russia, has meanwhile arrived in London and issued an appeal to the Latvians to avoid by all means fighting on the German side in the war. Britain and America have managed to influence the Soviet Union so much that the restoration of the Bolshevik regime in the Baltic states after the Soviet victory is no longer likely. Instead, a democratic leftist government would be formed there and this process has already started in London. Such a democratic leftist government would in any case be much more advantageous for Latvia than remaining a part of Ostland to be sooner or later incorporated into the German state.<sup>47</sup>

A month later German security institutions had come to the conclusion that the overall decrease of living standards in Ostland in February 1942 had caused public discontent with the basic postulates of German policy, which was further aggravated by the German declaration of war on the USA.<sup>48</sup>

Discontent with German occupation policies in Latvia also encouraged expressions of resistance among the nationally disposed circles of the Latvian public. Gradually, several underground groups and organizations emerged that spread word-by-mouth propaganda and published illegal newspapers. These protested against the Nazi occupation and the cooperation of a part of the Latvian population with Germans.<sup>49</sup> They also indicated strong pro-Western leanings. Thus the first issue of the illegal newspaper *Latvija* on 18 November 1941 underlined that the existence of the independent people and state of Latvia on the political map of Europe, divided by controversies among the great powers, would depend on Latvians residing in their homeland, as well as in Great Britain and America. The new order of the world and Europe would be shaped by the USA, just as it had been 23 years ago.<sup>50</sup> The 24 April 1942 report by RSHA mentioned the publication of underground newspapers *Tautas Balss* (The Voice of the People) and *Latvija*, which, especially the latter, maintained that the success of Germany in the war against the USSR would be short-lived, because the final victory would rest with the USA and UK, with whose assistance Latvia's independence would be achieved, as it had been in 1918–20. The RSHA report mentioned also that illegal typewritten leaflets "Open your eyes, Latvians!" had been found in Rīga. They contained the text: "The day is not far away when Americans, attacking from the direction of the British Isles, will liberate us from the German yoke." The 5 June

1942 survey by German security authorities on the situation in the occupied territories confirms the growth of national resistance and comments on “the steadily increasing anti-German sentiments in Latvian intellectual circles of late.” In contrast to Estonia, in Latvia, the survey continues, “there is an increase in national self-awareness that organically merges with resistance to Germany, reaching the goal of the resistance movement: first and foremost to achieve the unity of Latvian nationalists, and also resulting in rather successful dissemination of statements, organization of rallies and systematic counter-propaganda.”<sup>51</sup>

Regular listening to foreign radio broadcasts that could be heard in Latvia also testifies that Latvian people tried to obtain information different from that supplied by the Nazi propaganda.<sup>52</sup> Thus the Commissar of Valmiera District, Hermann Hansen, described public sentiments in the period from November 1941 to January 1942 as “unstable” and affected by “foreign radio broadcasts and fear of Communism.”<sup>53</sup> On 13 January 1942 the Reichskommissar Ostland, Hinrich Lohse, was forced to issue the “Order on Extraordinary Measures against Listeners of Foreign Broadcasts.”<sup>54</sup>

In the autumn of 1942 Rīga Radio warned against cooperation with the enemy and referred to “petty-spirited individuals” who paid duties to “the polluted propaganda broadcasts” and “yielded to yearning for pre-war life.”<sup>55</sup> The Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Provinces in its 3 November 1942 report on the situation in Ostland underlined that the Baltic peoples were in no way an indifferent mass of oriental-type people, but had a developed, thoroughly Central-European German-type sense of national unity that had been consolidated in the 20 years of statehood and was even out of proportion in some intellectual circles. “From the very outset Latvians have been the main force against the German aspirations for domination in the Baltic area. The character of the elite of this nation has been spoiled by complexes of inferiority vis-à-vis the stratum of the former German lords of the land. Therefore, in a remote perspective, emergence of breeding-grounds hostile to the Reich among Latvian intellectuals cannot be excluded ...”<sup>56</sup>

A more detailed insight into the scope of the national resistance movement in Latvia during the Nazi occupation can be obtained from documents pertaining to the “Wildcats” (*Wildkatzen*) unit that was subordinated to the *SS Jagdverband Ost (Ostland)*.<sup>57</sup> A large part of the respective archive is comprised of reports on public sentiment towards the German occupation regime written between October 1942 and January 1945 by the information office of the Latvian political branch of the Security Police and SD, “The Latvian Card File,” headed by Fēlikss Rikards.<sup>58</sup> The December 1942 survey of national resistance movement organizations distinguished several directions of the national resistance movement: (1) clearly nationally-oriented groups; (2) groups with unclear political orientation and (3) organizations and mem-

bers of resistance that were clearly oriented towards victory of the Western Allies in the war and their support as the only guarantee of the restoration of Latvia's independence.<sup>59</sup>

The first group included the largest national resistance organization at that time, the Latvian Nationalist Union (LNU). Through its underground newspaper *Tautas Balss* (The Voice of the People) it unambiguously voiced the belief that Latvians had to stay united and rely solely on their own strength, remaining skeptical towards possible help from the British and Americans; it also was critical towards other underground publications, regarding their editors as communists or anglophiles "under national disguise." It regarded the underground newspaper *Latvija* as the most striking representative of the pro-Western wing of the resistance movement that "combined its pro-British orientation with its reliance on Ulmanis and his achievements." The editors of this newspaper were said to hold views that "only a British–American victory would ensure freedom and that Britain and the Bolsheviks did not share any common goals."

The commander of the Security Police and SD in Latvia, SS *Obersturmführer* Rudolf Lange, admitted on 1 April 1943 that rumors were circulating among broad anti-Communist-oriented masses of the Latvian population, particularly in rural areas, that, disregarding even the westward offensive of the Red Army, Latvia's independence would be restored with British and American support after the war and that a government would be formed, headed by Kārlis Ulmanis, who was said to be residing in the USA at the moment.<sup>60</sup> On 1 July 1943 a similar survey remarked that nobody really believed German propaganda about the strategy of "wearing out the Red Army," that rumors were afloat about the possible defeat of the Germans, and that even National Socialist circles were talking about British guarantees and a Nordic block. The public was reported to believe that the Bolsheviks would return. The report stated that Latvian national resistance against the Germans had grown (13 illegal leaflets had been disseminated), and included also "international associations."<sup>61</sup>

The British Secret Intelligence Services (SIS) also collected information about developments in Latvia during World War II.<sup>62</sup> The 25 June 1943 report by the SIS about the situation in German-occupied Latvia drew the conclusion that the Latvian people desired the Latvian embassy in London to take a more active stand against Hitler and Stalin for Latvia's independence. If the Allies would do nothing, Latvians would form their own armed forces, the report said. "Latvians are aware that the time will come when Bolshevik hordes will again roam their country, but they believe that this time must be pushed as far into the future as possible."<sup>63</sup> Another British political intelligence survey of the situation in Latvia on 5 July 1943 remarked that all Latvians were oriented against Germans and Russians. While there were many quislings in Latvia, especially among the lower bureaucracy and the officer corps, on the whole

Latvians were nationalists. Soviet propaganda was reported to be very strong in Latvia. Although it did not affect the Latvians, it had a considerable influence on the ethnic Russian minority.<sup>64</sup>

The US foreign and military intelligence bodies were also not ignorant about the hopes of the Latvian population for the benevolence of the Western Allies in deciding the destiny of Latvia during the war. The Latvian Ambassador in Washington, DC, Alfreds Bīlmanis, in his 23 July 1943 letter to US Deputy Secretary of State Sumner Welles expressed the Latvian nation's gratitude to the US government for its non-recognition of the occupation of Latvia exactly three years earlier and congratulated the USA on the subsequent signing of the Atlantic Charter and the United Nations Declaration. He wrote:

Information has reached me that the Latvian people – young and old, men and women – put all their hopes in the realization of the Atlantic Charter and of the four freedoms. This fact, together with the aforementioned noble declarations of the great Democracies, have inspired me to address to you this letter, whereby I have the honor to express in the name of the oppressed Latvian Nation the sincerest thanks for the great moral support given to Latvia at the time of its greatest distress.<sup>65</sup>

Already from 1942 on, a Baltic states Division<sup>66</sup> of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS)<sup>67</sup> operated under the auspices of the US Embassy in Stockholm. Based on reports by the former Latvian Ambassador in Stockholm, Voldemārs Salnais, the US Ambassador in Stockholm, Hershel W. Johnson, informed Washington about the situation in Latvia on 26 November 1943:

Whereas the Germans are hated and despised, the Russians are feared and that even among the Latvian laborers and petty officials who suffer most from German banditry, practically no one may be found who would want the Bolsheviks to return.<sup>68</sup>

One of the testimonies given by Latvian refugees who had managed to flee to Sweden says:

We hope that both opponents, the Russians as well as the Germans, will exhaust themselves in the present combat and that finally a situation will be created which to some extent will resemble that of 1918. Such a situation will offer a possibility of putting into effect the promises which England and the United States have made to the world.<sup>69</sup>

The friendly feelings for the West in the Latvian public is attested also by the 25 July 1944 letter by Latvian Ambassador in London, Kārlis Zariņš, to the representative of the Northern Department of the British Ministry of Foreign Affairs, A. Warner. The attached resolution of the New York Latvian Community contains an appeal to occupy the Baltic

states with the land and marine forces of the USA and UK and emphasizes that “they in America, as also the Latvians in their own land, put all their faith in the Anglo-Saxon Democracies.”<sup>70</sup>

An important role in the exchange of information and establishment of secret contacts between German-occupied Latvia and the West was played by the underground resistance organization, Central Council of Latvia (CCL), which was founded on 13 August 1943. The political platform of CCL was adopted in February 1944 and envisaged “the restoration of independent and democratic Republic of Latvia, the administrative system of which would be determined by a freely and democratically elected Saeima [Parliament] [...]. Until then, the existing 1922 Constitution of the Republic of Latvia would be in force.”<sup>71</sup> This idea was developed further in the CCL declaration that was directed against the Soviet and German occupations, expressing hope for the victory of Western democracies in the war and the respect for the principles of the Atlantic Charter.<sup>72</sup> A memorandum initiated by CCL in March 1944 and signed by 188 Latvian political and public figures was intended both as a request addressed to the Inspector General of the Latvian Legion, Rūdolfis Bangerskis, expressing the aspirations of the Latvian people for independence as opposed to the occupation policies of the National Socialist regime, and as an independence declaration addressed to Western governments.<sup>73</sup> The former Latvian Ambassador in Stockholm, Voldemārs Salnais, transferred the memorandum to Ambassadors Kārlis Zariņš in London and Alfreds Bīlmanis in Washington, DC, and submitted it also to representatives of the UK and USA.<sup>74</sup>

Nazi occupation authorities also reacted to the memorandum. The Reichsminister for the Occupied Eastern Provinces, Alfred Rosenberg, meeting the first Director General of the Latvian Self-Administration, Oskars Dankers, in Berlin on 26 May 1944, reproached him about the fact that certain circles in the Latvian Generalkommissariat were maintaining illegal contacts with Sweden and the USA. He told him that the initiator of the memorandum, Konstantīns Čakste, had already been arrested and that in a similar situation in other *Reichskommissariats* a certain number of responsible officials would have been immediately executed as well. Dankers was also advised that “it was not possible for countries supported by Germany to negotiate later with Britain and America in the old carefree manner contrary to German policy and the unity of Europe.”<sup>75</sup>

The 1944 report by the CCL to the United Nations expressed the belief of the Latvian people in the victory of the USA and UK in the war and the hope that under the leadership of these states the principles of the Atlantic Charter would be carried out also with respect to the Baltic states, achieving the restoration of their independence.<sup>76</sup> The July 1944 report to the US Secretary of State also declared that “the Latvian people

are firmly convinced that this war will be won by the United Nations under the leadership of the U.S.A. and Great Britain. It is their hope that the U.S.A. and Great Britain will apply also to Latvia the high principles of the Atlantic Charter which the Latvian people unreservedly support."<sup>77</sup>

Hopes for Western intervention became urgent after the fall of Rīga on 13 October 1944, when the Western part of Latvia, Kurzeme, remained the only territory not conquered by the Red Army. A quasi-independent military detachment was established with the acquiescence of the Germans under the command of General Jānis Kurelis in the summer of 1944, ostensibly to organize resistance behind enemy lines by enlisting draft resisters and paramilitaries. Captain Kristaps Upelnieks, Chief of Staff of the group and its ideological leader, believed that a situation similar to that in 1919 had emerged. Proclamation of the national independence of Latvia and formation of a provisional government was necessary, he believed, under which Latvian and German armed forces would continue their struggle in Kurzeme. On 16 October 1944, the headquarters of the Kurelis group elaborated two plans of armed resistance.<sup>78</sup>

The leadership of CCL, with whom Upelnieks and other Kurelian staff officers were associated, neither supported nor rejected these plans. A telegram from CCL headquarters in Sweden said:

British representatives give instructions to defend Kurzeme until the arrival of the British and American navy in the Baltic Sea. The timing of the arrival of the navy in the Baltic Sea cannot be specified. Depending on circumstances and resources at your disposal, decide whether this can be accomplished and act accordingly. Should the local circumstances permit, the restoration of national sovereignty of Latvia must be declared ...<sup>79</sup>

German security institutions surmised the pro-Western orientation of Kurelian officers. After the liquidation of the Kurelis detachment on the orders of the Supreme Commander of SS and Police in Ostland, SS *Obergruppenführer* Fridrich Jeckeln, a court martial trial was held in Liepāja prison on 19 November 1944, and eight staff officers were executed in the coastal dunes near Liepāja, while three accused received reduced sentences. The court verdict stated: "You maintained contacts with Anglo-Saxons and secretly prepared a revolt in order to bring back the year of 1919. On behalf of Führer Adolf Hitler we can assure you: it will never repeat. We shall exterminate you and your nation to the last man."<sup>80</sup> Jeckeln's report of 21 November 1944 on the liquidation of the Kurelis group revealed the Kurelians' affinity to Britain and remarked that Kurelian agents had been engaged in propaganda in the Port of Liepāja, disseminating information that General Kurelis ostensibly had received certain guarantees from Britain. One of the arrested Kurelian radio operators had said that another radio operator had received

instructions to go to Sweden. It was also mentioned in the report that the Kurelis group had established contacts with former Latvian ambassadors in the West: V. Salnais [in the document his name is misspelled as L. Sēja] in Stockholm, K. Zariņš in London and A. Bīlmanis in Washington, DC, and with their help through Stockholm maintained ties with the West.<sup>81</sup>

On 10 February 1945, Jeckeln wrote that some Latvians (mostly workers) thought that life under Bolsheviks would not be worse than it was at the moment and thus were trying to cast off their ties with the Germans by taking a more neutral position or joining Communist ranks. Other Latvians (mostly intellectual anglophiles) regarded fleeing to Sweden as the only escape, while a third, the smallest, group of Latvians hoped for an agreement between Germany and the Western Allies and a victory of Germany (over the USSR) in the situation when the enemy would already be in German territory.<sup>82</sup> But according to the 1 April 1945 survey by the operative headquarters of the “Wildcats” units, many inhabitants of the Kurzeme region believed in the possibility of an imminent conflict between the Western Allies and the USSR that would eventually foster the restoration of Latvia’s independence.<sup>83</sup> These forecasts, however, were not destined to come true. Along with the general capitulation of Nazi Germany on 8 May 1945, the Kurzeme front ceased to exist and the entire territory of Latvia came completely under the second Soviet occupation.

## Conclusions

Although no comprehensive research concerning the impact of German National Socialist propaganda on the Latvian population has been carried out as yet, the existing documents testify that the prevailing public sentiment in wartime Latvia can be described as “fear of Russians and hatred against Germans.” Despite the efforts of the broadly extended propaganda apparatus, the German occupation regime failed to change the affections for the West that had taken root in the Republic of Latvia during the interwar period.

At the same time, the conclusion is inevitable that because of wartime circumstances the largest part of the population was poorly informed about developments in international politics. As the second Soviet occupation approached, rumors and wishful thinking, including those about possible assistance from the Western Allies, prevailed over comprehension of the actual situation. Although Western secret services received many valuable documents on developments in Nazi-occupied territories from the Baltic resistance movements, the USA and UK were not ready to give anything tangible in return, having acquiesced to the Baltic states remaining part of the USSR after World War II.

Security agencies of Nazi Germany had acquired some impression about the scope of national resistance in Latvia, the varied political orientation of different resistance organizations and their views on the possible role of Western Allies in the restoration of Latvia's statehood. Yet, the information at their disposal was not complete as attested by several incorrect conclusions about the operation of national resistance and their failure to uncover all resistance activities. The documents discovered to date leave the impression that German security agencies had obtained merely general information about the contacts Latvian national resistance had with the West. This information at best allowed them to speculate but did not disclose any network of ties with the West existing outside Latvia.

Future studies should focus in more detail on how information about German-occupied Latvia reached the West and on the knowledge at the disposal of foreign affairs and military intelligence institutions of the Western Allies about Nazi occupation policies in Latvia, as well as their reaction to these policies.



*Antonijs Zunda*

## **Resistance against Nazi German Occupation in Latvia: Positions in Historical Literature**

Like many other European countries, Latvia was occupied and lost its independence during World War II. The only occupying power in most countries was Nazi Germany. Unlike most occupied European countries, however, Latvia was first occupied by the Soviet Union and only thereafter by Nazi Germany. At war's end, the Soviet Union occupied Latvia again.

These three subsequent occupations made a heavy and lasting impact on the economic, social and political development of the country. The most typical reaction of the population to the occupation regimes in Latvia was either resistance against or collaboration with them. However, because both occupation regimes used propaganda, deception, falsification, intimidation and coercion as tools to demand the subordination of Latvian national interests to the occupants' mutually irreconcilable ideological goals – Communism and Nazism – the distinctions between collaboration and resistance easily became blurred.

Research into the resistance against Nazi-German occupation has been a complicated issue in historiography. It has been influenced by the political views and ideology of the respective historians, by the availability and choice of source materials and their interpretation, as well as by research methods. In general, three directions can be discerned. Soviet-era historians focused mainly on detailed studies of the Communist resistance movement. In their works, the national resistance movement was assessed in a very critical and ideologized manner. Latvian historians in exile on their part emphasized the national resistance movement. They were, however, unable to provide a comprehensive analysis of the resistance movement because, among other factors, they had access only to a limited amount of source materials. After the restoration of Latvia's independence, Latvian historians have attempted to overcome the shortcomings of their predecessors. Some interest in Latvia's history during World War II, including the history of resistance, can be observed among foreign historians as well.

## Historiography during the Soviet Era

Historians who worked in the Soviet Union and studied resistance in German-occupied Latvia focused primarily on the battles of the Red partisans and activities of the Soviet underground, i.e. the Communist resistance movement. Their assessment of the national resistance movement is superficial, subjective and politicized.

A typical example is *The History of the Latvian SSR* in three volumes that was published in the late 1950s. The book contains a separate chapter that analyzes the main problems, trends and results of Soviet resistance. The activities of the representatives of this branch of resistance, such as Imants Sudmalis, Aleksandrs Groms, Malds Skreja, Džems Bankovičs, Otomārs Oškalsns, among many others, are highly praised in the book. Yet, this is not a place where one can find a more or less impartial analysis of national resistance. The respective chapter leaves an impression that Communist resistance involved very large masses of Latvian society, workers and peasants in particular, who, in the opinion of the authors, were eager to see Soviet rule restored in Latvia as soon as possible. Representatives of national resistance on the whole are described as “bourgeois nationalists.” The book underlines that the national underground became active only in 1943–44 when the forthcoming defeat of Nazi Germany became imminent. While they mention that this branch of resistance propagated the ideas of establishing national armed forces and liberating Latvia from all occupants, the Soviet historians contend that these ideas did not receive support in the masses of the Latvian people.<sup>1</sup>

Conceptually very similar is *The History of the Latvian SSR. From the Ancient Times to the Present*, which was published in 1986. Although it came thirty years after the earlier one, the approaches had hardly changed. The only novel idea that the author of the respective chapter, Vasīlijs Savčenko, contributes is that the Red Partisans and the Communist underground had to fight not only against the Nazi German intruders but against Latvian “nationalist bourgeoisie” as well. The partisan war and the anti-Nazi efforts in Latvia thus were imbued with features of a civil war. “Bourgeois nationalists,” in Savčenko’s opinion, hoped also that the reactionary forces of the United Kingdom and the USA would support their aspirations to restore their rule. In compliance with the Stalinist concept of history, the author concludes that the Communist Party and the Soviet Army were the only true defenders of Latvia’s interests.<sup>2</sup>

Jānis Dzintars, who emerged as one of the leading representatives of the Soviet school of history in the 1960s, actually had gone even farther. In his best known work, *The Invisible Front*, published in 1970, Dzintars states that national resistance was actually inspired by the Nazi regime. He adduces no proof for his contention, which is obviously based on the preconceived historical framework of the Soviet period.<sup>3</sup>

Another historian of the Soviet period, Antons Raškevics, took an extreme orthodox Stalinist position towards national resistance in Latvia. He regards members of the movement as “bourgeois nationalists” who did their utmost to implement Nazi plans. Raškevics describes the so-called Kurelians and their military formations, supported by the Central Council of Latvia, as an “obscene provocation.” In his opinion, instead of organizing popular resistance to the German occupants, the national resistance movement only pretended to be in opposition to Nazi rule and to defend the interests of the independent Republic of Latvia.<sup>4</sup>

Academician Vilis Samsons wrote extensively about the Soviet resistance movement and the Red Partisans in Latvia during the Second World War. A typical tendency in his works is to embellish the respective topic with theoretical and philosophical generalizations. In this way he strives to make his writing look like an academic study. Yet, in his monograph *In the Quagmire of Hatred and Delusion*, Samsons reveals his one-sided approach and Soviet bias. He emphasizes that, apart from the Communist Party, there was no other political force in Latvia that would dare to fight actively against German militarism, the enemy of the Latvian people.<sup>5</sup> Samsons is very critical of the national forces in Latvia. He notes that, unlike patriotically disposed bourgeois circles in several other Nazi-occupied European countries that did not confront the Communists, Latvian “nationalist bourgeoisie” was blinded by class hatred. In the most complicated phase of the history of the nation, it was incapable of patriotic behavior and did not fight against the Nazi German invaders.<sup>6</sup>

If we compare Samsons’ works of the 1960s and 70s with what he wrote in the early 1990s, we see that he has made a step towards impartiality. The criticism of national resistance, typical of the Soviet period, has considerably decreased in his work; the author now regards national resistance as a considerable force that existed parallel to Communist resistance. He merely expresses disappointment that no united front against the occupants was established in Latvia. Many communists and national patriots regretfully did not come to think so far ahead. Being blindly obedient to Stalin and fearing him, leaders of the Latvian Communist Party were unable to analyze the situation independently, he admits.<sup>7</sup>

The last years of Soviet rule in Latvia saw the publication of *Shadows in the Swamp* by Osvalds Eglīte. The author emphasizes that it is a documented description of “the military-political gambles of the Latvian bourgeoisie during the Great Patriotic War.” The very title of the book reveals the author’s critical attitude towards national resistance. Speaking about the Central Council of Latvia (CCL), Eglīte notes that in the first half year after its foundation the Council was mostly preoccupied with planning future and composing all sorts of memorandums. The CCL never engaged in any active resistance

against the Nazi regime. The only practical activity of the Council, in the author's opinion, was the gathering of confidential information and the distribution of this information among a small segment of society.<sup>8</sup>

In 1988, a textbook for secondary schools *The History of the Latvian SSR*, edited by Aleksandrs Drīzulis, was published. Although national renaissance was already stirring in Latvia, the book basically contains only the ideas of classical Soviet historiography. The authors underline that resistance to the German regime in Latvia was organized exclusively by Soviet anti-Nazi underground and partisans. The book exaggerates that at the end of the war in Latvia there were altogether 20,000 armed partisans and members of Communist resistance.<sup>9</sup> More impartial research has established that the Communist underground in Latvia was actually active only in the cities of Rīga and Liepāja and the Latgale region. The Red partisans also were not active in all regions of Latvia.<sup>10</sup>

During 1990, the last year of Soviet rule in Latvia, a totally different tone and more impartial assessment of anti-Nazi resistance appears in a teaching aid for secondary schools covering the years from 1940 on, *Essays on the History of Latvia*, edited by Mārtiņš Virsis. The collection's authors analyze the resistance against the German regime and conclude that two branches can be distinguished. The first, in terms of its goal, was oriented towards the Soviet Union and wanted to see Soviet rule reestablished in Latvia after the Nazis would be driven out. The second was national resistance that strived for the restoration of the independent Republic of Latvia. It was basically oriented towards close cooperation with the Western Allies, primarily the USA and the UK. The existence of two non-cooperating branches of resistance was one of the specifics of Latvia's situation.<sup>11</sup>

The authors of this book attribute an essential role in the coordination of the national resistance movement to the Central Council of Latvia (CCL) led by Konstantīns Čakste and established on 13 August 1943. The former ambassador of the Republic of Latvia in Sweden, Valdemārs Salnais, and accredited ambassadors Alfrēds Bīlmanis in the USA and Kārlis Zariņš in the UK, who did not recognize the occupation regime established in 1940, supported this particular branch of resistance. Particularly active was the military mission of the CCL, officially led by General Jānis Kurelis, but actually in charge of Captain Kristaps Upelnieks. Upelnieks was confident that at the end of the war the Kurelian units would become the core of the army of independent Latvia that would continue the war against the Soviet Union together with the Western Allies after the defeat of Germany. This scenario did not come true.<sup>12</sup>

The greatest merit of the work edited by Virsis is that it correctly highlighted all these complicated issues of history and proved that there were Latvian historians who were ready to present and analyze events impartially, despite the fact that for a long

time different views had dominated in Soviet historiography. As a teaching aid for students of secondary schools it did not contain any basic research. The emergence of this work, however, challenged scholars to address issues of Latvia's recent history that had been either ignored or presented in a biased light. Thus it paved the way to further research after independence was restored in 1991.

## Exile Latvian Historiography

Among Latvians in exile, the documentation and the first attempts to study the history of national resistance began soon after World War II. In 1947, the memoirs of the former Minister of Finance of Latvia, Alfrēds Valdmanis, were published under the pen name of Boriss Zemgals: *The National Struggle of Latvians during the German Occupation*. In 1949 followed *Days Sunny, Days Rainy*. Valdmanis presents a subjective interpretation of the resistance movement in Latvia. He emphasizes his own role as one of the top political officials of independent Latvia, who in the summer of 1941 began to formulate a Latvian policy towards the German regime. It runs as follows: we are against the Bolsheviks and do not want to hide it. But we cannot engage in the battle, as we are not sure what to expect from the Germans. In Valdmanis' opinion, the most important task was to preserve the human resources of the Latvian people and to get organized for the last phase of the war when the opportunity would emerge to fight on the side of the Western Allies for the restoration of independence. Valdmanis was against unconditional mobilization into the Latvian Legion and regarded the orders of the German authorities as unlawful. Together with the other directors of the Self-Administration, he submitted a special memorandum to the Reichskommissar of Ostland, Hinrich Lohse, calling for the restoration of Latvia's independence and in return promising the establishment of a national army of 100,000 for the defense of Latvia's borders. Should sovereignty not be restored, the mobilization would not take place. To punish him, the Nazi regime deported Valdmanis to Germany in March 1943.<sup>13</sup>

The former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Fēlikss Cielēns, also tried to analyze the national resistance movement in Latvia in his 1964 memoirs. In his opinion, the Central Council of Latvia, unlike the other branches of opposition, not only voiced criticism of the German occupation rule but already came forward with a clear and definite goal: the restoration of the independent, democratic state of Latvia based on the Constitution of 1922.<sup>14</sup>

Exile historian Jēkabs Ozols presents a much more analytical and comprehensive research of the national resistance movement than does Valdmanis. In 1983 and 1984, the journal *The War Invalid* featured two articles by Ozols dealing with the national resistance movement in 1941–1945. He notes that right after the German forces came

into Latvia, the public began seriously to consider and discuss the future of their state. Everyone understood that the actual power and say were in the hands of the German authorities. It became particularly obvious after the 28 June 1941 statement by the German Reichskommissar of Ostland, Hinrich Lohse, that henceforth the future of the Baltic lands would be determined exclusively by Hitler and the German nation. On 18 November 1941, the Latvian Independence Day, the resistance movement issued its first leaflets and proclamations urging the nation not to obey the rule of their new exploiters blindly.<sup>15</sup>

Ozols believes that the resistance movement involved a high proportion of young people, students, army officers of the independence period, Home Guards (*aizsargi*), workers and many patriotically disposed people. There were groups of the resistance movement even in the Self-Administration that the Germans had established. In 1943 there was an attempt to unite and coordinate the national and Soviet resistance movements in Latvia. In this process Sweden, the UK and the Soviet Union were involved. These steps confused the national resistance movement and thus were rejected. The hope that the UK and other Western Allies would support the restoration of the independent state also failed.<sup>16</sup>

The number of people involved in the national resistance movement is also a controversial issue in historiography. Ozols tries to establish the figure on the basis of the data of the German authorities, primarily the number of inmates in prisons and concentration camps. For example, in January 1945 there were over 6000 Latvians imprisoned in the Stutthof Camp in Eastern Prussia, of whom many were members of the resistance movement. 1123 Latvians were killed in the Flossenbürg Concentration Camp in Northern Bavaria during the War. In the Salaspils Concentration Camp in Latvia there were over 7000 prisoners in 1944.<sup>17</sup>

Ozols is critical of the attitude of the Western countries towards the national resistance movement in Latvia. He believes that their attitude was determined by a secret deal between them and Moscow. During the war, the West failed to support the national resistance movement of Latvia. Ozols thinks that basically everything was clear as early as 1942. Analyses of BBC radio broadcasts of that time leave an impression that there was resistance to Nazi occupation in many European countries: France, Poland, Belgium and the Netherlands, but none in the Baltic. It was a rather clear testimony that the West had abandoned the Baltic states to the Soviet Union.<sup>18</sup>

Among the exile authors who have tried to go deeper into the issues of the resistance movement one should also mention Ēriks Pārups. He himself had been involved in underground organizations during the war. In his articles Pārups analyzes the situation and describes the most interesting episodes in the history of the resistance movement.<sup>19</sup>

In the early 1990s, Haralds Biezais' work *Latvia under the Rule of the Swastika* was published in exile. The book presents a very thorough analysis of the political situation during the German occupation period. Biezais' assessment of politicians such as Valdmanis and Celmiņš is very critical, and he rejects any association between these men and the resistance movement. He believes that Valdmanis just wanted to persuade Latvians that he was a politician fighting for the interests of the nation, but that his behavior was dictated by propaganda considerations.<sup>20</sup> In this respect Biezais is close in his views to Soviet historians.

Biezais has dedicated a special study to the Kurelis unit of the national resistance movement in 1944. He regards the Kurelians as an armed force that placed itself outside the two hostile occupation powers and asserts that it has won a lasting place in the history of the nation's struggles. The leaders, General Jānis Kurelis and Captain Kristaps Upelnieks, had not sworn allegiance to Hitler that they would fight for his New Europe. They were associated with the leadership of the Central Council of Latvia (CCL) and regarded themselves as fighters for independent Latvia.<sup>21</sup>

A significant exile contribution to resistance research was made by Edgars Andersons and Leonīds Siliņš in their 1994 book *The Central Council of Latvia*. They regard the CCL as the only democratic national resistance movement under the German occupation that had the right to speak on behalf of the entire Latvian nation. It was also the sole underground organization in Latvia that maintained regular contacts with foreign countries. The CCL published memorandums, declarations and notes of protest expressing its firm condemnation of both the German and Soviet occupation and submitted these documents to Western governments and international organizations. The CCL contributed also to the coordination of the resistance movements of the three Baltic nations. Through the activities of CCL the Western states had an opportunity to understand the actual situation in Latvia already during the war.<sup>22</sup> The main shortcoming of the book is its exclusive focus on the work of CCL and its failure to address other forms of national resistance.

In contrast to other historians in exile, Leonīds Siliņš tries to present the resistance movement in Latvia as a highly influential and well-organized political force with extensive contacts abroad. Such an assessment is somewhat exaggerated. The resistance movement in Latvia did not involve large masses, and it did not cause substantial harm to the German regime. The CCL worked primarily in the information and political spheres and was involved in transferring people across the Baltic Sea to Sweden. At the end of the war, the CCL failed to achieve its main goal: restoration of the statehood of Latvia. The Western countries did not recognize the CCL as the sole lawful representative of the interests of the Latvian people and instead accepted *de facto* reoccupation of Latvia by and its incorporation into the USSR.

## Post-Soviet Historiography

After the restoration of Latvia's independence, several younger historians have addressed the issue of resistance, having at their disposal previously unavailable sources and literature. The most active in this respect are Uldis Neiburgs and Dzintars Ērglis.

Having assessed the Central Council of Latvia (CCL), the Kurelians and national resistance as a whole, Ērglis has come to the conclusion that national resistance could not have essentially changed the tragic destiny of the Latvian people or the developments of World War II. It was practically impossible to prevent the aggression and occupation by either Nazi Germany or the USSR. The efficiency of resistance also suffered from Western *realpolitik*, which disregarded the destinies of small countries. However, compared to other underground organizations, the CCL did the most to save the people of Latvia from the brown and the red plagues. Although it did not have sufficient financial or political resources at its disposal, the CCL did its utmost to uphold hope that the independent Republic of Latvia would once again be reborn.<sup>23</sup>

Neiburgs, in turn, uses documents of the German occupation period to name the largest national resistance organizations: Union of Latvian Nationalists, Latvian National Council, Officers' Union, Latvia's Guards, Youth Regiment, Free Latvia, Daugava Falcons of National Latvia, etc. Yet he, too, recognizes the Central Council of Latvia as the best organized, the largest and the most important of them all.<sup>24</sup> Numerous underground newspapers and bulletins as well serve to gauge resistance during the German occupation. The most noticeable among these were: "Latvia," "The Voice of the People," "Trumpeter of Tālava," "Free Latvia. Latvian Writings," "New Latvia," "Daugava Falcons," etc. The underground press criticized the policies of the German regime and urged Latvians not to give up and to fight for the restoration of their statehood. Neiburgs also draws attention to the fact that various strata of society took part in the resistance movement: former parliamentarians, ministers, workers, intellectuals, students and even schoolchildren.<sup>25</sup> Regrettably there was no agreement among the organizations as to how the statehood of Latvia should be best restored.

German security agencies took harsh measures against the members of national resistance. Neiburgs has tried to establish the scope of repression. The latest research shows that about 6–7000 residents of Latvia had been imprisoned in German concentration camps. Underground organizations of the Union of Latvian Nationalists and the CCL were hit the hardest.<sup>26</sup>

Neiburgs and Ērglis have also attempted to compare the national and the Communist resistance movements in Latvia. They emphasize that both branches shared hatred against the Nazi regime. In terms of their other goals, however, they were in altogether contrary positions: the latter wanted to see the Soviet regime established, while the former strived for the restoration of the independent Republic of Latvia.<sup>27</sup>

## Foreign Historians

Some aspects of national resistance in Latvia during World War II have been treated by foreign historians as well. Thus, for example, Canadian historian Gerhard Basler has analyzed the ambiguous and controversial activities of Alfrēds Valdmanis during the German occupation. The fifth chapter of his book *Alfred Valdmanis and the Politics of Survival* assesses his role in Latvian resistance. Basler admits that, although Valdmanis was a political chameleon and climber, serious dislike of the Nazi regime can be discerned in his attitudes from the autumn of 1942 on. As one of the Directors General of the Self-Administration Valdmanis openly began to put forward requirements for Latvia's autonomy from the Germans, particularly with regard to the formation of the Latvian Legion. He supported the resistance movement and assisted the formation of various national organizations of officers, teachers and youth. For such activities, the Reichskommissar of Ostland, Hinrich Lohse, proposed the dismissal of Valdmanis from his post of Director in the Self-Administration and his punishment. Basler writes that even ideas about eliminating Valdmanis circulated in Nazi power corridors for some time.<sup>28</sup>

German historian Hans Dieter Handrack writes in the *Jahrbuch des baltischen Deutschtums 1978* about Kurelis' military units. He remarks that during World War II Latvians regarded Germans not only as liberators but also as occupants, as attested by the different forms of resistance. A significant episode in this regard was the establishment of the Central Council of Latvia (CCL). It intended to form a military force not subordinated to the German occupation regime. An important role in this regard was played by Kurelis' Chief of Staff Kristaps Upelniņš, who in Handrack's opinion stood in national anti-Bolshevik positions, but was also not friendly toward the Germans.<sup>29</sup>

Finnish historian Seppo Myllyniemi has also addressed issues of resistance in Latvia and the other Baltic countries during World War II. His 1995 article in the collection *The Nations of the Baltic Area and the Germans* deals in very general terms with the issue of resistance and collaboration. Myllyniemi believes that in the summer of 1941 the Germans were welcomed in the Baltic countries as friends and saviors. Yet soon, thanks to the policy of the occupation regime, the attitude changed. In 1942, Alfrēds Valdmanis became the most prominent standard-bearer of resistance. He demanded that the Commissioner of the General District of Latvia, General Otto Heinrich Drechsler, grant Latvia extensive autonomy based on the Slovak model.<sup>30</sup>

In the volume of the collection of articles *Europe under the Rule of the Swastika*, German historian Werner Rohr addresses general issues of resistance in the occupied European countries during World War II. Regrettably, he does not analyze the concrete situation in the Baltic states and instead focuses on France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Denmark, Poland and Czechoslovakia. Rohr emphasizes the important role of the UK in

supporting the national resistance forces in Europe. This country implemented special operations (and employed a Special Operations Executive) to ensure external support for the resistance movements. The UK helped with weapons, operations planning and co-ordination. It also paid for intelligence information. Rohr underlines that the UK cooperated with national resistance movements only.<sup>31</sup>

Expressions of collaboration and resistance at the Rīga University (the name for the University of Latvia during the German occupation) are the focus of German historian Margot Blank's work. She believes that, although all professors remaining in the University during the German occupation were anti-Communists, they maintained a Latvian national position and did not always agree with the policies of the Nazi regime. The majority of students in the University took the same position as their professors. The Director General for Education of the Self-Administration, Mārtiņš Prīmanis, supported both national efforts and cooperation with the Germans.<sup>32</sup>

Rolf-Dieter Müller and Gerd R. Überschär analyze the historiography of German occupation policy, including the issue of resistance in their work *Hitler's War in the East*. The authors examine the main trends in Western and Soviet historiography and reach the conclusion that Soviet historians pay much attention to the history of the partisan war but ignore the role of Jews in civil armed struggle.<sup>33</sup>

## Conclusions

No complex and comprehensive research into resistance against Nazi rule in Latvia during World War II has been carried out either in Latvian or foreign historiography. Historians who have written on this issue have primarily focused on one particular aspect. Thus, Soviet historiography for the most part has emphasized Communist resistance, while national resistance has been the focus of exile and post-Soviet Latvian historians. Both trends have their weak points. The first and foremost is the tendency to exaggerate the role and importance of the concrete type of resistance, to present it as a very serious, extremely well coordinated and centralized force that not only weakened the Nazi occupation regime, but also contributed to its collapse.

Resistance in Nazi-occupied Latvia is not a topic of secondary importance; it is one of the central themes in the history of World War II. Moreover, besides its academic character, it is also an important issue for current domestic politics, foreign policy and ethics. Soviet and also some foreign research publications propagate a myth of large numbers of collaborators with the Nazi regime among the Latvian population. To refute such a distortion of history scholars must present the concrete situation in Latvia in 1940–45 in an impartial manner and shed light on the discontent of wide masses of the populace and their active and passive resistance to Nazi policies.

The situation in Latvia, compared to that in the other occupied European countries, was complicated by the fact that it was occupied three times during the War as the Soviet and Nazi German regimes replaced each other. Such a situation could not have failed but split and disorient the people. During the war, there existed Communist, national Latvian, Polish, Jewish and individual resistance to the Nazi regime in Latvia. These segments of resistance were mainly autonomous and independent of each other. The situation was so complicated that some politicians found themselves being at the same time participants in both resistance and collaboration.

Issues of resistance in Latvia must, no doubt, be viewed not only in the context of events of the respective period of history, but also in the context of processes in Europe and the world. One can clearly see direct and indirect signs of interaction among three political forces taking place in Latvia: the USSR, Nazi Germany and Western democracies (the UK and USA). At the December 1943 summit conference of the Western Allies and the Soviet Union in Teheran, Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin reached an agreement to support the resistance movement. The USSR interpreted the agreement as support for Communist resistance only and actually worked to suppress the national resistance movement. Thus it considerably weakened the overall efficiency of resistance in the occupied countries. In wartime Latvia, unlike in Western democracies, the USSR was regarded more as a threat to national independence and an occupant than an ally and a liberator from Nazism.

In resistance studies attention must be shifted from relatively well-researched topics, such as the Central Council of Latvia (CCL) and the Kurelians, to the activities of other resistance organizations and groups, intellectuals, rural population, university and school students and individuals. Special efforts should also be exerted to assess the position of the political elite of the preceding independence period. National resistance in Latvia during the War was not restricted to the activities of the CCL and its leaders only. While the CCL launched its activities only in the second half of 1943, resistance to the Nazi regime began in Latvia as early as 1941. Instead of being the leader of the resistance of the entire Latvian population, the CCL revealed itself rather as the ideological and political center of all democratic and patriotic forces.

The efficiency of the resistance movement in German-occupied Latvia must not be measured by quantity and quality alone, such as the number of disseminated illegal leaflets, memorandums and newsletters and acts of sabotage or diversion. Resistance to the occupants on the whole was an important indicator of the moral health of the population and its loyalty to democratic values. The task of historians is to reveal the specific aspects of the situation in Latvia as well as its close linkage to the situation in other occupied European countries. Latvia had two enemies during the War: Nazism and Communism, while for the Western European countries there was only one: Nazism.



# **HOLOCAUST IN NAZI-OCCUPIED LATVIA**







*Aivars Stranga\**

## **The Holocaust in Occupied Latvia: 1941–1945**

### **Introduction**

The total annihilation of Jews – the Holocaust or Shoah – in Latvia during the Nazi German occupation was the gravest crime in the modern history of Latvia, a crime that was characterized by indescribable sadism and a huge number of victims that has not yet been accurately established.

The following categories of Jews perished in Latvia: (1) up to 70,000 native Latvian Jews who had remained in Latvia at the beginning of the Nazi occupation; (2) approximately 20,000 Jews transferred from the Reich (Germany, Austria and Bohemia) during the Nazi occupation and Jewish women from Hungary (deported to Latvia in the summer of 1944); (3) more than 1000 Jews from Lithuania who had fled to Latvia in late June 1941 or were deported to Rīga Ghetto and later transferred to the Kaiserwald Concentration Camp in late 1941 and early 1944. The total number of victims may thus constitute 90,000.<sup>1</sup>

The total extermination of the Jews and the annihilation of Latvia's Jewish community both in the territory of Latvia and beyond its borders went on until the defeat of Nazi Germany in 1945. Although the largest part of the territory of Latvia fell into the hands of the Red Army already in the autumn of 1944, German occupation persisted in much of the Kurzeme region of Western Latvia until as late as early May 1945. Several dozen Jews (approximately 50 persons), who had escaped from the Dundaga Concentration Camp, were hiding in the woods there; about half were captured and murdered. Until March 1945 there was a group of Jews in Liepāja; its size has not been accurately established. It had been transferred from the Lenta Concentration Camp in Rīga in October 1944, shortly before Rīga fell to the Red Army. A part of the group remained in Liepāja until the capitulation of Germany, while

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\* The author thanks historians Rudīte Vīksne, Mārgers Vestermanis and Andrievs Ezergailis for their consultations in the course of writing the paper.

the rest were deported to Hamburg, Germany, in March 1945. Also, for those Jews, who were transferred from the Kaiserwald Concentration Camp in Rīga to Stutthof Concentration Camp in Germany in the period between August 6 and the end of September 1944,<sup>2</sup> the Holocaust ended only after the capitulation of Germany. That leads me to conclude that, although the absolute majority of Jews who had resided in or were deported to Latvia from other countries were murdered by the autumn of 1944, the executions and destruction of the Latvian Jewish community lasted as long as May 1945.

To date, several dozen works have been dedicated to the history of the Holocaust in Latvia, the first ones being published just a few years after the disaster, in 1947 (books by Max Kaufmann and Tesja Frenkl-Zalcmann<sup>3</sup>). Among the most serious works of the later years one must first of all mention the research by Gertrud Schneider into the deportation of foreign Jews to Latvia and the outstanding work by Hans-Heinrich Wilhelm on the role of SD operative groups (*Einsatzgruppen*) in the implementation of the Holocaust in the Baltic. However, only in 1992 Mārgers Vestermanis published the first historiographic analysis of the Holocaust in Latvia.<sup>4</sup> In the course of the next few years he continued his historiographic studies and in 2001 issued the most up-to-date historiographic analysis of the topic; it embraces also reviews of books written in Yiddish and Hebrew that had not been previously included in such analyses.<sup>5</sup> The author remarks that in Latvia national historiography on the Holocaust has started to develop and mentions at least two most significant achievements: (1) the fundamental monograph by Andrievs Ezergailis *Holokausts vācu okupētajā Latvijā* (The Holocaust in German-Occupied Latvia)<sup>6</sup> that offers an impressive general picture of the Holocaust in Latvia with a special focus on the role of Latvian collaborationists in the implementation of the Holocaust; (2) the work of historians Rudīte Vīksne, Aigars Urtāns, Dzintars Ērglis, Meijers Melers and Grigorijs Smirins, who have opened new directions by writing histories about the destruction of Jewish communities of small Latvian towns: "... these unique studies have no analogue in the entire international historiography of the Holocaust, as previously researchers have always focused on the centers of the execution of the Jews ..."<sup>7</sup>

It is already becoming evident that Ezergailis' research has started to influence the conclusions of other historians. Richard Rodes' study of the history of *Einsatzgruppen* can serve as an example.<sup>8</sup> Although in terms of scholarly value his work lags much behind the fundamental monograph by Hans-Heinrich Wilhelm *Die Einsatzgruppe A der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD 1941–1942*, he has derived the facts about the Holocaust in German-occupied Latvia from Ezergailis, thus avoiding unsubstantiated assertions. Rodes rejects the widely held version about extensive spontaneous pogroms in the Baltic in the first days of the German occupation that supposedly had been

launched by the local population on its own accord. He underlines that the so-called pogroms had been organized by commanders of German SD units, who, moreover, were forced to admit facing difficulties in this task due to unresponsiveness of part of the local population.<sup>9</sup>

It is significant that the history of the Holocaust begins to take its due place in historical research and in secondary school curriculums in Russia as well. Recently Ilya Al'tman has published two books containing subchapters dedicated to the Holocaust in German-occupied Baltic.<sup>10</sup> A positive aspect is that Al'tman no longer operates with fantastic figures regarding the number of murdered Jews in the Baltic states, nor makes statements about “a non-German Holocaust”, i.e. a Holocaust supposedly initiated and carried out by the local population entirely on its own initiative, although the author still arbitrarily operates with the phrase “local nationalists,” a priori infusing it with criminal character “nationalist–murderer.”<sup>11</sup>

Although in scholarly literature the unacceptable tendency to place collective responsibility for the Holocaust on whole nations has decreased, such recurrences, regrettably, are still encountered. Therefore Holocaust research in Latvia has to continue with unabated energy.<sup>12</sup>

## **The Course of the Holocaust in German-Occupied Latvia: The Murderers**

After the German attack on the Soviet Union, mass-scale annihilation of Jews was launched in all occupied territories. However, for reasons that are difficult to explain, the manner and scale of killing often differed from place to place. Thus the annihilation of Jews in occupied Lithuania and Latvia, which started as early as in July 1941, was much more systematic and comprehensive than in occupied Belorussia and Western Ukraine (Galicia) at the same time.<sup>13</sup> Although a major role in the Holocaust in German-occupied Latvia was played by the SD *Einsatzgruppe A*, it was not the only organizer and executor: the most horrifying Holocaust episodes, such as the murder of approximately 25,000 people in Rumbula on 30 November and 8 December 1941, were carried out with no massive involvement of SS, SD or *Einsatzgruppen* personnel (the Arājs Commando, which was subordinated to SD, did take part – see below), with a much greater participation of *Schutzpolizei* units.<sup>14</sup> All German occupation authorities – the Wehrmacht (the *Feldkommandantur*, in particular); the naval forces; different types of police, including both police battalions and the civilian police; the occupants' civil administration – were involved in the organization and execution of the extermination of Jews. Thus the German civil administration gave the order to transfer Jews to ghettos in Rīga, Liepāja and Daugavpils and was in charge of ghetto administration and

the utilization of inmates as labor force; the order to establish a ghetto council – *Judenrat* – was issued by the Wehrmacht. The Holocaust in German-occupied Latvia, in brief, took the following course:

1. As the German occupation began, the Wehrmacht and the naval forces – commandants of the local German commandantures – made the first steps towards the annihilation of Jews by issuing the first anti-Jewish laws and threatening with severe punishment for their violation. In Rīga, the first anti-Jewish order was issued on 2 July by the Commandant of Rīga, Wehrmacht Colonel Ullersberger; in Liepāja, the Commandant of Liepāja, *Korvettenkapitän* Bruckner, issued the most comprehensive anti-Jewish order to date, consisting of 11 paragraphs, on 5 July.<sup>15</sup>
2. The extermination of Jews began in Grobiņa, near Liepāja on 23 June, the second day after the German invasion of Latvia, when members of *Teilkommando 1a* of *Einsatzgruppe A* killed 6 Jews; on 3 July Erhard Grauel's *Teilkommando 2*, following Bruckner's instructions, started to kill Jews in Liepāja; within the next few days the executions of Jews began also in Durbe, Priekule, Ašīte and Rīga, in almost all locations that had come under the German occupation.
3. Traditionally Holocaust historiography has maintained that the murdering of women and children began only in late summer of 1941, after Himmler's trip to the occupied territories, and only in October was launched on large scale.<sup>16</sup> In occupied Latvia events sometimes followed a different course: by mid-August 1941 a large part of the provincial Jewish communities of Latvia had already been annihilated (in Zemgale the entire Jewish population was already exterminated!). Furthermore, occasionally the executions were split in several phases, first killing men, then women and children, while on other occasions the entire communities, **including children**, were murdered at the same time (a typical example is Auce, where all Jews – men, women and children – were executed together, on 11 July.<sup>17</sup>).
4. The German occupation authorities issued directives to the subordinated local Latvian administrations to register all Jews residing in their territory.
5. The so-called Latvian Self-Defense (*Selbstschutz*), as well as special Latvian SD units for the execution of Jews were set up (see below).
6. The absolute majority of the Jewish community of occupied Latvia was murdered in the course of two phases. First, the so-called *Einsatzgruppen* phase that lasted from July to August 1941, entailed the murder of practically all Jews in the provinces. Although in September and October Jews were still being killed in Liepāja, Daugavpils and Aizpute (over 300 victims on 27 October), compared to the summer a respite set in until November. The second phase was introduced by the arrival of SS and Police General Friedrich Jeckeln in Rīga on 16 November 1941 and the massacre organized by him in Rumbula on 30 November and 8 December 1941,

when about 25,000 Jews were killed. After Rumbula only 6000 of native Latvian Jews survived, and they were spared only to be used as labor force.<sup>18</sup>

7. At the time of the Rumbula massacre, Jews deported from Germany began to arrive in Rīga to be killed in occupied Latvia. The first contingent of the deportees was assigned to clean (“to tidy up”) Rīga Ghetto after the 30 November massacre. In early December, four trainloads arrived with Jews from Nuremberg, Stuttgart, Vienna and Hamburg, followed by several others, and thus it continued until December 1942. The majority of the deportees were killed in Biķernieki right away, without even being settled in the ghetto. A part of the deportees were taken to the Auschwitz death camp in November 1943 and killed there.<sup>19</sup> Even as late as 1944, Jewish women from Hungary were brought to occupied Latvia and killed.
8. In the course of December 1941, the *Reichskommissar des Ostlandes* Hinrich Lohse achieved what he had failed to do on the eve of Rumbula: spare a number of Jews to be used as labor force. Such a demand was also put forward by the Wehrmacht command. As a result of the agreement, from February 1942 onwards able bodied Jews, 16 to 32 years of age, were spared and placed in the remnants of Rīga Ghetto (the so-called Little Ghetto) and later transferred to several concentration camps, from where the survivors were deported to Germany from late summer 1944 on. Of all Jews who had resided in or were deported to occupied Latvia only 1182 persons survived.<sup>20</sup>

## The participation of Ethnic Latvians in the Holocaust

The first Latvian paramilitary units to be established as the German–Soviet war broke out were the Latvian national partisans, who fought against the retreating Red Army and the collapsing occupation regime.<sup>21</sup> These units never took part in the annihilation of the Jews. In early July, the German occupation authorities disbanded and disarmed these units; from then on the only Latvian armed units in occupied Latvia were formed and controlled by the Germans. They played the following roles in the annihilation of the Jews:

1. The Germans launched mass executions of Jews only after having established the so-called Self-Defense (*Selbstschutz*) units all over Latvia. It was the first serious step taken by the Germans to involve Latvians in the Holocaust. Self-Defense units were formed by the German occupation forces according to the plan elaborated in Berlin: “generally we must also note that the Germans used their organizational skill (it was part of the fundamental order) to position the natives in the most public and visible roles”; it follows from Reinhardt Heidrich’s order of 6 June 1941 that the so-called

- Self-Defense units were not intended to be permanent, but were rather meant for the annihilation of the Jews in the initial phase of the occupation.<sup>22</sup> Within the first hours of the German occupation on German initiative and by German orders the so-called Self-Defense Commandantures were set up in all administrative units of Latvia; such offices had never existed in Latvia's history before. Within the first weeks of the German occupation approximately 700 such Latvian Commandantures were established. Germans – SD or military personnel – controlled the Latvian Self-Defense units at least on two levels: through district Latvian Commandantures that were under German supervision and through the local German Commandantures. The Latvian Commandantures were subject to orders both from the German SD personnel and the German military command. In many places in Latvia where there were Jews, the Self-Defense units took part in the executions; however, there is no reason to believe that all units were preoccupied solely with the killing of Jews. In mid-August 1941 – as suddenly as they had been founded – the Germans abolished almost all Self-Defense Commandantures. They had fulfilled the mission that the Germans had intended for them: under German supervision the Jews from small Latvian towns had been brought together and executed.<sup>23</sup> (The Ventspils Self-Defense unit continued to function until early October for the sole reason that not all Jews had been killed there yet; after the execution of the remaining Jews, the Ventspils unit was likewise closed).
2. Latvian Auxiliary Police (*Hilfspolizei*) was set up by the German occupation authorities, at first in Rīga on 1 July 1941 (under the leadership of Colonel-Lieutenant Voldemārs Veiss), and a little later in Daugavpils, Rēzekne, the other larger cities and even in the countryside. Although the Auxiliary Police fulfilled also the traditional civilian police functions, already from early July these functions were considerably enlarged. The Auxiliary Police and some other Latvian civilian police units (such as the Rīga Harbor Police and policemen of Rīga Police Station 11) took part in the execution of the Jews. Latvian policemen were also engaged in the registration of the Jews, provided the external security of Rīga Ghetto and took part in conveying the Jews from Rīga Ghetto to Rumbula, which was located 11 kilometers from the Ghetto.<sup>24</sup>
  3. Before the Rumbula massacre the most widely applied method of execution of the Jews, especially in the provincial areas, was for the local Latvian Self-Defense or Auxiliary Police unit “to collect” the Jews, whereafter an SD auxiliary Latvian unit or an ad hoc unit specially set up for execution arrived and killed the victims. The SD auxiliary forces in occupied Latvia consisted of the following components:
    - a. The Mārtiņš Vagulāns Unit in Jelgava. This was the first such unit to be set up – as early as 29 June – but it was also the first to be disbanded – in mid-August – when it had fulfilled its mission and annihilated the Jews in Zemgale, primarily in Jelgava.

- b. The Herberts Tidemanis SD Group in Valmiera. It probably took part in the annihilation of the small Jewish community of Valmiera (the Arājs Commando also was definitely involved in the murder of Valmiera Jewish community – see below).
  - c. The best-known unit – the Arājs Commando, which directly killed at least 26,000 civilians. The total number of murders that the unit facilitated and was indirectly involved in probably amounted to 60,000. The Commando usually worked in groups of 40 men at a time. During the Rumbula massacre, members of the Arājs Commando took part in forcing the inmates out of the ghetto, in the course of which about 1000 may have perished, and convoyed the victims directly to the shooting pits in Rumbula, but did not participate in the killing. In the period before December 1941, when the role of the SD auxiliary Latvian units in the Holocaust was the greatest, their total membership did not exceed 500 men. From 1942 on, members of the Arājs Commando took part also in the execution of Jews outside Latvia, in the first instance in the neighborhood of Minsk in Belorussia.<sup>25</sup> The accurate number of Latvians who took direct or indirect part in the annihilation of the Jews is not easy to establish; an approximate figure could constitute a few thousands.
  - d. A much larger number of local residents, particularly in the provinces, took part in looting the victims' property. Although the bulk of Jewish property, the most valuable items in particular, definitely fell into German hands, a significant portion of Jewish property was appropriated by local residents (this aspect has been touched on by Dzintars Ērglis in his study on the murder of Jews in Krustpils). In the first months, Latvian Self-Defense Commandantures played a significant role in the appropriation of Jewish property.<sup>26</sup>
  - e. Some Latvian doctors took part in the sterilization of Jews that began in Bauska in the first days of July 1941. On 11 November 1941, the German occupation authorities issued an order to allow sterilization by local doctors in the hospitals of Daugavpils, Rēzekne, Ludza, Liepāja, Venstspils, Jelgava and Jēkabpils.<sup>27</sup>
4. An essential role in the inspiration of the Holocaust was played by the Latvian- and Russian-language press of occupied Latvia starting with the very first edition of *Nacionālā Zemgale* (National Zemgale), edited by Mārtiņš Vagulāns, that started to come out as early as the end of June 1941.

## The Issue of the So-Called Interregnum

This issue presents at least three pending questions: did there exist a period of interregnum between the withdrawal of the Soviet Army from Latvia and the establishment of the German occupation? If it did exist: for how long and what happened during it?

The distinguished Israeli author Yitzhak Arad in his latest research published by Yad Vashem writes that the dominating attitude of the local population towards the Jews took its most open expression in a wave of pogroms that started in Lithuania and Latvia in the first days of the German occupation, with the local residents actively and aggressively venting their deep-rooted anti-Semitism. Professor Norman N. Naimark of Stanford University (USA) in turn with good reason has emphasized that the so-called pogroms had been organized by Germans in compliance with plans that had been elaborated already before the attack on the Soviet Union. These “pogroms” had to take place at the beginning of the occupation only, in order to create an impression of deep hatred for Jews among the local population. The “pogroms” were not meant and could not solve “the Jewish question” – the total extermination of Jews.<sup>28</sup>

Studies by the Commission of the Historians of Latvia have proved that in the first days of the occupation the course of developments was the following: in Kurzeme, Zemgale and Rīga the so-called interregnum period existed – if at all – for a few hours or less than one day with no spontaneous terror on the part of the Latvians against the Jews ever taking place. The situation was different in Vidzeme, which was occupied only by 6–8 July. In Cēsis the interregnum existed for less than one day only, 4 July, when the Soviet occupation forces withdrew from the city and it was taken by the Latvian national partisans, who put their commanders Mārtiņš Kaspersons and Kārlis Liepiņš in charge of the city. On the very next day, the German occupants arrived, dismissed the partisan commanders, who obviously were not German confidants, and replaced them with Alberts Ziediņš, who enjoyed their trust. Later they appointed to this position Fēlikss Bergs.<sup>29</sup> A period of very relative interregnum existed in Valmiera from 4–5 July until 7 July, i.e. not more than three days (see below); in Rūjiena – from 7 to 9 July; in Limbaži, probably, the longest of all: from 5 to 8 or 9 July. Thus, the so-called interregnum periods were very short and no pogroms took place during them, to say nothing about any mass-scale executions of Jews by Latvians. However, it must be noted that occurrences of brutal humiliation of Jews and looting of their property did happen, especially in Limbaži, attesting to a rather strong anti-Semitism among the local population: “... the goal of the first anti-Jewish campaigns was to humiliate the Jews ... under the supervision of Self-Defense men [ethnic Latvians] some local Jews pulled off boots from the bodies of the Soviet sailors that had fallen in the battle of 4 July [in Limbaži], while some others dug pits in the town cemetery and buried the killed sailors, members of militia and workers’ guard.”<sup>30</sup> However, even these occurrences do not fully allow drawing the unanimous conclusion that the anti-Jewish campaigns were carried out without any orders or incitement from the German occupants. Already on 5 July, the German-appointed commander of the Latvian Self-Defense, Colonel-Lieutenant Jūlijs

Kristaps Jaunsniķeris, arrived in Valmiera from Rīga. He acted on the basis of letters of authority from Germans (thus attesting that the absence of Germans in Valmiera at that point did not mean there was a period of interregnum). He also was in charge of the Limbaži Self-Defense unit, the orders being approved by the Germans.<sup>31</sup> However, no execution of Jews took place in Limbaži at that point. Three Jews were indeed killed during that time, but not because they were Jews: one, Lazars Kaiclers, was killed on 4 July when the Latvian national partisans attacked Soviet activists, while two others, Nisons Faits and Vulfs Leiba, had been Soviet militia officers and were killed not because of their Jewish origin but together with other supporters of the Soviet occupation regime.<sup>32</sup>

## The Rescuers

The rescuers of Jews lived as if on a different planet from that of the murderers, demonstrating that the same circumstances can produce both murderers and rescuers. The rescuers lived and worked literally next door to the murderers, although the number of murderers was much larger than that of rescuers. In recent years, research concerning the rescuers has advanced considerably. Margērs Vestermanis has compiled the first list of the rescuers of Jews that at present comprises more than 400 names of rescuers, who on their turn were assisted by several hundred other persons. These altogether rescued approximately 400 Jews.<sup>33</sup> The rescuers came from very diverse social strata and ethnic backgrounds. The example of Latvia affirms what has been said in scholarly literature about rescuers in other occupied countries: there is no use trying to identify any particular social or political groups that would have been more or less disposed to rescue Jews. Rescuers, the same as murderers, represented the entire social and even political spectrum.<sup>34</sup> Rescuers could be very heroic, self-denying and absolutely selfless people, like the legendary Rīga laborer Žanis Lipke, who saved more than 50 Jews. Or they could be much more controversial personalities, guided both by humanitarian considerations and greed as, for instance, Staņislavs Vuškāns from Preiļi. At the time when members of the local Preiļi and Līvāni Latvian Self-Defense units were annihilating the Preiļi Jewish community, he was hiding eight Jews, including two children, most of whom survived. Vuškāns' behavior acquires an even larger humanitarian dimension in view of the fact that after the execution of the Jews the Self-Defense men went around Preiļi openly bragging of their crime and replied to some local residents, who wondered how they could have found the heart to murder innocent human beings, with a counter-question: are Jews human beings?<sup>35</sup> At the same time, it is also known that Vuškāns required payment from the Jews for rescuing them. The Jews were asked to show the place where they had hidden their valuables,

collected by many generations of their ancestors. "I still keep wondering what was more striking in that man: heroism or greed," wrote one of the rescued Morduh Hagi.<sup>36</sup> The study of the history of the rescuers and their helpers must be continued; comparative analyses would obviously be worthwhile, at least on the basis of scholarly literature of those countries (Poland and Germany in particular) that have given serious attention to the study of the rescuers' history (the so-called rescuers' mentality and behavior in extreme circumstances).<sup>37</sup> Recently Latvian historians have started to focus also on the destiny of the rescuers of the Jews after Nazi defeat, in the years of the second Soviet occupation. In the eyes of the Soviet regime, the rescuing of Jews was meaningless. Thus, for example, Jezupata Amola from Babīte parish, who had hidden Marika and Leonard Hoff from Jelgava, was deported to Siberia on 25 March 1949. The Roman Catholic priest Izidors Ancāns from Krāslava, who had saved David Barkāns' family of four, was arrested on 29 May 1950 and sentenced to 10 years imprisonment.<sup>38</sup> In occupied Latvia, as in any other occupied country, there existed a full spectrum of attitudes toward the Jews: collaborationism with Nazis in the annihilation of Jews, indifference and different kinds of assistance. The two extreme ends, murderers and rescuers, were absolute minorities. The absolute majority, the onlookers, gazed at the unprecedented crime with indifference, horror or helplessness.

## The Victims

The years of the Soviet occupation considerably hampered Holocaust research in occupied Latvia. It is not surprising that the first two outstanding works, written by Andrievs Ezergailis and Marģers Vestermanis, focused primarily on the history of the murderers: the course of the Holocaust; the issue of who the murderers were; the methods of extermination; the relations between the central German authorities and the executors of their orders in occupied Latvia; the participation of Latvians in the Holocaust, etc. Although the number of the victims is incomparably larger than that of the murderers, the history of the victims has been relatively little studied as yet. How did the victims react to the imminent disaster? Why did they resist where resistance was doomed and failed to resist where there was at least a small chance of survival? How did the belonging of the Jews to a religious or secular environment and different political trends affect their behavior? What was the reaction of the gentile neighbors to the Holocaust and how did it differ in different countries and cultures? These are just a few of the questions. Of essential significance in the studies is a notion applied by the outstanding scholar of Holocaust history Jehuda Bauer. *Amidah* is an ancient Hebrew word that defies translation, by which the author refers to different types of Jewish non-military resistance and struggle for survival: the struggle for food that presents one of the most

important types of the fight for survival; educational and religious activities aimed at the strengthening of spirit and morale; the work of doctors and medical nurses in ghettos and camps and other activities.<sup>39</sup>

In recent years only a modest number of works has been dedicated to the life of the victims of the Holocaust in Latvia. Apart from the works by Gertrud Schneider and Frida Michelson that were published in the 1970s,<sup>40</sup> there are only the studies of Mārgers Vestermanis about Jewish spiritual resistance during the Holocaust. According to Vestermanis, the main precondition for spiritual Jewish resistance was the aspiration of Jews, in spite of the barbarous conditions in the ghetto, to maintain their human dignity, of which the Nazis tried to deprive them completely, humiliating Jews like no other group of victims of the Nazi terror, as well as their sense of ethnicity. Although it would be completely wrong, as Bauer with good reason has pointed out, to present life in a ghetto as nothing but cultural activities, Vestermanis has underlined that inmates wrote poetry and composed songs in an effort to salvage the remnants of their existence as human beings. An inmate of Liepāja Ghetto, Johanna Spektor, composed more than 15 songs; the lyrics were written by Kalmans Linkemers, Abrāms Blohs, Jasa Rabinovics. A deportee from Germany, Horst Kassel, was executed in Rīga on 12 April 1942 for disseminating – from the German perspective – inflammatory poems (*Hetzgedichte*).<sup>41</sup>

Among the younger generation of historians in Latvia, Svetlana Bogojavlenska must be singled out. Her talented work on the destiny of Šeina Grama, a Jewish teenager from a Latvian provincial town in the summer of 1941, reflects the inner world of the Jews on the very threshold of disaster. On 27 July 1941, the day of the first massacre of Jews in Preiļi, Šeina wrote in her diary the simple and shocking words: “This is a bloody Sunday for the Jewish people of Latvia. It is horrible. We did not expect such an end.”<sup>42</sup> Research on the Holocaust victims must continue in Latvia. The history of the three ghettos – Rīga, Liepāja and Daugavpils – and the concentration camps in Latvia must be written. This history must go beyond the still practiced approach of concentrating almost solely on factual material concerning the number of inmates in the ghetto and a detailed description of the execution procedure. Such an approach, as has been noted in historical literature, deprives ghetto history of its conceptual substance and, what is worse, fails to reflect the victims’ lives and aspirations to help themselves and others in the inhuman conditions.<sup>43</sup>

## Appendix: Determination of the Number of Jewish Victims

**Latvian Jews.** The main factor that makes it difficult to establish a more accurate figure of Jews murdered under the German occupation is the continued existence of different views as to how many Jews managed to flee – “evacuate,” using Soviet terminology of that time – from

Latvia from the beginning of the German aggression on 22 June 1941 to the occupation of the entire territory of Latvia by 6–8 July, and how many remained in Latvia. Two methods are possible in order to find out the numbers.

1. The first method, which, at least so far, has been rather unproductive, is to establish the number of “evacuated” Jews. This is difficult to do because the existing figures of the total number of “evacuees,” counting both gentiles and Jews, are still contradictory. According to Heinrihs Strods, the total number of those who left the Latvian SSR constitute only approximately 28–30,000 persons. This figure is half that traditionally maintained in Soviet historiography.<sup>44</sup> If we accept this figure, which is the smallest ever mentioned in literature, we must also assume that the number of Jews who managed to leave Latvia is likewise very small. It is difficult to say what would have been the proportion of Jews among the 28–30,000 evacuated, but they by no means were the majority, as the Soviet regime did not exert any particular effort to save the Jews; even if they would have constituted a half of the so-called evacuees, which would have been a very high proportion, probably the highest credible percentage, their number would not have exceeded 15,000. The result is not difficult to calculate: if we take as the initial reference point the Jewish population figure before the Soviet deportations of not more than 93–94,000, subtract more than 1700 Jews, whom the Soviet regime had deported to Siberia on 14–15 June 1941, and 15,000 so-called evacuees, at least at least 77,000 Jews remained in German-occupied territory. Dov Levin’s view that in June 1941 100,000 Jews lived in Latvia I regard as unreasonably high.<sup>45</sup> According to Levin, there were in Latvia several thousand Jewish refugees from Germany and other countries, but I have proved that in June 1940, at the beginning of Latvia’s occupation by the USSR, the number of refugees was only a little higher than 500.<sup>46</sup>

Contemporary scholarly Russian literature operates with a different total figure of evacuated, irrespective of their ethnic origin. It is 40,000 – considerably larger than that offered by Strods.<sup>47</sup> In this case, it could be assumed that, of the number of the evacuated, Jews did not exceed 20,000. Ezergailis, too, operates with approximately the same, though slightly lower, figure. Thus about 70,000 Jews – fewer than according to Strods – found themselves under German occupation. The most unexpected figure is provided in materials of the Board of Displaced Persons (*Pereselencheskoe Upravlenie*) under the USSR Council of People’s Commissars: On 1 December 1941, the Board had information at its disposal that 51,429 persons had evacuated from Latvia (from Lithuania – 32,432, from Estonia – 18,382), of these only 13,705 being ethnic Latvians.<sup>48</sup> If these figures are credible, more than 37,000 persons evacuated from Latvia were non-Latvians, and it may be assumed that the majority of them were Jews. The conclusion must be drawn that there is still no complete clarity about the number of Jews who remained in German-occupied Latvia and were thus, almost inevitably, doomed to death.

2. The second approach, which could produce more accurate figures, is to establish the number of persons remaining in Latvia, based primarily on the data of the registration of Jews carried out by the German occupation authorities in July 1941. Although in early July individual murders of Jews without registering them may have taken place, I assume that Jews and their property were registered from the very first days of the occupation. For example, almost half of the Jews who were murdered in Rīga had gone through the so-called filtration in Central Prison. It is absolutely clear that in provincial towns, such as Bauska, Auce and others, Jews were registered (entered in lists) already in early July. The German registers have never mentioned a figure higher than 70,000 Jews in occupied Latvia; therefore I consider that the number of Jews who remained of Latvia can be estimated at no higher than 70,000. The version of Israeli scholar Yitzhak Arad may be closest to the truth: in German-occupied Latvia approximately 68,000 Latvian Jews were murdered.<sup>49</sup> This figure stands closest to the one offered by Ezergailis, who estimates the number of Jews killed at 66,000 victims. It seems that the number of murdered Jews of Latvia may be set in the range **65–70,000**.

**Foreign Jews.** Yitzhak Arad believes that the number of foreign Jews who perished in occupied Latvia amounts to approximately 7000.<sup>50</sup> This estimate is definitely below the actual figure. Katrin Reichelt mentions a figure of 22,000 foreign Jews deported to occupied Latvia; however, it is not known how many of them actually perished in the territory of Latvia, since a part of the deportees were again transferred elsewhere.<sup>51</sup> The most accurate – to date – is the research by Wolfgang Scheffer and Diana Schulle, who have established that in the period between 27 November 1941 and 26 October 1942 24,603 persons were deported from the Reich to Latvia. Of these, only slightly more than 1700 were transferred back to the Reich (to Stutthof Concentration Camp) in August–September 1944 and 1073 survived.<sup>52</sup> It must be noted, though, that not all Jews were taken to Stutthof – there were also other camps, where a small number of inmates survived. At present, there is no reason to believe that the number of foreign Jews killed in Latvia much exceeds 20,000. Least known is the number and destiny of deported Hungarian Jewish women, who were the last group of European Jews to be deported to occupied Latvia. Probably their number constituted a few hundred; they were shipped to Latvia in July 1944 and were placed either in the concentration camp Kaiserwald (Rīga) or Popervale or Dundaga concentration camps in Kurzeme. It is difficult to establish how many of them perished in Latvia; however, it is known that the survivors were transferred to Stutthof or other camps in Germany. There is no evidence of the participation of any Latvians in the deaths of these women.

**Lithuanian Jews.** Ilya Al'tman believes that in the territory of German-occupied Latvia up to 5000–7000 Jews from Lithuania perished.<sup>53</sup> There is no evidence to support this figure. Three groups of Jews from Lithuania found themselves in the territory of Latvia:

1. Refugees who arrived in the first days of the German attack. Their presence in Latvia leaves no reason for doubt.<sup>54</sup> On 11 August 1941 the Chief of 5th Daugavpils Precinct of Auxiliary Latvian Police reported to the Prefect of Daugavpils on the arrest of refugees – Jews from Lithuania.<sup>55</sup> Their number has not been established, however I do not think that the number can be large. Although these refugees are mentioned in some memoirs, there is not much information on them based on documentary evidence. In Auce, Bauska District and Ilūkste, i.e. in direct proximity of the Lithuanian border, serious research into the Holocaust has been carried out. In the course of these studies the presence of Lithuanian Jews has either not been confirmed at all or evidence of a very small number of such refugees has been found (probably 7 Jews from Lithuania, all men, were killed in the cellar of the old Catholic church in Ilūkste). However, I do not exclude the possibility that a certain number of such people, most probably to be counted in hundreds rather than thousands, were indeed stranded and perished in Latvia.
2. Approximately 500 Lithuanian Jews were transferred to Rīga Ghetto in the winter of 1941–42.
3. In August 1943, when Heinrich Himmler decided to close down Vilnius Ghetto, the surviving inmates were deported to three locations. The smallest group (able bodied men) went to Kloogu in Estonia, where practically all of them perished in the course of 1944. A larger group – comprising probably up to 5000 persons – were sent to death camps in occupied Poland. The third group, probably more than 1000 persons, mostly women (and probably a small number of men from Kaunas Ghetto), came to the Kaiserwald Concentration Camp in Rīga, from where, however, a part were later transferred to Estonia.



*Dzintars Ērglis*

## **A Few Episodes of the Holocaust in Krustpils: A Microcosm of the Holocaust in Occupied Latvia**

We still know too little about the greatest tragedy that Latvia experienced in the twentieth century: the almost complete annihilation of its Jewish community during the Nazi German occupation. Even less is known about the massacre of Jews in places other than the major Latvian cities, Rīga, Daugavpils and Liepāja. Even the comprehensive pioneering work of Andrievs Ezergailis about the tragedy of Jews in Latvia leaves the Holocaust in Latvian provincial towns insufficiently studied.<sup>1</sup> Such studies are important, especially because in the provinces the killing assumed a highly personal character and it is possible to establish identities of the victims and perpetrators, name names and detail events.

Compared to mass murders in the major cities that involved “the division of functions” among the executors, in Latvian provinces the same persons were often engaged in the preparation of the operation, the arrest of victims, their assembling, conveying and execution. Unlike the mass murder operations, killing of a small group of people made the executor look into the eyes of each doomed old man, woman, teenager and child. On the other hand, in such cases the obsession with anti-Semitism had reached a level at which the executioners usually did not feel any pity or compassion. Nazi henchmen no longer regarded Jews as equal human beings and cynically took the inconceivable horror for granted.

The Soviet regime did not try to establish the identity of the murdered Jews in the trials of war criminals, since this would have emphasized the fact that in World War II Jews suffered by far more than any other nationality in Nazi-occupied territories. The study of the history of the annihilation of Jews was qualified as an expression of Jewish bourgeois nationalism. The prohibition went beyond research and popular science. It applied even to tombstones on the common graves of the murdered Jews.<sup>2</sup>

This paper about the massacre of Jews in the town of Krustpils and in the adjacent Krustpils civil parish is an attempt to correct that injustice. Krustpils is now incorporated into the city of Jēkabpils. It is located on the east bank of the Daugava River, 140 kilometers from Rīga and 90 kilometers from Daugavpils. The Holocaust events in Krustpils

so far have been mentioned only in a few publications.<sup>3</sup> Materials on the Holocaust in Krustpils can be found in the Museum and Documentation Center “Jews in Latvia,” the State History Archive of Latvia (LVVA) and the former archives of the National Security Committee (KGB) under the Council of Ministers of the Latvian SSR.<sup>4</sup>

The criminal files from the former KGB archives are the major source of written information, which, however, should be approached critically because (1) in efforts to save themselves the arrested persons whenever possible withheld the truth from the interrogators and sometimes put the blame on somebody else; (2) when interrogated about events that had happened several years ago, the accused may have failed to remember many things and may have confused facts; (3) KGB interrogators often obtained the desired information by means of mental coercion, and sometimes they falsified facts.

My paper is based on sources, however, that deserve high credibility as attested by the fact that one of the murderers of Beila Bella Veide was sentenced in a pilot trial for a concrete crime rather than on basis of a general charge. The credibility of the sources has been corroborated also in the course of several personal interviews with local residents of Krustpils.

In 1935, the Jewish community of Krustpils consisted of 1,043 persons and constituted 28.52% of the population in the town.<sup>5</sup> Since at that time Jewish communities in Latvian towns had a tendency to decrease in numbers, we can deduce with a high degree of certainty that in 1941 the size of the Jewish population was below that figure. One of the members of the Jewish community of Krustpils town was Beila Bella Veide. The girl’s tragic destiny and the other crimes committed by her murderers shed light on just a few episodes of the Holocaust in Krustpils town and parish.

## **Beila Bella Veide and Her Family**

Information on Beila Bella Veide is accessible in the following surviving sources: testimony of the girl’s sister Cilija Lazarenko, dated 1967, when one of her murderers stood trial; memoirs of Ruta Sirsniņa (nee Zālīte; 1932) and a personal data questionnaire filled out during the population census of 12 February 1935. The latter source testifies that Beila was born in Krustpils on 12 September 1921. She attended the 6-grade elementary Jewish school in Krustpils and by 1935 had completed four grades. The girl could speak and write Latvian and was also fluent in Yiddish, which was spoken in her family.<sup>6</sup>

Beila’s father owned a family-run hairdresser’s shop at Rīgas iela 188, Krustpils. Besides Beila, the family consisted of father Ichoks (born 26 November 1884),<sup>7</sup> mother Haja (b. December 1894),<sup>8</sup> brother Issers (b. 14 May 1916)<sup>9</sup>, sisters Cīvja (b. 16 August 1917),<sup>10</sup> Hesa (b. 14 September 1920)<sup>11</sup> and Estere (b. 30 July 1930).<sup>12</sup> The family lived

at Krasta iela 57, Krustpils. Lazarenko gave different names of the Veides in 1967: father Solomon (Ichoks in the form of 1935), mother Galda (Haja), brother Misha (Issers), sisters Cilija (Civja), Herta (Hesa) and Musja (Estere).<sup>13</sup> The apartment of the Veide family at Krasta iela consisted of three rooms and a kitchen. It was stove-heated, without plumbing and lit by oil lamps.<sup>14</sup> The following facts allow comparison: of 824 apartments in Krustpils, 327 had electricity, while only 26 had plumbing.<sup>15</sup>

Six years later, when the war between the USSR and Germany broke out, the Veide family still lived in Krustpils and Beila's father still worked as a hairdresser. In 1941, Beila had graduated from the Krustpils Jewish elementary school and studied in a trade-school for film projectionists in Rīga. That is where she was, separated from her family, when the war broke out. The German army seized Krustpils on the morning of 28 June 1941, i.e. even earlier than Rīga.<sup>16</sup> After the arrival of the German troops in Rīga, Beila went back to Krustpils to be with her family. The family, however, had already fled to the East as the front approached.

## **The Fate of the Jews who Remained in Krustpils in July 1941**

In July 1941, Beila Bella Veide shared the destiny of other Jews who had missed the chance to evacuate or wished to stay and had thus remained in Krustpils. Information as to exactly when the arrest of Jews took place in Krustpils and how long they were kept imprisoned in different locations is controversial and consists of several sources. It is certain, however, that mass-scale arrests of Jews in Krustpils took place in the first half of July 1941.

Following the instruction of Nazi occupation authorities, the chief of Krustpils police, Kārlis Balodis (1893–?), and the town's mayor, Mārtiņš Oskars Vētra (1908–1980), issued an order to assemble all Jews of Krustpils.<sup>17</sup> They were summoned to gather at the municipal market place at a certain hour to be taken to weed sugar beets. When the majority of the Jewish community had arrived, the police and Self-Defense men encircled the square.<sup>18</sup> Balodis addressed the surrounded group, emphasizing that Jews had trespassed against the Latvian people by betraying them to the Soviet authorities and had to be punished. After the presentation of this invented charge, which was typical of Nazi propaganda, armed Self-Defense men and police officers convoyed all Jews to the building of the municipal slaughterhouse, which had been in advance prepared for the purpose and bordered on the old Jewish cemetery.<sup>19</sup> The Jews were imprisoned in the slaughterhouse, and guards were placed outside while the police and Self-Defense men made rounds of the apartments of Jews to arrest and bring to the slaughterhouse those who had failed to turn up at the marketplace. Already during

the incarceration of the Jewish citizens in the slaughterhouse some Self-Defense men and police officers vented their personal hatred on them.<sup>20</sup>

About a week later all Jews were moved from the Krustpils slaughterhouse to the building of the former Jewish elementary school at Rīgas iela 182, which had been transformed into a ghetto. Apart from the ghetto, Jews were imprisoned also in the buildings of the Krustpils sugar factory and Jaunā muiža (the New Manor) which lay 4 km from the town limits. The ghetto served as a prison for several hundreds of Jews, for the most part elderly people, women and children. Alberts Gajevskis (1907) was appointed warden.

The ghetto guards humiliated Jews in various ways: they stoned and whipped them, made them sweep streets in an disgraceful manner, etc.<sup>21</sup> Special humiliation awaited the Jewish women who went swimming in the Daugava. On instructions of the ghetto guards they had to undress, and those who refused were beaten up. The story of Krustpils resident Oļegs Kalniņš (1915) testifies to the humiliation of the many Jewish women, one of whom was probably Beila Veide:

One morning after the Jewish citizens had been arrested I saw Alberts Gajevskis, who at that time was in the Krustpils anti-Soviet "Self-Defense" group and qualified as the commandant of the Jewish ghetto, take single-handedly about fifty Jewish women to the shore of Daugava and order them to strip to the skin. There were also young women among them. If any of the women showed reluctance, Gajevskis hit her with a whip. In this manner Gajevskis had all women undress and drove them into the water to wash themselves. After that the women stepped out of the water, dressed themselves and Gajevskis drove them to the ghetto ...<sup>22</sup>

It goes without saying that in the slaughterhouse and later in the ghetto the Jews were robbed of their belongings. Both the local Nazi helpers and the SD men from Daugavpils pocketed their valuables and money. Prisoners of the Krustpils ghetto were killed in the Kaķīši peat bog 6 km from the town on 1 August 1941. But for Beila Bella Veide something else lay in store.

## **Young Jews in Maksini Farmstead, Krustpils Parish**

In late July 1941 Pēteris Zālītis (1898–1969), the owner of the Maksini farmstead in Krustpils parish, came to Krustpils town. Near the ghetto he ran into his acquaintance, an elderly Jewish woman, who, wishing to spare Beila Bella Veide the horrors of the ghetto, begged Zālītis to take the girl to his farm. Zālītis granted the Jewish woman's request, and on the same day he visited the ghetto warden Gajevskis and received his permission to take Beila out of the ghetto. It was a ghetto practice to lend Jews as temporary farmhands to farmers on their signed receipt.

Thus Beila got out of the humiliating ghetto conditions and found herself in Maksini. In the farmhouse lived, apart from Zālītis, his wife Anna Zālīte (1904–1989) and their children: Ilmārs (1928–1961), Ruta (1932) and Aldonis (1936). The Zālītis farmland covered 21 hectares.<sup>23</sup>

The Zālītis farmstead was one of four in the Maksini settlement, which stood on the shore of the Daugava river about 6 km south of the town of Krustpils in the direction of Līvāni. All four bore the name Maksini and were located not far from each other in a single line, about half a kilometer long. In the summer of 1941, the farms were run by Zālītis, Alberts Lugins (1910–1980), Alberts Blūmentāls (1902–1988) and Fridrihs Blūmentāls (around 1911–?) respectively.

Beila's duties in Maksini included gathering berries, helping to cook jam for winter and other chores. Zālītis gave her food for her work. Ruta Sirsniņa remembers Beila as an attractive, not particularly tall girl with longish curly hair.<sup>24</sup>

A few days after Zālītis had taken Beila from the ghetto, four Jewish boys aged 14–16 turned up at the farm. Their names have not been established. They begged Zālītis to hire them and give them something to eat. The teenagers told they were from Līvāni and had escaped the execution there. The Zālītis family gave them food and shelter. While the Zālītis family did not keep Beila in hiding since the girl had been formally released from the Krustpils ghetto, the four boys from Līvāni lived in Maksini illegally.

The teenagers stayed in Maksini for about a week, and their presence there must have been no secret to the neighbors. Thus, for example, Alīda Blūmentāle (1911–1986), wife of Alberts Blūmentāls, recalled Beila as “a pretty Jewish girl who very conscientiously performed her chores at Maksini.”<sup>25</sup>

At the time when in the neighborhood other Jews were subject to humiliations and death, five Jewish youngsters enjoyed one week of humane conditions. At about that very time, a Jewish girl Šeina Grama (1925–1941) from Preiļi wrote a rhetoric question in her diary: “Is everything over for the Jewish youth?”<sup>26</sup> Regretfully, it was so: it was the last week in the lives of Beila Bella Veide and the four boys. The only “crime” these youngsters had committed was that they had offered the affront of being born Jews, whom the absurd racial theory of the occupants did not entitle to live.

## **Murder in the Rogāļi Thicket in Krustpils Parish**

Around sunset on a Sunday evening in early August 1941, five police and Self-Defense men from the adjacent Krustpils parish came to the Zālītis farm: Pēteris Gibže from the Dreimaņi farmstead (1900–?), police officer of Krustpils parish; Kārlis Balodis from Gāršpurvi (1912–1993), policeman of Trepmuiža in Krustpils parish; Alberts Ozoliņš from

Teļi (1918–1966), policeman at the Fourth Police Precinct of Jēkabpils Police District, and Self-Defense men Jānis Avotiņš from Aizupes Ļamāni (1909–?) and Osvalds Kalniņš from Kūģi (1910–1946).

Neither the perpetrators nor the eyewitnesses could later remember the exact date, but being farmers they all recalled that the murder had taken place at the time of rye harvest.<sup>27</sup> In 1941 the first two Sundays in August happened to be on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>. When the numerous testimonies are summarized, we have to deduce that Beila Bella Veide and the four boys were murdered on 3 August 1941.

Late afternoon on 3 August Pēteris Gibže received a telephone call to report to Captain Jānis Krūmiņš (1903–?), Chief of Krustpils Police Precinct.<sup>28</sup> During Nazi German occupation the municipal police station was housed in a two-story building at Rīgas iela 115. When Gibže reported to Krūmiņš, Kārlis Balodis and Osvalds Kalniņš were already there. Krūmiņš ordered Gibže, Balodis and Kalniņš to go to Maksini, arrest five Jewish teenagers and execute them. Jānis Avotiņš and Alberts Ozoliņš joined the three men on the way there.

It has not been established from whom Krūmiņš had received such an order. While the procedure of passing orders differed from place to place, in 1941 district police chiefs could not help being involved in the operations of killing Jews,<sup>29</sup> and Krūmiņš was directly subordinated to the chief of Jēkabpils District police, from whom he frequently received requests and orders by telephone.<sup>30</sup> It is impossible to restore the chain of instructions pertaining to the murder of Beila Bella Veide and the four boys accurately, as it is also impossible to establish whether Krūmiņš had received a corresponding order from the Nazi authorities, or else whether he acted on his own initiative wishing to please the occupation authorities and fearing reprimand, should a few Jews survive in the proximity of Krustpils. The Nazis allowed local murderers who felt no pricks of conscience such freedom of initiative, which, however, they purposefully guided and controlled to keep it within the limits set.<sup>31</sup>

The site and procedure for the execution of the Jewish teenagers had been chosen and planned in advance in order to carry out the operation in as organized a manner as possible. Approaching the Zālītis house the five men stopped to explore the alder thicket on the roadside that lay in the territory of the Rogāļi farm to select a suitable site for the murder and then proceeded along the highway in the direction of Daugavpils and turned into the farm road that led to Maksini.

Gibže and Balodis were wearing uniforms, while Ozoliņš, Kalniņš and Avotiņš were in civilian clothes. Pēteris Zālītis recognized them all as residents of his parish. Entering the room, Gibže asked right away why Zālītis had failed to bring the Jewish teenagers at his farm to Krustpils to have them executed. He then threatened to shoot them in the Maksini farmyard and make Zālītis bury them on the site of the execution. This

was obviously said to intimidate the Maksini farmer, since the site for the murder had already been chosen. While the discussion was taking place, the Jewish boys were hiding in the granary that stood next to the house, but Beila was in the house together with the farmer's wife Anna and thus heard what destiny the police and Self-Defense men had prepared for her.

The murderers bid Zālītis to tell the teenagers that they would be taken to Jaunā muiža to harvest rye. Jaunā muiža was located more than five kilometers from Maksini. The police and Self-Defense men led the teenagers into the yard and ordered Zālītis to harness a horse. This Zālītis could not do, as he did not have his horse near the house that evening. The policemen then instructed Zālītis to bring the personal belongings of the Jewish youngsters to the Krustpils police station the next day. At that moment Jānis Blūmentāls (1913–1987) and Fridrihs Blūmentāls approached the house.

Jānis Blūmentāls worked in the peat bog at Kūkas and on weekends visited his brother Alberts Blūmentāls in Maksini. That day around sunset Jānis and his cousin Fridrihs Blūmentāls were bicycling home to Maksini from the Delles farmstead in Krustpils parish where they had attended a hay-harvesting bee. Jānis Blūmentāls' brother had not been at home that evening, and thus the two men had proceeded to Fridrihs' house for a glass of beer. The road passed by Zālītis' house where Balodis and Avotiņš stopped the two men and told them that the Jews staying with Zālītis would be executed. The murderers ordered Zālītis and the two Blūmentāls to take spades and dig a grave to bury the executed teenagers.

Beila was crying as she was led into the farmyard, because she knew she would be taken to the scene of execution. The boys, who were unaware of what lay ahead, also obeyed the murderers. Of the eyewitnesses, Anna Zālīte and her children were upset the most. They all were so shaken that they did not dare look in the direction the Jewish teenagers were taken.

Balodis, Avotiņš, Ozoliņš and Kalniņš convoyed the five Jewish youngsters along the farm road that led from Maksini towards the Rīga–Daugavpils highway. At the highway they turned left, i.e. towards Rīga.

When the police and Self-Defense men with the teenagers had departed from Maksini towards the highway, Gibže and the diggers proceeded along another farm road that led from the Zālītis farmhouse towards the highway, past the homes of Fridrihs Blūmentāls and Alberts Lugins. First they picked up a spade at Blūmentāls' house, then proceeded to Lugins' house where Gibže ordered the farmer to take a spade and follow them. Gibže told the farmer that an accident had taken place and a dead horse had to be buried. Only as they had started walking, Lugins heard from Fridrihs Blūmentāls that the Jews who had lived with the Zālītis family would be executed and it would be their task to bury the bodies. So Gibže with the gravediggers and the police and Self-

Defense men with the Jewish teenagers moved along different farm roads towards the Rīga–Daugavpils highway. Jānis Blūmentāls joined them as they were approaching the highway. Gibže and the diggers crossed the Rīga–Daugavpils highway at the Rogāļi thicket. The Jewish teenagers and their guards arrived at almost the same moment. The doomed Jews were led into a clearing surrounded by sparse bushes.

The thicket on Rogāļi farmland was located 1.7 km from the Zālītis farmhouse by the Rīga–Daugavpils highway and the farm road leading from the Maksini farmstead to the highway (1 km by the highway and 0.7 km by farm road).<sup>32</sup> The thicket stood opposite the Rogāļi creamery. This was where the policemen took the Jewish teenagers for their execution.

The four diggers and Gibže stood about 20 meters from the site and could clearly see how the murder was taking place. The police and the Self-Defense men bid two of the teenagers to lie down and the others to proceed towards a gravel pit. When the three Jewish teenagers, including Beila, had taken a few steps, Balodis, Avotiņš, Ozoliņš and Kalniņš placed themselves behind them, took out their pistols and fired several times. Until that moment the murderers had had their pistols hidden in their pockets. The teenagers collapsed on the spot. Then the men ordered the other two Jewish youngsters to rise and move towards the executed bodies. The doomed boys were stumbling from fear. The same men shot the teenagers in the back. It all transpired within a few seconds around sunset since it was already twilight. It was a quiet evening, therefore the sound of shots was clearly heard. The report was heard also in Maksini where it signaled to Anna Zālīte that the five Jewish teenagers were being executed in the Rogāļi alder thicket.

Although Gibže was in charge of the operation, he did not command the execution. Right after the execution Gibže ordered Zālītis, Lugins and the two Blūmentāls to dig a grave in the old gravel-pit. As they had started digging, Avotiņš, Ozoliņš, Kalniņš and Balodis excused themselves saying that they still had to execute Jews at another farmstead in the Krustpils parish and left. Gibže stayed with the diggers, who dug a grave about as deep as a man's height and placed the bodies in it. After the grave was covered, Gibže departed in the same direction as the other murderers.

Already on the next morning the local farmers knew about the murder. In the morning an elderly man named Kalniņš from the Andrāni farmstead told Milda Ozoliņa (1909) who lived on the Rudzīši farm next to Rogāļi that Jews had been executed in the previous night and pointed towards the gravel pit. Since he was cutting grass near the site, Ozoliņa approached the gravel pit and saw wet yellow sand marked with footprints of men's boots covering a fresh hole in the ground.

Ozoliņa also recalled that towards the end of the Nazi occupation in 1944 the mortal remains of the executed Jewish teenagers were probably exhumed and taken away. Ozoliņa did not know by whom and where they were taken, as she had not witnessed it

personally but had heard many villagers talking about it.<sup>33</sup> As the Red Army approached, the Nazi murderers tried to hide all trace of their crimes wherever possible by destroying the remains of the murdered people.

In the spring of 1966, Jānis Bičolis, a tractor driver from the collective farm Laukezers in Jēkabpils District, who knew nothing about the tragedy in the Rogāļi thicket, was working in the Rogāļi gravel pit. As he was excavating gravel, he came across a human lower jawbone. Later as Bičolis was digging a deeper trench at the same spot, he found no more human bones.<sup>34</sup>

On 12 July 1967, in the course of investigating the criminal case of one of the teenagers' murderers, Kārlis Balodis, investigators from the State Security Committee (KGB) of the Council of Ministers of LSSR, carried out an on-site verification of the testimonies of Alberts Lugins and Pēteris Zālītis regarding the murder of the five Jewish teenagers in the Rogāļi thicket. Because 26 years had elapsed since the day of the murder and the surroundings had greatly changed, none of the two witnesses could locate accurately the site of the execution, and each of them pointed to a different gravel pit, 80 meters apart from the other.<sup>35</sup> It probably explains why nothing was found when the gravel pit was explored on 26 July 1967.<sup>36</sup> Another explanation why nothing but a lower jawbone was found in 1966 is offered by Milda Ozoliņa's testimony regarding the removal of the mortal remains.

Thus the mortal remains of Beila Bella Veide and the four teenagers were never found and could not be reburied in the Jewish cemetery.

The Veide family weathered the war in Russia. In 1942 Beila's sister Hesa (Herta) died. The father Ichoks died in February 1943.<sup>37</sup> After the war, the Veides returned to Latvia and learned from Krustpils residents that Beila had perished in the Holocaust. It was only around 1960 that Cilija Lazarenko heard by chance that her sister together with four other Jewish teenagers had been shot in a forest near Rogāļi. In 1965 or 1966 Lugins told her the details of the murder and showed her the approximate spot where Beila had been executed.<sup>38</sup>

## Brief Information about the Murderers

The following part of the paper will briefly look into the other crimes committed by Beila Bella Veide's murderers and the fates of the perpetrators.

**Kārlis Balodis.** Of all the murderers of Beila and the other Jewish youngsters, Balodis alone did not take part in any other Holocaust operation and was the only one to be sentenced in 1967 for his participation in the murder of the Jewish youngsters.

It is amazing how similar were the efforts of the two murderers Kārlis Balodis and Jānis Avotiņš to justify themselves. Each maintained that he had been unexpectedly engaged in the operation; that he had not known what awaited the Jewish teenagers; that he had walked behind the other murderers and had not been armed. Moreover, each insisted that all the witnesses who had testified against him had been lying. Balodis even insisted that he had suggested that Pēteris Gibže should let the teenagers go so that they could flee to another parish.<sup>39</sup> The words that Jānis Blūmentāls said in his testimony sound like a response to the murderers' attempts to justify themselves: "They all were shooting. It is difficult to tell who fired fewer shots. The fact remains that as a result of these shots citizens of Jewish origin were killed."<sup>40</sup>

In several of the initial sessions of interrogation Avotiņš and Gibže lied, since they were afraid they would again be sentenced for participation in the murder. Later when interrogators assured them that they had already been punished for their crimes and would not be punished again, they both admitted their guilt. Because of such practice by the interrogators of the Soviet repression system, for which it did not matter whether the offender had taken part in one or several crimes, regretfully Gibže and Avotiņš were not punished for the murder of the teenagers at Rogāļi.

The criminal case of Balodis was reviewed by the Criminal Collegium of the Supreme Court of the Latvian SSR in a closed session in Rīga on 14–18 September 1967, and Balodis was sentenced to 15 years of imprisonment without confiscation of property because he did not have any.<sup>41</sup> Balodis served his sentence in Mordovia and was released on 11 September 1981.<sup>42</sup>

**Pēteris Gibže.** Apart from the murder of the teenagers at Rogāļi, Gibže also took part in arrests and execution of Jews in Krustpils in the summer of 1941. He also appropriated the possessions of the arrested and executed Jews.

On 24 April 1947, the Military Tribunal of the Ministry of Interior of the Latvian SSR sentenced Gibže to death with confiscation of property for having served in the German police, taking revenge on communists, for arrests and participation in mass executions of Jews, expropriation of Jewish property, participation in punitive expeditions against Soviet partisans, forcing people to build German army defense positions in Kurzeme and sending them to forced labor in Germany, combating desertion from the German army and participation in national partisan groups in Kurzeme after German capitulation.<sup>43</sup> On 9 August 1947, the Criminal Collegium of the Supreme Court of the USSR replaced the sentence with 25 years of imprisonment plus deprivation of civic rights for five years and confiscation of property.<sup>44</sup> On 26 April 1956 the Commission of the Supreme Council of the USSR reduced the sentence to 15 years, but already on 5 April 1958 Gibže was released from imprisonment in Ozerlag.<sup>45</sup>

Although it was Gibže who was in charge of the murder operation, he was the only one of the murderers of Beila Bella Veide and the four Jewish boys to achieve rehabilitation, which was granted to him by the 22 September 1997 decision of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Latvia.<sup>46</sup>

**Jānis Avotiņš.** In the summer of 1941, Avotiņš, together with Self-Defense men Osvalds Kalniņš, Vladimirs Loms (1922) and Pēteris Grīnfelds-Stars (1908) took part in the execution of three Jewish women approximately 35 to 70 years of age and a boy of 15 who were staying with farmer Anna Veinberga in Piejūti, Krustpils parish. Regretfully, the identities of all four Jews have remain unknown.

Avotiņš was arrested on 30 May 1950,<sup>47</sup> and on 5 October 1950 the Military Tribunal of the Ministry of Interior of the Latvian SSR sentenced him to 25 years in reformatory labor camp plus deprivation of civic rights for five years and confiscation of all property for guarding and conveying Soviet prisoners of war, guarding Nazi military objects, for living with forged documents since 1945.<sup>48</sup> Because of the amnesty announced by the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the USSR, Avotiņš was released from imprisonment in Karaganda on 21 November 1955.<sup>49</sup> Yet on 13 June 1958 he was arrested again.<sup>50</sup> On 11 September 1958 in a closed session the Criminal Collegium of the Supreme Court of the Latvian SSR sentenced Avotiņš to 25 years of imprisonment without deprivation of civic rights and without confiscation of property for the murder of three Jewish women and one boy in 1941 plus all the crimes incriminated in the first case.<sup>51</sup> He was released from a camp in Mordovia on 13 December 1967.<sup>52</sup>

Jānis Avotiņš successfully concealed his participation in the murder of Beila Bella Veide and the four Jewish boys from the Soviet authorities.

**Alberts Ozoliņš.** Ozoliņš committed more war crimes than any other of the involved men. In the second half of July 1941, he and other policemen from Krustpils twice took Jews from Krustpils ghetto to Spunģēni forest, which lies near the Rīga–Daugavpils highway, and shot them there. In July 1941, Ozoliņš guarded the site of the execution of Jews from Jēkabpils in the peat bog at Kūkas. In early August 1941, he took part in conveying several hundreds of arrested Jews from Krustpils to the former shooting range of the Latgale Artillery regiment of the Latvian Army in the Kaķīši peat bog and in their mass-scale murder there, personally executing 8–10 persons. In July 1941, Ozoliņš participated in the execution of a Jewish woman and her three day old baby in Krustpils Jewish cemetery. In the summer of 1941, Ozoliņš, together with police officers Pēteris Auziņš (1888–?) and Vladimirs Graudiņš (1915–1943) from the Krustpils municipal police station, called on Daukstes farmstead in Krustpils parish where six Jewish citizens from Krustpils ghetto were staying: the former owner of the shoemaker's workshop at

Zilānu iela 10–1 in Krustpils, Mozus Leibovičs (1868–1941), his daughter Leja Moreina (1911–1941) with her son Kalmans Haims Moreins (1937–1941), his daughter-in-law Esfira Genija Leiboviča (1904–1941) with her children Josels Leibovičs (1932–1941) and Civa Dreiva Leiboviča (1937–1941). The policemen took all six Jews, including the three small children, to a grave which had been dug the previous day 800 m from the Daukstes farmstead, pushed them alive into the grave and shot them dead.

On 12 May 1945, Alberts Ozoliņš was detained in Kuldīga District and transferred to the filtration camp of the Ministry of Interior of the USSR in Vanino (400 km from Komsomolsk), from where he was released on 7 October 1946.<sup>53</sup> On 20 January 1947 Ozoliņš was arrested and on 27 May 1947 the Military Tribunal of the Ministry of Interior of LSSR sentenced him to 20 years of penal servitude.<sup>54</sup> Having been granted amnesty he was released from the camp in Vorkuta as early as 28 January 1956.<sup>55</sup> On 13 April 1965, Ozoliņš was arrested again.<sup>56</sup> On 28 December 1965 the Collegium of the Supreme Court of the Latvian SSR sentenced him to death. The sentence was carried out 16 May 1966.<sup>57</sup>

Ozoliņš was never tried for the murder of Beila Bella Veide and the four boys.

**Osvalds Kalniņš.** On Kalniņš there is less information than on the other murderers. In the summer of 1941, he took part in the execution of Jews in the Kaķīši peat bog.<sup>58</sup> He was the only one of Beila Bella Veide's murderers who was not brought to trial. On 24 June 1946 he died of tuberculosis in Krustpils parish at the age of 35.<sup>59</sup>

**Jānis Krūmiņš.** Mediator between the Nazi occupation authorities and the executioners, Chief of Krustpils Police Precinct, Jānis Krūmiņš fled from Latvia at the end of the war and thus escaped punishment and could enjoy old age in emigration in the USA. He died in Cleveland, Ohio.

## Conclusions

In the provincial towns of Latvia, the annihilation of Jews started later than in Rīga, Daugavpils and Liepāja, but it ended much earlier. Because of the small size of the Jewish communities in provincial towns it was decided to exterminate the Jews before the execution was completed in the cities.<sup>60</sup> In towns, even able-bodied Jews had practically no chance of escaping death. In Latvia, the Nazis sinned against their famous German punctuality by failing even to register the doomed people, the murders taking place in a hurry. Moreover, from the perspective of “the supreme race,” Jews were a mass of “lower creatures” that were intended for extermination, therefore the main point was to bring them together and take care that no one survived.

It was a general tendency for local murderers after executions, such as took place in the Kaķīši peat bog, to make rounds of farms, shoot Jews who had been temporarily released from ghettos and to appropriate their possessions or order the farmers to take them to the police station in Krustpils. It also was the usual procedure for executors to make farmers from adjacent farmsteads dig graves for the doomed. The horrible deeds were also often performed in the presence of witnesses. Both those who executed and those who gave orders came from Krustpils or adjacent parishes. Germans usually were not present in such operations involving small groups of Jews. Instead they allowed their local henchmen “initiative” and gave them “free rein.” In all Latvian regions the local murderers helped to relieve the psychological pressure on the executors from the ranks of “the supreme race.” Regretfully, they often tried to please the Nazi occupation authorities by doing more than they were expected to.

The murderers could not recall the details of all the murders of small groups of Jews, since they had taken part in several such operations, some even in countless. The witnesses on their part could not forget. The witnesses were forced to watch helplessly the execution of innocent people at the hands of their neighbors or acquaintances.

All the murderers as well as the eyewitnesses of the execution of Beila Bella Veide and the four boys are dead now. Many of the people who now live at Maksini have heard nothing about the murder that took place in the proximity of their house in August 1941.

The Holocaust in Krustpils needs to be studied further because the power structure of the Nazi occupation authorities, the names of Latvian collaborators and the chain of orders regarding the murder of Jews and other issues have not been thoroughly uncovered yet. Research into the Holocaust crimes in Krustpils and other provincial towns in Latvia inevitably requires calling the individual ethnic Latvian murderers and their crimes by name and condemning them. But it also requires calling by name the Nazi perpetrators and the atrocities and crimes they unleashed, enlisting Latvians to carry them out.



*Rudīte Vīksne*

## **Members of the Arājs Commando in Soviet Court Files: Social Position, Education, Reasons for Volunteering, Penalty**

Western public awareness about the role of Latvians in the Holocaust has been to a great extent formed by influential accounts by survivors and scholars, as well as Soviet propaganda brochures, which, surprisingly, became influential in shaping scholarly and public opinion. The former not infrequently picture Latvians as anti-Semites and maintain that Latvians started to murder Jews even before the German troops arrived in Latvia in late June and early July 1941.<sup>1</sup> The latter, directed at discrediting leading exile Latvian personalities and thus the entire exile anti-Communist effort, succeeded even in bringing about a number of extradition processes, most of which, however, did not result in convictions. Despite their obviously non-scholarly nature, they even influenced Western scholarship.<sup>2</sup> The inaccessibility of documentation and absence of basic scholarship on this topic during the Soviet occupation period are the obvious reasons for this state of affairs. Therefore it is important for post-Soviet Latvian historians to take the floor and make sure that all documents are revealed and all details of the Holocaust in Nazi German-occupied Latvia fully exposed.

The so-called Arājs Commando has entered Latvian – and not only Latvian – history as a criminal unit, which was used as a tool in implementing Nazi intentions and directly took part in the Holocaust. The activities and crimes of the Arājs Commando have been rather extensively described both in research literature, proceedings of Nazi war crime trials in Germany and the USA and the memoirs of Holocaust survivors.<sup>3</sup> My paper, therefore, studies the subject from a different angle – by drawing a portrait of the individual members of the Arājs Commando.

The Arājs Commando has usually been associated with the names of Viktors Arājs and Herberts Cukurs<sup>4</sup> and lately also with the names of Kārlis Ozols and Konrāds Kalējs. The portrait of the membership of the Commando usually has been based on the CVs of five or six people and has led to the conclusion that the Commando basically consisted of members of Pērkonkrusts (Thundercross) and student fraternities. These best-known representatives, however, are not the whole Commando. My study seeks to use a more comprehensive range of data to provide a more accurate picture

of the membership and the possible motivation of the individual members. Above all, is the common assumption true that men chose to join the Arājs Commando for anti-Semitic reasons?

My research is based on former KGB archive files, or, to be more precise, on the criminal cases in the archives. The incompleteness of documents allows to establish only approximate membership of the Arājs Commando in all periods of its existence. The most frequently mentioned figures are 1200 to 2000 members. Notations provided by the staff of the MGB/KGB that are attached to some criminal files, allow the guess that these organizations did not have exact figures either.

It has not been established either how many of Arājs men survived World War II, because it is known that many of them were killed in battles against the Soviet partisans and the Red Army. Several suicides have also been registered.<sup>5</sup> A group of Arājs men found themselves in Germany as the German Army withdrew from the East.<sup>6</sup> A certain proportion of those who remained in Latvia went into hiding after the German capitulation<sup>7</sup> and were killed in clashes with Soviet troops.

To date, 356 members of the Arājs Commando have been identified. The first Soviet trials of the members of the Commando took place in 1944 and the last ones in 1967. The files of their criminal cases are located in the State Archive of Latvia. Detailed information has been collected on 352 of them and forms the basis of my paper.<sup>8</sup>

The paper attempts to establish who were members of the so-called Arājs Commando, why they joined the unit and how they were punished for their membership.

## **Files of Criminal Cases as a Source of History**

Before we begin analyzing the accumulated information on members of Arājs Commando, this specific source of history should be assessed. While criminal files have many drawbacks<sup>9</sup> that restrict their application in the research into certain historical events, they contain information that is not available anywhere else. It is true also in this case, since there is no other source that could reveal why a person joined the Arājs Commando.

The main drawback of these files is that in the majority of cases the crime that the suspect had actually committed had not been clearly established in the course of the investigation. The verdicts do not contain evidence of the person's participation in specific actions, such as repressions against civilians. They also fail to state accurately the activities of the convicted. The formulation is oftentimes limited to generalized statements, such as: "took part in arrests and executions of Soviet citizens of Jewish origin" or "under German occupation during temporary

residence in the occupied territory committed treason against the Soviet Fatherland, volunteered for the auxiliary police service under the enemy's authorities and took part in punitive operations against Soviet citizens." Such statements do not allow determination of the degree of involvement in concrete crimes. While such determination is not particularly important for this research, it restricts the use of the files of Soviet criminal cases as a source in other projects of research into the events of World War II in Latvia. If not for this drawback, they could have served as a valuable source of history, since according to approximate calculations the State Archive of Latvia store more than thirty thousand files of so-called criminal cases related to World War II. Furthermore, in the course of my research I have discovered that materials of some criminal cases do not provide sufficient information to allow drawing the conclusion as to whether the respective person had actually been a member of the Commando. The sentences often state solely that the person "has served in SD Nazi counterrevolutionary intelligence authority" or else "volunteered for the German Nazi intelligence authority SD."<sup>10</sup>

The reliability of many materials filed in the criminal cases is also questionable, because methods of physical and mental intimidation were frequently applied to obtain the recorded evidence.<sup>11</sup> On many occasions, incrimination was based on personal confession as well.<sup>12</sup> Witnesses and attorneys were seldom summoned to trials, in the 1940s in particular. Neither played any practical role in criminal cases of this type anyway.<sup>13</sup> Witnesses, if any, for the most part were members of the Commando who had been arrested earlier. Considering the Soviet practices of interrogation, it must not have been difficult to make witnesses testify in the way the interrogator wanted them to. Thus, for example, a witness, who himself was under arrest, testified at the trial that he had not personally seen the defendant shooting. He admitted having told the opposite during the interrogation because the interrogator had told him that the defendant had confessed. Another interrogator practiced a different method: he promised the witness to reduce his penalty, should he testify in the way the interrogator asked him to. In fact, however, both the defendant and the witness were sentenced to 25 years of imprisonment.<sup>14</sup>

It must also be taken into account that suspects as a rule tried to present themselves in as favorable light as possible, except for cases when under physical or mental coercion they confessed things they had actually not done.<sup>15</sup>

Such infringement of legal procedures happened not only because the interrogators arbitrarily chose coercive methods. In many cases they were sanctioned by different classified orders and instructions. In 1948, the Deputy Prosecutor-General of the USSR, A. Vavilov, reasoned that "in cases of treason the presence of concrete facts of crime pertaining to anti-Soviet activity in prosecution statements may ham-

per exposing the criminal and finding out all about his hostilities.” Such a statement from a high-ranking official brought about suspension of the practice of giving the defendants copies of prosecution statements. From then on they instead received only brief extracts.<sup>16</sup>

## The Convicted Members of SD / Arājs Commando

The Arājs Commando (official name: Latvian Auxiliary Security Police, later known as Latvian Security Division of Security Police and Security Service) was established in early July 1941, right after the arrival of German troops in Rīga. According to Andrew Ezergailis, the formation of a unit from local men to serve as a catalyst of Jew-baiting became necessary when the policy of inciting Latvians to spontaneous attacks on Jews had failed.<sup>17</sup> The Germans had not intended it to be a permanent unit; however, developments at the front and the activation of Soviet partisans in the East made them change their plans.<sup>18</sup>

In 1941, the Arājs Commando guarded various SD facilities, took part in the arrests and executions of civilians in Rīga and elsewhere in Latvia. In February 1942, the unit was considerably increased in size. In March 1942, two companies were formed and sent to the SD school in Fürstenberg for training.<sup>19</sup> After three months of training one unit returned to Rīga and was assigned to guard various facilities, including the Salaspils and Jumpravmuiža Concentration Camps, and assist in the execution of Jews transferred from Western Europe. Another unit was assigned to take part in the annihilation of Jews and combat partisans in the proximity of Minsk. In early 1942, two companies were transferred to Nasva.<sup>20</sup> In 1943–44, members of the Commando continued to take part in operations against partisans in Russia, Belorussia, the frontier regions of Poland and Latgale while some units were transferred to the front at Nevel in 1943. In September 1943, some members of the Commando were assigned to guard the Vilnius Ghetto. In 1944, as the Red Army approached Rīga, a part of the Commando was incorporated into the Latvian Legion; another unit was transferred to Germany, where they also joined the Legion at a later date; some others were assigned to the local SD units in Liepāja and Ventspils, where they served until the capitulation of Germany.

For the purposes of my analysis all members of Arājs Commando are divided in groups by the years of their enlistment in the unit: 1941, 1942 and 1943–44. Of the 352 convicted members, 42 enlisted in 1941, 262 in 1942, 42 in 1943 and 6 in 1944.

The operation of the Arājs Commando in 1941 is first and foremost associated with crimes against the Jews in Latvia. It must be noted, though, that members of the Arājs Commando were not the only ones convicted for the murders of Jews in Latvia.

The maximum membership of the Commando in 1941 could have reached 300 men.<sup>21</sup> This figure is mentioned by Konstantīns Kaķis, Head of the Operations Department until 15 August 1941.<sup>22</sup> Edgars Jurītis, who was an assistant accountant from mid July 1941 and later became deputy head of the Logistics Department, also testifies to the membership of about 300 men.<sup>23</sup> According to some testimonies, however, in 1941 the Commando was comprised of approximately 150–180 members. This figure was supplied by Voldemārs Zariņš, who was Head of Investigation Department of the Commando for a period in 1941.<sup>24</sup> The figures depend on which month of 1941 each person had in mind. A member of the Commando, Jānis Iezēns, testified that in late 1941, on instructions of the German authorities, the size of the Commando had been dramatically reduced, so that by December 1941 only one company comprising about 50–60 people was left. In early 1942, however, when the Soviet troops breached the German front in the south at Rostov, the German authorities ordered to increase the membership of the Commando again.<sup>25</sup>

Who was then the “average” member of the Arājs Commando? Was he “a member of a student fraternity, the Thundercross organization, a staunch anti-Semite,” as the Soviet propaganda publications presented him?<sup>26</sup> Or was he in fact more often than not a young man, frustrated by the rapid change of two occupation regimes, in search for a means of survival, failing to understand thoroughly that everyone had to or would have to answer for their behavior?

**TABLE 1: The Convicted Members by Year of Birth**

Year of birth	Year of enlistment			Total
	1941	1942	1943—44	
before 1910	22	37	6	65
1911	0	8	0	8
1912	3	7	2	12
1913	0	7	4	11
1914	1	9	1	11
1915	3	7	4	14
1916	1	13	1	15
1917	2	9	3	14
1918	5		14	2
1919	2	16	3	21

Year of birth	Year of enlistment			Total
	1941	1942	1943—44	
1920	1	23	3	27
1921	1	30	0	31
1922	0	22	5	27
1923	0	24	5	29
1924	1	18	3	22
1925	0	16	3	19
1926	0	2	3	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>262</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>352</b>

According to data in criminal files on 1941, the membership tended to be older than in the subsequent years. It was because the top personnel of the Commando, members of the former Latvian Army and staff of the Logistics Department, were older than the others. This aspect is also related to their motivation for volunteering, which will be discussed later.

Almost half of the convicted members of the Arājs Commando (ca 45%) were born between 1920 and 1925, which means that in 1941–42 they were 16–21 years old. People of that age, particularly if they have been brought up “in law-abiding spirit,” are easier to manipulate. The authoritarian Ulmanis regime, under which they went to school and formed their world view, did not encourage development of an independent, politically free way of thinking either.

**TABLE 2: Education of the Convicted Members Enlisted in 1941–44 in %**

Education	1941	1942	1943–44
Unfinished elementary education	16.70	19.70	16.70
Elementary education	19.00	38.80	41.60
Incomplete secondary education	9.50	22.50	14.60
Secondary education	31.00	13.70	10.40
Finished or unfinished post-secondary education	23.80	5.30	16.70
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

The new recruits of 1941 had the highest average level of education. Approximately 40% had completed or incomplete secondary education, while 24% had finished or unfinished post-secondary education. It must be noted that in 1941 the proportion of the membership with higher education, in fact, was the highest. In July–August 1941, the Arājs Commando had an Investigation Department, which employed lawyers and students. In September 1941, the Department was closed and a part of its former staff transferred to the SD. Heads of Departments (there were three of them: Operations, Logistics and Investigation, which was later transformed into Information and General Department) also had finished or unfinished post-secondary education. However, many of them were not brought to trial for different reasons (killed in battles against partisans or the Red Army, fled to Germany at the end of the war, etc.). Testimonies show that some of the students who had been in the Commando early on left it in 1941. It can be assumed that their actual assignments in 1941 had not met their expectations, i.e. they had not expected to be involved in the murder of civilians.

In 1942, the proportion of members with secondary and higher education dramatically decreased. While in 1941 31% of the members had secondary and 23.8% had finished or unfinished post-secondary, in 1942 only 13.7% had graduated from secondary school and only 5.3% had any university education. The decrease of the education level among the membership of the Commando shows that the Commando had become unattractive for well-educated people. Among the volunteers of 1942, the proportion of those who had suspended their studies in secondary school was larger than a year earlier. However, the level of education among the new recruits in 1943–44 increased (at that time it could be described as a Commando only in theory) compared to 1942, because many hoped to use it as a cover to avoid mobilization into the German army.

## **Occupation of the Members of the Arājs Commando before Enlistment**

To obtain a basis of comparison by occupation, the following groups were established: laborers, white-collar workers, former army and police personnel, students, farmers (farm owners, farmhands) and recruits without a definite occupation. Such a division is based both on the information available and the objectives of the study.

Compared to other occupations, the proportion of laborers was always the largest. In 1942, however it was higher than in 1941 and 1943–44. The proportion of former soldiers and policemen, students and white-collar employees was the highest in 1941, as compared to 1942–44. The latter group represented a wide spectrum of professions.

TABLE 3: **Convicted Members by Occupation\***

Year of enlistment		
1941	1942	1943–44
1. laborers	1. laborers	1. laborers
2. white-collar employees	2. white-collar employees	2. without a definite occupation
3. former army and police personnel	3. farmers	3. white-collar employees
4. students	4. without a definite occupation	4. former army and police personnel
	5. former army and police personnel	5. students
	6. students	6. farmers

\* Arranged in descending order.

In 1942, the proportion of laborers was the highest, and another group that had been missing in 1941 – farmers – joined the unit. The group of those without a definite occupation also became larger. The proportion of students, former soldiers and policemen was insignificant in this year. In 1943, the proportion of laborers (compared to 1942) decreased, while that of white-collar workers increased. The group of those who had no definite occupation was the largest this year compared to other years.

The criminal files fail to confirm that a large proportion of the convicted Arājs men had been members of the Thundercross organization and student fraternities. Among the convicted there were only eight members of fraternities and four representatives of the Thundercross, although several other men who were not brought to trial also had been members of student fraternities, for example, Kārlis Ozols, Arveds Dikmanis, Voldemārs Elmuts, Boriss Kintslers and others.<sup>27</sup>

In the course of my research some criminal files turned out to be an insufficient source to establish why a particular convict had volunteered for the Commando. However, the fact of voluntary enlistment was always fixed. They all were volunteers, yet, on many occasions, volunteering had been formal and prompted by ideology and propaganda of the occupation authorities, affected by pressures and threats that had placed the person's physical existence at risk. In the conditions of a twice-occupied country, it is difficult to establish clear criteria of voluntary choice.

TABLE 4: The Most Typical Reasons Given for Enlistment

Year	Motivation	Previous occupation
1941	Responded to an appeal published in newspaper <i>Tēvija</i> (Fatherland).	Laborer.
	Did not wish to do manual work, was eager to advance in life, was disposed against the Soviet rule, read the appeal in <i>Tēvija</i> .	Locksmith at factory VEF.
	Joined on his acquaintance's advice, who also served in the Commando; had no satisfactory job at that time; was hostile against the Soviet regime.	Laborer, locksmith.
	Read an appeal in a newspaper for former policemen to report to the 1 <sup>st</sup> Police station, responded to it and in a couple of days was transferred to the Arājs Commando.	Had worked in Rīga 1 <sup>st</sup> Police station.
	Responded to an appeal on radio; wished also to receive a license to own a hunting gun.	Cashier.
	Acquaintance had told him that a special unit was being formed, the task of which it would be to fight against the Red Army. Both men applied.	Construction technician.
	Volunteered on his friend's recommendation; was hostile towards Jews, because in 1940 they had arrested many Latvians.	Draftsman in a building contractor's office.
	Enlisted on Arājs' advice, whom he vaguely knew personally; in 1941 his sister's family, including her baby, had been deported, he wished to take revenge upon the Soviet regime for it.	Accountant.
	At first became a member of a "Self-Defense" unit; volunteered on his own initiative; claims to have known Arājs personally.	Reporter, member of student fraternity Letonija.
	An acquaintance advised to volunteer, because an order had been issued that all students had to work.	Economy student at the University of Latvia, accountant.
	Had heard that those who would serve in German units, would be have their property restituted that the Soviets had nationalized.	Owned and ran a shop.
	Had been fired, met an acquaintance who advised him to join the SD and told him that work there was not difficult and the wages were good.	Laborer, weaver in a factory.

Year	Motivation	Previous occupation
1942	As a member of the [communist] Workers' Guard was arrested after the German occupation and through Labor Exchange sent to East Prussia in October 1941, where he stayed until 1942. After his return to Rīga was assigned to a sewage system construction crew, where he worked until he fell ill and consequently was unemployed till February 1942. In a restaurant met an acquaintance who served in the SD and who advised him to join the unit, telling him that he would have to serve in the German army anyway.	Laborer.
	Wished to enter the University of Latvia, for which he needed a background of 1 year of service in police, German army or <i>Reichsarbeitsdienst</i> , and chose the Latvian Security Police. Service in Auxiliary Police had been advertised at his school.	Graduated from secondary school in 1942.
	An acquaintance advised to volunteer because food was good and no physical labor was required. Thought that in Arājs Commando he would have to fulfill guard functions only.	Laborer.
	Was hostile towards the Soviet regime and yielded to the influence of German propaganda. In early 1942 the German occupation authorities announced the formation of a special Latvian military unit headed by an officer of the Latvian Army, Arājs, to fight against the Red Army and Bolsheviks.	Worker in a bakery (pastry-cook).
	Was unemployed; because he lost his warm clothes in a card-game, he did not report back to work and was dismissed. Two of his neighbors were SD policemen who told him he would be in trouble if he had no job. (His mother and sister had been active supporters of the Soviet regime.) He expected to be assigned to police functions in Rīga. Sister had been a typist in Central Committee of Young Communist League, mother had worked for MOPR [an international aid organization for revolution fighters] – both had evacuated to the Soviet Union.	Courier.
	Enlisted on the recommendation of an acquaintance, who had come on leave after graduation from the Fürstenberg school (dressed in army uniform), and his village elder, for whom he worked and who also employed a prisoner of war.	Farmhand.

Year	Motivation	Previous occupation
	Had been a colleague of the Leja brothers, who had joined the Arājs Commando earlier and had visited the factory and boasted that they lived well, were materially provided for and the service was easy. Told him to quit the drudgery at the factory and volunteer for the SD instead.	Laborer.
	Men of approximately his age had been called together in the Bebrene village school, where the village elder and the police chief had urged them to join the German army and Police. He had voiced his agreement to do so and later had been summoned for medical check-up and thereafter assigned to the Arājs Commando in the SD police.	Farmer.
	Worked on his father's farm till May 1942, when he was summoned by the Military Commander of Jēkabpils District. After the medical check-up had pronounced him fit for military service, Arājs (who was in Jēkabpils at that time but whom the man did not know yet) said he would henceforth serve under him.	Farmer.
	Volunteered for the Arājs Commando because he wished to be a soldier and fight against the Soviet Union (his cousin had been deported) but no other units accepted men as young as he (he was 17).	Laborer.
	He had been assigned from his job to work in Tallinn and did not wish to go. He asked his father, who served in the 22 <sup>nd</sup> Police Battalion, to help him to get into the Police Battalion too. The father told him the Battalion intended to go to Russia soon and advised him to enlist in the SD Police instead.	Laborer.
	There had been rumors afloat in early 1942 that Latvians would be mobilized into the German army, those who ran small farms in the first instance. This had been the reason for his volunteering for the Arājs Commando. Other men from Mērdzene village also had enlisted together with him.	Farmer.
	Had been studying at a trade school in 1941–42. In February 1942, a German came to the school and together with the principal addressed the students urging them to fight against the Communists and join the voluntary Latvian unit. Thus he and one of his schoolmates had applied at Valdemāra iela 19.	Student at a trade school.

Year	Motivation	Previous occupation
	Transferred from a police battalion to the Arājs Commando because he did not wish to go to the front.	White-collar employee.
	Wished to improve his living standard and get a better job. Thought that the Arājs Commando was exclusively a police unit and wanted to enroll at the criminal police school eventually.	Apprentice at a mechanic workshop.
	Was unemployed; feared he might be sent to forced labor to Germany. His brother had been in the same fraternity as Arājs, and he advised him to turn to Arājs.	Graduated from secondary school in 1941. From September 1941 worked in the office of Rīga Central prison. Was fired in December 1941 for smuggling cigarettes into the prison.
	After a quarrel with his father and stepmother left for Rīga because he had heard that members of the Arājs Commando enjoyed good living standards, and he wished to live comfortably.	Worked at his father's farm.
1943–44	To avoid conscription into the Legion, volunteered for the Arājs Commando on the advice of his football teammate Būmanis. Service in the Arājs Commando left him enough time to develop his football skills.	No definite occupation.
	To save himself from mobilization into the German army, with the assistance of Alberts Jerums joined the Broks Orchestra that had been established under the Arājs Commando (musicians' platoon).	Musician, student.
	Had been the director of factory no. 84 under the Soviet regime. After the arrival of the Germans, the SD started to show interest in him. In October 1941 he took the job of a jailer. In 1943 he broke his leg and was on sick leave. Having reported back to his job he found out that the jailers had been subordinated to the Arājs Commando.	No definite occupation.

Year	Motivation	Previous occupation
	Political prisoners from Valmiera were transferred to the Salaspils [Concentration] Camp in September 1943, and therefore 7 or 8 jailers were transferred to the Arājs Commando.	Casual worker, in March 1942 volunteered as a jailer in Valmiera Concentration Camp to get a better wage.
	In March 1943 was mobilized into the German army. When soldiers were offered to volunteer for the Arājs Commando, he applied to avoid going to the front.	Construction technician.
	Nikolajs Pūliņš had advised him to do so because in order to take a leading position in "Līdumnieks" one needed a record of having fought at the front.	No definite occupation.
	He and his friend had decided to volunteer together because they liked the uniform, the fact that they would get a salary, free cigarettes and brandy and thought that this would save them from going to the front.	Studied at a trade school and worked at a textile factory.

These examples show how difficult it is to systematize these motives, since many men mentioned several reasons for volunteering, and we cannot know which reason had been the decisive one. However, they allow us to establish the most typical trends for each year.

In 1941, the primary reasons for volunteering for the Commando were propaganda and hostile disposal against the Soviet rule. As early as 4 July 1941, the newspaper *Tēvija* appealed to "nationally thinking Latvians" and in particular to "members of the Thundercross, students, officers, national guards and those who wished to take an active part in cleansing our country from harmful elements." For this reason, the proportion of students, former military and police officers among the members was highest in 1941. For the latter it presented an opportunity to work in their profession, which they had been denied during the Soviet occupation. No one, at least among the rank-and-file, was aware of the tasks the unit would in fact have to perform. Many expected to be assigned to ordinary police functions.<sup>28</sup> When the massacres took place, it was forbidden to speak about them. Jānis Brencis (enlisted in early July 1941) testified that Arājs had called together all new recruits to brief them on the functions of the Commando, formulating them as follows: "To fight against the units of the Red Army that have fallen behind, against Soviet activists and other supporters of the Soviet regime that have stayed in the rear of the German troops and maintain order in Rīga as instructed by

the German occupants.”<sup>29</sup> This is probably the reason why in 1942, when the actual functions of the unit could no longer be kept secret, there were almost no students left in the Commando and the membership tended to be much younger in age.

How far would the members of the Commando have been *ready* to go on their own accord if they did not have to obey instructions from SD? Files of the criminal cases reveal that for one part of the unit the prospect of being assigned to executions of activists of 1940–41 had been acceptable and corresponded to their expectations of their functions. Leonīds Jansons said: “First we thought that only those individuals who were found particularly guilty of certain offenses would be executed, but later we realized that a countless number of people would be killed.” Asked about the popular reaction to these massacres, he replied that no obvious reaction followed from the civilian population. People, though indignant, were scared. A proportion of Latvians did not mind the idea of the Jews being isolated from the public, however, the killing of Jews did not meet with popular support.”<sup>30</sup> Some men said they could not have pictured themselves being assigned to killing women and children. Osvalds Eliņš described his discussion with Voldemārs Elmuts regarding the massacre of the Jews in Biķernieki, in the course of which they both had agreed that it was unacceptable to execute people without a trial.<sup>31</sup> The comprehensive and skillfully pursued anti-Semitic propaganda found fruitful soil, and the propagated views let out roots in the minds of many people. Some accepted the propagated views as their own. A member of the Arājs Commando admitted in his written testimony: “... only because of the folly of my youth I took part in the killing of the Jews. I have reached the conclusion that such executions do not benefit a cultured man. The Jews do not need to be exterminated, but should instead be systematically trained to work, in other words, they should be broken of the habit of parasitism so that they become useful members of society.”<sup>32</sup> Newspapers banded about phrases such as “a parasite and a sponger of a Jew, overfed with Latvian butter and eggs,” etc., and the young man, probably unawares, accepted this ideology. Brainwashing was further pursued within the Commando. L. Jansons testified that a strong dislike for Jews was cultivated in the unit, and men soon came to realize that extreme means would be applied against them. Arājs is reported to have told his men before the burning of the synagogue in Gogoļa iela (Gogol Street): “Since the people of Rīga hate Jews we must demonstrate our position by setting fire to the synagogue so that nothing of the Jewish culture remains.”<sup>33</sup> Auseklis Imants Dzirkalns testifies that students at the SD Fürstenberg School were taught that “Jews were living on other nations and that they were parasites and should be done away with forever.”<sup>34</sup>

Some of the men who had enlisted in the Commando in 1941 had in fact volunteered for a Self-Defense group or applied for a job at a police station and had been later transferred to the Arājs Commando. Several men mention their personal acquaintanceship

with Arājs. Several others mention Soviet repressions against their relatives as the reason for their membership in the Arājs Commando, but only one person admitted that he had been driven by his hatred for the Jews because they had arrested many Latvians in 1940.

By 1942, the situation in Latvia had changed in many ways. Slogans that had touched the patriotic feelings of Latvians in 1941 had lost their earlier impact. Public opinion had formed about the Arājs unit, and it was far from positive. The unit's functions had also changed. Thus a need arose to change the tactics in order to recruit new members. The choice of the Arājs Commando was also stimulated by the fact that at that time the Reich faced a general lack in human resources and had need for fresh labor force and new police units. Many institutions were busy "fishing" for laborers under the auspices of the Labor Service after the enactment of the order issued by Alfred Rosenberg on 19 December 1941 to the effect that "all residents of the occupied Eastern areas over 18 years of age are subject to work duty within the limits of their capacities." In compliance with the edict workers could be assigned to work far from their homes. In February 1942 a mass-scale recruitment campaign for police (*Schutzmannschaften*) battalions began, and rumors about imminent service in the German army were circulating. March and April 1942 were marked by the "new farmers' campaign," and in May–June 1942 the Latgalian forced labor campaign took place.<sup>35</sup> All this added to the uncertainty about the future and made people increasingly aware of the threats to their physical existence. The Arājs Commando also was in need of fresh recruits, because already in the winter of 1941 some units had been sent to the front. In March 1942, two companies were to be made up (preferably of young, strong and educated men) to be sent for training to the SD Fürstenberg School in Germany.

The Soviet occupation 1940–41 already had left an impact and changed not only the occupation patterns but entire lives of many people; the German occupation and conditions of war continued these changes further. Before they had time to graduate from schools and master the professions of their choice, many young people were forced to make a decision that eventually decided their entire lives and the destinies of others.

A situation of complete uncertainty about true national interests, daily observations of traditional moral values being trampled down and such behavior being accepted by the authorities can make a man totally frustrated, particularly if he is young. His only concern is to survive another day, which is natural under conditions of war. The imminent danger of today seems more threatening than the problems that may loom tomorrow. Many men did not suppose that times would change. This attitude is reflected also in the reasons they have given for enlisting in the Arājs Commando.

Many of the volunteers for the Arājs Commando in 1942 had previously had jobs that required little or no qualification and involved poorly rewarded hard physical labor. Some of this category had walked away from their jobs that had not been to their liking. For others trouble was looming for profiteering, pilfering, or because they or their relatives had

been somehow connected with the Soviet authorities. If the testimonies may be trusted, there had been instances of recruitment campaigns for police battalions in villages, the volunteers being enlisted instead in the SD after they had passed the medical check-up. In 1942, recommendations of acquaintances continued to rank among the reasons for enlisting. Several people were interested in training at a “police school” on the basis of advertisements. Among the volunteers were also adventurers and men who wished to live comfortably with little effort and with no scruples about the means to achieve their ends.

In 1942, facing a choice between forced labor in Germany or service in a police battalion, preference was given to the Arājs Commando because it offered better material rewards, including free alcohol and cigarettes, the chance to reside at home and a reason to assume that this service would save members from being sent to the front. All things considered, those who served in the Arājs Commando were in a privileged position compared to others. The recruits of 1943–44 mention their wish to avoid conscription into the Legion and going to the front as the main reason for enlisting, since service in the Arājs Commando gave them hope that they would be allowed to stay in Latvia and work there as guards. In 1943–44 many jailers were simply transferred to this unit from their previous jobs.

Starting about mid-1944, the Arājs Commando was gradually disbanded. A part of its members were transferred to the Legion. Approximately half of the convicted members reported that they had subsequently served in the Legion. A number of those who had remained in SD service in Latvia were assigned to SD divisions in Ventspils and Liepāja, where eventually some of them joined the *Jagdverband* group.<sup>36</sup>

Eighteen percent of the membership of the Arājs Commando deserted. In 1943 it happened primarily by failing to report back from furlough. Files of the criminal cases for the most part fail to mention motives for deserting. Some of the reasons were: unwillingness to go to the front, imminent troubles for petty offenses, such as smuggling in things for prisoners, a conflict with the Germans, etc. The main motive for deserting in 1944–45 was the attempt to save oneself from being sent to Germany.

The fate of the deserters depended on whether they were caught. If a deserter was captured, his destination was imprisonment in the Salaspils Concentration Camp and eventually either assignment to the Legion or a labor battalion, or in some cases the Stutthof Concentration Camp. Deserters who were not captured, fearing arrest, eventually volunteered either for the *Jagdverband* or the Legion. A few deserters were eventually mobilized in the Red Army.<sup>37</sup> In the latter case they had concealed their former membership in the Arājs Commando. Two deserters, who were recruited in the Red Army and eventually arrested (one in November 1945, the other in April 1947), were awarded with medals: one “For Victory over Germany” and “For the Capture of Berlin,” the other “For Valor.” After the capitulation of Germany some of the former members joined armed groups, while others went into hiding.

## Penalties

What were the penalties imposed on members of the Arājs Commando?

TABLE 5: Penalties by Years of Enlistment in the Arājs Commando

Imposed penalty	1941		1942		1943–44	
	number of sentenced persons	% of the total	number of sentenced persons	% of the total	number of sentenced persons	% of the total
10 years	6	14.20	51	19.50	19	40.40
15 years	2	4.70	8	3.00	0	0
15-18 years (penal servitude)	5	11.90	35	13.40	3	6.40
20 years (penal servitude)	3	7.40	32	12.20	1	2.1
25 years	18	42.80	116	44.30	22	46.80
Death penalty	8(9*)	19.00	20 (32*)	7.60	2(3*)	4.30
Total	42	100.0	262	100.0	47**	100.0

\* Figure before the abolition of death penalty in 1947.

\*\* One case was suspended

Having summarized 352 criminal cases, we obtain the following picture: the accused were for the most part sentenced in compliance with Article 58–1a of the Criminal Code of the Russian Soviet Federal Socialist Republic (high treason), while to about 24% of men the 19 April 1943 Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the USSR was applied, titled “On penalties to be imposed on German Nazi malefactors found guilty of killing and torture of Soviet civilians and captive Red Army soldiers, on spies, traitors of the Fatherland from the ranks of Soviet citizens and on their supporters.”<sup>38</sup> The defendants sentenced on the basis of Article 1 of the Decree were executed. Article 2 prescribed harsh regime hard labor (*katorga*), usually for 15 to 20 years.<sup>39</sup> The Decree of 1943 was applied to 33% of those members of the Arājs Commando who had enlisted in 1941, to about 26% of the recruits of 1942 and to about 6% of the volunteers of 1943–44. The Decree most often was applied to those who were arrested in 1944 (50%) and 1945 (60%). After 1948 it was no longer applied in Latvia.

As testified by the files of criminal cases, the most frequently imposed penalty (44% of cases) was 25 years of hard labor plus restriction of political rights for 5 years and confiscation of property. 21% of defendants were sentenced to 10 years in reformatory

labor camp.<sup>40</sup> 12% were sentenced to death and 8.50% were actually executed. The families of men sentenced to death were repressed. Compared by years of enlistment in the Arājs Commando, on the whole the volunteers of 1941 suffered the severest penalties, while verdicts on the volunteers of the later years were less harsh.

The penalty, however, depended also on the time of the trial. The death penalty was most often imposed in 1945 (on 30% of the arrested Arājs men, while only 7% of them had joined the unit in 1941). Proceedings of the criminal cases allow the assumption that a much larger number of Arājs men would have been sentenced to death, were it not for the abolition of the death penalty by the Decree of 1947, because half of the convicted Arājs Commando members were arrested precisely between the years 1947 and 1949. (In 1950, however, "at the request of the working people" the death penalty was restored for high treason). Since between the years 1947 and 1949 the death penalty was inapplicable, the severest possible of the available penalties was very often imposed instead. Thus of those who were arrested in 1947 half were sentenced to 25 years of reformatory labor and 30% to hard labor. Of those arrested in 1948, 92% were sentenced to 25 years in reformatory labor camp and of those in 1949 – 77%.

Files of the criminal cases are not a sufficient source to establish accurately the differences in the harshness of punishment between those members of the Commando who were accused (but not necessarily actually guilty) of the execution of civilians and those who were not charged with participation in such operations. Provisory data show that the difference was insignificant and the penalty primarily depended on the time of the trial. For instance, in 1945 Andrejs Lielmanis, who had been a storekeeper at an ammunition depot before being dismissed as unsuitable for the job, was sentenced to 15 years of hard labor, while Kārlis Hercogs, who had been a doctor's assistant between February 1942 and January 1943 and in June 1942 had served as a guard securing the massacre of civilians in Biķernieki, was sentenced to death.

The cases of the Arājs Commando members most often were tried by military tribunals and later (in late 1950s and 1960s) by the Supreme Court of the Latvian SSR, while 41 cases, or 12%, were transferred to the Special Assembly (Commission) of the USSR Interior People's Commissariat (NKVD). The latter institution was referred to whenever "prosecution was based on personal confession and indirect testimony by witnesses," "all witnesses had been convicted earlier and were serving their terms in remote camps of MGB (State Security Ministry) of USSR and their summoning as witnesses was not purposeful," "operative goals required it," "the person who had been recruited as an agent for operative needs had failed to work honestly for the authorities of MGB," or "the person had been an agent and in this capacity unmasked himself and supplied wrong information."

## Conclusions

The research dealing with the convicted members of Arājs Commando begins to deal with and clear up several controversial issues pertaining to the period of Nazi occupation in Latvia.

1. The existence of the presumed direct link between the killing of Jews and the events of the first Soviet occupation of Latvia 1940–41, the Year of Terror, has not been confirmed. The presence of a certain element of revenge cannot be excluded; however, as attested by the files of criminal cases, revenge was not the main reason for volunteering for the Commando. The desire to take revenge on the Jews was much less a motivation than hatred against the Soviet regime, the communists, etc. While the reliability of replies can be doubted, it should be taken into account that at the time when the interrogations took place it was much more dangerous to admit the wish to take revenge on the Soviet regime than to give other reasons.
2. Although certain differences exist (in the level of education and occupation before enlisting) between those who volunteered in 1941 and those who joined later, the “average” member of the Commando was a young man, a laborer without a secondary school education who enlisted in the Commando in 1941 mostly under the influence of propaganda and expecting thus to be able to help Latvia to regain its independence. While those who volunteered for the Commando at the outset of its existence did not know their eventual duties, those who joined later were more or less aware of their functions. Those who enlisted later tended to be socially and morally marginalized. In 1942–44 their choice was dictated by existential, selfish motives, low moral standards or no standards at all. The ability of such men to assess their behavior adequately was further diminished by the official endorsement of their activities, the extensive propaganda and by the failure of moral authorities to protest, no matter how difficult it might have been under the circumstances. It provided justification for the activities of these young immature men, at least from their own perspective.
3. Although a large proportion of Arājs’ men never committed any crimes against humanity, they suffered severe punishment. Almost a half of the membership of the Commando who stood trial were sentenced to 25 years in reformatory labor camp.
4. The line between voluntary choice and compulsion was blurred by the double occupation of Latvia. On the one hand, Arājs men were volunteers; on the other – conditions that enhanced making such choice were in place. They were volunteers only to the extent that they were not forced to choose that precise unit. Yet, no matter what the individual motives were, they do not justify participation in achieving the goals of German occupation authorities.
5. The Soviet regime and its judicial system, whose primary interest was the implementation of state policy rather than finding out the truth, have considerably weakened our chances of establishing the truth regarding the crimes committed in Latvia under the Nazi regime.



**UNDER SOVIET UNION  
1944–1991**







*Heinrihs Strods*

## **Sovietization of Latvia 1944–1991**

The second occupation of Latvia (1944–1991) was a continuation of the occupation and annexation of Latvia by the Soviet Union begun in 1940 on the basis of the secret protocols attached to the Hitler–Stalin Pact of 23 August 1939 and with the ambivalent acquiescence of the Western Allies. Its pervasive form was that of sovietization – comprising political takeover, social makeover and colonization.<sup>1</sup>

In English, the word “to sovietize” means “1: to bring under Soviet control 2: to force into conformity with Soviet cultural patterns or governmental policies.”<sup>2</sup> In Latvian terminology, “sovietization” means “the introduction and propagation of the forms of public life and work methods typical for the Soviet Union.”<sup>3</sup> Because in 1921 the soviets (workers’ councils) had come under the control of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks), sovietization in practice meant the enforcement of the control of this repressive totalitarian institution. Thus, in the domestic politics of the USSR, sovietization implied the subjugation of politics, economy and culture to Communist totalitarianism. In foreign politics sovietization became a method that the USSR employed for the incorporation of other states (German *Gleichschaltung*) in the process of building its imperial domination over the world.

In the case of Latvia, sovietization was comprised of the following elements:

1. Introduction of USSR administrative and economic systems.
2. Subjugation of Latvia to the economic and political needs of the USSR.
3. Militarization.
4. Colonization of Latvia by hundreds of thousands of Russian-speaking immigrants.
5. Destruction of traditional social structure through genocide and Russification.
6. Total control over internal means of communication and contacts with foreign countries.
7. Destruction of established political, economic and cultural traditions.

The post-1944 sovietization of Latvia can be divided in several basic phases. In the first phase (1944–46), the occupants tried first and foremost to establish their military, political and administrative power and rule. Administrative, educational and other

institutions were set up, following the Soviet model. In the second phase (1947–50), especially after the mass deportation in 1949, the occupation power launched the sovietization of Latvia's countryside through "overall collectivization." In the third, post-1950, phase of sovietization, the occupation power established large industrial enterprises to cater to the needs of the Soviet Union and imported hundreds of thousands of laborers, thus accomplishing the "internationalization" of Latvia's industry and the colonization of Latvia.

## Post-Sovietization Historiography

After the collapse of the USSR, historical reassessment of sovietization in Latvia and Russia has been characterized above all by the difficulty of historians to overcome their respective nations' sense of history and their own involvement in it, which has resulted in a lack of general consensus concerning the aims and the results of sovietization. The attitude of historians towards the sovietization of Latvia has ranged from admiration (in Russian patriotic literature) to condemnation (in Latvian democratic literature). These views to a certain extent are rooted in stereotypes existing among the older generation of both nations that are mostly negative among Latvians and positive among Russians.<sup>4</sup>

The positive view of sovietization had been cultivated by the Communist Party already from the late 1930s on as an element of the party's national ideology aimed at developing Russian patriotism in the form of a cult and the driving force of the centralized state.<sup>5</sup> Thus, some Russian historians still feel nostalgia for the collapsed empire, but, failing for the moment to see the new prospects for their state, they cannot find any new basis for assessing their recent past. Therefore the reassessment of the history of the USSR in Russia lags behind the respective processes in the Baltic states, where such a basis is provided by the renewal of democratic institutions and civic societies.

While today the majority of Russian historians admit that the Baltic states were occupied, they tend to deny the fact that there were two totalitarian dictatorships – of the Bolsheviks and of the Nazis<sup>6</sup> – and that the sovietization of Latvia had an ethnic Russian character. Russian authorities, too, discourage reevaluation of the past, sovietization included.<sup>7</sup> It will be difficult, if not impossible, to normalize Latvian–Russian relations as long as Russia will insist on a past interpretation of the occupation and sovietization of Latvia that is incompatible with historical facts.

Because one of the bulwarks of sovietization of Latvia in the occupation years was the exaggeration of the role of communist political history of Latvia, i.e. the mythologization of the history of the Soviet period, the political history of sovietization has been the focus of research in Latvia and also in several other countries of the former Communist camp.<sup>8</sup> The existing publications on the sovietization of Latvia represent progress in

this regard, but they also share three basic shortcomings: (1) insufficient reference to materials in Russian archives; (2) insufficient focus on the sovietization of economy, social sphere and culture and (3) insufficient attention to the antecedents of sovietization before the takeover in 1940 and again in 1944.

Contemporary Latvian historiography also seems to have paid insufficient attention to the internal – psychological, social and even ethno-psychological – causes of sovietization that external forces tried to exploit. Members of my “conformist generation,” as academician Jānis Stradiņš has named it, even those not being conformists at heart, abstain to a greater or lesser degree from calling the events in the history of the recent empire by their right names.

## **Historical Roots of Sovietization**

The sovietization of Latvia cannot not be understood without knowing the roots of the phenomenon in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and its recent pre-history in twentieth-century Russia. The so-called socialist industrialization, collectivization and Soviet cultural revolution, as well as colonization that took place within the framework of sovietization, was in essence the continuation of the complex of economic and cultural measures formerly pursued by the Russian Empire towards the goal of melding the Baltic area into the Empire forever, or, speaking in the words of Empress Catharine II, making it no longer look like a wolf in a flock of sheep. One of the features of sovietization was the subjugation of the process exclusively to the imperial ideological and colonial interests of USSR Communist totalitarianism, without giving consideration to the suitability and economic feasibility of the USSR's model of sovietization in other countries. Thus sovietization totally rejected private property, private initiative, religion, as well as Western cultural and spiritual values that had existed in Latvia for centuries.

Some key elements of what later became known as sovietization had emerged in Russia even before the 1917 Bolshevik coup. Such was the militarization and homogenization of the entire society, which was launched in Russia as early as under Tsar Peter I, the Great (1682–1725). Already under Tsar Nicholas I (1796–1855) the entire Russian society was shaped to think in a uniform way. This process was aided by an old Russian tradition: the consolidation of power in the head of the state, who was simultaneously the supreme commander of the military forces. The Communist rulers also made use of traditional messianic Russian patriotism to advance sovietization: the instrumentalization of the Russian language as the global language of socialism and the proclamation of a mono-faith in the global victory of socialism leading to the perfection of Communism under the leadership of the USSR. Thus the model of sovietization contained striking ethnic Russian elements.

In the USSR, which had replaced the Russian Empire, sovietization was carried out by a strictly centralized, semi-secret radical leftist organization: the Central Committee of the Communist Party (Bolsheviks) of the USSR (CPSU CC), headed by the Secretary General of its Politburo.<sup>9</sup> The CPSU CC was in control of the entire state, because all leading positions were occupied by members of the Communist Party. For this reason, the Communist Party should be regarded as the main force behind sovietization.

Although for one third of the duration of World War II the USSR was a supporter of Hitler's coalition, it came out of the war as part of the anti-Hitler coalition and took a politically important place among the four winners, expanding its territory and carrying out the sovietization of Central and East European states, including Latvia. In the post-war period the methods and rates of sovietization by the USSR were different in the territory of the former Russian Empire (Western Ukraine, Western Belorussia, the Baltic), in the countries once subordinated to the Empire (Finland and Poland) and in the newly conquered states (East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Romania and Hungary). After the victory over Nazi Germany in 1945, various versions of radical Communism based on the model of the CPSU spread in the Central-European countries occupied by the Soviet Union. In the countries or their parts designated as the Soviet "sphere of influence" in the Hitler–Stalin agreements of 1939, the Russian model of sovietization was imposed without substantial variations. However, in all areas, sovietization shares at least four common features, all without the characteristics of a constitutional state: (1) dictatorship of the Communist Party; (2) planned economy; (3) state terror and (4) the pursuit of the interests of Russian imperialism.<sup>10</sup>

Sovietization was rooted in the aspirations of the Soviet empire to develop a federation of socialistic countries on a European and eventually on a global scale. The method and rate of sovietization depended on the degree of pro-Soviet politicization and elements of resistance and partisan war in each respective newly conquered state. Although the sovietization of these states was advanced, first and foremost, by the rather obvious ghosts of the Russian Empire in USSR policies, sovietization in the so-called "sphere of influence," which the Soviet imperial forces laid greatest hopes on, was hampered by a partisan warfare that took place in the non-Russian states of the former Russian Empire.

## **The Sovietization of Latvia: Taking Control**

The sovietization of Latvia and the other two Baltic states from 1944 on consisted of occupation, annexation, integration and colonization. All these phases of sovietization were aimed at the political, economic and spiritual subjugation of Latvia to the totalitarian dictatorship of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. In the meanwhile, the Western

democracies continued their ambivalent policies toward the Baltic: *de facto* recognition of the occupation status, and *de jure* non-recognition of the annexation.

The sovietization model had been approved by the Politburo of the CPSU CC already on 1 October 1939 for application in Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia newly annexed from Poland.<sup>11</sup> The model was transferred to all states in the entire “sphere of influence” apportioned in the secret protocols of the 1939 Hitler–Stalin agreements and in Soviet propaganda referred to as “the new brotherly Soviet republics.”

The military reoccupation of Latvia began during World War II in 1944 and continued after the end of the war in 1945. During the war, which in Latvia ended with the armistice on 9 May 1945, the military presence was overwhelming. A large contingent of the Red Army was at the front. The rear was taken up with the forces of the USSR People’s Commissariat of the Interior (NKVD), USSR Border Guard and the counter-intelligence organization “Smersh.”<sup>12</sup> These forces greatly outnumbered their national partisan opponents, whose activity started as soon as the front had passed.<sup>13</sup> During the entire occupation period 1944–1991, and even afterward – until 1994 – the presence of large contingents of army, naval and air forces and rocket troops of the Red Army (as of 1946 – the Soviet Army) continued. The scope of the resources that the USSR invested in making the Baltic, Latvia in particular, into an important military outpost against the West has not yet been established; however, the surviving military buildings, facilities and rocket shafts testify that the investments were huge. The USSR was the world’s most militarized state, and Latvia was one of the centers of anti-Western militarization.<sup>14</sup> This military presence was one of the mainstays of sovietization.

Military occupation proceeded hand in hand with political occupation. The USSR trained and shipped to Latvia groups of sovietizers. Former residents of Latvia who had been evacuated to the USSR were engaged in these efforts. They could speak the local language and were familiar with the local situation. The first so-called “orggroups” (organizational groups) for the sovietization of Latvia consisted of heads of all central institutions of the Communist Party and the government of the Latvian SSR, as well as municipal and district divisions of the people’s commissariats. Included were both those who had served in these posts before and those who had been trained for this purpose in courses organized by the Latvian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) Central Committee (CPL CC<sup>15</sup>) in 1942–44. The “orggroups” followed the Red Army, which entered Latvia in July 1944. A group of 172 persons followed in the steps of the 1<sup>st</sup> Baltic front and departed from Moscow on 6 July 1944. Another group of 261 persons followed the 2<sup>nd</sup> Baltic Front and left Moscow on 13 July. On 15 July a group of the CPL CC departed from Moscow.<sup>16</sup> Altogether three “orggroups” were transferred to Latvia, with the total membership of 1966 persons, who had been approved for their jobs by the CPL CC and reviewed by the LSSR NKVD.

The administratively political sovietization of Latvia took place in 1944–45. On instructions from the USSR, a strictly centralized system of administration was established, whose basic unit was the civil parish council headed by a chairman and party organizer. Parishes were subordinated to district-level councils, which were subordinated to the respective district-level Committees of the CPL headed by a First Secretary. Districts and towns were subordinated to the LSSR Council of People's Commissars (CPC, later replaced by Council of Ministers – CM) and the CPL CC. Bolsheviks held absolute power on all three administrative levels, and heads of administrative structures and enterprises were completely subordinated to them, both through the Party and administrative structures.

The entire enterprise of sovietizing Latvia was under the aegis and control of the Politburo of the CPSU CC.<sup>17</sup> For this purpose, a Latvian office of the Politburo of the CPSU operated in Latvia from 1944 to 1947, to which the CPL CC was subordinated.<sup>18</sup> The Politburo of the CPL CC pursued the sovietization program both directly, as well as through subordinated power structures (first and foremost the KGB) and the “intellectual KGB” (State Censorship *GlavLit*). The Kremlin carefully concealed from public eyes the names of those Bolsheviks who had made erroneous decisions on behalf of the USSR Supreme Council or the Council of Ministers and later put the blame for all failures on the dismissed or deceased officials.<sup>19</sup> Mythologization of the existing system and the creation of Stalin's and later on of Khrushchev's and Brezhnev's cults became possible only by vilifying the preceding rulers.

Besides funding the construction of its colonial industry, Kremlin's oil dollars were also intensively channeled into the militarization of Latvia and the financing of the Latvian Communist Party. In the post-war years all financing required to accomplish the sovietization of Latvia was supplied by the CPSU to the CPL (Table 1).

TABLE 1: **Budget of the Latvian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) for 1945**<sup>20</sup>

No.		Rubles	%	Explanation
1	<b>Income</b>			
	1. Membership fees from 3079 members	750,000	4.09	The average membership fee is 243.58 rubles per year.
	2. Publishing of newspapers and magazines	0		
	3. Lectures and presentations	0		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>750,000</b>	<b>4.09</b>	Of expenditures.

No.		Rubles	%	Explanation
2	<b>Expenditures</b>			
	1. Administration	14,636,210	79.83%	
	2. Party education	1,410,400	7.69%	
	3. Maintenance	2,288,000	12.48%	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>18,334,600</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	Total expenditure.
3	<b>Subsidies</b>			
	1. Administratively organizational department of the CPSU CC	15,296,600	83.43%	
	2. State budget of Latvian SSR	2,288,000	12.47%	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>17,584,600</b>	<b>95.9%</b>	

Table 2 shows that in 1949 the Latvian Communist Party received as much as 21.2 million rubles (56%) from the CPSU, while, with the Kremlin's consent, it took 3.9 million rubles (10.5% of expenditures) from the budget of the Latvian SSR. Both these subsidies summed together, the Bolsheviks received 25.2 million rubles that constituted 66.5% of the total income of the Party.

**TABLE 2: Budget of the Latvian Communist Party (Bolsheviks)  
for 1949<sup>2</sup>**

No.		Thousands of rubles	%
1	<b>Income</b>		
	1. Membership fees	9,500	25.0
	2. Publishing of newspapers, magazines and books	3,137	8.3
	3. Paid lectures	25	0.06
	4. Other	50	0.13
	<b>Total</b>	<b>12,712</b>	<b>33.5</b>

No.		Thousands of rubles	%
2	<b>Expenditures</b>		
	1. Maintenance of the administration of the party organization	248,693	65.5
	2. Maintenance of Party offices	12,358	3.6
	3. Maintenance of Party school	58,039	15.4
	4. Party propaganda	15,001	3.5
	5. Maintenance	37,377	9.8
	6. Maintenance of Affiliate of Marx, Engels, Lenin Institute	5,419	1.5
	7. Medical services	250	0.7
	<b>Total</b>	<b>379 387</b>	<b>100.0</b>
3	<b>Subsidies</b>		
	1. From the budget of CPSU CC	31,239	56.0
	2. From the local budget of Latvian SSR	39,877	10.5
	<b>Total</b>	<b>252,267</b>	<b>66.5</b>
	<b>Total income</b>	<b>379,387</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Even 15 years later, in 1960, the Latvian communists received from Moscow 14,058 million rubles (33.3% of income). From the budget of the Latvian SSR they seized 2.8 million rubles (6.7% of income). Thus the Latvian communists continued to live at the expense of Moscow “oil dollars” and the Soviet Latvian state. The sovietization of Latvia was carried out by the CPL, which was a branch of the CPSU – directed by Moscow, financed by Moscow and dominated by Moscow.

In the first 10–15 years after the war, political and social transformations played a more important role than economic and cultural changes. This transformation occurred in a society that had been traumatized by two preceding occupations and a devastating war. The elites of independent Latvia had been decimated by the Soviet arrests, deportations, imprisonments and executions of 1940–41. The Nazi German occupation exacted its toll by intimidation, co-optation, arrests and executions of those opposing German policies. Approximately 240,000 persons (13% of the population), including many of the remaining elites, left Latvia fleeing from the Bolshevik terror that they had experienced in 1919 and again in 1940–41. Latvian society was reeling, but it was not cowed by the

returning Soviet regime. Armed and unarmed resistance – in most cases desperately hoping for Western intervention – sprang up as soon as Soviet forces reoccupied the country. National partisan warfare lasted until its infrastructure was decimated by the mass deportation of 1949. The returning Soviet rulers had to deal with a society whose majority was unfriendly at best, hostile at worst. They had to crack down to break the society's will to resist sovietization.

Following the method that the Bolsheviks had been elaborating since the 1917 coup, the sovietization of post-war Latvia continued with the elimination of remaining political, economic and spiritual leaders, with a special focus on former officials, and the destruction of the European-style socio-political structure that had developed in Latvia in the course of centuries. This was primarily achieved by the introduction of punitive legislation of the Communist dictatorship, including the notorious Article 58 of the Russian Federal Criminal Code on the suppression of counterrevolutionaries. This article had been approved in 1926 and subsequently amended to incorporate several dozen subsections. Punishment of the politically accused on behalf of the Communist Party was carried out by punitive organizations, including the notorious KGB, which is still known in Latvia by its first abbreviation, Cheka (Extraordinary Commission). The USSR's system and technology of repressions were fully instituted in Latvia. In practice there existed no courts for persons accused of political crimes. Verdicts on death penalties, incarceration in the Gulag or transfer to forced resettlement in Siberia were handed down by various extra-judicial punitive institutions. These included the Special Assembly (Commission) of the USSR People's Commissariat of the Interior (NKVD) in Moscow and war tribunals of the countless military units. The accused were usually not present at all or only for the few minutes that it took to read the concluding part of the verdict – the sentence determining the length of term in a prison camp. The Communist judicial model recognized the authority of neither courts nor the law but relied solely on the directives of the leadership of the Communist Party, thus fostering lawlessness.<sup>22</sup>

Mass persecution and suppression affected many strata of society, especially people who were disobedient to the Soviet regime or whom the Communist totalitarianism regarded as such. While the remaining former elites were the first and most obvious targets, the numbers of the repressed indicate the widespread nature of the opposition. In the mass deportation of 25 March 1949 alone, 43 000 persons were deported to Siberia, while the total number of persons punished for political reasons amounted to approximately 150,000 (7.5% of the population). Moreover, as many as about 600,000 persons (30% of the population) were harassed, intimidated and suppressed by other methods: they were dismissed from their jobs, prohibited to attend the school of their choice and limited in their career opportunities.<sup>23</sup>

While formally the totalitarian Communist regime declared that it was fighting against the bourgeoisie, the kulaks and other class enemies, in fact it annihilated its political enemies and their families, including elderly people and children. The main traditional measures of punishment were execution by shooting, bringing about the death of convicts by hard work or starvation in Gulag camps or resettlement to sparsely populated places in Siberia.

The subjugation of Latvian society to the policies of the ruling power destroyed social differentiation, either by eliminating the traditional economic, academic, judicial and cultural differences or rendering them powerless and transforming them ideologically and politically. Sovietization enforced by the dictatorship of the Communist Party brought about the death of not only the democratic state of Latvia, but also, and even to a greater degree, death of the society.<sup>24</sup>

### **The Sovietization of Latvia: Economic Centralism and Colonization**

The sovietization of Latvia's economy meant imposition of the totalitarian type of centralized command economy, which was planned and dictated in Moscow and whose aim was economic colonization: subjugation of Latvian economy to the political ends and needs of the "Great Fatherland." The process was based on the pseudo-research work *Economic Issues of Socialism in the USSR* written by the "last living classic of Marxism-Leninism," Joseph Stalin.<sup>25</sup> In Latvia, it started with agriculture.

The European-style agriculture of Latvia had been rooted in individual farmsteads, private property and private initiative.<sup>26</sup> It was destroyed in four violent stages of sovietization in the post-war years. During the first stage in the immediate post-war years, private land exceeding 20 ha (ca 50 acres) was nationalized, and the so-called hostile kulak class was created. The second stage took the form of the deportation of 43,000 (2.15% of pre-war population) "nationalists and kulaks" to Siberia on 25 March 1949.<sup>27</sup> The third stage was the forced collectivization of the remaining farmers in 1949–50. The fourth stage was the abolition of individual farmsteads and transfer of farmers to Russian-type villages. Agricultural products, butter and meat in particular, as well as fishery produce were exported to and sold in Russia, particularly in Moscow and Leningrad, for the price fixed by Russia.

An important form of sovietization was the construction of giant factories as a Soviet colonial industry in Latvia. It was aimed at supplying the Soviet Union with pre-fabricates (Valmiera Fiberglass Factory, Daugavpils Motor-Chain Factory) and basic commodities (Ogre Textile Company), as well as serving Soviet military needs. The

flagship of pre-war industry in Latvia, the State Electronics Factory (VEF) with a staff of 10,000 workers, as well as the newly-founded Alfa, RER, and others, produced mostly military supplies.<sup>28</sup>

Latvian science was restructured to support Soviet strategic needs. Among the achievements Communist propagandists always emphasized the growing number of institutes at the Latvian SSR's Academy of Sciences and that of researchers as well as research projects carried out in the laboratories of higher educational establishments. Yet it was never mentioned how many of the so-called "closed topics," i.e. those pertaining to military industry and space research, were studied in these institutes and how many million rubles a year the USSR Academy of Sciences and "leading universities" paid for it. Approximate calculations show that the number of "closed topics" and "mail-box topics" not infrequently amounted to one-third or even more of all technical research.

The massive industrialization that the USSR undertook in Latvia under the name of "internationalization of industry" was a form of colonization. Latvia did not have the necessary raw materials, which had to be imported, and its labor pool had been decimated by the war and the Soviet repressions, including the 1949 deportation. Therefore, tens of thousands of workers, engineers and technicians were recruited and imported into Latvia. Large complexes of apartment houses (and even whole new towns) were constructed to accommodate them. By 1989, Latvia had received an influx of 712,000 ethnic Russians, who, together with the already residing 193,600 ethnic Russian inhabitants (10.5%), constituted 34% of Latvia's population.<sup>29</sup> The proportion of privileged ethnic Russians in managerial positions was overwhelming. As seen in Table 3, according to the CPL CC, in 1986 only each third urban senior engineer was an ethnic Latvian.

**TABLE 3: Ethnic Composition of Senior Engineers in the Latvian SSR on 1 June 1986<sup>30</sup>**

No.	Ethnic background	Latvian SSR		In urban areas	
		number	%	number	%
1	Russians	179	43.0	142	63.7
2	Ukrainians	30	7.3	23	10.2
3	Belorussians	27	6.4	18	8.0
4	Latvians	180	43.3	72	32.1
<b>Total</b>		<b>416</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>255</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The demographic colonization of Latvia took the expression of “industrial internationalization” and aimed at the consolidation of ethnic Russian political and technical leadership in the second period of Soviet occupation. While in the immediate post-war period the pace of colonization was relatively slow, it picked up and intensified after 1956. It went hand in hand with intensified Russification.

## **The Sovietization of Latvia: Social and Cultural Russification**

From the first days of the second occupation the Russian language was placed in a privileged position in schools compared to the Latvian language and was declared the actual official language. The number of Russian-language books published in Latvia exceeded that of books published in Latvian. Moreover, Russian literature, works of political character in particular, were imported in huge numbers as well. This type of linguistic imperialism with the aim of merging and internationalization of nations meant the subjugation of other nationalities to Russian domination.<sup>31</sup>

In the course of sovietization a new social structure, typical for the USSR, emerged in Latvia. The ordinary, politically indifferent urban and rural residents who in practice enjoyed no political privileges formed the basic and largest group of this structure. Members of the Young Communist League, who could be regarded as candidates for the privileged Communist Party, constituted another group. The third public group consisted of members of the Communist Party, who constituted the privileged layer of society and who in their closed meetings endorsed all decisions of the CPSU and its Latvian affiliate, as a rule voting in favor. Members of the Communist Party held the positions of heads and deputy heads of institutions and enterprises as well as departments. They were entitled to receive apartments, private cars, etc., bypassing the waiting list. The fourth and highest ranking and most privileged group of society was the nomenclature that consisted of three main groups: the nomenclatures of the CPSU, the Interior Ministry and the KGB, which, in turn, were further subdivided in subgroups. The nomenclature of CPL that comprised executives of the Communist Party, administration and the Young Communist League was restored in Latvia in 1944.<sup>32</sup>

The nomenclature enjoyed privileges in all spheres: judicial, everyday life, distribution of material benefits. Members of the nomenclature were authorized to act independently, and it was forbidden to dismiss them from their jobs without approval from the higher-ranking institution that had appointed them. Between 1938 and 1963, the USSR (and Latvian SSR) Interior Ministry was not allowed to arrest members of CPSU without approval from the first secretary of the district (municipal) committee

and, until the collapse of the USSR, it was forbidden to spy on the top executives of the nomenclatures of CPL, the Council of Ministers and the Young Communist League.

Thus it was not only political beliefs and faith in the victory of Communism, but also economic and political privileges that fostered the social progress of communists and attracted new members into this totalitarian mono-party. As a result, the largest party in Latvia's history emerged, completely under Moscow's control and heavily infiltrated by Russians. As Table 4 shows, the "Latvian" Communist Party was dominated by ethnic Russians. Moreover, the number of Latvians included several thousand russified ethnic Latvian survivors of "the great terror," whose only remaining Latvian feature was their surname.

**TABLE 4: Ethnic Composition of the Membership of the CPL  
on 1 January 1989<sup>33</sup>**

No.	Ethnic background	Number	%
1	Russians	79,382	43.2
2	Ukrainians	10,317	5.6
3	Belorussians	10,250	5.6
4	Lithuanians	1,411	0.7
5	Latvians from Latvia and Russia	73,177	39.7
6	Estonians	235	0.1
7	Jews	3,368	1.8
8	Other	6,042	3.3
<b>Total</b>		<b>184,182</b>	<b>100</b>

The situation in many cases was even worse, especially in terms of administrative leadership positions. Table 5 shows that in the period between 1952 and 1990 ethnic Latvians constituted approximately one-fifth of the membership of the Rīga City Committee of the CPL. The fact that the Latvian membership constituted approximately one fourth of the Rīga CPL, demonstrates that national collaboration did not yield the expected results, and more than 80% of the administrators of the City of Rīga were newcomers, as confirmed by Russian scholars.<sup>34</sup>

**TABLE 5: Ethnic Composition of Members of Rīga City Committee of the CPL 1952–1990<sup>35</sup>**

No.	Ethnic background	1 July 1952		1 Jan. 1962		1 Jan. 1974		1 Jan. 1983		1 Jan. 1990	
		No.	%								
1	Russians	102	71.3	94	66.7	98	66.7	115	63.9	119	67.6
2	Latvians	25	17.5	34	24.1	26	17.7	33	18.3	31	17.6
3	Ukrainians	7	4.9	4	2.8	13	8.8	12	6.7	11	6.3
4	Belorussians	4	2.8	1	0.7	7	4.8	18	10.0	12	6.8
5	Other	5	3.5	8	5.7	3	2.0	2	1.2	3	1.7
Total		143	100	141	100	147	100	180	100	176	100

The sovietization of Latvia's culture meant the expansion of Russian and Soviet culture, the circumscription and control of Latvian culture and the elimination of the vestiges of earlier cultural traditions. Books, theatre productions, films, musical compositions and art for the most part represented Communist ideology. As compared to ethnic Russian culture and art, ethnic Latvian culture was to constitute the smaller and less qualitative proportion. Lists of titles of books, as well as theatre repertoires were approved by the CPL CC, which dictated that the bulk of plays had to come from Russian authors. In traditional national Latvian Song Festivals, as well, approximately half of the repertory consisted of Russian compositions. Strict censorship was instituted.

As early as 1944, the Main Literature Authority (GlavLit) of the USSR at the Propaganda Division of the CPSU CC directed the Latvian Main Literature Authority to supervise not only the publishing of books, newspapers and magazines and the broadcasting of radio programs, but also "to ensure control over all public lectures." The publication of religious literature was subject to approval by the secretaries of the CPSU and Republican CCs. Memoirs of Red partisans had to be approved by the secretary of CPL CC before publication. Printing of magazines and newspapers and topics of radio broadcasts were also dictated and approved from above.<sup>36</sup> The GlavLit of the Latvian SSR, which popularly was referred to as the "Book KGB," was one of the executors of orders issued by the CPL CC for the sovietization of Latvia. Approximately 30 political censors employed in the "Book KGB" covered both Rīga and the provinces, checked the content of all books, magazine and newspaper articles,

radio broadcasts and exhibitions; even the writings by Stalin and Lenin were subject to their approval before typesetting, printing and publishing.

Only a few approximate figures have been mentioned about retrospective removal and destruction of printed matter. According to reports by GlavLit, in the period before 1950 alone about 12 million books and 750,000 magazines and newspapers had been taken out of circulation and for the most part destroyed.<sup>37</sup> By 1955 the “Book KGB” in Rīga had issued nine, altogether 300 pages long, lists of books, which were classified as harmful and selected to be destroyed.<sup>38</sup> Still in 1965, 4,955 books were taken out of libraries and bookshops.

The methods and contents of ideological sovietization of Latvia were imported from the Soviet Union. Sovietization meant the withdrawal of religious subjects from school curricula (described as “the separation of religion from the state”), introduction of the compulsory subject of Communist pseudo-religion (called “the theory of society” or “scientific Communism” or “scientific atheism”), increased number of Russian language lessons in schools (referred to as “the language of international contacts”), Russification of schools and public life (presented as “proletarian internationalism” and “the friendship of the peoples of the USSR”), spread of propaganda films and exhibitions on “the Great Fatherland” (defined as “drawing closer to the Soviet culture”), as well as ceaseless praising of the Soviet Union, its politicians and leaders.

The rites of meetings and congresses of the CPL CC, the of reprisals against actual and imagined enemies, criticism and self-criticism, approval and appointment of the Party’s tasks and hearing of reports, the cult of personalities, the celebration of remembrance days, the grandiosity of monuments: all this was copied from Russian models and imposed by Communist dictate.<sup>39</sup>

No scholarly studies have been undertaken about the role in sovietization played by the pervasive everyday role of Soviet mass culture, the “socialist realism” imposed by Communists on art, “mass songs” imposed on music, “Soviet traditions” in daily life, “rallies of the working people” in the festivals of the empire, the presence of masses of Soviet vacationers in Jūrmala and Rīga, as well as the thousands of working people from the “brotherly republics” who had moved to Latvia to help in the “Construction of Socialism.” It must be noted that these representatives did not need to play-act socialism, since many of its elements had already been handed down from generation to generation. Although it still remains to be proved how deeply Russian life-style, traditions, festivals, behavior standards, etc., became rooted in Latvian society, it is already obvious that they did not turn into sustainable innovations that the indigenous society would have found necessary. Hand in hand with the achievements of sovietization, adaptation and imitation of socialism became an increasingly widespread social phenomenon.

## The Failures of Sovietization in Latvia

The policies of the USSR in the Baltic states and Central Europe faced a major obstacle that they never overcame: the countries to be sovietized were more highly developed than “the birthplace of socialism.” It was the cause of the armed, non-violent and spiritual resistance to sovietization in Eastern Europe that could be neutralized only through the intervention of the USSR troops in the 1950s and 1960s.

In the Baltic states and Latvia, the new rulers tried for a while to ignore the higher level of development of liberal capitalism in these countries compared to Russia, as well as the human factor.<sup>40</sup> However, the tenacious non-violent resistance of the Lithuanian and Estonian peoples, their spiritual resistance in particular, which the leaders of the Lithuanian and Estonian Communist Parties could not fail to notice, forced Moscow for the time being to switch over to less draconian forms of the “Construction of Socialism.” National Communists hoped that they themselves as autonomous economic and public leaders would carry out the modernization of Communist totalitarianism. In Latvia, such softening did not take place. Cognizant of the crimes committed by the so-called late Stalinism that they themselves had witnessed, Latvian Communists who had been raised outside the borders of the USSR understood the need to change the form of the dictatorship in the mid and late 1950s. Yet the national Communists of Latvia failed to win strong public support. Sovietization proceeded without hints of autonomy and under strong condemnation and isolation of the reformist leaders on instructions from Moscow.

The crude propagandistic attempts at integrating Latvian society by threatening it with internal and external enemies and intensifying propaganda about the achievements of socialism, however, yielded fewer and fewer results. They only succeeded in distorting human minds and souls. The hopelessly failing “Construction of Socialism” and Communism psychologically depressed and alienated an increasing part of Latvian society. The ideological offensive of the CPSU became less and less effective, forcing the rulers to maneuver and to liberalize the harsher forms of dictatorship, simultaneously expanding hidden forms of repression.<sup>41</sup> At the same time, with the sovietization directed and censured by the CPSU CC and the spread of “Soviet traditions” from above, there occurred a semi-legal westernization from below: worship of Western life-style, consumer goods, music and ideas and facts disseminated by radio broadcasts.<sup>42</sup>

During the entire period of sovietization, moreover, a Christian subsociety and a hidden national sub-culture continued existing in Latvia as forms of spiritual resistance, which the Communists failed to conquer even with the help of forced labor camps.<sup>43</sup>

The most permanent results and consequences of sovietization turned out to be neither the much-advertised “socialist industry and agriculture,” nor “socialist culture,”

but rather the exaggeration of social equality. It was based on immigrant Russian social culture and the naive trust that everyone's personal problems would be solved up there, "in the Party and government."

While in several countries of the so-called people's democracy tendencies of transition from Communist totalitarian to authoritarian Communist regimes emerged in the last years of their existence,<sup>44</sup> in the Soviet republics the violent Stalinist-type terror was replaced by highly integrated persecution and disciplinarian measures that some describe as "developed totalitarianism."<sup>45</sup> "The defensive modernization" that marked the sovietization of the USSR and also Latvian SSR in the 1960s and 1970s, can be viewed to a certain extent as the softening of the methods of sovietization by the CPSU and proof that sovietization was failing as a result of spiritual and mental resistance of all peoples of the socialist camp.

From the 1950s on, the USSR, together with the rest of the socialist camp, constantly lagged behind the West in economy, and in the 1980s it found itself unable to achieve the leap to the new information and high technologies. Speaking in Marxist terms, the old production relationships came into an unsolvable conflict with the new production forces. In the mid-1980s the economy could no longer be reformed, and the Soviet Union itself collapsed as a result of peaceful anti-Communist revolution.

The history of the fifty years of Latvia's sovietization proved that it was impossible to achieve it either by the revolutionary methods resorted to by Bolsheviks (until 1950s), or by reforms (1960s and 1970s). The CPSU-led state was incapable of developing a suitable new society for itself, since states develop on the basis of already existing societies.<sup>46</sup>

## Conclusion

Sovietization manifested its harshest forms in all Soviet republics. Among the Baltic republics sovietization revealed some common features and some differences. Differences for the most part were determined by the forms and methods of resistance that the Baltic nations employed to resist Communist totalitarianism. In Lithuania, where armed warfare emerged as the main form of resistance in the post-war years, deportations and executions tended to affect not only members of resistance, but the entire ethnic Lithuanian community. In Latvia, where armed resistance was less widespread than in Lithuania, the number of victims of deportations and executions was lower. Yet, Latvia's population had to a larger extent yielded to the political pressures of the two occupants, Nazi Germany and Bolshevik Russia, and thus the total proportion of victims was higher than in Lithuania and Estonia. In combination with the declining birthrate in Latvia from the early 1930s on, the deportations, executions and war action resulted in a demographic deficit in Latvia. The submissive policies of Latvia's Bolsheviks (compared

to those of Estonia and Lithuania) allowed the occupation power to staff the many headquarters of the Baltic Military District with its own people, to enact industrialization and bring in hundreds of thousands of colonists. This became the most important form of sovietization in Latvia.

In practice, however, eventually all measures of the sovietization of Latvia turned out to be unworkable. They either triggered side effects, which neutralized the unnatural measures of the Communist dictatorship, or they turned out to be impractical as such. The Communist dictatorship set sovietization as its goal, defining it as “the complete and final victory of socialism.” In the resolutions of the Communist Party this phrase as a form of self-praise emerged already in 1950, while in practice the goal to some small extent was achieved only in the 1970s and 1980s. At the same time, sovietization failed utterly in the spiritual and intellectual sphere and in the everyday life of the people. Non-violent inner resistance to occupation eventually gained such a momentum that it became the driving force of the anti-Communist “velvet” revolution in the entire “sphere of influence.” Its Baltic form became known as the “singing” revolution.

There is no doubt that the occupation power under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party attributed great importance to the sovietization of Latvia during the entire occupation period. In spite of the losses caused by sovietization, the speed with which the Baltic states have outstripped the “old Soviet republics” in their development over the last 12 years shows that in these West European-style countries sovietization did relatively little damage, if one does not consider the demographic situation. One of the reasons why sovietization failed in Latvia was the reliance on the hypnotic force of socio-political propaganda in a country whose society for a long time had been subject to the “ruining” influence of Western capitalism and thus had developed a relatively high sense of self-reliance and low sense of “social justice.” A second reason was the obvious inability of the centrally planned economy to compete with private entrepreneurship even under the conditions of totalitarian management and control. The third reason was the low level of work culture and precision among the imported labor force. Only after going through a careful selection were they fit to work well in the privileged military enterprises, while elsewhere, as in Russia, they in fact disrupted the course of sovietization.

The political sovietization of Latvia in abbreviated form went through the phases of totalitarianism that had earlier taken place in “the Great Fatherland”: the dictatorship of the Communist Party (defined as “Soviet power”), the eradication of the kulaks (described as “nationalization of land”), genocide (referred to as “extermination of class enemies”), placing of the Communist Party in a privileged position (filling all leading positions and the nomenclature) and scientific Communism (pseudo-religious mono-ideology).

Since a sovereign state of Latvia did not exist under the Communist dictatorship, we cannot speak of crimes committed by the state of Latvia, but only of the crimes committed

by those who collaborated with the USSR. Sovietization was not a willing submission of Latvia to the empire; it was a program instituted by the USSR. The Latvian SSR as a district of the USSR was ruled by the dictatorship of the CPSU. This dictatorship and the crimes it committed were not rooted in the malicious intent of individual officeholders (although, at times, this also was the case), but rather in the historical and ideological foundations of the USSR. Therefore the responsibility for all crimes against humanity that have taken place in Latvia during the occupation by the Soviet Union lies on the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, its Latvian branch and its higher nomenclature, if the precedent of the Nuremberg Tribunal is applied.

While laying the responsibility for the Nazi and Bolshevik crimes on the top leadership of their institutions, a question nevertheless arises whether and to what extent the guilt and responsibility lies with the people. It will certainly be answered in the course of further research. However, it has already become clear that neither nazification nor sovietization was possible by the efforts of the Nazi and Bolshevik leadership alone. Yet, however broad the support basis of sovietization may have been, it was unable to sustain the state led by the CPSU dictatorship. It collapsed along with approximately 20 other dictatorships in the second half of the twentieth century.

After the restoration of Latvia's independence in 1991, the eradication of the direct consequences, as well as the overcoming of the indirect consequences, of sovietization has begun, in order to shape a different future. Coming to terms with and overcoming the legacy of occupation and sovietization is one of the tasks. However, this task is hampered by the failure of the international political community to assess the crimes against humanity committed by the USSR. Without such an assessment, a condemnation of Communist totalitarianism is impossible. A scholarly assessment of Communist totalitarianism and sovietization abroad is hindered by insufficient knowledge of the crimes committed by the CPSU.

In Russia, such an assessment is hampered by the fact that the 1905 Revolution was not carried through completely and a civic society was never established. As a result, Russia has failed to settle accounts with Communist totalitarianism. Stalin's famous toast of 20 May 1945, calling Russians "the most outstanding of nations among all Soviet nations," still reverberates in the hopes of the imperial part of the nation for the benefits of socialism that it no longer receives, for the power and glory and geographic extension that it enjoyed at that time. The cause of sovietization for the most part lay outside Latvia and, speaking in the words of academician Alexander Iakovlev, the results of this social illness have survived mostly in the country where the infection originated.<sup>47</sup> In fact, already in the mid-1990s plans were hatched for a new empire and groups of friends of the former empire emerged both in Russia and abroad.<sup>48</sup> Therefore, the history of the sovietization of Latvia can serve not only as a case study for the past but also as a warning about the future.



*Jānis Riekstiņš*

## **Colonization and Russification of Latvia 1940–1989**

*[The United Nations General Assembly] denounces the policy pursued by certain colonial states in the territories that they administrate by appointing governments and enacting constitutions that do not represent the people, by promoting foreign economic and other interests, by misleading the global public opinion, by encouraging systematic influx of alien population simultaneously with expelling or transferring of the resident population to other districts.<sup>1</sup>*

Although the 1969 resolution of the United Nations General Assembly speaks of “certain colonial states” in general, in terms of content it fully refers also to the Soviet Union, which occupied and colonized Latvia for almost 50 years. My paper will concentrate primarily on Soviet population and language policies and practices within the context of the United Nations colonization resolution and demonstrate how these policies resulted in the subjugation and exploitation of the titular nationality of Latvia.

These policies were instituted already immediately after the occupation and illegal incorporation of Latvia into the USSR in 1940 and culminated in a mass deportation on 14 June 1941, when by the latest count at least 15,424 persons were forcibly sent from the territory of Latvia to distant parts of the Soviet Union.<sup>2</sup> Estimates of population losses caused by Soviet policies – arrests, executions and deportations – during the first Soviet year of occupation range as high as 35,000; the actual figure is probably lower, but still accounts for the loss of over 1% of the pre-war population of 2,000,000.

Although at that phase no substantial influx of migrants from the USSR took place yet, many functionaries of the Communist party and Soviet institutions, officials of repression authorities, commanders and military experts of the Red Army were transferred to Latvia, accompanied by a large number of their family members and relatives.

The intervening Nazi German occupation and war action in Latvian territory resulted in further major population losses and shifts. By some estimates up to one third of the pre-war population was not in Latvia at the end of the war. This population loss,

in effect, left the country more vulnerable to Soviet colonization policies and practices than it had been in 1940–41. The process was based on the foundation laid during the earlier Soviet occupation period.

## Military Immigrants

The settlement of demobilized Soviet military personnel in Latvia began immediately after the end of World War II and continued until the end of the occupation. Retired officers were particularly devoted to the Soviet cause and have to be considered as the regime's most trusted part of the civilian population in occupied Latvia.

The military strategic situation that had developed in the final phase of the World War II considerably facilitated the process. For a considerable period, nine months, Latvia was at the same time a military battlefield and a staging area in the immediate rear. Because of this strategic situation a massive influx of Red Army troops took place in Latvia. After the war, the Soviet government had at its disposal a large number of persons in the country who did not wish to go home.

In 1944–45, most people of Latvia did not regard the Red Army as a liberator, but rather as another occupant that had replaced the Germans. Thus it was important for the authorities to have loyal support groups among the local population. Demobilized soldiers and especially officers of the Red Army were one such group.

In the summer of 1945 when major demobilization from the Red Army started, the influx of retired military personnel in Latvia increased and continued to take place through all the 50 years of occupation. By 25 August 1945, 3,081 demobilized persons had settled in Latvia.<sup>3</sup> By 12 November 1945 5,575 ex-servicemen, of whom 3,525 had never resided in Latvia before, had settled in Rīga alone.<sup>4</sup> In the same period 836 demobilized persons had moved to Daugavpils.<sup>5</sup> Other Latvian towns and cities also received a heavy influx of demobilized persons. The number of ex-servicemen steadily increased. By 15 December 1945, 8,031 demobilized persons had settled in Rīga, 447 – in Liepāja, 697 – in Daugavpils, 424 – in Jelgava, 126 – in Ventspils. In the Abrene District 719 ex-servicemen had settled, in Aizpute District – 73, in Bauska District – 497, in Valka District – 613, in Valmiera District – 801, in Daugavpils District – 1587, in Jēkabpils District – 678, in Jelgava District – 1136, in Ilūkste District – 493, in Kuldīga District – 229, in Liepāja District – 371, in Ludza District – 1119, in Madona District – 576, in Rēzekne District – 1,272, in Talsi District – 120, in Tukums District – 133, in Rīga District – 884 and 490 – in Cēsis District, 21,558 persons in total. By late 1946, Latvia had received a total influx of 44,040 ex-servicemen, of whom 19,463 persons had never resided here before.<sup>6</sup> In the coming months the situation was the same. By 1 April 1947 the total influx of demobilized persons in Latvia reached 58,640 men, of whom 8,346 were

officers and 50,294 were rank-and-file soldiers and non-commissioned officers; of these, 27,624 persons had never resided in Latvia.<sup>7</sup> Rīga was their preferred choice as a place of residence. Thus, for example, by 1 July 1948 Rīga had received 6,646 demobilized officers and 13,315 rank-and-file soldiers and non-commissioned officers who had never served in Latvia before.<sup>8</sup>

There were inducements for ex-servicemen to stay in Latvia. Although parts of the country had suffered heavy war damage, as a whole it was less ravaged than many regions of Russia. Despite the war, the living standard in Latvia was still considerably higher than it was in the Soviet Union.

However, the strongest allurements for ex-servicemen was an opportunity to get an apartment in Latvia. At the end of World War II more than 160,000 Latvians had left their homes and sought refuge, fearing a new wave of repressions and deportations from the Soviet Communist regime. The apartments that they had left vacant were used to settle the newcomers. They were also allocated the former apartments of the estimated 70,000 Jews murdered by the Nazis and numerous victims of Soviet repressive authorities. Ex-servicemen who did not have permanent residences were put on the military register as residents with temporary addresses that entitled them to requisition living quarters for themselves and their families.

Apartments for new settlers were also obtained through decreasing the allocated living space of the resident population. By the 21 September 1945 regulation of the USSR Council of People's Commissars "On Measures to Assist Ex-Servicemen, Families of Soldiers Killed in Action, Disabled Soldiers of the War for the Fatherland and Families of Servicemen," the People's Commissariats and departments of Soviet republics were obliged to place 10% of all quarters in every new or restored apartment building at the disposal of the local Soviet executive committees. Only demobilized persons, families of servicemen, disabled soldiers of the Great Patriotic War and families of soldiers killed in action were entitled to these quarters.<sup>9</sup> The 8 September 1953 Resolution No. 2364 of the USSR Council of Ministers firmly re-emphasized that retired officers of the Soviet Army were entitled to receive living quarters "before all others" (i.e. bypassing the waiting list).<sup>10</sup>

The Soviet government was eager to achieve an increased influx of colonists in Latvia, particularly those loyal to the Soviet Communist regime, such as retired officers. Whereas in Moscow, Leningrad and other cities in the USSR only those demobilized officers who had resided in these cities before their service in the Soviet Armed Forces could be placed on the residents' register at that time, this regulation did not apply to Rīga. The results are evident from the figures. In the period between 1 July 1953 and 1 July 1956, 3,848 retired officers had moved to Rīga, and by 1 August their number had increased to 3,972.<sup>11</sup> By 1 October 1956 Latvia had received an influx of 5,540 demobilized officers,

of whom 4,863 settled in Rīga. While in the first part of 1956 the average number of retired officers coming to Rīga was 60 persons per month, in the period between May and October the number reached 90 officers per month. Between 1 September and 20 December 1956 Rīga received 650 demobilized officers that constituted 76.4% of all newcomers to Latvia.<sup>12</sup> Between 1953 and March 1959 altogether 5,587 demobilized officers had moved to Rīga, bringing with them their large families.<sup>13</sup>

After 15 January 1960 when the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the USSR passed the resolution “On a Considerable Decrease of Personnel in the USSR Armed Forces,” the flood of demobilized military immigrants became practically unstoppable. These were the strongest supporters of the Communist regime and the most active advocates of the policy of colonization and Russification of Latvia. During the period of national renewal in the late 1980s and early 1990s when the people of Latvia began their struggle to restore their national sovereignty, these immigrants were the staunchest opponents and enemies of independence. Organized in various “veterans’ councils” and organizations, including the so-called Interfront (The International Workers’ Front), they held noisy meetings and rallies, passed resolutions against national independence of Latvia. They submitted countless complaints to the USSR Communist Party leadership, demanding that “nationalists” and “separatists” should be restrained and even threatening to resort to armed intervention by way of the many units of the USSR troops stationed in Latvia, should they be deprived of their undeserved privileges.

## **Economic Immigrants**

Economic migration to Latvia was facilitated foremost by the population losses suffered during the war, by massive Soviet repressions and deportations in the post-war period and the deliberate policy of industrialization. Moreover, Latvia was for many an attractive place of residence because of its higher standard of living. For the entire period of occupation, mechanical population growth exceeded natural growth, and the ethnic composition of Latvia changed dramatically at the expense of the titular nation.

While the influx of colonists in Latvia was organized and arranged by USSR authorities, none of the newcomers, however, had been forced to come. In principle, Soviet citizens were allowed to move freely from one place of residence to another within the USSR. The borders between the Soviet Republics did not pose an obstacle. No visas or permits were required. The Soviet ideologists preached that such freedom testified to the equal rights enjoyed by all Soviet citizens, irrespective of their ethnic background, religion or any other criteria. This was done to release the Soviet Communist Party and government from any responsibility for the colonization and Russification of the national republics.

The influx of colonists to a large extent was caused by the difference in living standards between Latvia and other regions of the USSR. In Latvia it was considerably higher. Migrants of Russian, Belorussian, Ukrainian and other nationalities moved to Latvia mainly to improve their standard of living and find a suitable job. While a certain proportion of immigrants left after some time, the number of those who remained in Latvia remained very large. This becomes clear from Table 1, which summarizes immigration and emigration in Latvian urban areas, based on the data of the Latvian SSR Board of Statistics.

TABLE 1: **Population Movement in Cities and Towns of Latvia 1939–57**<sup>14</sup>

In thousands			
Years	Immigrants	Emigrants	Mechanical growth
1939	n/a	n/a	- 42.1 *
1940	n/a	n/a	0.0
1941	n/a	n/a	- 33.2 **
1942	n/a	n/a	+ 23.2
1943	n/a	n/a	n/a
1944	n/a	n/a	n/a
1945	137.4	17.3	+ 120.1
1946	159.4	48.0	+ 111.4
1947	118.8	58.0	+ 60.8
1948	92.6	578.9	+ 34.7
1949	78.9	59.1	+ 19.8
1950	92.4	77.1	+ 15.3
1951	93.2	74.4	+ 18.8
1952	95.2	75.6	+ 19.6
1953	106.2	71.7	+ 34.5
1954	102.1	74.2	+ 14.9
1955	99.1	74.2	+ 14.9
1956	91.9	72.8	+ 19.1
1957	79.3	76.5	+ 2.8

\* Including 42,000 Baltic German “repatriates.”

\*\* Including 8600 repatriates and 24,600 residents who were evacuated or transferred to other Soviet Republics due to the war.

Data on the population growth in 1939–42 are obtained by way of calculation.

Data on 1945 are incomplete because from January to May a part of Latvian towns were in the German-occupied territory.

Other sources show that in the period between 1950 and 1967 the population of Latvia increased by 364,500, or 18.8%, including the natural growth of 198,100 people that constituted 54.3% of the total population growth in the republic. However, in the same period the proportion of mechanical growth of population increased. Thus, for example, while in the early 1950s mechanical growth had accounted for approximately one third of the total growth, in the 1960s it exceeded natural growth by almost two times. In 1965–67 the proportion of mechanical growth reached 62.3% of the total population growth making Latvia the only Soviet Republic where mechanical growth of the population exceeded the natural one.<sup>15</sup>

The first post-war census was taken in 1959. It showed that in numbers the population of Latvia had regained the pre-war level of ca. 2,000,000, but the recovery had been achieved to a great extent by mechanical growth.<sup>16</sup>

As demonstrated by Table 2, the mechanical increase of population continued unabated in 1960–70.

TABLE 2: **Mechanical Increase in Population 1960–70**<sup>17</sup>

In thousands				
Years	Immigrants	Emigrants	Mechanical growth	Mechanical growth in percent compared to the previous year
1960	153.1	133.7	19.4	–
1961	141.7	126.4	15.3	78.9
1962	143.9	127.4	16.5	107.3
1963	139.2	119.9	19.3	117.0
1964	142.1	125.3	16.8	87.0
1965	136.1	122.9	13.2	78.6
1966	137.9	124.0	13.4	105.3
1967	139.2	129.7	9.5	68.3
1968	150.6	137.8	12.8	134.7
1969	151.3	140.7	10.6	82.8
1970	156.0	139.7	16.3	153.8
Total for 1960–1970	1591.1	1427.5	163.6	
Average per annum	144.6	129.8	14.9	

In 1970 the mechanical growth of the population of Latvia was 16,300. It was more than in any of the previous five years and constituted 67.7% of the total population growth. In cities the proportion of mechanical growth was even higher than in Latvia on the whole, accounting for 20,100 people or 71.3% of the total population growth in cities.

In the period between 1971 and 1989 the influx of colonists accounted for the mechanical growth of Latvia's population of more than 200,000 persons, which almost twice exceeded the natural growth of population.

The data obtained in the first post-war population census in 1959 clearly demonstrate also that during the preceding 15 years the ethnic composition of the population had changed dramatically. The results are shown in Table 3. The figures in the 1935 census are included for comparison.<sup>18</sup>

TABLE 3: Ethnic Composition of the Population of Latvia in 1959<sup>19</sup>

In thousands	Ethnic distribution 1959 census	Proportion (%) 1959 census	Ethnic distribution 1935 census	Proportion (%) 1935 census
Population of Latvia	2093	100.0	1950.5	100.0
Latvians	1298	62.0	1472.6	75.5
Russians	556	26.6	206.5	10.6
Belorussians	62	2.0	26.9	1.4
Poles	60	2.9	48.9	2.5
Jews*	37	1.7	93.5	4.8
Lithuanians	32	1.5	22.9	1.2
Ukrainians	29	1.4	1.8	0.1
Estonians	5	0.0	7.0	0.4
Roma	4	0.2	3.8	0.2
Tatars	2	0.1	n/a***	n/a
Germans**	2	0.1	62.1	3.2
Armenians	1.1	0.1	n/a***	n/a

\* In the Holocaust in Nazi-occupied Latvia approximately 70,000 Latvian Jews were killed.

\*\* Almost all ethnic Germans emigrated to Germany in 1939–41.

\*\*\* Others constituted 4,400 or 0.2%.

In the following years, the influx of migrants in Latvia increased year by year. Thus, for example, in 1960 49,287 Russians, 9,579 Belorussians, 5,145 Ukrainians and many immigrants of other nationalities arrived in Latvia.<sup>20</sup>

Table 4 shows the relative distribution of immigrants according to their places of origin.

**TABLE 4: Distribution of Immigrants by Place of Origin 1965–70<sup>21</sup>**

In percent	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970
Total mechanical growth	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
including from:						
Russia	54.9	59.5	46.	49.2	57.6	50.5
Belorussia	27.3	21.4	29.3	18.9	27.3	24.0
Ukraine	9.0	6.4	3.9	21.4	9.0	17.5
Kazakhstan	5.6	5.4	11.5	6.7	3.4	4.9
Other Soviet Republics and other states	3.2	7.3	3.3	3.3	-2.3	3.1

The largest influx of colonists came from Kalinina, Kaliningrad, Krasnoyarsk, Pskov and Smolensk regions in Russia. The number of immigrants from Belorussia and the Ukraine also increased.

Latvia was among those Soviet Republics, which had a very large proportion of Slavic peoples in their population. Only two other Soviet Republics, Estonia and Kazakhstan, had as high a proportion of Slavic population as Latvia. However, while in Kazakhstan the proportion of Slavs steadily decreased, in Estonia and Latvia it kept increasing.

In the period between 1979 and 1989 the population of Latvia increased by 6.5% and reached 2,666,600. Compared to 1935, the population growth had increased 1.4 times. However, the population of the historical titular nation, ethnic Latvians, still remained below the pre-war figure, the difference constituting 79,200 persons. Latvians were the only titular nation in the USSR not to have reached the pre-war population figure. In 1989, the number of ethnic Latvians in Latvia was by 5.4% lower than in 1935, while the ethnic Russian population had increased by 540%, that of ethnic Belorussians by 450% and that of Ukrainians – by more than 5000%. In spite of the growth of ethnic Latvian population in terms of absolute figures, in terms of proportion it was steadily decreasing.

The main reasons for the decrease of the proportion of the ethnic Latvian population compared to 1935, as well as in terms of the absolute figure, were the consequences of World War II, the Stalinist repressions and deportations, as well as the unjustifiable development of industry and other fields of economy that involved the influx of a labor force from other regions of the USSR.

In the last 30 years of Soviet rule migration became the main reason for the decrease of the proportion of the ethnic Latvian population. In the given period migration from other regions of the USSR accounted for a population growth of over 350,000. As a result, between 1959 and 1989 the ethnic Russian population in Latvia had increased by 160%, that of ethnic Belorussians by 190%, and that of Ukrainians by as much as 310%, while that of Latvians had grown only by 7%.

The impact of natural growth and migration on the population growth of Latvia during the last 30 years of Soviet rule is summarized in Table 5.

**TABLE 5: Natural and Mechanical Growth 1959–88<sup>22</sup>**

	In thousands			Per 1000 persons		
	1959– 1969	1970– 1978	1979– 1988	1959– 1969	1970– 1978	1979– 1988
Total growth of population	24.6	17.4	16.0	110.1	70.9	81.9
including:						
natural growth	10.3	5.8	6.7	46.1	23.6	25.9
proportion of the total growth	41.9	33.3	41.9	41.9	33.3	41.9
increase by migration	14.3	11.6	9.3	64.0	47.3	36.0
proportion of total growth	58.1	66.7	58.1	58.1	66.7	58.1

In 1989, the last Soviet census in Latvia, there were 1,459,000 ethnic Latvians in the entire territory of the USSR. In the period between 1979 and 1989 the number of ethnic Latvians had increased by 20,000 or 1.4%. In the territory of Latvia, the ethnic Latvian population constituted 1,388,000, which accounted for 95% of the ethnic Latvian population in the USSR. As Table 6 demonstrates, the proportion of ethnic Latvians in Latvia had decreased from 53.7% in 1979 to 52.0% in 1989, thus showing a steady decline. It was caused by the migration of people across the borders of the Soviet Republics as well as the unfavorable age structure, which involved a higher death rate and a lower natural growth among ethnic Latvians compared to other ethnic groups residing in Latvia.

TABLE 6: Population and Ethnic Changes in Latvia 1979–89<sup>23</sup>

	In thousands		% difference between 1989 and 1979	% of total population	
	1979	1989		1979	1989
Total population	2503	2667	106.5	100	100
including:					
Latvians	1344	1388	103.2	53.7	52.0
Russians	821	906	110.2	32.8	34.0
Belorussians	112	120	107.4	4.5	4.5
Ukrainians	67	92	138.1	2.7	3.5
Poles	63	60	96.4	2.5	2.3
Lithuanians	38	35	91.6	1.5	1.3
Jews	28	23	80.9	1.1	0.9
Roma	6.1	7.0	114.8	0.2	0.3
Tatars	3.8	4.8	128.3	0.2	0.2
Germans	3.3	3.8	114.7	0.1	0.1
Estonians	3.7	3.3	99.0	0.1	0.1
other ethnic groups	13	24	184.8	0.6	0.8

At the beginning of 1989, ethnic Latvians constituted 44% of the urban population and 71.5% of the rural population. In Rīga, the ethnic Latvian population was 332,000, which accounted for 36.5% of all residents of the city.

## The Communist Party's Role in Industrialization

The colonization of Latvia followed the dictate of the Soviet central authorities and involved the development of large-scale industrial manufacturing in Latvia. The influx of other ethnic groups during the whole period of the Soviet occupation was the key source of labor for the industrial enterprises of miscellaneous types. The increase of industrial output was also achieved mainly through the growth of the number of blue and white-collar workers, i.e. colonists.

The Communist Party of Latvia, being an obedient part of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in the task of achieving "socialistic industrialization," did its utmost to

ensure that factory workers become the “ruling class of the socialist society.” As apparent from Table 7, it developed the social representation of its membership on the basis of the “class principle” by giving the leading role to “representatives of the conscious working class.” It goes without saying that these for the most part were immigrants, primarily ethnic Russians, as becomes obvious from Table 8.

**TABLE 7: Social Composition of the Communist Party of Latvia<sup>24</sup>**

Year	Workers		Farmers (employed by collective farms)		White-collar employees	
	in absolute figures	%	in absolute figures	%	in absolute figures	%
1987	76,706	42.4	21,699	12.0	82,368	45.6
1988	78,423	42.6	21,802	11.9	83,629	45.5
1989	78,223	42.5	22,821	12.4	83,138	45.1

**TABLE 8: Ethnic Composition of the Communist Party of Latvia<sup>25</sup>**

	in absolute figures	%
The total membership of the Communist party and candidates on 1 January 1989	184,182	100
including:		
Russians	79,382	43.1
Latvians	73,177	39.7
Ukrainians	10,317	5.6
Belorussians	10,250	5.6
other ethnic groups	11,056	6.0 <sup>23</sup>
83 ethnic groups altogether		

It must be mentioned that before 1989 the ethnic composition of the Communist Party of Latvia was not recorded and thus these data are unavailable.

By dictate of central Soviet authorities, industrialization was launched immediately after World War II in major Latvian cities, such as Rīga, Daugavpils and others, since

war damage there was relatively small. To make up for population losses and meet the need for laborers, it was planned to bring in 35,404 persons from other regions of the USSR as early as 1945. By 1959 Latvia had received an influx of approximately 10,000 engineers, technicians and other specialists.<sup>26</sup>

During the entire period of Soviet occupation the largest concentration of immigrants was in enterprises subordinated to central Soviet authorities, as they recruited their workers and specialists primarily among colonists. It was an open expression of the imperial tendencies and aspirations of the USSR to turn Latvia into a colony of the vast empire by settling and employing here a maximum number of newcomers with their families. For this purpose, the labor force was recruited in different regions of the USSR, as well as among demobilized officers and former prisoners released from various places of incarceration. On the other hand, on the basis of various decisions of the Soviet government, many Latvian people were sent to work in Russia and other Soviet Republics. Thus, for example, approximately 5,000 young people from Latvia took part in the developing of virgin lands in Kazakhstan, Siberia, the Urals, the Volga region (Privolzh'e) and Northern Caucasus.

The manufacturing enterprises, designers' offices, laboratories and other institutions of the Soviet complex of military industry that fulfilled the orders of the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of State Security of the USSR employed mainly colonists because they did not trust the local workers and specialists. For the same reason enterprises of the Soviet Maritime and River Fleet also became a real beehive of colonists. Because of distrust or "bad CVs," ethnic Latvian seamen were either excluded from ship crews or had to surmount great difficulties to get a job on a ship; immigrants on the other hand faced no obstacles in this regard.

The colonization of Latvia was not an improvised process; neither was it left to its own course. It was carried out deliberately, in a well thought-out manner. An extensively applied method in this regard was creation of new jobs by building new factories, power stations, oil and gas pipelines, ports, bridges and other major constructions. Central Soviet institutions supplied these construction projects with labor recruited from the USSR, who usually remained in Latvia after the completion of construction. Since all industry was state-owned and the right to make decisions on new construction projects and capital investment was vested in the Communist Party and the Soviet government, the entire process of bringing in outside workers was the result of deliberate governmental policy.

In a more distant past, people used to return to their birthplaces eventually after these had been ravaged by an enemy or natural disaster and did their utmost to restore them as soon as possible. In their hearts and minds they maintained indissoluble links with their homeland and birthplace. But Soviet policies achieved what no enemy had

achieved before: the total alienation of human beings from their country, birthplace, home and property. Many villages and whole districts in Russia were declared as having no perspective of development. Such declarations were followed by countless appeals and announcements urging people to leave their homes for virgin lands and various kinds of short-term construction projects, both in Russia and especially in other Soviet Republics. Thus the state turned millions of people in the Soviet Union, a mobile labor force, into migrants and colonists. Migrants, brain-washed by Soviet ideologists, came to Latvia not as visitors but as “the true and only masters” who openly despised the history, culture and traditions of the Latvian people.

The first attempt to curb the influx of colonists in Latvia was made already in the late 1950s when the so-called Latvian National Communists tried to restrict the accelerated industrialization and urbanization of Latvia and the practically uncontrolled influx of colonists from other Soviet Republics, primarily Russia, the Ukraine and Belorussia. Regretfully, in 1959 they were dismissed from leading positions and the colonization of Latvia continued even more intensively.

It was only on 14 February 1989, after a lengthy struggle among the political forces, that the Council of Ministers of the Latvian SSR and the Council of Trade Unions of the Latvian SSR managed to pass a resolution “On Measures to Cease Ungrounded Mechanical Growth of Population and Regulate the Process of Migration in the Latvian SSR,” which dramatically decreased the influx of colonists in Latvia.<sup>27</sup>

## Russification of Latvia

Mass-scale migration from various regions of Russia to the national republics resulted in increased Russification of the population. The policies of the Soviet Communist Party were targeted at the eradication of the national self-awareness of any Soviet people through an influx of ethnic Russian immigrants. The processes of Russification were especially pronounced in the so-called cadre policies. The Communist Party supplied Latvia with specialists designated for leading positions from the USSR, i.e. cadres for the Communist Party and Soviet apparatus as well as managers and specialists for enterprises and institutions.

To achieve Russification, the use of the Russian language was imposed on the resident population, and the fields of its application were multiplied. Already in 1940, right after the occupation of Latvia, the Russian language was introduced in record keeping and official correspondence. It was introduced in political and administrative life and became the official language of the state. Russian was the working language of the Communist Party congresses, briefings and meetings. Russian was the language spoken in the Supreme Council of the Latvian SSR. Russian was also the working language

in institutions. Ethnic Russian employees were not required to have a command of the Latvian language. Ethnic Latvian employees, on the other hand, had to be able to speak Russian. Records and correspondence were also usually written in Russian because the administration of enterprises and institutions was primarily Russian-speaking.

Russification with the help of the general education system and the Russian language became particularly intensive in the 1970s and 80s, during the so-called Brezhnev stagnation period. It had very complicated consequences: the practice of having mixed ethnic groups in the same school and the pressure on schools to intensify the teaching of the Russian language. It all passed under the slogan of education in the international spirit. For example, towards this goal the Central Committee of the Latvian Communist Party passed the resolution "On the Status of the Russian Language and Measures to Improve Its Teaching in Schools of General Education and Trade Schools."<sup>28</sup> In the early 1980s the teaching of the Russian language was imposed on the system of the pre-school institutions. As well, students in the secondary schools had to take their graduation examinations in Russian.

The role of the Russian language was promoted at the expense of the Latvian language. The teaching of the Latvian language in schools with Russian language of instruction was perfunctory and disparaging. The psychological barrier against the Latvian language among ethnic Russians (in families, schools and among teachers) was mainly the result of the policy of Russification.<sup>29</sup>

The colonization and Russification of Latvia were two key factors that triggered the movement of national rejuvenation and the struggle for the restoration of national independence in the late 1980s.

In Latvia, the USSR has performed acts which are prohibited in the Geneva Convention: deportations of the native population, transfer of its citizens as colonists to the territory of Latvia, forcible change of the social and political structure, judicial system and procedures.

In compliance with the definitions on occupation, annexation and colonization in international law, in 1990 Latvia embarked on the process of decolonization. The transformations done during the Soviet occupation were recognized as illegal and citizenship of the Republic of Latvia is now granted through naturalization rather than automatically. Resistance to this process continues to be considerable, especially among those who came to and settled in Latvia as the staunchest allies, supporters and defenders of the Soviet regime



*Daina Bleiere*

## **Repressions against Farmers in Latvia in 1944–1953**

In 1944–53 the Soviet regime carried out a thorough sovietization of all spheres of life in Latvia and in the other Baltic republics. The collectivization of agriculture was an essential component of this policy. In Latvia, the Soviet regime resorted to the same methods for the subjugation of farmers that had been used in the USSR in the late 1920s and early 1930s: (1) splitting of the farming population by setting off the poor and the “middle” farmers against the so-called wealthy “kulaks”; (2) abolishing, discrediting or weakening the established social institutions of rural population, or transforming them according to the Soviet model; (3) political and formally non-political repressions. Through these methods the rural population was deprived of unity and its ability to organize for the protection of its interests. Compared to the Soviet Union, where in the period of collectivization in the 1930s these methods had only been developing, in post-war Latvia they were applied in a systematic and consistent manner and yielded tangible results in spite of the generally negative attitude towards the occupation regime in rural areas.

Significant progress has been achieved in the research of this topic since the late 1980s, when it first became possible for historians to address the methods of collectivization and its human toll, and especially since the early 1990s, when researchers gained free access to archival records in Latvia.

The determination of the number of victims of political repressions in Latvia has been one of the primary concerns for the general public as well as for historians. In recent years, the files of the State Security Committee (KGB) of the Latvian Socialist Soviet Republic (LSSR) on persons arrested and convicted for political crimes have been published.<sup>1</sup> In 1995, the State Archive of Latvia published the lists of the deportees of 1941, 1941–53 and 25 March 1949.<sup>2</sup> In 2001, a more accurate list of the victims of the 14 June 1941 operation was published.<sup>3</sup> These publications make it possible to determine the scope of repressions against the farming population in Latvia much more accurately than before. Moreover, several collections of documents that give a comprehensive overview of the policy vis-à-vis farmers in 1940–41 and 1944–53

have also been issued.<sup>4</sup> The repression of farmers has been addressed in research publications.<sup>5</sup> Several publications have focused on the preparation and implementation of the 25 March 1949 deportation.<sup>6</sup> Studies in regional history also contribute significantly to the overall picture.<sup>7</sup> It should be mentioned that a large number of documents has been published in newspapers and magazines. Numerous published memoirs also play an important role in the research into the topic.

The published research papers, documents and memoirs provide a sufficiently comprehensive picture of the economic and political levers that were pushed to eradicate individual farming and achieve complete nationalization of agriculture. However, the wealth of Latvian archives has not been exhausted, and there is still a range of topics that has not yet been researched, such as the implementation of the agrarian reform of 1944–45, development of state farms (sovkhozs), etc. Historians have also had very limited access to Moscow archives. Materials of the State Archive of Latvia alone are not sufficient to fully explain the development of relations between the government of the Latvian SSR and the Kremlin, and the extent to which the general changes in the policy vis-à-vis the Baltic republics as well as the peasantry in the USSR affected the fate of farmers in the Baltic republics.

## **“Eradication of Kulaks as a Class” and Collectivization**

Traditionally “the eradication of kulaks as a class” in the USSR has been regarded as a tool to achieve overall collectivization. However, the analysis of the developments in Latvia leads towards the conclusion that the economic and physical extermination of “kulaks” had a political meaning of its own that cannot be reduced only and exclusively to aspirations to achieve fast and complete collectivization of agriculture. The need for economic and physical eradication of “kulaks” followed from Stalin’s thesis that class struggle had become more intensive with the progress of socialism; thus, the blame for both the failures in agriculture and the resistance of the entire farming population to collectivization was put on the “kulaks.”

The basis for “the eradication of kulaks as a class” was laid already in the first period of the Soviet occupation in 1940–41 through the nationalization of land and the implementation of agrarian reform. The size of each farm was limited to 30 ha, and land exceeding the limit was expropriated. The first large-scale repression of the well-to-do farmers was linked with the setting up of Machine Tractor Stations (MTS) and Horse and Machine Lending Stations (HMLS) that began in early 1941. For this purpose approximately 500 of the largest and better-organized farms were confiscated, but their owners for the most part were arrested or deported on 14 June 1941.

After the re-occupation of part of the territory of Latvia by Soviet troops, on 7 September 1944 in Daugavpils, the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the Latvian SSR issued the decree "Amendments to the 29 July 1940 Law on Land." The decree restored the right of use to land that had been granted by the 29 July 1940 law. The size of the new farms was established at 10 to 15 ha (while in 1940–41 the upper limit had been set at 10 ha). The decree envisaged a much larger scope of land confiscation for state land reserve than had been the case in 1940, as land commissions were authorized to place a ceiling on the size of land per farm within the limits of 20–30 ha "depending on local conditions." Persons "having assisted actively the German occupants during the period of occupation" were left with 5–8 ha of land "except for the land held by enemies of the people and land profiteers, which is to be transferred to the state land reserve to full extent."<sup>8</sup> All such farms were qualified as "kulak" farms and were assessed higher taxes. The bulk of the burden of taxes and levies in kind lay on "kulak" farms.

The official criteria of "kulak" farms were fixed in the 27 August 1947 Resolution No. 761 of the LSSR Council of Ministers "On Criteria of Kulak Farms and the Procedure of Their Taxation" that was passed on the initiative of the USSR Ministry of Finance. In 1947 as well, the policy of "the isolation and expulsion" of "kulaks" was launched, and 10,924 farms, or 4.1 % of all farms, were placed in the category of "kulak" farms.<sup>9</sup> The agricultural tax was calculated on the basis of the total revenue from the farm, by this understanding the revenue that in theory could be achieved from the respective plot of land and not the actual income. The agricultural levies in kind (agricultural products that were to be sold to the state for a low price) were applied to the entire arable land and not the actually cultivated part of it. "Kulak" farms had to deliver more agricultural produce per one hectare of arable land than other farms, the highest rate sometimes six times exceeding the lowest one.

The taxation rate depended also on the size of the farm. The average agricultural tax per farm in 1947 grew 1.7 times compared to the previous year, while that per "kulak" farm increased fivefold.<sup>10</sup> In 1947, the average tax per 1 ha of land and per one able-bodied person in a "kulak" farm was 12–17 times higher than the tax on poor farms and by 4–5 times exceeded that assessed the middle farmers. The agricultural tax on the middle farmer, in turn, three to four times exceeded the rate applied to the poor farmer. In 1948, the agricultural tax rate was increased by 33% for all categories of farms. Simultaneously the existing tax relief for new farmers and old people was rescinded, and "kulak" farms received a further surcharge of 2–2.5 times.<sup>11</sup> Taking into consideration the monetary reform of 1947 and the decrease of prices of agricultural products, the agricultural tax on "kulak" farms in 1948 had grown fivefold compared to the previous year. In 1948, the rate of compulsory insurance of "kulak" farms also twice exceeded that applied to other individual farms.<sup>12</sup>

As a result, already in 1947–48 most “kulak” farms had practically gone bankrupt or were on the verge of ruin. Because serious restrictions on the use of hired labor were in force, many farmers were unable to cultivate their land and thus to pay the increased duties. In his 29 August 1947 report to Jānis Kalnberziņš, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Latvian Communist Party (CPL CC), and Vilis Lācis, Chairman of the Council of Ministers, the Deputy Chairman of the LSSR Council of Ministers, Yevgeny Ronis, wrote that in the course of one and a half years 11,400 farmers had submitted applications of complete or partial renunciation of their land; at least as many farmers had made similar applications addressed to the local civil parish (*pagasts*) or district authorities. According to Ronis, local authorities as a rule rejected such applications and “by turning down the appeals and applications of many farms that were in fact self-liquidating, cattle and inventory of many farms were destroyed and squandered; sowing was not done to the full extent; deliveries to the state fell short; a huge debt accumulated; and the state did not receive agricultural products to the expected and planned extent.”<sup>13</sup> The drawing up of lists of “kulak” farms and increasing the tax rate on them could not fail but accelerate the process. It must be mentioned that the authorities regarded the renunciation of land as sabotage.

Many of the persons who had been placed on the “kulak” lists regarded joining a collective farm (*kolkhoz*) as an opportunity to get out of the politically and economically devastating status and to enhance their living standard. However such attempts to demonstrate their loyalty to the regime provoked a completely reverse reaction. The admission of “kulaks” to collective farms was prohibited, and it was even less acceptable to appoint “kulaks” to leading positions in collective farms. In 1948, altogether over 200 “kulaks” were expelled from collective farms, and 50 chairmen of collective farms were dismissed from their positions for family or political reasons.<sup>14</sup>

It should be pointed out, though, that on the local level the policy of non-admission of “kulaks” to collective farms was not always consistently pursued, much being dependent on the parish Communist Party organizer (*partorg*) and the district administration. Cases of collective farmers actively protesting against anti-kulak policy have also been recorded.

The deportation of more than 13,000 families on 25 March 1949 logically continued the policy of the isolation and expulsion of “kulaks” as, at least in theory, their collectivization was considered impossible, and in general they had no place in the Stalinist model of Soviet agriculture. As a result of Soviet repressions, land reforms and taxation policies, already by 1949 the most energetic, best educated, modern and economically strongest part of the farming population in practice was completely destroyed economically and had lost its influence politically. The deportation of March 1949 and the first years of the existence of collective farms completed the process.

The political importance of “the eradication of “kulaks” as a class” was so high that the economic disadvantage of such a policy was disregarded, although it was obvious to many of the implementers of this policy in Latvia. However, the consequences of the policy vis-à-vis “kulaks” went beyond this particular group of the farming population, and they were not exclusively economic by nature. The eradication of “kulaks” undermined also the moral reputation of this stratum of society and its influence on the entire rural population.

In 1940–41, the intention to collectivize agriculture was officially denied. Propaganda spoke only about voluntary joining agricultural cooperatives and Associations for Joint Cultivation of Land. The experience of 1919, however, and stories collective farms in the Soviet Union gave Latvian farmers reason to fear them. Aware of these fears, the CPL declared in the so-called demands to the new government on 21 June 1940 that “collectivization must not be imposed on farmers against their will.”<sup>15</sup> However, nationalization of land, agrarian reform as well as several measures taken in the spring of 1941, such as the establishment of MTS and HMLS mentioned above and agricultural and fishing cooperatives, outlined a course towards overall collectivization.

When the Soviet Union occupied the territory of Latvia for the second time, principally no secret was made of the goal of overall collectivization. Yet, as late as early 1949, official propaganda kept declaring that the formation of collective farms would take place on strictly voluntary basis that helped to foster illusions that the system of collective farms in Latvia was a question for the remote future only.

It must be noted that in the immediate post-war period it was widely believed that the system of collective farms was not applicable to Latvia, and the impression is that many local communists also held this view. The propaganda of the CPL emphasized that the land reform had granted land to small farmers and landless farming population and referred to collectivization only as to a prospect for the remote future. However, the summer and autumn of 1946 were a significant turning point in propaganda trends, because Moscow had expressed displeasure with the evasive tactics pursued by the republican authorities regarding collectivization. The Secretary for Agricultural Affairs of the CPL CC, Jānis Jurgens, was dismissed. Jurgens, Minister of Agriculture Jānis Vanags and some other high-ranking officials were reproached for having avoided addressing directly the issue of class struggle in rural areas and the socialistic transformation of the countryside, thus causing incompatibility between statements made at farmers’ congresses and meetings and sessions of the CPL CC.<sup>16</sup> The available sources, however, do not allow establishing whether the tactics of evasion were a local CPL leadership initiative to avoid unduly upsetting farmers and to ensure at least minimal loyalty on their part, or whether it was Moscow’s policy. Probably the “brainwashing” of the leadership of the Latvian SSR in fact reflected serious changes in attitude towards

the rural areas in the USSR in general, as well as towards the speed of sovietization in the Baltic republics.

On 21 May 1947, the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) (CPSU CC) passed a resolution “On Collective Farm Construction in the Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian SSRs.”<sup>17</sup> Although it was declared that the establishment of collective farms had to take place without undue haste and on strictly voluntary basis, conditions were deliberately created that left the farmers with no alternative but to join collective farms and that led to the complete ruin of the wealthiest part of the farming population. To stimulate interest among farmers it was planned to establish 25–30 pilot collective farms in 1947.<sup>18</sup> Each parish had to organize initiative groups from the poorest farms. These collective farms were to be supplied with the most modern agricultural equipment (but not with tractors; these were allocated to the MTSs only). Only collective farms were eligible for electricity and telephones. Collective farms and collective farmers were levied a reduced rate of deliveries to the state.<sup>19</sup> In practice, however, there were insufficient resources to apply such privileges everywhere, apart from some model collective farms.

Neither the increasing pressure on individual farmers, nor the privileges granted to collective farmers, nor the growing propaganda of the advantages of the socialized farming produced the expected results. The number of collective farms grew, yet the process was slow. The middle farmers offered the most resistance. Farmers who had obtained land in the agrarian reform of 1944–45 generally tended to be more loyal to the Soviet regime than others, yet only as long as the issue of their joining collective farms was not addressed. On 1 January 1949, there were only 890 small kolkhozes in Latvia encompassing 23,900 homesteads that constituted 10.2% of all homesteads.<sup>20</sup>

In late 1948 and early 1949, the congresses of the Communist Parties of the Baltic republics, Belorussia, Ukraine and Moldavia reported that conditions were in place for “overall” collectivization. In Latvia the congress took place on 24–27 January 1949. To achieve “overall” collectivization, on 25 March 1949 a mass deportation was carried out. It gave the expected result. While on 24 March 1949 there had been 1,443 collective farms in Latvia and approximately 500 initiative groups for the establishment of collective farms, in the period immediately after the deportation – between 27 March and 6 April – 1,740 new collective farms were established, and by 1 May collective farms covered already 71.6% of all farms.<sup>21</sup>

After overall collectivization had taken place, the earlier tax discounts and other privileges for collective farms were gradually phased out. One of the main causes of the difficulties that kolkhozes faced in the first period of their existence was the state policy oriented at their unlimited exploitation. The price of state purchases of agricultural products fixed in the Soviet Union in 1928–29 remained in force as long as 1953, while

the prices of products in retail trade and retail prices in general had grown several times. Apart from the compulsory levies in kind, a certain amount of above-the-plan produce, voluntarily in theory, had to be delivered for state purchase prices that were only slightly higher than the compulsory delivery prices. It should be taken into account that kolkhozes were paid for compulsory delivery considerably lower prices than state farms (sovkhozes), while prices applied to individual suppliers were even lower than those paid to kolkhozes. Collective farms also had to pay a rather high income tax and compulsory insurance payments, as well as fulfill obligatory labor duties in forestry, road repairs, etc.

It must be noted that in 1950–53 the pressure on collective farmers increased in the entire USSR. It took the form of higher taxes and duties, as well as various campaigns aimed at eradicating any interest among *kolkhozniks* in the fruit of their work.

Because of low productivity and miserable prices paid for state purchases, most collective farms were in a very dire financial condition, particularly in 1952 when bad weather resulted in very poor harvest and many collective farms were unable to pay their members for their work after settling accounts with the state. Income of collective farmers kept decreasing from 1950 on. In the June 1953 session of the CPL CC, Kalnbērziņš admitted that, compared to 1949, remuneration paid in money had decreased by 57% and payment in kind by 35% in 1952.<sup>22</sup> Tax discounts that collective farmers had enjoyed in the initial phase of collectivization were phased out, and taxes were increased. Compulsory levies in kind were applied even to the collective farmers' private plots of land. Collective farmers, as all other groups of population, had to subscribe to state loans, which in fact presented an extraordinary annual tax, the size of which, moreover, kept increasing steadily.

In essence the entire policy of the Soviet regime vis-à-vis farmers, both individual and collective, was hostile by nature. Repressions were applied widely and willingly – both to foster the strategic goal of trying to achieve complete control over rural population and to reach concrete economic results. The arsenal of repression methods was diverse.

## Methods and Legal Basis of Repression

**Direct political repressions** took the form of convictions “for counterrevolutionary crimes” in accordance with Article 58 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Soviet Federal Socialist Republic (RSFSR) and of the special administrative penalty of deportation.

In the years between 1946 and 1950, 3,967; 2,424; 3,131; 3,542 and 2,987 persons respectively were arrested for political crimes, but as long as there is no computerized register of all the repressed persons, it is not possible to establish the proportion of

farmers from the total number of persons accused and sentenced for political crimes and to make a more detailed analysis of the types of incriminations.<sup>23</sup> “Counterrevolutionary crimes” for the most part lay in the competence of military tribunals and the Special Commission (Assembly) of the NKVD/MGB, and to date we have at our disposal only sporadic data on the number and proportion of farmers among all convicted persons. Thus, Heinrihs Strods points out that in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 1950 the military tribunal of the border troops of the USSR Ministry of the Interior stationed in Lithuania but operating also on the territory of Latvia convicted 245 collective farmers, 68 “kulaks” and 70 individual farmers of other categories “for counterrevolutionary crimes” in Latvia.<sup>24</sup> Relatively detailed data are available concerning the social composition of persons convicted by the Supreme Court of LSSR. This court dealt with crimes that fell under Articles 58–10 (propaganda and agitation), 58–11 (preparation of counterrevolutionary crimes) and 58–14 (counterrevolutionary sabotage) of the Criminal Code. However, the overall number of cases reviewed by the Supreme Court is low (in July–December 1946 the Court sentenced 90 persons, including 51 farmers, in 1947 – 71 persons, including 22 farmers, in 1948 – 109 persons, including 23 farmers, in 1949 – 89 persons, of these only 3 farmers, and of the 67 convicted in 1950 only 8 were farmers).<sup>25</sup>

However, even a superficial overview of the files of those convicted for political crimes reveals that farmers were the social group that suffered most from the arrests and political repressions. Farmers constituted a proportionately large group in the population of Latvia in the respective period, and rural areas were the basis of the partisan movement, the majority of national partisans, moreover, being farmers. Thus in Northern Vidzeme, in the period 1945–53, 85.3% of partisans were former farmers, of whom 2.3% had been landless, 24.1% had owned farms with fewer than 20 ha of land while the largest group, 40.8%, had owned 20–30 ha of land. The large landowners (above 40 ha) constituted only 3.5%.<sup>26</sup> While the overall picture could differ somewhat from region to region, archive materials lead to the conclusion that the general tendency was the same all over Latvia. The majority of members and supporters of the partisan movement belonged to the category of middle farmers. It was not only because the middle farmers constituted the largest group of the farming population, but also because the middle farmers more than others had felt their living standard improving in independent Latvia, particularly in late 1930s, as a result of the agricultural policy of the Ulmanis regime. Young people, who constituted a major part of resistance, came from this group of population as well. In the immediate post-war years special attention was paid to students of agricultural schools as potential opponents to the Soviet regime.

Administrative exile – referred to also as deportation – was the second and the most widespread type of political repression. Administrative exile was not restricted only to specific social groups, and it was an ongoing practice rather than just mass-scale

operation. Right after the occupation of the territory of Latvia, and particularly after the capitulation of the German army in Kurzeme on 8 May 1945, a high proportion of men were placed in so-called filtration camps, from which the survivors and those who were not convicted were released in 1946. This too can be regarded as a form of deportation.

However, the mass-scale operations of 14 June 1941 and 25 March 1949 were extraordinary actions that had a huge demoralizing impact on the public. The 1941 operation was targeted specifically not as much at farmers as at various groups of society that were regarded to be potential enemies of the Soviet regime. Nevertheless, about one third of the persons arrested on 14 June 1941 were farmers. The March 1949 operation was fully aimed against farmers, although not all of the deportees were farmers. The 1949 deportation had two goals: (1) to break the resistance to collectivization; (2) to suppress armed resistance.

The top secret Resolution No. 390–138 passed by the USSR Council of Ministers on 29 January 1949 fixed the categories of people that were to be deported from Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia: (1) “kulaks” and their families; (2) families of “bandits” and nationalists who had illegal status, as well as families of convicted and executed “bandits”; (3) legalized “bandits” who continued anti-Soviet activities and their families; (4) families of the supporters of “bandits.” Under-aged and disabled family members were not to be subjected to deportation; however they could voluntarily follow their families (in practice all family members who were found at home at the moment of arrest were deported).<sup>27</sup>

On 17 March 1949 the Latvian SSR Council of Ministers passed a top secret Resolution No. 282 “On Deportation of Kulak Families beyond the Latvian SSR,” that ordered the deportation of 10,000 “kulak” families and confirmed the deportee lists handed in by district executive committees. The State Security Ministry (MGB) of the Latvian SSR was placed in charge of the deportation.<sup>28</sup> It must be mentioned that only “kulak” families were mentioned in this resolution. The reasons for the inconsistency between the two documents have not been established. The authorities probably did not distinguish much between “kulaks” and “nationalists.” The deportation was aimed at the elimination of both armed resistance and opposition to kolkhozes. According to Soviet propaganda, both were instigated by “kulak” conspiracy.

The deportee lists including both categories of victims – “kulaks” and “nationalists” – were endorsed by the chairmen of the district executive committees on 13–15 March. These lists included 11,000 families with 38,000 people. However, the deportee register files show that the lists had been prepared already in February and March by state security authorities.<sup>29</sup> They considered the existing lists of “kulaks” and the advice of local authorities only in part and based their decisions also of the data from the LSSR State History Archive on the condition of farms before June 1940, primarily the data of the 1939 agricultural census. Changes that had happened to the respective farm since 1939

were not considered.<sup>30</sup> As regards the “nationalists,” decisions on their deportation were reached on the basis of MGB sources of information. At the same time, it seems, there existed deportee quotas per district. The low proportion of “kulaks” in Latgale districts was compensated by higher proportion of “nationalists.”

Altogether on 25–29 March, 9147 “kulak” families or 29,252 people were deported, including 28,107 Latvians, 482 Russians and 663 persons of other ethnic groups, as well as 3,841 “nationalist” families or 12,881 persons, including 12,158 Latvians, 293 Russians and 430 persons of other ethnic backgrounds. The deportees were later joined by their family members who voluntarily or compulsorily followed them or were exiled to join their families after their release from imprisonment. Between 1949 and 1954, 405 persons were released from exile, because they were undeservedly deported according to criteria in effect at that time. Within the framework of the 25 March 1949 deportation altogether 44,191 persons were in administrative exile for a longer or shorter period, including children born in exile.<sup>31</sup> The deportees of 1949 constituted 2.28 % of the population of Latvia.<sup>32</sup> If the statistical data – that in May 1948 in Latvia there were 194,259 farms<sup>33</sup> – can be trusted, the deported families constituted about 6.7% and “kulak” families 4.7% of all farming families.

Neither before nor during the deportation did the public know the actual goals or scope of the operation or the criteria that were used to select the deportees. It was only in late 1980s when information about the criteria of “kulak” farms and the categories of people officially subjected to deportation was released. Therefore many people believed that further deportations would follow and the effect of the operation went far beyond the rural population. It left a demoralizing impact on the entire society.

**Economic and political repressions.** The most widespread repressions were related to default on taxes, failure to deliver levies in kind and fulfill labor duties. After overall collectivization repressions were applied to violations of collective farm statutes, theft of collective farm property and other offenses “against socialist property.” While in theory these qualified as “non-political” repressions, in essence they were political. (1) The degree of punishment depended on the social “status” of the accused: persons who qualified as “kulaks” or were regarded as politically disloyal were punished much more severely, in almost all cases receiving a term of actual incarceration. (2) Punishment was used not only to foster economic goals but also to remodel the society politically. (3) Inability or unwillingness to fulfill the imposed duties and levies was interpreted by the Communist Party as political resistance.

On many occasions punishment took on the character of a campaign. “Show trials” and other mechanisms of collective intimidation were employed. Thus in a meeting of the CPL CC in June 1946 a representative of Valka District described the practiced tactics

as follows: “We went to ... village, there we decided on a charge, selected a suitable defendant and convicted him on the spot. Many people attended the trial. On the next day a considerable number of farmers began delivering milk.”<sup>34</sup> Another participant of the meeting emphasized that mass trials were inefficient. He suggested that preference should be given instead to fewer cases resulting in sentences of five years in prison plus confiscation of property, and such trials should be featured in the press.<sup>35</sup> However, such suggestions were not always taken into account in practice, and in some districts the number of criminal charges and sentences remained rather high.

Soviet jurisprudence had at its disposal a wide range of articles of the Criminal Code and official decrees. However, in most cases the procedure was as follows. The first step taken in case of failure to pay taxes and to fulfill deliveries in kind or labor duties was to take the case to court, i.e., the court decided to take inventory of the farmer’s property in the so-called incontestable manner, and property was confiscated to cover the amount of the debt. In case of repeated defaults on taxes, levied deliveries in kind or failure to fulfill labor duties, charges were brought in court usually based on Article 60 (default on taxes), 61 (refusal to fulfill labor duties) or 62 (deliberate default of levies and concealment of property subject to confiscation) of the Criminal Code of RSFSR.

In compliance with Article 60, ordinary farmers for a first-time offense were fined for the sum of the payment due; in case of a repeated offense they were sentenced to reformatory labor for the period up to six months or fined for double the sum of the payment due. “Kulaks,” in turn, were subject to incarceration or reformatory labor for up to one year or a fine for the sum up to ten times the payment due (Part 3 of Article 60).<sup>36</sup>

Article 61, mostly applied to farmers for failure to fulfill forestry duties, also discriminated between “working farmers” and “kulaks.” For a first-time offense working farmers were fined for the sum up to five times worth the work due (Article 61, Part 1). For a repeat offense they were incarcerated or sentenced to reformatory labor for up to one year (Article 61, Part 2). “Kulak elements,” in contrast, were to be sentenced to up to two years in prison plus complete or partial confiscation of property or even deportation (Article 61, Part 3).<sup>37</sup> On a few occasions the court indeed sentenced the offender to deportation (prior to March 1949), yet there were only a few such cases, and they seem to have been revoked on appeal.

In the period between October 1948 and 15 January 1949, the Collegium of the Criminal Court of the Latvian SSR Supreme Court analyzed 44 People’s Court cases on the failure to fulfill forestry duties that qualified under Article 61 of the Criminal Code. In compliance with Part 1 of Article 61 the offender had been fined in four cases; in compliance with Part 2 one offender was incarcerated; and in compliance with Part 3 nine persons had been sentenced to up to one year in prison and 29 persons – up to two years. In addition, 34 offenders had their property confiscated, the rights of seven persons

were restricted, and seven persons were forbidden to reside in the territory of Latvia after serving their term. Criminal charges had been brought against 39 “kulaks,” and only one case was withdrawn; however all of the five criminal cases against “working farmers” had been dropped.<sup>38</sup> If the accused was placed in the “kulak” category, even advanced age and other extenuating circumstances could not serve as a basis for dropping the case.

Article 61 of the Criminal Code was applied to nine farmers in 1945, 308 farmers in 1946, 70 farmers in 1947, 245 farmers in 1948 and 150 farmers in 1949, moreover in 1946 and 1948–49 more than a half of the accused were sentenced to one to two years in prison and the majority had their property confiscated.<sup>39</sup>

In the first quarter of 1949 alone, 1749 “kulaks” and 2703 farmers of other categories were charged with default on the agricultural tax for the previous year.<sup>40</sup> However, in most cases the charges were either withdrawn (if the accused paid the tax before the trial) or the accused were acquitted because finance departments often lodged unfounded claims. Many sentences were disputed by way of appeal. Nevertheless, the number of sentences was large. Out of all cases reviewed between July and October 1948 208 persons were convicted on the basis of the Article 60, Part 3; of these – 182 for default on the agricultural tax, 26 – for default on income tax, and one person was acquitted. Of the defaulters on the agricultural tax 167 persons (92%) were sentenced to up to one year in prison, seven persons (4%) were incarcerated to less than one year, five (3%) were sentenced to reformatory labor, one was fined and two were placed on probation.<sup>41</sup>

When the majority of farmers were forced to join collective farms, the character of repressions against them changed rapidly. Although the default on taxes as well as failure to fulfill obligatory delivery quotas and labor duties still was an important source of repressions, and debt even as old as that for 1946 was not infrequently exacted, other problems quickly advanced to the forefront. Thus a campaign was launched in 1950 against non-collectivized farmers whose land had been transferred to the collective farm and compensated for by land outside the borders of the collective farm, but who still continued to cultivate their former land. From January to October 1951, 55 of the 72 cases of unauthorized activity involved individual farmers who used their former land.<sup>42</sup> In accordance with Resolution No. 7/6/U, passed at the 3 April 1940 session of the Supreme Court of the USSR, such activities qualified as theft of collective farm property, and thus the respective verdicts had to comply with the 4 June 1947 decree “On Criminal Liability for Plunder of State and Public Property” that envisaged much harsher punishment than the respective articles of the Criminal Code. Attempts at concealing the property to be seized were also sometimes qualified according to this decree.

After collectivization the number of criminal cases dealing with theft of collective farm property increased rapidly. The Ministry of Justice and other institutions demanded such cases to be qualified in compliance with the 4 June 1947 decree. In 1951,

altogether 608 cases on theft of collective farm property were referred to the court, and 677 persons were convicted. Of the 235 cases analyzed by the Ministry of Justice involving 350 persons, in 69 cases involving 70 persons the worth of stolen property did not exceed 100 rubles.<sup>43</sup> Furthermore, punishment was extremely ruthless. Thus in 1950 a person from the collective farm Zvezda in Alūksne District was sentenced to 5 years without restriction of rights and confiscation of property for the theft of 4 kg of grain, and the Supreme Court let the sentence stand. Collective farmer Anastasija P. (born 1892) from the collective farm “Lenin” in the same district was sentenced to 7 years plus partial confiscation of property for the theft of 17 kg of grain (most probably because she had resisted the search).<sup>44</sup> As excessively mild the Supreme Court revoked a verdict against Elza K. in Ventspils District. She had been given an eight-year suspended sentence in a reformatory labor camp with a five-year period of probation. The court had shown leniency because the accused was ill and had returned the stolen clover to the collective farm.<sup>45</sup>

**Unofficial and semi-official repressions.** Apart from the officially accepted repressions, various forms of violence that officials resorted to must also be considered. At the end of the war and in the immediate post-war period the overall level of violence in rural areas was very high. Murders, robberies and other crimes were rampant. Many crimes, moreover, were committed by occupation troops and officials, particularly the so-called “destroyers,” who were involved in anti-partisan warfare, militia (police) and persons authorized by state security (MGB), as well as parish Communist Party organizers, officials of the local executive committees, etc. The situation was so dire that in November 1945 the CPL CC sent a classified letter to district party committees with instructions on urgent measures to root out violation of Soviet law. The debates about the letter in district party committees revealed a truly depressing picture. Thus in Viļaka District, militia and security officers had committed murders, rape, robbery, unsanctioned searches and arrests of civilians. They had beaten and robbed the arrested persons, to say nothing of misappropriation of property left without an owner. Heads of various institutions had also used the farmers’ labor without paying them. The local officials had intimidated the discontented by threatening court cases, arrests and fines. The court and the prosecutor’s office on their part had not reacted at all.<sup>46</sup> In other districts the situation was similar. Unsanctioned searches were carried out not only by militia, “destroyers” and KGB officials but also by employees of executive committees.

To force farmers to deliver their levies of grain and fulfill plans of forestry work imposed on parishes, the local authorities not infrequently resorted to methods that were unlawful and high-handed even from the perspective of the Soviet regime. For instance, G. Simanovičs, Party organizer of Briģi Parish in Ludza District, had arrested, interrogated and beaten up farmers for their failure to fulfill the plan of timber delivery.<sup>47</sup>

The fact that the Latvian SSR Prosecutor's Office, the Council of Ministers and the CPL CC pointed out such violations does not attest to the regime's humane considerations, but instead shows that the state and party apparatus had to learn to resort to the legal instruments of coercion. However one gets an impression that on many occasions not even attempts were made to eliminate violence completely.

The Communist Party kept emphasizing that repressions were a reaction to the resistance on the part of "kulaks" and "banditistic elements." In fact, in many cases the Soviet regime deliberately provoked resistance, particularly through the policy of "the isolation and expulsion of kulaks," through taxes, levies and labor duties, as well as through violence and unlawful acts on the part of state officials.

## Conclusions

Repressions against the farming population in Latvia between 1944 and 1953 can be classified as social genocide. Both the scope and the goal of the repressions – to transform the farmers' social identity, to force an entire social class, whose existence was based on private land ownership, to become members of the proletariat – attest to the validity of such a classification.

In Latvia collectivization was not only imposed "from above," but also imported "from outside." It had neither economic, nor social justification, and contemporaries, including many Communist Party functionaries clearly realized it. Soviet repressions and agricultural policy resulted in the destruction and waste of human and economic resources.

There is no reason to regard Soviet agricultural policy as an attempt to modernize the peasantry socially. In fact, by 1944, there was no peasantry in the traditional sense left in Latvia. In the lifestyle and in the social communication of the farming population institutions of civic society rather than those of traditional peasantry were predominant. Traditional peasantry as such had existed only in Latgale, but it, too, had to a large extent lost its positions already in the inter-war period because of the agrarian reform. Repressions against the wealthiest, best educated and politically most active members of the rural community, as well as the abolition, neutralization or sovietization of all the traditional institutions of rural socialization (cooperatives, various social organizations, church parishes, etc.) destroyed the already entrenched forms of social organization offering almost nothing in its place.

The Latvian nation developed on the basis of the farming population. The farmers' life-style and culture was and still is a cohesive element of national self-awareness. The collectivization and deportations of the farming population caused economic, demographic and socio-psychological consequences whose impact on the entire nation has not been fully evaluated as yet.



*Aleksandrs Ivanovs*

## **Sovietization of Latvian Historiography 1944–1959: Overview**

The establishment of the Soviet occupation regime inaugurated the sovietization of Latvia. Sovietization embraced historiography as well, which the Soviet regime regarded as an efficient tool for the implementation of Soviet policies and the indoctrination of Latvia's population by creating historical myths that promoted the regime and deformed the nation's self-awareness.<sup>1</sup> As a result of sovietization, historical research in Latvia came under total political control and ideological pressures and eventually developed into one of the factors of implementing Soviet policies.<sup>2</sup>

The sovietization of Latvian historiography in 1944–59 has not been studied as such. Historiography surveys traditionally treat the development of historical research in Latvia in 1944–59 within the overall context of Soviet Latvian historiography. Such studies are rather numerous, and they were published both during the Soviet occupation and after the restoration of Latvia's independence. Works published before 1991 leave a two-sided impression. On the one hand, they are saturated with authors' names and titles of research publications, thus summarizing a very extensive historiographic material.<sup>3</sup> Thanks to such an "extensive" approach these surveys partially retain their significance for research even now as valuable reference sources. On the other hand, these works have serious shortcomings as well. Like Soviet historiography in general, Latvian historiography studies possessed an ideologized and politicized character. They rejected earlier accomplishments of national historiography, demonstrated a hostile and nihilistic attitude towards foreign and especially exile Latvian historiography.<sup>4</sup> It exaggerated the achievements of historical research in the Latvian SSR, ignored its failures and placed an excessive emphasis on research into contemporary history. At the same time, these historiographic studies failed to provide an overall picture of the development of historical research and substituted ideological assessments for historiographic analysis.

After Latvia regained independence in 1991, it became possible for historians to study Soviet Latvian historiography free of ideological constraints, to evaluate its actual contribution to the research into Latvia's past and to reveal its link with politics and the

ruling ideology. Although the number of historiographic studies published in the 1990s is not large, they provide an overall picture of the destiny of Latvia's historiography under Soviet occupation, including the process of its sovietization in 1944–59.<sup>5</sup>

Because Soviet Latvian historiography developed in the context of Soviet historiography in general, works of Russian historians who present a comprehensive picture of Soviet historiography acquire a certain importance for studying Soviet Latvian historiography.<sup>6</sup> These works emphasize the dominating influence of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) on historical research in the USSR. Research of Soviet Latvian historiography requires also the consideration of works of those Western historians who describe the specifics of Soviet historiography, primarily in the context of CPSU policies.<sup>7</sup> Some individual studies analyze also the role of historiography in the implementation of Soviet nationalities policies, among others also in the Baltic republics.<sup>8</sup>

On the whole, however, research of Soviet Latvian historiography is still in the initial phase. Detailed studies are not available; no summarizing monograph has been published; and certain aspects (such as the historians' attitude towards the ruling ideology, the impact of historical research on the national awareness of Latvians, etc.) are still being neglected. More attention should also be paid to the initial phase in the development of Soviet Latvian historiography when the Soviet model was being imposed on Latvian history and all features typical of Soviet Latvian historiography took root. This paper provides only an initial outline of the process of the sovietization of Latvian historiography and reveals the controversial consequences. Special attention is focused on the conceptual and methodological foundations of historiography, since they best of all reveal the dependence of historical research in the Latvian SSR on Soviet policies and ideology, as well as on the precepts of the Russian national and the USSR Marxist historiography.<sup>9</sup> The limited scope of the paper precludes a comprehensive study and must be regarded as only the first step of an extensive research program.

## **The Emergence of Soviet Latvian Historiography**

Soviet Latvian historiography has a prehistory that Soviet scholars often traced back to Latvian Marxist historiography of the 1920s and 30s, linking its emergence with the October 1917 revolution in Russia.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, as members of the revolutionary movement, representatives of Latvian Marxist historiography, who resided in the USSR during the period of Latvia's independence (R. Apinis, J. Bērziņš-Ziemelis, J. Daniševskis, P. Dauge, R. Endrups, V. Miške, P. Stučka, K. Šķilters, etc.), laid the foundations for the interpretation of certain topics in Latvian history in the spirit of Soviet methodology. However, the range of these topics is rather limited: the condition of the working class; the history of the Social Democratic Workers' Party and the Communist Party of Latvia

(hereafter – CPL); the history of the 1905–07 and 1917 revolutions; the “struggle of the working class of Latvia for Soviet rule” in 1918–19; the activities of Latvian Riflemen; and agrarian history.<sup>11</sup> The main task of Latvia’s Marxist historiography was to find arguments for proving the thesis that the establishment of Soviet rule in Latvia in 1918 and its subsequent restoration were inevitable developments. As a result, except for the history of social struggle, Latvian Marxist historiography neglected almost all other topics of Latvian history. Therefore these works, which only rather conditionally qualify as historical research, are hardly the places to look for any general concept of Latvia’s history. Nevertheless, early Latvian Marxist historiography gives a rather accurate picture of the essential methodological features of subsequent Soviet historiography: an unbalanced approach to the study of different phases and issues of Latvian history; reduction of the whole process of history to modern history only; exaggeration of the role of the socio-economic “basis” and the significance of the revolutionary movement; disregard of the national specifics of the history of Latvia; justification of the policies of the ruling Communist regime.

The purposeful development of Soviet Latvian historiography in the framework of Soviet historiography began during the first Soviet occupation in 1940–41.<sup>12</sup> The institutions of the new regime had to deal with a range of complicated tasks: the transformation and unification of the system of research and educational establishments in Latvia in order to integrate it into the infrastructure of historical research existing in the Soviet Union; the implementation of Soviet personnel policies; the elaboration of an appropriate concept of Latvian history following the model of the USSR and “the elder” Soviet republics; the development of Latvian historiography into an efficient tool for advancing Soviet policies. One year was not enough to implement such an extensive program. However, the first steps taken towards the sovietization of Latvian historiography and especially organizational measures, such as the establishment of the Chair of Marxism-Leninism at the University of Latvia, the beginning of the reorganization of the Institute of the History of Latvia, the foundation of the Museum of Revolution, etc., clearly reveal the priorities of the occupation regime in the administration of historical research.<sup>13</sup> No tangible result was achieved in other fields related to the qualitative aspect: no Soviet concept of Latvian history was elaborated; among publications dominated articles written for the general readership (propaganda).

The sovietization of Latvia’s historiography was interrupted by the Nazi occupation of 1941–44/45. It should be mentioned that, as a consequence of the first Soviet and the Nazi occupation, the ranks of qualified historians shrank: a number of historians left Latvia during the German period, when a second Soviet occupation threatened, and never returned<sup>14</sup>. In 1944–45 the imposition of the Soviet model on Latvian

historiography began practically from scratch. This interruption allows us to consider the period of the first Soviet occupation as the last phase in the prehistory of Soviet Latvian historiography, in the course of which a few methods of the administration of historical research were tried out.

## Changes in Organization and Methodology of Historical Research

It was only during the second Soviet occupation that the regime achieved tangible success in the sovietization of Latvia's historiography. From 1944–45 on, the main directions of sovietization were: *the politicization and ideologization of history, as well as partial Russification and integration of Latvian historiography into USSR historiography.*

The establishment of the exact time when the process of sovietization was completed presents a special historiographic problem. While the organizational foundation of Soviet Latvian historiography was laid in a relatively short period, the elaboration of the official Soviet concept of the history of Latvia and its imposition on Latvian historians was more time-consuming. It seems that basically only around 1959 the Soviet concept had become entrenched and the sovietization process was finished. The publication of the third and the last volume of the summarizing collective monograph *The History of the Latvian SSR* can be considered the capstone of the process.<sup>15</sup> From this time on, the scheme of Latvian history elaborated in the monograph became compulsory to all researchers of Latvia's past.<sup>16</sup> Around this very time the concept of the history of Latvian Social Democrat and the Communist parties was also elaborated as attested by the submission for print of the first part of the *Historical Treatises of the Communist Party of Latvia*,<sup>17</sup> as well as the publication of monographs dedicated to those particular topics in Latvia's history that the Soviet authorities deemed particularly significant.<sup>18</sup> It should be noted that between 1944 and 1959 the sovietization of the historiography of the Latvian SSR was pursued purposefully and tenaciously and the so-called "Thaw" (relaxation of the regime) of 1956 failed to curb these processes. The role of the "Thaw" in the development of the Soviet historiography seems to be exaggerated.<sup>19</sup> The political "Thaw" essentially affected the research into a few topics of Latvia's history only. These were basically the topics which before 1956 had been completely subjected to the concept of "The Brief Course in the History of CPSU(B)": the issues of revolutionary movement, the construction of socialism and the history of CPL.<sup>20</sup>

Thus the sovietization of Latvia's historiography can be considered in two aspects: the transformation of the organizational infrastructure of historical research and the development of the methodological and conceptual basis of historiography.

The transformation of the organization of historical research in Latvia following the Soviet model began already on 7–8 December 1944, when, in compliance with decisions of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Latvia (Bolsheviks) (hereafter LCP(B) CC), a commission was established, whose function was to elaborate “Marxist scientific history of the Latvian SSR.” The Institute of History was reopened under the auspices of the Latvian State University. Mārgers Štepermanis, who had served as secretary-general of the former Institute of the History of Latvia in 1936–40, was appointed director. However, already in February 1946 he was replaced by Kārlis Strazdiņš, who remained in this position until 1963. On 20 June 1946, the Institute of History was placed under the auspices of the Latvian SSR Academy of Science.<sup>21</sup> From 1946 to 1959 it was called the Institute of History and Material Culture at the Latvian SSR Academy of Science; later it was renamed again the Institute of History at the Latvian SSR Academy of Science.

The Institute of History coordinated and organized historical research in the Latvian SSR. In parallel, on 25 November 1945, a special institution for ideological supervision was established: the Institute of Party History of LCP(B) (from 1952 CPL) CC,<sup>22</sup> which existed until 1990 when it was reorganized and renamed the Institute of Socio-Political Studies of CPL CC and soon after closed down altogether. With the establishment of the Institute of Party History of CPL CC, a separate, isolated and privileged field emerged in the historiography in the Latvian SSR: the history of the Communist Party of Latvia.

The establishment of these two research institutions facilitated the unification and organizational incorporation of Latvian historiography into USSR historiography, since the two institutes were subordinated to the leading central institutions for research and ideological supervision in Moscow: the Institute of Party History of CPL CC was simultaneously a section of CPL CC and an affiliate of the Marx-Engels-Lenin-Stalin Institute of CPSU(B) CC (from 1956, Institute of Marxism-Leninism of CPSU CC); the Academy of Science of Latvian SSR, which was in charge of the Institute of History, was subordinated to the USSR Academy of Science.

The processes of integration were facilitated by changing history teaching in Soviet Latvian higher education institutions: in 1951 the Chair of the History of Latvia was closed at the Latvian State University. Henceforth the history of Latvia was taught in the context of USSR history. Chairs of Marxism-Leninism and CPSU history were established at all higher educational institutions with the aim to indoctrinate students. The operation of such Chairs was coordinated by the Institute of Party History of CPL CC.

Another organizational measure was the strict regulation of archives on the basis of normative acts of the USSR.<sup>23</sup> As a result, many primary sources became inaccessible to researchers. In libraries, “special collections” were created that could be accessed only by a special permit. Some research papers were withdrawn from libraries and destroyed.<sup>24</sup>

In practice the creative freedom of historians had come to an end. Apart from institutions of the Party, authorities for national security,<sup>25</sup> and research institutions that oftentimes acted as supervisors,<sup>26</sup> the historians' work was also controlled by bodies of political censorship.<sup>27</sup> This infrastructure of Latvian SSR historiography remained unchanged until the restoration of Latvia's independence.

Along with the infrastructure reform, its personnel policy was also transformed. Personnel changes assumed various forms: dismissal of historians from their positions at Latvian State University (B. Brežgo, G. Lukstiņš), archives (J. Jenšs) and Institute of History (R. Malvess, J. Zemzaris); deportation of historians to Siberia (Fr. Adamovičs, A. Karnups, R. Šnore); the influx of already indoctrinated historians from Russia (K. Strazdiņš, J. Zutis, J. Krastiņš, A. Drīzulis, V. Dorošenko, V. Savčenko, V. Šteinbergs, etc.)<sup>28</sup>. Loyalty to the Soviet regime, rather than achievement in scholarship, was henceforth regarded the key criterion of a historian's qualification.

All these facts allow considering Soviet Latvian historiography as a "repressed science," since repressions affected the academic community as a whole, individual scholars, academic mentality and ideas, areas and directions of historical research, as well as research and educational institutions, books and archives.<sup>29</sup> Through such measures Latvia's historiography became organizationally incorporated into the historiography of the USSR and thus subordinated to total ideological control.

Compared to organizational reforms that were implemented through the acts of the Communist Party, the emergence of a new concept of history was hampered by the inertia of thinking on the part of historians, the influence of the previous concept of Latvian history, the indecisiveness of the "Marxist methodology"<sup>30</sup> itself and its incompatibility with scholarly criteria. Officially until 1956 (but in practice longer), the approach to the presentation of the process of history described in the "Brief Course of the History of the CPSU(B)" was regarded as the paragon of the Marxist methodology.<sup>31</sup> This methodology determined some important features of historical research that to a greater or lesser degree marked the works of Soviet historians: (1) not infrequent falsifications of history; suppression of historical truth; (2) tendentious selection of historical facts and historical sources and the creation of unnatural and abstract historical schemes that simplify or vulgarize the idea of history; (3) arbitrary interpretation of historical sources and facts, proceeding primarily from ideological and political considerations, rather than scholarly ones. As a result, factual material was completely subordinated to this scheme, and the discovery of any new historical facts did nothing to change it. Soviet historiography also mastered a new "scientific" language in which the key terms were: "struggle," "Marxism," "formation," "process," "class," "proletariat," "revolution," etc. Instead of describing the past, works of Soviet history presented illustrated sociological schemes.

The introduction of Marxist methodology and the Soviet concept of history into Latvian historiography took place in two fields simultaneously: interpretations of modern political history for the most part continued to abide by the position of Latvian Marxist historiography of the 1920s and 1930s, while in the medieval and partially also ancient history of Latvia a consistent concept was completely established only during Soviet occupation. For the development of the Soviet concept of Latvian history the series of brochures “Apcerējumi par Latvijas PSR vēsturi” (Treatises on the History of the Latvian SSR) was of special importance. Some of them had both theoretical and methodological significance.<sup>32</sup> But the general concept that embraced all of the history of Latvia was entrenched in the collective monograph *Latvijas PSR vēsture* (History of the Latvian SSR).

The Soviet concept of Latvian history as a whole was decisive in the construction of the overall picture of Latvian history, in the research of concrete topics and the study of individual facts of history. It is only at first glance that the concept seems simple and primitive. Regrettably, contemporary historiography tends to a certain extent to simplify the impression of the theoretical foundations of Soviet historiography in Latvia by focusing on its links with the Marxist methodology and the concept of the “Brief Course of the History of CPSU(B)” only.

## **Soviet Latvian Historiography: A Theoretical Framework**

When the theoretical foundations of Soviet Latvian historiography are taken into account, the hypothesis can be advanced that it actually consisted of three conceptual strands that never quite merged: the (Marxist) historiography of the USSR, the Russian national (pre-Soviet) historiography and the Latvian national historiography. While it is difficult to measure accurately the proportion of each of these historiographic traditions in the historiography of the Latvian SSR, it seems that research into nineteenth and twentieth-century events was rooted in Marxist methodology and especially in the “Brief Course of the History of the CPSU(B).” As concerns the earlier periods of Latvian history, the ideas of nineteenth-century Russian historians and their approaches to the interpretation of Baltic history can oftentimes be discerned behind the Marxist phraseology and official schemes of historical development. Actually ideas of Russian national historiography affected the research into the nineteenth and twentieth-century history as well, providing Soviet historiography with additional arguments to justify the domination of the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union in Latvia.<sup>33</sup> Thus the Russian pre-Soviet school of history should be placed next to Marxist ideology and the concept of the “Brief Course” among the factors that shaped the structure of Soviet Latvian historiography.

The official Soviet concept, certainly, considerably changed the basic precepts of Russian national historiography, yet did not revise them entirely and as a result itself fell under the influence of nineteenth-century Russian historiography. It allowed the historiography of the USSR partially to maintain its national (Russian) character. Therefore the imposition of the Soviet concept of history on Latvian historiography meant not only its sovietization, but also Russification. In short, it was an attempt to replace the Latvian historiography tradition by the Russian one<sup>34</sup> with an admixture of Marxist methodology and theory. Despite the harsh post-war conditions, however, Latvian national historiography asserted its own vitality as attested by the survival of the less-politicized and ideologized fields of research where Marxist methodology had failed to take deep root. Here the elements of the official methodology “had more the character of compulsory duties.”<sup>35</sup>

The substantiation of the proposed hypothesis, of course, requires careful and thorough analysis of the works of all Latvian historians and comparison of their ideas with those of Soviet and nineteenth-century Russian historiography. Therefore, here only the main themes that shaped the identity of Soviet Latvian historiography will be sketched in and the specifics of their interpretation and adaptation determined.

A cornerstone of Soviet Latvian historiography is the thesis that the integration of the lands populated by Latvians into Russia was “inevitable” and had “progressive” significance. The thesis was substantiated on the basis of the following considerations: the integration of Latvia’s historic regions into the Russian Empire ensured a lasting peace for Latvians, encouraged their economic development, restored “the age-old” political, economic and cultural links between Latvians and Russians and thus “created preconditions for further development of the Latvian people [...] and the cultivation of Latvian culture under the influence of the culture of the great Russian people.”<sup>36</sup> This idea, no doubt, had a clearly political slant, since in essence it practically justified the incorporation of the territory of present-day Latvia into the Russian Empire in the eighteenth century and the occupation of independent Latvia in the twentieth century. It must be noted that it was not Soviet historiography that “contributed” this thesis to the research into Latvian history. Very similar ideas can be traced in the very origins of Russian national historiography in the *Chronicles of Ancient Russia (Rus)*.<sup>37</sup>

Initially this thesis existed in the form of the political ideas of Russian chroniclers regarding the age-old right of Russia to neighboring lands whose populations paid tribute to the Grand Princes of Kiev, St. Vladimir and Yaroslav the Wise (10<sup>th</sup>–11<sup>th</sup> c.). Therefore, based on semi-legendary ancient tales from *The Primary Chronicle*,<sup>38</sup> chroniclers regarded the territory of present-day Latvia as an irretrievable part of Russia and ancient Latvians as subjects of Russian princes, who had “unlawfully” rejected their duties. Russian chronicles, in fact, justified the territorial expansion of Russia and presented the policy of invasion as a just war for the restoration of the age-old order.<sup>39</sup>

In the first half of the eighteenth century this ancient Russian historiography tradition was resuscitated by one of the first Russian historians Vasilii Tatishchev. On the basis of the chronicles, which describe ancient Latgale and Livland as Russian tributary dominions, he deduced that these territories had been an integral part of Russia.<sup>40</sup> Until the end of the eighteenth century, Russian historiography tenaciously followed the chroniclers' ideas, and in the beginning of the nineteenth century, Nikolai Karamzin supplemented the traditional thesis of the age-old right to Latvia with the idea of the positive effect of Russian domination and its benevolent impact on the local peoples. Therefore, in his story on Russian conquests in the Baltic, Karamzin underlined that Russian political domination did not imply the oppression of the local populations and the spread of the Orthodox faith by force; the local peoples even were granted the right of self-government.<sup>41</sup> The thesis of the positive significance of Russian domination enjoyed particular currency in the second half of the nineteenth century when the issue of the privileges of Baltic Germans was raised. Often the thesis turned into an open apology for the nationalities policies of the Russian Empire.<sup>42</sup> The thesis is featured in Soviet Latvian historiography practically in the same form.<sup>43</sup> The only innovation seems to be the premise of the "lesser evil,"<sup>44</sup> i.e. Russian domination, since the "class-oriented approach" required that on the one hand tsarist Russia had to be regarded as a "prison of nations" and on the other as the "liberator" of the Baltic peoples from the yoke of German landlords. As a result, the thesis defended by nineteenth-century Russian historians partially lost its purity and consistency in Soviet Latvian historiography.

The nineteenth-century idea that the incorporation of the territory of present-day Latvia into the Russian Empire was "historical inevitable" was augmented by the nineteenth-century historian Sergei Solov'ev based on the theory of "organic development." He outlined the general scheme of Baltic history<sup>45</sup> that was later taken over by rank-and-file Russian historians.<sup>46</sup> In contrast to pre-Soviet historiography, Soviet Latvian historiography was incapable of substantiating the "historical inevitability" of the incorporation of the Baltic in the eighteenth century in such a consistent and clear manner, because Solov'ev's geographic determinism was not at all acceptable to Soviet scholarship. Thus the emphasis was moved to the assessment of the fact itself, only underlining the "progressive significance" of Russian domination. Nevertheless, elements of Solov'ev's concept seem to appear in Soviet research dealing with the early formations of statehood in Latvia, the "Baltic issue," the Livonian War and the Great Northern War.

Another thesis of the Soviet Latvian historiography that is rooted in the eighteenth and nineteenth-century Russian historiography is the thesis of the age-old contacts between Latvians and Russians that also justified the incorporation of Latvia into the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union. The published works underlined the "positive significance" of such contacts in the process of ethnogenesis of the ancient Latvian

tribes as early as the Middle Iron Age.<sup>47</sup> As the main proof of this thesis, linguistic evidence was mentioned: borrowings from the Slavic languages that were supposed to attest to the close and intensive contacts that had developed and consolidated between ancient Latvians and Slavs in prehistoric times.<sup>48</sup> The goal of this linguistic pursuit was to emphasize that “it has been absolutely proved that in terms of language Slavs (Russians [...]) are for the Balts the closest relatives.”<sup>49</sup>

The thesis of the long contacts between the Russian and Baltic peoples as well as of their common ethnic origin was attributed particular importance in nineteenth-century Russian historiography. It should be noted that this thesis had been put forward already by both Tatishchev and Karamzin,<sup>50</sup> and between the 1820s and 1840s several research projects emerged that tried to provide a comprehensive proof with the help of ethnography and linguistics.<sup>51</sup> This thesis was featured also in the works of a few Young Latvians. However, already in the nineteenth century many academic historians and specialists in regional history began to regard such ideas as pure speculation.<sup>52</sup> Nevertheless, they were resuscitated in the twentieth century because they well suited the goals of the totalitarian Soviet regime, serving to justify its policy of Russification.

Unlike these theses, the thesis about Latvian-Russian friendship and the common struggle against invaders was rare in nineteenth-century Russian historiography<sup>53</sup> and does not occupy an important place in concepts of Russian historians and their interpretations of Latvian history, obviously because the chronicles contain almost no reference to the common struggles of Russians and Latvians.<sup>54</sup> In Soviet Latvian historiography, however, this thesis developed into another theoretical cornerstone, justifying Latvia's incorporation into Russia.<sup>55</sup>

As an original addition of Soviet historiography to Latvian history can be regarded the periodization of history on the basis of USSR history, thus trying to unify the interpretation of the history of Latvia according to the Soviet model. The history of Latvia was divided into the following phases:<sup>56</sup> the primitive society, until the ninth century; the early feudal society from the ninth to the twelfth century; the developed feudal society from the twelfth to the early seventeenth century; the late feudal society from the seventeenth to the mid-nineteenth century; pre-monopolistic capitalism from 1861 to the late 1890s; imperialism from the late nineteenth century to March 1917; the period of the Great October Socialist Revolution and the struggle for Soviet rule from April 1917 to 1919; the period of the dominion of “nationalist bourgeoisie” from 1920 to 1940; the period of the struggle for socialism from 1940 to 1950. Thus the history of Latvia was mechanically squeezed into this ideologized periodization. This periodization is completely subjected to speculative premises on “socio-economic formations,” exaggerating the common features in the history of Latvia, Russia and entire Europe. It does not reveal the substance and

the national specifics of the history of Latvia. As a result it overlooks almost all turning points in Latvian history: the periods of the ethnogenesis of Latvians, the emergence of early Latvian forms of statehood, the invasion of the crusaders, etc.

Among the original ideas that the Marxist theory of Latvian history contributed along with the new periodization are also the theses on class struggle, progressive development of “the productive forces and relations of production,” “the outstanding role of the Communist party,” the “inevitability” of the socialist revolution, the anti-national activities of “the falsifiers of history,” etc. These priority themes found reflection in the directions of research that the Institute of History of the Latvian SSR supported<sup>57</sup> in full accordance with the-so-called “arterial” themes (the history of revolutionary movements, revolutions, class struggle and CPSU) and “super-themes” (the history of October Revolution and “Leniniana”)<sup>58</sup> in USSR historiography. The tendencies of research of the “arterial” themes were dictated by the directives of CPSU CC:<sup>59</sup> resolutions that interpreted the most important historical events, documents that evaluated the current status in the historiography, speeches, articles and lectures by the leaders of the CPSU that, as a rule, were found to “contribute to the development of the theory of Marxism-Leninism.” Historians followed these directives almost automatically. On the whole, these official priorities essentially curbed the research of history and reduced the range of topics of research.

The comparison between the contributions by Russian national (pre-Soviet) historiography and Marxist theory to the development of the Soviet concept of Latvian history explains why Soviet historiography did not fully reject the heritage of Russian national historiography. First, since historiography as such possesses a rather strong inertia, Marxist historiography in the Soviet Union could not break the kindred links with the earlier historiography tradition. Second, the nineteenth-century Russian historiography successfully fulfilled the functions of a political instrument, and the nationalities policy pursued in the Latvian SSR did not essentially differ from the respective policy in the Russian Empire.

As a result, under the Soviet regime Latvia’s historiography was subjected to two pressures: Russian national and Soviet (Marxist) historiography. Latvian historians’ attempts to escape from the pressure of the official ideology and to achieve a certain degree of impartiality in their research resulted in the narrowing research topics, writing purely fact-based papers, distancing themselves from topics of modern history<sup>60</sup> and passivity in their research efforts.<sup>61</sup> The majority of historians also tried to avoid independent (original) generalizations and conceptual conclusions. Such positions taken by historians can be regarded as spiritual resistance to the official historiography. In some fields of historical research (medieval studies, archaeology, ethnography and anthropology, in particular) historians succeeded in maintaining high professional

standards and traditions that had developed during the period of Latvia's independence. Some of their publications have not lost their significance for scholarship.<sup>62</sup>

Paradoxically, it was in these very fields of historical research that the Russification of Soviet Latvian historiography found the most vivid expression. Here the efforts to introduce the ideas of the Russian national historiography, with the focus on Latvian–Russian (Slavic) contacts, were most consistent. They are apparent in the exaggeration of the importance of these contacts, as well as the unbalanced approach: neglecting contacts between ancient Latvians and other, non-Slavic, peoples or allocating to them an undeservedly modest role.

In contrast, such traditional fields of research as source studies, auxiliary disciplines and archeography were less successful and failed to produce an impressive range of research papers<sup>63</sup> and source publications.<sup>64</sup> The reasons are rooted in the attitude of Soviet historiography toward these fields. It is only at first glance that they seem ideologically “neutral.” The main question that they try to answer concerns the reliability and credibility of historical sources; yet the verification of source information is not possible without a critical attitude towards the information provided by the source and a certain distrust in the source on the part of the historian. It seems that Marxist historiography could not permit all sources without exception to be subjected to critical verification, because among them were also “methodological sources” (works by Lenin, Marx, Engels) and documents of the CPSU and CPL. Thus, instead of a critical study of sources, Soviet historiography tried to thrust on historians “the class principle,” according to which sources related to the activities of the Communist Party had the highest degree of credibility. It was from such a perspective that the principles of “Party spirit and impartiality” declared by Soviet historiography were pursued, impartiality always being subjected to Party spirit. Such an approach did not encourage the edition of sources either. As a result, many sources were taken out of circulation for historical research, while some others (such as the secret protocols appended to the 23 August 1939 Non-Aggression Treaty between Germany and the USSR) were officially regarded as falsifications.<sup>65</sup>

Research publications dealing with the issues of modern and contemporary history of Latvia require special and deep study. Apart from ideological stock-phrases, they sometimes contain valuable factual material that has not lost its significance. For the most part, these are publications dealing with issues of socio-economic and agrarian history of Latvia.<sup>66</sup> However, many works purposefully abound in dubious, ideologized theses and openly falsify Latvian history. The highest degree of falsification was reached in works treating the events of the 1940s and 1950s: the occupation of the Republic of Latvia, World War II, the sovietization of Latvia and the so-called “construction of socialism.” In these fields, historical research was completely subjected to abstract

schemes, whose goal was to indoctrinate the people of Latvia and make them conform. Consequently, the dependence of Soviet Latvian historiography on politics and official ideology is most evident in contemporary history, as attested, for example, by the works of historical journalism by the leaders of the Latvian SSR and CPL.<sup>67</sup> These works voice the official position of the Soviet authorities that set the permissible limits for research of Latvian history.

In the substantiation of its version of Latvian history of the 1940s and 1950s, Soviet Latvian historiography attributes special attention to the events of 1940. According to this version, a “socialist revolution” began in Latvia in June 1940 under the leadership of the Communist Party. It abolished “fascist rule,” and on 20 June 1940 established “the people’s democratic government.” The new “government” launched consistent democratization of all spheres of life in the society and the state and endorsed the new election law. Under the leadership of the Communist Party, “during the election campaign all the progressive forces of the Latvian people came together in one single block – the block of the working people of Latvia,” which won the parliamentary elections on 14 and 15 July. The People’s Parliament (Saeima) “unanimously declared the Soviet Socialist Republic of Latvia established and passed a resolution on Soviet Latvia’s joining the Soviet Union.” On 5 August 1940, the Seventh Session of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR admitted Latvia to the Soviet Union.<sup>68</sup> Already in the late 1940s such an account of events became the standard interpretation of the facts of 1940 and was transferred to other publications without any essential modifications,<sup>69</sup> eventually to become officially accepted in the third volume of the *History of the Latvian SSR*.<sup>70</sup> It must be noted that the presentation of events and the substantiation of interpretations traditionally was not based on historical sources.

The theory of the socialist revolution played an important role in Soviet Latvian historiography: it actually justified the occupation of Latvia in 1940 and the reoccupation in 1944–45, as well as the subsequent sovietization and Russification. All this was interpreted as a free choice made by the Latvian people: “With the restoration of the Soviet rule in 1940 the mass of the working people of Latvia, striving for brotherly cooperation and friendship with the Russian people [...] had fulfilled their dreams and hopes.”<sup>71</sup> At this point an insight into the history of contacts (“friendship”) between Russians and Latvians was offered,<sup>72</sup> which brought one back to the ideas that had been already current in pre-Soviet Russian national historiography.

In its efforts to substantiate the theory of the socialist revolution and to prove the inevitability and preordained nature of the revolution, the historiography of the Latvian SSR held a very negative attitude towards the period of the independent state. It emphasized all facts that could testify to the movement of the working people in the 1920s and 1930s and exaggerated the role of the Communist Party in the political history of the independent

state of Latvia.<sup>73</sup> However, the efforts to elaborate a consistent theory failed, because it was impossible to overlook the fact that the change of power in Latvia had taken place under the conditions of factual occupation and in the presence of Soviet troops. Therefore the role of the Soviet Union in the events of 1940 was interpreted as “unselfish assistance granted to the working people of Latvia by the peoples of the Soviet Union,”<sup>74</sup> generously applying euphemisms in describing the ruthless measures taken by the occupation regime and rather arbitrarily operating with concepts. For example, the appointment of “political leaders” in Latvia in 1940 was referred to as “democratization”;<sup>75</sup> the incorporation of Latvia into the Soviet Union was described as “the ensuring of national independence” of Latvia;<sup>76</sup> the “isolation of a part of kulaks and other hostile elements” in fact meant deportations, etc.<sup>77</sup> Sections dealing with the political history of Latvia under the Soviet rule are dominated by standard phrases, generalizations and ideologized assessments, the presentation of facts being allocated a rather limited space.

The theory of the socialist revolution is closely associated with that of the construction of socialism, which was mechanically transferred from Soviet historiography. Following this model, Soviet Latvian historiography treats “the construction of socialism” in three aspects: as industrialization, collectivization and “cultural revolution.”<sup>78</sup> “The construction of socialism,” however, is crowned by the development of “the socialist Latvian nation.”<sup>79</sup> Unlike surveys of political history, the story of the development of industry and agriculture, emergence of the new life style and flourishing of culture was traditionally saturated with statistical data, detailed facts, names of companies and farms, personal names and place names. Regretfully, this factual material was used to conceal other facts: the attitude of Latvians towards sovietization and collectivization, repressions and deportations being overlooked altogether. A few works dealing with the process of collectivization fail even to mention the 1949 mass deportation.<sup>80</sup>

On the whole, only a few works, and they only in passing, mention repressions, deportations and Latvian resistance.<sup>81</sup> All such facts were incorporated in the framework of the theory of the socialist revolution, according to which the victory of the revolution and the construction of socialism trigger “fierce resistance of reactionary forces.” Consequently, repressions and deportations are necessary and fully justified as an expression of “class struggle.” A typical example is the logic behind the justification of the 14 June 1941 deportations: “The anti-Soviet underground fighting against the Soviet rule pinned its hopes on a war and activated spying and sabotage in favor of Hitler’s Germany [...]. The activation of counterrevolutionary forces forced the Soviet authorities to deport a certain number of politically disloyal persons from the Baltic.”<sup>82</sup> It should be remarked that members of national resistance in Latvia are usually referred to as “bandits,” “enemies of the Soviet rule” or “bourgeois nationalists,” the names of the members of resistance, as well as concrete facts about their struggle, usually being omitted.

The hostile attitude of Soviet Latvian historiography towards “bourgeois nationalists” is particularly vivid in works dealing with World War II. In its efforts to identify features of “class struggle” in World War II history, Soviet Latvian historiography could not modify its position and reject its “class-oriented” attitude towards national resistance. In writings about the events of the war in Latvian territory, the category of “the enemies of the Soviet rule” thus is used indiscriminately to embrace both people and groups fighting on the German side, such as members of the *Schutzmannschaften* battalions, the “Latvian SS Volunteer Legion” and the “Arājs Commando,” as well as people and groups fighting against them, such as national partisans, the national underground, Social Democrats and the Central Council of Latvia.<sup>83</sup> At the same time the scope and significance of the activities of Soviet partisans are considerably exaggerated.<sup>84</sup> On the other hand, Soviet Latvian historiography paid rather limited attention to the history of the Holocaust: the extermination of Jews is usually described in one paragraph, and the issue of the Holocaust is presented in general lines in the context of German occupation regime policies and Hitler’s terror.<sup>85</sup> Such specifics of World War II research were dictated by Marxist methodology, according to which this war was a test of the Soviet system. Consequently, the victory of the USSR in the war meant also “the final victory in the long struggle for Soviet rule” in Latvia.<sup>86</sup>

It is evident that research of all issues of Latvia’s history related to the establishment of the Soviet rule, the occupation of Latvia and “the construction of socialism” were subjected to strict ideological control. Therefore the work of Soviet Latvian historians in these areas has no scholarly value. In this regard it must be acknowledged that the occupation regime succeeded at least partially in achieving the goal of sovietizing Latvian historiography.

However, as Indulis Ronis points out, in spite of the pressures of sovietization and Russification, even in 1944–1959 Latvian historiography “managed to prevent the interruption of historic traditions in the research of ancient history and partially also medieval history of Latvia.”<sup>87</sup> Thus the survival of national historiography traditions not only helped to lessen the efficiency of Soviet Latvian historiography as an instrument of Soviet rule, but at the same time supported the existence and development of national self-awareness of Latvians during the occupation.<sup>88</sup> In the context of the present article, this thesis is to be accepted as a declaration.



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## **The Activities and the Main Repressive Tasks of Latvian SSR Agencies of National Security 1944–1956**

After World War II and the liberation of East European countries from the Nazis, the Red Army of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics did not leave. It became an instrument for establishing oppressive Communist regimes in the liberated countries. One after another they became “people’s democracies” obedient to the USSR. The Red Army provided the military presence that allowed the Soviet security agencies – the People’s Commissariat for National Security (NKGB), in 1947 replaced by the Ministry of National Security (MGB) – to play their central role in the establishment of these regimes.<sup>1</sup>

The Republic of Latvia had been occupied by the USSR already in 1940–41. The second Soviet occupation of Latvia started when the Red Army, driving back the German forces, entered Latvia in July 1944. Even before the Red Army had seized the entire territory of Latvia in May 1945, the security agencies of the restored Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic (LSSR) launched their operations. Jointly with the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks), from which they received orders, and its affiliate in Latvia, the Latvian Communist Party (Bolsheviks), the LSSR security agencies ensured the functioning of the totalitarian regime in Latvia.

Public political show trials and systematic mass-scale extermination of people were no longer typical of Stalin’s regime after World War II. Yet it was in the conservative and oppressive totalitarian regime of this period that the repression system and violations of law became most pervasive.<sup>2</sup> In Latvia, too, from 1944 to 1956, the activities of the LSSR security agencies are first of all associated with repressions. Our paper analyzes the activities of the LSSR security agencies in this period, especially the deportations of 1945–53; the struggle against the opponents of the regime; the elimination of national resistance groups and their armed units; campaigns to expose spies; provocations of various kinds. More than 119,000 persons became victims of these repressions.<sup>3</sup> Repressions were a typical feature of the work of the USSR security agencies (and consequently also the LSSR security agencies) in the occupied territory of Latvia already during World War II and of the counter-intelligence efforts of LSSR security agencies later on.

The unlawful nature of the repressions was recognized even before the USSR disintegrated. Already in 1988, by its 2 November resolution “On the Unlawful Administrative Deportation of Citizens from the Latvian SSR in 1949” the LSSR Council of Ministers recognized the forced deportation of the population as unsubstantiated and thus unlawful even according to USSR legislation. In 1989, the Presidium of the LSSR Supreme Council rehabilitated all persons deported in 1941 and 1949.<sup>4</sup> At this time, the Office of the Prosecutor General and the Ministry of Justice of the LSSR, and, subsequently, the corresponding institutions of the reconstituted Republic of Latvia, began to review the cases of persons convicted or otherwise repressed in 1940–50. In the course of these reviews, victims were rehabilitated and the repressions against them recognized as unlawful.<sup>5</sup> Since in many instances the organization and execution of repressions contain the features of genocide or war crimes, it is very important to understand the role and the moral and legal responsibility of each individual organizer or participant in the repressions.

## **The Evolution of LSSR Security Agencies 1943–56**

The same USSR security agencies that operated in the territory of Latvia in 1940–41 were again involved in the Soviet occupation in 1944–45. In the autumn of 1943, while preparing for the second occupation of the Baltic states, operative groups of the People’s Commissariats of State Security (NKGB) of the Latvian, Lithuanian and Estonian SSRs were set up in Pavlovo Posada, Moscow Region, Russia. These groups recruited personnel, organized intelligence and saboteur groups, and crossed the front line to carry out intelligence operations in Nazi-occupied Baltic territories even before the arrival of the Red Army.<sup>6</sup> After the Red Army entered Latvia in July 1944, the already established operative groups formed the apparatus of the LSSR NKGB in the occupied territories (districts).<sup>7</sup> In the final phase of the war and in the period before 1947, to be sure, the functions of the NKGB were restricted even in the fields of intelligence and counterintelligence, because the battle against armed resistance lay in the competence of the People’s Commissariat of the Interior, while operations against “anti-Soviet elements” and saboteurs and counterintelligence in the territories occupied by the Soviet troops had to be shared with the USSR Military Counterintelligence Authority SMERSH. On 24 March 1946, in the course of reorganization, the LSSR NKGB was transformed into the Ministry of National Security (MGB).<sup>8</sup> The counterintelligence authority SMERSH as an independent structural unit was abolished; on its basis separate units of MGB were established and assigned to counterintelligence work within the USSR military structures. Thereby the scope of counterintelligence duties

of the LSSR MGB was enlarged. From March 1947 on, the LSSR MGB took over from the LSSR Ministry of the Interior the field of counterinsurgency as well, the fight against national partisans.

In March 1953, after the death of Stalin, the MGB ceased to exist as an independent structural unit, coming under the Ministry of the Interior. This remained so for one year, until March 1954, when the national security authority was separated from the Interior Ministry, and the Committee for State Security (KGB) was established under the LSSR Council of Ministers.<sup>9</sup> Although the subordination of the KGB to the executive power was rather formal, the security institution never regained an independent status. Within the KGB itself the status “under the Council of Ministers” was regarded as a failure to recognize its importance.

### **Activities of Partisan-Saboteur Groups of the USSR NKVD in German-Occupied Territory of Latvia in 1944-45<sup>10</sup>**

USSR security agencies pursued subversive and terrorist activities in Latvia during World War II when the entire territory of Latvia was under German occupation. They carried out acts of terror and sabotage by means of special operative groups and trained Soviet partisans. To lead the partisan movement in the German-occupied territories, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Division within the USSR Commissariat of the Interior (NKVD) was established on 3 October 1941, but already on 18 January 1942 on its basis the 4<sup>th</sup> Department was formed, whose 6<sup>th</sup> Branch of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Division provided leadership for Soviet partisan groups in the territory of Latvia.<sup>11</sup> One of the functions of the department was the organization of intelligence, terror and sabotage in the enemy's rear.<sup>12</sup> Subversive activities in the occupied territory of Latvia were carried out also by trained operative groups, called Special Groups of the USSR NKGB, that were referred to as partisans. In various periods of 1943 alone there were 41 to 125 active Special Groups of the USSR NKGB in the territory of Latvia occupied by Germany.<sup>13</sup>

Farmers in Latvia's frontier regions suffered most from activities of these Special Groups of combatants. The Red saboteurs terrorized them on a regular basis, seized their food reserves, cattle, carts, clothes and other belongings and launched punitive operations that involved the murder of civilians.<sup>14</sup> Frequently the Special Groups disguised themselves in German army uniforms and presented their crimes against civilians as being committed by the Nazis.<sup>15</sup> The policy of intimidation found a particularly vivid expression in the operation of a Special Group led by Vasilijš Kononovs (1923) against the farmers of Mazie Bati village in Ludza District. Kononovs' Special Group, disguised in German uniforms, murdered nine persons on 27 May 1944 with particular cynicism and ruthlessness.<sup>16</sup> Six men and three women, including one in the last month

of pregnancy, were burned alive or killed in other tormenting ways. A note is attached to Kononovs' criminal case brought against him by the Republic of Latvia. It describes his career in the USSR armed forces and as commander of a Special Group of a partisan brigade in Latvia in 1943 and 1944, for which he received remuneration.<sup>17</sup> The materials in the criminal case allow drawing the conclusion that the Special Group led by him was equivalent to a structural unit of the regular army, i.e. they were combatants. It means that the 5 (18) October 1907 Hague Convention "Regulations and Customs of Warfare on Land" is applicable to the activities of the group, and the tragedy at Mazie Bati is to be regarded as a war crime.<sup>18</sup>

## **Activities of LSSR Security Agencies in Combating Armed Resistance**

Combating national resistance, armed resistance in particular, was the focus of particular attention during the entire period of Soviet occupation in Latvia. Resistance to the Soviet regime resumed along with the second arrival of the Red Army in the territory of Latvia in 1944. The fact that national resistance strived to restore the independent democratic state of Latvia even at the time when World War II battles between the USSR and German military units were taking place in Latvia is attested in documents related to the resistance movement and testimonies of its members. The USSR security agencies had expected resistance against the Communist occupation regime to take place and thus reacted accordingly. Units of the Soviet Commissariats of the Interior and Security, as well as of the USSR Military Counterintelligence Department SMERSH followed right in the steps of the Red Army.

Particularly active in operative and military efforts against the armed resistance movement in the territory of Latvia from July 1944 on was the Department for Combating Banditism (DCB) in the LSSR NKVD. It had been established in the Soviet Union during the war. Parallel to the efforts of the DCB, the NKGB launched operative work among members of national resistance as well. In this regard both the NKVD and the NKGB received orders and instructions from the Communist Party of Latvia (Bolsheviks). In 1946, the former people's commissariats were reorganized as ministries. The DCB was incorporated into the structure of the LSSR Ministry of the Interior (MI). Formally, the former NKVD and the new MI were not regarded as security agencies. However, it must be taken into account that all operative methods and experience of the DCB in combating armed resistance was passed over to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Division of the LSSR Ministry of State Security (subsequently replaced by the KGB) that was established in March 1947 and assumed all the functions of the LSSR NKVD and MI DCB.

Documents and testimonies of witnesses clearly prove that institutions for national security played the decisive role in combating and defeating national resistance in the post-war period when military action had proved to be inefficient.

**Combating national partisans in 1944–45.** In 1944–45, military units of the army were engaged in combating armed resistance in Latvia along with the LSSR Commissariat of the Interior (NKVD) and the Commissariat for State Security (NKGB). The 5<sup>th</sup> Division of the Interior Forces comprised several regiments whose main function was to fight against armed resistance. If needed, other military units of the USSR NKVD were also engaged against the national partisans. In 1945, the LSSR NKVD and USSR NKVD destroyed 283 groups and killed 1098 partisans. In the same year, national partisans launched 186 attacks on state institutions, killed 635 officials of NKVD, NKGB and militia as well as other supporters of the Communist regime.<sup>19</sup>

The military operations launched in the first phase of the period of 1944–45 without any preliminary operational planning and engagement of undercover agents were recognized as unsuccessful even by the LSSR NKVD itself. As late as September 1945, USSR Deputy Commissar of National Security, Bogdan Kobulov (1904–1953), concluded that the efforts of the LSSR NKVD and NKGB had failed because, instead of systematic operative efforts, they had “expected to liquidate banditism by military operations alone.”<sup>20</sup>

The unsuccessful efforts in late 1945 and early 1946 to eliminate national partisan groups and the commanders of partisan organizations by military attacks reaffirmed that armed resistance could not be defeated without operative activities and agencies, in particular, special agents–combatants.

**Engagement of special groups and agents–combatants in 1945–53.** Between 1945 and 1953, LSSR security agencies (NKVD–MVD–MGB–KGB) used special agents–combatants as the most efficient tool for the extermination of national partisans. These agents were recruited partly from the ranks of partisans and former legionnaires and infiltrated into resistance groups. The agents were engaged either individually or, more often, combined in special groups. Special agents infiltrated the armed resistance movement and applied secret and unlawful methods, typical exclusively of security agencies. According to the formulation by the Soviet counterintelligence institutions, in operations against members of armed resistance special agents resorted to combat methods.<sup>21</sup> Documents and memoirs of national partisans indicate that not infrequently strong narcotic substances were applied in the extermination of partisan groups.

The analyzed documents from Fonds 1825 at the State Archive of Latvia (LVA) comprise evidence that at least 64 special agents–combatants of the LSSR security

agencies operated in Latvia between 1945 and 1953. They killed at least 167 and captured 58 national partisans.

The promises of the Soviet regime to grant amnesty to legalized partisans also produced results. A rather large number of partisans responded to the appeal: in 1946, 987 persons became legalized.<sup>22</sup> However, the majority of the legalized partisans were tried and deported in 1949.

**The KGB's involvement in 1953-56.** Despite the efforts of the national security agencies armed resistance in Latvia continued as long as 10 years after the war. The fact that continued armed resistance in Latvia was a serious concern for the USSR government is attested by USSR MGB Order No. 006 "On Elimination of National Underground and Its Armed Gangs in the Western Regions of the Ukrainian and Belorussian SSRs and Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian SSRs" issued on 24 January 1953.<sup>23</sup> Isolated partisan groups and individual "illegals," including armed ones, still operated from 1953 to 1956. The discontinuation of the use of special agents–combatants in anti-partisan operations in 1954 accounts for the slow progress in the extermination of armed groups and for the large number of "illegals" in 1953–54. In 1954–56, when the LSSR KGB resorted only to operative groups and troops, only 99 partisans and 401 "illegals" were neutralized.

**Conclusions about the counterinsurgency work of the LSSR security agencies.**

The activities of Interior Ministry troops and the so-called exterminator battalions of local security offices against armed resistance from 1944 were rather inefficient. To be sure, the troops and exterminators altogether killed more national partisans and armed "illegals" than agents of the LSSR interior and security agencies. However, they were unable to eliminate either the centralized partisan organizations that operated in 1944–46 or some of the strongest partisan groups. As regular combat units without information obtained by operative work at their disposal they were unable to locate partisan groups or individual partisans and thus eliminate or arrest them. The operation of groups of special agents–combatants of the LSSR NKVD–MVD–MGB–KGB in the territory of Latvia proved that secret operations, such as the infiltration of special agents posing as national partisans into partisan groups or confrontation of partisan groups with agents–combatants, were the most successful method to liquidate armed resistance.

In the regions of Latgale, Vidzeme and Kurzeme, the elimination of partisan unions that had been formed through the merger of the strongest partisan units was accomplished by 1947. It was achieved by infiltrating security agents into the organizations and by physically exterminating leaders of the centralized unions. In late 1945 and early 1946, the LSSR security agencies routed the central partisan organization in Eastern Latvia,

the Union of Latvia's Homeland Guards. In late 1946, they eliminated the Union of National Partisans of Kurzeme. In 1947, the operative work the LSSR MGB disrupted the functioning of the central partisan organization of Vidzeme and part of Latgale, the Union of Latvia's National Partisans.

**Partisans as combatants.** According to the Hague Convention 1907 on warfare, the national partisans of Latvia fall in the category of combatants (armed military personnel).<sup>24</sup>

In 1944–56 the majority of national partisan groups in Latvia complied with the respective criteria. Article 23 of Part 2 of the Hague Convention IV (18 October 1907) states that the following methods must not be applied against combatants:

- a) To employ poison or poisoned weapons;
- b) To kill or wound treacherously individuals belonging to the hostile nation or army;
- c) To kill or wound an enemy who, having laid down his arms, or having no longer means of defense, has surrendered at discretion;
- d) To declare that no quarter will be given;
- e) To employ arms, projectiles, or material calculated to cause unnecessary suffering;
- f) To make improper use of a flag of truce, of the national flag or of the military insignia and uniform of the enemy, as well as the distinctive badges of the Geneva Convention.<sup>25</sup>

Thus the methods used by LSSR security agencies in combating the national partisans – physical extermination of unarmed partisans during sleep or their deliberate intoxication with narcotic substances and subsequent capture – are to be regarded as violations of the Convention.

In compliance with Part 2, Article 23, Paragraph 5 of the Hague Convention of 1907, the camouflaging of special agents as national partisans, infiltration into national partisan groups and their subsequent physical extermination are to be condemned. Thus, for violations of the provisions of the Hague Convention not only the agents–combatants but also their leaders, i.e. officials of security agencies, are to be held accountable.

## **The Deportation of 1949 and the Role of the LSSR MGB**

The most effective method for establishing control over the rural areas of Latvia, however, proved to be the mass deportation of 1949. In the course of the deportation 42,975 persons, or 2.28% of the population, were deported from Latvia for life by

administrative procedure. Farmers, who had been the actual supporters of partisans, constituted 51% of the deportees. The deportation orders also targeted “bandit supporters,” as well as national partisans who had been voluntarily legalized.

Deportation was a favorite method employed by Soviet repressive authorities. They launched and supervised the deportation of the indigenous Baltic population to sparsely populated and remote areas of the USSR right after the incorporation of these states into the USSR (1941) and resorted to it on a regular basis until the late 1950s.

The deportations from the Baltic states in 1945–49 were based on the following instructions: the 16 June 1945 telegraph directive from the USSR NKVD; the 10 December 1946 directive by the USSR NKVD and the 18 December 1946 order of the USSR NKVD on the deportation of the families of leaders and active members of gangs from the Lithuanian SSR; the 21 February 1948 resolution of the USSR Council of Ministers on the deportation of the families of bandits and nationalists living in illegal status, families of persons killed in armed clashes or punished, as well as supporters of bandits–kulaks with their families from the Lithuanian SSR; the 29 January 1949 resolution of the USSR Council of Ministers on the deportation of kulaks and their families and the families of bandits and nationalists from the Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian SSRs.<sup>26</sup> The preparation and implementation of these operations were veiled in utmost secrecy.

Soviet documents pertaining to the reasons for the deportations are not accessible. Therefore historians have offered differing explanations of the 1949 deportation: fear of war and the need to consolidate USSR society in the period when the Cold War was at its climax; the wish to break resistance to collectivization and to eliminate armed resistance movements.<sup>27</sup> The last two goals were certainly achieved.

It is unambiguously clear that it would have been impossible to carry out operations of such scale without the active involvement of security and interior institutions and that great importance was attached to their work. For their contribution to the 1949 deportation, several officials of the LSSR MGB and MVD were awarded the Order of the Red Flag and the Order of the War for the Fatherland, First Class, “for successful performance of a special assignment of the Government.” The list “On Awarding Orders and Medals to Generals, Officers, Sergeants and Soldiers of the Agencies and Forces of the USSR Ministry of National Security and the USSR Ministry of the Interior” was published in sequels in the newspaper *Pravda* on 25 August and 26 August 1949. Regretfully, the list is incomplete, as the publication of the list was suspended after the second sequel. The list of the recipients of the Order of the Red Flag is available in full. In the USSR altogether 75 persons were awarded the Order of the Red Flag for their contribution to the operation. The list published in *Pravda*

was supplemented with the officers' birth dates and positions occupied at the time of the operation. Soon after the performance of their feats during the deportations all the decorated officials were promoted.<sup>28</sup>

The deportee files of the LSSR MGB allow identifying the officials of LSSR security agencies who endorsed the resolutions on the deportation of civilians from Latvia in 1949–53. Thus, for example, the LSSR Minister for National Security, A. Noviks (1908–1996), signed resolutions on 41,544 persons (in 1949); the Deputy Head of the Investigation Department of the LSSR MGB, Fotijs Pešehonovs, on 141 deportees (in 1949–53); Deputy Minister for National Security for operative work Jānis Vēvers (1899–1978) on 51 persons (in 1951–53), etc.

In 1952, the deportees from the Baltic republics to special settlements were divided into four groups: “those deported from the Baltic in 1941”; “those deported from Lithuania in 1945–48”; “those deported from the Baltic in 1949” and “kulaks deported from Lithuania in 1951.” All these deportees fell into three categories: those deported for a fixed term (in 1941); those deported for an indefinite term (in 1945–48) and those deported for the rest of their lives (in 1949).<sup>29</sup>

Research carried out to date on the mass-scale deportations of Latvia's population in 1949 and other years is for the most part based on the reports of the repressive institutions of that time and has thus been restricted by the range of facts presented in these documents. Such research has been carried out in Russia, as well as in Latvia.<sup>30</sup>

Our structural analysis of the deportations has employed the electronic deportee database prepared by the Department for the Rehabilitation of the Unjustly Deported Citizens at the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Latvia.<sup>31</sup> As a basis of comparison, census results in 1943 and 1959,<sup>32</sup> data (calculations) of the Central Statistics Board of Latvia and information of the Population Register of the Republic of Latvia have been employed.<sup>33</sup>

The deportees in the database fall into the following chronological categories:

- Between 1941 and the end of the war 14,428 persons;
- In 1949 42,975 persons.
- Placed on register after serving their term (persons who were forbidden by resolutions of the LSSR Council of Ministers to return to Latvia) 1,376 persons
- Deported between 1945 and 1958 (1949 excluded) 514 persons

With a deviation of 2–3%, these data comply with the calculations by the Ministry of the Interior, allowing us to make a sufficiently accurate comparative statistical analysis.<sup>34</sup>

In 1941, 0.74% and, in 1949, 2.28% of the entire population of Latvia were deported.

In 1949, 95.60% of the deportees were Latvians, 1.80% – Russians, 0.01% – Germans and 2.59% of other ethnic backgrounds. (Figure 1).

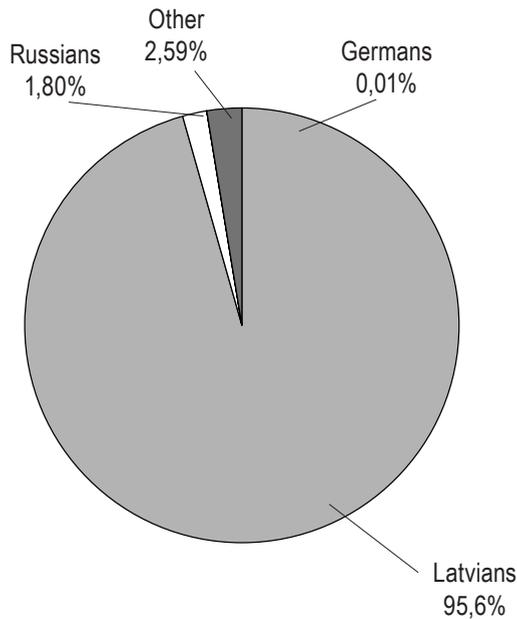


Fig. 1. Ethnic Composition of 25 March 1949 Deportees

In 1949, 5.2% of all deportees were placed on the deportee lists additionally after the basic lists had been completed. This was one of the specific features of the 1949 deportation.

In 1949, 2.35% of Latvia's women and 2.18% of men were deported. Compared to the gender structure of Latvia's population, the deportee gender structure is expressly dominated by women, who comprise 58.1% of the total figure (as compared to 56.2% in the population). The proportion of deported women between 20 and 60 years of age was very high, exceeding the proportion of men 1.5 times, that, however, reflected the skewed gender structure in 1949 (Figure 2).

Under 20 years of age were 31.95% of the deportees; 14% – under 10; 7.56% were older than 70 (Figure 3).

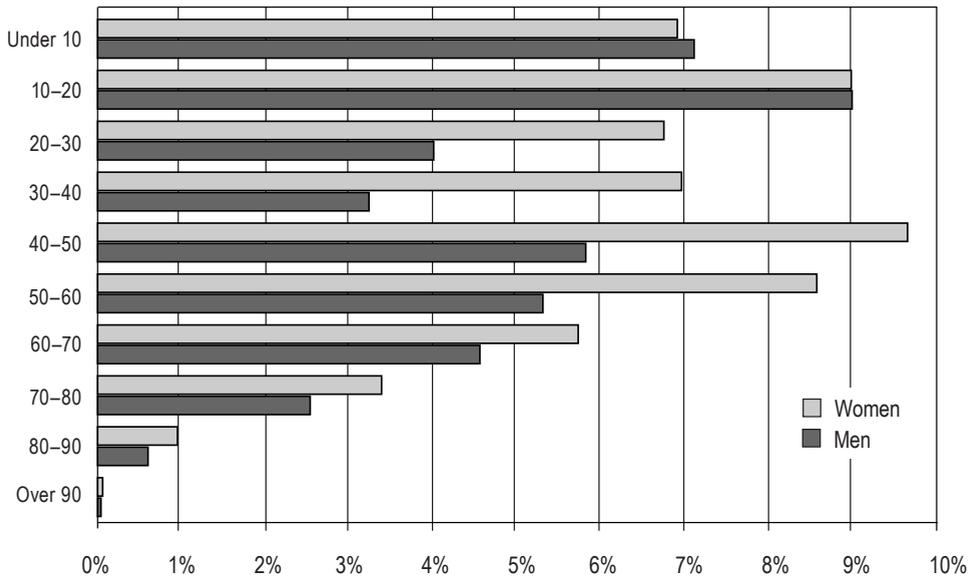


Fig. 2. Age and Gender Distribution of 25 March 1949 Deportees (in percent)

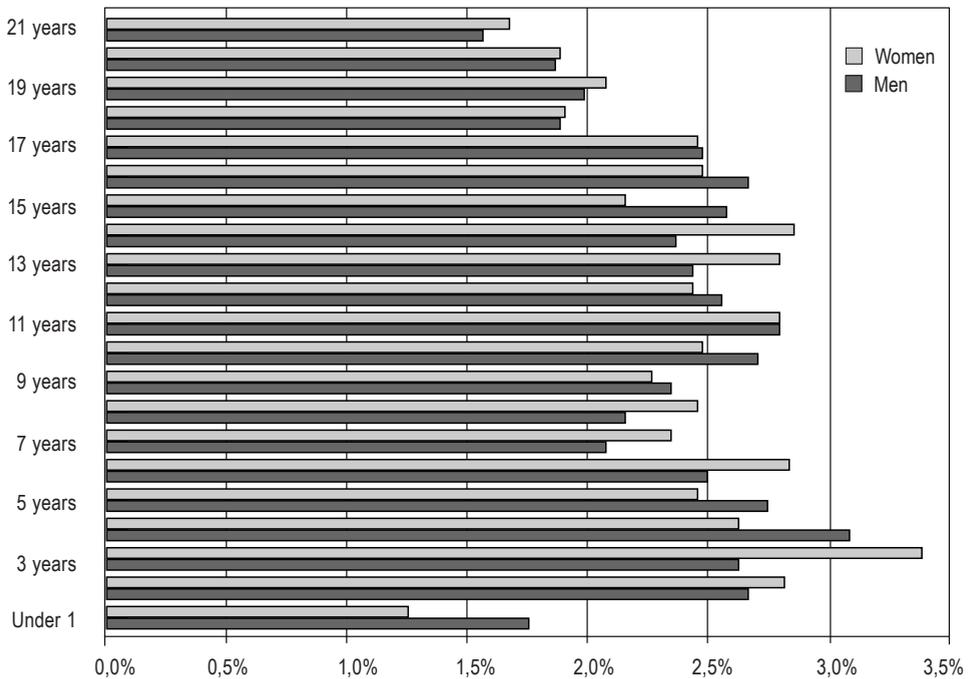


Fig. 3. Age and Gender Distribution of 25 March 1949 Deportees to Age of 21

Farmers constituted 51.9%; children of pre-school age and elderly people – 17.8%; school students – 16.3% of deportees (Figure 4).<sup>35</sup>

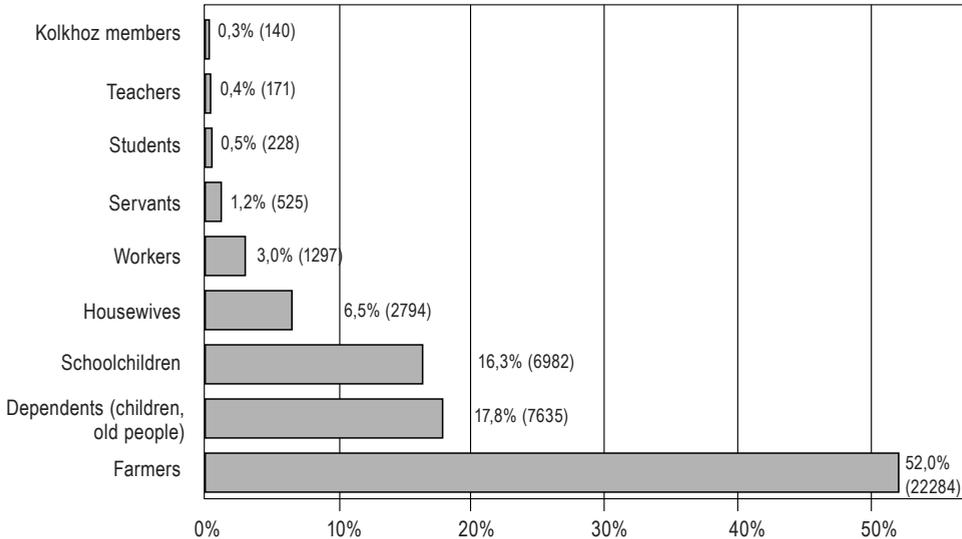


Fig. 4. Numerical Distribution of 25 March 1949 Deportees by Occupation

Records show that in the 1949 deportation 183 persons died en route. During forced exile 4,941 persons died, 12% of all deportees.<sup>36</sup> Six babies were born in transit, all of whom survived and subsequently returned to Latvia. There is no documentary evidence regarding babies that were born and died en route, however such occurrences are described in testimonies of witnesses. The available documents contain also no data on the execution of deportees.

Deportations from Latvia and their consequences contain elements of genocide enumerated in Article II of the United Nations 9 December 1948 “Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide”:

In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

- (a) Killing members of the group;
- (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.<sup>37</sup>

Although the deportations were carried out in compliance with directives issued by the USSR Communist Party and USSR executive authorities and USSR interior forces, interior and security agencies were involved in their execution, officials of Latvian SSR institutions of national security who took part in the organization and implementation of the deportations are also to be held responsible for this crime.

Deportations in combination with other measures used by the Soviet regime to subjugate Latvia and its people – the annihilation of the sovereign state and its annexation to the USSR, the persecutions of 1940–41 and from 1944 on, the deliberate undermining of the positions of ethnic Latvians in their country through enforced colonization and Russification – characterize the policy that the Soviet regime pursued in occupied Latvia.<sup>38</sup> It intended “to destroy, in whole or in part” the nation that it occupied and kept captive until 1991.

## **The LSSR Security Agencies and the UK Intelligence Service 1945–56**

Already in 1945, after the entrenchment of the Soviet regime and the end of warfare, an official of the 2<sup>nd</sup> (Counterintelligence) Division of the LSSR NKGB conceived an idea to pass off the employees and agents of security agencies to the UK intelligence service as members of national resistance. In the initial phase of the game British intelligence services were deceived.<sup>39</sup> It must be noted that Soviet security agencies were experienced in deceiving Western intelligence services already in the 1920s when the Cheka had carried out its operation “Trust.”

Thanks to the professionalism of the LSSR NKGB, MGB and KGB (hereafter all of them referred to as KGB), a game began, in the course of which the LSSR KGB successfully controlled the activities of the UK Secret Intelligence Service (SIS) in Latvia for a long period. By becoming acquainted with the modus operandi of British agencies and the environment of agent infiltration, they deciphered the intentions of the UK intelligence service in the Baltic and to some extent the directions of its interests in the territory of Russia as well. This intelligence coup allowed the Soviet Union to increase its security precautions. In this way the LSSR KGB also paralyzed the potential contacts between national resistance and the West and thus precluded any moral and material foreign assistance reaching the resistance fighters.

In was not until 1954 that the UK intelligence service discovered the rules of the game of the LSSR KGB. According to former USSR KGB officer Oleg Gidriyevsky, the LSSR KGB failed to avail itself of the opportunities presented by the successful start of the operation because of the stubborn and conservative tactics imposed by the USSR KGB.<sup>40</sup>

The competition between the two intelligence services caused serious losses to national resistance in Latvia, the national partisans in particular. Thus, for example, on 7 September 1946 LSSR KGB agent Marģeris Vītoliņš used information available to partisans regarding the expected arrival of UK representatives in Latvia and succeeded in persuading 13 national partisans from several groups to come to Rīga to attend a meeting with a supposed SIS agent. The agent, in fact, turned out to be an operative of the LSSR KGB and the partisans were arrested on the site of the meeting.<sup>41</sup>

## **Priorities of the LSSR KGB Counterintelligence Division 1953–56**

The disclosure and unmasking of spies, saboteurs and terrorists infiltrated by imperialist states became the main task of counterintelligence on 12 March 1954 when the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU CC) passed a resolution “On the Work of National Security Agencies.”<sup>42</sup> The Resolution fixed the functions of the USSR KGB, which was established in 1954.

On 30 July the 2<sup>nd</sup> Main Department of the USSR KGB held a meeting at which the administration of the LSSR KGB reported on the results of the work of their institution. In the course of the meeting special attention was focused on the analysis of the work of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Division (Counterintelligence) of the LSSR KGB. The report comprised the following main chapters:

- (1) Disclosure of agencies of capitalist states.
- (2) Interception of enemy communication channels and the infiltration of agents into the enemy ranks.
- (3) Screening of foreign sailors.

The administration of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Main Department of the USSR KGB was not content with the work of the Counterintelligence Division of the LSSR KGB. The reasons for dissatisfaction were the insufficient number of agents involved in the Division’s activities and insufficient attention paid to repatriates.<sup>43</sup>

The changes that took place in the USSR in the mid-1950s encouraged the activation of economic and tourist contacts with other countries. Therefore agencies of national security had to increase the allocated resources for the control and surveillance of visiting foreigners. Residents of Latvia who maintained unsanctioned contacts with foreigners were entered into a KGB register, a compromising fact that could affect the rest of their lives. Sometimes such persons were coerced into cooperation with security agencies and involved in the processing of foreigners. In

the late 1950s, the LSSR KGB devoted increased attention to former (unmasked and convicted) agents of foreign intelligence services after their return from their places of incarceration.<sup>44</sup>

It may seem strange that counterintelligence measures of the LSSR security agencies in the 1950s were in one way or another linked with repressions. However, it must be taken into consideration that security agencies of any totalitarian country are based on the principle of total surveillance of people, and counterintelligence measures are directly associated with vigorous repressive activities against persons or groups, who, according to certain criteria, differ from the rules generally accepted in the totalitarian society. Apart from direct repressions, such as detention, arrest, trial, deportation, etc., indirect repressions were applied very often in the respective period: restriction of career opportunities; dismissal from educational institutions; prohibition to travel abroad; restriction of the rights of relatives, etc. In these aspects there existed very close cooperation between the Communist Party and KGB structures, the Communist Party traditionally playing the role of the elder brother.

In this period one can observe the formation of a system for all-embracing social control by the KGB. One may conditionally speak about the creation of a double Iron Curtain. One curtain was meant for domestic use: for the control and influence on internal contacts in the society. The other was intended for informative and physical separation of the USSR from the rest of the world. In this way a closed Soviet society, isolated from the rest of the world with totally controlled and restricted internal communication, was developed.



*Heinrihs Strods*

## **Resistance in Latvia 1944–1991**

The current status of research into the forms and methods of dictatorship and resistance is characterized by attempts at global generalization, as well as regional and local studies.<sup>1</sup> Although the former approach inclines towards sociology, all these approaches endeavor to reveal the rational substance, goals and results of resistance. My study serves as an introduction and survey of resistance against the Soviet occupation in Latvia. However, because resistance was to a great extent localized, a great amount of work has still to be carried out by regional historians.

The nature of resistance in Latvia during the second Soviet occupation was to a great extent determined by the country's situation in the great power struggles of World War II: the Nazi–Soviet conspiracy of 1939, the Soviet occupation of 1940–41, the Nazi occupation of 1941–44/45, the second Soviet occupation and the failure of the Western Allies to exert their positive influence in Eastern Europe. The East European countries between Nazi Germany and the Communist Soviet Union were involved in the war against their will; they suffered in general relatively heavier losses than the main belligerents; and after the war they came under the hegemony of the Soviet Union. Of these, the Baltic states, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, were annexed outright. Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria became Soviet satellite states, and only Finland managed to retain reasonable sovereignty.

The situation of these countries during and after World War II cannot be understood without realizing that both World Wars and the subsequent Cold War were of imperial character. World War I ended with the Versailles Treaty and World War II with the Yalta–Potsdam Treaties. If, however, after World War I the smaller East European countries were able to plead their case and obtain self-determination, no matter how flawed, they had no voice in their post-World War II fate. For the formerly independent nations, having tasted freedom Soviet rule meant the loss of sovereignty, of their civil and human rights. Having become the victims in the war, they had to endure injustice. For them, the war did not mean closure but the beginning of resistance.

Resistance did not start at the same time, did not have the same goals and assume the same forms in all of the countries concerned. In the countries and territories occupied by the Soviet Union in compliance with the 1939 Hitler–Stalin Pact (Western Ukraine, Western Belorussia and the Baltic states), which had experienced Soviet rule before, post-war resistance in most cases tended to take more violent forms and begin earlier than in the countries occupied in 1945 in compliance with the Yalta and Postdam Treaties (Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, etc.).

The latter struggles were of great importance for the subsequent peaceful anti-Communist revolutions in Eastern and Central Europe and the victory of the democratic forces in the Cold War that came to an end with the collapse of the Soviet empire. It would also be incorrect to reduce these wars-after-the-war to military activity only and disregard the economic, political and ideological struggles. I agree with Russian historian Mikhial I. Meltiukov that, regrettably, in recent years Russian historiography has either completely shunned these topics or simply reproduced the political clichés of Soviet historiography.<sup>2</sup>

Compared to France, where the resistance movement first developed in the form of separate groups in 1941–43 and only then resorted to armed struggle,<sup>3</sup> armed struggle against the Bolshevik occupation began in the Eastern part of Latvia as early as the summer of 1944 and embraced the entire country right after the war ended in May 1945. The partisan war in Latvia that began in 1944–45 must be qualified as the renewal of armed partisan activity against the Red Army in 1941, rather than the last developmental stage of resistance. One of the specific features of the resistance of the Latvian people and the partisan war in Latvia in the post-war period was the fact that this war was fought during peace among the major powers.<sup>4</sup>

The majority of historians of the Soviet era applied the USSR historiographic model to post-war resistance in Latvia. Thus, instead of providing a critical analysis of the ideology and myths of the occupation regime and maintaining their own intellectual dignity and integrity as historians, they helped the occupation regime to manipulate history.<sup>5</sup> A study of the archives of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of France and the United Kingdom attest to the firm belief held in these states that the Baltic nations would launch armed resistance against the Bolsheviks, notwithstanding that earlier they had also offered resistance to the Nazis.<sup>6</sup>

Although the Western democracies were well informed about resistance to the occupation in Latvia, exile Latvian historians were the first who began to study this topic. The book by Ādolfs Šilde, *Resistance Movement in Latvia*, published in 1972, was the first major work on the topic.<sup>7</sup> Although based on very fragmentary and inaccurate data, resistance was understood as armed resistance among Latvian historians in the West.<sup>8</sup>

In recent years, research into regional processes and the history of the Cold War has been steadily gathering speed, primarily in terms of replacing “dated information” with the “latest information.”<sup>9</sup> This fully applies also to the history of resistance in the Baltic states, both in terms of expanding topics and sources. The source basis is growing through archival work and through the documentation of eyewitness accounts and publication of memoirs. Moreover, new topics have emerged, such as the history of resistance in the Gulag hard labor prison camps. This topic came into focus through hundreds of testimonies collected by the Video Archive of the Museum of the Occupation of Latvia and in the process of making a documentary on national partisans.<sup>10</sup>

## Armed Resistance

In the post-war occupation period, three main forms of resistance emerged: armed struggle by national partisans, non-violent and inner resistance. The politically most active part of Latvians had been engaged in a struggle against the Bolshevik and Nazi occupants since 1940. Therefore resistance and rebellion against the second Bolshevik occupation began right away. It was primarily based on local partisan units and the hope that, with the help of the Western democracies, the partisans would win a fast victory over the Bolshevik occupants. According to Meltyukov’s periodization of the history of World War II, the post-war war of the Latvian national partisans began in the second (June 1944–May 1945) and third phases (May–September 1945) of the third stage of the war (July 1943–September 1945).

In terms of their professional background, most of the leaders of armed resistance, as in 1940–41, were persons with military training (former police officers, soldiers) and their family members. The assumption found in documents that follow the spirit of the propaganda of the USSR Ministry of the Interior – that all partisans were either war veterans, who had fought on the Nazi side in World War II, or war criminals – does not stand up.<sup>11</sup>

Thus, according to the January 1947 data of the USSR Interior Ministry, among the Baltic population there were 83,234 draft dodgers and 7,133 deserters from the Red Army. The number of draft dodgers is equal to eight infantry divisions and that of deserters from the Red Army to one infantry division, together accounting for 86.2% of the members of the national underground movement. Of these men 80% were Lithuanians, approximately 10% were Latvians (9,961 persons) and 5.6% were Estonians.<sup>12</sup>

While ethnic Latvians formed the core of the national resistance movement, it also involved all other major ethnic groups residing in Latvia: Russians, Poles, Belorussians. This was particularly true in Latgale, the eastern region of Latvia. In the proximity of

their borders, Lithuanians, Estonians, Russians, Poles and Belorussians participated in Latvian resistance groups. Most weaponry and ammunition were of either German or Russian origin obtained during the war.

According to data of the USSR Ministry of Interior, in the period between 1944 and January 1947 altogether 4,416,183 units of weapons, military equipment and ammunition had been confiscated in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, of which 65.7% had been seized in Lithuania, 22% in Latvia and 12.3% in Estonia. In the course of the three years of occupation, the authorities had appropriated 4 cannons, 2 grenade-launchers, 56 mortars, 35 anti-tank guns, 3,295 machine-guns, 7,326 sub-machine guns, 6,768 pistols, 80,141 grenades, 6,460 mines and 2,033 kg of explosives.

Another stereotype cultivated by Bolshevik propaganda – that the national partisans were criminal elements and bandits – should also be regarded as a falsification of history on the basis of Soviet data. The secret information that was carefully collected by the USSR Ministry of the Interior in January 1947 attests that only about 8% of the partisan units in the Baltic displayed “banditistic” tendencies (robbery, drinking, etc.).<sup>13</sup>

Actually, documentation proves that the aim of the partisan movement was idealistic. Thus in 1945, associations of Latvian national partisans in the Eastern,<sup>14</sup> Western<sup>15</sup> and Northern parts of Latvia<sup>16</sup> published their statutes and declarations by which they, as did the Lithuanian national partisans in 1949,<sup>17</sup> asserted their will in the name of the people of Latvia to fight for the restoration of national independence of Latvia and to bring Communist collaborators to justice. The major national resistance groups not only nominated but also appointed a shadow-cabinet of the occupation cabinet, from ministers to district chairmen.<sup>18</sup>

Although in Latvia the resistance movement encompassed different ethnic and social groups, all participants in the resistance movement were motivated by a desire to abolish Soviet imperialism and colonization and were not ready to accept political compromises. In their documents published in the underground press, in their proclamations and during interrogations by Soviet authorities, the national partisans of Latvia unanimously demanded the restoration of the Republic of Latvia on the basis of the Constitution of 1922. While in some underground publications the 15 of May was commemorated, not a single document has been found by which the armed, non-violent and inner resistance called for the restoration of the Ulmanis dictatorship established on 15 May 1934. The war by Latvia's national partisans as the most developed form of resistance embraced 95% of parishes and achieved the character of a national rebellion.<sup>19</sup>

Soviet authorities took the partisan movement seriously. To combat it, in Latvia alone the following units were involved: the 5<sup>th</sup> Special Task Division of the USSR People's Commissariat (since 1946 Ministry) of the Interior; the 18<sup>th</sup> Convoy Division, the 152<sup>nd</sup> Railroad Guard Regiment; 18,000 combatants of the State Security Ministry

(the so-called “destroyers”) and 36 Communist Party “activist” groups of combatants. In 1944–46 the partisan battles proved that these considerably larger forces had no success in fighting the outnumbered partisans, except when the partisans themselves did not adhere to methods of partisan war.

Success in the partisan war was eventually achieved by stationing military units in all population centers, by launching a partisan-style war against the partisans and by infiltrating loyal agents into the partisan movement. Thus, according to Soviet data, 3,597 secret informers, agents and residents were engaged in the struggle against the national partisans in January 1947.<sup>20</sup>

The suppression of armed resistance was facilitated most by the fact that partisans and their supporters took seriously the promises of amnesty by the occupation authorities. Secondly, the suppression was also made easier by a shortage of weapons and ammunition and the incompatibility of the weapons and ammunition that had been obtained from the warring powers. Thirdly, the suppression was facilitated by the failures or even non-existence of intelligence and counter-intelligence efforts by the partisans that allowed Soviet agents to infiltrate among partisan supporters and liaison persons and not infrequently among partisans themselves. Fourthly, the partisans were heavily outnumbered.

In terms of taking over power, the national partisans of Latvia were closer to the French partisans than to the Red Army combatants, the so-called Red partisans, during the war.<sup>21</sup> As far as the tactics were concerned, on several occasions the Latvian national partisans took over the power in several villages and towns and even districts (e.g., the Ilūkste District); as concerns strategy, they formed national and district authorities. The Red combatants, on the other hand, were subordinated to the Bolshevik Party to the extent that they did not even attempt to take over the power either before or after the arrival of the Red Army. Probably the reason was the lack of support for Red ideology in the masses.

According to the KGB, the national partisan war in Latvia in the course of 12 years embraced approximately 20,000 fighters supported by about 80,000 people, mostly rural residents. Approximately 3,000 partisans and about the same number of Soviet representatives were killed in action. These figures confirm that this war, which encompassed the entire territory of Latvia as a front, was the largest-in-scale partisan war in the history of Latvia. About 5,000 national partisans and several tens of thousands of their supporters were imprisoned in hard-labor camps in Siberia, and the majority never came back.<sup>22</sup>

The turning point in the national partisan war in Latvia came in 1949. On 25 March, in the course of the secret operation “Priboi” (“Coastal Surf”), 42,149 people were deported to Siberia, 72% of whom were women and children.<sup>23</sup> Many of the deportees

perished. This inhumane act, however, effectively eliminated the infrastructure of the partisan war in the countryside and thus allowed the occupants to put down the armed resistance more effectively, though not completely.

This international crime soon became known also to Western democracies. Thus on 26 July 1949, Yves Chataigneu, the Ambassador of France in Moscow, reported to Robert Schuman, French Minister of Foreign Affairs, about the ongoing transfer of the Baltic population to the Komi Republic in Russia.<sup>24</sup> On 13 August 1949, Henri Hoppekot, the Ambassador of France to Switzerland, reported to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that the USSR military forces had carried out a deportation of the population in order to eliminate organized resistance.<sup>25</sup> He added in a 30 November 1949 memorandum that the deportation of the population from the three Baltic states was directed against members of opposition.<sup>26</sup> In the 6 July 1953 analysis “The Baltic states,” the Ambassador of France reported to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that in the Baltic states the USSR had violated all human rights<sup>27</sup> by arranging an influx of Russians, exceeding 25% of the total population.<sup>28</sup> However, the report also mentions the continued existence of resistance encompassing about 8,000 people.

The British Ministry of Foreign Affairs had at its disposal data that altogether 170,000 people were deported from the Baltic states on 24–27 March 1949. This figure was reported in a memorandum by seven prominent Latvian exiles on 14 June 1951 to the Prosecutor General of the UK.<sup>29</sup>

According to demographic calculations, suppression of different forms of resistance and what the occupants, both Nazi and Soviet, assumed to be “the social resource” of resistance, the Latvian nation lost 325,000 people (17% of the population), above all the political, economic and intellectual elite during the early occupation period and war. Moreover, about 600,000–700,000 people (34% of the population) suffered as a result of the occupants’ efforts to restrict the career and educational opportunities of “the socially dangerous elements.”<sup>30</sup> As a result of the colonization of Latvia by the USSR, the proportion of ethnic Russians increased from 8.8% to 26.6% in 1970 and reached 34% in 1989.<sup>31</sup> Ethnic Russians comprised about 70% of the newcomers. As a result, Latvians are an ethnic minority in the major cities of Rīga, Daugavpils and Liepāja.

Seven years after the mass deportation of 1949, in the mid-1950s, the last organized armed resistance was finally put down. Thus the ultimate means by which the occupation power suppressed the armed resistance and its support by much of the population were both mass-scale deportation and mass scale importation of colonists. The end was marked also by the suppression of the Hungarian revolution in 1956, which signified the end to the hopes for Western intervention, and by the mid-1950s relaxation of the regime, the so-called “thaw,” which tempted the weary population

with a return to some kind of normalcy. However, the twelve-year partisan war testifies that the small suppressed European nations were not merely martyrs and that their liberation and renewed independence in the late 1980s and early 1990s did not come only through the charity of the major powers but was a privilege that they themselves had fought for and achieved.

## Non-Violent Resistance

Non-violent resistance in Latvia began with the second Bolshevik occupation and ended in 1991 with the restoration of the state of Latvia. Its beginnings were akin to those in Poland.<sup>32</sup> Four main forms of non-violent resistance can be discerned from today's perspective: (1) resistance by associations and circles of like-minded persons; (2) activities of school students in 1956–59; (3) resistance by the church; (4) the democratic resistance that led to the “singing revolution in the 1980s.” Youth and intellectuals played the leading role in the non-violent political resistance in 1944–57.

In 1944–48 the national partisans and the non-violent resistance movement issued about 15% of all newspapers in Latvia that had a much higher degree of credibility than the Bolshevik-censored publications.<sup>33</sup> We can judge the scale of non-violent resistance only by identifying the thousands of underground newspapers and leaflets that KGB had seized, the damaged portraits of “the leaders of proletariat” and anti-Bolshevik inscriptions, the persons charged with listening to the Voice of America and other Western radio stations and those arrested for telling anti-Soviet jokes.

Non-violent resistance sometimes took rather interesting forms. Thus, for instance, during the Nazi occupation the Rīga Porcelain Factory manufactured a grotesque toy figurine “*Vater*” that copied the features of “the leader and teacher of all nations.” Only in late 1946 did a conscientious worker at the factory, F. Grigor'eva by name, reported to the KGB that the figurine was being manufactured in the factory, where 200 pieces were found, and the head of the manufacturing department V. Sapogs (born in 1904) was arrested as a consequence.<sup>34</sup> In 1957, the Liepāja regional court sentenced a blacksmith of a collective farm K. Mežalskis to 10 years in prison plus 5 years of deprivation of civil rights for arguing with a propagandist.<sup>35</sup> In 1951, Elfrīda Jaksone (born in 1921), an operator from the Vaiņode telephone exchange was sentenced to 8 years for having tuned the parish public radio channel to the Voice of America instead of Radio Moscow.<sup>36</sup>

While in the period of 1944–53 the dominating forms of student resistance were the avoidance of joining the Pioneer organization and the Young Communist League and evasion of other political Bolshevik activities, underground resistance groups of students also steadily gained momentum. These groups usually had their own statutes,

oaths and rules of conspiracy. The membership in such groups amounted to about 100 students, who occupied themselves with planning armed resistance against the occupants in case of war.

The second phase of resistance by school students was the period of 1947–57, when students organized about 100 small anti-Soviet propaganda groups.<sup>37</sup> The third phase was active non-violent resistance (such as tearing down USSR flags, dissemination of leaflets, anti-Soviet graffiti and letters). In the 1960s–1980s youth resistance merged with the underground movement of the entire nation that will be further discussed below.

To suppress non-violent resistance the occupants usually resorted to infiltration into resistance groups, analysis of underground publications and graffiti and information supplied by informers. However, occupants failed to put down the non-violent resistance that often turned into mental resistance.

While in Europe the so-called “rebellion of conscience” has been seriously studied for 20 years already,<sup>38</sup> in Latvia the research into the history of inner resistance to the occupation has not really started as yet. Practically, only the collecting of memoirs and testimonials, as well as sketching in research areas and topics has taken place.<sup>39</sup> Thus only a few suggestions are in place here.

The first wave of resistance by Latvian intellectuals to the second Bolshevik occupation in 1944–45 began with much of the political, economic and intellectual elite of Latvia going into exile to Germany and Sweden and later settling in Great Britain, the USA, Canada, Australia and other countries. The Latvian exile community originally encompassed about 200,000 people. Of these approximately 120,000 settled in foreign countries for life and thus saved that part of Latvian intelligentsia from annihilation that resumed after the occupation. On the other hand, it could not enrich the intellectual life in the homeland either.

The second wave of resistance took the form of the preservation of national material and spiritual values in museums, libraries and private collections. Inner resistance also found an outlet in underground periodicals and publications and translations from foreign languages with the participation of non-conformist intellectuals.

Areas that must be covered by future research of inner resistance include all types of non-conformism, dissidence or contrariety that were not directly confrontational but that continually tested the ideological and bureaucratic limits of the regime. We must study the professional activities of intellectuals who elaborated plans and prepared reports at all levels of state and administrative institutions. Secondly, the functioning of production plans and directives in various economic enterprises must be investigated. A third area encompasses the ways in which directives and censorship threats were circumvented in research and artistic activities and in the activities of social organizations and institutions. One of the forms of resistance applied within history scholarship was

the deliberate avoidance of research areas that included Party-dictated topics of “Soviet and workers’ revolutionary movement” and “the Soviet traditions of work and life” in favor of medieval studies, for instance. It sufficed to place the obligatory quotations by “the classics of Marxism-Leninism” in the introduction and conclusion. Inner resistance took expression in the works of scholars, writers and in folklore.

Marxism-Leninism, including its Bolshevik version, had strong messianic features. Thus the Bolshevik battle against the traditional religions displayed “credocidal” elements.<sup>40</sup> An important form of inner resistance was the resistance by the traditional religious denominations of Latvia: Lutherans, Roman Catholics, Russian Orthodox, Old-Believers and Baptists. Disregarding the declaration of freedom of religion in the USSR Constitution, the Bolsheviks regarded the very existence of religion in their atheist state as an anti-state activity. Therefore they closely controlled and oppressed religious activities from the moment of the occupation. Religion was fought against not only through the countless “atheist councils” organized by the Bolshevik authorities and the compulsory subject of “scientific atheism” in school curriculum, but also through institutes, lecturer teams, inspectors of religious services and informers in the service of the official Cult Authority. The churches resisted as best they could.

Publishing of religious literature was one of the forms of resistance by the churches. Although the multi-denominational conditions in Latvia made it difficult to publish a major religious periodical, such as the Lithuanian *Chronicle of the Catholic Church*, all religious denominations issued underground spiritual literature for the needs of their members. Thus the present Cardinal Jānis Pujāts organized the publication and illegal printing of religious literature for the Roman Catholic Church. Baptist underground literature was compiled by Baptist Bishop Jānis Tervits. It is comprised of 600 typed and handwritten publications typed and written by about 200 persons.<sup>41</sup>

One of the resistance forms by religious denominations was the organization of parishes without officially registering them and conducting surreptitious services not accessible to the control by the 5<sup>th</sup> Division of the KGB. Thus, for example, in 1951 a Stefans Samonēns (born in 1872) together with seven other leading figures of the “True Orthodox Church” (*josiflianstvo*) of Latvia were arrested in Georgijevka village, Balvi District. Despite his 79 years he was sentenced to 25 years of hard labor.<sup>42</sup> In 1940 there were 190 Catholic priests in Latvia;<sup>43</sup> 70 priests (36.8%) were arrested, executed or deported by 1973. Six other priests were prohibited to teach religion to children in their ecclesiastic capacity, and several priests were arrested for their sermons being “disloyal to the Soviet regime.”<sup>44</sup>

As was mentioned above, much of the resistance in Latvia in all its varieties was an endogenous phenomenon. However, testimonies by the leaders of resistance groups, publications in the underground press, hundreds of interrogation protocols of participants

in the resistance, as well as decrees by the occupant punitive authorities attest to the fact that the resistance movement expected assistance from the West. From the Western democracies and compatriots in exile the Latvian resisters expected first of all ideological and organizational assistance, since the majority of former resistance leaders and intellectual elites lived abroad. Secondly, participants in the armed resistance expected assistance from the Western powers or even the outbreak of war against the USSR that would have helped them to win the partisan war. Thirdly, the resistance movement expected support among the governments of the Western democracies for the restoration of Latvia's independence, advocacy of resistance through foreign policy tools and protection of human rights.

## Role of Exile for Resistance

Little research has been done concerning the role exile Latvian and other East European communities played for resistance in their respective countries. Much of the work is still on the level of collecting of memoirs, testimonies and other materials.<sup>45</sup> Some of the exile organizations that came into existence during the Cold War were to some extent an outgrowth of it and frequently received clandestine support of Western secret services. Among the most notable was the Assembly of Captive European Nations (ACEN), which was founded in 1954 in New York City by delegations representing 16 countries, including Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Hungary. Once or twice every year a General Assembly of ACEN was held in New York or Strasbourg. Up to 1960 ACEN had commissions for political, legal, information, economic, social and cultural affairs. On 14 July 1973 in Stockholm, the assembled organizations of Baltic, Polish and Hungarian exile communities of ACEN passed an appeal for assistance to the Baltic nations in their fight for liberty.<sup>46</sup> In the 1980s, as international tension relaxed, ACEN practically ceased to function.

Other exile organizations were formed later on and likewise proved to be effective tools in advancing the struggle for independence among Western nations. Such was the Baltic Appeal to the United Nations (BATUN), founded in New York in 1966 as an association of the Baltic exile organizations with the goal to fight for the restoration of the independence of the Baltic states. BATUN was chaired by a board of nine to twelve elected persons, each of the Baltic nations being represented by an equal number of board members. To achieve the restoration of the independence of the Baltic states BATUN first of all submitted several memorandums to the UN presenting the facts of the oppression and colonization of the Baltic nations,<sup>47</sup> of the violation of the human rights of the Baltic peoples, including the right to free movement outside the USSR.<sup>48</sup> Secondly, BATUN organized rallies of the Baltic communities at UN headquarters in New York,

such as marking the occasion of the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Soviet occupation of the Baltic and the Molotov–Ribbentrop pact on 20 September 1969. Letter campaigns was the third major form of BATUN's struggle for Baltic independence; thus in the early 1950s the best-known Baltic exiles sent several hundreds of appeals – 328 pages in total – to the President of France, urging him to protest against the occupation of the Baltic states and the oppression of the Baltic peoples.<sup>49</sup> In 1969 and 1970, exiles sent 35,344 letters to the presidents and governments of different states.<sup>50</sup> The fourth form of BATUN's activities were visits paid by delegations of Baltic exiles to the embassies of different non-communist states at the UN. Thus in 1969–70 alone, Baltic exile delegations had audiences with 25 ambassadors, 14 charges d'affaires, 12 envoys (plenipotentiary ministers) and 17 embassy councilors.<sup>51</sup>

The Association for the Advancement of Baltic Studies (AABS) was founded in 1969 as a scholarly organization. Though it emphasized its academic and non-political nature it became nevertheless an important scholarly conduit for objective research about the Baltic states and their peoples through its biannual conferences and its *Journal of Baltic Studies*. The Baltic Institute in Stockholm performed similar functions in Europe through its biannual conferences.

Organizations of the Latvian and the Baltic communities in exile represented the largest part of the intellectual and cultural elite and usually performed two basic functions: (1) cultural – preserving the exile communities as viable and creative national entities – and (2) political – carrying on the struggle for the liberation of their countries. The Latvian central country organizations eventually established a roof organization, the World Association of Free Latvians (Latvian abbreviation: PBLA), which played an important role in the latter stages of the liberation movement in the 1970s and 1980s. The world-wide Latvian World War II veterans' organization Daugavas Vanagi (Daugava Falcons) provided not only social services but was active in the cultural and political field as well. The Latvian National Foundation in Sweden was devoted exclusively to activities aimed at the liberation of Latvia and performed both overt and covert information gathering and dissemination tasks. It is important to note that the Communist rulers of Latvia exerted considerable efforts at both subverting and undermining the work of these exile organizations, especially as their work seemed to become effective.<sup>52</sup>

The strategy and activities to achieve the political goals changed over time and as the younger exile generation started to assert itself – at first in their central youth organizations, which were established in the USA, Canada, Europe and Australia, and later on as leaders of the central organizations. In the 1940s and 1950s the majority of older generation exiles were hoping for immediate liberation of Latvia, not excluding warfare against the USSR. They shaped exile strategy accordingly, concentrating on

anti-Communist activities with the idea that the struggle against Communism means struggle for free Latvia. From the late 1950s on, as the possibility of Western intervention became less and less likely, the younger generation of active Latvian exiles began discussions about strategic change.<sup>53</sup> The emphasis, it was argued, should be placed more on the efforts of strengthening the positions of Latvians in Latvia, even those in the Communist Party, based on the intellectual and spiritual force of the younger Latvian generation to counter the Russification of the Latvian people and the colonization of Latvia. Slowing down the extinction and assimilation rate of Latvians in Latvia was seen as a more important and effective way of achieving the long-term goals than the general struggle against Communism.<sup>54</sup> Yet the new strategic thinking could become part of active exile politics only after a change in the leadership of central organizations, which occurred in the 1970s and 1980s.

Apart from these external functions, Latvian exile organizations and individuals performed important functions toward their native countries, including radio broadcasts from the UK, USA and the Vatican in the Latvian language, trips to Latvia, sending of letters and cuttings from the exile press, smuggling in literary works and musical recordings. Although these contacts were both supervised and censored, they nevertheless played an important role in the spread of the non-violent and inner resistance in the 1970s and 1980s.

In the last period of the occupation, active non-violent resistance merged with inner resistance, creating, in effect, a legal underground with the largest part of the nation as its members – the open democratic resistance movement. After the suppression of the local partisan war, after witnessing helplessly the suppression of the revolts in Berlin, Budapest and Prague, Latvian resistance had finally become aware of the possibility to defeat the simulated Communist democracy by means of an uncompromised nation pursuing the Polish roundabout way of socialism. In their efforts to put down the “legal underground” in the 1970s and 1980s, the occupants typically resorted to involving the militia and the KGB in the supervision and psychological intimidation of the most active part of the population (5<sup>th</sup> Department of the Latvian SSR KGB), as well as to placing emphasis on “Soviet traditions,” incorporating in them a few elements of ethnic Latvian culture. However, these efforts failed to avert the nation’s “singing revolution” in the late 1980s that led to liberation.

## Concluding Remarks

1. After the second Bolshevik occupation of Latvia, the nation had several theoretical options: collaboration with the occupation, adaptation or opposition. Restoration of independence was not feasible.

2. Resistance against the totalitarian occupation of Latvia was a popular movement that had political, social, economic and ideological causes. For this reason, Latvian national resistance did not have the alternative that was available to Germany: “resistance without a people.”<sup>55</sup> Latvian resistance was the struggle of the Latvian people against occupation; against the pressure and propaganda on the part of the occupant country; for democracy and free economic, political and spiritual development; for European culture and traditions, under whose influence Latvia had developed for centuries. Latvian resistance of 1944–91 was targeted against the totalitarian empire of the USSR. While being confident that the supreme meaning of historical events lies outside the historical realm,<sup>56</sup> I believe that a human being, a nation and continents can influence their destinies also through a resistance movement.
3. Indigenous resistance to the Red Empire in 1944–91 was a unique historical phenomenon in the lives of not only Latvia, but also all other European nations.<sup>57</sup> The resistance did not receive any assistance from abroad either in terms of funding, human resources, armament, medical aid, organization or any other form of help.
4. National resistance in Latvia underwent the transformation of its main form, changing from armed struggle into non-violent resistance, which in turn gave way to inner resistance. In the last years of the occupation, resistance developed into a quasi-legal underground that embraced the widest possible groups of people. The totalitarian empire of the USSR was unable to resist this all-pervasive underground of people that brought about the anti-Communist “singing revolution.” National resistance in Latvia in the 1970s and 1980s proved that even a totalitarian regime has limitations in resorting to force.<sup>58</sup> Comparing the basically unsuccessful struggle of Latvian national partisans in the late 1940s with the successful popular struggle in the late 1980s, one must recognize that the vast majority of the people, including many communists and ethnic minorities, Russians, Belorussians and Poles, went over to the side of the independence movement once they felt relieved from the fears of the last 50 years and faced “a small risk of martyrdom.”<sup>59</sup>
5. Latvian resistance in all its forms and periods demanded independence for the Baltic states, democratic freedoms and respect for human rights. This is attested to by the statutes published by resistance organizations, by the underground press, leaflets and even KGB interrogation protocols.
6. Baltic resistance played an important role in the collapse of the European order established at the Yalta and Potsdam conferences, the disintegration of the Warsaw block and the creation of a new international system in the wake of the Belovezh Treaty dissolving the Soviet Union. Dr. Alfreds Bīlmanis, Ambassador of the Republic of Latvia to the USA, wrote the prophetic words in 1948: “It is clear, therefore, that there can be no free Europe without a free Baltic.”<sup>60</sup> His vision came true in 1991, thanks partly to the 50-year-long resistance of the Latvian people.

## Notes

### Abbreviations of Frequently Cited Works

CHL. Latvijas vēsturnieku komisijas raksti / Symposium of the Commission of the Historians of Latvia. 13 volumes. Rīga: Institute of the History of Latvia 2000–2005. References – CHL volume: page.

CHL 1. *Latvija Otrajā pasaules karā / Latvia in World War II*. Daina Bleiere, Iveta Šķiņķe et al., eds. Rīga: Institute of the History of Latvia, 2000. 392 pages.

CHL 2. *Holokausta izpētes problēmas Latvijā / Problems of Holocaust Research in Latvia*. Dzintars Ērglis et al., eds. Rīga: Institute of the History of Latvia, 2001. 408 pages.

CHL 3. *Totalitārie režīmi un to represijas Latvijā 1940.–1956. gadā / Totalitarian Regimes and their Repressions Carried out in Latvia in 1940–1956*. Irēne Šneidere et al., eds. Rīga: Institute of the History of Latvia, 2001. 744 pages.

CHL 4. Leo Dribins. *Antisemitisms un tā izpausmes Latvijā: Vēstures atskats*. Rīga: Institute of the History of Latvia, 2001. 182 pages.

CHL 5. *Stockholm Documents: The German Occupation of Latvia. 1941–1945. What did America Know?*. Andrew Ezergailis, ed. Rīga: Historical Institute of Latvia, 2002. 508 pages.

CHL 6. *1941. gada 14. jūnija deportācija – noziegums pret cilvēci / Deportation of 14 June 1941: Crime Against Humanity*. Māra Brence, Dzintars Ērglis et al., eds. Rīga: Institute of the History of Latvia, 2002. 416 pages.

CHL 7. *Okupācijas režīmi Latvijā 1940.–1956. gadā / Occupation Regimes in Latvia in 1940–1956*. Irēne Šneidere et al., eds. Rīga: Institute of the History of Latvia, 2001. 496 pages.

CHL 8. *Holokausta izpētes jautājumi Latvijā / The Issues of the Holocaust Research in Latvia*. Dzintars Ērglis et al., eds. Rīga: Institute of the History of Latvia, 2003. 414 pages.

CHL 9. *Padomju okupācijas režīms Baltijā 1944.–1959. gadā: politika un tās sekas / The Soviet Occupation Regime in the Baltic States 1944–1959: Policies and their Consequences*. Rīga. Iveta Šķiņķe et al., eds. Rīga: Institute of the History of Latvia, 2003. 462 pages.

CHL 10. *Okupācijas režīmi Baltijā 1944.–1959. gadā / Occupation Regimes in Latvia in 1940–1959* Dzintars Ērglis et al., eds. Rīga: Institute of the History of Latvia, 2004. 608 pages.

CHL 11. *Latvija nacistiskās Vācijas okupācijas varā 1941–1945 / Latvia under Nazi German Occupation 1941–1945*. Dzintars Ērglis et al., eds. Rīga: Institute of the History of Latvia, 2004. 232 pages.

CHL 12. *Holokausta izpēte Latvijā / The Holocaust Research in Latvia*. Dzintars Ērglis et al., eds. Rīga: Institute of the History of Latvia, 2004. 416 pages

CHL 13. *Totalitārie Okupācijas režīmi Latvijā 1940.–1964. gadā / Totalitarian Occupation Regimes in Latvia in 1940–1964*. Dzintars Ērglis et al., eds. Rīga: Institute of the History of Latvia, 2004. 584 pages.

- LA** – *Latvijas Arhīvi* (Archives of Latvia).
- LKOPKL** – *Latviešu karavīrs Otrā pasaules kara laikā: Dokumentu un atmiņu krājums* (Latvian Soldier in World War II: Collection of Documents and Recollections), 11 vols. (N.p., 1970–1993).
- LPSRZAV** – *Latvijas PSR Zinātņu Akadēmijas Vēstis* (News of the Academy of Sciences of Latvian SSR).
- LV** – *Latvijas vēsture. Jaunie un jaunākie laiki* (History of Latvia. Recent and Contemporary Period).
- LVĪŽ** – *Latvijas Vēstures Institūta Žurnāls* (Journal of the Institute of the History of Latvia).
- LZAV** – *Latvijas Zinātņu Akadēmijas Vēstis* (News of the Latvian Academy of Sciences).

## Abbreviations of Archives

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| <b>BA–B</b> – Bundesarchiv Berlin.                                   | <b>PA AA</b> – Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amts.                |
| <b>BA–MA</b> – Bundesarchiv–Militärarchiv Freiburg.                  | <b>PRO</b> – Public Record Office.                                     |
| <b>GARF</b> – State Archive of the Russian Federation.               | <b>RGAE</b> – Russian State Economy Archive.                           |
| <b>LVA</b> – State Archive of Latvia.                                | <b>RGASPI</b> – Russian State Archive of Social and Political History. |
| <b>LVVA</b> – State Historical Archive of Latvia.                    | <b>USNA</b> – United States National Archives.                         |
| <b>LZA CA</b> – Central Archive of the Academy of Science of Latvia. |  |

## Alfred Erich Senn, “Baltic Battleground,” 17–30

- <sup>1</sup> Cf. Boris Meissner, “The Occupation of the Baltic States from a Present-Day Perspective,” *The Baltic States at Historical Crossroads* (Riga, 1998) 473–88. For a Soviet account of party-state relationships in this period, see E. M. Kozhevnikov, *Istoricheskii opyt KPSS po rukovodstvu Sovetskim gosudarstvom v predvoennye gody (1936–1941)* (Moscow, 1971).
- <sup>2</sup> “Protokol No. 7 resheniia politbiuro TsK VKP(b),” in Ministerstvo inostrannykh del Rossiiskoi federatsii, *Dokumenty vneshnei politiki 1939 god* (Moscow, 1992) 2: 19–22. Erwin Oberländer called attention to this document in his “Instruments of Sovietization in 1939/1940 and after 1944/45,” *CHL* 9: 50–57. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, former party officials spoke freely of the position of the Politburo: Vladimir Kriuchkov, *Lichnoe delo*, 2 vols. (Moscow, 1996) 1: 258, called it the “highest leading organ in the country”; Egor Ligachev, *Zagadka Gorbacheva* (Novosibirsk, 1992) 6, called it “the highest political organ of the country”.
- <sup>3</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 55 vols. (Moscow, 1960–64) 42: 367; 43: 199.
- <sup>4</sup> United States National Archives, State Department Decimal File (hereinafter referred to as USNA), 860p.00/283. On 20 June, the First Secretary of the French embassy wrote in his journal, “Annexation to the Soviet Union is half done.” Jean de Beausse, *Carnets d’un diplomate francais en Lettonie 1939–1940* (Riga, 1997) 160. [Text in both Latvian and French.]
- <sup>5</sup> USNA, 860p.00/283.
- <sup>6</sup> When the Lithuanian “People’s Assembly” met on July 21, it echoed the Politburo’s order of October 1939 by adopting as the first questions on its agenda: the establishment of the Soviet order, requesting admission to the Soviet Union, land reform, and the nationalization of banks and large enterprises. *Lietuvos Liaudies Seimas. Stenogramos ir medziaga* (Vilnius, 1985) 50–53.
- <sup>7</sup> Dov Levin, *Baltic Jews under the Soviets 1940–1946* (Jerusalem, 1994) 371. For a contemporary account of the minorities’ situations in the three republics, see Royal Institute of International Affairs, *The Baltic States* (London, 1938) 30–38.
- <sup>8</sup> Levin 117; William W. Mishell, *Kaddish for Kovno* (Chicago, 1988) 8.; Ben-Cion Pinchuk, *Shtetl Jews under Soviet Rule* (Oxford, 1990) 221; the American report in USNA, 861m.00/464. On the deportation of Jews from Ukraine and Belorussia in June 1940, see Jan Gross, *Revolution from Abroad. The Soviet Conquest of Poland’s Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia* (Princeton, 2002), Chapter 6: “Deportations.”
- <sup>9</sup> Levin 2; Zvi Gitelman, “Soviet Reactions to the Holocaust, 1945–1991,” *The Holocaust in the Soviet nion* (Armonk, NY) 4–5. On the reactions of the Jewish community in Lithuania, see also Saliamonas Atamukas, *Lietuvos zydu kelias* (Vilnius, 1998) 213–14.
- <sup>10</sup> Ezra Mendelsohn, *On Modern Jewish Politics* (New York, 1993) 98; Gross 272; Zvi Kolitz, “The Physical and Metaphysical Dimensions of the Extermination of the Jews in Lithuania,” *The Holocaust in the Soviet Union* 201.
- <sup>11</sup> Levin 27; Dov Levin, *The Lesser of Two Evils: Eastern European Jewry under Soviet Rule, 1939–1941* (Philadelphia, 1995) 44–46; Kolitz 201.
- <sup>12</sup> Levin, *Baltic Jews* 92; Gitelman. 5; Aba Gefen, quoted in *Lietuvos rytas* (Vilnius), 23 March 1996. For the text of the American report, see Alfred Erich Senn, “Documents: Introduction and Commentary,” *Journal of Baltic Studies*, 26.2 (1995): 145–46.
- <sup>13</sup> Text in Valentinas Brandisauskas, *Siekiai atkurti Lietuvos valstybinguma* (Vilnius, 1996) 151.

- <sup>14</sup> On the deportations in Latvia, see CHL 6. There has been considerable controversy concerning the exact number of deportees in 1941. Latvians have now generally settled on 15,000, the Estonians on 10,000, but the Lithuanians' figures range from 17–19,000 to 27,000. Part of the confusion in the Lithuanian statistics revolves around problems of establishing the numbers of Jews and Poles deported; see Eugenijus Grunskis, *Lietuvos gyventoju tremimai 1940–1941, 1945–1953 metais* (Vilnius, 1996); Solomonas Atamukas, *Lietuvos zydu kelias* (Vilnius, 1998). On the deportations in all three Baltic republics, see Romuald J. Misiunas and Rein Taagapera, *The Baltic States: Years of Dependence 1940–1980* (Berkeley, 1983) 38–42. For an example of the life of a deportee, as opposed to a prisoner in a labor camp, see the diary of Onute Garbstiene, *Hell in Ice* (Vilnius, 1992). For an account by a prisoner, see Menachem Begin, *White Nights* (London, 1957).
- <sup>15</sup> Mendelsohn, 40; Azreal Shochat, "Jews, Lithuanians and Russians, 1939–1941," in *Jews and Non-Jews in Eastern Europe*, B. Vago and G. I. Mosse, eds. (New York, 1974) 301–14. In the early post-war years, Soviet authorities in the Baltic quickly restrained individual acts of vengeance and reasserted their monopoly over the exercise of violence: See Aba Gefen, *Defying the Holocaust* (San Bernardino CA, 1993). Aleksandr Slavinas, *Gibel' Pompei* (Tel-Aviv, 1997); Rich Cohen, *The Avengers* (New York, 2000).
- <sup>16</sup> See Charles Tilly, *The Politics of Collective Violence* (Cambridge, 2003) 230.
- <sup>17</sup> For accounts of the spread and growth of the violence, see Andrew Ezergailis, *The Holocaust in Latvia, 1941–1944* (Riga, 1996); Atamukas, *Lietuvos zydu kelias*; Alfonsas Eidintas, *Zydai, Lietuviai ir Holokaustas* (Vilnius, 2002); *Judenmord in Litauen*, Wolfgang Benz and Marion Neiss, eds. (Berlin, 1999). See also the articles by Saulius Suziedelis, Yitzhak Arad, and Arunas Bubnys in *The Vanished World of Lithuanian Jews*, Alvydas Nikzentaitis, Stefan Schreiner and Darius Staliunass, eds. (Amsterdam, 2004). The example of Nazi propaganda is taken from the book *Raudonasis siaubas GPU* (Kaunas, 1941) 4.
- <sup>18</sup> *Ny Dag*, 10 February 1944. To make a show of the independence of the Union Republics of the USSR, the Soviet government, on 1 February 1944, decreed the addition of Article 18a to the Stalin constitution: "Each Union Republic has the right to enter into direct relations with foreign states and to conclude agreements and exchange representatives with them."
- <sup>19</sup> USNA, 860n.01/97.
- <sup>20</sup> Tom Bower, *The Red Web* (London, 1989). For an account of a disastrous episode in this intervention, see Liutas Mockunas, *Pavarges herojus* (Vilnius, 1997).
- <sup>21</sup> See Grunskis, *Lietuvos gyventoju tremimai* and Heinrich Strods and Matthew Kott, "The File on Operation 'Priboi': A Reassessment of the Mass Deportations of 1949" *Journal of Baltic Studies* 33.1 (2002): 1–31. For a general account of post-war resistance and the deportations, see Misiunas and Taagapera, *The Baltic States*, Chapter III "Post-War Stalinism: 1945–1953." For examples of higher estimates of deportees see the reports for the various countries in *Vilniaus tribunalo nuosprendis* (Vilnius, 2000).
- <sup>22</sup> Quoted in Ignas Seinius, *Raudonasis tvanas* (Vilnius, 1990) 134 (first published in Danish, 1941); Strong's major contribution to the history of the Soviet incorporation of the Baltic states was her *The New Lithuania* (New York, 1941).
- <sup>23</sup> Alfred Erich Senn, *Power, Politics, and the Olympic Games* (Champaign IL, 1999) 100.
- <sup>24</sup> Arthur Coleman to Washington, 21 November 1929, USNA, 860i.00/182; Helene Carrere d'Encausse, *L'empire eclate: La revolte des nations en U.R.S.S.* (Paris, 1978) 273.

## Irēne Šneidere, “The First Soviet Occupation Period in Latvia 1940–1941,” 33–42

- 1 The name “Year of Terror” is derived from a poem “Baiga vasara” written by the Latvian poet Edvarts Virza (1883–1941), who died a few months before the Soviet occupation. The poem is thus perceived as a prophecy of the tragic events of 1940–41.
- 2 Responsibility for these crimes is fixed in articles included in Chapter IX of the Criminal Law: “Crimes against Humanity, Peace, War Crimes, Genocide,” *Criminal Law. Concerning Procedures of Introduction and Application of the Criminal Law* (Rīga, 2003) 25–26.
- 3 Natalia Lebedeva, “Chetvertyi razdel Pol’shi i Katyn’skaia tragediia” [The Fourth Division of Poland and Katin Tragedy], *Drugaiā voina* [A Different Kind of War], ed. Iurii Afanas’ev (Moscow, 1996) 237–95.
- 4 *Katyn’. Mart 1940 g. – sentiabr’ 2000 g.: Rasstrel. Sud’by zhivikh. Ekho Katyn’ i. Dokumenty* [Katyn’. March 1940–September 2000: Execution. Destiny of the Survivors. Echo of Katyn’. Documents]. (Moscow, 2001) 43–44.
- 5 *Ibid.* 231–33.
- 6 *Ibid.* 180–82.
- 7 Iurii Afanas’ev, “Vvedenie” [Introduction], *Drugaiā voina* 18. (Note 3.)
- 8 Inesis Feldmanis, “15. maija Latvija un autoritārie režīmi Austrumeiropā (1926–1940): salīdzinošs raksturojums” [Latvia of 15 May and Authoritarian Regimes in Eastern Europe (1926–1940): A Comparative Analysis], *Kārlim Ulmanim 120* [Kārlis Ulmanis 120], ed. Irēne Šneidere (Rīga, 1998) 84.
- 9 The *coup d’état* took place in Latvia on 15 May 1934. Therefore the period between the coup and the Soviet occupation is called also “Latvia of 15 May” or “dictatorship of 15 May.”– Aivars Stranga, “Liberālisms, demokrātija un autoritārisms Eiropā un Latvijā (20.–30. gadi)” [Liberalism, Democracy and Authoritarianism in Europe and Latvia (1920s–30s)], *Kārlim Ulmanim 120* 56.
- 10 *Ibid.* 91.
- 11 As the first research monograph should be mentioned, however, Alfreds Ceichners, *Latvijas boļševizācija* [Bolshevization of Latvia], (Rīga, 1944) 595 pages. The book was published in Nazi-occupied Latvia, at first in German in 1942. On the basis of documents left behind by Soviet institutions, newspaper articles, recollections and his own education in economy, the author described “the Socialist transformations” in the Latvian SSR and their consequences and calculated losses incurred from the Soviet rule. For this reason the book was reprinted in 1986.
- 12 One can fully agree with David Hoffmann that all research into Stalinism carried out during the Cold War was politicized. David L. Hoffmann, “Introduction: Interpretation of Stalinism,” *Stalinism: The Essential Reading*, ed. David L. Hoffmann (Bodmin, 2003) 2.
- 13 Stephen J. Lee, *The European Dictatorships, 1918–1945* (London, 1987) 271.
- 14 Edgar Anderson, “The Baltic Entente: Phantom or Reality,” *The Baltic States in Peace and War, 1917–1945*, ed. V. Stanley Vardys and Romuald Misiunas (University Park, PA. 1978) 131.
- 15 Latvian National Foundation, *These Names Accuse: Nominal List of Latvians Deported to Soviet Russia in 1940–41* (Stockholm, 1952) 547. The book was reprinted in 1982.
- 16 Ādolfs Šilde, *Pa deportēto pēdām: Latvieši padomju vergu darbā* [In the Footsteps of the Deportees: Latvians as Soviet Slave Laborers] (Stokholm, 1956) 304.

- <sup>17</sup> For the first time this figure was mentioned in the historical introduction to *These Names Accuse* (p. 33). This became the figure most often mentioned in publications by exile Latvians.
- <sup>18</sup> *Istoriia Latviiskoi SSR (s drevneishikh vremen do 1953. g.): Sokrashchennyi kurs* [History of the Latvian SSR (from the Ancient Times until 1953): Brief Course], ed. Kārlis Strazdiņš (Rīga, 1955) 490.
- <sup>19</sup> *Fal'sifikatory istorii: Istoricheskaja spravka* [Falsifiers of History: Historical Inquest] (Moscow, 1948) 64–65.
- <sup>20</sup> *Istoriia Latviiskoi SSR*, 481–98.
- <sup>21</sup> *Istoriia Latviiskoi SSR* [History of the Latvian SSR], eds. Kārlis Strazdiņš, Jānis Zutis, Jānis Krastiņš, Aleksandrs Drīzulis, 3 vols. (Rīga, 1958) 3: 463–514.
- <sup>22</sup> *Latvijas PSR vēsture: No vissenākajiem laikiem līdz mūsu dienām*, [History of the Latvian SSR: from the Ancient Times until the Present], ed. A. Drīzulis, 2 vols. (Rīga, 1986) 2: 172.
- <sup>23</sup> Antony Read and David Fisher, *The Deadly Embrace: Hitler, Stalin and the Nazi-Soviet Pact. 1939–1941* (London, 1988); John Hiden and Patrick Solmon, *The Baltic Nations and Europe: Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in the Twentieth Century* (London, 1991); Romuald Misiunas and Rein Taagepera, *The Baltic States: Years of Dependence, 1940–1980*, expanded and updated edition (Berkeley, CA., 1993); Bernd Wegner, ed., *From Peace to War: Germany, Soviet Russia and the World, 1939–1941* (Providence, 1997); etc.
- <sup>24</sup> *Latvijas Republikas Ministru kabineta sēžu protokoli: 1940. gada 16. jūnijs –19. jūlijs* [Minutes of Meetings of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia: 26 June–19 July 1940], eds. I. Šneidere and A. Žvinklis (Rīga, 1991); *Latvijas okupācija un aneksija: 1939–1940. Dokumenti un materiāli* [Occupation and Annexation of Latvia: 1939–1940. Documents and Materials], eds. I. Grava-Kreituse, I. Feldmanis, J. Goldmanis and A. Stranga (Rīga, 1995); *Policy of Occupation Powers in Latvia: 1939–1991. A Collection of Documents*, ed. Elmārs Pelkaus (Rīga, 1999).
- <sup>25</sup> Inesis Feldmanis, Aivars Stranga and Mārtiņš Virsis, *Latvijas ārpolitika un starptautiskais stāvoklis (30. gadu otrā puse)* [Foreign Policy and International Situation of Latvia (late 1930s)] (Rīga, 1993).
- <sup>26</sup> Current spelling of the name; its historical spelling was „Kirchenšteins.“
- <sup>27</sup> As the first monographic study should be mentioned: Ilga Gore and Aivars Stranga, *Latvija: neatkarības mijkrēslis. Okupācija: 1939. gada septembris–1940. gada jūnijs* [Latvia: Twilight of Independence. Occupation: September 1939–June 1940] (Rīga, 1992).
- <sup>28</sup> See *Polpredy soobshchaiut... Sbornik dokumentov ob otnosheniakh SSSR s Latviei, Litvoi i Estoniei: Avgust 1939 g.–avgust 1940. g.* [Plenipotentiary Representatives Report ... Collection of Documents on the Relations between USSR and Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia: August 1939–August 1940] (Moscow, 1990); *Dokumenty vneshnei politiki 1939* [Documents of Foreign Policy of the USSR 1939], XXII, kn. 1, 2 (Moscow, 1992).
- <sup>29</sup> Rudīte Vīksne and Kārlis Kangeris, eds., *No NKVD līdz KGB. Politiskās prāvas Latvijā 1940–1986: Noziegumos pret padomju valsti apsūdzēto Latvijas iedzīvotāju rādītājs* [From NKVD to KGB. Political Trials in Latvia 1940–1986: Lists of Residents of Latvia Charged with Crimes against the Soviet State] (Rīga, 1999).
- <sup>30</sup> Ēriks Jēkabsons, “Padomju represijas pret Latvijas poļiem, lietuviešiem un baltkrieviem 1940.–1941. gadā” [Soviet Repressions against Latvia’s Poles, Lithuanians and Belorussians in 1940–1941], CHL 3: 51–70; Arturs Žvinklis, “Latvijas valsts darbinieku – ebreju liktenis Otrā pasaules kara laikā” [Destiny of Latvia’s State Officials of Jewish Origin in World War II], CHL 2: 248–57.

- <sup>31</sup> Ainārs Lerhis, "Padomju režīma represijas pret neatkarīgās Latvijas valsts diplomātiem" [Repressions by the Soviet Regime against Diplomats of Independent Latvia], *Totalitarian Regimes and Their Repressions in Latvia in 1940–1956* 71–119 and "Latvijas Republikas ārlietu darbinieku likteņi padomju noietnēs" [Destinies of Latvian Foreign Ministry Officials in Soviet Camps], CHL 6: 191–200; Ēriks Jēkabsons and Ainārs Bambals, "Latvijas armijas iznīcināšana un represijas pret tās karavīriem 1940.–1941. gadā" [Annihilation of the Army of Latvia and Repressions against Its Soldiers], CHL 6: 120–70.
- <sup>32</sup> Uldis Lasmanis, "1941. gada represijas Jēkabpils apriņķī" [1941 Repressions in Jēkabpils District], CHL 6: 261–68.; Dzintars Ērglis, "1941. gada 14. jūnijs Ventspils apriņķa Dundagas pagastā" [14 June 1941 in Dundaga Parish, Ventspils District], CHL 6: 269–330; Irēne Šneidere, "Padomju režīma represijas pret Latgales civiliedzīvotājiem 1941. gada jūnijā–jūlijā sākumā" [Repressions by the Soviet Regime against Civilians in Latgale in June–early July 1941], CHL 3: 15–50 and "Arestēti 1941. gada jūnijā–jūlijā sākumā: Latgales civiliedzīvotāju liktenis Gulaga noietnēs" [Arrested in June–early July 1941: Destiny of Civilians from Latgale in Gulag Camps], CHL 7: 15–34.
- <sup>33</sup> Iveta Šķiņķe, "1941. gada 14. jūnija deportācijā arestētās un izsūtītās sievietes. Ieskats problēmā" [Women Arrested and Deported in the Course of 14 June 1941 Deportation. A Brief Introduction into the Topic], CHL 6: 331–42.
- <sup>34</sup> State Archive of Latvia, *Aizvestie: 1941. gada 14. jūnijs* [The Deported: 14 June 1941], ed. Elmārs Pelkaus (Rīga, 2001).
- <sup>35</sup> *Ibid.* 11.
- <sup>36</sup> A decree by the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Council on 7 September 1940 granted citizenship of the USSR to inhabitants of the Latvian SSR, and the change of passports began. *LPSR Augstākās Padomes Prezidija Ziņotājs* [Bulletin of the Presidium of the Latvian SSR Supreme Council] 11 September 1940.
- <sup>37</sup> Andrejs Lepše, "1941. gada 14. jūnija deportācijas starptautiski tiesiskie aspekti" [International Legal Aspects of the 14 June 1941 Deportation], CHL 6: 98.
- <sup>38</sup> Kārlis Kangeris, "Padomju okupācija un 14. jūnija deportācija nākamās okupācijas varas – nacionāl-sociālistiskās Vācijas propagandā Latvijā (1941.–1942. gads)" [Soviet Occupation and the 14 June Deportation in the Propaganda of the Next Occupation Ruler, Nazi Germany (1941–1942)], CHL 6: 154.
- <sup>39</sup> Georg Fridman, *Čto s nami sluchilos'. Vospominaniia* [What Happened with us. Memoirs] (Rīga, 2004) 14–15.
- <sup>40</sup> It is known that, of all ethnic groups, Latvians played an important role in the repressive bodies in the Soviet Union up to 1937. Thus, in September 1918 the central apparatus of the Cheka, as it was known then, in Moscow had a staff of 781 persons, almost 36% of these being Latvians and only about 4% Jews. See Aivars Stranga, *Ebreji un diktatūras Baltijā (1926–1940)* [Jews and Dictatorships in the Baltic (1926–1940)] (Rīga, 2002). As Stranga points out, "around 1920 this situation, however, began to change irreversibly: the proportion of Latvians decreased, while that of Jews increased, the main and irrepressible trend however being the growth of the proportion of ethnic Russians." After 1937 this trend became particularly striking. In the course of two years, from early 1938 to early 1940, the proportion of Russians in the main national USSR security authority, the NKVD, increased from 64% to 80%, the proportion of Jews rapidly fell from almost 27% to slightly over 6%, while the already small proportion of Latvians from slightly over 3% decreased to 0.1%. See Galina Ivanova, *GULAG v sisteme totalitarnogo gosudarstva* [GULAG in the System of a Totalitarian State] (Moscow, 1997) 153–54, 159–60.

- <sup>41</sup> Indulis Zālīte and Sindija Eglīte, “1941. gada 14. jūnija deportācijas struktūranalīze” [Structural Analysis of the 14 June 1941 Deportation], CHL 6: 41, 43.
- <sup>42</sup> LVA, fonds 1986, ser. 2, file 10462 (supervision case).
- <sup>43</sup> The number of deportees – 14,693 persons – was for the first time mentioned in propaganda publication in Nazi German occupation period: P. Kovaļevskis, O. Norītis, M. Goppers eds., *Baigais gads. Attēlu un dokumentu krājums par boļševiku laiku Latvijā: no 14.VI 1940 līdz 1.VII. 1941* [The Year of Terror. Collection of Photographs and Documents on the Bolshevik Time in Latvia: from 14 June 1940 to 1 July 1941] (Rīga, 1942) 96.
- <sup>44</sup> Heinrihs Strods, “Genocīda galvenās formas un mērķi Latvijā, 1940–1985” [The Main Forms and Goals of Genocide in Latvia, 1940–1985], *Practice of Communist Totalitarianism and Genocide in Latvia. Materials of a Scholarly Conference* (Rīga, 1992) 20.
- <sup>45</sup> Vincents Karaļūns, “Par Padomju varas pretinieku, kapitālistisko un deklasēto elementu pārvietošanu 1941. gada 14. jūnijā” [Concerning the Displacement of Enemies of the Soviet Rule and Capitalist and Declasse Elements on 14 June 1941] *Latvijas likteņgadi* [Fateful Years for Latvia], II (Rīga, 1988) 77.
- <sup>46</sup> *Latvija padomju režīma varā 1945–1986. Dokumentu krājums* [Latvia under the Soviet Regime 1945–1986. Collection of Documents] (Rīga: 2001) 96, 102, 111.
- <sup>47</sup> *Aizvestie* 14.
- <sup>48</sup> *Ibid.* 112.
- <sup>49</sup> Strods 24.
- <sup>50</sup> For a detailed analysis see Rudīte Vīksne, “Soviet Repressions against Residents of Latvia in 1940–1941: Typical Trends” in the present volume.
- <sup>51</sup> Danute Dūra, Ieva Gundare and Dzidra Zujeva, “Okupācijas vara un Latvijas sabiedrība ‘Nacionālās sardzes’ dokumentos” [Occupation Rule and the Public of Latvia in the Documents of the ‘National Watch’], CHL 7: 80–104; Danute Dūra and Ieva Gundare, “Okupācijas vara un Latvijas cilvēks: izmaiņas sabiedrības psiholoģiskajā noskaņojumā (1940–1941)” [The Occupation Regime and the People of Latvia: Changes in the Psychological Mood of the Society], CHL 10: 88–140.
- <sup>52</sup> *Vesti segodnia* 20 February 2004.

## Irēne Šneidere, “The Occupation of Latvia in June 1940: A Few Aspects of the Technology of Soviet Aggression,” 43–52

- <sup>1</sup> *Kārlis Ulmanis trimdā un cietumā: Dokumenti un materiāli* [Kārlis Ulmanis in Exile and Prison: Documents and Materials], comp. I. Ronis, A. Žvinklis (Rīga, 1994) 392.
- <sup>2</sup> *Valdības Vēstnesis* [Governmental Gazette] 17 June 1940; *Izvestija* 17 June 1940.
- <sup>3</sup> *Polpredy soobshchaiut... Sbornik dokumentov ob otnosheniakh SSSR s Latviei, Litvoi i Estoniei: avgust 1939 g. –avgust 1940 g.* [Plenipotentiary Representatives Report ... Collection of Documents on Relations between USSR and Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia: August 1939–August 1940] (Moscow, 1990) 387.
- <sup>4</sup> Henry Campbell Black, *Black’s Law Dictionary. Definitions of the Terms and Phrases of American and English Jurisprudence, Ancient and Modern*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. (St. Paul, MN., 1990).

- <sup>5</sup> *Juridisko terminu vārdnīca* [Dictionary of Legal Terms] (Rīga, 1998) 275.
- <sup>6</sup> *Latvijas Republikas Ministru kabineta sēžu protokoli: 1940. gada 16. jūnijs–19. jūlijs* [Minutes of the Meetings of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia: 16 June–19 July 1940] (Rīga, 1991) 9.
- <sup>7</sup> D.A. Lēbers, “Latvijas valsts bojāeja 1940. gadā. Starptautiski tiesiskie aspekti” [The Annihilation of the State of Latvia in 1940: Aspects of International Law], Valdis Blūzma, Ojārs Celle, Tālav Jundzis, Dītrihs Andrejs Lēbers, Egils Levits, Ļubova Zīle, *Latvijas valsts atjaunošana: 1986.–1993.* [Restoration of the State of Latvia: 1986–1993] (Rīga, 1998) 13.
- <sup>8</sup> Kociņš was executed in Lublyanka Prison in Moscow on 28 July 1941 in compliance with the verdict of the War Collegium of the USSR Supreme Court. For more details see Ainārs Lerhis, “Padomju režīma represijas pret neatkarīgās Latvijas diplomātiem” [Repressions by the Soviet Regime against Diplomats of Independent Latvia], CHL 3: 88.
- <sup>9</sup> In compliance with the 18 June 1940 decision of the Cabinet of Ministers, a liaison headquarters was established under the Commander of the Latvian Army with the goal of “organizing and promoting cooperation with the troops of the Soviet Army in Latvia.” General Mārtiņš Hartmanis was appointed chief. As of October 1939, he had served as Chairman of the Commission set up for dealing with military issues arising from the Mutual Assistance Pact between Latvia and the USSR. In October 1940 he was retired from active military service; in December, the NKVD of the USSR arrested him and deported to Moscow where he was executed. See *Latvijas Republikas Ministru kabineta sēžu protokoli* 17, 18, 21.
- <sup>10</sup> *Polpredy soobshchaiut* 400–01.
- <sup>11</sup> In his work *Theory of Legal Proof in Soviet Law* (Moscow, 1941), Vyshinsky theoretically justified the trying of a person solely on the basis of the person’s admission of guilt. Investigation was not obliged to prove the defendant’s guilt. For this work Vyshinsky received Stalin’s Award, I Class, in 1947. See V. I. Ivkin, *Gosudarstvennaia vlast’ SSSR: Vysshie organy vlasti i upravleniia i ikh rukovoditeli. 1923–1991. Istoriko-biograficheski spravochnik* [State Power in USSR: Supreme Bodies of Power and Administration and Their Leaders. 1923–1991. Historical-Biographical Reference Book] (Moscow, 1999) 260.
- <sup>12</sup> For the sake of simplicity, the common abbreviation is used instead of the official title at that time: All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks).
- <sup>13</sup> The new government started working before being fully formed. The formation of the government continued until early July. See *Latvijas Republikas Ministru kabineta sēžu protokoli* 4.
- <sup>14</sup> Current spelling of his name; its historical spelling was “Kirchenšteins.”
- <sup>15</sup> Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv social’no-politicheskoi istorii (RGASPI) [State Archive of Socio-Political History of Russia], fonds 82, ser. 2, file 150, p. 1.
- <sup>16</sup> *Latvijas Republikas Ministru kabineta sēžu protokoli* 27, 32.
- <sup>17</sup> *Valdības Vēstnesis* 22 June 1940.
- <sup>18</sup> LVVA, fonds 2574, ser. 4, file 7662, p. 102.
- <sup>19</sup> *Valdības Vēstnesis* 30 June 1922.
- <sup>20</sup> A line from the „Internationale” translated from the Latvian version. In the English translation it reads: “We’ll change forthwith the old condition.”
- <sup>21</sup> RGASPI, fonds 17, ser. 116, file 53, pp. 32, 33; file 56, p. 27.
- <sup>22</sup> RGASPI, fonds 17, ser. 22, file 1602, p. 38.

- <sup>23</sup> Although Soviet propaganda declared that the Communist Party represented the working class and defended its interests, according to a report of the Mandate Commission the composition of delegates as to their occupation was the following: of 161 delegates 48 were military personnel, 58 Party personnel, 43 employees of Soviet institutions, and only 7 were workers. RGASPI, fonds 17, ser. 22, file 1603, p. 3.
- <sup>24</sup> It was “scientifically” substantiated in the 3<sup>rd</sup> volume of *Latvijas PSR vēsture* [History of Latvian SSR] published in 1958. – See *Istoriia Latviiskoi SSR*, vol. 3 (Rīga, 1958): 463–84.
- <sup>25</sup> RGASPI, fonds 73, ser. 2, file 18, p. 30.
- <sup>26</sup> LVVA, fonds 3235, ser. 1/22, file 684, p. 29.
- <sup>27</sup> LVA, Division of Socio-Political Documents, fonds 101, ser. 2, file 176, p. 115.
- <sup>28</sup> I. D. Chichaev, *Nezabyvaemye gody* [Unforgettable Years] (Saransk, 1976) 103.
- <sup>29</sup> LVA, fonds 910, ser. 1, file 15, vol. 1, p. 24.
- <sup>30</sup> LVA, fonds PA-15500, ser. 2, file 7580, p. 8; file 8789, p. 5; ser. 1, file 2276, p. 6; ser. 2, file 2154, p. 8; file 8651, p. 8. See also T. Vilciņš, “Latvijas zinātnieki staļinisma represiju apstākļos” [Latvian Scientists under Stalinist Repressions], *Komunistiskā totalitārisma un genocīda prakse Latvijā* [The Practice of Communist Totalitarianism and Genocide in Latvia], comp. I. Šneidere (Rīga, 1992) 89.
- <sup>31</sup> *Polpredy soobshchaiut* 419.
- <sup>32</sup> LVVA, fonds 1307, ser. 1, file 516, p. 269.
- <sup>33</sup> LVA, PA-fonds 101, ser. 1, file 12, pp. 22–24.

## Rudīte Viksne, “Soviet Repressions against Residents of Latvia in 1940–1941: Typical Trends,” 53–61

- <sup>1</sup> On 25 July 1940, a law was passed on the nationalization of banks and large industrial enterprises. According to the 29 July 1940 law on the nationalization of land, private property could not constitute more than 30 ha of land, while the lands of “the enemies of the people and profiteers with land” were transferred to the State Land Reserve; the decree of 28 October 1940 nationalized large houses, i.e. those, the total area of which in the cities exceeded 220 square meters and in smaller settlements – 170 square meters. On 29 March 1941, the Latvian SSR Council of People’s Commissars and the Central Committee (CC) of Latvian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) (henceforth referred to by its later name and acronym as Communist Party of Latvia, CPL) passed the regulation “On the Nationalization of Valuables and Property of Former Enemies, Usurers and other Non-working Elements,” etc.
- <sup>2</sup> Ainārs Bambals, “Staļinisma genocīds pret Latvijas armijas karavīriem Baigajā gadā.” [Stalinist Genocide against Latvian Army Soldiers in the Year of Terror], *Practice of Communist Totalitarianism and Genocide in Latvia: Conference Materials*, comp. Irēne Šneidere (Rīga, 1992) 74–86; Ainārs Bambals, “1940./41. gadā represēto latviešu virsnieku piemiņai: Virsnieku Golgātas ceļš un liktenis Gulaga nometnēs (1941–1959)” [In Memory of Latvian Officers Repressed in 1940/41: Latvian Officers’ Road to Golgotha and Fate in Gulag Camps (1941–1959)], *Yearbook of the Occupation Museum of Latvia 1999* (Rīga, 2000) 92–115; Ēriks Jēkabsons, and Ainārs Bambals, “Latvijas armijas iznīcināšana un represijas pret tās karavīriem 1940.–1941. gadā” [Liquidation of the Latvian Army and Repressions against Its Soldiers in 1940–1941] CHL 3: 120–72.

- <sup>3</sup> I. Šneidere, "Represijas pret Latvijas Republikas valsts darbiniekiem 1940.–1941. gadā" [Repressions against State Officials of the Republic of Latvia in 1940–1941], *Practice of Communist Totalitarianism and Genocide in Latvia ...* 64–73
- <sup>4</sup> T. Vilciņš, "Latvijas zinātnieki staļinisma represiju apstākļos" [Latvian Scholars and Scientists under Stalinist Repressions] *Practice of Communist Totalitarianism and Genocide in Latvia ...* 87–98.
- <sup>5</sup> Dz. Alks, "Šķiru cīņa pret Latvijas medicīnas darbiniekiem 1940.–1953. gadā [Class Struggle against Medical Personnel of Latvia in 1940–1953], *Practice of Communist Totalitarianism and Genocide in Latvia ...* 111.
- <sup>6</sup> Ainārs Lerhis, "Padomju represijas pret neatkarīgās Latvijas diplomātiem" [Soviet Repressions against Diplomats of Independent Latvia] CHL 3: 71–119
- <sup>7</sup> Arturs Žvinklis, "Padomju represijas pret neatkarīgās Latvijas parlamentāriešiem 1940.–1941. gadā" [Soviet Repressions against Parliamentarians of the Republic of Latvia in 1940–1941] CHL 6: 201–23.
- <sup>8</sup> Ēriks Jēkabsons, "Padomju represijas pret Latvijas poļiem, lietuviešiem un baltkrieviem 1940.–1941. gadā" [Soviet Repressions against Ethnic Poles, Lithuanians and Belorussians in Latvia in 1940–1941] CHL 3: 51–70.
- <sup>9</sup> See CHL 6; State Archive of Latvia, *Aizvestie: 1941. gada 14. jūnijs*, ed. Elmārs Pelkaus [The Deported: 14 June 1941] (Rīga, 2001) 804.
- <sup>10</sup> *No NKVD līdz KGB. Politiskās prāvas Latvijā, 1940–1985: Noziegumos pret Latvijas valsti apsūdzēto rādītājs* [From NKVD to KGB. Political Trials in Latvia, 1940–1985: Index of Persons Accused of Crimes against the State of Latvia], eds. Rudīte Vīksne and Kārlis Kangeris (Rīga, 1999) xviii, 975.
- <sup>11</sup> For example, in the State Archive of the Russian Federation, Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federacii (GARF), fonds 8131, ser. 37, file 557, pp. 10–28, there is a document on inmates that were in the Kriazh prison in August 1941. It mentions several residents of Latvia, but it has not been established yet where their individual files are. There must have been people from Latvia in other places of incarceration as well.
- <sup>12</sup> Both were members of the Communist Party; Latkovskis had been cooperating with the Soviet intelligence service already since 1921.
- <sup>13</sup> On 30 March 1941, the Latvian SSR People's Commissar of Justice and the Latvian SSR Prosecutor General issued a joint regulation No. 2588 on the procedure of reviewing criminal cases involving crimes committed before the effective date of the RSFSR Criminal Code in the territory of Latvian SSR, i.e. on the procedure of applying the RSFSR Code without permitting any reference to earlier laws. See S. Graužinis, "Piezīmes par Latvijas PSR Prokuratūras izveidošanos un attīstību 1940. un 1941. gadā" [Comments on the Establishment and Development of the Prosecution in the Latvian SSR in 1940–1941], *Scholarly Papers of Pēteris Stučka State University of Latvia*, vol. 44: *Law. Issues of Criminal Law and Criminal Proceedings*, 4<sup>th</sup> printing (Rīga, 1962) 196–97.
- <sup>14</sup> See Andrejs Edvīns Feldmanis, *Masļenku traģēdija – Latvijas traģēdija / The Tragedy of Masļenki – Latvia's Tragedy* (Rīga, 2002), esp. 103–04. During the unprovoked attack, three border guards and two civilians were killed. One of the captives was later sentenced to death.
- <sup>15</sup> Šneidere 67–68.
- <sup>16</sup> The actual number of arrested was higher. It is known that two more members of the Thundercross organization were left to continue serving their terms in prison; however, the files of their criminal cases are not in Latvia.

- <sup>17</sup> Thundercross, a Latvian political organization that from 1930 to 1934 emulated fascist organizations of Western Europe, adapting fascist ideology to fit Latvian circumstances. See Andrejs Plakans, *Historical Dictionary of Latvia* (Maryland, 1997) 123. In 1934, the organization was banned by the autocratic Ulmanis regime, and more than 100 of its members were arrested.
- <sup>18</sup> *Latvijas Republikas Ministru kabineta sēžu protokoli. 1940. gada 16. jūnijs–19. jūlijs* [Minutes of Meetings of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia, 16 June–19 July 1940], ed. I. Šneidere, A. Žvinklis (Rīga, 1991) 131–32.
- <sup>19</sup> For example, as attested by an inquest of Otto Krauklis on 5 July 1940, he was arrested in 1938 and sentenced to 3 years in a reformatory institution. By way of the Amnesty Law of 21 June 1940 his sentence should have been terminated, but he was kept incarcerated as being dangerous to state security. The resolution reads: “We, the Ministers of the Interior and War, qualifying Oto-Aleksandrs Krauklis (born in Rīga on 23 August 1902, citizen of Latvia), who on 2 June 1938 was sentenced to 3 years in a reformatory institution by the III Division of Rīga District Court on the basis of Article 71 of Criminal Law, exempted from penalty on the basis of the Amnesty Law of 21 June this year and kept in incarceration until further instructions on the basis of the order of the Minister of the Interior from 21 June this year as dangerous to state security on the basis of the Comment to Article 1 of the 21 June 1940 Amnesty Law and Article 10 of the Law on Order and Public Security, DECIDED: Oto-Aleksandrs Krauklis shall be kept in incarceration in Rīga Central Prison. Minister of the Interior, V. Lācis, Minister of War, General Dambītis, Head of Political Police Department V. Latkovskis.” The resolution was made public on 6 July 1940. LVA, fonds 1986, ser. 2, file 6901, p. 10.
- <sup>20</sup> There were groups of the NTSNP also in Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, France, etc.
- <sup>21</sup> *Sociālistiskās revolūcijas uzvara Latvijā 1940. gadā: Dokumenti un materiāli* [Victory of the Socialist Revolution in Latvia in 1940: Documents and Materials] (Rīga, 1963) 70.
- <sup>22</sup> Six of them were arrested again in 1950–51 after they had already served their terms and charged with the same crime, deported to a settlement in the Kazakh SSR and Krasnoyarsk region.
- <sup>23</sup> By the 7 September 1940 Decree of the Presidium of the USRR Supreme Council, citizens of Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania were declared citizens of the USSR as of the day of the accession of the respective republics to membership in the USSR.
- <sup>24</sup> From the first pre-election day after the adoption of the resolution on 4 July, according to which parliamentary elections were to be held on 14–15 July, various obstacles were created to prevent the nomination of alternative lists of candidates.
- <sup>25</sup> LVA, fonds 1986, ser. 2, file 1547.
- <sup>26</sup> LVA, fonds 1986, ser. 2, file 5409.
- <sup>27</sup> Vilhelms Munters (1898–1967) was subsequently rearrested on 26 June 1941; he returned to Latvia in 1959.
- <sup>28</sup> Kārlis Ulmanis (1877–1942) was subsequently rearrested on 4 July 1941 and died in the prison hospital in Krasnovodsk on 20 September 1942.
- <sup>29</sup> Jānis Balodis (1881–1965) was subsequently rearrested on 4 July 1941; he returned to Latvia in 1956.
- <sup>30</sup> Roberts Bulsons (1889–1942) was arrested on 23 July 1940 and sentenced to death on 24 March 1942.
- <sup>31</sup> Krišjānis Berķis (1884–1942) was arrested in July 1940 and died in prison on 29 July 1942.

- 32 Z. Indrikovs, "Ieskats lekšlietu komisāra darbībā 1940. gadā" [Insight into the Work of the Commissar of the Interior in 1940], *Latvijas Arhīvi* 1 (1997): 63.
- 33 For example, Kārlis Putniņš was arrested on 7 August 1940 because in a state of intoxication he had spoken derogatorily about Stalin and treated militia officers with scorn. On 8 March 1941, the extra-judicial Special Commission (Assembly) of USSR NKVD sentenced him to 8 years in a reformatory labor camp. He died on 12 June 1941. LVA, fonds 1986, ser. 2, file 8328.
- 34 *Ibid.*, file 2294.
- 35 *Ibid.*, file 4466, p. 68.
- 36 See Jēkabsons, "Padomju represijas ..." CHL 3: 51–70.
- 37 LVA, fonds 1986, ser. 2, file 5945, pp. 33–34. Perkovich was sentenced to 8 years.
- 38 "Cadets" was the popular name of the Party of Constitutional Democrats in pre-revolutionary Russia. It was founded in October 1905 and had also a Latvian branch. In Soviet propaganda, the term "cadets" turned into a synonym for bourgeois and liberal enemies of the revolutionary movement and the Soviet Union.
- 39 The Soviet repressive authorities regarded all organizations and parties of independent Latvia, including the Boy Scouts, as fascist or counterrevolutionary.
- 40 LVA, fonds 1986, ser. 1, file 7531. On 30 September 1940, the War Tribunal of the Baltic Special Military District sentenced Rūsis to 8 years in a reformatory labor camp plus 3 years of deprived political rights and the confiscation of property.
- 41 On 10 July 1940, a law was passed that banned the Aizsargi organization.
- 42 He was executed on 3 February 1941.
- 43 He was executed in 1941.
- 44 Jēkabsons and Bambals, CHL 3: 137.
- 45 Indrikovs 63.
- 46 T. Vilciņš, *Skolu jaunatne nacionālajā cīņā (1940–1941)* [School Students in National Struggle (1940–41)] (Rīga, 1997) 80.
- 47 LVA, fonds 1986, ser. 2, file 5220. Lācis died in prison on 15 December 1941.
- 48 *Policy of Occupation Powers in Latvia 1939–1991: Collection of Documents*, ed. Elmārs Palkaus (Rīga, 1999) 106.
- 49 For example, on May 1941 5 members of the Occultist Society were arrested.
- 50 More than 300 officers, instructors and soldiers of the Latvian Army were arrested before the June 1941 deportation. See Jēkabsons and Bambals, CHL 3: 147.
- 51 *Ibid.*, ser. 1, file 37194, pp. 242–44.

## Jānis Riekstiņš, "The 14 June 1941 Deportation in Latvia," 62–74

1. A. Iakovlev, "Bolshevizm – socialnaia bolezn' XX veka" [Bolshevism: the Social Disease of 20<sup>th</sup> Century], *Chornaia kniga kommunizma* [The Black Book of Communism] (Moscow, 1999) 7.
2. Note Stalin's speech to the Plenum of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) on 3 March 1937.
3. Henceforth referred to by its later acronym CPSU.

- <sup>4</sup> A. Gur'ianov, *Masshtaby v glub' SSSR v mae – iune 1941 g.* [The Scale in the Depth of USSR in May–June 1941], *Daugava* 3 (1997): 130.
- <sup>5</sup> *LPSR Augstākās Padomes Prezidija Ziņotājs* [Bulletin of the Presidium of the Supreme Council of LSSR] 26 November 1940.
- <sup>6</sup> A paramilitary mass organization in the Republic of Latvia, active from March 1919 to July 1940.
- <sup>7</sup> Bolshevik opponents during the Russian Civil War were called “White Guards” and their military forces “White Armies.”
- <sup>8</sup> Meaning the male heads of households.
- <sup>9</sup> *Organy gosudarstvennoi bezopasnosti SSSR v Velikoi Otechestvennoi voine. Sbornik dokumentov* [State Security Authorities of USSR in the Great Patriotic War. Collection of Documents], vol. 1: *Nakanune* [On the Eve] (Moscow, 1995), book 2: 144–146.
- <sup>10</sup> H. Sabbo, *Võimatu vaikida = Невозможно молчать* [It is Impossible to Stay Silent] (Tallinn, 1996) 754.
- <sup>11</sup> *The Policy of Occupation Powers in Latvia 1939–1991: A Collection of Documents*, ed. Elmārs Pelkaus (Rīga, 1999) 155–61.
- <sup>12</sup> Sabbo 761.
- <sup>13</sup> State Archive of the Russian Federation (GARF), fonds 9479, ser. 1, file 87, p. 70.
- <sup>14</sup> *Ibid.* p. 72.
- <sup>15</sup> *Ibid.* p. 45.
- <sup>16</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 37–41.
- <sup>17</sup> Henceforth referred to by its later acronym CPL.
- <sup>18</sup> The Workers' Guard was a militarized organization set up to support the Soviet occupation; active from July 1940 till June 1941.
- <sup>19</sup> LVA, PA, fonds 101, ser. 1, file 31, pp. 38–41.
- <sup>20</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 19, 20.
- <sup>21</sup> *Organy gosudarstvennoi bezopasnosti SSSR v Velikoi Otechestvennoi voine*, vol. 1, book 2: 147.
- <sup>22</sup> *Istochnik* [The Source] 1 (1996): 138.
- <sup>23</sup> *Aizvestie: 1941. gada 14. jūnijs* [The Deported: 14 June 1941], ed. Elmārs Pelkaus (Rīga, 2001) 14.
- <sup>24</sup> GARF, 9479.f., 1.apr., 87.l., 224.p.
- <sup>25</sup> Sabbo 816.
- <sup>26</sup> GARF, fonds 9479, ser. 1, file 458, pp. 55, 56.
- <sup>27</sup> LVA, fonds 290, ser. 1, file 4494, p. 1.
- <sup>28</sup> *Ibid.* file 2830, p. 144.
- <sup>29</sup> *These Names Accuse: Nominal List of Latvians Deported to Soviet Russia in 1940–1941* (Stockholm, 1982). Originally published by the Latvian National Foundation in Stockholm, 1952. See also Ādolfs Šilde, *Pa deportēto pēdām. Latvieši padomju vergu darbā* [Tracing the Deportees. Latvians in Soviet Slave Labor] ([New York], 1956). Šilde based his book on interviews with about 2000 returning German POWs.
- <sup>30</sup> In compliance with the USSR Council of Ministers top-secret Resolution No. 390-138 of 29 January 1949, over 42,000 people, mostly formerly well-off farmers, were deported from Latvia on 25 March 1949.
- <sup>31</sup> *Aizvestie*.

- <sup>32</sup> Pēteris Zvidriņš and Edvīns Vītolīņš, "1941.gada 14.jūnija deportācijas tiešās un netiešās demogrāfiskās sekas" [The Direct and Indirect Demographic Consequences of 14 June 1941 Deportation], CHL 6: 358–63.
- <sup>33</sup> "International Conference Deportation of 14 June 1941: Crime against Humanity. Conclusions and Resolution," CHL 6: 413.

## Inesis Feldmanis, "Latvia under the Occupation of National Socialist Germany (1941–1945)," 77–91

- <sup>1</sup> Arnolds Aizsilnieks, *Latvijas saimniecības vēsture 1914–1945* [History of Latvian Economy 1914–1945] (Stockholm, 1968) 951.
- <sup>2</sup> For this concept of World War II see, for example, N. Davies, *Europe. A History* (Oxford, 1996) 39–42.
- <sup>3</sup> Aivars Stranga, criticizing the assertion that Eastern European peoples *en masse* had been Nazi collaborators, the staunchest anti-Semites and murderers of Jews in Europe, ironically remarks: "by exaggerating a little, the next step would be to declare that Hitler was a native of the Baltic or Ukraine." See his Foreword to Dzintars Ērglis, *Latvijas Centrālās Padomes vēstures nezināmās lappuses* [The Unknown Pages of the History of the Central Council of Latvia] (Rīga, 2003) 14.
- <sup>4</sup> *SSSR i germanskii vopros 1941 –1949 v 2-kh. t.* [The USSR and the German Issue] (Moscow, 2000) 2: 83.
- <sup>5</sup> Bonifācijs Daukšts, "Aiz Nirnbergas tribunāla kulisēm" [Behind the Scenes of the Nuremberg Tribunal], *Diena*, 5 August 2000: 2.
- <sup>6</sup> *Dokumenty vneshnei politiki 1939* [Documents on Foreign Policy 1939], vol 22, book.2: 1 September–31 December, 1939 (Moscow, 1992): 590.
- <sup>7</sup> Daukšts 2.
- <sup>8</sup> *Dokumenty vneshnei politiki 1939*, 22.1: 590.
- <sup>9</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>10</sup> The horrible crimes against German civilians committed by the Soviet troops in the final phase of World War II as well as "the bomb war" that, among others, destroyed the typical urban scenery of Germany and killed about 635,000 civilians, certainly, were not reviewed in Nuremberg.
- <sup>11</sup> Heinrihs Strods, *Zem melnbrūnā zobena: Vācijas politika Latvijā 1939–1945* [Under the Black-and-Brown Sword: German Policies in Latvia 1939–1945] (Rīga, 1994) 7.
- <sup>12</sup> *Latviešu tautas cīņa Lielajā Tēvijas karā (1941–1945)* [Struggle of the Latvian People in the Great Patriotic War 1941–1945] (Rīga, 1966) 654.
- <sup>13</sup> *Latvijas PSR vēsture. No vissenākajiem laikiem līdz mūsu dienām* [History of the Latvian SSR. From the Ancient Times until the Present], ed. A. Drīzulis, 2 vols. (Rīga, 1986) 2: 552.
- <sup>14</sup> Ibid. 186.
- <sup>15</sup> Aizsilnieks 884–956.
- <sup>16</sup> *Latviešu karavīrs Otrā pasaules kara laikā: Dokumentu un atmiņu krājums* [Latvian Soldier in World War II: Collection of Documents and Recollections], 11 vols. (N.p., 1970–1993).
- <sup>17</sup> Ibid. 8: 359.

- <sup>18</sup> *Latvijas suverenitātes ideja likteņgriežos. Vācu okupācijas laika dokumenti 1941–1945* [Idea of Latvia's Sovereignty in Fateful Times. Documents of the German Occupation Period 1941–1945], comp. Vilis Samsons (Rīga, 1990); Andrievs Ezergailis, *Latviešu leģions. Varoņi, nacisti vai upuri?* [Latvian Legion: Heroes, Nazis or Victims?] (Rīga, 1998); *Latviešu karavīrs Otrā pasaules kara laikā: Dokumentu un atmiņu krājums*, 11 vols.; *Okupācijas varu politika Latvijā 1939–1991: Dokumentu krājums* [Policies of Occupation Powers in Latvia 1939–1991: Collection of Documents] (Rīga, 1999); Mirdza Kate Baltais, *The Latvian Legion in Documents* (Toronto, 1999), etc.
- <sup>19</sup> Edgars Andersons and Leonīds Siliņš, *Latvijas Centrālā padome* [The Central Council of Latvia] (Upsala, 1994) 496; Haralds Biezais, *Latvija kāškrusta varā. Sveši kungi – pašu ļaudis* [Latvia under the Rule of the Swastika. Alien Overlords – Our Own People] ([East Lansing], 1992); Haralds Biezais, *Kurelieši: nacionālās pretestības liecinieki* [Members of the Kurelis Unit: Witnesses for National Resistance] (Ithaca, 1991); Andrievs Ezergailis, *Holokausts vācu okupētajā Latvijā 1941–1945* [Holocaust in German-Occupied Latvia 1941–1945] (Rīga, 1999); Indulis Kažociņš, *Latviešu karavīri zem svešiem karogiem 1940–1945* [Latvian Soldiers under Foreign Colors 1940–1945] (Rīga, 1999); Heinrihs Strods, *Zem melnbrūnā zobena*; Hans Heinrich Wilhelm, *Die Einsatzgruppe A der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD 1941/42* (Frankfurt a.M., 1996), etc.
- <sup>20</sup> See, for example: “Nacionālsociālistiskās Vācijas plāni Baltijā un to izpausme Latvijas ģenerālapgabala kultūrpolitikā” [Plans of National Socialist Germany in the Baltic and their Expression in Cultural Policy of the General District of Latvia], *Bibliotēka, grāmatniecība, ideoloģija Otrā pasaules kara laikā (1939–1945)* [Libraries, Book Publishing and Ideology in World War II (1939–1945)] (Rīga, 1999) 24–46; “Izvēles iespējas: ‘Jaunā Eiropa,’ padomju republika vai neatkarīga valsts. Valststiesiski jautājumi un ‘lielā politika’ kara gados (1941–1945)” [The Choices: the ‘New Europe,’ Soviet Republic or an Independent State. Issues of National Rights and the ‘Big Politics’ during the War (1941–1945)] CHL 1: 79–95; “Piezīmes pie jautājuma kompleksa ‘Latviešu leģions’” [Notes to the Topic ‘Latvian Legion’], in Ezergailis, *Latviešu leģions* [The Latvian Legion] 112–21; “Nacionālsociālistiskās Vācijas militārajos formējumos iesaistītie Latvijas iedzīvotāji: skaita problēma” [Residents of Latvia Recruited in German Military Formations: the Problem of Numbers], *Yearbook of the War Museum of Latvia*, (Rīga, 2000) 137–57; “Nodeva reiham” – Latvijas ģenerālapgabala iedzīvotāji darbos Lielvācijā” [“Dues to the Reich” – Residents of the General District of Latvia in Labor Service in Greater Germany], LZAV 12 (1990) 34–48; “Hitleriešu plāni Baltijas tautu evakuēšanai 1944. gadā” [Plans of Hitler’s Men for the Evacuation of the Baltic Peoples in 1944], *Vācija un Baltija* [Germany and the Baltic] (Rīga, 1990) 129–137; “Kollaboration vor der Kollaboration? Die baltischen Emigranten und ihre ‚Befreiungskomitees‘ in Deutschland 1940/1941,” *Europa unterm Hakenkreuz. Okkupation und Kollaboration (1939–1945)* (Berlin, 1994) 165–90; “The ‘Closed’ Units of Latvian Police – *Lettische Schutzmannschafts-Bataillone*: Research Issues and Pre-History” in this volume.
- <sup>21</sup> Kārlis Kangeris. *Latvija un tās iedzīvotāji trešā reiša plānos un okupācijas varā (1941–1945)* [Latvia and its Inhabitants in the Plans of the Third Reich and under the Occupation Rule (1941–1945)] (Rīga, 2002) 1.
- <sup>22</sup> Arturs Silgailis, *Latviešu leģions: dibināšana, formēšana un kauju gaitas Otrajā pasaules karā* [The Latvian Legion: Founding, Formation and Battles in World War II] (Copenhagen, 1964) 399.
- <sup>23</sup> Biezais, *Latvija kāškrusta varā* 390.
- <sup>24</sup> *Ibid.* 367.

- <sup>25</sup> Ernst Benz, "Rezenzion zur: Strods H., Unter dem schwarzbraunen Schwert. Deutschlands Politik in Lettland 1939–1945. – Rīga, 1994," *Nordost Archiv* 2 (1996) 2: 505.
- <sup>26</sup> "Generalplan Ost" was the theoretical basis of Nazi racial and colonization policy vis-à-vis Eastern Europe. German historian Katrin Reichelt has remarked: "It is difficult to define the essence of the *Generalplan Ost*, because on different levels of decision making, in different or the same periods of time, there were elaborated such plans, and several versions have been lost." ("Latvia and Latvians in the Nazi Race and Settlement Policy: Theoretical Concepts and Practical Implementation," CHL 1: 265).
- <sup>27</sup> Benz 507.
- <sup>28</sup> Note 3. Although the author's contribution to the study of the history of the Central Council of Latvia (CCL) cannot be refuted, his book has also several essential shortcomings. The work is not sufficiently analytic; it is rather fact-oriented and descriptive. The activities of the CCL are occasionally idealized, and its role and place in the history of the Latvian resistance movement are exaggerated. The book fails to touch upon theoretical issues related to the resistance movement; comparative analysis is not yet sufficient.
- <sup>29</sup> Andrievs Ezergailis, "Pašaizsardzības komandantūru loma holokaustā" [The Role of Self-Defense Commandantures in the Holocaust], CHL 1: 199; "Noziegumi pret cilvēci Latvijas teritorijā Padomju Savienības un nacistiskās Vācijas okupācijas laikā no 1940. līdz 1956. gadam. Progresā ziņojums" [Crimes against Humanity on Latvia's Territory during the Occupation by the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany from 1940 to 1956. Progress Report], LV 2 (2002): 26.
- <sup>30</sup> According to Juris Pavlovičs, the "interregnum" is a period between the disappearance of one command structure in a concrete territory and the restoration of an analogous or at least adequately efficient command structure. He remarks that in Latvia the command structure was restored from below, at first on the level of civil parishes, then in districts and finally on national scale. In districts, the interregnum period lasted for two to seven days, while the establishment of a national command structure required approximately a fortnight. See Juris Pavlovičs, "Change of Occupation Powers in Latvia in the Summer of 1941: Experience of Small Communities" in this volume.
- <sup>31</sup> Juris Pavlovičs, "Okupācijas varu maiņa Ziemeļkurzemē 1941.gada vasarā" [Change of Occupation Powers in North Kurzeme region in the Summer of 1941], CHL 10: 143–68.
- <sup>32</sup> Juris Pavlovičs, "Okupācijas varu maiņa Valmieras apriņķī 1941.gada vasarā" [Change of Occupation Powers in Valmiera District in the Summer of 1941], CHL 8: 309.
- <sup>33</sup> Andrievs Ezergailis, "Vācu laiki 1941–1945. Atbrīvošana, brīvprātība, paš aizsardzība, atribība" [The German Times 1941–1945. Liberation, Volunteering, Self-Defense, Revenge], *Yearbook of the Museum of the Occupation of Latvia 2002* (Rīga, 2003) 164.
- <sup>34</sup> *Latvijas PSR vēsture* 2: 182.
- <sup>35</sup> Ezergailis, "Vācu laiki" 164.
- <sup>36</sup> "Der Reichskommissar Ostland Lohse an den Reichsführer SS Himmler, 11. Dezember 1943, Bundesarchiv Berlin (hereafter BA–B ), R 90/2.
- <sup>37</sup> Kārlis Kangeris, "Latviešu policijas slēgtās vienības – *Lettische Schutzmannschafts-Bataillone*: pētniecības problēmas un bataljonu formēšanas priekšvēsture [Latvian Closed Police Units: Research Problems and Pre-History of the Battalions], CHL 2: 214.; see also his article in this volume.
- <sup>38</sup> Kārlis Kangeris, "Latviešu bataljonu izveidošanas otrā fāze – 'lielervēšanas' akcija. 1942.gada februāris–septembris" [The Second Phase of the Formation of Latvian Battalions: The "Grand Recruitment" Campaign February – September, 1942], CHL 10: 318.

- <sup>39</sup> Kaspars Zellis and Uldis Neiburgs, "Vācu okupācijas laikā represētie Latvijas iedzīvotāji (1941–1945). Datu bāzes apraksts" [Residents of Latvia Repressed under the German Occupation (1941–1945). Description of the Data Base], CHL 3: 235.
- <sup>40</sup> Ērglis 231; Uldis Neiburgs and Dzintars Ērglis, "Nacionālā un padomju pretošanās kustība: kopīgais un atšķirīgais (1941–1945)" [National and Soviet Resistance Movements: Similarities and Differences (1941–1945)], CHL 3: 267–330; Ēriks Jēkabsons, "Poļu nacionālā pretošanās kustība Latvijā vācu okupācijas laikā (1941–1945)" [Polish National Resistance Movement in Latvia during the German Occupation (1941–45)], CHL 10: 240–76.
- <sup>41</sup> Neiburgs and Ērglis 272.
- <sup>42</sup> Ezergailis, *Holokausts* 65.
- <sup>43</sup> Andrievs Ezergailis, "Latviešu tautas pretestības izpausmes pret okupācijas varu 1940–1945" [Expressions of the Latvian People's Resistance to the Occupation Rule 1940–1945], *Jaunā Gaita* 173 (1989): 45.
- <sup>44</sup> Aivars Stranga, "Kas bija Pērkonkrusts" [What the Thundercross Was], *Diena* 1 November 1997: 10.
- <sup>45</sup> Neiburgs and Ērglis 313.
- <sup>46</sup> Stranga, Foreword 11 (note 3).
- <sup>47</sup> See "Application (Memorandum) by Director General of the Self-Administration A.Valdmanis to Generalkommissar O.Drechsler, November 1942," *Latvijas suverenitātes ideja* 59–68.
- <sup>48</sup> See Neiburgs and Ērglis 312.
- <sup>49</sup> Biezais 145.
- <sup>50</sup> *Ibid.* 150.
- <sup>51</sup> "Politische Lage in den Generalbezirken Estland und Lettland," 23. November 1943, BA–B, R 6/5, S.105.
- <sup>52</sup> Inesis Feldmanis and Kārlis Kangeris, "Patiesība par Latviešu SS brīvprātīgo leģionu" [The Truth about the Latvian SS Volunteer Legion], *Latvijas Avīze* 16 March 2004.
- <sup>53</sup> Ezergailis, *Latviešu leģions* 11–12.
- <sup>54</sup> Inesis Feldmanis, „Latviešu un citu nevācu tautību ieroču SS vienības Otrajā pasaules karā: kopīgais un atšķirīgais” [Waffen SS Units of Latvians and Other Non-Germanic Peoples in World War II: Similarities and Differences], CHL 3: 173–186; Inesis Feldmanis, "Latviešu un citu nevācu tautību ieroču SS vienības Otrajā pasaules karā: formēšanas veids, ideoloģija un cīņas mērķi [Waffen SS Units of Latvians and Other Non-Germanic Peoples in World War II: Method of Formation, Ideology and Goals], CHL 10: 334–351; Uldis Neiburgs, "Latviešu leģions – pagātne un mūsdienas" [Latvian Legion: Past and Present], *LV* 3 (2000): 103–08, etc.
- <sup>55</sup> Robin Lumdsen, *Himmler's Black Order: A History of the SS, 1923–1945* (Stroud, 1997) 207.
- <sup>56</sup> Paul Hausser, *Waffen-SS im Einsatz* (Göttingen, 1953) 27.
- <sup>57</sup> George H. Stein, *Geschichte der Waffen –SS* (Düsseldorf, 1967) 123.
- <sup>58</sup> Feldmanis CHL 3: 171.
- <sup>59</sup> Letter by H. Rosenfield from the Displaced Persons Commission to the Chargé d'affaires of Latvia in Washington, DC, J. Feldmanis, on 12 September 1950 cited by Ezergailis, *Latviešu leģions* 103.
- <sup>60</sup> Bonifācijs Daukšts, "Latvijas karogi pēckara Nirnbergā. Nejaušs atgādinājums?" [Flags of Latvia in Post-War Nuremberg. An Accidental Reminder?], *Mājas Viests* 84 (2003): 8.
- <sup>61</sup> See Ritvars Jansons, "Latviešu leģionāru – pretošanās kustības dalībnieku programmatiskie mērķi" [Declared Goals of Latvian Legionnaires – Members of Resistance Movement], *LV* 4 (2001) 102–08.

- <sup>62</sup> Registration of recruits of the Lithuanian SS Legion was launched on 1 March 1943. "Check-up" and mobilization covered men born between 1919 and 1924. In the first ten days only 23.5% of the summoned men reported to the recruitment station. See "Übersicht über den Verlauf der Musterungsaktion in Litauen," 9. Mai 1943, BA-B , R6/162,16.
- <sup>63</sup> Ibid. 8–11.
- <sup>64</sup> R.Lange's report to administration of RSHA IV on 1 April 1943 in *Latvijas suverenitātes ideja* 108.
- <sup>65</sup> H.W. Neulen, *An deutscher Seite. Internationale Freiwillige von Wehrmacht und Waffen-SS* (München, 1985) 54.
- <sup>66</sup> "Schreiben des Chefs des SS Hauptamtes an Reichsführer SS vom 12. November 1943," BA-B, NS 19/382.
- <sup>67</sup> "Der Generalkommissar in Rīga Drechsler an den Reichskommissar für das Ostland Lohse," 19. Juni 1943, State History Archive of Latvia (LVA), fonds P-1018, ser. 1, file 2, pp. 160–64.
- <sup>68</sup> "Vermerk Kleist's betreffend Landeseigene Verwaltung in Lettland vom 29. Juni 1943," BA-B , R6/ 67.
- <sup>69</sup> "Erlass des Führers über die Errichtung der Länder Estland und Lettland, BA-B, R 90/2.
- <sup>70</sup> S. Myllyniemi, *Neuordnung der baltischen Länder 1941–1944: Zum nationalsozialistischen Inhalt der deutschen Besatzungspolitik* (Helsinki, 1973) 207.
- <sup>71</sup> "Landesverwaltungspräsident Burmeister an Gauleiter Lohse," 9. November 1943, BA-B, R90 /2.
- <sup>72</sup> "Vai Jaltas kārtība beigusies?" [Has the Order Established at Yalta Come to an End?], (Interview with Jānis Stradiņš), *Diena* 4 February 1995, 17.
- <sup>73</sup> See, for example: "Der Reichskommissar Lohse an den Reichsminister für die besetzten Ostgebiete Rosenberg," 9. Dezember 1943, BA-B, R 90/2.
- <sup>74</sup> "Der Reichsminister und Chef der Reichskanzlei Lammers an den Reichsminister des Innern und Reichsführer SS Himmler," 20. November 1943, BA-B , NS 19/3894 and others.
- <sup>75</sup> Edvīns Evarts, "Vācijas vēsturnieki par nacistu okupācijas periodu Latvijā" [German Historians on the Nazi Occupation Period in Latvia], CHL 7: 123–41; Edvīns Evarts, "Nacistu ekonomiskā politika okupētajā Latvijā: historiogrāfisks apskats" [Nazi Economic Policy in Occupied Latvia: A Historiographical Survey], CHL 10: 352–70; Inesis Feldmanis, "Latvija vācu okupācijas laikā (1941–1945): aktuālās izpētes problēmas" [Latvia under the German Occupation: Current Research Issues], CHL 3: 173–86; Jānis Taurēns, "Baltijas jautājums lielvalstu politikā: ieskats historiogrāfijā" [The Baltic Issue in the Policies of the Major Powers: A Brief Historiography], CHL 3: 208–27; Jānis Taurēns, "Latvija vācu okupācijas laikā Rietumu vēsturnieku skatījumā" [Latvia under the German Occupation from the Perspective of Western Historians], CHL 7: 107–23; Antonijs Zunda, "Vācu okupācijas varas politika Latvijā: nostādnes vēstures literatūrā" [Policies of German Occupation Power in Latvia: Positions in Historical Literature], CHL 3: 186–208; Antonijs Zunda, "Kolaborācija vācu okupētajā Latvijā: nostādnes vēstures literatūrā" [Collaboration in German Occupied Latvia: Positions in Historical Literature], CHL 7: 141–65; Antonijs Zunda, "Vācu laiks Latvijā (1941–1945): izvērtējums historiogrāfijā" [The "German Times" in Latvia: Historiographic Assessment], LV 3 (2003): 107–15, etc.
- <sup>76</sup> Edvīns Evarts, "Latviešu Zemes pašpārvaldes izveidošanās un darbības sākums vācu nacistu okupētajā Latvijā (1941. g. jūlijs–1942. g. septembris)" [Establishment and the Early Phase of the Self-Administration of the Land of Latvia in Nazi German Occupied Latvia (July 1941–September 1942)], *LVIŽ* 3 (2001): 135–55; Edvīns Evarts, "Reprivatizācijas jautājums vācu okupācijas laikā 1941–1945" [The Issue of Re-Privatization under the German Occupation 1941–1945], forthcoming in CHL 13.

- <sup>77</sup> Uldis Neiburgs, "ASV izlūkdienests OSS un tā dokumenti par Latviju nacistu okupācijas laikā (1941–1945)" [The US Intelligence Service OSS and its Documents about Latvia during the Nazi Occupation Period (1941–1945)], CHL 11: 48–56.
- <sup>78</sup> Uldis Neiburgs, "Rietumu sabiedroto tēls Latvijā nacistiskās Vācijas okupācijas laikā: oficiālā propaganda un sabiedrības noskaņojums (1941–1945)" [The Image of the Western Allies during the German Occupation in Latvia: Official Propaganda and Public Attitude (1941–1945)], CHL 10: 169–215.
- <sup>79</sup> Andrievs Ezergailis, *Holokausts* 120–31.
- <sup>80</sup> Danute Dūra, Ieva Gundare and Dzidra Zujeva, "Okupācijas vara un Latvijas sabiedrība 'Nacionālās sardzes' dokumentos" [The Occupation Power and Latvia's Society in the Documents of "The National Watch"], CHL 7: 80–107.

## Juris Pavlovičs, "Change of Occupation Powers in Latvia in Summer 1941: Experience of Small Communities," 92–103

- <sup>1</sup> The capital Rīga had 350,000; the other three largest cities had 35–65,000.
- <sup>2</sup> A particularly enthusiastic author can invent the fact of simultaneous execution of three or even four Grand Plans during an interregnum period. See Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre, *Is Paris Burning?* (New York, 1966).
- <sup>3</sup> In 1946 when John Hersey published the first book about World War II to be written as a journalist's report of a natural disaster, *Hiroshima* (New York, 1946), he was the pioneer of a very popular literary genre that flourished particularly in the 1960s (Cornelius Ryan, Harrison Salisbury, John Toland) and whose negative impact on research into the interregnum question is still felt (for example, Anthony Beevor's *Berlin 1945: A Downfall*, London, 2002). To achieve a horror-story effect such authors wrote exclusively about violence and extraordinary incidents, thus creating an impression of general mass obsession. On the other hand, "mass psychosis" turned out to be almost the only argument resorted to even by serious historians in order to explain the looting of property that in fact was triggered by threats of famine and collapse of the supply system (Marian Marek Drozdowski, *Alarm dla Warszawy*, Warsaw, 1969, 305).
- <sup>4</sup> In Latvia, as earlier in France, the awareness of a common nationality began to develop first in rural communities in the nineteenth century and was very unstable. See E. Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870–1914* (Stanford, 1976) 4.
- <sup>5</sup> 20. *gadsimta Latvijas vēsture 1900–1918*, [Twentieth-Century History of Latvia 1900–1918], ed. Valdis Bērziņš et al., vol. 1, (Rīga, 2000): 77.
- <sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* 366.
- <sup>7</sup> Kārlis Siliņš, *Mana dzīve* [My Life] (n.p., 1965) 84–87.
- <sup>8</sup> After 1934, 57% of parish elders were replaced on the order of the Minister for the Interior. See *Latvijas padomju enciklopēdija* [Soviet Latvian Encyclopaedia], vol. 7 (Rīga, 1986): 465.
- <sup>9</sup> Ēriks Žagars, *Sociālistiskie pārveidojumi Latvijā 1940–1941* [Socialistic Transformations in Latvia 1940–1941] (Rīga, 1975) 137–38, 212–13, 229, 241.
- <sup>10</sup> One of the best descriptions of the Soviet rural elite is Ernests Ozols, *Mālupe pagasts* [Mālupe parish] (Lincoln, NE., 1976) 102–07.

- <sup>11</sup> *Latviešu tautas cīņa Lielajā Tēvijas karā (1941–1945)* [The Struggle of the Latvian People in the Great Patriotic War (1941–1945)] (Rīga, 1966) 60.
- <sup>12</sup> A good command of the Russian language was sometimes enough to enter the economic elite. See Miervaldis Birze, “Tai saulainajā jūlijā rītā” [On that Sunny July Morning], *Liesma* 21 September 1985.
- <sup>13</sup> LVA, fonds 170, ser. 1, file 2, p. 3.
- <sup>14</sup> LVA, fonds 1320, ser. 1, file 22, p. 419.
- <sup>15</sup> On 27 June institutions in Saldus continued their financial correspondence, ignoring the fact that the Wehrmacht was just tens of kilometers away. LVA, fonds 977, ser. 1, file 4, pp. 25–27.
- <sup>16</sup> An infantry division was allocated 12 anti-aircraft canons, 8 of which were totally outdated.
- <sup>17</sup> During World War II any army cut off from supplies resorted to looting. See William Shirer, *The Collapse of the Third Republic* (London, 1972) 1006.
- <sup>18</sup> LVA, fonds 1320, ser. 1, file 18, p. 3.
- <sup>19</sup> Aleksandrs Kokurins, “Ieslodzīto evakuācija no Latvijas PSR Iekšlietu Tautas komisariāta cietumiem 1941. gadā / The Evacuation of Prisoners from Latvian SSR NKVD Prisons in 1941,” *Yearbook of the Occupation Museum of Latvia 1999* (Rīga, 2000) 161.
- <sup>20</sup> The old definitions of interregnum are applicable to long periods only, in the course of which states, organizations and even entire civilizations disappear or change beyond recognition.
- <sup>21</sup> Seppo Myllyniemi, *Die Neuordnung der Baltischen Länder 1941–1944* (Helsinki, 1973) 74–75.
- <sup>22</sup> Shirer 1007.
- <sup>23</sup> Telephone lines linked all parishes to the district center, and they remained in place even during the interregnum period. However, the demolition of some telephone exchanges and lines as a result of military action caused disruptions in intra-town communications and made impossible telephone contacts with the German-occupied regions.
- <sup>24</sup> In Germany in 1945, the population looted shops, as it happened in Latvia in 1941. Klaus Jörg Ruhl, *Besatzer und die Deutschen* (Düsseldorf, 1989) 58.
- <sup>25</sup> LVA, fonds 1252, ser. 1, file 25, p. 207.
- <sup>26</sup> Heinrihs Strods, “Sarkanarmijas haotiskā atkāpšanās no Latvijas (1941. gada 22. jūnijs–5. jūlijs) / The Disorganised Retreat of the Red Army from Latvia in 1941,” *Latvijas Okupācijas muzeja gadagrāmata 2001 / Yearbook of the Museum of the Occupation of Latvia 2001* (Rīga, 2002) 69–70.
- <sup>27</sup> *Nacionālā Zemgale* 14 July 1941.
- <sup>28</sup> *Latviešu karavīrs otrā pasaules kara laikā* [The Latvian Soldier in World War II], vol. 1 (Toronto, 1970): 271–74.
- <sup>29</sup> Only two cases of spontaneous lynchings are known to the author: in the Liepāja and Valmiera Districts respectively.
- <sup>30</sup> Perc Ernst Schramm, ed., *Kriegstagebuch des Oberkommandos der Wehrmacht*, vol. 1.2 (Munich, 1982): 429.
- <sup>31</sup> LVVA, fonds 1218, ser. 2, file 42, p. 1.
- <sup>32</sup> *Ventā Balss* 4 July 1941.
- <sup>33</sup> A. Martinovs, “No barikādes pretējās puses” [From the Other Side of the Barricade], *Liesma* 24 January 1989.
- <sup>34</sup> The Self-Defense forces of Ventpils and Talsi Districts that were used for coast guard functions and the surveillance of possible Soviet expeditionary operations until September-October.
- <sup>35</sup> LVVA, fonds 1423, ser. 1, file 9, p. 1.

## Kārlis Kangeris, ““Closed” Units of Latvian Police – *Lettische Schutzmannschafts-Bataillone*: Research Issues and Pre-History,” 104–121

- <sup>1</sup> This figure has been deducted from lists of surveys of battalions provided by Georg Tessin, “Die Stäbe und Truppeneinheiten der Ordnungspolizei,” part 2 of *Zur Geschichte der Ordnungspolizei 1936–1945* (Koblenz, 1957). These data are not accurate, since it is known with certainty that in Lithuania there were by 11 battalions fewer than shown in Tessin’s lists. Thus the exact total figure is most probably below 200 battalions. According to Tessin’s survey in the General District of Latvia 46 battalions were formed. For more details on this issue, see the sub-section “Periodization ...” of this paper.
- <sup>2</sup> Decree of the *Reichsführer* SS (RFSS) addressed to the Supreme Commanders of SS and Police (HSSPF) of 25 July 1941 and regulation “Schutzformationen in den neubesetzten Ostgebieten” of 31 July 1941. Both documents are stored at Bundesarchiv Berlin (hereinafter BA–B), R 19/326.
- <sup>3</sup> “Organisation und Dienstbetrieb der Polizei im Generalbezirk Lettland,” 27 September 1941, BA–B, R 92/518.
- <sup>4</sup> “Schutzmannschaften in den Ostgebieten,” 6 November 1941, BA–B, R 19/326.
- <sup>5</sup> Later the term “liaison officers” (*Verbindungsoffiziere*) was usually applied instead.
- <sup>6</sup> Dieter Pohl, “Die Holocaust-Forschung und Goldhagens Thesen,” *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 45 (1997): 1–48; here: 44–47; Christopher R. Browning, “Der Weg zur Endlösung,” *Entscheidungen und Täter* (Bonn, 1998) 9–11.
- <sup>7</sup> Richard Breitman, “Hitler’s Police Auxiliaries in the Occupied Soviet Territories,” *Simon Wiesenthal Center Annual* 7 (1990): 23–39; here 23–24 and 33–34.
- <sup>8</sup> Richard Breitman, “Hitler and the ‘Terrible Secret’ among the Executioners,” *The Impact of Western Nationalism*, eds. Jehuda Reinharz and George L. Mosse (London, 1992) 77–97.
- <sup>9</sup> Ibid. 92 (interrogation of Bach-Zelewski on 19 June 1947, National Archives, Washington (hereafter NA), RG 238, M-1019, 4<sup>th</sup> roll, cadres 143–144). See also Richard Breitman, *Heinrich Himmler. Der Architekt der “Endlösung”* (Paderborn, 1996) 290–91 (original edition: *The Architect of Genocide. Himmler and the Final Solution*, New York, 1991).
- <sup>10</sup> Breitman “Hitler and the ‘Terrible Secret’” 92. In this respect it should also be checked to what extent this statement agrees with the thesis of German historian Ernst Nolte that some kind of preconditions for the emergence of the Third Reich are to be found in the Russian Revolution and that it was from the Soviet system that the Nazis borrowed certain repressive methods. See Ernst Nolte, “Zwischen Geschichtslegende und Revisionismus? Das Dritte Reich im Blickwinkel des Jahres 1980,” „*Historikerstreit*.“ *Die Dokumentation der Kontroverse um die Einzigartigkeit der nationalsozialistischen Judenvernichtung* (Munich, 1987) 13–35; here 33, as well as other papers in this volume. Especially see Nolte’s fundamental work on this topic: Ernst Nolte, *Der europäische Bürgerkrieg 1917–1945. Nationalsozialismus und Bolschewismus*, 5<sup>th</sup> revised and amended edition (Munich, 1997).
- <sup>11</sup> Alfred Rosenberg, “Bolschewismus, Hunger, Tod” *Flugschrift aus dem Bildwerk “Pest in Rußland”* (Munich, [1922]) 30: “After a few weeks of joy and intoxication a German worker faces a 12-hour-long working day as well as the crudest terror. Same as in Russia **Latvian and Chinese** [bold in the original] battalions with the help of machine-guns forced the Russian worker to obedience, soon the

- German worker will likewise stand face-to-face with the closed ranks of guards recruited from the dregs of his own nation and brought-in Bolshevik aliens." Adolf Hitler, *Monologe im Führerhauptquartier 1941–1944. Die Aufzeichnungen Heinrich Heims*, ed. Werner Jochmann (Hamburg, 1980) 42: "For executions that Russians were not ready to conduct, Stalin resorted to ethnic Chinese and Latvians; they also were the executioners of the old Czarist State."
- <sup>12</sup> Raul Hilberg, *Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders, The Jewish Catastrophe 1933–1945* (New York, 1992) 96–101.
- <sup>13</sup> See Hilberg's Chapter 8: "Non-German Volunteers."
- <sup>14</sup> Christopher R. Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* (New York, 1992)
- <sup>15</sup> Christopher R. Browning, "Die Debatte über die Täter des Holocaust," *Nationalsozialistische Vernichtungspolitik 1939–1945. Neue Forschungen und Kontroversien*, ed. Ulrich Herbert (Frankfurt a.M., 1998) 148–69; here 149.
- <sup>16</sup> Daniel J. Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners. Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust* (New York, 1996) 409.
- <sup>17</sup> Martin Dean, *Collaboration in the Holocaust. Crimes of the Local Police in Belorussia and Ukraine, 1941–1944* (New York, 2000).
- <sup>18</sup> *Ibid.* 167.
- <sup>19</sup> Frank Golczewski, "Organe der deutschen Besatzungsmacht: die ukrainischen Schutzmannschaften," *Die Bürokratie der Okkupation. Strukturen der Herrschaft und Verwaltung im besetzten Europa*, eds. Wolfgang Benz et al. (Berlin, 1998) 173–96.
- <sup>20</sup> *Ibid.* 172–74 and 195–96.
- <sup>21</sup> Peter Longerich, *Politik der Vernichtung. Eine Gesamtdarstellung der nationalsozialistischen Judenverfolgung* (Munich, 1998) 402.
- <sup>22</sup> In my opinion this battalion can in no way be regarded as a "typical" police battalion. It did not emerge through the normal procedure of battalion formation either. Making generalizations on the basis of an untypical case is a dubious method.
- <sup>23</sup> Raul Hilberg, *Die Vernichtung der europäischen Juden*, durchgesehene und erweiterte Ausgabe (Frankfurt a.M., 1990) 389 and 402. See also Peter Klein, "Die Erlaubnis zum grenzenlosen Massenmord – das Schicksal der Berliner Juden und die Rolle der Einsatzgruppen bei dem Versuch, Juden als Partisanen ‚auszurotten‘," *Die Wehrmacht. Mythos und Realität*, eds. Rolf-Dieter Müller and Hans-Erich Volkmann (Munich, 1999) 923–47; Timm Richtel, "Die Wehrmacht und der Partisanenkrieg in den besetzten Gebieten der Sowjetunion," *ibid.* 837–57.
- <sup>24</sup> Christian Gerlach, *Kalkulierte Morde. Die deutsche Wirtschafts- und Vernichtungspolitik in Weißrußland 1941 bis 1944* (Hamburg, 1999) 957.
- <sup>25</sup> Arūnas Bubnys, *Okupuota Lietuva (1941–1944)* [Occupied Lithuania (1941–1944)] (Vilnius, 1998) 110–38; "Lietuvių viešoji ir policijos batalionai (1941–1944)," *Genocidas ir rezistencija* 1 (1998): 81–104.
- <sup>26</sup> Petras Stankeras, *Lietuvių policija 1941–1944 metais* [Lithuanian Police 1941–1944] (Vilnius, 1998) 116–97.
- <sup>27</sup> *Lietuvių enciklopedija*, vol. 15 (Boston, 1968): 119–20.
- <sup>28</sup> Tessin 101–09. A part of the 35 Lithuanian police battalions on Tessin's list never existed (no. 263–265, 301–310).

- <sup>29</sup> Arūnas Bubnys, "Lietuvių policijos 2-asis (Vilniaus) ir 252-asis batalionai (1941–1944)," *Genocidas ir rezistencija* 2 (2000): 42–55.
- <sup>30</sup> Arūnas Bubnys, "253-asis lietuvių policijos batalionas (1943–1944)," *Genocidas ir rezistencija* 2 (1998) 104–20.
- <sup>31</sup> Arūnas Bubnys, "Penktasis lietuvių policijos batalionas (1941–1944)," *Genocidas ir rezistencija* 1 (2001): 44–50.
- <sup>32</sup> Arūnas Bubnys, "Lietuvių policijos batalionai srityje ir Kursė: 13-asis ir 10 (256)-asis batalionai (1942–1945)," *Genocidas ir rezistencija* 2 (2001): 31–43.
- <sup>33</sup> Arūnas Bubnys, "Die litauischen Hilfspolizeibattalione und der Holocaust," *Holocaust in Litauen. Krieg, Judenmorde und Kollaboration im Jahre 1941*, eds. Vincas Bartusevičius, Joachim Tauber and Wolfram Wette (Köln, 2003) 117–131.
- <sup>34</sup> Knut Stang, *Kollaboration und Massenmord. Die litauische Hilfspolizei, das Rollkommando Hamann und die Ermordung der litauischen Juden* (Frankfurt a.M., 1996) 181–89.
- <sup>35</sup> Knut Stang, "Hilfspolizisten und Soldaten: Das 2./12. litauische Schutzmannschaftsbataillon in Kaunas und Weißrußland," *Die Wehrmacht. Mythos und Realität*, eds. Rolf-Dieter Möller and Hans-Erich Volkmann (Munich, 1999) 858–78.
- <sup>36</sup> *Estonian Freedomfighters in World War Two*, ed. August Jurs ([Toronto], n.d.) 70–96.
- <sup>37</sup> *Eesti riik ja rahvas*, vol. 7 (Stockholm, 1959).
- <sup>38</sup> *Report of the Estonian International Commission for the Investigation of Crimes against Humanity. Phase II – The German Occupation of Estonia, 1941–1944.* <http://www.historycommission.ee/temp/conclusions.html>.
- <sup>39</sup> *Latviešu karavīrs Otrā pasaules kara laikā* [Latvian Soldier in World War II], vol. 2, eds. Osvalds Freivalds and Oskars Caunītis ([Münster], 1972) (hereafter cited as *LKOPKL*).
- <sup>40</sup> Igors Vārpa, *Latviešu karavīrs zem kāškrusta karoga. Latviešu leģions - nācijas triumfs vai traģēdija?* [Latvian Soldier under the Swastika Flag. The Latvian Legion: Triumph or Tragedy of the Nation?] (Rīga, 2003) 77–103.
- <sup>41</sup> Andrievs Ezergailis, *Holokausts vācu okupētajā Latvijā 1941–1944* (Rīga, 1999) 368–77. In English: *The Holocaust in Latvia, 1941–1944: The Missing Center* (Rīga, 1996) 321–29.
- <sup>42</sup> In the meantime a new research paper on the activities of the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 272<sup>nd</sup> Latvian police battalions in Warsaw has been written for the Commission of the Historians of Latvia: Ēriks Jēkabsons, Uldis Neiburgs and Kaspars Zellis, "Latviešu karavīri Vācijas militārajā dienestā Polijā 1942.–1945. gadā" [Latvian Soldiers in German Military Service in Poland in 1942–1945], *CHL* 7: 179–218.
- <sup>43</sup> Aleksey Litvin, "Latviešu policijas bataljoni Baltkrievijā 1941.–1944. gadā" [Latvian Police Battalions in Belorussia in 1941–1945], *CHL* 1: 252–65; here 260. Litvin does not seem to care much for the generally accepted method of source criticism in his analysis of data.
- <sup>44</sup> Ruth Bettina Birn, "'Zaunkönig' an Uhrmacher. Große Partisanenaktionen 1942/43 am Beispiel des ‚Unternehmens Winterzauber,'" *Militärgeschichtliche Zeitschrift* 60 (2201): 99–118.
- <sup>45</sup> *Ibid.* 118.
- <sup>46</sup> Harlds Biezais, *Latvija kāškrusta varā. Sveši kungi – pašu ļaudis* [Latvia under the Rule of the Swastika. Alien Overlords – Our Own People] ([East Lansing], 1992) 223.
- <sup>47</sup> See my article "Latviešu policijas bataljonu izveidošanas otrā fāze – 'lielervēšanas akcija'. 1942. gada februāris–septembris [The Second Phase of the Formation of Latvian Police Battalions: 'The Grand Recruitment Campaign'. February–September 1942], *CHL* 10: 277–333.

- <sup>48</sup> Some items could certainly be further subdivided, or else – additional topics can be proposed, such as trials against police battalions in the Latvian SSR. See the articles by Andrievs Ezergailis: “Reabilitāciju 18. un 21. Latviešu palīgpolicijas bataljonam?” [Rehabilitation for 18<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Latvian auxiliary police battalions?] *Atmoda Atpūtai* 6 and 8 July 1994; “Safabricētās prāvas: karavīri bija nevainīgi” [Trumped-up Charges: Soldiers were not Guilty], *Laiks* 17 April 1999; “Vēsturnieka versija par padomju paraugprāvām” [A Historian’s Version about Soviet Show Trials], *Nacionālā Neatkarība* 18 and 25 August 1999.
- <sup>49</sup> Minutes of Meeting of The Council of Directors General. No. 65, 4 November 1942. A copy of the document is part of the author’s personal archives.
- <sup>50</sup> Browning wonders in this regard whether the new conclusions reached in the course of studying the Holocaust in Eastern Europe will comply with the existing models and paradigms, or whether the future will require a completely new paradigm. In his opinion, it is too early to tell. Browning, „Der Weg zur ‘Endlösung’” 91.
- <sup>51</sup> It should be considered whether in the future the research program should not embrace several other units: (1) The so-called “Latgalian battalions,” seven altogether (Nos. 283, 314, 315, 325–328), which consisted primarily of ethnic Russian citizens of Latvia residing in Latgale, while including also individual members of other ethnic groups, among them ethnic Latvians. (2) The *Polizei-Reserve-Bataillon Ostland* (later *Reserve Polizeibataillon*) 33, which was formed in Germany in 1941 from the ranks of the 1941 ethnic German resettlers from the Baltic, two companies of which, moreover, consisted of Estonians and one of Latvians. Concerning the latter see my “Kollaboration vor der Kollaboration? Die baltischen Emigranten und ihre ‚Befreiungskomitees‘ in Deutschland 1940/1941,” *Europa unterm Hakenkreuz. Okkupation und Kollaboration (1938–1945). Beiträge zu Konzepten und Praxis der Kollaboration in der deutschen Okkupationspolitik*, ed. Werner Röhr (Berlin, 1994) 165–90; here 181.
- <sup>52</sup> *LKOPKL* 2: 58–60; in German 370–71.
- <sup>53</sup> “Schlußbericht über die Organisation, Aufbau, Aufgaben, Tätigkeit und Abwicklung der Hauptdirektion der Lettischen Polizei, 14 April 1945” 7–8. A copy of this document is in the author’s personal archive. See also Arturs Silgailis, *Latviešu leģions. Dibināšana, formēšana un kauju gaitas Otrā pasaules karā* [Latvian Legion. Establishment, Formation and Battles in World War II] (Copenhagen, 1964) 328–39.
- <sup>54</sup> Here are 22 numbers only. It must be taken into consideration that Nos. 271 and 279 were assigned twice, thus different battalions at different times had one and the same number: No. 271 and No. 279. Furthermore, for a very brief period there also were battalions with the following numbers: 280a, 280b, 281a and 282a.
- <sup>55</sup> Tessin 55.
- <sup>56</sup> Kārlis Kangeris, “Nacionālsocialistiskās Vācijas militārajos formējumos iesaistītie Latvijas iedzīvotāji: skaita problēma” [Residents of Latvia Engaged in the Military Formations of National Socialist Germany: Problem of Numbers], *Yearbook of the War Museum of Latvia* (Rīga, 2000) 137–56; here 143.
- <sup>57</sup> Notes in Himmler’s office calendar: 25 January 1942 discussion with Hitler, 9 February 1942 meeting with HSSPF Jeckeln and Feldmarschall Keitel. *Der Dienstkalender Heinrich Himmlers 1941/42*, eds. Peter Witte et al. (Hamburg, 1999) 326–27 and 341–42.

- <sup>58</sup> Document 221-L, office note, 16 July 1941 in *Der Prozess gegen die Hauptkriegsverbrecher vor dem Internationalen Militärgerichtshof*, vol 38 (Nuremberg, 1949): 88 (hereafter *IMG*).
- <sup>59</sup> *Der Dienstkalender Heinrich Himmlers* 189; Ereignismeldungen UdSSR, No. 48, 10 August 1941. BA–B, R 58/215;.
- <sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>61</sup> Document 180-L, Einsatzgruppe A. Gesamtbericht bis zum 15 Oktober 1941 in *IMG*, vol. 37 (Nürnberg, 1949): 696–97.
- <sup>62</sup> Joachim Hoffmann, *Die Ostlegionen 1941–1943. Turkotataren, Kaukasier und Wolgafinnen im deutschen Heer*, 3rd ed. (Freiburg, 1986) 17–18.
- <sup>63</sup> Biezais 231.
- <sup>64</sup> Otto Bräutigam, *Überblick über die besetzten Gebiete während des 2. Weltkrieges* (Tübingen, 1954) 33 and 84.
- <sup>65</sup> Berger to Himmler, 2 and 10 October 1941. Both documents BA–B, NS 19/382.
- <sup>66</sup> Lettische Freiwilligenformation, Kapp, 31.10.1941. BA–B, R 92/12.
- <sup>67</sup> Brandt to Berger, 17 October 1942. BA–B, NS 19/382.
- <sup>68</sup> Eingabe der lettischen nationalsozialistischen Bewegung Pērkonkrusts betr. Aufstellung eines lettischen Freiwilligenkorps im Verbände der deutschen Wehrmacht zwecks Fronteinsatz in der Sowjet-Union, 25 July 1942. BA–B, R 92/6.
- <sup>69</sup> *LKOPKL* 2: 48, 69–76, 373–77.
- <sup>70</sup> With's reports to Himmler, 15 May and 22 May 1942. BA–B, NS 19/1625.
- <sup>71</sup> Stahlecker's "Blitz" telegram to Heidrich, 25 January 1942. BA–B, NS 19/3500.
- <sup>72</sup> *Ibid.* It was also noted in the telegram to Heidrich, i.e. Himmler, that the Army would certainly feel essential relief of the burdens if the Supreme Commander of SS and Police and the Public Order Police exerted all possible effort to promote the formation of new units of Public Order Service (*Schutzmannschaftsabteilungen!* – not referred to as battalions at this point yet).
- <sup>73</sup> A note in Himmler's office calendar on 25 January 1942. *Der Dienstkalender Heinrich Himmlers* 326–27.
- <sup>74</sup> Himmler's telegram to Jeckeln, 27 January 1942. BA–B, NS 19/1462. The relevant information was „repeatedly“ submitted to the Army Group North by Feldmarschall Keitel. As in August 1941, the Supreme Command of the Wehrmacht (*Oberkommando der Wehrmacht*) had negative views on the issue of incorporating non-Germans into the Wehrmacht.
- <sup>75</sup> Note in Himmler's office calendar, 9 February 1932 in *Der Dienstkalender Heinrich Himmlers* 341–42.
- <sup>76</sup> Biezais 341–42.
- <sup>77</sup> "Wehrbezirkskommando Ausland in Berlin," report to Reichskommissar Ostland, 29 January 1942. BA–B, R 92/530.
- <sup>78</sup> In the occupied Soviet territories, however, the involvement of the local population in German military formations proceeded in a different way. As of 1942, there began a wide-scale formation of units of assistants to the army (*Hilfswillige, Freiwilligenverbände*) and Eastern Legions (*Ostlegionen*) under the subordination of the Wehrmacht.
- <sup>79</sup> The validity of Himmler's statement that there was no "sufficient supply of weapons to equip non-German units for fighting at the front adequately" should be checked in more detail. See Himmler's telegram to Jeckeln, 27 January 1942. BA–B, ND 19/1462.

- <sup>80</sup> It was precisely in 1942 that Himmler intensified the formation of SS units on mass scale. See George H. Stein, *Geschichte der Waffen-SS* (Königstein, 1967) 177–82.
- <sup>81</sup> Boriss Zemgals, *Dienas baltās nebaltās* [On Days Sunny and Rainy] (Geneva, 1949) 72–74; Biezais 219–20.
- <sup>82</sup> Biezais 221.
- <sup>83</sup> Survey of the Formation of Latvian Voluntary Units, Col.-Lt. A. Bulle, 7 June 1945. LCK, box 116, HI; *LKOPKL* 2: 55–56.
- <sup>84</sup> Minutes of the meeting of the Council of Directors General No.10, 10 February 1942 (a copy of the document is part of the author's personal archive); *LKOPKL* 2: 57.
- <sup>85</sup> Office note, 4 February 1942. BA–B, R 92/523.
- <sup>86</sup> Minutes of the meeting of the Council of Directors General No.8, 6 February 1942 (a copy of the document is part of the author's personal archive); *LKOPKL* 2: 56–57.
- <sup>87</sup> Minutes of the meeting of the Council of Directors General No.9, 7 February 1942 (a copy of the document is part of the author's personal archive); *LKOPKL* 2: 57.
- <sup>88</sup> *LKOPKL* 2: 58–60, 370–71.
- <sup>89</sup> 22 persons participated in that meeting. The list of the names see in *Tēvija* 12 February 1942.
- <sup>90</sup> Zemgals 74–75; Ēriks Pārups, “Policijas bataljonu formēšana” [Formation of Police Battalions], *Saulainā Krasta Vēstis* [Messages from the Sunny Shore] February 1982: 9–12.
- <sup>91</sup> Concerning the attitude of some Latvian circles to the formation of police units see my “Latviešu policijas bataljonu izveidošanas otrā fāze – ‘lielervēšanas akcija’” (note 50).
- <sup>92</sup> One should also remark that during the same time, on 11 February 1942, members of the Thundercross, Celmiņš and Ēvalds Andersons, submitted a memorandum in Berlin calling for the formation of Latvian units at least the size of a regiment (“lettische Heeresseinheiten [...] nicht kleiner als in Regimentsstärke”). The already existing police regiments would be incorporated into the new formations. As seen in this memorandum, Celmiņš and Andersons meant the formation of military units and not of new police battalions! BA–B, R 92/6.
- <sup>93</sup> Minutes of the meeting of the Council of Directors General No. 65, 4 November 1942 (a copy of the document is part of the author's personal archive); an excerpt of the minutes has been published by J. Kalniņš: “Iz pagātnes. Ģenerāļa Dankera lieta” [Out of the Past. The Case of General Dankers], *Treji Vārti* 77 (1980): 41.

## Inesis Feldmanis, “Waffen-SS Units of Latvians and Other Non-Germanic Peoples in World War II: Methods of Formation, Ideology and Goals,” 122–131

- <sup>1</sup> Robert Alexander Clarke Parker, *Europa 1918–1945* (Frankfurt a.M., 1967) 248.
- <sup>2</sup> Franz Wilhelm Seidler, *Die Kollaboration 1939–1945* (Munich, 1999) 5.
- <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 7.
- <sup>4</sup> See Kārlis Kangeris, “Izvēles iespējas: ‘Jaunā Eiropa,’ padomju republika vai neatkarīga valsts. Valststiesiskie jautājumi un ‘lielā politika’ kara gados (1941–1945)” [The Choices: “New Europe,” Soviet Republic or an Independent State. Issues of National Rights and “Big Politics” during the War], *CHL* 1: 89.

- <sup>5</sup> Commission of the Historians of Latvia, "Noziegumi pret cilvēci Latvijas teritorijā Padomju Savienības un nacistiskās Vācijas okupācijas laikā no 1940. g. līdz 1956. gadam. Progresa ziņojums" [Crimes against Humanity on the Territory of Latvia under the Occupation of the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany from 1940 to 1956. Progress Report], *Latvijas Vēstnesis* 16 December 2001.
- <sup>6</sup> D.A. Lēbers, "Molotova–Ribentropa pakta juridiskās sekas Baltijas valstīs" [The Legal Consequences of the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact in the Baltic States], *Latvija divos laika posmos: 1918–1928 un 1991–2001* [Latvia in Two Periods: 1918–1928 and 1991–2001] (Rīga, 2001) 112.
- <sup>7</sup> As concerns the name "Latvian SS Volunteer Legion" (German: "Lettische SS-Freiwilligen-Legion"), henceforth for the sake of simplicity referred to as the "Latvian Legion," see Kārlis Kangeris, "Piezīmes pie jautājuma kompleksa 'Latviešu leģions'" [Notes Regarding the Complicated Topic 'Latvian Legion'], *Latviešu leģions. Varoņi, nacisti vai upuri?* [Latvian Legion. Heroes, Nazis or Victims?], ed. Andrievs Ezergailis (Rīga, 1998) 113–14.
- <sup>8</sup> Robin Lumsden, *Himmler's Black Order 1923–1945* (London, 1997) 207.
- <sup>9</sup> Paul Hausser, *Waffen-SS im Einsatz* (Göttingen, 1953) 27.
- <sup>10</sup> George H. Stein, *Geschichte der Waffen-SS*, (Düsseldorf, 1967) 123.
- <sup>11</sup> See the Progress Report of the Commission of Latvian Historians, note 5.
- <sup>12</sup> Andrievs Ezergailis, Ievads [Introduction], *Latviešu leģions* 11–12.
- <sup>13</sup> SD (Sicherheitsdienst) – Security Service of the Nazi Party and SS organization.
- <sup>14</sup> Prigovor Mezhdunarodnogo Voennogo Tribunala [Verdict of International War Tribunal], Niurnbergskii protsess [Nuremberg Process], 7 vols. (Moscow, 1961) 7: 427.
- <sup>15</sup> Hausser 27.
- <sup>16</sup> Bernd Wegner, *Hitlers politische Soldaten: die Waffen-SS* (Paderborn, 1985) 273.
- <sup>17</sup> Paul Hausser, „Das Gesetz gemäß dem Artikel 131 des Grundgesetzes und die Waffen-SS,“ Bundesarchiv–Militärarchiv Freiburg (henceforth – BA–MA ), N756/59, S. 6.
- <sup>18</sup> Lumsden 207.
- <sup>19</sup> *Das Deutsche Reich und der Zweite Weltkrieg*, vol.5.2: *Kriegsverwaltung, Wirtschaft und personelle Ressourcen 1942–1944/45* (Stuttgart, 1999): 839.
- <sup>20</sup> *Monatshefte für Auswärtige Politik* 7 (1941): 675.
- <sup>21</sup> Before 1943, units of "non-Germanic" volunteers from West European countries were part of Wehrmacht and not Waffen-SS troops.
- <sup>22</sup> *Das Deutsche Reich und der Zweite Weltkrieg*, 5.2: 835.
- <sup>23</sup> Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes (henceforth PA AA), R 27775 , E 236961.
- <sup>24</sup> *Das Deutsche Reich und der Zweite Weltkrieg*, 5.2: 263.
- <sup>25</sup> Lumsden 207.
- <sup>26</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>27</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>28</sup> One of the Hague Conventions of 1907 fixed the rights and duties for an occupying country. It was forbidden, for example, "to compel the inhabitants of the occupied territory to swear allegiance to the hostile Power."
- <sup>29</sup> "Latviešu leģions PSRS Valsts drošības tautas komisariāta vērtējumā – 1943.gads" [The Latvian Legion in the Eyes of the USSR People's Commissariat of National Security: 1943], *Latviešu leģions. Varoņi, nacisti vai upuri?* 107, 108.
- <sup>30</sup> Quoted from *The Latvian Legion: Heroes, Nazis, or Victims?*, ed. A. Ezergailis (Rīga, 1997) 95.

- <sup>31</sup> Hitler's written order on the formation of the "Latvian SS Volunteer Legion" was issued on 10 February 1943. – Lettischer Fürsorgeverein "Daugavas Vanagi": Lettische SS-Freiwilligen-Legion, 21. November 1968, BA–MA, RS 3 – 19, S. 1.
- <sup>32</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>33</sup> Uldis Neiburgs, "Latviešu leģions–pagātne un mūsdienas" [Latvian Legion: the Past and the Present], *LV 3* (2000): 103.
- <sup>34</sup> Der Generalkommissar in Rīga O.Drechsler an den Reichskommissar für das Ostland H.Lohse, 23.Juni 1943, Bundesarchiv Berlin (henceforth BA–B), R92/1148, S. 1.
- <sup>35</sup> Kangeris, "Piezīmes pie jautājuma kompleksa 'Latviešu leģions'" 117.
- <sup>36</sup> Kārlis Kangeris, "Nacionālsociālistiskās Vācijas militārajos formējumos iesaistītie Latvijas iedzīvotāji: skaita problēma" [Residents of Latvia Recruited in the Military Formations of National Socialist Germany: Problem of Numbers], *Latvijas Kara muzeja gadagrāmata* [Yearbook of the War Museum of Latvia] (Rīga, 2000) 147.
- <sup>37</sup> Zigmunds Skujiņš, *Sarunas ar jāņtārpiņiem: (no bezmiega melnrakstiem )* [Conversations with Glowworms (from Insomnia Notes)] (Rīga, 1992) 98.
- <sup>38</sup> Bericht des Kommandeurs der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD Lettland, 1.August 1943, BA–B , R 90/115.
- <sup>39</sup> Kangeris, "Piezīmes pie jautājuma kompleksa 'Latviešu leģions'" 118.
- <sup>40</sup> 15. Waffen-Grenadier-Division der SS (lettische Nr.1), BA–MA , RS 3 –15, S.21.
- <sup>41</sup> 19. Waffen-Grenadier-Division der SS (lettische Nr.2), BA–MA , RS 3-19, S.14.
- <sup>42</sup> H. W. Neulen, *An deutscher Seite. Internationale Freiwillige von Wehrmacht und Waffen-SS* (Munich, 1985) 54.
- <sup>43</sup> P. Scill, *Die Geschichte der lettischen Waffen-SS* (Stuttgart, 1977) 25–27.
- <sup>44</sup> Ibid. 28.
- <sup>45</sup> Memorandum of the Latvian Self-Administration to Generakommissar O. Drechsler, December 1942 in *Latvijas suverenitātes ideja likteņgriežos* [The Idea of Latvia's Sovereignty in Fateful Times], comp. V. Samsons (Rīga, 1990) 68–69. The appeal was written in support of an earlier memorandum, "The Latvian Problem," that the Director General of Justice, Alfreds Valdmanis, had submitted to Drechsler in November 1942. The memorandum proposed the formation of a Latvian army under German higher command in exchange for a degree of sovereignty for Latvia (ibid. 59–68). Valdmanis connected the restoration of Latvia's independence with the formation of the Latvian Legion also in a meeting of the Self-Administration and the leadership of *Generalkommissariat* for Latvia on 29 January 1943. He pointed out that "we all have one and only one common ideal and desire: that the free state of Latvia should be restored as soon as possible." Protokoll der Sitzung der Lettischen Selbstverwaltung und der Führung des Generalkommissariats, 29. Januar 1943, BA–B, R 6-5.
- <sup>46</sup> R. Lange's report to RSHA Administration IV, 1 April 1943, *Latvijas suverenitātes ideja likteņgriežos* 108.
- <sup>47</sup> Uldis Neiburgs, "Pašpārvalde. Bez tiesībām runāt tautas vārdā" [Self-Administration. Without the Right to Speak on Behalf of the People], *Lauku Avīze* 3 November 2001.
- <sup>48</sup> Neulen 285.
- <sup>49</sup> Schreiben des Chefs des SS Hauptamtes an Reichsführer SS vom 12. November 1943, BA–B , NS 19-382. Aktennotiz des Abteilungsleiters Schierholz über eine von Obergruppenführer Berger in Berlin vor den Propagandaleuten gehaltenen Rede, 12. Oktober 1943, BA–B, R90-2.

- <sup>50</sup> See, for example, H.Lohse–A.Rosenberg, 9. Dezember 1943, BA–B, R 90/2.
- <sup>51</sup> O.Drechsler–H.Lohse, 19. Juni 1943, LVVA, fonds P-1018, ser. 1, file 2, pp. 160–64. Vermerk Kleist's betreffend Landeseigene Verwaltung in Lettland vom 29. Juni 1943, BA–B, R6/67.
- <sup>52</sup> Erlass des Führers über die Errichtung der Länder Estland und Lettland, BA–B, R 90–2.
- <sup>53</sup> S. Myllyniemi, *Neuordnung der baltischen Länder 1941–1944 : Zum nationalistischen Inhalt der deutschen Besatzungspolitik* (Helsinki, 1973) 207.
- <sup>54</sup> Schreiben des Chefs des SS Hauptamtes an Reichsführer SS vom 12. November 1943, BA–B, NS 19/382.
- <sup>55</sup> Neulen 382.
- <sup>56</sup> H. G. Dahms, *Der Zweite Weltkrieg in Text und Bild* (Munich, 1999) 9.
- <sup>57</sup> Even as late as 3 August 1944 when Germany's military situation had already become critical, Himmler spoke unambiguously in favour of the foundation of a „Germanic Reich.” H. W. Neulen, *Europa und das Dritte Reich. Einigungsbestrebungen im deutschen Machtbereich 1939–1945* (Stuttgart, 1989) 61.
- <sup>58</sup> J. Elvert, *Mitteleuropa. Deutsche Pläne zur europäischen Neuordnung 1918–1945* (Stuttgart, 1999) 372.
- <sup>59</sup> Werner Hans Neulen, *Eurofaschismus und der Zweite Weltkrieg. Europas verratene Söhne* (Munich, 1980) 138.
- <sup>60</sup> See Neulen, *An deutscher Seite* 54–56.
- <sup>61</sup> Oleg Roman'ko, *Musul'manskie legiony tret'ego reikha* [Muslim Legions of the Third Reich] (Simferopol, 2000) 36.
- <sup>62</sup> Mikhail Semiriaga, *Kollaboratsionizm: priroda, tipologija i proiavlennie v gody vtoroi mirovoi voiny* [Collaborationism: Character, Type and Expressions in World War II] (Moscow, 2000) 497.
- <sup>63</sup> Quoted from Neulen, *An deutscher Seite* 294.
- <sup>64</sup> Guntis Kalme, „Latvijas 'Baigā gada' pieredze – Latviešu leģiona veidošanas veicinātāja” [Latvia's Experience in the 'Year of Terror' as a Stimulus for the Formation of the Latvian Legion], *LV 3* (2001): 106.
- <sup>65</sup> 15.Waffen-Grenadier-Division der SS ( lettische Nr.1.). Tätigkeitsbericht für die Zeit vom 15. April bis 18. Juli 1944, BA–MA, RS 3–15, S. 22.
- <sup>66</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>67</sup> Der Reichskommissar für das Ostland. Abteilung I: Politik. An den Reichsminister für die besetzten Ostgebiete, 26. Oktober 1943, BA–B, R 90-2.
- <sup>68</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>69</sup> R. Jansons, „Latviešu leģionāru – pretošanās kustības dalībnieku programmatiskie mērķi” [The Programmatic Goals of Latvian Legionnaires as Members of the Resistance Movement], *LV 4* (2001): 104.
- <sup>70</sup> In early October 1944, the German commanders decided to change the retreat route of the 19<sup>th</sup> Latvian Division, and it did not go through Rīga.
- <sup>71</sup> Quoted from Jansons 105.
- <sup>72</sup> In this connection it would not be out of place to note that the SS Headquarters divided all SS divisions in three categories: “1. Worthy of the Order, ethnic Germans fit for the SS, result of check up: fit for military service – SS. 2. Not worthy of the Order: ethnic Germans and Germanic peoples. Result of check-up: fit for military service – army. 3.Non-Germans and non-Germanic peoples, irrespective of the result of check-up.” Wegner 315. Latvian SS divisions fell in the third category.

- <sup>73</sup> Letter by the Commissioner of the Displaced Persons Commission, Harry N. Rosenfield to the Charge d'Affaires of Latvia in Washington, DC, J. Feldmanis on 12 September 1950. Quoted from *The Latvian Legion: Heroes, Nazis, or Victims?* 94.
- <sup>74</sup> B. Daukšts, "Latvijas karogi pēckara Nirnbergā. Nejaušs atgādinājums?" [Latvian Flags in Post-War Nuremberg. An Incidental Reminder?], *Mājas Viesis* 84 (2003): 8. The International Military Tribunal that was held in Nuremberg between 20 November 1945 and 1 October 1946 tried 24 main Nazi war criminals and pronounced 12 death sentences. After the main process, as many as 12 other processes, often referred to as "the follow-up processes," took place in Nuremberg.
- <sup>75</sup> Daukšts 9.

### **Uldis Neiburgs, "Western Allies in Latvian Public Opinion and Nazi Propaganda during the German Occupation 1941–1945," 132–147**

- <sup>1</sup> For more details on this topic see: Jānis Taurēns, "Baltijas jautājums lielvalstu politikā Otrā pasaules kara gados: ieskats historiogrāfijā" [The Baltic Issue in the Policies of Superpowers during World War II: A Historiographic Survey] CHL 3: 208–26.
- <sup>2</sup> A notable exception is the recently published 507-page collection of documents: Andrew Ezergailis, ed., *Stockholm Documents. The German Occupation of Latvia. 1941-1945: What Did America Know?* (Rīga, 2002) = CHL 5.
- <sup>3</sup> See Sergejs Kruks, "Radio karš: Propaganda latviešu valodā Otrajā pasaules karā" [Radio War: Propaganda in the Latvian language in World War II], *LA* 4 (2002): 97–118.
- <sup>4</sup> Ezergailis CHL 5: 488.
- <sup>5</sup> In October 1941, the "Broadcasting Group Ostland" ("*Sendergruppe Ostland*") began operating. It included also Rīga Radio with transmitters in Madona, Kuldīga and Liepāja. At the end of the war, Radio "Kurzeme" broadcast from Liepāja.
- <sup>6</sup> US National Archives, College Park (hereafter – USNA–CP), RG 59, 860, P.76/3.
- <sup>7</sup> *Niurnbergskii protsess. Sbornik materialov v 8-mi tomakh* [Nuremberg Process. Collection of Materials in 8 volumes] (Moscow, 1989) 3: 560–64.
- <sup>8</sup> For more details see: Elga Zālīte, "Demonizations and Deportations: Propaganda Wars in Latvia, 1941" CHL 6: 384–405.
- <sup>9</sup> See *Latviešu periodika* [Latvian periodicals], vol. 4: 1940–1945, ed. Ērika Flīgere (Rīga, 1995): 145–48.
- <sup>10</sup> The particularly "valuable" propaganda articles were reprinted in other press publications, often under a different headline or without any reference to the author. The newspaper *Tēvija* was subjected to censorship before printing, while provincial press was under the control of District Commissars and local censors who censured the papers after publication. See: Kārlis Kangeris, "Nacionālsociālistiskās Vācijas plāni Baltijā un to izpausme Latvijas ģenerālapgabala kultūrpolitikā" [Plans of National Socialist Germany in the Baltic and Their Expression in the Cultural Policy of the Generalbezirk of Latvia], *International Conference "Library, Books and Ideology in World War II (1939–1945). 8.10.1996.–12.10.1996. Jūrmala: Collection of Materials* (Rīga, 1999) 33–34.
- <sup>11</sup> Arturs Freimanis, "Cīņa starp divām pasaulēm" [Struggle between Two Worlds], *Laikmets* 1 (1942) [actually dated 24 December 1941].

- <sup>12</sup> See: Uldis Neiburgs and Kaspars Zellis "Rietumu sabiedrotie nacistiskās okupācijas laika latviešu presē (1941–1945)" [Portrayal of the Western Allies in the Latvian Press of the Occupation Period], *Yearbook of the Museum of the Occupation of Latvia 2002* (Rīga, 2003) 173–97.
- <sup>13</sup> See "Parakstīsim uzsaukumu Amerikas latviešiem [Let Us Sign an Appeal to Latvians in America], *Tēvija* 19 July 1941; "Aicinājums Amerikas latviešiem" [Appeal to Latvians in America], *Zemgale* 7 October 1941, etc.
- <sup>14</sup> Dokuments par boļševiku-žīdu teroru nosūtīts Amerikas latviešiem [Document on Bolshevik-Jew Terror Sent to Latvians in America], *Kurzemes Vārds* 10 December 1941.
- <sup>15</sup> "Latvijas zemes pašpārvalde protestē pret angļu-boļševiku neģēlīgiem veikalēm" [The Self-Administration of the Latvian Land Protests against Despicable English-Bolshevik Deals], *Tēvija* 18 June 1942.
- <sup>16</sup> The text of the protest was dictated to the Self-Administration of the Land by the *Reichskommissar* of Ostland Hinrich Lohse. See: Kārlis Kangeris, "Izvēles iespējas: 'Jaunā Eiropa,' padomju republika vai neatkarīga valsts. Valststiesiskie jautājumi un 'lielā politika' kara gados [Choices: the "New Europe," Soviet Republic or an Independent State. Issues of the Rights of State and "Big Politics" during the War] CHL 1: 90.
- <sup>17</sup> *Deutsche Zeitung im Ostland* 17 November 1942.
- <sup>18</sup> "Latvieši, Anglija vēlas jūsu nāvi" [Latvians, Britain Desires Your Death], *Tēvija* 18 November 1942.
- <sup>19</sup> "Churchill Telling Fairytales," Propaganda Poster, 1942, National Library of Latvia.
- <sup>20</sup> See, for example, "Maskavas konference pret mazajām tautām" [Moscow Conference against the Small Nations], *Tēvija* 25 October 1943; "Maskavas konference un Eiropas nākotne" [The Moscow Conference and the Future of Europe] *Tēvija* 27 October 1943, etc.
- <sup>21</sup> Maskavas prasības joprojām spēkā [Moscow's Demands Still in Effect], *Zemgale* 7 October 1943.
- <sup>22</sup> Significantly, at the same time the underground newspaper *Brīvā Latvija* [Free Latvia] declared that all information provided by the official press was "fiction concocted by the yellow propaganda mills for the naive public." The paper stated that the Moscow conference had actually indicated some deterioration of the relations among the Allies because of Polish border issues and because the Western Allies did not want to see the Soviet influence in Eastern Europe growing. See *Brīvā Latvija. Latvju Raksti* [Free Latvia. Latvian Writings], nos. 6 and 7 (1943), in LVVA (State History Archive of Latvia), fonds P 252, ser. 1, file 26, pp. 62–63, 86.
- <sup>23</sup> *Stockholm Documents*, CHL 5: 245.
- <sup>24</sup> See *Tēvija*, Special issue, 14 November 1943.
- <sup>25</sup> The economist Jānis Lejiņš describes his meeting with the Director General for Finances of the Latvian Self-Administration Jānis Skujevics in Rīga on 23 November 1943 as follows: The latter informed him that "Germans had allowed some celebration on 18 November and had also approved the radio broadcast of a speech in the English and Swedish languages. When the text of the speech was submitted to censors it was rejected on the grounds that there was not a single word about the Führer in it. When the Latvian speaker promised to correct the omission, the failure to abuse the British was pointed out as another drawback of the speech. So the whole enterprise was cancelled." See Jānis Lejiņš, *Mana Dzimtene: Atmiņu un pārdomu atspulgā* [My Homeland: In the Reflection of Memories and Thoughts], (Vāsterās, 1971) 289.
- <sup>26</sup> *Deutsche Zeitung im Ostland* 18 November 1943.

- <sup>27</sup> "Iekšlietu ģenerāldirektora ģen. Dankera runa" [Speech by Director General for the Interior Gen. Dankers], *Tēvija* 19 November 1943.
- <sup>28</sup> *Stockholm Documents*, CHL 5: 234.
- <sup>29</sup> USNA–CP, RG 59, 860, p.76/4.
- <sup>30</sup> See: "Konference aiz dzeloņdrāžu žoga un mīnu laukiem" [Conference behind a Barbed-Wire Fence and Mine Fields], *Kurzemes Vārds* 4 December 1943; "Teherāna – nekrologs 1943.gadam" [Teheran: Obituary for 1943], *Kurzemes Vārds* 24 December 1943, etc.
- <sup>31</sup> Mirdza Kate Baltais, "Latvia at the Teheran and Yalta Conferences – Issues and Sources" CHL 1: 330–35. Baltais cites the memoirs of Charles E. Bohlen's, Roosevelt's translator, *Witness to History* (New York, 1973).
- <sup>32</sup> Žanis Unāms, "Mēs nešaubīgi ticam uzvarai" [(We Unflinchingly Believe in Victory)], *Daugavas Vēstnesis* 9 May 1944.
- <sup>33</sup> The Atlantic Charter recognized "... the right of all peoples to choose the form of government, under which they will live" and expressed a wish "to see sovereign rights and self government restored to those who have been forcibly deprived of them." Although the USSR also joined the Atlantic Charter on 24 September 1941, the fundamental principles of the Charter were not respected vis-à-vis the Baltic states.
- <sup>34</sup> See "Atlantikas charta bez nozīmes" [Atlantic Charter without Significance], *Kurzemes Vārds* 18 July 1943; V.A., "Krāpšana ar Atlantijas chartu" [Deceit with the Atlantic Charter], *Kurzemes Vārds* 27 August 1943, etc.
- <sup>35</sup> "Amerikas palīdzība Staļinam" [American Assistance to Stalin], Propaganda leaflet, 1944, Collection of the Museum of the Occupation of Latvia.
- <sup>36</sup> "Par Eiropas brīvību" [For the Freedom of Europe], *Kurzemes Vārds* 15 June 1944.
- <sup>37</sup> "Kāds izgaisis malds" [A Vanished Illusion], *Kurzemes Vārds* 20 July 1944.
- <sup>38</sup> *Stockholm Documents*, CHL 5: 313.
- <sup>39</sup> "Muļķa Antiņš ticēja" [Silly Billy Believed], Propaganda poster, 1944, National Library of Latvia.
- <sup>40</sup> See, for example, "Konference pie Staļina beigusies" [Conference with Stalin Is Over], *Tēvija* 14 February 1945; "Čerčils atzīst Jaltas varas plānus" [Churchill Acknowledges Yalta Plans for Power], *Tēvija* 18 March 1945, etc.
- <sup>41</sup> In the period between 23 June 1941 and 24 April 1942, 195 reports on developments in the USSR (*Ereignismeldungen UdSSR*) were issued, and from 1 May 1942 to 21 May 1943, 55 reports from the occupied Eastern provinces (*Meldungen aus den besetzten Ostgebieten*) were written.
- <sup>42</sup> Yitzhak Arad, Shmuel Krakowski, Shmuel Spector, eds., *The Einsatzgruppen Reports: Selections from the Dispatches of the Nazi Death Squads' Campaign Against the Jews in Occupied Territories of the Soviet Union July 1941–January 1943* (New York, 1989) 61.
- <sup>43</sup> Jēkabs Ozols, "Latviešu politiskais noskaņojums" [The Political Mood of Latvians], *Kaŗa Invalids*, 33 (1988): 21.
- <sup>44</sup> In late 1941 and early 1942, the Nazis seriously considered substituting the initially planned repressions with transferring "disobedient and nationalistically-chauvinistically disposed intellectuals" to the partisan-endangered occupied regions of the USSR as administrators. Although this idea was not carried out, such a threat helped to keep a part of Latvians away from active national activities and resistance to the National Socialist regime. See: Kangeris, "Nacionālsociālistiskās Vācijas plāni Baltijā ..." 29, 38.

- <sup>45</sup> LVVA, fonds P 70, ser. 5, file 37, pp. 18–21.
- <sup>46</sup> Ozols 22.
- <sup>47</sup> Peter Klein, ed., *Die Einsatzgruppen in der besetzten Sowjetunion 1941/42: Die Tätigkeits- und Lageberichte des Chefs der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD* (Berlin, 1997) 281–82.
- <sup>48</sup> *Ibid.* 297–98.
- <sup>49</sup> For more details on this topic, see Uldis Neiburgs, “Latviešu nacionālās pretošanās kustības preses izdevumi Latvijā vācu okupācijas laikā (1941–1945)” [Press Publications of the Latvian National Resistance Movement in Latvia under the German Occupation], *LZAV*, 1–2 (2000): 43–58.
- <sup>50</sup> *Latvija*, no. 1, 18 November 1941.
- <sup>51</sup> Bundesarchiv, Berlin (hereafter – BA–B), R 58/697, S.116–18.
- <sup>52</sup> Jēkabs Ozols writes: “Hope for the Western Allies and rumors about an exile government formed by Ulmanis led to more or less systematic listening to BBC broadcasts. The majority of the population believed in these rumors as long as mid-1942, because they wanted it to happen and saw it as their only possible solution. However, BBC did not broadcast anything for Latvians and the belief grew weaker and weaker.” See Ozols 25.
- <sup>53</sup> LVVA, fonds P 69, ser. 1, file 17, pp. 463–65.
- <sup>54</sup> Spreading information obtained from foreign radio broadcasts was punishable with death. See: *Sendergruppe Ostland*, no. 31, 1–7 February 1942.
- <sup>55</sup> USNA–CP, RG 59, 860, P.00/363.
- <sup>56</sup> BA–B, R 90/115, S.1120–25.
- <sup>57</sup> Central Archive of the Academy of Science of Latvia (hereafter LZA CA), fonds 40 (Academician Vilis Samsons), sec. 5, file 1–3, vol. 1–3 (archive of the “Mežakaķi” [“Wildcats”]).
- <sup>58</sup> After January 1945, many of the employees of the “Latvian Card File” were transferred to the *SS Jagdverband*.
- <sup>59</sup> LZA CA, fonds 40, ser. 5, file 1, vol. 1, pp. 172–77.
- <sup>60</sup> LVVA, fonds P 82, ser. 1, file 39, pp. 111–88.
- <sup>61</sup> BA–B, R 90/115, S. 3–4.
- <sup>62</sup> See Francis H. Hinsley, *British Intelligence in the Second World War* (London, 1993).
- <sup>63</sup> Public Record Office, Kew (hereinafter – PRO), FO 371, R 36774/F 3701.
- <sup>64</sup> *Ibid.* R 36774/F 3860.
- <sup>65</sup> USNA–CP, RG 59, M 1185, 860 N. 01/95.
- <sup>66</sup> It obtained information both from legal sources, such as German radio broadcasts and press publications and later also through the resistance movement, which had established secret contacts from Latvia across the sea with Sweden. Latvian refugees who had fled to Sweden also served as a source of information.
- <sup>67</sup> See Anthony Cave Brown, ed., *The Secret War Report of the OSS* (New York, 1976); Bradley F. Smith, *The Shadow Warriors: O.S.S. and the Origins of the C.I.A.* (New York, 1983); George C. Chalou, ed., *The Secret War: The Office of Strategic Services in World War II* (Washington, DC, 2002) 392.
- <sup>68</sup> Andrew Ezergailis, ed., *The Latvian Legion. Heroes, Nazis, or Victims?: A collection of documents from OSS War-Crimes investigation files 1945–1950* (Rīga, 1997) 16–21.
- <sup>69</sup> *Ibid.* 21.
- <sup>70</sup> PRO, FO 371, R 43050/F 316, P.79.

- <sup>71</sup> Ibid. 41–44.
- <sup>72</sup> Ibid. 27–28.
- <sup>73</sup> See Uldis Neiburgs, “Latvijas Centrālās padomes memorands par Latvijas neatkarības atjaunošanu. 1944. gada marts” [Memorandum of the Central Council of Latvia on the Restoration of Latvia’s Independence. March 1944], *Yearbook of the War Museum of Latvia*, vol. 2 (Rīga, 2001): 184–203.
- <sup>74</sup> See Edgars Andersons, Leonīds Siliņš et al., *Latvijas Centrālā padome: Latviešu nacionālā pretestības kustība. 1943–1945*. [Central Council of Latvia: Latvian National Resistance Movement. 1943–1945], (Uppsala, 1994) 70.
- <sup>75</sup> Haralds Biezais, *Latvija kāškrusta varā: Sveši kungi – pašu ļaudis* [Latvia under the Rule of Swastika: Foreign Overlords – Our Own People] (N.p.: Gauja, 1992) 442.
- <sup>76</sup> PRO, FO 371, R 43050/F 1951, P.66-70.
- <sup>77</sup> USNA–CP, RG 59, M 1777, R.16.
- <sup>78</sup> The first plan envisaged that the Kurelians would move over to Sweden in case of a fast evacuation of the German troops from Kurzeme. For this purpose, a base on the seacoast between Ventspils and Liepāja had to be established and defended against both the Germans and Russians to allow complete evacuation. Since the available forces were insufficient for an operation of such a scale, it was decided to join forces with units of the Latvian Legion and to carry out the operation together. The second plan was designed in case the efforts to establish a base failed. It envisaged the division of forces in smaller groups and hiding in the forests to await an opportune moment for rising against the Soviet forces. (LVA, fonds 1986, ser. 1, file 99, vol. 2., p. 117).
- <sup>79</sup> Andersons, Siliņš et al. 292.
- <sup>80</sup> Haralds Biezais, *Kurelieši: Nacionālās pretestības liecinieki* [Kurelians: Witnesses of National Resistance] (Ithaca, NY., 1991) 57.
- <sup>81</sup> Ibid. 85–89.
- <sup>82</sup> BA–B, R 5/598, S.31.
- <sup>83</sup> LZA CA, fonds 40, ser. 5, file 1, vol. 3., pp. 17–19.

## Antonijs Zunda, “Resistance against Nazi German Occupation in Latvia: Positions in Historical Literature,” 148–158

- <sup>1</sup> Kārlis Strazdiņš, ed., *Latvijas PSR vēsture: No 1917.gada līdz 1950.gadam*, 3 vols. (Rīga, 1959) 3: 427–55.
- <sup>2</sup> A. Drīzulis, ed., *Latvijas PSR vēsture: No vissenākajiem laikiem līdz mūsu dienām*, [History of the Latvian SSR: from the Ancient Times until the Present] 2 vols. (Rīga, 1986) 2: 192–96.
- <sup>3</sup> J. Dzintars, *Neredzamā fronte* [The Invisible Front], (Rīga, 1970). By Dzintars see also “Patiesība, kura jāzina” [The Truth that Must Be Known], *Padomju Latvijas komunisti*, 3 (1988): 79–83; “Patriotisma un nodevības lappuses” [Pages of Patriotism and Treason], *Padomju Jaunatne*, 6 June 1964; “Pret ko bija vēsta latviešu buržuāzijas ‘nacionālā opozīcija’” [What the ‘National Opposition’ of the Latvian Bourgeoisie Was Directed Against], *Latvijas PSR Zinātņu Akadēmijas Vēstis*, 9 (1968): 4–7.
- <sup>4</sup> A. Raškevics “Viņu īstā seja (Par latviešu buržuāzisko nacionālistu prettautisko darbību Lielā Tēvijas kara laikā)” [Their True Face (Concerning Bourgeois Nationalist Activities against the People during the Great Patriotic War)], *Padomju Latvijas komunisti*, 9 (1958): 30–39.

- <sup>5</sup> V. Samsons, *Naida un maldu slīkšņā: Ieskats ekstrēmā latviešu nacionālisma uzskatu evolūcijā* [In the Quagmire of Hate and Delusion: A Look at the Evolution of Extreme Latvian Nationalist Opinion], (Rīga, 1983) 95.
- <sup>6</sup> Ibid. 143
- <sup>7</sup> V. Samsons, ed., *Latvijas suverenitātes ideja likteņgriežos: Vācu okupācijas laika dokumenti 1941.–1945.* [Idea of Latvia's Sovereignty in Fateful Times. Documents of the German Occupation Period], (Rīga, 1990) 5–24.
- <sup>8</sup> O. Eglīte, *Ēnas purvā. Dokumentāls apraksts par latviešu buržuāzijas militāri politiskajām avatūrām Lielā Tēvijas kara beigu posmā Vidzemē un "Kurzemes katlā"* [Shadows in the Swamp. A Documental Description of the Military-Political Adventures of Latvian Bourgeoisie during the Final Stages of the Great Patriotic War in Vidzeme and in the "Kurzeme Kettle"], (Rīga, 1989) 15–16.
- <sup>9</sup> A. Drīzulis, *Latvijas PSR vēsture vidusskolām* [History of Latvian SSR for Secondary Schools], (Rīga, 1988) 195–98.
- <sup>10</sup> Uldis Neiburgs and Dzintars Ērglis, "Nacionālā un padomju pretošanās kustība: kopējais un atšķirīgais (1941–1945)" [National and Soviet Resistance Movements: Similarities and Differences], CHL 3: 282–285. Professor Henrihs Strods has found a top secret report prepared by the Deputy Chief of Staff of the Red Army's Central Partisan Command, Col. J. Naumov, to the All-Union Communist Party's (Bolsheviks) Central Committee of 7 January 1944 that states the number of active partisans in Latvia as 812. Russian State Archive of Social and Political History (RGASPI), fonds 69, ser. 1, file 23, p. 12.
- <sup>11</sup> M. Virsis, ed., *Latvijas vēstures apcerējumi. Mācību palīgīdzeklis vidusskolām* [Essays on the History of Latvia. A Teaching Aid for Secondary Schools] (Rīga: Zvaigzne, 1990) 70.
- <sup>12</sup> Dzintars Ērglis, *Latvijas Centrālās padomes vēstures nezināmās lappuses* [The Unknown Pages of the History of the Central Council of Latvia] (Rīga: LVIA, 2003) 61–75. See also: Andrew Ezergailis, ed. *Stockholm Documents. The German Occupation of Latvia. 1941–1945. What Did America Know?* CHL 5: 174.
- <sup>13</sup> B. Zemgals, *Latviešu nacionālā cīņa vācu okupācijas laikā no 1941.gada 1.jūlija* (N.p., 1947) and *Dienas baltās, nebaltās*, (Geneva, 1949) [LKM, inv. nr. 5-503-DK/p].
- <sup>14</sup> F. Cielēns, *Laikmetu maiņā. Atmiņas un atziņas* [As Eras Turn. Memories and Perceptions], (Lidingo: Memento, 1964) 3: 248–49, 253–54.
- <sup>15</sup> J. Ozols, "Latviešu nacionālā pretestības kustība 1940.–1945" [The Latvian National Resistance Movement], *Kaŗa Invalīds*, 28 (1983): 27.
- <sup>16</sup> Ibid. 31, 33–34.
- <sup>17</sup> Ibid. 37–40.
- <sup>18</sup> J. Ozols, "Piezīmes par latviešu nacionālo pretestības kustību 1940.–1945." [Notes Concerning the Latvian National Resistance Movement], *Kaŗa Invalīds*, 29 (1984): 29, 34–35.
- <sup>19</sup> Ē. Pārups, "Pretestības kustība" [Resistance Movement], *Jaunā Gaita*, 156 (1986): 33. and "Pretestības organizācijas un laikraksti vācu laikā" [Resistance Organizations and Newspapers during the German Period], *Jaunā Gaita*, 165 (1987): 35–37.
- <sup>20</sup> Haralds Biezais, *Latvija kāškrusta varā: Sveši kungi – pašu ļaudis* [Latvia under the Rule of the Swastika. Foreign Overlords – Our Own People], ([East Lansing], 1992) 72, 145.
- <sup>21</sup> Haralds Biezais, *Kurelieši: Nacionālās pretestības liecinieki* [The Kurelians – Witnesses of National Resistance] (Ithaca, 1991) 158.

- <sup>22</sup> Edgars Andersons, Leonīds Siliņš et al., *Latvijas Centrālā padome: Latviešu nacionālā pretestības kustība 1943–1945* [The Central Council of Latvia: The Latvian National Resistance Movement], (Upsala, 1994) 5–6. See also Note 12.
- <sup>23</sup> Dzintars Ērglis, “Dažas pretestības kustības īpatnības Latvijā” [A Few Characteristics of the Resistance Movement in Latvia], *Latvijas Arhīvi*, 2 (1995): 22–23.
- <sup>24</sup> Uldis Neiburgs, “Nacionālās pretošanās kustības organizācijas Latvijā padomju un vācu okupācijas laikā (1940–1945)” [Organizations of the National Resistance Movement in Latvia during the Soviet and German Occupation], CHL 1: 163–64.
- <sup>25</sup> German efforts at counteracting widespread pro-Western sentiment in occupied Latvia is portrayed in Uldis Neiburgs and Kaspars Zellis, “Rietumu sabiedrotie nacistiskās okupācijas laika latviešu presē (1941–1945)” [Portrayal of the Western Allies in Latvian-Language Press During Nazi German Occupation] *Yearbook of the Museum of the Occupation of Latvia 2002*, (Rīga: OMF, 2003) 173–97.
- <sup>26</sup> Neiburgs, CHL 1: 166.
- <sup>27</sup> Neiburgs and Ērglis, CHL 3: 272–314.
- <sup>28</sup> G.P. Basler, *Alfred Valdmanis and the Politics of Survival*, (Toronto, 2000) 139–74.
- <sup>29</sup> H.D. Handrack, „Die Kurelis Verbände“ [The Kurelis Units], *Jahrbuch des baltischen Deutschtums 1978*, 136.
- <sup>30</sup> Seppo Myllyniemi, „Die Deutschen und die Völker des baltischen Raumes im Zweiten Weltkrieg,” *Die Völker des Baltischen Raums und die Deutschen*, Tausend Jahre Nachbarschaft 4 (Bonn, 1995) 148–49.
- <sup>31</sup> W. Rohr, „Okkupationspolitik und Widerstandskampf,” *Europa unterm Hakenkreuz: Analysen, Quellen, Register. Die Okkupationspolitik des deutschen Faschismus (1938–1945)*, vol. 8 (= supplementary vol. 2), (Heidelberg, 1996) 173–201.
- <sup>32</sup> Margot Blank, *Nationalsozialistische Hochschulpolitik in Rīga (1941 bis 1944)*, (Lüneburg, 1991) 97–103.
- <sup>33</sup> Rolf-Dieter Müller and Gerd R. Überschär, *Hitlers Krieg im Osten 1941–1945. Ein Forschungsbericht*, (Darmstadt, 1997) 313–14, 321–22.

## Aivars Stranga, “The Holocaust in Occupied Latvia: 1941–1945,” 161–174

- <sup>1</sup> For a detailed discussion about the methodologies used to establish the number of Latvian Jewish victims see the Appendix.
- <sup>2</sup> Probably even as late as October 1944. See: Edward Anders and Juris Dubrovskis, Preface, *Jews in Liepāja, Latvia. 1941–1945. A Memorial Book* (Burlingame, CA., 2001) vii, 3.
- <sup>3</sup> Max Kaufmann, *Churbn Lettland. Die Vernichtung der Juden Lettlands* (Munich, 1947); Tesja Frenkl-Zalcmann, *Hefthing 94771* (Montreal, 1947).
- <sup>4</sup> M. Vestermanis, “Holokausts Latvijā: Historiogrāfisks apskats” [The Holocaust in Latvia: An Historiographic Survey], *Ārzemju literatūra par Latviju* [Foreign Literature about Latvia] (Rīga, 1992) 122–35.
- <sup>5</sup> Marģers Vestermanis, “Holokausts Latvijā. Historiogrāfisks apskats” [The Holocaust in Latvia. An Historiographic Survey] CHL 2: 36–49.

- <sup>6</sup> Andrievs Ezergailis *Holokausts vācu okupētajā Latvijā* [The Holocaust in German-Occupied Latvia] (Rīga, 1999). An earlier English language version: Andrew Ezergailis, *The Holocaust in Latvia 1941–1944: The Missing Center* (Rīga, 1996).
- <sup>7</sup> Vestermanis 40
- <sup>8</sup> Richard Rodes, *Masters of Death. The SS–Einsatzgruppen and the Invention of the Holocaust* (New York, 2002).
- <sup>9</sup> Ibid. 45.
- <sup>10</sup> See note 47; also – I. A. Al'tman, *Kholokaust i evreiskoe soprotivlenie na okkupirovannoi teritorii SSSR* [The Holocaust and Jewish Resistance in the Occupied Territory of the USSR] (Moscow, 2002).
- <sup>11</sup> Ibid. 63–67.
- <sup>12</sup> The well-known Holocaust scholar Deborah Lipstadt writes about whole ethnic groups as such, which as a whole have "... collaborated in the annihilation of the Jews"; from this unsubstantiated generalization she derives another, just as unsubstantiated, that Eastern Europe still today is "... increasingly beset by nationalism ...": *The Growing Assault on Truth and Memory* (New York, 1993) 7. Daniel Goldhagen in his bestseller, which has received by far more criticism than praise in academic circles, emphasizes that the Latvian culture as such has been deeply anti-Semitic and that the perpetrators were animated by "vehement hatred" of the Jews: *Hitler's Willing Executioners. Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust* (London, 1996) 409.
- <sup>13</sup> Norman M. Naimark, *Fires of the Hatred. Ethnic Cleansing in Twentieth-Century Europe* (London, 2001) 77.
- <sup>14</sup> Andrievs Ezergailis, "Rumbula: A Perspective on the Perception of the Holocaust," CHL 8: 33.
- <sup>15</sup> Anders 2; Ezergailis, *The Holocaust in Latvia* 209; more details about the role of the German Army in M. Vestermanis, *Tā rīkojās Vērmahts* [The Way the Wehrmacht Acted], (Rīga, 1973). The same happened in occupied Lithuania, where the Holocaust was carried out with the participation of the Wehrmacht *Feldkommandantur* 814 in particular; German police battalions, primarily no. 11 and no. 65; other police structures, including the Criminal Police and *Feldgendarmarie*, as well as a part of the German Civil administration (*Zivilverwaltung*). See Saulius Suziedelis, "The Mass Persecution and Murder of Jews: The Summer and Fall of 1941," *The International Conference on Holocaust Research and Education*, Vilnius, 23–25 September 2002, 9 (conference materials).
- <sup>16</sup> Naimark 77.
- <sup>17</sup> Rudīte Vīksne, "The Destruction of Auce Jews, July 1941" CHL 8: 124. In contrast, in occupied Estonia men were killed first; women and children were separated from the men and imprisoned to be killed in November 1941.– Ruth Bettina Birn, "Collaboration with Nazi Germany in Eastern Europe: the Case of Estonia," *Contemporary European History* 10, Part 2 (2001): 188.
- <sup>18</sup> Ezergailis CHL 8: 25–37.
- <sup>19</sup> Wolfgang Scheffler, "The Fate of the German Jews in the Ghetto of Rīga and Surroundings" CHL 8: 39–51.
- <sup>20</sup> Ibid. 49. As pointed out by Aly Götz and Susanne Heim, *Architects of Annihilation. Auschwitz and the Logic of Destruction* (London, 2003) 210, "... the ghettos were not producing cost-effectively by the standards of the German war economy ... In many cases Jewish forced labourers were employed on marginal economic activities that were shut down anyway in the 'total war'."

- <sup>21</sup> More details about the national partisans can be found in Heinrihs Strods' study "Sarkamarmijas haotiska atkāpšanās no Latvijas (1941. gada 22. jūnijs–5. jūlijs)" [The Chaotic Retreat of the Red Army from Latvia], *Yearbook of the Museum of the Occupation of Latvia, 2001* (Rīga, 2002) 31–93.
- <sup>22</sup> Ezergailis, CHL 8: 31; Norman N. Naimark, "The Nazis and 'The East': Jedwabne's Circle of Hell," *Slavic Review*, 61.3 (2002): 480.
- <sup>23</sup> Andrew Ezergailis, "The Role of the Self-Defense Commandantures in the Holocaust," CHL 1: 235–52.
- <sup>24</sup> Robert G. Waite, "'Reliable Local Residents': Collaboration in Latvia, 1941–1945" CHL 1: 118–19; for more details about the role of Latvian Auxiliary Police (*Schutzmannschaften*) in the Holocaust see Ezergailis, *Holokausti* 357–83.
- <sup>25</sup> Ibid. 201 et passim.
- <sup>26</sup> Dzintars Ērglis, "A Few Episodes of the Holocaust in Krustpils" in this volume.
- <sup>27</sup> See: Waite 127–28.
- <sup>28</sup> Yitzhak Arad, "The Local Population in the German Occupied Territories of the Soviet Union and its Attitude toward the Murder of Jews," *Nazi Europe and the Final Solution*, ed. David Bankier and Izrael Gutman (Jerusalem, 2003) 235; Norman N. Naimark, "The Nazis and 'The East'" 479–80.
- <sup>29</sup> Ezergailis CHL 1: 251.
- <sup>30</sup> Aigars Urtāns. "Ebreju tautības civiliedzīvotāju slepkavošana Valmieras apriņķī (1941. gada vasara–rudens)" [The Murder of Jewish Civilians in Valmiera District, Summer–Autumn 1941] CHL 8: 253–79, citation 260; Juris Pavlovičs. "Okupācijas varu maiņa Valmieras apriņķī 1941. gada vasarā" [The Change of Occupation Powers in Valmiera District in the Summer of 1941] CHL 8: 299–324.
- <sup>31</sup> Urtāns 260.
- <sup>32</sup> Ibid. 260–61.
- <sup>33</sup> Mārgers Vestermanis, "Pieteikums pētījumam 'Pretdarbība holokaustam Latvijā'" [Research in Progress: "Resistance to the Holocaust in Latvia"] CHL 2: 384–407.
- <sup>34</sup> See *Nazi Europe and the Final Solution...* 555.
- <sup>35</sup> Svetlana Bogojavlenska, "Šeinas Gramas dienasgrāmata (Preiļi, 1941. gada jūlijs–augusts) – laikmeta vēsturiska un vispārcilvēciska liecība [Šeina Grama's Diary (Preiļi, July–August 1941): Historical and Human Testimony of the Time] CHL 2: 228.
- <sup>36</sup> Morduh (Motja) Hagi, "Nashe spasenie" [Our Survival], *Novosti nedeli* [Israeli newspaper], 20 March 2003.
- <sup>37</sup> Since 1997, the Center for Anti-Semitism Studies at Berlin Technical University has been working on the project "Rettung von Juden im nationalsozialistischen Deutschland. 1933–1945," which has established that 2/3 of the rescuers were women, particularly often unmarried or widowed ones. See: *Nazi Europe and the Final Solution*, 96–98.
- <sup>38</sup> Inese Dreimane and Ojārs Stepens, "Grāmata skolām par holokaustu Eiropā" [A Book for Schools on the Holocaust in Europe], *Yearbook of the Museum of the Occupation of Latvia 2002* (Rīga, 2003) 424.
- <sup>39</sup> Jehuda Bauer, *Rethinking the Holocaust* (New Haven, 2001) 120.
- <sup>40</sup> Gertrud Schneider, *Journey into Terror: The Story of the Riga Ghetto* (New York, 1979); Frida Michelson, *I Survived Rumbuli*, (New York, 1979).
- <sup>41</sup> Marger Vesterman. "Motivy evreiskogo natsional'nogo samosoznaniia v poezii kholokausta v Latvii" [Elements of Jewish Ethnic Self-Awareness in Holocaust Poetry in Latvia], *Evreei v meniaiushchemsia*

- mire* [Jews in the Changing World], vol. 2 (Rīga, 1998): 246–52. The studies launched by Vestermanis have been followed up by the teacher and musician Mihails Leivands, who focuses particularly on the musical part of the songs composed in ghettos and concentration camps in occupied Latvia and Lithuania, emphasizing that the main motif of these songs is hope: one should not lose hope even standing at the edge of the grave. See: *Jews in the Changing World*, vol. 4 (Rīga, 2002): 181–90.
- <sup>42</sup> Bogojavļenska CHL 2: 226.
- <sup>43</sup> Eleonora Bergman, „Life in Ghettos,” *Holokausto Istorijas Tyrimai IR Tautu Kolektvyne Atmintis Baltijos Regione* (Kaunas, 2002) 7–21.
- <sup>44</sup> Strods, “Sarkanarmijas haotiskā atkāpšanās” 86.
- <sup>45</sup> Dov Levin, “The Jews and the Sovietisation of Latvia, 1940–41,” *Soviet–Jewish Affairs*, 5.1 (1975): 39.
- <sup>46</sup> Aivars Stranga, “Ebreju bēgļi Latvijā. 1933–1940” [Jewish Refugees in Latvia. 1933–1940] CHL 2: 319.
- <sup>47</sup> Naselenie Rossii v XX veke: Istoricheskie ocherki, t.2.1940–1959 [Population of Russia in the 20<sup>th</sup> century: Historical Essays, vol. 2. 1940–1959] (Moscow, 2001): 70.
- <sup>48</sup> RGAE – Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennii Arkhiv Ekonomiki [Russian State Economic Archive], f. 1562, op. 20. d. 249, l. 68.
- <sup>49</sup> Ilya Al'tman, *Zhertvy Nenavisti. Kholokaust v SSSR. 1941–1945. gg* [Victims of Hatred. The Holocaust in the USSR] (Moscow, 2002) 498, reference to no. 171.
- <sup>50</sup> *Ibid.* 498.
- <sup>51</sup> Reichelt CHL 8: 284.
- <sup>52</sup> Wolfgang Scheffer and Diana Schulle, *Buch der Erinnerung. Die ins Baltikum deportierten deutschen, österreichischen und tschechoslowakischen Juden* (Munich, 2003).
- <sup>53</sup> Al'tman, *Holokost* 240.
- <sup>54</sup> See Sidney Ivens, *How Dark the Heavens* (New York, 1990) 19–23.
- <sup>55</sup> LVVA, fonds 1398, ser. 1, file 68, p. 31.

## Dzintars Ērglis, “A Few Episodes of the Holocaust in Krustpils: A Microcosm of the Holocaust in Occupied Latvia,” 175–187

- <sup>1</sup> Andrievs Ezergailis, *Holokausts vācu okupētājā Latvijā 1941–1944* [The Holocaust in German-Occupied Latvia], (Rīga, 1999) 592 pages. His English-language version is less comprehensive: *The Holocaust in Latvia 1941–1944. The Missing Center* (Rīga, 1996).
- <sup>2</sup> M. Vestermanis, “Holokausts Latvijā: historiogrāfisks apskats” [Holocaust in Latvia: Historiographic review], *Ārzemju literatūra par Latviju* [Foreign Literature on Latvia], comp. and ed. Juris Prikulis, vol. 1 (Rīga, 1992): 123.
- <sup>3</sup> “Nāves un moku purvs” [The Swamp of Death and Agony], *Brīvā Daugava* 22 December 1944.
- <sup>4</sup> In 1991, the Archive of the State Security Committee of the Council of Ministers of LSSR was transferred to the archives of the Prosecutor’s Office of the Republic of Latvia and in 1996 to the State Archive of Latvia (LVA).

- 5 *The Fourth Census in Latvia in 1935*, vol. 4: *Nationality* (Rīga, 1937): 297.
- 6 LVVA, fonds 1308, ser. 12, file 13042, p. 618.
- 7 LVVA, fonds 1308, ser. 12, file 13044, p. 396.
- 8 *Ibid.* file 13042, p. 190.
- 9 *Ibid.* file 13044, p. 531.
- 10 *Ibid.* file 13042, p. 647.
- 11 *Ibid.* p. 572.
- 12 *Ibid.* p. 619.
- 13 LVA, fonds 1986, ser. 1, file 45124, vol. 2, p. 133.
- 14 LVVA, fonds 1308, ser. 12, file 10311, p. 31.
- 15 *Daugavpils aprīņķis: Dzīve un darbs* [Daugavpils District: Life and Work] (Rīga, 1937) 9.
- 16 "Mūsu vēsturiskā diena 28. jūnijs" [Our Historic Day 28 June], *Jēkabpils Vēstnesis* 23 July 1941.
- 17 LVA, fonds 1986, ser. I, file 45050, vol. 4, p. 63. There were two persons so named. The town's mayor, who is mentioned here, fled from Latvia at the end of the war. The other Kārlis Balodis (1912–1993) took part in the murder of Beila B. Veide.
- 18 *Self-Defense*: armed units that emerged both spontaneously and in an organized manner at the outset of the war between Germany and the USSR with the declared goal to protect the local population from the arbitrariness by the withdrawing Red Army. Upon the arrival of Nazi German troops, Self-Defense groups in their respective districts were subordinated to and controlled by the occupation authority. In places that had Jewish communities they were involved in the Holocaust. *Latvian police*: on many occasions, upon the arrival of the Nazi German troops police functions were assumed by former policemen who had served in the Latvian police until 1940 and had been discharged by the Soviet authorities. The chief of police of each district was subordinated to the Nazi occupation authorities. Police officers also were involved in the Holocaust. In the period that this paper focuses on (July–early August 1941) both Self-Defense units and police in the provinces were usually subordinated to German military and SD command posts. For details see: Andrievs Ezergailis, "The Role of the Self-Defense Commandantures in the Holocaust," CHL 1: 235–42.
- 19 The site of the former slaughterhouse now is Palejas iela 32.
- 20 LVA, fonds 1986, ser. 1, file 45050, vol. 1, pp. 114, 115. For example, one evening Self-Defense men Nikolajs Karabanovs (1913) and Pavels Stūre (1921–1945) took a 40–50 year old Jewish shopkeeper, whose name has not been established, out of the slaughterhouse and shot him at the old Jewish cemetery.
- 21 LVA, fonds 1986, ser. 1, file 45050, vol. 9, pp. 102, 271, 298; *ibid.* vol. 11, p. 80.
- 22 *Ibid.* p. 132.
- 23 LVA, fonds 1986, ser. 1, file 45124, vol. 1, p. 23.
- 24 Interview with Sirsņiņa on 12 July 2000 by the author.
- 25 Interview with Alīda Blūmentāle's (1911–1986) son Jānis Blūmentāls (1941) by the author on 4 June 2000.
- 26 S. Bogoiavlenskaia, "Dnevnik Sheili Gram – istoricheskii i chelovecheskii dokument" [Sheila Gram's Diary: a Historical and Human Document], *Jews in the Changing World*, vol. 3 (Rīga, 2000): 433.; Svetlana Bogojavlenska, *Šeinas Gramas dienasgrāmata* (Preiļi, 1941. gada jūlijs–augusts) – laikmeta vēsturiska un vispārcilvēciska liecība" [Šeina Grama's Diary (Preiļi, July–August 1941): Historical and Human Testimony of the Time], CHL 2: 227.

- <sup>27</sup> LVA, fonds 1986, ser. 1, file 45124, vol. 1, p. 33; vol. 2, pp. 81, 86, 155, 170, 175, 184, 237, 276.
- <sup>28</sup> Jānis Krūmiņš formally qualified as Chief of the Fourth Police Precinct of Jēkabpils District, with headquarters in Krustpils.
- <sup>29</sup> Ezergailis, *Holokausts* 367.
- <sup>30</sup> LVVA, fonds 3705, ser. 1, file 1, p. 1.
- <sup>31</sup> Ezergailis, *Holokausts* 70, cites Heydrich's instructions to Stahlecker: "No obstacles must be placed in the way of the self-cleansing efforts of anti-communist and anti-Jewish circles in the newly-occupied territories. Whenever necessary, it is best to intensify and guide them appropriately, leaving no evidence and giving these 'Self-Defense circles' no chance later on to refer to orders or any kind of political guarantees."
- <sup>32</sup> LVA, fonds 1986, ser. 1, file 45124, vol. 2, p. 120.
- <sup>33</sup> LVA, fonds 1986, ser. 1, file 45124, vol. 2, p. 237.
- <sup>34</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 242, 243.
- <sup>35</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 102–21.
- <sup>36</sup> *Ibid.* vol. 3, pp. 2–6.
- <sup>37</sup> *Ibid.* vol. 2, p. 133.
- <sup>38</sup> *Ibid.* p. 132.
- <sup>39</sup> *Ibid.* p. 47.
- <sup>40</sup> *Ibid.* p. 290.
- <sup>41</sup> *Ibid.* vol. 3, p. 265.
- <sup>42</sup> *Ibid.* information from register card.
- <sup>43</sup> LVA, fonds 1986, ser. 1, file 1666, vol. 9, p. 407.
- <sup>44</sup> *Ibid.* vol. 12, p. 297.
- <sup>45</sup> *Ibid.* p. 345; *ibid.* information from register card.
- <sup>46</sup> *Ibid.* p. 345.
- <sup>47</sup> *Ibid.* file 3927, vol. 1, p. 149.
- <sup>48</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 159, 160.
- <sup>49</sup> *Ibid.* information from register card.
- <sup>50</sup> *Ibid.* vol. 2, p. 262.
- <sup>51</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 290, 291.
- <sup>52</sup> *Ibid.* information from register card.
- <sup>53</sup> LVA, fonds 1986, ser. 1, file 45050, vol. 4, p. 57.
- <sup>54</sup> *Ibid.* p. 49; *ibid.* vol. 1, p. 2.
- <sup>55</sup> *Ibid.* information from register card
- <sup>56</sup> *Ibid.* vol. 1, p. 64.
- <sup>57</sup> *Ibid.* file 45124, vol. 3, pp. 103, 104. Ozoliņš was sentenced on 27 May 1947 for service in the German police; participation in Jewish arrests and executions; service in a police battalion and punishment expeditions against Soviet partisans; being a member of the 19<sup>th</sup> SS Division in battles against the Red Army in Kurzeme. On 28 December 1965, he was sentenced for his activities as member of the national resistance organization Latvian National Legion; service in a Self-Defense unit and police during Nazi occupation; participation in arrests and murder of Jews in July and August 1941; participation in the shooting of Soviet activist Eižens Mihailovskis in Krustpils on 1 August 1941; service in the 281<sup>st</sup> police battalion and participation in its ranks in punishment actions against

Soviet partisans, burning of villages, killing of peaceful civilians and their deportation for slave labor in Germany; service in a German army work battalion in the artillery regiment of the 19<sup>th</sup> SS division and participation in battles against Soviet army detachments in Kurzeme.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid. file 17347, p. 28.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid. file 45124, vol. 3.vol, p. 213.

<sup>60</sup> Ezergailis, *Holokausts* 156.

## Rudīte Viksne, “Members of the Arājs Commando in Soviet Court Files: Social Position, Education, Reasons for Volunteering, Penalty,” 188–206

- <sup>1</sup> See “Par latvieša mugurkaulu, kalpa dvēselēm un vēstures viltotājiem...” [On Latvian Backbone, Servile Souls and Falsifiers of History], *Lauku Avīze*, 14 July 1998. Daniel J. Goldhagen believes that Latvians were driven by strong hatred for Jews which had been the reason why Latvians took part in the killing of Jews. *Hitler's Willing Executioners. Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust* (New York, 1996).
- <sup>2</sup> An outstanding example is a pamphlet written by a turncoat Nazi-propagandist Pauls Ducmanis under several pseudonyms: E Avotiņš, J. Dzirkalis and V. Pētersons *Kas ir Daugavas Vanagi?* (Rīga, 1962). English edition: *Daugavas Vanagi: Who Are They?* (Rīga, 1963). Daugavas Vanagi, Falcons of Daugava, is an influential social and welfare organization founded by exile Latvian World War II veterans. Note a forthcoming book by Andrew Ezergailis, *Nazi–Soviet Disinformation about the Holocaust in Occupied Latvia. Daugavas Vanagi: Who Are They? – Revisited* (Rīga, 2005) in press.
- <sup>3</sup> Andrew Ezergailis, *The Holocaust in Latvia 1941–1944: The Missing Center* (Rīga, 1996); Max Kaufmann, *Die Vernichtung der Juden Lettlands* (Munich, 1947); Bernhard Press, *Judenmord in Lettland* (Berlin, 1988); proceedings of trials against Viktors Arājs, Friedrich. Jahnke, Hugo Friedrich Gustav Tabert and other war criminals in Hamburg Land Court Archives; materials of trial against E. Grauel in Hannover Land Court Archives; materials on trials of K. Detlavs, V. Hāzners and others in the USA.
- <sup>4</sup> It should be noted that in materials of criminal cases the name of Herberts Cukurs is mentioned very rarely and more often than not in connection to a trip of a unit of the Commando led by Cukurs to Nasva in 1942 to take part in operations against partisans there.
- <sup>5</sup> Lt. R. Freimūts, former Chief of Logistics Department and Lt. F. Dībietis.
- <sup>6</sup> As the best-known members of this group one could mention V. Arājs himself, H. Sviķeris, H. Cukurs, K. Ozols, K. Kalējs, E. Tobiass, the Dikmanis brothers, etc.
- <sup>7</sup> Alfrēds Šķērsēns said: “After 8 May 1945 when the capitulation of Germany was declared, Commander of the 4<sup>th</sup> Company of Arājs Commando Buka lined us up, approximately 60 people in total, and marched us from Aizpute District, Liepāja region, in the direction of Saka village. We all were fully armed and five-six horse-carts with weapons, ammunition and food followed us. As we reached Saka village, Buka commanded us to disperse and act by our own wits.[...] Buka told us that there would be no Soviet rule in Latvia and that Latvia would become an independent state

- no later than in 2 months and we had to hide till then to avoid getting arrested - LVA, fonds 1986, ser. 1, file 2160, vol. 1, p. 17; vol 2, p. 204. Pēteris Buka was killed on 14 or 15 May 1945 in a clash with Soviet troops. Ibid. file 45285, vol. 7, p. 136.
- <sup>8</sup> When all case files of persons who have stood trial for crimes committed during World War II will have been studied, the number of Arājs Commando members may slightly increase. We have had no access to the files of six convicted persons; therefore they have been omitted from the calculations.
- <sup>9</sup> Drawbacks from a historian's perspective and infringement of legal procedures from the judicial perspective.
- <sup>10</sup> LVA, fonds 1986, ser. 1, files 44087, 42890. Although the "Arājs Commando" was an unofficial name of the unit, in this case, however, the point is that neither the functions, nor the unit of the arrested person were specified.
- <sup>11</sup> After 10 January 1939, on the instructions of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) the application of physical force against the arrested person was allowed. This instruction was revoked only after Stalin's death.
- <sup>12</sup> As early as in 1936, in compliance with the theory of Andrei Vyshinsky that depreciated the importance of "objective proofs" in court cases, personal confession began to play an increasingly important role in judicial practice, particularly pertaining to political crimes. See: Peter Solomon, *Sovetskaia iusticia pri Staline* [Soviet Justice under Stalin, (Moscow, 1998) 231. This theory was applied also to K. Svecitis' case and the formulation was: "Since the defendant has himself pleaded guilty, witnesses shall not be summoned." LVA, fonds 1986, ser. 1, file 44045.
- <sup>13</sup> The attorney defending Ē. Āboliņš, for example, suggested that witnesses who had been convoyed to the court needed not be interrogated since "the case was clear." Ibid. file 1268.
- <sup>14</sup> Ibid. file 28661; file 808.
- <sup>15</sup> For instance, A. Točs in 1945 and J. Bērziņš in 1947, when they were arrested for the first time, concealed the fact of their former membership in the Arājs Commando. Four members of the Commando were punished twice because on the first occasion they had concealed the fact of their former membership.
- <sup>16</sup> G. Ivanova, *Gulag v sisteme totalitarnogo gosudarstva* [Gulag in the System of a Totalitarian State] (Moscow, 1997) 58.
- <sup>17</sup> Ezergailis 175.
- <sup>18</sup> A member of the Arājs Commando K. Kaķis testified that initially the Commando had been intended as a police unit in Leningrad, whose task it would have been to deal with the local population after the German troops would have taken the city. LVA, fonds 1986, ser. 1, file 1623, pp. 37–38. This information, however, has not been confirmed in any other document.
- <sup>19</sup> Three more groups were sent to Fürstenberg for training. One cannot agree with M. Birznieks, *No SS un SD līdz ...* [From SS and SD to ...], (Rīga, 1979) 85, who, speaking about K. Ozols, states that the Fürstenberg school was accessible only to the most reliable Latvians.
- <sup>20</sup> A. Upmalis testified that Arājs and Cukurs were also sent to Nasva. Rumors had been afloat in the unit that this assignment (to fight against guerillas) was punishment because the Germans suspected that they had pocketed Jewish gold and other valuables. LVA, fonds 1986, ser. 1, file 45285, vol. 1, p. 191.
- <sup>21</sup> See Ezergailis 186.

- <sup>22</sup> LVA, fonds 1986, ser. 1, file 1623, pp. 37–38.
- <sup>23</sup> Ibid. file 45285, vol. 8, p. 158.
- <sup>24</sup> Ibid. file 794, vol. 2, p. 141.
- <sup>25</sup> Ibid. file 44899, vol. 1, p. 109.
- <sup>26</sup> Avotiņš, Dzirkalis, Pētersons (note 2); Birznieks a.o.
- <sup>27</sup> K. Ozols, H. Cukurs, V. Elmuts and A. Dikmanis left for Germany in 1944. B. Kinstlers was a KGB agent according to the KGB. He died in Sillamae on 25 April 1949.
- <sup>28</sup> Testified by A. Proškovičs, E. Jurgītis and others. - LVA, fonds 1968, file 45285, vol. 2, p. 4; vol. 8, p. 165.
- <sup>29</sup> Ibid. file 45285, vol. 1, p. 128.
- <sup>30</sup> Ibid. file 45285, vol. 8, p. 199.
- <sup>31</sup> Ibid. p. 83. A. Točs also mentions an incident when Lt. Indāns had shown indignation about his men being instructed to take part in operations against civilians, to which Lt. Medens had replied: "We shall soon go mad because of such operations and Germans will shoot us." Ibid. file 45134, vol. 2, p. 126.
- <sup>32</sup> Ibid. file 40558, vol. 1, p. 85.
- <sup>33</sup> Ibid. vol. 8, pp. 190, 191.
- <sup>34</sup> Ibid. file 695.
- <sup>35</sup> See: K. Kangeris, "'Nodeva Reiham' – Latvijas Ģenerālapgabala iedzīvotāji darbos Lielvācijā" ["Dues to the Reich" – Inhabitants of the Latvian General District in Forced Labor in Germany], *LZAV* 12 (1990): 34–49.
- <sup>36</sup> The SS *Jagdverband Ost* created special diversionary units to operate behind the enemy lines.
- <sup>37</sup> Ten of the convicted members of the Arājs Commando had served in the Red Army.
- <sup>38</sup> The text of the Decree is published in Rudīte Vīksne, Kārlis Kangeris, eds., *No NKVD līdz KGB. Politiskās prāvas Latvijā 1940–1986: Noziegumos pret padomju valsti apsūdzēto Latvijas iedzīvotāju rādītājs* [From NKVD to KGB. Political Trials in Latvia 1940–1986: Lists of Residents of Latvia Charged with Crimes against the Soviet State] (Rīga: 1999) 970.
- <sup>39</sup> About *katorga* see Anne Applebaum, *Gulag: A History* (New York, 2003) 438–41. Ivanova, *Gulag ...* 53, thinks that official introduction of hard labor is related to the start of practical work on the creation of the nuclear bomb. This work required the strictest isolation possible, and hard labor mining uranium ore underground would seem to be a natural cause of quick death.
- <sup>40</sup> This form of punishment was applied to defendants sentenced according to Article 58 of the RSFSR Criminal Code.

## Heinrihs Strods, "Sovietization of Latvia 1944–1991," 209–227

- <sup>1</sup> Lauri Mälksoo, *Illegal Annexation and State Continuity: the Case of the Incorporation of the Baltic States by the USSR. A Study of the Tension between Normativity and Power in International Law* (Leiden, 2003).
- <sup>2</sup> *Meriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, Tenth Edition (Springfield, MA., 1993).
- <sup>3</sup> Juris Baldunčiks, ed., *Svešvārdu vārdnīca* [Dictionary of Foreign Terms] (Rīga, 1999).
- <sup>4</sup> R. Kh. Simonian, "Strany Baltii i raspad SSSR. (O nekotorykh mifakh i stereotipakh massovogo soznaniia)" [Baltic States and the Collapse of the USSR (A Few Myths and Stereotypes of Mass Consciousness)], *Voprosy Istorii* [Issues of History] 2 (2002): 27–39.

- <sup>5</sup> A.M. Dubrovskii, "Lichno ia schitaiu ee doklad nemarksistskim" [I Personally Regard Her Report as Non-Marxist], *Istoriia i istoriki* [History and Historians], vol 2 (Moscow, 2001): 40.
- <sup>6</sup> Cp. Igor Lukeš, *Československo mezi Stalinam a Hitlerem* (Prag, 1999).
- <sup>7</sup> A. O. Chubarian, "Itogi i perspektivy deiatel'nosti Instituta Vseobshchei istorii" [Results and Perspectives of the Activity of the Institute of Universal History] *Novaia i noveishaia istoriia* [Modern and Contemporary History] 1 (2004): 3–14.
- <sup>8</sup> *Bilanz und Perspektiven der DDR-Forschung*, (Paderborn, 2003) 557.
- <sup>9</sup> A. S. Lebedeva, "Politbiuro TsK VKP(b) i sovetizatsiia prisoedinennykh k SSSR v 1939–1941 godakh territorii" [The Politburo of the All Union Communist Party (B) CC and the Sovietization of Territories Incorporated into the USSR in 1939–1941], *Secret Soviet-German Agreements of 1939 and their Repercussion to the Middle and East European States* (Vilnius, 1999). The name of the Communist Party changed to Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1952. For the sake of brevity, the abbreviation CPSU will be used throughout.
- <sup>10</sup> Bernd Faulenbach, "Fußnote der Weltgeschichte," *Bilanz und Perspektiven der DDR-Forschung* (Paderborn, 2003) 17; G.V. Volotkina, *Sovetskii faktor v Vostochnoi Evrope 1944–1953* [The Soviet Factor in Eastern Europe], (Moscow, 1999); G.V. Volotkina et al., *Moskva i Vostochnaia Evropa. Stanovlenie politicheskikh rezhimov sovetskogo tipa 1949–1953* [Moscow and Eastern Europe. The Development of Soviet-Type Political Regimes] (Moscow, 2002); A.D. Nekipelov et al., *Tsentral'no-Vostochnaia Evropa vo vtoroi polovine XX veka* [Central-Eastern Europe in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century], vol 1: *Stanovlenie "Real'nogo sotsializma"* [Development of "Real Socialism"] (1945–1965) (Moscow, 2000).
- <sup>11</sup> "Postanovlenie TsK VKP(b) po Latvii" [Resolutions of the CPSU CC Regarding Latvia], Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History (RGASPI), f. 17, Protocol 44, § 251, 29 December 1944.
- <sup>12</sup> *Bor'ba za sovetskuiu Pribaltiku v Velikoi Otechestvennoi voine 1941–1945* [Struggle for the Soviet Baltic in the Great Patriotic War 1941–1945], 3 vols. (Rīga, 1966, 1967, 1969).
- <sup>13</sup> Heinrihs Strods, *Latvijas nacionālo partizānu karš 1944–1956* (Rīga, 1996) 305–41.
- <sup>14</sup> I. V. Bystrova, "Sovetskii voennyi potentsial v periode 'kholodnoi voiny' v amerikanskikh otsenkakh" [The Soviet Military Potential in in the Period of the "Cold War" in American Estimations], *Otechestvennaia istoriia* [History of Russia] 2 (2004): 124–42.
- <sup>15</sup> The name of the party was changed to Communist Party of Latvia in 1952. For the sake of simplicity, the abbreviation CPL will be used throughout.
- <sup>16</sup> Latvian State Archive (LVA), fonds 101, ser. 6, pp.25–35.
- <sup>17</sup> *Politbiuro TsK VK(b)P i Sovet Ministrov SSSR 1945-1953* [Politburo of the AUCP(B) CC and USSR Cabinet of Ministers] (Moscow, 2002) 5 et passim.
- <sup>18</sup> RGASPI, fonds 17, ser. 163, file 1432, pp. 12–14.
- <sup>19</sup> Iu.P. Zhukov, *Tainy istorii* [Secrets of History], (Moscow, 2000) 4–5.
- <sup>20</sup> LVA, fonds 101, ser. 8, file 41, pp. 44–45.
- <sup>21</sup> LVA – CPL CC, fonds 101, ser. 12, file 126, p. 88.
- <sup>22</sup> A. Iakovlev, *Sumerki* [Twilight], (Moscow, 2003) 31.
- <sup>23</sup> Zhukov 170; Pārsla Eglīte. "Latvijas iedzīvotāju skaita un etniskā sastāva veidošanās XX gadsimtā" [Changes in the Number and Ethnicity of the Inhabitants of Latvia during the Twentieth Century], *Yearbook of the Museum of the Occupation of Latvia 2001* (Rīga, 2002) 100.

- <sup>24</sup> Cp. Sigrid Menchel, *Legitimation und Parteiherrschaft. Zum Paradox von Stabilität und Revolution in der DDR 1945–1989* (Frankfurt a.M., 1992). See also Eric Hobsbawm, *Das Zeitalter der Extreme. Weltgeschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Munich, 1995).
- <sup>25</sup> J. Stajins, *Sociālisma ekonomiskās problēmas PSR Savienībā* [The Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR] (Rīga, 1952).
- <sup>26</sup> Heinrihs Strods, *Latvijas lauksaimniecības vēsture* [History of Latvian Agriculture] (Rīga, 1992) 158–74.
- <sup>27</sup> Gerd Koenen, *Utopie und Säuberung. Was war Kommunismus?* (Berlin, 2000).
- <sup>28</sup> *Istoriia otechestva* [History of the Fatherland], ed. G.B. Polyak, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Moscow, 2002) 432 et passim.
- <sup>29</sup> Eglīte 104; Heinrihs Strods. “Civilokupantu pirmie desanti 1941–1946” [The First Expeditionary Forces of Civilian Occupants], *Okupācijas varu nodarītie postījumi Latvijā 1940–1990* [Devastations Caused by the Occupation Powers in Latvia 1940–1990], ed. Tadeušs Puisāns (Stockholm, 2000) 112–18.
- <sup>30</sup> LVA, fonds 101, ser. 57, file 272, pp. 96–97.
- <sup>31</sup> “The Subjugation by the Russian People,” *Eastern Europe, Russia and Central Asia*. 2003, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (London, 2003) 300.
- <sup>32</sup> See, for example, *Organizatsionnaia struktura Tsentral'nogo komiteta Kommunisticheskoj partii Estonii 1940-1991g* [Organisational Structure of the Central Committee of the Estonian Communist Party 1940–1991] (Tallinn, 2003) 672.
- <sup>33</sup> LVA, fonds 01, ser. 61, file 149, p. 11.
- <sup>34</sup> R. Kh. Simonian, “Strany Baltii i raspad SSSR” [Baltic States and the Disintegration of the USSR], *Voprosy Istorii*, [Issues of History] 12 (2002): 29.
- <sup>35</sup> LVA, Archive of Rīga City Committee of CPL, fonds 102, ser. 62, file 7, pp. 6, 34, 63, 86 etc.
- <sup>36</sup> *Upolnomochennyi SNK SSSR po okhrane voennykh tain v pechaty nachal'nik Glavlita* [Authorized Agent of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR for Protection of Military Secrets in Printing], Circulars No. 1-14. State Archives of the Russian Federation (GARF), fonds 9425, ser. 2, file 61, pp. 1, 4, 10, 14 et. al.
- <sup>37</sup> Heinrihs Strods, ed., *Latvijas Valsts Universitātes vēsture, 1940-1990* [History of the State University of Latvia] (Rīga, 1999) 317. LVA, fonds 917, ser. 1s, file 3, p. 11.
- <sup>38</sup> The Combined List of Dated Publications (1–7) not to Be Used in Public Libraries and the Bookshop Network of the Latvian SSR (Rīga, 1951). No. 1257, 284+20 pages. These secret lists were numbered. No. 1257 is located in the archive of the Museum of the Occupation of Latvia. As testified by the 1965 annual report by the Head of the Main Literature Authority of LSSR Agafonov addressed to the Head of the Main Literature Authority of the USSR Council of Ministers, K. K. Omelchenko, altogether 41 censors working in Rīga and provinces before publishing checked all books, newspapers, magazines, post-cards, labels and other printed matter, as well as works of art, and rejected many of them.
- <sup>39</sup> Gunter Holzweißig, *Zensur ohne Zensor*, (Bonn, 1997).
- <sup>40</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, ed., *Das Zeitalter der Extreme. Weltgeschichte der 20. Jahrhunderts*, (Munich, 1995).
- <sup>41</sup> Olaf Mertelmsman, Introduction, *The Sovietization of the Baltic States 1940–1956* (Tartu, 2003); cp. also John Connelly, *Captive University. The Sovietization of East German, Czech and Polish Higher Education 1945–1956* (London, 2000).

- <sup>42</sup> Claus Leggewie, "Go East. Oder wie amerikanisch ist Ostdeutschland?" *Kursbuch* 141 (2000): 153–79.
- <sup>43</sup> Irina Reznikova, *Pravoslavie na Solovkakh* [Orthodoxy in Solovki] (St. Petersburg, 1994).
- <sup>44</sup> Iakovlev 286.
- <sup>45</sup> Klaus-Dietmar Henke, "Für eine 'Autonomie' des SED-Sozialismus," *Deutschland-Archiv* 31 (1998): 83-86.
- <sup>46</sup> Iakovlev 286.
- <sup>47</sup> Iakovlev 89–89.
- <sup>48</sup> *Informatsiia, diplomatiia, psikhologiiia* [Information, Diplomacy, Psychology] (Moscow, 2002). "Strategy For Russian Council for Domestic and Defense Policies. Thesis, 12 May 1994," *Nezavisimaia Gazeta*, 27 May 1994, documents 3, 10, 8.

## Jānis Riekstiņš, "Colonization and Russification of Latvia 1940–1989," 228–241

- <sup>1</sup> Resolution 2548 (XXIV), IUN 1969, 649 p.
- <sup>2</sup> *Aizvestie. 1941.gada 14.jūnijs* [The Deported. June 14 1941], ed. Elmārs Pelkaus (Rīga, 2001) 14.
- <sup>3</sup> LVA, fonds 270, ser. 1.s, file 113.I, p. 35.
- <sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* p. 43.
- <sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* p. 44.
- <sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* file 234, p. 224.
- <sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* file 304, p. 98.
- <sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* file 377, p. 109.
- <sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* ser. 2, file 11, p. 8.
- <sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* file 1849, p. 315.
- <sup>11</sup> LVA, fonds PA–101, ser. 19, file 76, p. 27.
- <sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* file 116, p. 127.
- <sup>13</sup> LVA, fonds 270, ser. 1.s, file 1267, p. 8.
- <sup>14</sup> LVA, fonds 277, ser. 14, file 106, p. 78.
- <sup>15</sup> LVA, fonds 270, ser. 1.s, file 1905, p. 13.
- <sup>16</sup> Pārsla Eglīte, "Latvijas iedzīvotāju skaita un etniskā sastāva veidošanās XX gadsimtā" [Changes in the Number and Ethnicity of the Inhabitants of Latvia during the Twentieth Century], *Yearbook of the Museum of the Occupation of Latvia 2001* (Rīga, 2002) 95.
- <sup>17</sup> LVA, fonds 277, ser. 35, file 99, p. 41.
- <sup>18</sup> Eglīte 95.
- <sup>19</sup> LVA, fonds 277, ser. 17, file 21, p. 103..
- <sup>20</sup> *Ibid.* file 36, pp. 109, 110.
- <sup>21</sup> LVA, fonds 277, ser. 35, file 99, p. 22.
- <sup>22</sup> *Ibid.* ser. 17, file 445, pp. 1, 2, 3.
- <sup>23</sup> *Ibid.* p. 7.
- <sup>24</sup> *Padomju Latvijas komunisti* 6 (1989): 27.
- <sup>25</sup> *Ibid.* 29.

- <sup>26</sup> Ļ. Zīle, *Strādnieku šķiras izaugsme Padomju Latvijā* [Growth of the Working Class in Soviet Latvia] (Rīga, 1967) 50.
- <sup>27</sup> *Latvijas Padomju Sociālistiskās Republikas Augstākās Padomes un Valdības Ziņotājs* 15 (1989): 349, 353.
- <sup>28</sup> LVA, fonds PA–101, ser. 38, file 3., pp. 95–99.
- <sup>29</sup> See Ilga Apine, *Zakat nomenklatury. Po materialam arkhiva Kompartii Latvii. Baltiiskii arkhiv* (Rīga, 2000) 206–22.

## Daina Bleiere, “Repressions against Farmers in Latvia in 1944–1953,” 242–255

- <sup>1</sup> R. Vīksne and K. Kangeris, eds. *No NKVD līdz KGB. Politiskās prāvas Latvijā 1940–1986: Noziegumos pret padomju valsti apsūdzēto Latvijas iedzīvotāju rādītājs* [From NKVD to KGB: Index of Inhabitants of Latvia Accused of Crimes against the Soviet State] (Rīga, 1999).
- <sup>2</sup> *List of the Repressed. 1941*. Supplement to journal *Latvijas Arhīvi (LA)*, no.1, (Rīga, 1995); *List of the Repressed 1941–1953*. Supplement to *LA*, no.2, (Rīga, 1995); *List of the repressed 1949*. Supplement to *LA*, no.1–4, (Rīga, 1995).
- <sup>3</sup> *Aizvestie. 1941. gada 14. jūnijs* [The Deported. 14 June 1941], Elmārs Pelkaus et al., eds. (Rīga, 2001).
- <sup>4</sup> J. Riekstiņš, “Kulaki” Latvijā (1940.–1953. gads). *Kā varasvīri Latvijā “kulakus” taisīja un kādas sekas tas radīja. Dokumenti un fakti* [“Kulaks” in Latvia. How Officials Made “Kulaks” in Latvia and What Were the Results. Documents and Facts] (Rīga, 1996); J. Riekstiņš, ed. and introd., *Izpostītā zeme. II. PSRS okupācijas armijas nodarītie zaudējumi Latvijas laukiem* [The Wasted Earth II. The Losses Caused to Latvian Agriculture by the USSR Occupation Army] (Rīga, 1997); J. Riekstiņš, *Ekspropriācija (1940.–1959. gads)* [Expropriation (1940–1959)], (Rīga, 1998); *Policy of Occupation Powers in Latvia 1939–1991. A collection of documents*, Elmārs Pelkaus, ed. (Rīga, 1999); *Represijas Latvijas laukos 1944–1949. Dokumenti un materiāli* [Repressions in Rural Areas of Latvia 1944–1949. Documents and Materials], Daina Kļaviņa et al., eds. (Rīga, 2000).
- <sup>5</sup> J. Riekstiņš, “Stalīniskā nodokļu politika – līdzeklis latviešu zemniecības izputināšanai” [Stalinist Taxation Policies – Means to Destroy Latvian Farming], *LVIŽ* 1 (1991): 78–94; J. Riekstiņš, “Represijas labības sagādes kampaņās, 1944.–1949. gads” [Repressions in Campaigns of Grain Collection, 1944–1949], *LVIŽ* 3 (1992): 130–52; A. Krastiņš, “Latvijas zemniecības sociālekonomiskā degradācija kolektivizācijas noslēgumposmā, 1949–1953” [The Socioeconomic Degradation of Latvian Farmers During the Last Collectivization Phase, 1949–1953], Dz. Alks et al., eds. *Komunistiskā totalitārisma un genocīda prakse Latvijā. Zinātniskās konferences materiāli* [The Practices of Communist Totalitarianism and Genocide in Latvia. Materials of a Scholarly Conference] (Rīga, 1992) 144–51; A. Krastiņš, “Lauku saimniecību īpašuma nacionalizācija 1941. gada pavasarī – aizsākums masveida represijām pret Latvijas zemniekiem” [Nationalization of Rural Property in the Spring of 1941 – the Beginning of Mass Repressions against Latvian Farmers], *LVIŽ* 2 (1993): 102–15; A. Krastiņš, “Posta gadi (Latvijas kolhozi 50. gados)” [The Years of Calamity (Kolkhozes of Latvia in the 1950s)], Manuscript, Rīga, 1993, on deposit in the Institute of the History of Latvia; L. Ozola, “Mašīnu-zirgu iznomāšanas punktu veidošana Latvijas PSR 1941. gada pavasarī” [Formation of Farm Machinery

- and Horse Leasing Stations in the Latvian Soviet Republic in the Spring of 1941], *Yearbook of the Museum of the Occupation of Latvia 2002* (Rīga, 2003) 115–25.
- 6 Heinrihs Strods and Matthew Kott, "The File on Operation 'Priboi': A Reassessment of the Mass Deportations of 1949," *Journal of Baltic Studies* 33.1 (2002): 1–31. H. Strods, *Latvijas nacionālo partizānu karš 1944–1956* [The War of the Latvian National Partisans 1944–1956] (Rīga, 1996) 531–36.
  - 7 P. Klišs, "Jēkabpils zemniecība represiju vilnī" [Wave of Repressions against the Farmers of Jēkabpils], *LA* 4 (1997): 24–25; M. Stabrovskā, "Nodevas un nodokļi Augstrozes pagasta Pēterēnu zemnieku sētai 1944.–1949. gadā" [Levies in Kind and Taxes imposed on the Farmstead "Pēterēni" in the Augstroze Parish 1944–1949], *LVIŽ* 3 (1999): 119–28.
  - 8 *LPSR Augstākās Padomes Prezidija Ziņotājs* 4 (1944)
  - 9 Riekstiņš, Foreword, *Represijas Latvijas laukos* 7.
  - 10 Riekstiņš, "Stalīniskā nodokļu politika" 82–83.
  - 11 *Ibid.* 85–86.
  - 12 J. Riekstiņš, "Nodokļu nasta – latviešu zemnieku izputināšanas līdzeklis" [Tax Burden – a Means of Ruining Latvian Farmers], *LA* 2 (1998): 52–69.
  - 13 Riekstiņš, "Kulaki" *Latvijā* 56.
  - 14 J. Riekstiņš, "Kadru tīrīšana pēckara gadu Latvijas laukos" [Post-War Cleansing the Rural Cadres in Latvia], *Latvijas Vēstnesis* 4 November 1998.
  - 15 Quoted from: Ē. Žaģars, *Sociālistiskie pārveidojumi Latvijā 1940.–1941* [Socialist Transformations in Latvia 1940–1941] (Rīga, 1975) 115.
  - 16 LVA – PA, fonds 101, ser. 9, file , pp. 169–72. At this time, the Latvian Communist Party's name still contained the designation "Bolshevik" in its title. For the sake of simplicity, it is omitted in the abbreviation CPL.
  - 17 Resheniia partii i pravitel'stva po khoziaistvennym voprosam [Decisions of the Party and the Government on Economic Issues] (Moscow, 1968) 3: 427–28. The decree was not published in the press.
  - 18 Krastiņš, "Posta gadi" 11.
  - 19 LVA – PA, fonds 123, ser. 7, file 6, pp. 3–14.
  - 20 Krastiņš, "Posta gadi" 23.
  - 21 *Ibid.* 22–23.
  - 22 LVA – PA, fonds 101, ser. 16, file 9, pp. 80–81.
  - 23 Vīksne and Kangeris 972.
  - 24 Krastiņš, "Posta gadi" 47.
  - 25 LVA, fonds 938, ser 1s, file 82, p. 109; file 83, pp. 22, 47, 80, 127; file 84, pp. 15, 63, 113, 171; file 85, pp. 29, 82, 113, 155; file 86, pp. 23, 60, 96, 135; file 87, p. 33.
  - 26 Zigmārs Turčinskis, "Ziemeļvidzemes nacionālie partizāni: 1945.–1953. gads" [The National Partisans of Northern Vidzeme: 1945–1953], *CHL* 10: 340–41.
  - 27 R. Spridzāns, "Latvijas melnākā diena" [The Blackest Day of Latvia], List of the Repressed 1949, Supplement to *Latvijas Arhīvi* 1 (1995): 2.
  - 28 Pelkaus, *Policy of Occupation Powers* 292.
  - 29 Spridzāns 3.
  - 30 Riekstiņš, "Kulaki" *Latvijā* 93.

- <sup>31</sup> Spridzāns 3–4.
- <sup>32</sup> Sindija Dimanta and Indulis Zālīte, “Četrdesmito gadu deportāciju struktūranālieze” [Structural Analysis of the Deportations in the 1940s], *Okupācijas varu nodarītie postījumi Latvijā 1940–1990*, ed. Tadeušs Puisāns (Stockholm, 2000) 142.
- <sup>33</sup> *Represijas Latvijas laukos* 78.
- <sup>34</sup> LVA – PA, fonds 101, ser. 9, file 50, p. 135.
- <sup>35</sup> *Ibid.* p. 141.
- <sup>36</sup> A. Traiņins, V. Meņšagins and Z. Višinska, *KPFSR Kriminālkodekss. Komentārs* [Criminal Code of the RSFSR. Commentary], (Rīga, 1946) 115.
- <sup>37</sup> *Ibid.* 116.
- <sup>38</sup> LVA, fonds 938, ser. 1s, file 67, pp. 9–11.
- <sup>39</sup> *Ibid.* file 63, pp. 47, 80, 127; file 84, pp. 15, 64, 118, 168; file 85, pp. 33, 78, 110, 153; file 86, p. 26.
- <sup>40</sup> Krastiņš, “Posta gadi” 18.
- <sup>41</sup> LVA, fonds 938, ser. 1s, file 67, p. 9.
- <sup>42</sup> *Ibid.* file 70, p. 133.
- <sup>43</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 206–07.
- <sup>44</sup> *Ibid.* file 69, p. 138 (both sides).
- <sup>45</sup> *Ibid.* p. 141.
- <sup>46</sup> LVA – PA, fonds 101, ser. 8, file 63a, pp. 21–22.
- <sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

## Aleksandrs Ivanovs, “Sovietization of Latvian Historiography 1944–1959: Overview,” 256–270

- <sup>1</sup> Indulis Ronis, “Latvijas vēstures institūts laikmeta kontekstā” [The History Institute of Latvia in the Context of Recent Times], *LVĪŽ* 4 (1995): 32; Iurii Afanas’ev, “Fenomen sovetskoj istoriografii” [The Phenomenon of Soviet Historiography], *Sovetskaia istoriografiiā* [Soviet Historiography], ed. Iurii Afanas’ev (Moscow, 1996) 9.
- <sup>2</sup> Heinrihs Strods, “Latvijas vēstures zinātne (1945–1990)” [Historical Research in Latvia (1945–1990)], *LV* 1 (1991): 3.
- <sup>3</sup> Ianis Zutis, “Razvitie istoricheskoi nauki v Latvii” [Development of Historical Research in Latvia], *IANLSSR*, 7 (1955): 57–77; Jānis Zutis, “PSRS un Latvijas PSR vēstures zinātnes sasniegumi” [The Achievements of Historical Research in the USSR and Latvian SSR], *LPSRZAV*, 10 (1957): 55–74; Anatolijs Bīrons and Vasilij Dorošenko, *Vēstures zinātnes attīstība Padomju Latvijā* [Development of Historical Research in Soviet Latvia], (Rīga, 1966); Anatolii Biron and Vasilii Doroshenko, *Sovetskaia istoriografiiā Latvijā* [Soviet Historiography of Latvia], (Rīga, 1970); Bruno Toman, *Istoriografiiā istorii Kommunisticheskoj partii Latvii: (konets XIXv.–nachalo 60-kh godov XXv.)* [Historiography of the Communist Party of Latvia (from the Late 19<sup>th</sup> Century to the Early 1960s)], (Rīga, 1983).
- <sup>4</sup> “Bourgeois” historiography was criticized in many publications, which have completely lost their importance for scholarship. The most typical example of such works is a collection of articles published by the Academy of Sciences of the Latvian SSR: Kārlis Strazdiņš et al., eds., *Buržuāziskie nacionālisti – Latvijas vēstures viltotāji* [Bourgeois Nationalists – Falsifiers of Latvian History], 2nd ed. (Rīga, 1953).

- <sup>5</sup> See, for example, articles dedicated to an anniversary of the Institute of the History of Latvia in *LVĪŽ*, 4 (1995). See also: Strods (note 2) and Heinrihs Strods, *Ievadlekcija Latvijas vēsturē* [Introductory Lecture in the History of Latvia], (Rīga, 1990); Aleksandrs Ivanovs and Josifs Šteimans, *Latgales vēstures historiogrāfija (1946–1999)* [Historiography of Latgale] (Rēzekne, 1999) 46–98; and others.
- <sup>6</sup> See the collection edited by Iurii Afanas'ev, *Sovetskaia istoriografiia* [Soviet Historiography] (note 1); G. D. Alekseeva, A. N. Sakharov and L. A. Sidorov, eds., *Istoricheskaia nauka Rossii v XX veke* [Historical Research in Russia in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century], (Moscow, 1997).
- <sup>7</sup> Anatole G. Mazour, *The Writing of History in the Soviet Union*, (Stanford, CA., 1971); Samuel H. Baron and Nancy Whittier Heer, eds., *Windows on the Russian Past. Essays on Soviet Historiography since Stalin* (Columbus, OH., 1977).
- <sup>8</sup> Lowell Tillett, *The Great Friendship: Soviet Historians on the Non-Russian Nationalities* (Chapel Hill, 1969); Kenneth E. Nyirady, "Historians and the Nationality Dissatisfaction," *Nationality Group Survival in Multi-Ethnic States: Shifting Support Patterns in the Soviet Baltic Region*, ed. Edward Allworth (New York; London 1977) 58–82.
- <sup>9</sup> For seminal papers see: Aleksandrs Ivanovs, "Vēstures zinātne kā padomju politikas instruments: Historiogrāfijas konceptuālais līmenis" [Historical Research as an Instrument of Soviet Policy: The Conceptual Level of Historiography], *CHL* 9: 59–70; Aleksandrs Ivanovs, "Latvijas PSR historiogrāfija (konceptuāls pārskats)" [Historiography of the Latvian SSR (A Conceptual Review)], *LV* 2 (2003): 75–83, *LV* 3 (2003): 69–77.
- <sup>10</sup> Anatolii Biron and Margarita Biron, *Stanovlenie sovetskoj istoriografii Latvii. 20-ye i 30-ye gody XX veka* [Development of Soviet Latvian Historiography. 1920s–1930s] (Rīga, 1981) 272.
- <sup>11</sup> Among the most typical publications one can mention: *Proletāriskā revolūcija Latvijā*, 1: *Strādnieku šķiras partijas sākotne. LKP vēstures materiāli* [The Proletarian Revolution in Latvia, 1: The Beginnings of the Party of the Workers' Class. Materials of CPL History] (Moscow, 1924); Pēteris Stučka, *1905. gads Latvijā* [The Year 1905 in Latvia], (Moscow, 1926); Kārlis Šķilters, *Latkoloniju vēsture*, 1: *Izceļošana no Baltijas un koloniju pirmsākums* [The History of Latvian Colonies, 1: Emigration from the Baltic and the Beginnings of Colonies] (Moscow, 1928); Petr Stuchka, *V bor'be za Oktjabr': Sb. statei* [In the Struggle for October: Collection of Papers] (Rīga, 1960) and others.
- <sup>12</sup> Ronis 24–25; Toman 179, 184–87.
- <sup>13</sup> Toman 185; Ronis 24.
- <sup>14</sup> As Strods, "Latvijas vēstures zinātne" 3, points out, the following historians departed from Latvia in 1941–44: professors Fr. Balodis, A. Švābe, E. Dunsdorfs, assistant professors E. Šturms, B. Ābers, V. Ginters, ethnographer Z. Ligers a.o.
- <sup>15</sup> During World War II, a plan of *Latvijas PSR vēsture* [History of the Latvian SSR] was elaborated (See: Toman 191), and the first volume of the monograph was published in 1952 (in Russian) and 1953 (in Latvian). See: *Latvijas PSR vēsture* [History of the Latvian SSR], vol. 1: *No vissenākajiem laikiem līdz 1860. gadam* [From the Ancient Times to 1860], ed. Jānis Zutis (Rīga, 1953); vol 2: *No 1861. gada līdz 1917. gada martam* [From 1861 to March 1917], ed. Jānis Krastiņš (Rīga, 1955); vol 3: *No 1917. gada līdz 1950. gadam* [From 1917 to 1950], ed. Kārlis Strazdiņš (Rīga, 1959).
- <sup>16</sup> The official status of the summarizing monographs in the historiography of the USSR has been noted by Western historiography (Tillett ix, 420) It is not a coincidence that this history was published both in the Russian and Latvian languages. The Russian version is to be regarded as a basis, since

the Russian language volumes were published earlier (1952–58) than the Latvian language texts (1953–59). The practice of publishing historical research in both languages attests to the special importance attributed to these works by the Soviet government and party institutions, regarding them as a mirror of the official ideology.

- 17 The project of the first two chapters was drafted in 1957 (Toman 239) and published fully in 1961: *Latvijas Komunistiskās partijas vēstures apcerējumi* [Historical Treatises of the Communist Party of Latvia], part 1 (Rīga, 1961). This part in Russian was published in 1962.
- 18 Valentīns Šteinbergs, *Latvijas darbaļaužu cīņa par Padomju varu 1917. gadā* [The Struggle of the Latvian Working People for Soviet Rule in 1917] (Rīga, 1957); Aleksandr Drizulis, *Velikaia Oktabr'skaia sotsialisticheskaia revolutsiia v Latvii* [The Great October Socialist Revolution in Latvia] (Rīga, 1957); Ian Krastyn', *Sovetskaia Latvija v 1919 godu* [Soviet Latvia in 1919] (Rīga, 1957).
- 19 For example, Tillett 228–30.
- 20 Some publications dared to deviate from the requirements of Marxist methodology. As an example can be mentioned a monograph on the nineteenth-century “Young Latvian” movement, which took its cues from similar European movements, such as Mazzini’s Young Italy (1833): Georgs Libermanis, *Jaunlatvieši: No latviešu ekonomiskās domas vēstures* [Young Latvians: from the History of Latvian Economic Thought] (Rīga, 1957). According to Strods, “Latvijas vēstures zinātne” 5, it “laid the foundation for dissident research literature on Latvia’s history.” However, on the whole such works were an exception.
- 21 Ronis 25–26.
- 22 For more detail see: Liubov’ Zile, ed., *Institut istorii partii pri TsK KP Latvii – filial Instituta marksizma-leninizma pri TsK KPSS* [The Institute of Party History of CPL CC: Affiliate of Marxism-Leninism Institute of CPSU CC] (Rīga, 1980).
- 23 Partial liberalization of the work of archives began in 1956, based on 7 February 1956 resolution of the USSR Council of Ministers. For more detail see: A.B. Elpat’evskii, “O rassекреchivani arkhivnykh dokumentov” [On the Declassification of Archival Documents], *Otechestvennye arkhivy* 5 (1992): 16.
- 24 Strods, “Latvijas vēstures zinātne” 3.
- 25 Afanas’ev 28–30.
- 26 Ibid. 22.
- 27 Heinrihs Strods, “Cenzūras žņaugos” [In the Stranglehold of Censorship], *Mājas Viesis* 25 October 2002. For more detail see: T.M. Gorjaeva, *Politicheskaia tsenzura v SSSR. 1917–1991gg.* [Political Censorship in the USSR. 1917–1991] (Moscow, 2002) 276–309.
- 28 Strods, “Latvijas vēstures zinātne” 3; Strods, *Ievadlekcija* 8, 11; Ronis 27–29.
- 29 In such a way M. Iaroshevskii described the tragic destiny of science under the Soviet rule. See M. G. Iaroshevskii, “Stalinizm i sud’by sovetskoj nauki” [Stalinism and the Destinies of Soviet Science], *Repressirovannaja nauka* [The Repressed Science], ed. M. G. Iaroshevskii (Leningrad, 1991) 10.
- 30 According to some scholars, the Soviet historical methodology cannot be classified as Marxist since it was eclectic and non-Marxist in its essence (Aleksieva et al., eds., *Istoricheskaia nauka Rossii* 282, 284). Certainly, this methodology can be best described either as “the methodology of the Brief Course” or “the Soviet methodology.” However, it must be taken into consideration that the methodology called itself “Marxist.” Moreover, it seems that there was and is no such thing as “the real and pure” Marxist methodology (as opposed to the Soviet methodology). Only its Soviet version existed. Therefore, hereafter this methodology will conditionally be referred to as Marxist.

- <sup>31</sup> N. N. Maslov, "Kratkii kurs istorii VKP(b)' – entsiklopediia i ideologija stalinizma i poststalinizma: 1938–1988gg ["The Brief Course of the History of the CPSU(B) – Encyclopedia and Ideology of Stalinism and Post-Stalinism], *Sovetskaia istoriografii* [Soviet Historiography], ed. Afanas'ev (Moscow, 1996) 261, 265.
- <sup>32</sup> The most important treatises are: Jānis Zutis, *Latvijas aizvēstures problēmas* [Issues of Ancient History of Latvia] (Rīga, 1948); Jānis Zutis, *Agrie viduslaiki Latvijā: No IX līdz XII gadsimtam* [The Early Middle Ages in Latvia: from the 9th to 12th century] (Rīga, 1948); Jānis Zutis, *Krievu un Baltijas tautu cīņas pret vācu agresiju* [The Struggle of the Russian and Baltic Peoples against German Aggression] (Rīga, 1948); Aleksandrs Drīzulis, *Latvija Lielās Oktobra sociālistiskās revolūcijas sagatavošanas un norises periodā* [Latvia during the Period of the Preparation and Implementation of the Great October Socialist Revolution] (Rīga, 1951); Jānis Krastiņš, *Latvija fašistiskās diktatūras laikā (1934–1940)* [Latvia during the Period of Fascist Dictatorship (1934–1940)] (Rīga, 1949); Aleksandrs Drīzulis, *Cīņa par fašistiskās diktatūras gāšanu un Padomju Latvijas nodibināšana 1940. gadā* [Struggle for the Overthrow of the Fascist Dictatorship and the Establishment of Soviet Latvia in 1940] (Rīga, 1951); Aleksandrs Drīzulis, *Padomju Latvijas sociālistiskās celtniecības pirmie soļi (1940–1941)* [The First Steps in the Construction of Socialist Soviet Latvia (1940–1941)] (Rīga, 1952); A. Drīzulis and R. Tizenberga, *Latvijas PSR Padomju Savienības Lielā Tēvijas kara laikā (1941–1945)* [Latvian SSR in the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union (1941–1945)] (Rīga, 1954) and others.
- <sup>33</sup> The "rehabilitation" of tsarist Russia and simultaneously also the revival of some precepts of pre-Soviet historiography began in USSR historiography in the 1930s. It could have signaled the return of the official ideology to the chauvinist and nationalist (patriotic) ideology of the Russian Empire. G.D. Alekseeva et al., eds., *Istoricheskaia nauka Rossii* [Historical Research in Russia] ... 217-218, 221, 225, 234; Tillett.
- <sup>34</sup> The earliest instance of the integration of the Russian historiography into Latvian historiography can be observed already in the writings of the Young Latvians in the second half of the nineteenth century. This topic requires a special study.
- <sup>35</sup> Ronis 32. This idea is substantiated in more detail by Mazour xiii *et passim*. He believes that references to Marx, Engels and Lenin, judgements on the process of history, the class struggle etc. in the spirit of Marxist methodology formed only the surface layer of historical research, oftentimes failing to influence the interpretation of the evidence or research into concrete facts of history.
- <sup>36</sup> *Latvijas PSR vēsture* [History of the Latvian SSR] 1: 292–94.
- <sup>37</sup> For more detail see: Aleksandrs Ivanovs, "Latgales vēsture Senās Krievzemes hronikās: historiogrāfisks aspekts" [The History of Latgale in Old Russian Chronicles: Historiographic Aspects], *Humanitāro Zinātņu Vēstnesis*, 1 (2002): 89-98; Aleksandrs Ivanovs, Pēteris Kivrāns, Inese Poča and Kārlis Počs, *Apcerējumi par Latgales vēstures historiogrāfiju līdz 1945. gadam* (Essays on the Historiography of the History of Latgale to 1945) (Rēzekne, 2003) 36–50, 69–102.
- <sup>38</sup> *Polnoe sobranie russkikh letopisei* [Complete Collection of Russian Annals] (Moscow, 1962) 1: col. 11.
- <sup>39</sup> This trend is particularly striking in the Novgorod and Pskov Chronicles that paint a detailed picture of warfare, collection of tribute, pillaging in the Eastern part of the territory of present-day Latvia. See, for example, Arsenii Nasonov, ed. *Novgorodskaia pervaja letopis' starshego i mladshhego izvodov* [The First Annal of Novgorod, the Oldest and the Newest Recensions] (Moscow; Leningrad, 1950)

- 20, 36, 203, 204, 225; Arsenii Nasonov, ed. *Pskovskie letopisi* [Annals of Pskov] (Moscow, 1955) 2: 22, 88, 92–94, 144–45, 203, 237–39, 245–48, 261–62.
- 40 Vasilii Tatishchev, *Istoriia Rossiiskaia* [Russian History], 8 vols., vol. 1, (Moscow, 1994): 208, vol. 2 (Moscow, 1995): 77, 241, 264–65, vol. 3 (Moscow, 1995): 119, 152, 153, 180, 185, 250, 260.
- 41 Nikolai Karamzin, *Istoriia gosudarstva Rossiiskogo* [History of the State of Russia] (Moscow, 1988) 1.2: 13.
- 42 Anton Iasinskii, *Prichiny padeniia drevnei Livonii: Publichnaia lektsiia* [Causes of the Collapse of the Old Livonia: a Public Lecture], (Iur'ev, 1898) 31–32; Evgraf Cheshichin, *Kratkaia istoriia Pribaltiiskogo kraia* [Brief History of the Baltic Region], 2nd ed. (Rīga, 1894) 60.
- 43 Jānis Zutis, *Baltijas jautājums XVIII gadsimtā* [The Issue of the Baltic in the 18<sup>th</sup> century] (Rīga, 1951); Ianis Zutis, “Ob istoricheskom znachenii prisoedineniia Latviu k Rossii” [On the Historical Significance of Latvia’s Joining Russia], *Voprosy istorii* 7 (1954): 95–105.
- 44 The view has become entrenched in historiography that the formula of the “lesser evil” was proposed by M. Nechkina in the journal *Voprosy istorii* in April 1951, at the time when a discussion was taking place in the USSR historiography on the historic significance of the non-Russian peoples joining Russia. (Afanas'ev, ed. *Sovetskaia istoriografiia* [Soviet Historiography] 156, 556). It must be noted that as early as 1948 Zutis, *Agrie viduslaiki* 45–46, proposes the following thesis: “It must be concluded that between the ninth and twelfth centuries the ancient Latvian tribes were constantly threatened by foreign invaders and hunters for tribute [...]. In view of the political situation of that time, it must be acknowledged that the submission to the tributary overlordship of Russians was the ‘lesser evil’ for the Baltic tribes. Such conclusion becomes understandable through impartial evaluation of the influence of Slavic culture on the life of ancient Latvians.”
- 45 Sergei Solov'ev, *Istoriia Rossii s drevneishikh vremen* [History of Russia from the Ancient Times], Soch. v 18-ti kn. [Works in 18 Volumes] (Moscow, 1988) 1: 62–63.
- 46 For example, see V. E. Danilevich, *Ocherk istorii Polotskoi zemli do kontsa XIV stoletia* [An Outline of the History of the Land of Polock till the Late 14<sup>th</sup> Century] (Kiev, 1896) 7.
- 47 Zutis, *Latvijas aizvēstures problēmas* 22.
- 48 Ibid. 35–42; Ia. Endzelin, “Drevneishie slaviano-baltiiskie iazykovye sviazi” [The First Slavo-Baltic Linguistic Contacts], *IANLSSR* 3(1952): 33–46.
- 49 Zutis, *Latvijas aizvēstures problēmas* 37.
- 50 Tatishchev 1: 229; Karamzin 1.1: 51–54, notes 80, 202.
- 51 Petr Keppen, *O proiskhozhdenii, iazyke i literature litovskikh narodov* [On the Origins, Language and Literature of the Lithuanian Peoples] (St. Petersburg, 1827) 19, 33; Iurii Venelin, *Okruzhnye zhiteli Baltiiskogo moria, to est' lety i slaviane* [The Peoples on the Baltic Coast, i.e. Letts and Slavs] (Moscow, 1846) 30.
- 52 A. Sementovskii, *Etnograficheskii obzor Vitebskoi gubernii* [Ethnographic Survey of Vitebsk Province] (St Petersburg, 1872) 27–28, footnote.
- 53 Solov'ev 613.
- 54 Probably the only example is Nasonov, ed. *Novgorodskaia pervaiia letopis'* [The First Annals of Novgorod] 74, 285.
- 55 Zutis, *Krievu un Baltijas tautu cīņas* [The Struggles of the Russian and Baltic Peoples]; Ian Krastyn', *Bor'ba latyshskogo naroda protiv nemetskikh zakhvatchikov i porabotitelei* [The Struggle of the

- Latvian People Against the German Invaders and Enslavers] ([Moscow], 1946) 3–4; V.I. Savchenko, *Istoricheskie svyazi latyshskogo i russkogo narodov* [Historical Connections between the Latvian and Russian Peoples] (Rīga, 1959) 15–16. Tillett 306–08 *et passim*, has done a particularly detailed and convincing study of the development of the historiographic myth of the friendship among the peoples of the USSR, its expressions in historical works, its role in the implementation of Soviet nationalities policies and the development of “the Soviet people.”
- <sup>56</sup> *Latvijas PSR vēsture* [History of Latvian SSR], 3 vols. In the 1960s–80s this periodization was developed further: the history of Latvia during the Soviet occupation was divided in more detailed phases.
- <sup>57</sup> For more detail see *Institūt istorii Akademii nauk Latviiskoi SSR* [Institute of History of the Latvian SSR Academy of Sciences] (Rīga, 1976).
- <sup>58</sup> Afanas'ev 21.
- <sup>59</sup> *Ibid.* 22–23; Strods, “Latvijas vēstures zinātne” 4.
- <sup>60</sup> Nyirady 65–66.
- <sup>61</sup> Strods, *Ievadlekcija* 9.
- <sup>62</sup> Zutis, *Baltijas jautājums*; Janis Zutis, *Očerki po istoriografii Latvii* [Essays on the Historiography of Latvia], 1: *Pribaltiisko-nemetskaia istoriografiia* [Baltic-German Historiography] (Rīga, 1949); Marģers Stepermanis, *Zemnieku nemieri Vidzemē, 1750–1784* [Peasant Uprisings in Vidzeme] (Rīga, 1956); Vasili Doroshenko, *Očerki agrarnoi istorii Latvii v XVI veke* [Essays on the Agrarian History of Latvia in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century] (Rīga, 1960); Boleslav Brezhgo, *Očerki po istorii krest'ianskikh dvizhenii v Latgalii, 1577–1907* [Essays on the History of Peasant Movements in Latgale, 1577–1905] (Rīga, 1956). See also works by S. Cimermanis, R. Deņisova, L. Jefremova, Dz. Liepiņa, H. Strods, E. Šnore, A. Zariņa and other scholars.
- <sup>63</sup> An exception were works by B. Brežgo, V. Dorošenko, J. Jenšs, J. Zemzaris.
- <sup>64</sup> It is significant that during the Soviet occupation the best collections of sources were published in the late 1940s and early 1950s when the historiographic tradition of the independence period of Latvia still was strong: Garlībs Merķelis, *Latvieši, sevišķi Vidzemē, filozofiskā gadsimteņa beigās* [Latvians, Particularly in Vidzeme at the End of the Philosophic Century] (Rīga, 1953); Aleksandrs Drīzulis, ed., *Manaseina revīzija* [Manasein's Revision] (Rīga, 1949).
- <sup>65</sup> In response to the publication of the secret protocols in the USA (See *Nazi–Soviet Relations, 1939–1941: Documents from the Archives of the German Foreign Office*, Raymond J. Sontag and James S. Beddie, eds., Washington DC, 1948) an official “inquest” (*Fal'sifikatory istorii* [Falsifiers of History] Moscow, 1948) was issued. These contained therein remained unchanged in the official historiography of Latvia until the late 1980s.
- <sup>66</sup> Boļeslavs Brežgo, *Latgales zemnieki pēc dzimtbūšanas atcelšanas 1861.–1914.* [Peasants of Latgale after the Abolishment of Serfdom 1861–1914] (Rīga, 1954); Mihails Kozins, *Zemnieku kustība Latvijā XIX gs. 60. gados* [Peasant Movement in Latvia in the 1860s] (Rīga, 1958). See also the works of A. Mieriņa, H. Strods and other historians.
- <sup>67</sup> Jānis Kalnbērziņš, *Padomju Latvijas desmit gadi* [Ten Years of Soviet Latvia] (Rīga, 1950); Vilis Lācis, “Latviešu tauta Padomju Savienības brālīgo tautu saimē” [The Latvian People in the Fraternity of Peoples of the Soviet Union], *Padomju Latvijas 15 gadi* [15 Years of Soviet Latvia], comp. P. Dzērve (Rīga, 1955) 8–26; Fricis Deglavs, “Sociālistiskās celtniecības sākums Padomju Latvijā” [The Beginning of the Construction of Socialism in Soviet Latvia] *ibid.* 27–36; Arvīds Pelše, “Lielā

- Oktobra sociālistiskā revolūcija un tās nozīme Baltijas tautu vēsturē” [The Great October Socialist Revolution and its Significance in the History of the Baltic Peoples], *Cīņa par Padomju varu Latvijā* [Struggle for Soviet Rule in Latvia] (Rīga, 1955) 7–22, etc.
- 68 Aleksandrs Drīzulis, “Padomju varas nodibināšana un sociālisma celtniecības pirmie soļi Latvijā (1940.–1941.)” [Establishment of Soviet Rule and the First Steps in the Construction of Socialism in Latvia], *Cīņa par Padomju varu Latvijā* 97–98, 101–104, 106, 109, 112.
- 69 For example, see: Drīzulis, *Cīņa par fašistiskās diktatūras gāšanu* 39–70; Aleksandr Drizul, *Ocherki istorii rabocheho dvizheniia v Latvii (1920 – 1940gg.)* [Essays on the History of the Workers’ Movement in Latvia (1920–1940)] (Moscow, 1959) 157–64; Josifs Šteimanis, *Jūnija dienas: 1940. gada jūnija notikumi Latvijā* [The Days in June: The June 1940 Events in Latvia] (Rīga, 1960) 60–76.
- 70 *Latvijas PSR vēsture* 3: 373–90.
- 71 *Ibid.* 414.
- 72 Kalnbērziņš 13–23, 31–33, 37 *et passim*.
- 73 There are numerous works dealing with the revolutionary movement and the activities of the CPL from the 1920s to the 1940s. See: Krastiņš, *Latvija fašistiskās diktatūras laikā*; Jānis Krastiņš, “Strādnieku kustība buržuāziskajā Latvijā (1920.–1940.)” [Workers’ Movement in Bourgeois Latvia (1920–1940)], *Cīņa par Padomju varu Latvijā* 55–78; Aleksandrs Drīzulis, *Cīņa par brīvību: No strādnieku kustības vēstures buržuāziskajā Latvijā* [Struggle for Freedom: From the History of the Workers’ Movement in Bourgeois Latvia] (Rīga, 1956); Josifs Šteimanis, *Latvijas Komunistiskā partija cīņā par strādnieku šķiras vairākumu (1920.–1940.)* [The Communist Party of Latvia in the Struggle for Majority Support in the Working Class (1920–1940)] (Rīga, 1957); Drizul, *Ocherki istorii rabocheho dvizheniia v Latvii*.
- 74 *Latvijas PSR vēsture* 3: 389–90.
- 75 Drīzulis, *Cīņa par fašistiskās diktatūras gāšanu* 52.
- 76 *Latvijas PSR vēsture* 3: 414.
- 77 *Ibid.* 519.
- 78 *Ibid.* 490, 532; Drīzulis, *Padomju Latvijas sociālistiskās celtniecības pirmie soļi*; S.A. Udachin, *Zemel’naia reforma v Sovetskoj Latvii* [Land Reform in Soviet Latvia] (Rīga, 1948) 363–78; J. Ostrovs, *Kultūras revolūcija Latvijā* [Cultural Revolution in Latvia] (Rīga, 1960); Kārlis Strazdiņš, Jānis Krastiņš and Aleksandrs Drīzulis, eds., *Sociālisma uzvara Latvijā: Padomju Latvijas 20. gadadienai veltīts rakstu krājums* [The Victory of Socialism in Latvia: Collection of Essays Dedicated to the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Soviet Latvia] (Rīga, 1960).
- 79 Kārlis Strazdiņš, “Par latviešu sociālistiskās nācijas izveidošanos” [On the Development of the Latvian Socialist Nation], *Cīņa par Padomju varu Latvijā* 183–85.
- 80 J. Vanags, “Padomju Latvijas lauksaimniecība 15 gados” [The Agriculture of Soviet Latvia in 15 Years], *Padomju Latvijas 15 gadi* 163–65; A. Sumins, “Latvijas sociālistiskās lauksaimniecības divdesmit gadi” [Twenty Years of Socialist Agriculture in Latvia], Kārlis Strazdiņš et al., eds., *Sociālisma uzvara Latvijā* 90–93.
- 81 *Latvijas PSR vēsture* 3: 379–80, 402–03, 480–81, 489–90, 511, 518–19.
- 82 *Ibid.* 403.
- 83 *Ibid.* 427–31, 437, 447; Drīzulis and Tizenberga 24, 30, 69; Krastyn’, *Bor’ba latyshskogo naroda protiv nemetskikh zakhvatchikov* 176–78.

- <sup>84</sup> See Vilis Samsons, *Partizāņu kustība Ziemeļlatvijā Lielajā Tēvijas karā* [Partisan Movement in Northern Latvia during the Great Patriotic War] (Rīga, 1950); Vilis Samsons, *Kurzemes partizāņi (1941.–1945.)* [Partisans of Kurzeme (1941–1945)] (Rīga, 1956).
- <sup>85</sup> Drīzulis and Tizenberga 33; *Latvijas PSR vēsture* 3: 431. It must be noted that Soviet Latvian historiography did not use the term “Holocaust.”
- <sup>86</sup> R. Tizenberga, “Latviešu tauta cīņā pret vācu okupantiem Lielā Tēvijas kara laikā (1941.–1945.)” [The Struggle of the Latvian Nation against the German Occupants during the Great Patriotic War], *Cīņa par Padomju varu Latvijā* 168.
- <sup>87</sup> Ronis 31.
- <sup>88</sup> Nyirady 58.

### **Aldis Bergmanis, Ritvars Jansons, Indulis Zālīte, “The Activities and the Main Repressive Tasks of Latvian SSR Agencies of National Security 1944–1956,” 271–285**

- <sup>1</sup> K. Endriu and O. Gordievskii, *KGB: Istorii vneshnepoliticheskikh operatsii ot Lenina do Gorbacheva* [KGB: History of Domestic Policy Operations from Lenin to Gorbachev] (Moscow, 1992) 355.
- <sup>2</sup> Nicholas Werth, “A State against Its People: Violence, Repression, and Terror in the Soviet Union,” Stéphane Courtois et al., *The Black Book of Communism*, transl. Jonathan Murphy and Mark Kramer (Cambridge, MA., 1999) 232.
- <sup>3</sup> “Latvijas Komunistiskās partijas Centrālās Komitejas VI plēnuma stenogramma. 1953. gada 22.–23. jūnijs” [Stenogram of VI Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Latvia. 22–23 June 1953], *LV* 1 (1992): 40.
- <sup>4</sup> “LPSR Augstākās Padomes Prezidija 1989. gada 8. jūnija dekrēts ‘Par četrdesmitajos un piecdesmitajos gados no Latvijas PSR izsūtīto pilsoņu rehabilitāciju’” [The 8 June 1989 Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Council of LSSR “On the Rehabilitation of Citizens Deported from the Latvian SSR in the 1940s and 50s”], *LPSR AP un Valdības Ziņotājs* [Bulletin of the Supreme Council and Government of LSSR] 25 (1989): 661.
- <sup>5</sup> “LR likums ‘Par nelikumīgi represēto personu rehabilitāciju’ 03.08.1990” [Republic of Latvia Law “On Rehabilitation of Unlawfully Repressed Persons” 3 August 1990], *LR AP un Valdības Ziņotājs* 34 (1990): 1742–43.
- <sup>6</sup> I. Petravičiute, “Sovietinu saugumu struktūra ir funkcijas Lietuvoje (1941–1954),” *Genocidas ir rezistencija* 1 (1997): 69.
- <sup>7</sup> LVA, PA fonds 15500, ser. 2, file 7786, p. 2.
- <sup>8</sup> *Vysshie i tsentral'nye gosudarstvennye organy Latviiskoi SSR 1940-1985 gg.* [The Supreme and Central Authorities of the Latvian SSR 1940–1985] (Rīga, 1989) 163.
- <sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* 162–63.
- <sup>10</sup> This section was contributed by Māris Krūmiņš.
- <sup>11</sup> *Liubianka VChK – OGPU – NKVD – MGB – MVD – KGB 1917–1960*, comp. Alexander Kokurin and Nikolai Petrov (Moscow, 1997) 276.
- <sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* 109.

- <sup>13</sup> *Sovetskie organy gosudarstvennoi bezopasnosti v Velikoi otechestvennoi voine/zhzh Sbornik dokumentov i materialov* [Soviet Authorities of State Security in the Great Patriotic War: Collection of Documents and Sources], vol. 4 (Moscow, 1988): 1007.
- <sup>14</sup> LVA, PA fonds 302, ser. 2, file 43, p. 5.
- <sup>15</sup> K. Radziņš, *Mēs nebijām bandīti, bet partizāni* [We Were Partisans, not Bandits], Diena 4 September 1993.
- <sup>16</sup> Republic of Latvia Criminal Case no. 86000198.
- <sup>17</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>18</sup> *Mezhdunarodnoe pravo v izbrannykh dokumentakh* [International Law in Selected Documents], vol. 3 (Moscow, 1957): 41–53.
- <sup>19</sup> “Slepenis dienesta ziņojums” [A Secret Internal Report], LA 1 (1994): 37–38.
- <sup>20</sup> Archive of the Information Centre of the Interior Ministry of the Republic of Latvia, fonds 1, ser. 3, file 2, p. 40.
- <sup>21</sup> *Kontrrazvedyvatel'nyi slovar'* [Counterintelligence Dictionary] (Moscow, 1972) 7.
- <sup>22</sup> Heinrihs Strods, *Latvijas nacionālo partizānu karš* [The War of Latvia's National Partisans] (Rīga, 1996) 239.
- <sup>23</sup> Vysshiaia vsesoiuznaia shkola gosudarstvennoi bezopasnosti pri SM SSSR [The Highest All-Union School for State Security under the USSR Council of Ministers], *Istoriia sovetskikh organov gosudarstvennoi bezopasnosti* [History of Soviet Authorities for State Security] (Moscow, 1977) 522, 612.
- <sup>24</sup> The Hague Convention, Hague Convention IV (18 October 1907). Convention Respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land Articles 1–56. Entry into Force: 26 January 1910 ([www.lib.byu.edu/~rdh/wwi/hague/hague5](http://www.lib.byu.edu/~rdh/wwi/hague/hague5), 2004.10.06)
- <sup>25</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>26</sup> V. N. Zemskov, “Prinuditel'naia migratsiia iz Pribaltiki v 1940–1950-kh godakh” [Compulsory Migration from the Baltic in 1940s–50s], *Otechestvennyi arkhiv* 1 (1993): 4–5.
- <sup>27</sup> Daina Bleiere, “Represijas pret zemniecību Latvijā 1944.–1953. gadā” [Repressions against Farmers in Latvia in 1944–1953], CHL 3: 568–69 (see also her article in this volume); Strods 531.
- <sup>28</sup> The Order of the Red Flag for successful performance of the deportation was conferred on the following officials of the LSSR Ministries for the Interior and State Security: (1) Col. Vladimirs Vasiljevs, son of Vasily (1902), Ministry of State Security; (2) Col. Jānis Vēvers, son of Jānis (1899), Deputy Minister of State Security for operative work; (3) Maj. Ivans Zujāns, son of Donāts (1910), Head of 2<sup>nd</sup> N Division (combating national partisans) of MGB; (4) Col. Viktors Kozins, son of Nikolajs (1909), Head of 2<sup>nd</sup> Division (counterintelligence) of MGB; (5) Militia Commissioner 3<sup>rd</sup> Class Aleksejs Košeļevs, son of Aleksejs (1906), Deputy Minister of the Interior; (6) Capt. Mihails Larjutins, son of Pāvels (date of birth not known), Head of the Kuldīga District Branch of MGB; (7) Maj.-Gen. Alfons Noviks, son of Andrejs (1908), Minister for State Security; (8) Militia Col. Nikolajs Platais, son of Kārlis (birth of date not known), official of the Interior Ministry; (9) Capt. Pēteris Reinholds, son of Jāzevs (1910), Head of Madona District Branch of MGB; (10) Capt. Vincs Tutins, son of Antons (1914), Head of Valmiera District Branch of MGB, later promoted to Deputy Head of 2<sup>nd</sup> N Division of MGB; (11) Capt. Jēkabs Šalms, son of Miķelis (date of birth not known), Head of Aizpute District Branch of MGB; (12) Col. Fjodors Širinskis, son of Zahary (date of birth not known), served in MGB

- in Madona District; (13) Maj.-Gen. Augusts Eglītis, son of Pēteris (1896), Minister of the Interior; (14) Lt. Col. Kārlis Jaunpetrovičs, son of Ivans (1902), Head of Liepāja Branch of MGB.
- <sup>29</sup> Strods 5.
- <sup>30</sup> Ibid, 4–19; B.Chebrikov, “O vyselenii v 40-50 godakh nekotorykh grazhdan iz zapadnykh raionov SSSR” [On the Eviction of Some Categories of Citizens from the Western Regions of the USSR in 1940s–1950s], *Istochnik* 1 (1996): 138–39; Heinrihs Strods and Matthew Kott, “The File on Operation ‘Priboi’: A Reassessment of the Mass Deportations of 1949” *Journal of Baltic Studies* 33.1 (2002): 1–31.
- <sup>31</sup> The data are based on documents from LVA Fonds 1897 (comprising files on persons deported from Latvia on 14 June 1941), Fonds 1894 (files on persons deported from Latvia on 25 March 1949) and Fonds 1994 (files on persons of German origin, members of religious sects and anti-social elements deported from Latvia in 1945–55). A copy of the database is at the Centre for the Documentation of the Consequences of Totalitarianism of the Bureau for Defense of the Constitution.
- <sup>32</sup> I. Mežs, *Latvieši Latvijā* [Latvians in Latvia] (Rīga, 1994).
- <sup>33</sup> Unpublished data.
- <sup>34</sup> B. Spridzāns, “Latvijas melnākā diena” [The Darkest Day for Latvia], *LA* 1 (1995), Annex, p. 3.
- <sup>35</sup> I. Zālīte and S. Dimante, “Četrdesmito gadu deportācijas. Struktūranalīze” [The Deportations of the 1940s: Structural Analysis], *LV* 29 (1998): 73–82.
- <sup>36</sup> Farmer Veronika Ruseckis, who was born in 1877 and deported in 1949 together with her family as a nationalist, died on 5 March 1960, this being the last documented case of death in deportation.
- <sup>37</sup> *Collection of International Law*, vol. 1, part 2 (New York, 1994): 673.
- <sup>38</sup> *Krimināllikums* [Criminal Law] (Rīga, 1999) 37.
- <sup>39</sup> “Arhīva lieta ‘Lursens–S’” [Archive File “Lursens–S”], *LA* 1–2 (1996): 89–92.
- <sup>40</sup> Эндрю and Гордиевский 395–96.
- <sup>41</sup> “Arhīva lieta ‘Lursens–S’” 93. On these operations see also Tom Bower, *The Red Web* (London, 1989).
- <sup>42</sup> Vysshiaia vsesoiuznaia shkola gosudarstvennoi bezopasnosti pri SM 497.
- <sup>43</sup> *Otchet o rabote 2-go kontrrazvedyvatel'nogo otdela Komiteta gosbezopasnosti pri SM ESSR za period 1954-1955 gg.* [Report on the Performance of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Counter-Intelligence Division of the Committee for State Security under the Council of Ministers of Estonian SSR] (Tallinn, 1998) 14–15.
- <sup>44</sup> LVA, PA fonds1178, ser. 1, file 15, p. 10.

## Heinrihs Strods, “Resistance in Latvia 1944–1991,” 286–298

- <sup>1</sup> Thomas Schaarschmit, *Regionalkultur und Diktatur*, (Köln 2003); Peter Berger. *Im Schatten der Diktatur* (Vienna, 2000); Erwin Schmidt, ed., *Österreich im frühen Kalten Krieg 1945–1958* (Vienna, 2000).
- <sup>2</sup> Mikhail I. Meltiukov, “Problemy periodizatsii istorii vtoroi mirovoi voiny” [Problems of Periodization of World War II History], *Voprosy Istorii* 6 (2002): 154.

- <sup>3</sup> "Resistance," *Brockhaus Enzyklopädie. Geschichte*, 19th Edition, (Mannheim, 1992) 18: 315.
- <sup>4</sup> K. Khil'debrand, *Voina v usloviakh mira i mir v usloviakh voiny* [War under Conditions of Peace and Peace under the Conditions of War] (Moscow, 1996) 25–41.
- <sup>5</sup> *The Uses and Abuses of History and Responsibility of the Historians, past and present*, Abstract, 19<sup>th</sup> International Congress of Historical Sciences, (Oslo, 2000) 20 pages.
- <sup>6</sup> Public Record Office (PRO) Kew Garden, FO, 371.
- <sup>7</sup> Ādolfs Šilde, *Resistance Movement in Latvia*, (Stockholm, 1972).
- <sup>8</sup> See "Pretestības kustība," *Latvju enciklopēdija*, vol. 3 (Rockville, MD, 1987): 510–18.
- <sup>9</sup> A. S. Seniavskii, "Tvorcheskie problemy istoricheskoi nauki" [Theoretical Problems of Historiography], *Novaia i noveishaia istoriia* 2 (2002): 193.
- <sup>10</sup> The archive is located at the Museum of the Occupation of Latvia, Strēlnieku laukums 1, Rīga, LV-1050, Latvia. <http://www.occupationmuseum.lv/>.
- <sup>11</sup> LVA, fonds 101, ser. 11, file 70, p. 99 (Mishutin's report of 1948).
- <sup>12</sup> State Archive of the Russian Federation (GARF), The Chief Directorate for the Fight against Banditism of the Ministry of Internal Affairs USSR (CDFB), fonds R-9478, ser. 1, file 764, pp. 15–34.
- <sup>13</sup> 180 units (8%) out of 2353 units in January 1944–47. GARF, CDFB fonds R-9478, ser. 2, file 746, pp. 15–34.
- <sup>14</sup> Heinrihs Strods, ed., *Latvijas nacionālo partizānu karš* [Latvian National Guerilla Warfare], vol. 2 (Rīga, 1999): 148–50, 160–71.
- <sup>15</sup> Ibid. 151–52.
- <sup>16</sup> Ibid. 155–56.
- <sup>17</sup> *Declaration of the Council of the Movement of the Struggle for Freedom of Lithuania, 16 February 1949* (Vilnius 2002).
- <sup>18</sup> For example, the Latvian Association of the Guards of the Fatherland. Strods, vol. 3 (Rīga, 2003): 60.
- <sup>19</sup> Ibid. 4 and map on the cover.
- <sup>20</sup> "Spravka o chislennosti i dvizhenii agenturno-osvedomitel'noi seti po linii bor'by s banditizmom MVD Latviiskoi SSR za ianvar' 1947 g." [Report about the Number and Changes of Latvian SSR Ministry of the Interior Agency Network Involved in Fighting Baditism for January 1947], GARF, CDFB fonds R-9478, ser. 1, file 857, p. 11.
- <sup>21</sup> The so-called Red Partisans were organized, trained, armed, infiltrated into Latvia and commanded by the Red Army Command following a directive of the Politburo of the All-Union Communist (Bolshevik) Party's Central Committee. Thus they are to be considered detachments of the Red Army and henceforth combatants.
- <sup>22</sup> GARF, CDFB fonds R-9478, ser. 2, file 764, pp. 15–34.
- <sup>23</sup> Heinrihs Strods and Matthew Kott, "The File Operation 'Priboi.' A Re-Assessment of the Mass Deportations of 1949," *Journal of Baltic Studies*, 33.1 (2002): 1–31; here 20–21.
- <sup>24</sup> "... Replacement des Baltes transferes dans la Republique des Komi par les Russes," Ministère des Affaires Etrangères (MAE), EU-URSS-1949-1955, 31-7-1, vol. 34, p. 2.
- <sup>25</sup> „Situation dans les Pays Balts," *ibid.* p. 1.
- <sup>26</sup> "...entredientrait des contacts directs avec les groupes d'opposition," *ibid.* p. 5.

- <sup>27</sup> "Sattache a taute atteina au droit des gas," *ibid.* pp. 53–72.
- <sup>28</sup> *Ibid.* p. 3.
- <sup>29</sup> 40,000 from Estonia, 70,000 from Latvia and 60,000 from Lithuania, PRO FO–371 Nr. 94470, pp. 7–8. "Russification of the Baltic States." Closed until 1982.
- <sup>30</sup> Pārsla Eglīte, "Latvijas iedzīvotāju skaita un etniskā sastāva veidošanās XX gadsimtā" [Changes in the Number and Ethnicity of the Inhabitants of Latvia during the Twenty Century], *Yearbook of the Museum of the Occupation of Latvia 2001* (Rīga, 2002) 100.
- <sup>31</sup> *Ibid.* 105.
- <sup>32</sup> Zygmunt Woźniczka, *Zrzeszenie „Wolność i Niezawisłość 1945–1952,”* [Significance of "Freedom and Independence 1945–1952"] (Warsaw, 1992).
- <sup>33</sup> In the Kurzeme region: "Mūsu Sauksme," "Vanagi," "Kurbads," "Tēvzemei un Brīvībai"; in Zemgale: "Vilkaču Sauciens"; in Vidzeme: "Sudrabortā Saule," "Avoti," "Tēvzemei un Brīvībai," "Mazais Vēstnesis," "Tautas sargs," "Liesma," "Dzintarzeme," "Tālavas Taure," "Dzimtene"; in Latgale: "Tēvijas Sargs," "Māras Zeme," "Latgales Partizāni." LVA, fonds 1986.
- <sup>34</sup> LVA, fonds 1986, ser. 1, file P–791.
- <sup>35</sup> *Ibid.* file 21386, p. 351.
- <sup>36</sup> *Ibid.* file P–6832, p. 130; J. R. Bagašauskas, "The Contribution of Foreign Radio Stations to Nation's Struggle for Freedom during the Years of Soviet Regime," *Genocidas ir Rezistencija*, 2 (2001): 91.
- <sup>37</sup> Heinrihs Strods, "Latvijas skolu jaunatnes nacionālā pretošanās kustība (1944–1950. g. vidus)" [The National Resistance Movement of Latvian Schoolchildren (1944 to the mid-1950s)], *CHL* 3: 592–675.
- <sup>38</sup> *Aufstand des Gewissens* (Bonn, 1984).
- <sup>39</sup> The archive of the Museum of the Occupation of Latvia holds many such documents. See note 10.
- <sup>40</sup> Wilhelm Maser, *Genossen beten nicht. Kirchenkampf des Kommunismus* (Köln, 1962) 12 et passim. Alfreds Braunfelds, *Marksistu ideoloģija un stratēģija* [Marxist Ideology and Strategy] (New York, 1981) 11.
- <sup>41</sup> Jānis Tervits, "Mašīnraksta literatūra padomju okupācijas gados Latvijas baptistu draudžu lokā" [Typewritten Literature among Latvian Baptist Congregations during the Soviet Occupation]. Manuscript in the author's personal archive.
- <sup>42</sup> LVA, fonds 1986, ser. 1, file 6222, vol. 1, p. 4; vol. 2, p. 287.
- <sup>43</sup> *Latvijas Romas katoļu priesteri. 1918–1995. Uzziņas* [Latvian Roman-Catholic Priests. A Reference Book] (Rīga, 1996) 291.
- <sup>44</sup> *Ibid.* 312.
- <sup>45</sup> H. Tichovskis, ed., *Latviešu trimdas desmit gadi* [Ten Years of Latvian Exile] ([Toronto], 1954); Ilgvars Spilners, *Mēs uzvarējām* [We Prevailed] (Rīga, 1998).
- <sup>46</sup> *Policy of Occupation Powers in Latvia 1939–1991*, ed. Elmars Pelkaus (Rīga, 1999) 511–12.
- <sup>47</sup> "Memorandum on Soviet Colonialism in the Baltic States," 13 November 1965.
- <sup>48</sup> "Memorandum on the Right on an Individual to leave any Country including his own, and to return to his country," 2 March 1971.
- <sup>49</sup> "Pays Baltes. Motions et petitions," MAE, EU–Europe, URSS 1949–1955, vol. 130. 1.–328 p.

- <sup>50</sup> "Letters to the President of France," MAE, Archives Diplomatiques.
- <sup>51</sup> MAE, Etats Balts, vol. 872, pp. 27 et passim.
- <sup>52</sup> A pamphlet written by a turncoat Nazi-propagandist Pauls Ducmanis under several pseudonyms is a notable propaganda and disinformation effort – and success – of the KGB: : E Avotiņš, J. Dzirkalis and V. Pētersons *Kas ir Daugavas Vanagi?* (Rīga, 1962). English edition: *Daugavas Vanagi: Who Are They?* (Rīga, 1963). The pamphlet adroitly mixes fact and fiction to accuse various exile personalities of war crimes and participation in the Holocaust. The pamphlet became a source not only of historical accounts but also led to a number of extradition trials, most of which, however, ended in acquittals. A thorough extended review of the pamphlet is forthcoming: Andrew Ezergailis, *Soviet–Nazi Disinformation about the Holocaust in Occupied Latvia. Daugavas Vanagi: Who Are They – Revisited* (Rīga, 2005) in press.
- <sup>53</sup> See: [Aivars Ruņģis, ed.], *Tāltālu tālumā. Referātu krājums* [In the Distance Far Away] ([Kalamazoo, MI], 1964); [Aivars Ruņģis, ed.], *Kaut šķirti, tomēr nešķīrami. Referātu krājums* [Separated but not Separable] ([Kalamazoo, MI], 1965).
- <sup>54</sup> Valters Nollendorfs, "Trimdas latviešu politiskā cīņa par vai pret ko?" *Tāltālu tālumā*, 21.
- <sup>55</sup> Jan Kershaw, "Widerstand ohne Volk," *Dissens und Widerstand im Dritten Reich. Widerstand gegen den Nationalsozialismus* (Zürich, 1994) 779–98.
- <sup>56</sup> Jörn Rüsen, *Zerbrechende Zeit. Über den Sinn der Geschichte* (Köln, 2001).
- <sup>57</sup> A. Rusnachenko, *Narod zbruennyi* [The Armed Nation] (Kiev, 2000) 7.
- <sup>58</sup> Ralph Jessen, "The Limits of Power in Totalitarian and Authoritarian Dictatorship," *19<sup>th</sup> International Congress of Historical Sciences* (Oslo, 2000) 27.
- <sup>59</sup> Roger D Petersen, "The Small Risk of Martyrdom," *Resistance and Rebellion. Lessons from Eastern Europe* (New York, 2001).
- <sup>60</sup> A. Bīlmanis. "The Problem of the Baltic in Historical Perspective," *Scholar*, 2/8 (1948): 12.

## Pronunciation of Latvian

The Latvian language orthography with few exceptions reflects the phonetic structure. However, not all Latvian sounds have exact equivalents in the standard English language used in the USA. The following table designates approximations as such. The stress in Latvian is always on the first syllable.

a	<b>up, but</b> (approx.)	k	<b>can, lack</b>
ā	<b>father, car</b>	ķ	<b>Katja</b> (approx.)
ai	<b>I, mine</b>	l	<b>like, bell</b> (tongue higher)
au	<b>out, clout</b> (approx.)	ļ	<b>guillotine</b> (approx.)
b	<b>but, baby</b>	m	<b>mime, gum</b>
c	<b>tsunami</b> (with t pronounced as in <b>cats</b> )	n	<b>none, ban</b>
č	<b>choice, cherry</b>	ņ	<b>news, canyon</b> (approx.)
d	<b>door, dog</b>	o	<b>October</b> (both short and long “o” – in foreign words)
dž	<b>John, judge</b>		<b>wander, was</b> (approx. – in Latvian words)
e	<b>bed or mat</b> (both short sounds)	p	<b>pet, open</b>
ē	<b>Mary, prairie</b> (approx.)	r	<b>red, bearing</b> (approx. – pronounced with tip of the tongue)
ei	<b>eight, way</b>	s	<b>sit, less</b>
f	<b>five, buff</b>	š	<b>shoe, machine</b>
g	<b>go, egg</b>	t	<b>two, bet</b>
ģ	<b>Nadia</b> (approx.)	u	<b>put, wood</b>
h	<b>hat, behave</b>	ū	<b>rule, loot</b>
i	<b>tip, in</b>	v	<b>vivid, love</b>
ī	<b>eagle, deed</b>	z	<b>zone, praise</b>
ie	<b>Mia</b> (approx.)	ž	<b>vision, pleasure</b>
j	<b>you, yeast</b>		

## Index

In alphabetization Latvian and German diacritics have been disregarded. Frequently used terms “Communist Party,” “German occupation,” “Nazi occupation,” “Latvia,” “Latvian,” “Latvian SSR,” “Russia,” “Soviet,” “Soviet occupation,” “Soviet Union,” “USSR” are listed only in modified form.

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