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INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE  
**THE SOVIET OCCUPATION REGIME IN THE BALTIC STATES 1944-1959:  
POLICIES AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES**  
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## **1<sup>ST</sup> PLENARY SESSION**

**THE SOVIET OCCUPATION REGIME IN THE BALTIC  
STATES (1944 – 1959): PROBLEMS OF  
METHODOLOGY, TERMINOLOGY AND SOURCES**

Chaired by Dr.habil.hist. **Aivars Stranga**



## **THE SOVIET OCCUPATION REGIME IN LATVIA: DIRECTIONS AND PROBLEMS OF RESEARCH**

Exactly 11 years ago, in June 1991 a similar international conference "The Practice of Communist Totalitarianism and Genocide in Latvia" took place. At that time the host country of that conference had not fully restored its independence yet. It is impossible and the author does not want to compare that conference with the present one, since times have changed and so are we. Yet, a certain span of the road has been covered. Completely new directions of research have emerged, the range of available source materials has become much larger, a new generation of researchers is emerging. In 1990s archives, museums and the newly established higher educational establishments actively and very successfully contributed to historical research. There are three journals in Latvia that deal with history, including the period, which is in the focus of the present conference. What is there that has not changed over this time? For very different reasons the public, politicians and along with them also historians still focus on the 20<sup>th</sup> century events in Latvia. The problems are also still there; some of them have not even changed.

The paper deals with the following aspects of the theme.

1. Among the factors that influence both the directions of research and historians, from the author's perspective especially important are the facts that: firstly, the restoration of the national independence of Latvia was related to the reassessment of the history of our nation and state. It means that historians, their work, assessments and conclusions came into the focus of public attention. Secondly, as you know, the population of Latvia is relatively small. It makes the link between the historian and the public much closer than in countries with larger populations. For this very reason our primary task was first of all to pay back the debt to the public. It largely explains the

fact that very many publications, research conferences and seminars were dedicated to the repressions of the soviet regime and their victims. Because these things have been kept back for so many years!

A huge step forward has been made in this direction. One of the tasks of the present conference is to summarise and share the views that have developed in the phase, which focused on the summarising of the primarily empirical material and the denial of the historiography of the former (Soviet) period. It is a completely logical and even necessary phase in the modern Latvian historiography. Summarising theoretical research could be in the focus of the next phase.

2. The fact that sometimes the research into that or other period of history is so closely interwoven with political interests and discords that it is difficult to distinguish between science and the dictate of national interests, present certain problems. It refers most of all to the assessment of the shared past of Latvia and Russia.

3. May problems stem from the existence of opposite views (assessment) in the public on the history of Latvia after the Second World War. The diversity of opinions is completely understandable in a democratic society. Here the author means two approaches that develop in parallel to each other and practically never intersect. Of these two approaches (the division is very relative) one is typical for Latvians and the other for non-Latvians living in the Russian-language information environment. For example, speaking about the repression of the Soviet regime against the Latvian population, we with complete logic use the notions "genocide" or "the features of genocide". The other part of the society very often continues to refer to the phrase "fight against class enemies" that was invented back in Stalin's time, believing that repressions were based on the class principle: from the Soviet rule suffered the rich men and exploiters and not ordinary people.

Certainly, one can say that history and myths are indivisible. Yet the author believes that this is an issue of principle and it still requires much difficult and ungrateful work to explain the issue to the public. It is difficult to do so also because the press in the Latvian and Russian languages

sometimes voice opposite views and assessments of historical events. Sometimes it gives an impression that there have been two Latvias with two completely different histories. The Russian language press calls us "court historians".

4. The responsibility of historians of the author's generation is still a painful issue. The author's impression is that, in order to avoid responsibility, these historians in a simplified manner change their assessment from negative to positive and vice versa: what used to be negative now becomes positive and the other way round. This tendency sometimes implies nationalistic attitudes: all that was bad came from aliens. But where were we, the Latvians? Were we all "dissidents in disguise"? No, we lived under that regime and collaborated with it. Were indeed the members of the Latvian Communist Party the only "bad boys"?

The author sees collaboration under the Soviet regime as one of the gravest problems in contemporary Latvian historiography. As we know, it is much easier to put the blame on somebody else than to analyse, explain and eventually to denounce your own behaviour. There were also Latvians among those who carried out repressions, tortured people, reported on their friends and neighbours and looted the property of the arrested and deported. History has never been black-and-white.

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## **THE OCCUPATION OF THE BALTIC STATES: A VIEW ON THE TERMINOLOGY, PERIODIZATION, AND THE STATUS OF RESEARCH**

The issues of terminology, periodization and co-ordinated research of the Communist totalitarian occupation of the Baltic countries in 1939 – 1991 have been in the focus of many international scholarly conferences and research papers and

will remain important research topics in the future. Therefore the author suggests some ideas only, while believing that it is impossible in a business-like manner to interpret historical events from a certain distance in time.

While from the perspective of the former colonial empire the Baltic countries have not been occupied in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, researchers on the basis of striking evidence have proved the fact of the occupation and colonisation of the Baltic countries. Another group of scholars attempts to lessen the role of the occupation and colonisation on the basis of the terminology and periodization introduced by the occupation rule thus in fact trying to defend the position of the colonial state.

The Central Committee of Communist Party of Soviet Union had the monopoly over the interpretation of the history of the USSR, therefore in the period of occupation research into the history of the Baltic countries in 1939 – 1991 was practically non-existent. The historians of this period were evaluated on the basis of how fast and literally they repeated the invariable “general line” of CC CPSU.

Research must be done into the periodization and terminology of the totalitarian history in the Baltic States, with emphasis on the essence of terms, such as “Soviet power”, “Stalinism”, “repressions”. Such efforts would help to eliminate the influence of the mental occupation and the assumption that the Baltic was liberated from occupation already in 1945. The aim of the present research is to explain the terms that serve to disclose the historical facts and replace them by true, real terms that can be understood by the generation of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Historical research must embrace all political, economic and cultural history of the Baltic with special emphasis on co-ordinated study of genocide against political and social groups and the colonisation of Baltic countries with the purpose of changing their ethnic structures and consolidating the Soviet border at the Baltic Sea. It is also necessary to study the history of the armed, non-violent and intellectual resistance of the Baltic peoples.

The study of the history of occupation of the three Baltic countries by the two totalitarian regimes serves as an important model for explaining the crimes against humanity in the world in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. For this reason it is necessary to intensify the publication of source materials, collections of papers and monographs on the history of the Baltic occupation in foreign languages.

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## **INSTRUMENTS OF SOVIETIZATION IN 1939/40 AND AFTER 1944/45**

„Sovietization” means that complex bundle of political, economic, social and terrorist measures which allowed Soviet authorities to bring bourgeois societies under their complete control within a short period.

If it is nowadays assumed that Stalin did not have any master plan at his disposal for the Sovietization of the states of East Central and South-Eastern Europe, there certainly was – as we know now – indeed such a plan for the Sovietization of the territories annexed in 1939/40, a basic model which was taken up again immediately after 1944/45. It was a resolution drafted by A.A.Zdanov and adopted by the Politburo of the Central Committee of the CPSU on October 1st, 1939 „On the Western Ukraine and Western White Russia”. If we compare this plan with the objectives and methods of Soviet policy in the Baltic Republics, north Bukovina and in Bessarabia, then it is obvious that Sovietization between October 1939 and June 1941 proceeded everywhere in accordance with a certain pattern, that the same instruments were employed everywhere. Except for the terror, for which there were special resolutions adopted by the Politburo, they may be summarized in seven points:

1) The occupation by the Red Army.

- 2) The transformation of the political order under the pretext of „democratization“.
- 3) The organization of the Communist Party as the sole political force.
- 4) The mass transfer of Soviet cadres in order to ensure the replacement of the elites of the countries and territories concerned.
- 5) Nationalization of industry, trade and banks and their integration into the Soviet centrally planned economy.
- 6) „Land reform“ with distribution of expropriated land holdings to poor peasants and beginning of collectivization campaigns in the Western Ukraine and Bessarabia.
- 7) The bringing into line of the education system and culture.

Aditionnally to these instruments of Sovietization after 1944/45 the collectivization of agriculture, the expansion of the school and education system in the backward areas of the Western Ukraine, Western White Russia and Bessarabia as well as the beginnings of an accelerated industrialization were now particularly promoted; the latter drastically changed the demographic situation in the area around Lemberg (L'viv) as well as in Latvia and Estonia.

Stalinist Soviet leadership had for the most part pushed through its integration objectives by 1953. But already soon after Stalin's death, with the end of the mass terror, the social climate began to change. The decisive difference in the following decades lay in the fact that the dynamism of the social forces came more strongly to the fore again, which also gave the national elites, that had been growing up since the nineteen-fifties, the chance to utilize the possibilities that were gradually opening up, to promote their own nation's interest and thus also to raise their own population's national awareness. Research into this process of gradual de-Sovietization should also be a central task for Latvia's historical science!

## **HISTORICAL SCIENCE AS A TOOL OF SOVIET POLICY: THE CONCEPTUAL LEVEL OF HISTORIOGRAPHY**

Historical science was extremely politicized in the Baltic countries under the Soviet rule, especially at the outset, when the newly arrived Soviet authorities had to solve some urgent problems of sovietization and communist indoctrination of the Baltic nations. Since the Soviet nationality policy was, to a great extent, uniform in all Baltic countries, the destiny of the Latvian historiography can be considered typical for the Baltic and illustrating also the conditions of the historical science in Lithuania, and Estonia. Thus, the case of the Latvian historiography can serve as a basic model of interaction between historical science and policy in an occupied country. Therefore, this paper (case study) deals with the conceptual and theoretical propositions of the Soviet Latvian historiography (1945 – early 1950s) in order to reveal the essence (nature) of the Soviet historiography in the Baltic region in general, as well as its efficiency in achieving the aims of the Soviet rule.

The paper proposes a thesis that in terms of the theoretical foundations, the Soviet Latvian historiography was formed out of three components, namely – the elements of the Soviet (Marxist) historiography, the 19<sup>th</sup> century Russian national historiography, and the Latvian national (Civic) historiography. Although the integration and synthetic unity of these elements was not achieved, the Soviet Latvian historiography succeeded in the substantiation of the following dogmas: the historical inevitability of incorporation of Latvia into the Russian Empire and, later, into the Soviet Union viewed as the manifestation of progress, an epoch-making fact; the positive and benevolent consequences of the Russian (Soviet) rule for the Baltic peoples; the centuries-old contacts between Russians (Slavs) and Latvians viewed as a justification for the nationality policy in the Baltic region; the joint struggle of the Baltic peoples and Russians against mutual enemies (Germans, Poles, etc.). All of

the above-mentioned dogmas had been first introduced and substantiated in the 18<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> century Russian historiography. The Marxist historical science absorbed these ideas because they were fully in compliance with the aims of the Soviet policy. It seems, that, unlike the potential influence of the traditional Russian concepts upon the national self-awareness of the Latvians (that was tested in the Russian Empire), the ideas that were solely Marxist (socialist revolution in the Baltic countries, class struggle, etc.) failed to become an effective tool of the Soviet policy in the Baltic region.

Thus, the Soviet Latvian historiography assumed the features of both Soviet (Marxist) and Russian national historiography. That resulted, on the one hand, in the russification and, on the other hand, in the sovietization of the Latvian national historiography. But, in spite of the double pressures exerted by the Russian national and Soviet (Marxist) historiographic traditions, Latvian historical science succeeded in preserving some basic features and concepts of the national Latvian historiography, especially in such fields of research as ethnography, anthropology, archaeology and medieval Latvian history. Therefore the Soviet Latvian historiography can be viewed, to a certain extent, as a supporter of the ethnic identity and national self-awareness of the Latvians.

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## **PROJECT A JOINT REGISTER OF ESTONIAN POPULATION LOSSES: SOURCES AND METHODS OF RESEARCH**

I would like to speak about the problems of use of research methods and various sources that have appeared in the course of the verification of Estonian population losses caused by various occupations.

**Soviet occupation and Estonian population losses. The current state of research.** The research into repressions, based on source materials, began in Estonia at the end of the 1980s. Within the last dozen years praiseworthy research into repressions has been conducted in Estonia. Regrettably, I have to admit that many of the questions remain without an estimate or concrete answer.

**More generally on the background of the project on population losses.** Numerous groups of researchers, committees and individual researchers have attempted to elucidate Estonian population losses. All of them have observed one or another category of the repressed, however, a broader historical assessment or a comprehensive work is still lacking to date. As long as a single and integrated database is lacking, we cannot speak about verified data about population losses, on the other hand, current data are dispersed and often contradictory. The composition of an integrated database that would draw together all existing databases is inevitable. The research into repressions presumes a complex application of various sources, composing reliable databases to be elaborated and analysed professionally.

**On the project.** In 2000 the Chair of Archival Studies at the University of Tartu, Estonia, launched an extensive research project "A Joint Register of Estonian Population Losses". The purpose of the project is to compose an integrated joint register for Estonian population losses from 1940 to 1989, indicating all the categories of those who suffered in the course of various occupations. Parallel to the information about permanent population losses, the data about the categories of people who left Estonia, either for good or temporarily, including new settlers, fugitives, mobilised persons, evacuees, etc. are also fed in the register. Thus the project is planned to contain both direct and indirect population losses caused to Estonia. Up to now the realisation of the project has conventionally taken two major courses, first, entering the filing cards into the computer and, second, drawing together and making earlier existing databases compatible.

**About the main task of the project.** The files of individual data, better known as the so-called KGB-files, are now kept in

the Estonian National Archives. From the aspect of archival records, the files are a collection whose first cards come from 1919 and the last ones from the end of the 1980s. Completely various sources have been melted into the integrated files. The State Archives, subjected to the Ministry of Internal Affairs in the Estonian SSR, played a definite role in carrying out the repressive policy. It was possible to operatively get data about the persons or organisations concerned. Compromising materials about persons were sought for fund-by-fund. A filing card was drawn up about every suspicious person. Since the files have a very long history and survived various regimes and principles of formation, a special attention is to be paid to the source-criticism. At the same time the compilers of the files have made use of documents, destroyed by now, and their onetime existence can be seen only thanks to references on filing cards. The data of the files, rather heterogeneous in places, offer rich material for further analyses.

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## **2<sup>ND</sup> PLENARY SESSION**

### **THE STRUCTURE OF THE POLITICAL POWER OF THE SOVIET OCCUPATION REGIME**

Chaired by Dr.habil.hist. **Antonijs Zunda**



## **THE CHANGE OF THE POLITICAL SYSTEM IN LATVIA IN 1940 – 1959 AND THE POLITICAL AND LEGAL EVALUATION OF THESE CHANGES**

1. The establishment of an independent state of Latvia in 1918, its annihilation in 1940 and its resurrection in 1990 depended on political, economic and military processes in Latvia as well as on international level and therefore should be assessed in their interconnection.

2. The state of Latvia was first born in 1918 out of an unusually favourable international situation and out of the unity of the political will of the Latvian nation. The US President T.V. Wilson's famous Fourteen Points paper largely contributed to the foundation of the state. On the other hand, the annihilation of the statehood of Latvia in 1940 to a large extent stemmed from the inability of peace-loving nations consistently to implement this programme over a long-term period. The Molotov-Ribbentrop pact concluded between two dictators proved to be stronger than the Fourteen Points and put an end to the implementation of the programme. This fact lies also at the basis of the annihilation of the national independence of Latvia.

3. The annihilation of Latvia's independence was also a result of regional and internal reasons:

3.1. The inability of the Baltic States to form a political and military union for the protection of their independence;

3.2. The abolishment of the parliamentary regime and democratic freedoms and their replacement with one person's dictatorship that was supported by a relatively limited group of society, complete distancing of the masses from participation in state administration;

3.3. National economic policy, which was primarily aimed at support of large, farms and neglected the interests of the other groups of society;

3.4 The development of the leader's cult that in essence little differed from Stalin's cult which made the replacement of one cult with the other easier.

4. The annexation of Latvia was unlawful. It was contrary to international law. While a rather large group of society supported the abolishment of Ulmanis' regime and the restoration of parliamentary system and democratic freedoms, the people of Latvia never and in no way consented to the annihilation of the independence of Latvia and its incorporation into the USSR.

5. Latvia's occupation and incorporation into the USSR resulted in very grave consequences for the entire Latvian nation.

5.1. The ownership of all more or less valuable property (land, manufacturing facilities, apartment houses, cultural assets, bank deposits) was transferred to the USSR;

5.2. Mass-scale extermination and exile of the most intellectual, creative and experienced part of the Latvian nation;

5.3. Free thought was suppressed, only those views that the Communist party approved of were allowed;

5.4. Complete ousting of the people from political decision making, legislation and state administration.

All these fields fell under the competence of the Communist party only.

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## **THE CORPS OF JUDGES AND PROSECUTORS IN 1940–1941 AND 1944–1953**

The executors of Stalinist repressions have been described primarily in the context of deportations and other political repressions and the focus has been mainly on the staff of state security institutions. Yet researchers have paid almost no attention at all to the corps of judges and prosecutors. These

officials were a very important element of the judicial mechanism of repression in a system where the distinction between political and non-political repressions was very vague and the criminal code was used for reaching political and economic goals.

The foundation for the Soviet system of courts and public prosecutors in the Latvian SSR was laid in 1940-1941 when it was formed primarily of lawyers sent from "the old" republics of USSR. Although initially the local lawyers with degrees from the University of Latvia held a large proportion of the jobs at the lower level, in the spring of 1941 they were rapidly pushed out from the law-enforcement institutions and replaced with left-minded students of law or persons without any education in law at all.

In 1944-1945 the staff of courts and public prosecutors' offices was based primarily on the contingent of the officials of the pre-war Prosecutor's Office of LSSR and the People's Commissariat of Justice, employees sent from other republics and demobilised soldiers (mainly from the Latvian Division). Persons who had been in Latvia during the war, except former partisans were initially very little involved. The lawyers of the pre-war Republic of Latvia primarily practised at Bar, in notary's offices or as legal advisers and in 1947-1948 the bulk of them were pushed out of these fields as well.

In late 1940s and early 1950s the engagement of local specialists in courts and public prosecutors' offices increased although on the one hand this tendency was hampered by the unwillingness of the local population to take part in the work of repression bodies and on the other due to different political reasons these specialists were very carefully selected. However, the necessity for the holders of these jobs to speak Latvian to a certain extent restricted the new-comers' career opportunities in courts, less so in public prosecutor's offices.

Due to lack of specialists in the first post-war years public prosecutors' offices and courts, especially on the local level, hired more than a few persons whose education, professional qualification, overall cultural level and moral standards were not at all adequate for these jobs.

The overall level of education and legal qualification among judges and public prosecutors was very low. In early 1947 of the top officials at the Prosecutor's Office of the Latvian SSR 125 (60%) did not have any education in law. Of these, 50 had secondary education, 57 had studied 7-9 grades at school and 18 had finished elementary school only. Of the 29 top administrators and operative officials at the Ministry of Justice only seven had law degrees and four had secondary education in law. Six more persons had graduated from courses of law. Of the 19 top officials at the Supreme Court 15 did not have any education in law and only three persons had higher education at all. Of the 60 people's judges only two had law degrees from universities, 12 had secondary education in law, the majority, 46 had graduated from courses and nine persons did not have any education in law at all.

In early 1950s the overall level of general and professional education among judges and public prosecutor's started to increase rather fast, although judicial institutions continued to employ the-so-called practitioners. The quality of education of law in the respective period was very poor. Education was oriented primarily at mastering the existing laws, instructions and the criminal proceedings code. The knowledge of "bourgeois" law was considered unnecessary and undesirable for a Soviet lawyer who first of all had to be a conscientious civil servant who follows the instructions of the Party and government.

Political loyalty was the dominating criterion for the selection of public prosecutors and judges. "Wrong" social background or activities in his or her past were an almost insurmountable obstacle for a career. Yet, there were exceptions, for instance, after the war the person's having fought on the side of the USSR was highly valued. The public prosecutors' offices and courts employed many former soldiers of the Latvian Division who under different circumstances would not have met the political criteria for these jobs.

It should be noted that in districts and rural regions public prosecutors and judges depended strongly on the local authorities, particularly on the favour of the Secretary of the Party Committee for facilities, heating, transportation and many

other supplies. Moreover, the local Party leaders had the decisive say when the adequacy of that or the other judge or public prosecutor for his or her job was considered. Political dependency unnoticed grew into economic dependency and corruption.

Obviously a part of lawyers, especially the young lawyers who had just graduated and were not stuck in the routine yet, welcomed the liberalisation after Stalin's death with relief. For a large number of lawyers it was a tragedy because it made the principles that have been fed into them for almost ten years, relative. However, the fundamental principles and position of the Soviet justice did not change in substance.

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## **RURAL PARTY WORKERS IN ESTONIA (1944–1950)**

### 1 Overview

New research on Stalinism has in two essential ways switched focus. On the one hand the centralistic view, that often uncritically took the plans made in Moscow for reality, has been substituted by a broader approach of taking into account the differences of the various regions of the soviet empire. On the other hand a turn to the subject has taken place. Much attention has recently been paid to the people involved, to their expectations and mentalities during the Stalin era.

The exploration of Sovietization in the Estonian Countryside offers a good opportunity to investigate both aspects. It reflects the problems and strategies of the Soviet regime to incorporate a border country and get hold of its most remote areas: the countryside. It also brings the average Estonian party worker into closer focus: What did he think he was doing, while implementing a policy that was to a high

degree based on terrorizing the local inhabitants and destroying economical resources so desperately needed after a devastating war? To what degree ideology was important and to what degree other reasons were involved like career opportunities, fear of punishment etc.? And what part did Estonian nationality play?

Among the party workers in the countryside the diversity was big. Mainly recruited from the Estonian Rifle Corps or the Red Army, they were Estonians who had grown up in the Soviet Union as well as those who had spent their former lives in the Estonian Republic and sometimes even served in the army. Other party workers were Russians. Their expectations and behavior differed considerably. The range went from party workers using their official standing in the pursuit of their own personal aims to those, who rather felt like advocates of the rural populations and issued complaints about the corruption of party- and state officials. Also, their imagination about what soviet rule would bring differed. How far the miscomprehension could go can e.g. be exemplified by the announcement of a rural party worker who at a conference in January 1945 praised the soviet power for reintroducing the free market after the restrictions during the German occupation .

The party leadership was well aware of the control problems, yet for a couple of years it was unable to find a remedy. In 1946 – parallel to unionwide controls – the Estonian party workers and state officials were screened. The results reflected both aspects mentioned. Alcoholism, misuse of power and a lack of discipline was mentioned on the one hand, an undue “softness”, often in combination with family connections and personal relations on the other hand . Meanwhile, the land reform lagged behind the plan. It never quite reached its aim to draw a clear line between the supporters and enemies of the system, destroying the latter economically while supporting a pro-soviet clientele.

However, the reasons were multiple and the problems occurred not only due to the lack of “ideologically firm” personell. The directives from the center were often ambiguous and contradictory, leaving it up to the local party worker, whether to reach political aims while failing to reach economic

plans or ignore the political side in order to maintain production. Also, high tax rates based on the ownership of land kept poor farmers from accepting land from the state . Soviet policy however ignored all system errors that were apt to question the system as a whole. The party leadership focused merely on the personal factor. As Elena Zubkova (*E. Zubkova. Russia after the War. Hopes, Illusions, and Disappointment, 1945-1957. - London - 1998.*) put it, there was never a search for the *causes* of failure, but only for *persons* to blame. Correspondingly, the rates of dismissal among local party workers increased dramatically in 1946 .

Although the grip on the countryside had considerably tightened in 1947, the collectivization drive that was now initiated faced similar problems. Local party workers proved unable to efficiently promote collectivization, being the last to be informed about it. Besides, knowing the Russian example all too well, not only regular farmers but especially the village communists were very reluctant to join the collective farms. Quite a few party workers took the collectivization drive of 1947/1948 merely for another campaign, that would soon be over and forgotten. After the rich farmers had been forced into the *kolkhozes* by tremendously raising the agricultural taxes in 1947, the vast majority of farmers joined the collective farms only after the mass deportations in March 1949.

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### **POLITICAL CHANGES IN LATVIA IN 1953**

In the next year, 50 years will have elapsed from the events described in the paper "Political changes in the Soviet Latvia" – the events showing the liberalization of the regime in the Soviet Union.

In this paper, changes in the repressive policy of the Soviet power are examined, for example, amnesty promulgated in the country for prisoners of various categories. It should be mentioned that amnesty was applied mostly to criminal offenders. Employees of the security units were forbidden to influence the arrested persons physically; the whole structure of state security forces was reorganised. People not engaged in political activities had no longer to fear that they would be arrested without a reason.

The national issue was very topical in Latvia, and it was closely connected with the status of the Latvian language in LSSR (Latvian Soviet Socialistic Republic). There were almost no Latvians working in leading positions. According to official statistical data, i.e. the population census of 1959, the Latvians in the LSSR constituted 62% of the population, but in 1953 the proportion of Latvians working in leading positions of national economy was significantly lower – only 22.5% of factory managers, 12% of kolkhoz chairmen and 45% of MTS (machine and tractor stations)\* directors were Latvians. The numbers are indicative of the discrimination of Latvians.

On June 12, 1953 the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CC CPSU) passed a decision, which launched radical changes in the national policy that had been carried out over the recent years. This decision gave wide scope to the local carriers of conformist ideas. Although in July of 1953 the political leaders of the USSR changed their attitude towards this decision, it was not abolished until 1959. For that reason, no consistent changes happened in the national policy. The inhabitants of the Baltic countries were still regarded as potential traitors and all positions of trust were assigned to immigrants.

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\* A MTS was a special station where kolhozs could rent machines and tractors.

## **LATVIAN SAILORS: HISTORY OF EMPLOYMENT'S RESTRICTION (1945 - 1959)**

Since the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the shipping industry has been one of the spheres where the Latvian Nation has successfully realized its economic capabilities and deep-rooted traditions. Three thousand sailors worked on pre-war Latvian ships and two thousand were employed in shipping-related industries. After the WWII the merchant fleet was almost closed for persons of Latvian origin- they never exceeded 20% of all sailors. In 1940, following the nationalization of ships and shipping enterprises, first restrictions were applied to former **leading staff of Latvian maritime administration, shipping companies and enterprises, members of former political parties and Aizsargi paramilitary organization**. They were fired, arrested or deported to Siberia together with their families and relatives. Regretfully, the author has not managed to study the tragic destinies all seamen yet- it remains a task for future studies. To prevent escapes abroad, many sailors who were regarded as disloyal were taken off the ships by Soviet authorities and NKVD. Thus by February 1941 133 seamen had been dismissed as *“anti-soviet minded, as members of fascist organizations or because they had relatives abroad.”* The dismissal of the “disloyal” was practised probably until the beginning and during the very first months of the war. During the war many seamen were killed fighting on either of the two warring sides, perished together with their ships or were arrested and convicted. 930 sailors fled to the West in 1944-1945. Only a few hundred remained in their fatherland. In April 1945 there were 80 seamen working in Latvia, but by the end of the same year their number has grown to 361. Majority of them was of Latvian nationality. On 1<sup>st</sup> January 1946 of the 108 steersmen and naval engineers 77 were Latvians.

Yet as early as March 1945 the director of the Latvian State Steamship Lines<sup>1</sup> N. Andersen reported to the Central Committee of the Latvian Communist Party that the majority of sailors due to their *political qualities* would be unable to work on ships bound for abroad. Since the majority of sailors *had remained in the German occupied territories*, they were considered disloyal. No personnel “purging” took place as long as it was topical in maximum short terms to bring over as many of the captured German ships as possible and then to ship the most valuable equipment from German factories to the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, for *political reasons* Latvian ships were forbidden to go beyond German ports. In June 1946 the Soviet Maritime Ministry issued special regulations which prohibited the sending on commission abroad of the following persons: *persons disfranchised by court verdict; convicted of criminal offences, counter- revolutionary activity or selfishness; the deported; foreign citizens, relatives of repressed persons (parents, brothers and sisters, spouses and children); close relatives of émigrés from the USSR, former émigrés who have eventually returned to the USSR; persons who have voluntarily served in the White armies and institutions and invaders' armies and institutions; persons who have served in the armies and institutions of the German invaders; persons who have served in foreign missions; persons who have worked on foreign ships after 1917 (except the ships of countries which have joined the USSR); persons who had remained in the territories temporarily occupied by German Nazis; persons dismissed from the Maritime Ministry and its institutions because of theft, breach of discipline, disorganisation of production, laxity of morals and dissoluteness in public life; persons who through indecent behaviour have compromised themselves in a foreign country; morally unstable persons.*

From June 1946 the 1<sup>st</sup> assistants to captains or political assistants to captains together with the Political Departments that were set up within shipping companies started to verify seamen's loyalty. Latvian State Steamship Lines and the Black Sea Shipping Company were considered the least loyal, having

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<sup>1</sup> Latvian State Steamship Lines was a company which managed all the nationalized ships

*“crews polluted with many shady and morally unstable elements”.*

The “purging” of seafaring personnel began in November 1946. For this purpose special commissions were established at the Regional Committees and Central Committees of the Communist Parties of the Soviet Republics (including Latvia) by a resolution of the USSR Council of Ministers and the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist (Bolshevik) Party. As a result 249 seamen were dismissed from the Latvian shipping company by 10<sup>th</sup> March 1947. Of these 163 were dismissed for *having remained in the occupied territories*, 30 for *political disloyalty*, 18 because they *did not have any relatives on the Soviet coast*, 14 for *violating the Statutes on Behaviour Abroad*, 7 for *having been prisoners of war of Germany*. The others were discharged for *“having worked on German ships, having a record of criminal convictions, breach of discipline, moral unstableness, smuggling and profiteering, inadequate state of health and hooliganism”*. Altogether the ranks of seamen were “purged” of more than 300 persons in 1946/ 1947. As crews were not trusted, all the USSR ships were divided into three categories according to the degree of loyalty of their crews. To the 1<sup>st</sup> category belonged ships with especially loyal crews, thus their range of navigation was not restricted and they were allowed to enter any foreign port or sea. Ships of the 2<sup>nd</sup> category, because of disloyal crews, had to follow fixed, approved routes. The rest of the fleet was assigned to cabotage. Since Latvian ships for the most part fell into the 2<sup>nd</sup> category, their range of navigation was restricted to the Baltic Sea and ports of Murmansk and Spitsbergen. Therefore until 1953 the merchant fleet of Latvia consisted of depreciated steamers of small tonnage and solid age. Due to their poor technical condition only about a half of the fleet was in use.

As almost all Latvians had remained in the German occupied territories and had relatives abroad, as a result of the imposed restrictions and “purging” of the 316 seamen in Latvia only 26 were of Latvian origin (9%) according to a record of May 1947. In 1952 of the total of 603 seamen only 34 (or 5.6 %) were Latvians. Thus, as seen in the figure below, until late 1980s

merchant fleet was almost completely closed to seamen of Latvian nationality:

Year	Total Number of Seamen	of them Latvians	%
1958	670	100	14.9
1960	1029	193	18.7
1965	2531	245	9.7
1970	3581	437	12.2
1987	5303	334	6.3

## **3<sup>RD</sup> PLENARY SESSION**

### **THE REPRESSIVE POLICIES OF THE SOVIET OCCUPATION REGIME IN THE BALTIC STATES AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES**

Chaired by Dr.habil.hist. **Heinrihs Strods**



## **CRIMES OF COMMUNISM IN LITHUANIA (1944-1953) – HISTORICAL-STATISTICAL SURVEY**

Each section of society in Lithuania, the state itself and each of its citizens sustained heavy losses. It should be pointed out that as many as 456 thousand people, every third adult, Lithuanians making up 93% of all the prisoners and 96% of all the deportees, became a victim of Soviet terror and suffered one or another form of violence. Out of this number, about 350 thousand people were thrown into prisons, deported or sent to GULAGs or murdered (the total number is 332 thousand people). About 25-33% perished there, and about 25% were not able to return to Lithuania. 26 thousand were killed in Lithuania. About 500 thousand people were forced to leave Lithuania because of the terror, the war or judgements of the occupations it forces. If we add to this figure the number of victims of Nazi dictatorship which physically destroyed 245 thousand people out of which 200 thousand were Jews, the losses of the population of Lithuania amount to 33% of the total number of the country's population in 1940.

If we try to estimate the damage caused to the Republic of Lithuania in financial terms the result will be as follows: USD 278 billion, out of which the damage caused through genocide and repressions would amount to USD 1.849 billion, the damage caused by deportations and exile to GULAGs – USD 53.8 billion (the national income that had not been not received) etc.

Terror accompanying the process of sovietisation, war crimes, crimes against humanity, crimes of genocide destroyed not only people but entire social groups with their culture, property and social influence. Demographic, property and other losses sustained by Lithuanian people have had a lasting effect and will long tell upon the life of the contemporary state of Lithuania and its society as an eternal reminder of the crimes of the communist regime.

## THE DEPORTATION OF 25<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 1949 IN LATVIA

Mass-scale deportations, targeted at particular categories or strata of population or at entire peoples, were among the forms of repression that the leaders of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the state leaders of the USSR resorted to for many years in order to strengthen the so-called Dictatorship of the Proletariat and their own positions in the administration.

The first time that the population of Latvia experienced the horror of Stalinist deportations was on 14<sup>th</sup> June 1941, when more than 15 thousand people, including prominent statesmen, high-ranking militaries, outstanding figures in the field of economy, scientists, farmers and people of other occupations were taken away to death camps and places of re-settlement in Siberia.

On 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> February 1945, ethnic German citizens and homeless people were banished from Riga and the environs.

The largest deportation, which took place on 25<sup>th</sup> March 1949, was targeted primarily at the former most prosperous farmers and at the so-called nationalists and their families. The aim of this deportation was to create pre-conditions for the transformation of privately owned Latvian farms into collective farms – *kolhozs* – according to the USSR model. On 29<sup>th</sup> January 1949 the Council of Ministers of the USSR passed a top secret decision, instructing the USSR Ministry of Security and the USSR Ministry of Interior to prepare the deportation operation, by which more than 29 000 the-so-called *kulak* and nationalist families were to be deported from the Baltic before the sowing time in the spring of 1949. The preparation work for this major crime was completed in February and early March 1949, and in Latvia the actual deportation took place on 25<sup>th</sup> March 1949. On that day more than 42 thousand people from Latvia were taken away to “re-settlement for life” in Siberia. The property

they left behind was divided among the newly established *kolhozs* and other institutions or sold in local shops.

The deportees were settled in Amur, Omsk and Tomsk Regions where they were forced to work in the local *kolhozs* or Soviet farms under the supervision of special authorities of the USSR Ministry of Interior. Their release from these settlements began only after the death of the USSR dictator J. Stalin in March 1953, the largest wave of release taking place in mid-1950s. The returnees from Siberia did not receive back their confiscated property, nor were other rights, that they had been deprived of, restored to them.

The deportation of 25<sup>th</sup> March 1949 should be seen as a flagrant crime of genocide committed by the Soviet regime against the Latvian people.

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## **REPRESSIONS AGAINST THE PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE REPUBLIC OF LATVIA AFTER THE SECOND WORLD WAR**

After the Second World War the repression authorities of the Soviet regime continued the persecution of those Latvian parliamentarians (members of the former Constitutional Assembly and the Saeima) who had remained in Latvia and had not suffered in the previous, the largest wave of repression in 1940-1941. From February 1946 to September 1960 in total at least 16 parliamentarians of the Republic of Latvia were arrested or deported.

The main feature of this particular wave of political repression was the majority of the arrested MPs having belonged to Left wing or even radical Left wing political parties and organisations during the period of their parliamentary activities. Thus, out of the 16 repressed parliamentarians 10 belonged to the Latvian Social Democrat Workers' Party

(LSDWP), one had moved to the more leftist Latvian Independent Socialist Party during the 3<sup>rd</sup> convocation of the Saeima and another had represented the Communist-oriented Workers' and Farmers' Faction in the 4<sup>th</sup> Saeima.

Of the five arrested or deported members of civic parties, two were clergymen and had represented two religiously oriented parties in the Latvian parliament: the National Christian League (Evangelical Lutheran Party), the Catholic and the Christian Farmer's faction. One MP belonged to a regional Latgale party while the fourth was a member of a Russian party.

All arrested Latvian parliamentarians were prosecuted for their political and public activities. The holding of the position of a member of the Parliament of an independent state and representing the interests of his/her electorate was considered a crime, same as in 1940 -1941. Moreover, the "lists of crimes" committed by MPs from LSDWP went back as far as 1905-1908 when these politicians had been involved in the Social Democrat movement which was qualified as Menshevism (in cases of F. Menders, R. Bilmanis, K. Lorencs and E. Morics). The above-mentioned Social Democrat parliamentarians were prosecuted also for their contacts with the Central Council of Latvia. Left-wing Social Democrat F. Menders was persecuted practically for the rest of his life and was arrested even twice: in 1948 and 1960. While parliamentarian A. Kurcijs-Kurchinskis was charged of terrorism, the activities of the head of the Workers' and Farmers' Faction at the 4<sup>th</sup> Saeima E. Sudmalis were qualified as Right-wing Trotskyism. The parliamentarians from the ranks of the clergy were accused of having used their position as clergymen for "sabotaging activities" (K. Irbe) or for the publishing of anti-Soviet press (A. Pastors). Member of a Russian party I. Korniljev along with the holding of the position of a people's representative was prosecuted also for his refusal to serve as a secret informer and for his service in Judenich's army. To prove that the arrested politicians had been engaged in anti-Soviet activities in the Latvian parliament, the evidence of the member of the Workers' and Farmers' Faction at the 4<sup>th</sup> Saeima F. Bergs was used.

The bulk of the cases of the repressed Latvian parliamentarians, particularly those of the members of LSDWP, were transferred to the Special Assembly of the USSR Ministry of State Security that sentenced them to from 5 to 10 years in reformatory labour camps.

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### **THE PERSONAL FILES OF THE OFFICERS OF THE LSSR SSM EXTERMINATORS BATTALIONS AS A SOURCE OF HISTORY**

The paper analyses the composition and content of the personal files of the officers of the Exterminators Battalions of the Latvian SSR State Security Ministry (SSM) as a source of history.

In the personal files of the officers of the Exterminators Battalion documents are divided into four sections:

1. section. References written on (confidential) form no.1; the form has two parts and contains basic information on the combatant, his previous occupation or activities.

2. section. List of the person's military activities with detailed information on his civilian career, membership in the Communist Party (CP), participation in the Great Fatherland's War of the Soviet Union (WWII), engagement in the structures of People's Commissariat for Home Affairs and SSM, etc. Documents enclosed in this section contain information on the combatant's participation in combat operations against national partisans.

3. section. Certification documents, the person's political testimonials issued by his section of CP, the Young Communist League and other references.

4. section. Documents referring to the person's career in the structures of SSM: application for the Exterminators Battalion, CV, form of the special duties employee of SSM,

personnel register form, report on the results of the special examination, signed pledge not to divulge official secrets, conclusion of the medical commission on the person's status of health, copies of the orders of the combatant's dismissal from the battalion and documents on pension. Documents included in this section contain information on the combatant's activities in the Exterminators Battalion and participation in fight against national partisans.

The author, having analysed the above-described group of documents as a source of history, has reached the following conclusions:

These files present a new historical source, which has not been completely studied and assessed yet. In the Latvian historiography these documents have only been mentioned in the context of the history of the Latvian national resistance movement: in the survey of sources in Prof. H. Strods' monograph "The War of the Latvian National Partisans in 1944-1956".

These documents have been written under special conditions dictated by the special regime of the operation of the former LSSR SSM: secrecy, special registration of documents that differed from the traditional office-work, special regulations of storage, filling-out and usage of these documents.

It is impossible to find out how complete these files are. In the archives of the former LSSR SSM information on all of the 44 000 members of the Exterminators Battalion has survived in the file-index only and there are only 2823 personal files and two registration books of these files available.

A specific feature of these documents is that they are both in the Latvian and Russian languages that requires from a potential researcher to have a good knowledge of these languages as well as of the principles of the office-work in SSM and of the Soviet law.

Information found in the personal files of those combatants of the Exterminators Battalion, who were born in Latvia, attests their collaboration with the Soviet occupation regime in Latvia after the Second World War, therefore these documents could be useful in the research into the history of collaboration.

In view of the specific conditions under which these documents were created, the following methods are recommended and are suitable for the assessment of these files: direct comparison of different sources (collation with orders and instructions, for instance) and analysis.

As these documents contain so-called sensitive information on persons, their usage is dictated by law "On the Protection of the Data of Physical Persons" which was adopted in Latvia on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2000.

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## **ESCAPES FROM OCCUPIED ESTONIA 1947-1959**

Although according to the UN Declaration of Human Rights everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country, the USSR never fulfilled this commitment. The borders of occupied Baltic states were carefully locked by the KGB and the border guards. Estonian coast and islands were guarded by three land-based border squad units and two marine squadrons, altogether 2000 men. Despite of this many Estonians managed to successfully escape over the border to the West during the occupation period.

The most escapes were made before 1947, when the border had not yet been completely closed. According to archival data, during 1947-59 there were at least 10 successful border crossings, ten times less than failed attempts. There are not taken into account leaving USSR legally (seamen, tourists, official cultural delegations etc), many of them sent by KGB. In most cases successful escapes were made across the Baltic Sea by means of fishing boats or trawlers.

In December of 1947 took flight to Sweden fishing trawler "Merituul", belonging to Estonian Trawling Boat Base and

residing in the fishing waters of Central Baltic. This vessel has nine member crew, leading organizer of this escape was Priidu-Friedrich Põld, who later returns to Estonia as Swedish intelligence agent and was killed in a battle with Soviet border guards in 1951. After 18 hours sea-voyage "Merituul" arrived to coast of Gotland and all members of crew applied political asylum in Sweden. After this escape the checking of trawlers was considerably strenghtened but despite of this in August of next year another Estonian trawler "Merisilm" succesfully fled to Sweden. The fugitives were the captain Eduard Soorsk, trawling-master August Koppel and "faredodger" Edgar Pappel, 4 Russian members of vessel refused to escape. In December of 1949 arrived to Gotland on a motor boat three inhabitants of Saaremaa (Hiiväin and Ting brothers).

During the 1950's the most exciting escapes were performed by 20-year old Manivald Rästas (hided himself in a hold of Soviet merchant ship sailing to England) and a fisherman Eduard Õun (escapes with his family from East-Saaremaa in a small fishing boat). Both were sentenced in absence to death. In August of 1957 fled from Tallinn to Sweden well-known yachtsman Eugen Adrik with his fiancée Hilda Vainola and steersman Avo Pruul. The punishment in absence was 10 years. A year later escapes from a great fishing ship near Shetland islands by means of small motor boat to the England territory seaman Erich Klaup. He was sentenced to 25+5 years.

Although the land border of the USSR was as carefully sealed as was the maritime border and equipped with electrified barbed wire fences, wire traps, ploughed checkup landstrips and patrol units having electronic and infrared detection decices, many succesful flights were made. At the end of the war and afterwards, the main escape routes were located in the Karelia and the Kola peninsula, where the additional difficulty was associated with hiking through hardly penetrable "closed zone" (60-80 km), which normally required about 10-15 days. Unfortunately Finland has a secret agreement with the USSR and so many refugees were returned to the USSR and sentenced. So in 1949 by Finnish Frontier Guard were captured Estonian officers Jaan-Herman Treial and Artur

Lõoke; the former died in Finnish prison, the second was handed over to Soviet authorities and shot in Tallinn. Two years later escaped to Finland Heino Jalakas and Evald Sirp, captured there and also handed over to the USSR. In 1952 they were sentenced to 25+5 years and survived. In September of 1955 fled to Finland Enno Hubel, where he was arrested but on unknown circumstances was not delivered back. Three years later when residing in Sweden, he was sentenced to death by reason of "slandering the Soviet system in Western press".

The most famous Estonian fugitive of all occupation period is doubtless Juhan Lapmann (born 1910 in a small fishery village Kibru) who accomplished two sea escapes to Finland and Gotland, fled in 1949 successfully from hard labor camp in Komi and made attempts to cross the USSR border near Afganistan and in Arhangelsk. In fact his escape in a tiny selfmade boat to Finland was succesful but he has no luck, landing on the Porkkala peninsula straight in a Soviet military base. In 1971 he passed almost the Baltic Sea in a motor boat, was taken on board of a Danish fishing vessel but Soviet Coast Guard with guns in hand forced him to return. In summary Juhan Lapmann spent in Soviet prisons, labor camps and psychiatric hospitals 32 years (from 1942 to 1989), but never surrendered.



## **4<sup>TH</sup> PLENARY SESSION**

### **THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL POLICIES OF THE SOVIET OCCUPATION REGIME IN THE BALTIC STATES, THEIR MANIFESTATIONS AND CONSEQUENCES**

Chaired by Dr.habil. **Erwin Oberländer**



## **DID ESTONIAN INDUSTRY REALLY GROW SO FAST AFTER THE WAR? SOVIET STATISTICS AND A MORE REALISTIC APPROACH**

Officially, Estonian industry grew 6,7 fold between 1940 and 1955. This would even have improved upon the reconstruction statistics of Germany or Italy, both well known for their superior economic performance in the post-war period. After the devastating effect of the Second World War, Estonian industrial production is supposed to have increased by more than 25 percent per year.

The official statistics are based on the worth of the gross production at fixed rouble prices. With the help of greatly underestimating the productivity of independent Estonia and pegging the Estonian Crown to only 1,25 roubles, the given figure for 1940 is definitely too low. The soviet currency also faced inflation and the real worth of a rouble in 1955 was lower than that of 1940. Deflating the numbers, Estonian industrial production in 1955 was approximately as high as 15 years previously.

There existed several reasons for the low performance. The soviet planned economy was less efficient than a market economy. The nationalisation of the factories and the unrealistic goals of planning both hampered development. Administration grew faster than the workforce, which doubled, but was admittedly diluted by lowly qualified inexperienced labourers, partly immigrants from Russia. The decline of the standard of living, authoritarian but less educated management and problems with supply, and regular deliveries, led to decreasing productivity. Due to Stalinist terror and as a result of the war, the number of male workers had shrunk. Technological backwardness prevented rapid modernisation. The concentration on heavy industry caused a misallocation of capital. The results were the need for increased immigration caused by the shortage of workers, pollution and an

unbalanced, and not sustainable, development. But because of a better infrastructure and higher rates of literacy and working skills, industrial growth was above the average of soviet performance.

Contradictorily, it could be argued that without the incorporation of Estonia into the Soviet Union, Estonian industry would have been in a healthier condition in the 1950's.

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### **THE SPECIFICS OF THE METHODS OF STATISTICS IN THE SOVIET PERIOD**

It is impossible in one presentation to give a detailed analysis of the statistics of the Soviet period. Therefore the author focuses on the aspects that differ the Soviet statistics from generally accepted international methods.

The Soviet statistics was based on the only recognised theory of economy in this state: that of Marxism. To a large degree this aspect is the source of the peculiarities of the Soviet statistics. Among these one should mention first of all the division of economy into the manufacturing and non-manufacturing spheres. According to the Soviet statistics, the GDP and national revenue came solely from the manufacturing sphere, the non-manufacturing sphere acting as a consumer only. This division often lacked elementary consistency. For example, science qualified as a non-manufacturing field, yet the Soviet theory of economy regarded it as an important factor for the development of manufacturing forces. According to Marxist theory, men ranked among the most important manufacturing forces, yet the human medicine, that looked after this manufacturing force, qualified as a non-manufacturing field while the veterinary medicine was placed in the manufacturing sphere. Only in the

final stage of the-so-called Gorbachov's Perestroyka a special government's resolution allowed the Soviet statistics to calculate GDP in compliance with the generally accepted methodology according to which all fields of economy contribute to GDP.

It must be admitted though that not all peculiarities of the Soviet statistics stemmed from the postulates of the teaching of the Marxist economy. Some of these peculiarities deliberately served to embellish the achievements of the Soviet economy and the living standards of the people. For instance, the Soviet statistics ignored the generally accepted methods of the calculation of the price index and was based on the assumption that the Soviet Union guaranteed the stability of prices and therefore only those price differences that followed from the government's decisions were taken into account in the calculation of price indexes. Thus the replacement of goods with a cheaper assortment that became a widely spread tendency, particularly in 1970s-1980s, was ignored. Therefore the growth of real income of the population, calculated with the help of such price indexes, was fictional and did not reveal the actual changes in the living standards of the people.

The application of the-so-called constant prices to calculate the economic growth was another peculiarity of the Soviet statistics. For example, until 1952 the growth of industry was calculated on the basis of the constant prices of 1926/27. In their reports all enterprises had to give their production amounts both in the existing prices and the constant prices of 1926/27. The constant prices of those types of products that had not been manufactured in 1926/27 were calculated with the help of special coefficients derived from the difference between the actual prices of those types of products that were manufactured in 1926/27 and the constant prices of 1926/27.

From 1952 the calculation of industrial production was based on the prices of 1<sup>st</sup> January 1952. The production indicators of 1950 and 1951 were also transformed into these prices to allow the application of the method of the-so-called chain indexes to calculate the growth.

From that date new constant prices were established for each new five-year period. Yet this method had some very substantial drawbacks. Namely, the existing regulations required the first adopted stable price to be regarded as the first constant price. Yet in those fields of industry where the assortment of prices changed, this first adopted price inevitably implied trends of inflation. Thus the growth figures derived from such "constant prices" were always higher than those that would have been obtained from price indexes with the help of internationally recognised methods.

Up to 1957 the Soviet statistics was covered in secrecy. No collection of statistical data was ever published in that period. Newspapers printed only the percentage of the fulfilment of economic plans. The first post-war statistical publications appeared in 1957. In spite of the drawbacks in the methodology of the Soviet statistics and then still existing prohibition to publish many data, these publications should be assessed as a positive development since they acquainted the public with the key indicators of economic development.

In the period that the present conference deals with, the methods of the collection of statistical data also changed. Until 1957 the Board of Statistics received summarised information from Ministries to which it added data provided by enterprises of all-Union importance that were not subordinated to the ministries of the Republic. In 1957 the so-called centralisation of statistical information took place and from then on the Board of Statistics processed information received directly from enterprises. Such transformation was largely due to the transition to the territorial system of administration with councils of economy on the top. This system remained in force also after 1966 when the councils of economy were abolished and enterprises were again subordinated to different ministries of the USSR, several republics or the Soviet Republic of Latvia.

## **THE DEMOGRAPHIC LOSSES AND CHANGES OF THE ETHNIC STRUCTURES IN LATVIA: 1944-1959**

In the post-war period the Soviet occupational regime continued the repressions against Latvian local population which were started in the horrible 1940. There was a great influx of colonists from other USSR regions to Latvia that facilitated the Russification process. The authors have tried to assess the demographic losses and changes of the ethnic structure in Latvia during the postwar period using data from the scarce postwar statistical publications as well as documents from the Center for Documentation of the Consequences of Totalitarianism. Great attention was paid to the issue of reliability of the demographic statistical data from the given time period.

The data on the post-war population in Latvia in the 1940s and 1950s published in statistical editions and encyclopedias should be revised because they are contradictory and do not correspond to changes in the population's natural growth and net migration. The authors have used the retrospective calculation method and considered the relatively more reliable data of 1959 census as well as the data of the regular population registration. The findings showed that the population of Latvia in early 1946 exceeded 1.50 million people but in early 1949 already 1.88 million people. After the 1949 March deportation the population decreased by 43 thousand people. The majority of the deportees were Latvians living in countryside whose average age was 37. Approximately four fifths of them later returned to Latvia, however actual demographic losses account for hundreds of thousands of human years. In addition due to scarce marriages or broken up families tens of thousands of children, who would have been born under different circumstances, were not born.

The authors have assessed the ethnic structure of the population of Latvia shortly before World War II and before the 1949 March deportation and analysed the causes of the changes in the structure. The decrease of population from 1.5 million in the middle of 1941 to 1.3 million in early 1959 is an evidence of not only of the tragic decade of 1940s but also of a rather unfavorable situation in 1950s.

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## **DEMOGRAPHIC CONSEQUENCES OF THE SOVIET OCCUPATION IN LATVIA**

Under the communist regime all the subjected *national republics* were purposely colonized. It is the reason why from the very end of WW II up to the end of Soviet occupation in 1991 net migration in Latvia exceeded the natural increase of population.

At the time of the last Soviet census in 1989 the number of colonists and their descendants almost twice exceeded that of the pre-war ethnic minorities and their proportion had increased to 48% of the population: the highest among all the former Soviet republics except Kazakhstan.

Such a massive influx of migrants had certain impact on the age composition of the population. The proportion of young people of 16-29 years of age among immigrants is usually twice as large as in the resident population. Obviously, they enter the retirement age already in some 30-40 years, which is faster than it takes for the population to be compensated by the arrival of new-borns.

The inevitable comparatively fast ageing of the immigrants was not compensated for by an adequate birth rate. The average birth rate among ethnic Russians, who at that

time constituted 27-34% of the population and 70% of colonists, both in urban and rural areas, was lower than that of ethnic Latvians and was not sufficient eventually to replace people of their parents' generation. So the enormous influx of migrants aggravated the ageing of the population with all its consequences: the burden of pensions on the rest of the population and hindering of the rise of welfare.

The unprecedented intensity of immigration led to cardinal changes in the language situation. The proportion of the Russian speaking population increased so rapidly that it became quite possible to manage without speaking any other language. In 1989 only 22% of ethnic Russians confessed that they had a command of Latvian. The natives, on the contrary, were forced to learn and use Russian at most jobs, and Latvian became a minority language, especially in some larger cities, where colonists were the majority.

Although over the ten years of the restored national independence the proportion of non – Latvians who are more or less able to speak the official language of the state, has increased to a half of this group and is even higher in the younger generation, poor knowledge of Latvian remain to be a serious obstacle for integration.

The experience of Latvia regarding the consequences of enormous immigration during the Soviet occupation could be useful for some other European countries, where discussions on the possibilities to slow down the ageing of the population by additional influx of migrants have begun.



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE  
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POLICIES AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES**  
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## **5<sup>TH</sup> PLENARY SESSION**

**THE CULTURAL, EDUCATIONAL AND RELIGIOUS  
POLICIES OF THE SOVIET OCCUPATION REGIME IN  
THE BALTIC STATES AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES**

Chaired by Dr. **Valters Nollendorfs**



## **SOVIET RELIGIOUS POLICY TOWARDS THE LUTHERAN CHURCH IN ESTONIA 1944-1949 AND ITS CONSEQUENCES**

The paper is based on the author's doctoral thesis "Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church and the Soviet State 1944-1949" (University of Tartu, 2000). There was a certain ambiguity in the church-state relationship in this period, after the shift in Stalin's religious policy during the war. Religious tolerance was granted in order to preserve good relations with the allies. Yet this was just a facade: religious policy had the same aim as before: to cut the ties between church and society, to destroy the religious traditions which had become national traditions. EELC retained a certain degree of independence during the period under observation. 1945 and 1946 were years when many church traditions could be followed without major problems, and the church was also allowed to own its property. 1947 was a turning point in some ways, as the popularity of the church rites attracted the attention of the state authorities. The protest of the church against the commencement of atheistic education made the reaction stronger. As a reaction, and also as a result of the research work done by state representative J. Kivi, operations were initiated to decrease the influence of the church. In 1948 most church property was confiscated, the operation of assimilating the Moravian Brethren was begun and some congregations were also closed. Also the changes in the staff of the consistory began as well as the wave of arrests among the clergy who were accused of anti-Soviet activities during the recent years. In 1949 the state replaced the leadership of the church and prohibited confirmation classes. In the same year the 13th Church Council confirmed the changes in the Church Articles in order to comply with the Soviet legislation. The church's room for manoeuvre had become greatly restricted.

## **THE LITHUANIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH AND SOVIET REGIME IN 1944-1953**

Despite losses suffered during the war the Catholic Church had a fairly strong institutional structure and significant public influence in Lithuania. Expecting to reduce it, the Soviet regime supported in postwar years the Russian Ortodox Church, that was much more loyal to the regime. On the other hand, the government tried to use the Church authority to suppress the public resistance, therefore until 1947, it did not attempt unduly to enforce the Church to follow the model of the Soviet religious cult and avoided pursuing the too aggressive antireligious policy. For the Church leaders protested against the restraints of religious liberty and didn't want to support the regime in it's struggle with querrillas, most of them were repressed until the middle of 1947.

The change of Soviet government's anti-ecclesiastical policy in Lithuania was related to radical actions, taken to implement final sovietization in Lithuania in spring of 1948. The Soviet regime attempted with drastic measures to force religious organisations to accept the restictions of religious activity, common for the Soviet Union. At first, the opposition of the episcopate curia and clergy against the registration was neutralized. The registration order granted the Soviet government the tool to effectively control the density of the parish network and repartition of the clergy. Until 1950 there had been about a hundred catholic churches shut down in Lithuania, most of them in the major towns. The representative of the CARC was seeking to eliminate the most active priests from Vilnius and Kaunas too. The surplus of priest was quickly devoured by the Stalinist machine of repressions having operated to best rating in 1948-1949. In 1944-1953 about one third of priests were arrested and sentenced in Lithuania. The clergy number in Lithuania was decreasing not only due to

repressions but also because the government militated against preparation of new priests.

Seeking to subdue the Church in Lithuania, in 1948-1949 the Soviet authorities attempted to destroy its hierarchic structure. It fostered the ordinary priests to insubordinate to the diocese proprietors and also tried to create Vatican independent, the so called national Church. The Soviet regime had not succeeded in creating the national Church, but in the end of 1949 all the dioceses in Lithuania were already administered by the clergy which inclined to adapt to the conditions of the regime. After ensuring the efficient control of religious institutions, CARC stopped actions of his representative in Lithuania, which aimed to destroy the Church completely in short. So, in the beginning of the 50s, the anti-ecclesiastical policy in Lithuania softened, the Soviet authorities focused all attention on invisible destructive actions.

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## **RELATIONS BETWEEN THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH OF LATVIA AND THE STATE (1944 – 1959)**

This presentation describes relations between the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia (ELCL) and the Communist regime in 1944 to 1959. The year of 1944 was to a large extent decisive for the further development of the ELCL, as in this year the Church lost many clergymen as well as many parishioners. It was also in this year that the Archbishop of ELCL Teodors Grinbergs left Latvia.

The totalitarian regime of the USSR pursued a policy that was hostile to the Church. From 1944 the policy was imposed through the authorised official of the Council of the Affairs of Religious Worship (CARW). The goal of the Communist policy was to subjugate the Church and to separate and isolate it

from the public. To a large degree the policy was successful. It was carried out by means of first getting rid of "the undesirable elements" in the Church and then centralising the authority in the Church in the hands of a few people in order to make the Church easier to manipulate. The tactics of dividing the Church from inside and creating a gap between the administration and Archbishop of the Church on one hand and the clergy and parishes on the other was also applied.

Analysis of the relations between the ELCL and the state authorities in the above-mentioned period reveals that, with regard to their attitudes to the Communist regime, clergy and parishioners were split in two camps. The attitude of the first acting Archbishop in the post-war period Reverend Karlis Irbe and his associates in the administration of the Church was unanimous: no co-operation with the godless regime whatsoever. The efforts of the authorised official for Religious Affairs to make Reverend Irbe into a tool in the hands of the Communist policy failed and therefore he had to be disposed of. The arrested leaders of the Church were replaced by administrators of "a new type" with the "blessings" of the authorised official.

The attitude of the new administrators of ELCL is best seen in the work style of Archbishop Gustavs Turs as he adapted himself to the realities of the Soviet rule, abided the existing laws and within the framework of these laws tried to ensure the survival and continuity of the Church. Reverend Turs played a role in the political game where the rules were set by the Communist authorities. Although outwardly Reverend Turs was a tool in the Communist hands, his tactics were aimed at the protection of the interests of the Church. The leaders of ELCL outwardly demonstrated their loyalty to the Soviet rule in different ways which policy gave the Church the chance of a more or less peaceful existence. However as the Church accepted the rules of the game set by the state, it was forced to make compromises, such as the harmonisation of the Statutes of ELCL with the legislation of the LSSR and co-ordination of the nomination for the administration of the Church with the CARW and the government of the LSSR.

The administration and the Archbishop of the Church fulfilled the function of an intermediary between the state authorities and members of the Church. Such position doomed them to serve as targets for criticism and assaults from both sides. Through the administration of the Church the authorised official tried to influence clergy and parishes by instructing the administration to impose his decisions with respect to the clergy and the parishes. The administration of the Church tried to protect the clergy and the parishes from the state authorities, yet it had very limited possibility to do so. At first the parishioners did not understand the situation and reproached the administration of the Church of "unresponsiveness". Among the clergy there existed an opposition to Reverend Turs' policy of loyalty to the state, yet with the help of the authorised official their voice was silenced.

In general, in 1950s the ELCL was already reconciled to the role imposed on it by the Soviet State, i.e. it maintained its outward institutionalised form in fact serving as a puppet in the hands of the Communist rule.

Relations that developed between the state and ELCL in the relevant period to a large extent determined the model of the work under the Communist regime that the Church followed up to the end of 1980s. Obeying the restrictions of the religious work that the state authorities imposed on it, the Church placed itself in a ghetto situation, which had been the goal of the Communist policy.

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## **IMPLEMENTATION OF SOME ASPECTS OF SOVIET SCHOOLS POLICY IN DAUGAVPILS (1944 – 1953)**

Research into the particularities of education policy helps to identify more precisely the overall priorities of the state. As far as the Baltic republics incorporated into the Soviet Union are

concerned, the aim of the Soviet power was to turn them into soviet republics as quickly as possible. However, for this to happen, state and military pressures were not enough; the people themselves had to be changed and it was in public schools that these changes could be made in depth rather than at a superficial level. For the analysis of this mechanism of sovietization, and how it expanded throughout Latvia, excellent material is provided by a study of the situation in Daugavpils. For here, for a variety of reasons, the tempo and intensity of these changes were particularly swift.

Archive materials, press and oral history sources allow it to be ascertained that, among the many aspects of schools policy, the following stand out:

- **a unified system of education**, which was launched in 1940 and restored immediately in 1944. As a result, the legal basis of education, its administration and the system of educational institutions were brought in complete compliance with the system of education in the Soviet Union. Soviet textbooks were introduced in Latvian schools, and from 1952 on the RSFSR school curricula were in force. Finally, in 1948 the schools for the ethnic minorities were liquidated, the last element, which had distinguished Latvian education from the Soviet system.
- **the complete “ideologization” of Latvia’s schools policy.** The Communist party and state machinery, as well as media, imposed the impression that every activity, from the construction of nest boxes for birds to attendance of Marxism-Leninism classes at the university, eventually had to lead to the successful construction of communism. The school curricula and methods of teaching strictly enforced these ideological requirements.
- **the process of sovietization inevitably led to Russification.** Russification, implemented through the compulsory learning of Russian and the large number of hours dedicated to this subject, changed the status of Russian schools and resulted in the growth of their number.

More study needs to be done on the role of the individual teacher in this process, since individual behaviour ranged from

open opposition to enthusiastic collaboration with the authorities.

However, despite the undoubted successes in the implementation of the Soviet policy, as early as the 1940s a number of factors emerged which complicated the triumph of the Soviet power over the Latvian educational policy:

- the traditional values and historical experience of the people of Latvia,
- the lack of historical perspective in the communist idea,
- the enormous gap between words and deeds in Soviet behaviour patterns.

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### **THE PEOPLE'S LIBRARIES OF RIGA BETWEEN THE INTERESTS OF THE STATE POWER AND SOCIETY (1944-1953)**

The oldest of the people's libraries in Riga (originally called public libraries) was opened to readers in October 1906. By the Second World War the network of libraries in Riga was developed to an optimal degree: the inhabitants of Riga had ten people's libraries with 24 affiliates in remote areas in the City where they could order and receive books. Eight book repositories had children's sections and in library no. 10 there was a section of Jewish literature.

During the second Soviet occupation (in 1944-1990) people's libraries were called mass libraries. Quantity was considered the key category describing the growth of libraries. Same as in the first year of the Soviet occupation (in 1940/1941) the number of the permanent book repositories was increased at the expense of the existing libraries, i.e. no additional funding was allocated for the purchasing of books for new libraries,

which thus received a proportion of the book reserves from the existing libraries. In 1950 there were already 29 libraries in Riga.

However, the new state power did not care for the actual interests of readers. Adaptation of the service to the readers' particular wishes was no longer the most important task for the library. Many of the newly established libraries were housed in completely unsuitable premises and libraries suffered from the shortage of financing necessary to purchase the latest literature. Libraries were not allowed independently to choose the topics of the so-called mass events. The themes were dictated by the Department of Cultural and Educational Institutions at the City Council that was in charge of libraries. The standard accounting forms no longer required the analysis of the composition of the reading public (age, occupation, nationality).

One of the first things that the occupation rule did was to take out the undesirable literature from the library funds. In 1945 12 923 books were taken out of circulation, in 1946 - already 27 625 and in 1948 - 86 254. The cleansing of the library funds continued in the following years, when the proportion of ideologically harmful literature among the taken out units was no longer included in reports. On the other hand, the priority in collecting books was no longer the most demanded fiction as has been the case before, the focus having switched to publicistic and political works, the writings of the classical authors of Marxism-Leninism in the first instance. Such literature soon became the second dominating group in the funds of Riga mass libraries: in 1950 it accounted for 17.8% of all library book collections. In spite of the diverse propaganda events, publicistic political literature constituted only 10 to 15% of the books issued to readers.

In the first two years the composition of staff in Riga mass libraries did not substantially change. The oldest city libraries were still administrated by same managers of long standing who had held the jobs under the Nazi occupation. The year of 1948 when the administration of the Department of Cultural and Educational Institutions was replaced, was a sharp turning point. In the period between 1948 and 1951 altogether ten managers and five employees of libraries were dismissed as

politically and professionally unsuitable for their jobs. Neither the numerous events of political education, nor increased control over their work, nor the replacement of staff could lessen the indifference to politics among librarians. In 1950 of 145 librarians only eight were members of the Young Communist League and six - members of the Communist Party. The majority of librarians of mass libraries in Riga did not support the new system. Through passive resistance in the form of purely formal execution of requirements they tried to hamper the process of Sovietization. Having discovered it, the authorities not only repressed them, but also increased control over the development of the "backward" spheres. Yet the plans of the occupation rule were so ruthless towards the spiritual values that had been accumulated for decades, that their accurate fulfilment would have completely destroyed the national culture.

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### **LIBRARIES AS CAPTIVES OF THE SOVIET IDEOLOGY (1944 – 1953)**

On 13<sup>th</sup> October 1944 Riga and on 8<sup>th</sup> May 1945 all Latvia again came under the Soviet occupation. The Soviet rule again held power, it exerted power over the culture as well and through culture, over the people's minds. The library being one of the most influential tools to manipulate the public opinion, Latvian libraries found themselves in the focus of increased attention of the Soviet cultural policy. The aim of this presentation is to reveal the goals of the Soviet library policy in the years after the Second World War and to show methods that were applied to implement the library policy.

To make cultural institutions more efficient to manage, the administrative system was changed in this period. In the first year after the war libraries were subordinated to the Board of

the Political Education at the People's Commissariat for Education. On 12<sup>th</sup> September 1945 the Council of People's Commissars of the Latvian SSR adopted resolution "on the Formation of the Committee for Cultural and Education institutions at the Council of People's Commissars of LSSR". The established Committee was in charge of libraries until 1953.

The goal of the Soviet rule was through the two supervisory institutions to make libraries into propagandists of the Soviet ideology. In accordance with the decision of the Committee for Cultural and Education Institutions libraries had to help the reader to use the book as a tool in the struggle for Communism. Libraries adopted aggressive style of work, with all means at their disposal imposing the Soviet ideology on the public.

"Politico-economic" campaigns played a special role in the propaganda efforts. All cultural institutions: clubs, "red interest groups", community centres, and certainly, libraries, were involved in these campaigns. People employed in cultural institutions, including librarians, through different propaganda events had to take part in campaigns dedicated to the implementation of laws/ decisions of the Party and Government, national holidays, anniversaries of the Party or the Young Communist League, elections, agricultural campaigns etc.

The following methods were applied in the ideological work: selection of literature that complied with the Soviet ideology, exhibitions of books, slogans, posters, conferences and meetings of readers dedicated to a particular subject, even readings aloud, etc.

The State Library of LSSR played an important role in the implementation of the ideological work of Latvian libraries. The State Library was engaged in propaganda efforts soon after the second Soviet occupation began. The methodical efforts and bibliographical recommendations were especially important elements in the ideological work of the State Library.

The main function and goal of libraries in the post-war period was by embracing as large a segment of society as possible to change the way of thinking in society; with the most obtrusive methods of agitation the way of thinking that the

Soviets regarded as desirable was imposed on every reader of any library and every Soviet citizen that had some contacts with any library; Soviet ideals were propagated in libraries in an open and "violent" form.

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### **THE POLICY OF THE SOVIET OCCUPATION POWER AGAINST THE PROTECTION OF MONUMENTS (1944 – 1953)**

Legally, protection of monuments is the protection of officially recognised monuments, designated as such by state or municipal authorities. It is a complex activity, which includes the evaluation of the future worth of objects, the efforts of the protective agencies, personnel policies, etc.

Already during the time of the first Republic of Latvia /1920-1940/ , there were very heated discussions in Constitutional Assembly and in the Saeima (Latvian parliament) about the wording of the very first law passed to protect cultural heritage. This indicates the close connections between state policy and the choices made in the selection of items to be protected as valuable cultural heritage. It is clear that also in today's world the attitude held towards national heritage is like a litmus test for every political system. It is a test, which measures political maturity, extent of democracy in the society and is indicative of the relationship between those who hold political power and the rest of society.

During 1940 - 1941, the first year of Soviet occupation, also known as "The Year of Terror", the Soviet regime made radical changes in state institutions, abolished the Monuments Board and replaced most staff members. The new ideological foundation for the evaluation of cultural heritage was to be based on the class concept of society and revolutionary processes as the driving forces for changes of society.

After the Second World War, the occupation power in Latvia had to deal with the destruction and losses caused by the war and the ideological precepts of the "Year of Terror" were set aside. All of the complete or partial destruction of the valuable cultural heritage items was declared to be the result of the evildoing of fascists. Professionals like architects, civil engineers, sculptors, restoration specialists, museum staff members, etc. enthusiastically set out to record what had survived, believing that protection, that is, conservation or restoration would then follow. This illusion was fostered by specialists and administrators of the Soviet Union, who sometimes intervened and prevented destructive activities of the extra orthodox local communists. The fate of the ruins of the Blackheads House in old town Rīga is a striking example of this process. The blowing up of these ruins without any justification in 1948, concluded the post war period of romanticism, illusions and hope about the protection of monuments and cultural heritage.

On October 14, 1948, the Council of Ministers of the USSR passed law *On the improvement of the protection of monuments* and later, by-laws and regulations to be observed by all of the Republics of the USSR. The Council of Ministers of the Latvian SSR very soon passed nearly identical legislation. During the following years of Soviet occupation this became an inevitable pattern, that is, when the central government bodies in Moscow had passed legislation, only then did the Latvian SSR do the same. Not only the monuments that were listed as Soviet Union level monuments, but also those to be listed separately for each republic, had to be submitted for "coordination" by the Council of Ministers in Moscow. In the early 1950s, intensification of the suppression of "bourgeois nationalism" lead to the arrest and loss of job by a number of specialists, who had been involved in the post war effort to protect the cultural heritage. The Soviet ideology attacked the German culture of the Middle Ages, the much younger bourgeoisie culture and objects which represented it. At the same time it demanded a more in-depth study of Soviet history and way of life, with special emphases on Latvian friendship with the "great Russian Nation". The role of the Soviet nation in its victory over "German

fascism" was to be immortalized. In 1953, Cultural ministries were established in the republics of the USSR, and the work of protection of monuments became more rational.



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## **6<sup>TH</sup> PLENARY SESSION**

### **ARMED AND PEACEFUL RESISTANCE AGAINST THE SOVIET OCCUPATION REGIME IN THE BALTICS**

Chaired by Dr.hist. **Kārlis Kangeris**



## **LATVIAN ARMED RESISTANCE MOVEMENT (1944 - 1956): HISTORIOGRAPHY AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE STUDIES**

The Latvian armed resistance due to its' longevity and complicated character has an important role in the history of Latvia. It stands to reason that great importance should be attached to the historical research into this subject.

Research into the Latvian armed resistance to date falls into three basic categories:

- 1) research abroad;
- 2) articles, written in Latvia during the Soviet occupation;
- 3) monographs and research works in Latvia after 1990.

Analysing the scholarly works on the Latvian armed resistance written in emigration, the conclusion is that from the perspective of the contemporary research into the topic, these works are outdated, and therefore should be regarded critically.

Western scholarly works on resistance movements in East Europe during World War II and after it, except those written by historians of Baltic origin, usually do not deal with and do not even mention Latvia.

During the Soviet occupation no reasonably impartial research into the Latvian armed resistance was possible because of censorship and confidential status of practically all necessary information. The articles of that time are not usable in contemporary historical research.

Impartial research into the Latvian armed resistance movement began after 1990. It took the form of gathering and analysing information on national partisans, following the principle from the general to the individual.

The first monograph on national partisans was "Latvian National Partisan War 1944-1956", written by professor Henrihs Strods. The monograph was published in 1994 and became the

basis for further academic studies of the Latvian armed resistance.

Currently a new stage of development that follows the principle from the individual to the general vaguely begins to emerge.

Historian Zigmārs Turčinskis is writing his doctor's thesis "Activities of the Union of Latvian National Partisans in 1944—1956", that deals with the activities of partisans in Vidzeme, and northern Latgale.

Yet it is impossible to carry out comprehensive research without taking into consideration the activities of partisan groups in Kurzeme and the Association of the Guards of Fatherland Latvia (Latvijas Tēvzemes Sargi), which covered southern Latgale, Central Vidzeme and Sēlija.

Currently the historical research into this subject is standing practically on the same level. The growing interest into this subject among historians and state support for doctor's thesis on this theme will hopefully by the year of 2010 result in comprehensive monographs on the national armed resistance in Latvia. No adequate further research into the armed resistance is possible without developing a single data basis on the members of the national armed resistance and their supporters. The database would allow the establishing of the total number of prosecuted and murdered partisans and their supporters, as well as the systematisation of all members of national resistance according to the geographical principle and their social status.

The acquired information would allow drawing conclusions about the armed resistance in general. Furthermore, one of the tasks in the process of research into the armed resistance would be finding out the practical results of partisans' activities, as well as to analyse the obtained figures and to draw conclusions. For the same reason it is necessary to study the impact of the armed resistance on entire society and on the public attitude towards the occupation regime. Contacts and co-operation among the armed resistance movements in the Baltic countries present a perspective theme for further research. It would be interesting to study the impact of German special services on the Latvian armed resistance in

1944-1945, the activities of partisans during and after the civilians' deportations in March 1949, as well as other themes.

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**NATIONAL PARTISAN WARFARE IN THE BALTIC  
1944 – JANUARY 1947:  
ARMAMENT, STAFFING, MILITARY ACTION**

Research on the history of National Partisan Warfare in the Baltic 1944–1956 was carried out by Latvian exile historians in the West after World War II and, more recently, by Latvian historians in Latvia in the 10 years following the restoration of independence. Publications on the topic include monographs, documents, articles and testimonies of eyewitnesses. However, until now there have been no comparative studies on armament, staffing and military actions in the Baltic. This presentation is the first attempt to deal with these questions.

The historical source for this analysis are 18 statistical tables which were prepared by the Chief Administrative Board for Fight against Banditism at the Ministry of Interior of USSR in Moscow on 15 February 1947. These tables are analysed here for the first time. They provide the opportunity to examine and compare national partisan warfare in the Baltic countries because they follow the same format:

Armament of national partisans.

Staffing and losses of national partisans.

Staffing and losses of the Soviet forces.

As a result of his analysis, the author has come to the conclusion that, regarding all three indicators (armament, staff and intensity of fighting) the Lithuanian national partisans were taking the leading position, the Latvians – the second place, and the Estonians – the third place.

From 1944 until January 1947 the Soviet occupation forces confiscated from the national partisans of the three Baltic republics 4,416,183 units of armament, ammunition and communication systems. The ranks of the Baltic national partisans included deserters from the Soviet army (7,133 men) and draft dodgers (84,234). These groups, an equivalent of nine divisions of the Red Army, constituted 97.9% of all national armed resistance in the Baltic countries. While Soviet propaganda called all national partisans "criminal bands," the secret information in these 18 statistical tables reveals that only 4.9% of Lithuanian, 10.3% of Latvian and 12.6% of Estonian partisans were using extreme violence in order to gain sustenance and fight active collaborators with the Soviet occupation. During three years of fighting in the three Baltic republics, 176,145 members of national armed resistance and their family members were "neutralized", 2,237 men representing the occupation power were killed and 9,469 civilians died in military action (among them secret Cheka/KGB agents). The total death toll of the national partisan warfare between 1944 and January 1947 was 11,706 persons.

The Baltic national partisans used their right to resist (*ius resistendi*) disproportionately greater forces of the occupation power. They were fighting for the internationally recognized rights of nations to decide their fate fixed in the Atlantic Charter signed on 14 August 1941. They were fighting for the restoration of democratic independent Baltic States in hope for assistance from democratic Western countries, and were planning to restore democratic governments in their countries after the defeat of the totalitarian communist occupation.

## **THE CO-OPERATION BETWEEN LATVIAN AND ESTONIAN NATIONAL PARTISANS (1945 - 1952)**

The main objective of this presentation is to analyse the co-operation between Latvian and Estonian partisan groups after the Second World War. Since the resistance to the communist occupation took place in both countries, co-operation logically developed among these groups.

There were geographical differences in intensity of co-operation: while there were no actively fighting national partisans in the Western part of Vidzeme (from the Coast of the Gulf of Riga to the city of Valka) (and therefore there was no co-operation there), active co-operation took place in the Eastern part (from Valka to the border of Russia).

The national partisans of both countries met for the first time in the territory of Latvia in the forest near Gaujiena in September of 1945.

At that time case-fire has been concluded between the Latvian National Partisan Union (LNPA) from one side and NKVD and NKGB from the other (in force from 29<sup>th</sup> September to 9<sup>th</sup> October 1945). On 6<sup>th</sup> October 1945 partisans of both countries carried out a joint operation outside the zone of the mentioned case-fire. A group of 15 Latvian and three Estonian partisans established control over the municipality of Hargla (Veru county, Estonia). During the operation two armed collaborationists of the occupation regime (so called "istrebitel"s) were shot dead.

Paying a visit back, four Estonian partisans joined 45 Latvian partisans in an attack on the municipality of Zvartava (Valka county, Latvia) on 9<sup>th</sup> October, 1945. One collaborationist was shot during the action and five more "istrebitel"s were beaten.

Such exchange operations continued on a regular basis. The main principle of these actions were that Latvians took part in combat operations in Estonia and Estonians in Latvia. The

function of the local partisans in these operations was only to identify the objects of attack. This was done for the victims of these attacks to be unable to recognise their attackers and thus to decrease the risk of repression against the partisans' families.

The greatest achievement of the co-operation between Latvians and Estonians was the killing of the chief of the Aluksne department of the Ministry of State Security (MGB), major Gusiev by Estonian partisans on the 22<sup>nd</sup> May, 1946.

However, after 1946 the military pressure of the occupation forces became too strong and co-operation ceased. In the following years partisans used the territories of the neighbouring country only as a shelter when occupants intensified anti-partisans actions.

After 25<sup>th</sup> March, 1949 (the day of the huge deportations of citizens of Latvia by the occupation regime) the support base for partisans in Latvia was heavily damaged. Yet Latvian partisans attacked and robbed shops owned by the occupation regime in Estonia.

In total the Latvian partisans carried out five major attacks in Estonia (5 red activists killed and 9 beaten) and Estonians took part in 6 major attacks in Latvia (3 red activists killed, 6 wounded and 7 beaten).

The participation of civilians in the partisans' movement in the neighbouring country is a topic for a separate discussion. According to the available data, only one citizen of Latvia joined a group of Estonian partisans and 7 citizens of Estonia became members of Latvian partisan groups (5 of them from Latvian settlement Lauri in Estonia).

The language barrier was the main obstacle for closer co-operations between Latvian and Estonian partisans.

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## **7<sup>TH</sup> PLENARY SESSION**

**THE BALTICANS (LATVIANS, LITHUANIANS,  
ESTONIANS) IN THE FREE WORLD AND THE  
SOVIET OCCUPATION REGIME**

Chaired by **Daina Kļaviņa**



## **THE IDEA OF THE INDEPENDENT STATEHOOD OF LATVIA IN THE PERIOD OF REFUGEE CAMPS (1944 – 1949)**

The USSR as the occupying country, failed to achieve the closure of diplomatic missions that represented the independent state of Latvia in several Western states. This aspect was of huge importance for the maintenance of the idea of the continuity of the national statehood and the aspirations to restore Latvia's national independence. In spite of the extensive campaign of propaganda for repatriation launched by the leadership of the Communist (Bolshevik) party of Latvia and different occupant authorities, only a few thousand of approximately 200 000 refugees who had fled Latvia during the war voluntarily returned to the occupied Latvia after the war.

Those Latvian citizens who settled in the free world continued the discussion that had begun already during the war pertaining to the system of administration to be established in Latvia after the restoration of its independence. The joint position of the members of the democratic resistance movement was first formulated by the platform of the Central Council of Latvia that had been established on 13<sup>th</sup> August 1943. It stated that the Constitution of the Republic of Latvia that had been adopted in 1922 while remaining in force needed amendments to achieve a more balanced division of functions between legislative and executive authorities.

In the course of discussions the Central Council of Latvia in Germany, consisting of the representatives of the Presidium of the Saeima and the largest political parties represented in the Saeima, insisted that the 1922 Constitution of the Republic of Latvia had never been invalidated and was thus still in force and the Constitution being the most important document in the history of the Latvian nation, only the whole Latvian nation (the community of citizens) in the state liberated from occupation

would have the right to decide on the possible amendments to the Constitution. The umbrella organisation of the Latvian refugees, the Central Committee of Latvians was considerably more reserved towards the Constitution of 1922. The holder of emergency powers, the Ambassador of Latvia to the United Kingdom Karlis Zarins pointed to the shortcomings in the Constitution and emphasised the necessity to elaborate a new basic law for Latvia including in it those provisions from the 1922 Constitution that had stood the test of time. Different exiles organisations did not come to full agreement regarding whether the Constitution needed amendments and whether the right to make amendments to the Constitution vested in the Constitutionals Assembly or in the Saeima. Yet in late 1940s the belief that the Constitution of the Republic of Latvia was still in force took root.

Rather harsh disputes centred also on the issue whether there was a legal basis for the existence of the state institutions provided for in the Constitution such as the President of State, etc. in exile. Ambassadors of Latvia declared that they as legally appointed, accredited and recognised officials had no right to renounce the powers granted to them by a sovereign government and to subordinate themselves to any other officials as this would put the recognition of the ambassadors from the part of Western powers at risk as a result of which the Embassies and Consulates of Latvia would be threatened with closure.

No agreement was reached on this issue in the period of refugee camps. Yet from a historical perspective this dissension was of secondary importance. What was of primary importance was the firmly established position on the continuity of the statehood of the Republic of Latvia as ambassadors as representatives of the statehood of Latvia and officials of both the parliamentary and the authoritarian periods of Latvian history from different refugee organisations agreed on a common strategic vision of the restoration of the annihilated state on the foundation of the Constitution of 1922.

## **ATTEMPTS TO RESUME THE WORK OF THE CENTRAL COUNCIL OF LATVIA AND ARRESTS OF ITS MEMBERS AFTER THE ANNIHILATION OF THE COUNCIL IN 1945**

On 13<sup>th</sup> August 1943 representatives of four biggest political parties elected to the last convocation of the Latvian parliament established a joint organization of national resistance movement – the Central Council of Latvia (CCL). The goal of the Council was to restore the parliamentary Republic of Latvia, which had existed until coup d`etat of 1934, and to coordinate the struggle against the Nazi and possible Soviet occupation.

Because of the specific conditions under which CCL worked, very few source materials on CCL have survived, therefore in many cases the story must be based on documents from the former archive of the Latvian SSR State security committee (KGB). The criminal files of the former KGB archive must be regarded with criticism. However, this is the biggest source of written information on the work of CCL in Latvia after World War II.

After the capitulation of NS Germany those activists of CCL, who remained in Latvia, continued their underground activities in the port city of Kurzeme, Ventspils and in Riga. When many members of the Council were arrested during an operation of NKGB in late 1945 – early 1946, the organization was forced to suspend its activities.

Even after the collapse of the organization in the period from 1946 to early 1950s the repression authorities of the Soviet regime continued to arrest former members of CCL. A large part of the arrested people had no longer been members of CLL after the war; this refers primarily to members of the Latvian Social Democratic Workers Party (Fricis Mendērs, Klāvs Lorencs and others). However, being arrested for what the Soviet authorities regarded as serious crimes against the state, they

were also prosecuted for their membership in CCL during World War II.

Until as late as 1951 some activists of CCL unsuccessfully tried to resume the work of the organization in Latvia. To save their human resources, they abstained from armed struggle against the Soviet occupation authorities and pursued tactics of temporizing in hope that Latvia's independence would be restored with the support of the Western countries.

The expectations of CCL to receive help from the Western countries in the post-war period failed to materialize. Instead the Western intelligence services merely used the resistance movement in the Baltic to foster their own mercenary goals. The members and supporters of LCC found themselves under total control of the Soviet repressive system, were used for some time in the game against the Western intelligence services and afterwards arrested one after another.

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### **THE LATVIAN QUESTION IN THE CONTEXT OF SWEDISH-SOVIET RELATIONS 1941– 1959**

1) By the end of the Second World War, most evacuees and refugees from Latvia found themselves in the territories occupied by Allies. Only some 4,000 Latvians managed to reach the neutral Sweden during the war.

2) The overall aims of the Soviet Union included the 'bringing home' of all Soviet citizens who, as a result of the war, found themselves beyond the borders of the USSR. The citizens of Latvia were regarded as Soviet citizens by the USSR. At the Yalta conference of 11.2.1945 the Western Allies accepted the Soviet proposal that all Soviet citizens were to be repatriated, even by force if necessary. The status of Latvians was not

specifically defined at the conference and their citizenship was seen as 'disputable'. In principle, Sweden was not bound by the decisions of the Allies reached among themselves.

3) Sweden and the Soviet Union developed particular relations during the Second World War. In 1940/1941 Sweden recognized *de iure* the incorporation of the Baltic countries in the USSR which became explicit in the special "Agreement between Sweden and the USSR on the regulation of reciprocal economic demands regarding Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia" of 3 0.5.1941. In the first years of the war, Sweden had supported Finland and also allowed the transit of German troops through its territory. In 1943, when Germany was already on the defensive, the USSR began to pressure Sweden for 'atonement of their sins'.

4) During the war, seven categories of Soviet citizens whose repatriation was demanded by the USSR had arrived in Sweden:

1. Interned Soviet military personnel who had come to Sweden in 1941;

2. Soviet military personnel who had fled to Sweden from military internment and labour camps in Norway, Finland and Germany between 1942-1945;

3. Civilian refugees from Latvia (3,500), Lithuania (500) and Estonia (22,000);

4. Estonian Swedes;

5. Interned Baltic military personnel (167);

6. Refugees from Ingria;

7. "Russian civilians" and "former Russians" who had been transferred to Sweden from concentration camps in Germany.

5) The USSR began to raise the question of Latvian and other Baltic civilian refugees in January, 1944, which became a particularly sore point in Swedish-USSR relations in March-July of 1945 when Sweden rejected the repatriation by force of Baltic civilian refugees.

Concessions to the USSR were made in 'minor matters' such as allowing USSR repatriation officers, in the company of Swedish authorities, to visit Baltic refugee camps, relinquishing to the USSR all Baltic refugee boats, surrendering interned Baltic

military personnel etc. The pressure to return Baltic refugees to the USSR desisted in the spring of 1946 when Moscow decided that it was wiser to sign a credit agreement with Sweden (7.10.1946) to divert Sweden from engaging in the politics of the Western Allies directed against the Soviet Union.

6) In future years, the Latvian viz. Baltic question had little direct impact on Swedish-USSR diplomatic relations and became more of a question of Swedish internal politics (double citizenship for Balts, the visit of the Swedish fleet to the Baltic countries, etc.).

7) The Latvian refugees in Sweden felt secure only at the onset of the 1950's when it became possible to get Swedish citizenship. Prior to that, some 2,000 Latvians had left Sweden in search of their 'personal safety' in distant overseas countries, far away from the uncertainty of Swedish internal politics and imminent communist threats.

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### **EXILE HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS AS REFLECTED IN LITERATURE: THE IMAGE OF ENEMY, FRIEND, HERO AND SUFFERER**

In the absence of sociological surveys, other sources of gauging public opinion or sentiment have to be found. Literature is one such possible source. If used with proper precautions, it can allow us to arrive at certain conclusions concerning prevalent public consciousness of historical events.

As the end of World War II approached, an estimated 200,000 inhabitants of Latvia were located in European areas outside Latvia. These included refugees, evacuees, soldiers, forced laborers, inmates of concentration camps. Most of them were concentrated in Germany or areas formerly held by Germany. Some 5000 had crossed the Baltic Sea to Sweden. After war's end, an estimated 120,000 were left in the West,

mainly in refugee camps in Western Germany. The others had been overtaken by Soviet troops in the East, taken prisoner, repatriated, killed in war action. Those remaining chose to live in exile rather than repatriate. Among the exiles was a disproportionate number of people who had belonged to the cultural, political and economic elites of independent Latvia. Beginning in 1947, most Latvian refugees emigrated to Great Britain, the USA, Canada and Australia and other countries.

Literary life in exile resumed soon after war's end. For quite a long time, the number of literary works published in exile exceeded that of publications in occupied Latvia. Two types of publications dominated the early period until 1950: published or unpublished works written before exile and works dealing with the immediate refugee and exile experience. Short forms predominated. Longer works, such as novels, came out later when the exiles had settled in their final lands of residence.

Of interest to the historian is the question of exile consciousness concerning the momentous events of occupation, war and suffering 1940–45, and subsequently reflected directly or indirectly in exile literary works. Since the exile community formed a cohesive if not homogeneous group, a close correlation between the written and read word existed, i.e. writing reflected public sentiment. This correlation can be confirmed by the relative popularity, i.e. acceptance of works adhering to what may be termed the exile credo, as contrasted with public criticism leveled at works which seemed to deviate from it. Literary works confirming the ideology tend toward stereotyping of the enemy, hero and sufferer image. The questioning or breaking of stereotypes in critical works allows the scholar to draw inferences about critical undercurrents in exile society.

For obvious reasons, the standard image of the enemy and the victim or sufferer were already preordained by the common experience. The enemy was the Soviet Union, its ruling Communists and all they embody: the occupying Red Army, the destruction of civil society, the pervasive presence and arbitrary powers of the Cheka, the deportations, arrests and executions. The Red Army soldier was oftentimes depicted as uneducated, uncivilized, as an Asian or a Mongolian. The figure

of the Chekist became that of a brutal interrogator and sadistic torturer, at times – as practiced by Nazi propaganda – Jewish. The victim was the patriot, the suffering – imprisonment, torture, deprivation, deportation. The exile experience became one of escape from Communist terror and total opposition to all it embodies. The enemy is hated all the more for having raped the homeland and having driven the exile out. There is usually little or no questioning or investigation of these images and stereotypes.

As for the image of the friend, the outlines are much more fuzzy. Clearly, the friend –in politics as in literature – was the Westerner, but in literary works oftentimes the “friend” oftentimes turns out to be the uncomprehending local who fails to understand the frustrated exile’s attempts at explaining the evil nature of the foe, namely, Communism. This foe, after all, had just recently been a comrade-at-arms of the “friend” fighting in his view the far greater evil – Nazism. And here, of course, the Latvian exile faces difficulties convincing the local that Latvians were not fighting to uphold Nazism but oppose Communism.

This problem becomes obvious in literary works dealing with the Nazi period and Latvian involvement in the war. The Latvian legionnaire, especially the one defending Kurzeme to the very last, is the hero, but, it must be noted – not as the SS-man who has sworn allegiance to Hitler, rather as the Latvian patriot defending his land against the evil invader from the East. The impression conveyed is oftentimes that of singular achievement, although Kurzeme was defended by an army of about 200,000, of whom one tenth were Latvian legionnaires. Less glorious are descriptions of Latvian fighters caught in the Soviet winter and spring offensives of 1945, toward the end of the war. In these descriptions, questions are sometimes raised concerning the wisdom and the results of Latvian involvement in the disastrous fighting far from their native land. Yet it also becomes clear from criticisms leveled at some of these works that, while describing war’s inglorious events was generally acceptable, questioning the rationale of Latvian involvement was not.

Communist propaganda has described Latvian exiles as pro-Nazi or, in its terminology – pro-Fascist. Literary works do not bear out such inclinations, unless virulent anti-Communism is taken as proof of pro-Fascism. The prevailing sentiment in exile literary works is patriotism, or “bourgeois nationalism” as it came to be known in Soviet propaganda. At the same time, coming to terms with the reasons and causes for collaboration or at least accommodation with the Nazis is not a prevalent literary topic. Thus, collective memory lapses occur concerning the atrocities committed by the Nazis against Latvia's Jews, namely the Holocaust, and Latvians, including forced conscription, labor service, imprisonment, concentration camps. These are not general topics of exile literary or public discourse. Can this collective amnesia be attributed to latent Nazism? Hardly. But it raises serious questions about the exile community's willingness and ability to face the consequences of the existential moral choices some of its leading members had to make during Nazi German occupation and thus the community's tacit acceptance of these choices.



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