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THE IMPOSSIBLE RESISTANCE: LATVIA BETWEEN TWO TOTALITARIAN REGIMES 1940–1991

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THE IMPOSSIBLE RESISTANCE: LATVIA BETWEEN TWO TOTALITARIAN REGIMES 1940–1991

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Editorial Introduction

On 23 August 1989, some two million singing Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians held hands from Tallinn through Riga to Vilnius to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Hitler–Stalin Pact and protest against its secret protocols, which had sealed the fate of the Baltic States and their populations for half a century. This was the most massive act of resistance against the Soviet occupation, and it culminated in the restoration of independence two years later.

Such a demonstration would have been impossible, if resistance in its various forms had not existed and persisted all the time since the loss of independence and the destruction of the Latvian state in 1940 by the Soviet Union, during the invasion and rule by Nazi Germany and the annihilating war of 1941–45, during the long subsequent period of oppressive Soviet military occupation and rule. And it would have been just as impossible, had collaboration with the oppressor, the inevitable antithesis of resistance, taken firm hold among the population. But there they stood, hand in hand, the most uncompromising and staunchest fighters for Latvia's independence and many who to a greater or lesser degree had accommodated, made compromises with and even been part of the oppressive regime. It was a critical mass that made the non-violent Singing Revolution and restoration of independence possible.

Our volume sets out to reveal and analyze the complex and changing causes, motives and forms of resistance in Latvia over the course of time and under contingencies dictated mostly by external circumstances: the rapid sequential occupations of the country by two hostile forces, their own destructive, revengeful antagonism and total war, and lastly – an extended rule by a regime bent on total control and subjugation of Latvia's people and the destruction of its national identity. Under these conditions the very concept of resistance loses its one-to-one adversarial singularity and becomes a battle for survival between two evils, with neither being the lesser for long. Forms of resistance become highly mutable, from organized armed resistance, to individual or collective acts of civil disobedience, defiance, intransigence or non-compliance, to adaptation short of acquiescence, to just keeping memories alive.

At the same time and under these conditions even certain acts of collaboration lose some of their singularity and synonymity with betrayal except in the most blatant cases of treachery. This multi-faceted aspect of what was mostly subliminal resistance helps to explain how Latvia and the Baltic States were so quick and consistent in their adoption of independence, how the populations could make nuanced and complicated choices and by their actions reveal how fragile the Soviet totalitarian regime actually was.

Daina Bleiere's lead article is a broad and thorough analysis of recent research on the topic of collaboration and resistance. It makes clear the complexity of these issues and their terminology; there is no general consensus. Bleiere observes that the complex issues concerning collaboration and resistance have as yet not been sufficiently conceptualized and stresses the need for further discourse. Her contribution sets the tone and points directions for such a discourse. The following articles provide both ample illustrations of the problem and at the same time attempts at dealing with them in various historical contexts during the entire occupation period.

We have divided the volume into two parts. The first part deals with the traumatic period 1944–45 and beyond when Latvia not only experienced three military occupations by two hostile totalitarian powers within a short span of five years, but was fully subjected to the total war between the two and vainly hoped for political or military intervention on its behalf. The population experienced the sudden breakdown and destruction of the Latvian state and its political, economic, social and cultural structures. Latvia's leading elites were ruthlessly subjected. Its citizens were co-opted and involved in crimes against the humanity on the one hand, suppressed, persecuted and eliminated on the other. The people experienced unprecedented mental, psychological and moral pressures of power shifts, terror, mass deportations, murders and the destruction and death of war. Latvia's young men were forced to enlist and had to fight on opposite sides against each other. Under these conditions resistance against one foreign power could easily became collaboration against the other and maintenance of patriotic allegiance to the Latvian state and nation – treason for both. In the midst of all of this, even survival became a form of resistance.

It is fitting that the article by Jānis Viļums concerning non-violent resistance comes first. Latvia was taken over by the Soviet Union on 17 June 1940 without military resistance because of the amassed Soviet military might at and within its borders. Viļums analyzes how the actions taken by the government and the occupying power made armed resistance impossible and deprived potential unarmed resistance of leadership and organizational know-how. His analysis of various non-violent resistance forms shows the persistence of these shortcomings throughout the Soviet occupation with the result that resistance was largely individual, spontaneous and

uncoordinated, except for small groups, oftentimes pupils in Latvian schools, and thus easily discovered and eliminated. Since the War of Independence in 1919–20, moreover, strategic thinking was prevalently military and little thought was given to the significance of other forms of resistance.

The prevalence of military and political thinking became evident when partisan warfare began as Nazi Germany invaded the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941. It primarily involved former Latvian military and paramilitary personnel and was mostly directed against the chaotically retreating Soviet forces on the one and local communist functionaries and collaborators on the other hand. Jānis Tomaševskis illustrates the spontaneous creation and *ad hoc* nature of these mostly local partisan groups by using as example the only large-scale battle of the national partisans. Their aim was not as much helping the German army as hoping to become the military arm of the renewed Latvian state. This ran contrary to Nazi German intentions, and in a short time they disbanded or co-opted the Latvian military groups and pinned any Latvian hopes for renewal of independence to their willingness to do the bidding of the new masters.

For the Latvian people the German invasion, coming as it did on the heels of a mass deportation of 15,443 to the Soviet Union and last-minute political murders, meant liberation from a year of terror. At the same time, for most it meant a dramatic reversal of long-held historical stereotype of the German as an age-old Latvian enemy – the German baron as landowner and oppressor, and the German militarist as aggressor against whom Latvians had fought in Russian uniform in World War I. This reversal of historical stereotypes and the inability to form anything resembling a national consensus meant a confusion of moral values and allegiances. Despite actions undertaken by the hastily organized national partisans and the remaining political elites, Germans were well prepared to take over and established firm and full control within a very short time, leaving only days or at most weeks of interregnum. One of the most insidious Nazi plans was the mass murder of Latvia's Jewish population which was put into effect at the moment German soldiers set foot on Latvian soil.

The Holocaust was the single largest mass murder in Latvian history. An estimated 70,000 Latvian Jews were murdered by bullet in the territory of Latvia by the end of 1941 on Nazi orders employing special operative units with the aid and abetment of the Wehrmacht and with the involvement of local helpers as executors to cover the actual instigators. Benumbed by Soviet atrocities and the mass deportation and bombarded by relentless propaganda equating Jews with the hated Bolsheviks and cowed by threats of punishment for aiding the Jews, most of the population did not rush to help their fellow citizens, although they had peacefully coexisted in Latvia

for centuries. Under these circumstances, as Katrin Reichelt shows, rescue of Jews oftentimes became an act of resistance, especially considering the fact that the rescuers risked their own lives. In view of the numbers of dead the number of the rescued is small, but the acts of rescue demonstrate that even human compassion can become defiance and resistance in extreme circumstances.

The war and its return to Latvian soil in 1944 seemed to open another opportunity to re-establish the destroyed Latvian state by military and political means. The interregnum between the retreating German army and the advancing Soviet forces, albeit short, could be used to declare the renewal of independence and hold out until Allied military aid would come to the rescue. This calculation was the driving force, as Uldis Neiburgs makes clear, behind both the political efforts by former Latvian parliamentarians, who established contacts with Western diplomats and secret services through neutral Sweden, and the clandestine military group under the command of general Jānis Kurelis established with German consent allegedly to fight behind the Soviet lines. The failure of the diplomatic activities and the destruction of the Kurelis group by German SS forces put an end to these efforts. The war ended with little hope and lot of wishful thinking about Western intervention on behalf of Latvia.

The hopes for a renewal of the Latvian state seemed dismal as the war came to an end in Latvia. The occupations and the war had left a heavy toll and deep rifts in society. By any calculation up to a third of the pre-war population was not in Latvia, dead or dispersed. Many representatives of the remaining political, social and cultural elites had fled to the West. At war's end in Germany, conscripted Latvian legionnaires in German military service at the Eastern front demonstrated their true allegiance to the Latvian state rather than Hitler's Reich by heading West and surrendering to the Western Allies. In Latvia, the war came to an end on 9 May 19456 when the German forces that had held out in Western Latvia, in the so-called Kurzeme cauldron or fortress, laid down arms. Many Latvian legionnaires in Kurzeme, who had fought to the end, did not surrender but joined the already burgeoning national partisan movement in Latvia's forests and bogs. Despite the dismal outlook, for them and for many Latvian civilians the war was not over.

The entire range and extent of this war after the war is revealed in the contribution of Zigmārs Turčinskis. As he points out, military opposition to the Soviet regime was not an isolated Latvian phenomenon. In very broad terms it extended from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea, especially in areas that the Soviet Union had occupied in its Zone of Interest as specified in the Secret Protocol of the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact. The commitment of the partisans to their national goals despite heavy losses is underscored by their persistence and endurance, which against all odds extended into the 1950s.

In many ways the partisan war illustrated the dominant military thinking that harkened back to the War of Independence. Only conditionally can it be called resistance, at least in its early years. Though forced to use the forests and bogs as their battleground, hence their common byname "Forest Brethren," they considered themselves an advance guard of a liberation army fighting for Latvia's independence, as their manifestos declare and as is evident from their military organizational efforts. The hope for Western intervention based on the ideals of the Atlantic Charter and other idealistic declarations, as well as Western policy of *de iure* non-recognition of the annexation, was one of the continuing myths that strengthened their resolve. Churchill's 1946 Iron Curtain speech at Westminster College and Soviet reaction to it, the declaration of the Truman Doctrine in 1947 and the Berlin Blockade in 1948 fed the hopes for a coming conflict. This hope was underpinned by the ambivalent involvement of Western secret services in clandestine operations involving young Latvian patriots in exile that, however, were effectively undercut and thwarted by Soviet counterintelligence.

The Soviet authorities relentlessly tried to eradicate the Forest Brethren, using not only military force but organizing the so-called destroyer battalions from local Soviet supporters as well. Rules of military engagement were observed hardly at all.. In the end, infiltrators turned out to be the insidious way to destroy partisan units. The mass deportation of over 40,000 of 25 March 1949 was the ultimate weapon. It was directed at Latvian farm population that had been the backbone of the partisans' civilian support. However, that was not the end. Although the struggle became more and more dispersed and sporadic, it lasted for close to another decade. The brutal suppression of the Hungarian uprising by Soviet tanks in 1956 put an end to whatever hopes had remained for Western intervention and a military solution.

The second part of our volume is dedicated to the long second period of Soviet rule aimed at slow but unrelenting eradication of Latvians as a viable nation and the various disparate, oftentimes desperate forms of unarmed resistance to keep it from happening. Unarmed resistance began simultaneously with armed opposition as soon as Soviet troops re-entered Latvian territory in July 1944. It was not and could not be organized resistance, and therefore it became subject to persecution and suppression only when it was manifested openly. For the most part, as the following contributions demonstrate, everyday and public life under a totalitarian regime is complicated to analyze. During 40-plus years of Soviet occupation the regime produced enormous amounts of sources documenting the behavior of the population. What official documents and other sources reveal is that population of Soviet Latvia took a nuanced stance towards regime. Some were active collaborators, some tried to resist in various

forms, but majority simply pretended to be loyal citizens in order to avoid any everyday problems. Yet it also becomes clear that subliminal resistance persisted in multiple mutations until the end of Soviet rule, eventually breaking out as a mass movement in the late 1980s.

Geoffrey Swain's article sets the international, Soviet and Latvian scene of this period to remind us of the broad context in which Soviet policies and their shifts occurred over the Cold War period and how they were reflected in policies that directly affected the Latvian situation. Although the articles of faith on which the Soviet state rested remained basically unchanged, the realities had to change and did. These changes, in turn, affected both the visible form and content of resistance.

One of the most intensive confrontations occurred between proclaimed communist internationalism and its battle against national particularism as analyzed by Ilze Boldāne-Zeļenkova. At state level it meant the ultimate creation of an amalgamated society based on Marxist-Leninist ideology, Russian language and socialist traditions. It included a policy of immigration from other, especially Russian, areas of the Soviet Union thus upsetting the population balance and threatening the Latvians with becoming a minority in their own country. However, attempts at Russification and eradicating Latvian distinctiveness, broadly described as "bourgeois nationalism," were only partly successful. They met with deeply rooted open or clandestine maintenance of national, ethnic and religious traditions and identity. This resistance included even traditional ethnic minorities in Latvia that were subjected to total Russification and deprived of the modest latitudes still available to the Latvians. It is notable that, besides the illegal occupation and political takeover of Latvia in 1940, the suppression of national identity and culture, especially the Latvian language, was a prominent grievance voiced by the national mass movement in the late 1980s.

Those voicing grievances about Soviet suppression of Latvian language and culture, most notably at the Plenary Meeting of Creative Unions held on 1 and 2 June 1988, included prominent cultural figures of the Soviet era, many of them members of the Communist Party. The phenomenon of communists criticizing their own Party's policies on such a scale indicated that, despite all contradictions implied, even communists could be considered part of the resistance to Soviet rule, no matter under which name, most prominently, "national communism." Michael Loader justifiably calls the term oxymoronic, yet despite the inherent incompatibility of the two terms, the phenomenon existed, its beginnings dating to the period of the so-called "Khrushchev Thaw" in the late 1950s. As his examples Loader uses two of the prominent figures, Eduards Berklavs and Vilis Krūmiņš, who rose in Communist Party ranks, attempted to institute reforms in the spirit of Lenin's national policies and were demoted by the Party's Moscow-centered wing. Both later

became prominent figures during the national resurgence thirty years later. Loader demonstrates their controversial and contradictory personalities and their disputes as to their "nationalist" convictions and roles during the Soviet period as revealed or perhaps suppressed in their memoirs.

The complex and tenuous relationship between the KGB as the executor of Communist Party policy and the society's reaction or counter-reaction during the post-Stalinist era is the subject of Mārtiņš Mintaurs. In the post-Stalinist period reforms were instituted in criminal law governing subversive activities. They were still punishable, but the KGB no longer had physical terror methods – torture, long prison terms, deportation – at its disposal. But a large part of activities termed "anti-Soviet expressions," though outside of criminal law, remained nevertheless undesirable and under the supervision and control of the KGB. Prevention and suppression of "anti-Soviet expressions" became a widespread, multi-faceted and on purpose unpredictable operation. The KGB recruited cadres of informers and employed a variety of so-called preventive measures, usually shy of arrests or worse. The desired aim was creation of an atmosphere of uncertainty, suspicion and fear as a means of control over the population and its dissatisfaction with the deteriorating economic situation, but for Latvians – their national situation as well. It was in some ways a fine line that was drawn between what could and what could not be tolerated, such as the 1986 protests against another hydroelectric power station on the Daugava River, which were tolerated, and the political actions undertaken and demonstrations organized by the Helsinki '86 human rights group in 1987, which were not. Yet that was already the point of no return when, as was oftentimes repeated during the time, the people had overcome fear and it no longer prevented them from expressing much more than just anti-Soviet sentiments.

The creative intellectuals, as Eva Eglāja-Kristsone calls them, had a much more difficult tightrope to walk on. They were on the one hand a privileged group in Soviet society: people entrusted with and rewarded for creating communist culture, educating the young and advancing Soviet science. That implied at least conformism if not outright collaboration with Soviet ideology and ideals. Many were and had to be members of the Communist Party as proof of their allegiance. And yet, creative intellectualism and Communist idealism are basically incompatible. Intellectualism, as long as it is creative, by nature cannot be constrained by and conform to Party dogma. But being a "creative conformist" is an oxymoron, as Michael Loader observes about "national communism." At the same time, these intellectuals had an out which was not available to national communists in political life: they did not have to execute Party policy in real terms but in terms of their respective activities and products, which were much more subject to interpretation. This provided enough leeway for balancing

between their commitment to the Party's communist internationalism and their creative impulses, which in most cases were steeped in national Latvian culture. As Eglāja-Kristsone notes, this balancing led to a "double consciousness," to "inward cynicism/outward hypocrisy, private freedom/official loyalty." This psychological dilemma pervaded much of the creative life in occupied Latvia during the 1960s, 70s and 80s. It is well known that creative individuals who overstepped the borderlines of "anti-Soviet expressions," as described by Mintaurs, were variously warned and chastised. It is, however, important to note that exactly the creative intellectuals became, leaders of the National Awakening movement, albeit a year later than the political protesters of the Helsinki '86 group in 1986. For many of the creative intellectuals their nightmare on a psychological tightrope was over.

The term 'dissident' as critic or opponent of the Soviet regime became widely known in the West in the 1960s. It has also variously been applied to diverse forms of resistance in Latvia, as Gints Zelmenis analyzes in his concluding article. He notes, however, that the term is basically misapplied to resistance against occupation in Latvia and the other Baltic States. He uses it in its original eighteenth-century meaning "deserters from the faith" only in regard to the dissenters from within the Communist faith, namely the "national communists" described by Michael Loader. Zelmenis, too, uses Eduards Berklavs as one of his prominent examples. That question resolved, Zelmenis provides a listing and characterization of various resistance forms and organizations and their encounters with the KGB in in the post-Stalinist period, thus complementing the account of Jānis Viļums about non-violent resistance in the Stalinist period, especially the role played by Latvian youth. The forms of unarmed resistance changed, but they persisted throughout the long Soviet occupation.

One of the obvious conclusions about the "impossible resistance," as we have termed it, is the impossibility of coming to a definite consensus about clear-cut definitions as to what constitutes the entire spectrum of resistance in the one hand and its reverse – collaboration on the other. Except at the extreme ends of the spectra, such as the Latvian national partisan war at one extreme and the collaborationism of some of the Latvian leading elites with the first Soviet occupation at the other, attempts at establishing clear definitions are at best approximations. The reasons for this difficulty are obvious. First, the three subsequent occupations by totalitarian powers within a short time forced the society to align with or against one of the enemies to a greater or lesser degree as an existential necessity rather than individual or national choice. Collaboration with or resistance against one of the two was oftentimes determined entirely by circumstance or at best – the choice of the lesser evil. Second, the extreme measures employed by both occupants silenced opposition and forced resistance

underground, making creation of resistance centers and organizations impossible or easily subverted. As a result, overt resistance was very fragmented and individualized. Third, the extended occupation, Sovietization and colonization of Latvia without a foreseeable end made adaptation, conformism and collaboration more defendable as a means of leading a reasonably normal private life under the circumstances with the result that more and more hybrid forms of collaboration and resistance came about.

Maybe striving for such clear-cut definitions and classifications is superfluous if we deal with each case separately but consider the consistent national key elements of resistance throughout the entire period besides the obvious universal desire for freedom and fundamental human rights. These are clearly (1) the devotion to the national state or at least a desire for some form of national autonomy or sovereignty; (2) the preservation and maintenance of the Latvian language, traditions and culture and (3) the preservation and cultivation of Latvian land as a heritage of the Latvian nation. They are common to those on the resistance side and define the national element on the collaboration side of the spectrum. They formed the overwhelming long suppressed and hidden subliminal national consensus that only waited for the opportune time to break free and expressed itself in the mass movement called National Awakening or the Singing Revolution in Latvia.

Standing by the thousands firmly on Latvian soil, singing, holding hands and demanding independence on the fiftieth anniversary of the infamous Hitler–Stalin Pact is a powerful symbol of national resistance and unity that endured and that ultimately made the impossible possible.

We hope that the research articles in this volume might provide academic foundations both to the understanding of the repressive nature of the totalitarian Nazi and Soviet regimes in Latvia and of the ways in which the population reacted to them. We hope as well that their new approaches and insights might provide broader and at the same time more nuanced answers to the questions that Latvians are asking about their own past.

Valters Nollendorfs
Valters Ščerbinskis

Daina Bleiere

Collaboration and Resistance: Definitions, Classification and Their Application in Research on the Soviet and Nazi Occupations in Latvia*

Application of the terms 'collaboration/collaborationism' and 'resistance' in research on the Soviet and Nazi occupation periods in Latvia is complicated by their use in very diverse contexts and, frequently, with reference to a wide spectrum of phenomena. In the case of Latvia, we are dealing with three rapidly occurring takeovers 1940–45 by the Soviet Union, Nazi Germany and Soviet Union followed by a long-lasting Soviet occupation period until 1991. Therefore, the boundaries between collaboration and resistance and their various forms of expression have become rather fluid, as attempts to conceptualize these terms demonstrate. Moreover, the two terms are often interpreted and applied differently with respect to the Soviet and the Nazi German occupations, largely due to the difference in their duration and political context. In dealing with the occupation by Germany, historians rely largely on definitions and classifications established in historical research of other occupied territories. In the case of the Soviet occupation, there are far fewer examples of this kind. Moreover, the two concepts are easier to apply with respect to fairly short periods of lost independence, whereas there have been few attempts to conceptualize them in situations of extended subjection. The aim of the paper is to establish a classification of forms of collaboration and resistance that might be applied in academic research with respect to both occupations, reflecting the specific historical situation of Latvia and simultaneously also linking up with the understanding of these terms in the context of other countries.

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* The article is partly based on the author's publication in Latvian: Daina Bleiere, "Par kolaborāciju: definīcijas, klasifikācija, pielietojamība vācu un padomju okupācijas pētniecībā Latvijā," *Latvijas Vēstures Institūta* Žurnāls, 2 (2014): 139–67.

Collaboration

The attitude towards the term 'collaboration' and thus also towards research into this phenomenon by academic historians is commonly determined by the way the term is used in writing on current affairs and in public discussion, namely as a political label denoting treacherous action. Contrasted with positively colored 'resistance,' collaboration always obtains a negative connotation. Moreover, studies that examine its contradictory and complex character sometimes earn condemnation as attempts to vindicate collaborators. This comes across very clearly in the discourse on cooperation by Latvians with the Nazis during World War II.

There is a variety of definitions of this term, but perhaps the most precise and also the most often quoted is that collaboration is "a co-operation between elements of the population of a defeated state and the representatives of the victorious power."[1] The French experience during World War II led to a division of the term into 'collaborationism' and 'collaboration,' the first denoting ideologically motivated cooperation, whereas the second refers to cooperation with the occupation regime because of pragmatic considerations.

It should be noted that the negative political connotations of the term and the fact that it is most commonly used with reference to cooperation with the Nazis have significantly influenced historical research. The study of collaboration as negative, undesirable behavior does not give rise to objections with respect to the obvious Nazi henchmen and war criminals, but research into what is known as everyday collaboration, as well as friendly attitude toward or cooperation with the Nazis by respectable political and cultural figures often provokes negative publicity. This is vividly expressed particularly in the areas that formed part of the Soviet Union, because here the term 'collaboration' has a particularly negative connotation, and after World War II the view was cultivated that cooperation with the German occupation regime had involved only a small handful of traitors, pathological anti-Semites, etc. Although academic studies have been published since the collapse of the USSR about collaborationism in Belarus, Russia and Ukraine, showing that the real situation was very different and much more nuanced, the reaction to attempts at objective examination of the question of collaboration is often markedly politicized and intolerant. Such attitudes have found particularly harsh expression in recent years in Russia, where, for example, a doctoral dissertation in history by St Petersburg historian Kiril Aleksandrov, in which he analyzed the personnel serving as generals and officers in the Vlasov Army, was rejected in 2017.

As regards cooperation with the communist regimes of Central and Eastern Europe, conceptualization of the problem has not kept up with the specific studies

reflecting various aspects of collaboration. There are quite a few such studies, including studies under the title "collaboration" or "collaborationism." We may note a trend observable in the most recent research to avoid the reductionism of applying the concept of collaborationism solely to a limited circle of security service personnel, secret agents and other individuals directly involved in repression.[2]

The juxtaposition of collaboration and resistance often creates the impression that the former constitutes a self-evidently illegitimate activity. In fact, this is in many cases not true. Research on World War II reveals that neither in France, nor in other countries occupied by Germany, the phenomena of collaboration and collaborationism are straightforward. They take a very wide variety of forms, not always a matter of free choice, and the gap between cooperation and resistance is in many cases quite vague, as is that separating collaboration from conformism. When research comes to focus on individual lives, the problematic aspects come across even more clearly. Political strategies, nowadays viewed as betraying national interest, when examined in the historical context, reveal that the people involved in implementing them were guided not by ideological sympathy towards the occupiers but rather by pragmatic considerations and patriotism – as they conceived it in the particular situation. As Julian Jackson notes, when viewed close up, "collaborationism becomes a series of individual stories of fanaticism, naivety, opportunism, and adventure."[3]

Collaboration in Research on the History of Latvia since the Restoration of Independence (1991–2017)

The specific characteristics of collaboration, and likewise resistance, were determined by the conditions in which Latvia lost its national independence, and by the fact that during World War II its territory was successively occupied by two different powers. From June 1940, up to early July 1941 there was a first Soviet occupation, followed by Nazi German occupation. In July 1944, Soviet reoccupation began, introducing the second Soviet occupation, which continued up to the beginning of the 1990s. The loss of national independence by Latvia, along with Estonia and Lithuania, was a consequence of the agreement between the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany on the eve of World War II concerning the division of spheres of influence and territories (the secret protocols of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact), and of the events at the beginning of the war. The agreement with Nazi Germany gave the Soviet Union, in October 1939, the possibility of forcing the Baltic States to sign treaties that permitted the stationing of Soviet forces in these countries. Such an agreement was concluded with Latvia on 5 October. As a result, the Baltic States, though formally retaining their independence, became *de facto* protectorates of the USSR, because the agreements

meant not only the establishment of Soviet military bases but also the harmonization of the foreign and domestic policies of these still-independent states with the interests of the USSR. In June 1940, the Soviet Union began massing military forces near its borders with the Baltic States, and as a result these countries were forced to accede to ultimatums demanding a change in their governments and permission to allow entry of additional military contingents. The Soviet forces entered Latvia on 17 June, and on 18 June Moscow's emissary Andrey Vyshinsky arrived in Riga. Under his leadership a collaborationist government was set up, led by Augusts Kirhenšteins. This government acted under the complete control of Vyshinsky and the Soviet mission and prepared the way for Latvia's annexation to the USSR. It formally took place on 5 August 1940, ostensibly at the request of the Latvian parliament elected by a close to 100% vote in Soviet-style one-party election. Already from the time when the Kirhenšteins government began its activities, preparations had commenced for the Sovietization of Latvia, and after 5 August the transformation of the political, economic and social system was begun in earnest, being accompanied, moreover, by growing political and economic repression. The main political force in Latvia on which Moscow relied was the Latvian Communist Party, which, although it was numerically small (no more than 400–500 members at the time of occupation), had been acting under the strict guidance from Moscow (the Comintern) during the whole period of Latvia's independence and had consistently opposed Latvian statehood. However, in the early days of the occupation, in June and July 1940, the Soviet emissaries strove to convey the impression that the changes would be limited to restoration of the democratic system that had been abolished as a result of the *coup d'état* by Kārlis Ulmanis on 15 May 1934, and this helped involve a proportion of the opponents of the authoritarian regime, notably the Social Democrats, in the dismantling of the Latvian state system. The fact that the entry of Soviet forces into Latvia and the change of government took place with the acceptance of the Ulmanis government served to disorient and neutralize supporters of his government, as well as the population at large. Accordingly, the Soviet occupation initially did not meet with serious resistance. Resistance groups and organizations began to form in the second half of the summer and the autumn of 1940, by which time the direction of events had become quite clear and it was evident that the slogan of restoring democracy had been no more than a smokescreen behind which the destruction of the Latvian state had been taking place.

When war broke out between the USSR and Germany, a large section of the population hoped it would mean liberation from Soviet domination and the restoration of independence. However, already in July 1941 the Nazi occupation authorities made it clear that this was out of the question. The propaganda presented the Nazis as liberators from Bolshevism and its atrocities. This did have some effect and served

to involve one section of Latvians in cooperation with the Nazis, including genocide against the Jews. Preventing a return of the Soviet regime was the main (and very effective) propaganda slogan used to justify the mobilization of Latvians into the police battalions and the *Waffen-SS* forces to fight the Red Army at the front. However, we cannot speak of the unreserved submission of Latvia's political élite and population and its involvement in the implementation of the Third Reich's political and military aims. The majority of Latvian society regarded cooperation with the German occupation authorities as being forced on them by circumstances and hoped the outcome of the war would bring about a situation that would make regaining independence possible. Under the Nazi occupation, national resistance organizations and groups developed that opposed both occupying powers, Nazi and Soviet, and an equally negative attitude towards both was widespread in society.

A significant section of the Latvian élite hoped for support from the Western allies in the anti-Hitler coalition. Thus, in 1943 the Latvian Central Council was established by representatives of the main political parties of Latvia's parliamentary period. It urged the restoration of a democratic Latvian state, sought contacts with the West and provided information about the situation in Latvia and its political outlook.

The return of the Soviet regime in Latvia in 1944–45 did not completely eliminate the hope of restored independence. Many hoped that the Western Allies would convince or force Stalin to restore independence to the Baltic States, or that this might come about as a result of military conflict between the USSR and the West. Such hopes sustained the substantial armed and unarmed resistance movement that existed during the war and in the post-war years. And this held people back from cooperation with the Soviet authorities. The situation changed significantly after Stalin's death, when a certain liberalization of the Soviet regime commenced, whereas armed resistance had been almost completely eliminated.

The normalization of relations between the USSR and the West in accordance with the doctrine of peaceful coexistence, especially after the crushing of the Hungarian rising in 1956, showed that Latvia's situation would not change in the foreseeable future, either as a result of external factors or internal resistance, because the Soviet regime's ability to crush all forms of resistance had become insurmountable. There were hopes for liberalization of the Soviet regime, but these, too, were dashed with the ousting from power of the so-called national communists in 1959 and the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. Only the weakening of the USSR and the commencement of *perestroika* and *glasnost* policy in the mid-1980s created a situation in which the question of restoring national independence came to the fore once again, being broached timidly at first and subsequently asserted ever more clearly.

In the historical context described here, the roots of the problems relating to collaboration/collaborationism and resistance are to be sought in the events preceding and during World War II, and the question of the cooperation with the two occupying powers by the political élite, particular political forces and individuals became a subject of political discussion already at that time, the discussion continuing in Latvian émigré circles after the war. However, academic study and conceptualization of the problems could really only develop after Latvia regained independence when the archives became freely accessible, and when there was a significant increase in the volume of published memoirs and various other material.

The first academic discussion to highlight the issues of collaboration was the conference "Occupation, Collaboration, Resistance: History and Perception," held in Riga in 2009 by the Commission of the Historians of Latvia and the Museum of the Occupation of Latvia.[4] The conference included presentations by several scholars from Germany, France and Poland (Olivier Wieviorka, Pieter Lagrou and Piotr Madajczyk), who are recognized authorities on these issues. A comprehensive Latvian treatment of the problem of collaboration was presented by Inesis Feldmanis; Uldis Neiburgs touched on this theme in his comments on the paper by Wieviorka. In her critical comments on the paper by Feldmanis, Eva-Clarita Pettai pointed to several problematic aspects relating not only to his personal views, but also to the situation in Latvian historiography as a whole. Despite the clashing exchange of views and the interest generated by the conference, the problems of conceptualizing collaboration have still not become a subject of wider academic discourse.

The proceedings of this conference reveal a very significant issue: the problem of collaboration is largely, or almost exclusively, discussed in Latvian studies that deal with the Nazi occupation period. Moreover, these studies commonly polemicize, directly or indirectly, with Soviet accusations leveled against the Latvians of being collaborationists and Nazi followers per se. There are relatively few attempts to take a more distanced view of the collaboration problem.

The problems relating to collaboration during the German occupation have been examined by Andrievs Ezergailis, Kārlis Kangeris, Antonijs Zunda, Inese Dreimane and others.[5] It should be noted that Kangeris and Zunda deal with the way that collaboration and collaborationism have been presented in the historiography, as well as seeking to conceptualize the application of these concepts in the case of Latvia. Kangeris objects to a one-sided evaluation of Latvian cooperation with the Nazis as "a nation of voluntary collaborators/implementers," because "the causes of events and the motives behind individual actions need to be explained, in addition to which it is necessary to characterize the ethics, prevailing views, norms and judicial system of the society of that time."[6] In this context, he underlines the study of international public law as one of the

main research issues– both from a legal perspective and in terms of investigating how the situation was understood by the residents of Latvia during the German occupation. Zunda likewise emphasizes that the processes to be assessed cannot be separated from the context of the period, and that "in Latvia, compared with other occupied countries of Western Europe, there was a big difference between treasonous, voluntary, absolute, unconditional cooperation, and tactical, including forced, collaboration."[7]

The idea of tactical collaboration has been developed in several publications by Inesis Feldmanis. In his view, the concept of collaboration is problematic in the Latvian case, because the Latvian state had been destroyed by the Soviet Union already in 1940, and so the population could not be expected to have a sense of loyalty towards the Soviet state. Accordingly, "the concept of collaboration is not really appropriate and suitable for characterizing the activities of the inhabitants of countries that had experienced multiple occupations."[8] Use of the term 'collaboration' would be justified only if we could prove that the activities of particular groups of the population were directed not against the Latvian SSR but against the Republic of Latvia or the interests of the Latvian people. However, Feldmanis also accepts that the term 'tactical collaboration' might be used with reference to cooperation with the German occupation authorities, the aims of which "in one way or another corresponded to the interests of the Latvian people." Moreover, he urges discussion of the issue of whether tactical collaboration might not be regarded as "a certain form of resistance movement."[9] Accordingly, tactical collaboration is presented not as one form of collaboration but rather as a concept at the same level as the terms 'collaboration' and 'collaborationism.' In Feldmanis's view, as collaborationists could be termed "those Latvians, essentially criminals, who helped the Germans realize the Holocaust."[10] With regard to the differences between collaboration and collaborationism, Feldmanis describes collaboration as "simple cooperation with the occupying power, which no occupied people can avoid," whereas collaborationism he understands as "treacherous cooperation contradicting the interests of the people concerned."[11]

Andrievs Ezergailis likewise questions the applicability of the concept of collaboration to Eastern Europe and Latvia. His considerations proceed from an understanding of collaboration as an activity motivated by considerations of statehood. Ezergailis points out, quite rightly, that during the German occupation there were Latvians who tried to offer the Nazis cooperation with the aim of restoring Latvia's statehood, albeit in a very attenuated form (Viktors Deglavs, Aleksandrs Plensners and Alfrēds Valdmanis), but these proposals were turned down, because the Nazis were not prepared to discuss Latvian statehood in any form whatsoever.[12] What they expected from the Latvians was not collaboration but rather collaborationism, i.e., complete submission to the interests of the Third Reich.

Cooperation with the Soviet regime in Latvia is most commonly discussed in current affairs writing, especially with respect to outstanding figures in Latvian culture[13] or in the discourse relating to the content of the "Cheka Sacks" – the card catalogue of informers of the Latvian SSR Committee for State Security – and the question of whether this catalogue should be made publicly accessible.[14] There have been few attempts to conceptualize the problems of cooperation, and for the most part these touch on particular aspects of the problem or discuss the usefulness of applying the concept of collaboration/collaborationism. There is a very strong tendency to restrict the scope of collaboration. Thus, Ritvars Jansons considers that "we can speak of collaboration in cases where people have been involved in the implementation of mass persecution of the citizens of their own country during the Nazi or communist occupation."[15]

Thus, the application of the terms 'collaboration/collaborationism' with respect to the Soviet and the German occupations elicits contradictory reactions, although the reasons for this are somewhat different in each case. One circumstance prompting caution towards the concept of collaboration is its widespread application in Soviet historiography with respect to Latvia and other countries of Eastern Europe, with the aim of demonstrating that the Latvians were "Hitler's willing executioners," to use the metaphor from David Goldhagen's well-known book. Its use in such a political context continues in literature produced by those in Latvia who still uphold Soviet historiography, and frequently also in the Western press. A second reason relates to the historical context of collaboration, which in the so-called Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact zone differs significantly from that of Western Europe. The alternation of two different totalitarian powers inevitably brings comparison between the two regimes and the issue of the "lesser evil" – an approach that, in turn, gives rise to suspicion of strivings to foreground the crimes of the communist regimes, so as to justify or downplay the evils of Nazism and cooperation with it. This is also the source of a certain defensive reaction that finds expression in attempts to circumvent or markedly restrict the study of the issues of collaboration, applying the concept only to a very narrow circle of people involved in cooperation with the Nazis.

An avoidance to discuss collaboration is also perceptible with respect to the Soviet regime, and in this case, too, it is affected by the legacy of the past, although in a different way to the case of Nazi occupation. Aleks Szczerbiak points to a "schizophrenic" attitude among Poles to lustration and accessibility of the secret service archives, an attitude arising from mutually opposed impulses. On the one hand there is an unwillingness to discuss the communist past and a fear that transitional justice can do more harm than good, while on the other hand there is an awareness that society has a right to know the truth about the past of its political élite and

important public figures.[16] In spite of the differences in historical context and in the post-communist policies of overcoming the past, this observation may be applied to all the countries of Central Europe and the Baltic States, including Latvia.

An unwillingness to discuss cooperation with the Soviet regime is very often expressed as reductionism, i.e., applying the concept of collaboration solely to cooperation with the security services. In connection with the work of the Commission to Investigate the Latvian SSR Committee for State Security (KGB), this question has recently come up quite regularly in the media and has engendered discussion, especially with regard to cooperation with the KGB by well-known figures in culture. This is understandable, since secret cooperation with the security services and betrayal of one's colleagues and friends is, in ethical terms, one of the most heinous crimes. The special role of writers, artists and other members of what was known as the creative intelligentsia in maintaining society's self-esteem during the Soviet occupation is a matter of general knowledge, and accordingly their cooperation with the Soviet regime is a subject of heightened attention.

To sum up the views presented in Latvian historiography on the application of the concept of collaboration/collaborationism in studies on the German and Soviet occupation of Latvia, they may be defined as follows:

1) most researchers do not perceive a difference between collaboration and collaborationism;
2) there is a skeptical attitude towards the question of whether these concepts can even be applied to the case of Latvia, taking into account the specific historical characteristics, namely the loss of independence and three occupations (Soviet–Nazi–Soviet);
3) many authors consider that we cannot speak of collaboration/collaborationism in the case of the Soviet occupation, considering its long duration;
4) the spectrum of collaboration/collaborationism is applied either to practically the whole of the population (especially in the case of the Soviet occupation), or else it is reduced to particular individuals and fairly restricted groups (those directly involved in repression).

The concept has greater analytical potential, if it can be applied to the study of various typologically similar phenomena. In Latvia's case it must be applicable to interpretation not only of the Nazi occupation but also of the Soviet regime. It must be sufficiently universal that it can be applied in the interpretation of not just one particular phenomenon, period or region, but rather it must be applicable in interpreting other equivalent events, periods or regions.

The above-mentioned objection concerning differences between the experience of the Nazi occupation and the Soviet period is significant; and this is not only because of

the ideological difference between the regimes but also because of the long duration of the Soviet occupation. The concept of collaboration has mainly been applied to cases where an occupation is fairly short-lived, as was the case during World War II, and when there is a clearly perceptible conflict between the country's national interests and cooperation with the occupying powers. In Latvia, this is evidently the case during World War II, under the Soviet as well as the German occupation, and in the early post-war years. The argument that statehood cannot serve as a point of reference for the conduct of the citizens in the case of the Nazi occupation, since the Latvian state had been destroyed by the USSR, and the citizens had no basis for a sense of loyalty towards the Latvian SSR, does not really seem well-founded. The hope of restoration of the Latvian state in some form or another had not been lost, and this determined the behavior of its citizens, although there no longer existed any state institutions (such as a government in exile) that might oversee the activities of individuals and provide standards of conduct. Application of the concept to the whole period of the Soviet occupation truly does raise a series of issues, especially if we equate collaboration with adaptation.

Collaboration and Collaborationism: Typology and Classification

Historians commonly tend to classify collaboration into different sectors, such as political, military, economic, cultural, everyday collaboration, etc., thus encompassing practically all activities that help strengthen the occupying power. Thus, in his book on collaborationism in the German-occupied territory of Russia, historian Igor Yermolov distinguishes the following forms of collaboration: administrative, economic, ideological and military.[17] Another Russian scholar, Boris Kovaliov, employs an even finer division, supplementing these kinds of collaborationism with intellectual, spiritual, national and children's collaborationism, and even sexual collaborationism.[18] A very popular theme of research is cultural collaborationism.[19] It should be emphasized that this kind of sectorial approach can in some cases alleviate the historian's task, permitting a maximally complete account of the situation in a particular sphere of activity, but this is not a good basis for theoretical elaboration of the concept, because it promotes a very broad understanding of collaboration, one that is not useful, if only because it indirectly promotes strivings to place political responsibility for cooperation with hostile powers on the shoulders of the population as a whole, rather than addressing the issue of political responsibility. Furthermore, the use of the term 'collaborationism' is itself problematic, because, as discussed below, it is applied in the academic literature to refer to voluntary service in the interests of the occupying power, predominantly with an ideological motivation.

There are many other kinds of classification in addition to the sectorial one. Thus, Polish historian Czesław Madajczyk points out that in historical research collaboration is oftentimes referred to as "conscious; reciprocal; superficial; circumscribed; tactical or limited; transitory or enduring."[20] Other kinds of classifications might be mentioned as well, but it should be emphasized that the strivings to create a classification aimed at reflecting absolutely all the different shades of cooperation are, by definition, doomed to failure.

In my view, the most productive classification, and one that retains its significance today, is that developed in 1968 by American political scientist Stanley Hoffmann.[21] The advantage of this approach is that it provides a good overview of the forms of cooperation. In contrast to the tendency among many historians of giving a separate name to each new case of cooperation, Hoffmann's classification is parsimonious in its terminology, but at the same time can be adapted to the treatment of other countries and situations. We are dealing here with ideal types, because the real forms of cooperation are much more complex and diverse.

Hoffmann's classification is based on a single criterion: the attitude towards the nation state and the associated motivation to engage in cooperation with an occupying power. This criterion is the basis for the main difference that he emphasizes: that between '*collaboration'* and '*collaborationism.*'

'*Collaboration*' is cooperation between a defeated country and a victorious country; it is based on reasons of state (*raison d'état*) – namely, to *preserve or restore the state*. Collaboration may be voluntary or imposed by circumstances, and it is guided by patriotic motives. Here it should be emphasized that patriotic considerations do not automatically mean that such cooperation is "good," because it may constitute a search for a way out in a situation where there is no solution; it may constitute cooperation with the "lesser evil" (yet with an awareness of it being an evil); and it may be based on delusions and erroneous assumptions (although they may seem altogether rational and well-founded considerations to people at the time).

In the case of '*collaborationism,*' we are dealing with overtly *voluntary cooperation with, and emulation of, the regime of the victorious state.* Hoffmann distinguishes between *ideological* and *servile or self-seeking collaborationism*.

The driving force behind cooperation in '*ideological collaborationism*' is the force of attraction of the regime's ideology or its political and social system. It is important to emphasize that in the case of ideological collaborationism the motivation likewise relates to independent statehood, but in a negative sense, namely with its denial. The motivation for cooperation may proceed from dissatisfaction with the nation state, its system or ideology, and the identification of a better model in the state system of the conquering state. Ideological collaborationism wishes to adopt the model of the

ideological and socio-political system of the occupying country and destroy the state. In Latvia's case this is evident in the activity of the Latvian communists in 1940–41, as well as during World War II and immediately afterwards. In their view, independent Latvia was a kind of misunderstanding that had to be eliminated, replacing the social and political system with a superior one – after the Soviet model. Although one section of them, the so-called national communists, began to feel disillusioned with the Soviet model in the post-war years, it was a question of the inadequacies of the model and improvements to it, rather than its outright rejection. Ideological collaboration is also evident in the late 1980s, when it involved a struggle against the restoration of Latvia's independence, so that it would stay in the USSR. Ideology played a significant role in the view of those Latvians who supported the Moscow-true International Working People's Front or continued their activities in the Latvian Communist Party led by Alfrēds Rubiks after it split up in April 1990.

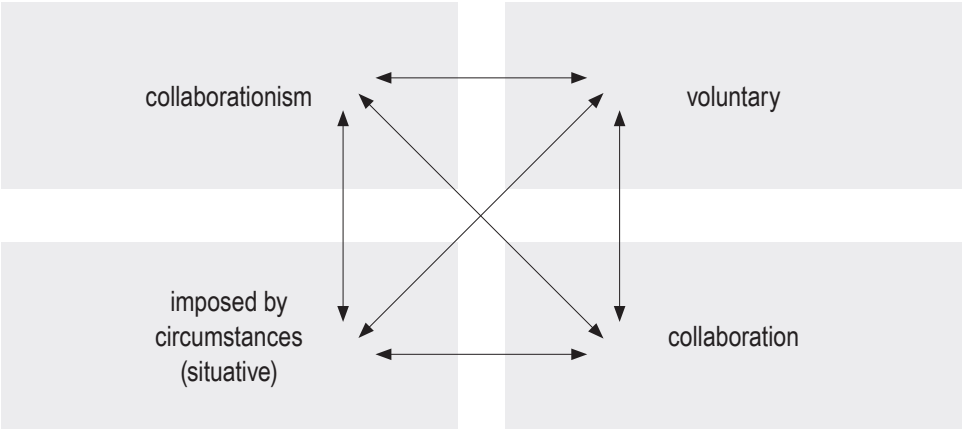
It is more difficult to discuss ideological collaborationism with respect to cooperation with the regime of Nazi Germany. The strong anti-German sentiment during the inter-war period and the element of German racial superiority in Nazi ideology acted to severely restrict its attractiveness in Latvia. As noted by Kaspars Zellis, such ideas as German racial superiority and colonization plans were concealed in Nazi propaganda during the occupation, while highlighting anti-Semitism, anti-Marxism and state socialism.[22] Although the only major political group that had been significantly influenced by Fascist ideology was Pērkoņkrusts, anti-Semitic like Nazism but alienated from Nazism by its anti-German orientation, anti-communist and anti-Semitic ideas did have wider currency. Moreover, ideological views and sympathies no not always have to coincide perfectly. Thus, Pērkoņkrusts and the Nazis parted ways when it came to the question of statehood and the attitude towards the role of Latvians in the administration of Latvia. Likewise, when it comes to the Social Democrats' cooperation with the Soviet regime, there is no basis for equating them with the communists.

Servile or self-seeking collaborationism is voluntary service to an occupier motivated by considerations of personal advantage that displays indifference towards the state and its interests even when justified by reference to national interest or other idealistic considerations. If we consider, for instance, the members of the so-called Arājs Commando that took part in the annihilation of the Jews in Latvia, it is clear that they should be viewed as collaborationists, even though there was a variety of individuals among them who may be classified in terms of their motivation as servile collaborationists (evidently in the majority[23]) as well as ideological collaborationists (especially in the initial stage of the Nazi occupation).

However, it must be emphasized that in real life the boundary between collaboration and collaborationism is not always readily determinable, just as with

the boundary between cooperation and resistance, and between cooperation and adaptation. The question may be posed as to whether service in a police battalion or in the Latvian Legion under the German occupation can be viewed as collaboration or collaborationism, when people were actually being mobilized, even if they formally enlisted as volunteers in the knowledge that they would be called up anyway, and additionally had an ideological motivation, namely fear of the Soviet regime's return.

Figure 1
The Interaction between Collaborationism and Collaboration



Source: Scheme by the author after the ideas set out by Hoffmann.

In spite of these difficulties, the difference between collaboration and collaborationism permits a clearer line to be drawn, for example, between Kārlis Ulmanis and Augusts Kirhenšteins. The actions of Ulmanis and his government in the initial phase of Soviet occupation, criticized many times and with good reason, were evidently guided by the hope of preserving the nation state, albeit in a very reduced form, in what is known as the Mongolian variant (retaining domestic political autonomy while subordinating foreign and defense policy to Soviet interests), and should accordingly be seen as collaboration, in contrast to the collaborationist Moscow-approved government under Augusts Kirhenšteins, the sole task of which was to legitimize the destruction of the Latvian state. In the latter case one might consider the motivation of Kirhenšteins himself and the members of his government, considering whether elements of collaboration can also be identified, and whether it should be regarded as influenced by ideological or by self-seeking collaborationism.

The concept of collaboration may also be applied to the activities of the leaders of the Latvian Popular Front after the proposal of 31 May 1989 to follow the path towards regaining independence and the activities of the Ivars Godmanis' government from May 1990 up to August 1991 because cooperation with the leadership of the Soviet Union was necessary and unavoidable, even though the quality and effectiveness of this cooperation might be questioned.

Not all cooperation is collaboration/collaborationism. Under the conditions of a totalitarian regime (and under other kinds of occupation) people often do not have the choice of cooperating or not cooperating with the occupying state. People had to work in order to make a living, they were called up into the military forces of occupying states and were forced to undertake various kinds of non-political administrative functions. The Nazis did not seek to integrate into their political system particular groups in society, such as the Jews, while the rest of the population retained a certain possibility to avoid direct ideological or political cooperation, although this was not always straightforward. In the case of Soviet rule (especially under Stalin), there was practically no opportunity for ideological or political autonomy. Although there were individuals and groups (religious communities, for instance) that strove to maintain this kind of autonomy, the state did supervise them in some way or another, and persecuted them if they did not submit. Additionally, the time factor needs to be considered. Cooperation with an occupying power in an extreme situation, such as wartime, is one thing, and cooperation under the conditions of a stable, peacetime political regime is something altogether different. The situation in Latvia was significantly influenced by the absence of any government in exile during the Soviet or the Nazi occupation, or of any other organization with the capacity to regulate people's behavior. It was only with the establishment of the Latvian Popular Front in 1988 that this situation changed.

Statehood as a Criterion of Collaboration/Collaborationism and a Chronological Classification

A significant question is that of the criterion to be used for separating collaboration/collaborationism from ordinary cooperation, i.e., how to "measure" the degree of cooperation. Katrin Reichelt's formulation "how intensely the collaborator supports the occupier's interests"[24] may provide a point of reference, but only offers general guidelines (and only with respect to collaborationism), and such measurements are inevitably subject to a degree of arbitrariness and subjectivism.

In fact, the only practically applicable criterion is one's attitude towards statehood. *Collaboration/collaborationism is possible in the case where the independent state*

still exists in some form or another, or there is a realistic hope or possibility of the restoration of its independence. It should be remembered that the attitude towards statehood may be positive, negative or indifferent. Of course, when using statehood as a criterion, the phenomena of collaboration and collaborationism are primarily restricted to those manifestations indicating a political motivation, political character or political consequences. However, it is also necessary to consider differences in the level of political responsibility.

The national interest and defense of the national interest are often invoked in the context of collaboration. Scott Burchill rightly asserts that "while it may retain rhetorical and lexical functions in the modern age, the national interest lacks substantive objective content."[25] The only objective content of national interest, independent of the interests and subjective perspective of politicians, diplomats and other individuals and groups involved in formulating it, is the assurance of the survival of the state, i.e., the preservation of independence and sovereignty. Thus formulated, the national interest is the basis of the criterion of statehood, and this criterion permits the separation of periods in Latvia's historical development in which it is productive to study the problem of collaboration/collaborationism: the first Soviet occupation of 1940–41, the Nazi occupation, the second Soviet occupation, from the mid-1940s to the second half of the 1950s, and the struggle to restore independence in 1989–91.

In the analysis of the attitudes of various individuals and social groups towards the Soviet occupation in June and early July 1940, the criterion of statehood is fairly clear and readily applicable. A scale of attitudes can be established quite easily: from the communists' unconditional readiness to destroy the Latvian state as a kind of historical misunderstanding to the Social Democrats' hopes of restoring a democratic Latvia, as well as the unsuccessful strivings by many members of the political, administrative, economic and military élite to salvage what could still be salvaged.

During the first Soviet occupation the boundary between collaboration and collaborationism is quite clearly identifiable, because it follows logically from the USSR's policy in Latvia. With rare exceptions, the Soviet regime did not even try to incorporate the former élite of the Latvian state into its system of power; instead, it was subject to extermination, deportation and marginalization.[26] During the Nazi occupation the differences between collaboration and collaborationism are harder to distinguish, because Nazi policy was more flexible in this regard. The Nazis strove to bring into their political orbit the section of Latvia's political, economic and cultural élite that had survived Soviet persecution and to exploit the traumatic experience of the first Soviet occupation in order to further their own aims.

Moreover, the propaganda instruments they used were more diverse and effective, oftentimes promoting a subtle shift from collaboration to collaborationism. In many cases, the boundary between ideological and self-serving collaborationism is also hard to draw.

After the return of the Soviet regime in 1944–45, the boundary between cooperation and non-cooperation was not always very clearly drawn, but it did exist and did influence people's behavior. However, after Stalin's death the situation gradually changed. The Latvian state continued to exist in the Latvian population's minds but not as a material factor. The emphasis also shifted with the question of the Latvian people's physical, linguistic and cultural survival coming to the fore along with the position of Latvians in the administration and economy of the republic. Survival aims could not be furthered without cooperating with the authorities, and in this period we may speak of *adaptation*, which could include a very broad spectrum of society: from reconciliation with the existing situation to strivings to address social issues and the issue of national existence within the frame of the system. Adaptation as a strategy of coexistence with the Soviet regime always balanced dangerously on the boundary with collaboration/collaborationism, and precisely this aspect appears most commonly in discourse and publications concerning the activities of prominent figures of the Soviet period.[27] The issue of collaboration/collaborationism was no longer so acute, but at the same time various forms of cooperation with the Soviet authorities, such as work for the security services, especially in the status of an informer, or a career in the Communist Party, continued to provoke condemnation in society.

The restoration of the Latvian state became a reality, an attainable aim, along with the growth of national independence strivings in the Baltic and the processes of disintegration in the USSR in the late 1980s. The question of loyalty towards the state came to the fore once again along with the Latvian Popular Front's appeal of 31 May 1989 and in particular after the declaration of 4 May 1990 on restoration of state independence, up to the time of complete restoration of independence in August 1991. Accordingly, starting from this time we may once again speak of collaboration and collaborationism, because the attitude towards the restoration of the country's independence became the deciding criterion for assessing the political behavior of people in Latvia.

Table 1 presents my attempt to indicate the occurrence and intensity of particular forms of collaboration/collaborationism in the terms "yes," "no" or "partly." Such a division is inevitably an approximation, because it is also necessary to consider that, for example during the 1940–41 period, the situation in the first weeks of occupation differed cardinally from the situation after Latvia's annexation.

Table 1

Forms of Collaboration/Collaborationism in Latvia in a Historical Perspective

Form of cooperation	Motivation behind political behavior	1940–1941	Nazi occupation	mid 1940s – 2nd half of 1950s	1989–1991
Collaboration	*raison d'état*				
forced	minimal cooperation in order to preserve/ restore the state	Yes	Yes	No	Partly
voluntary	utilizing the opportunity to align with the stronger side	?	Yes	No	No
Collaborationism	voluntary submission to the interests of an external power				
ideological	attractiveness of the ideology and regime	Yes	Partly	Yes	Yes
servile	self-interest	Yes	Yes	Yes	?

The Problem of Resistance in Recent Latvian Historiography

The question of resistance to the Soviet and Nazi regimes in Latvia is better researched, and more effort has been applied to the classification of forms of resistance and to the conceptual issues relating to research on resistance, but a string of problems and ambiguities remains. Historiographer Aleksandrs Ivanovs rightly observed several years ago that research into the resistance movement in Latvia has still not developed into a definite topic of research, because the various aspects of resistance tend to be examined separately and to be incorporated into other contexts (persecution by the Soviet regime, Sovietization, Russification, etc.). Moreover, they lack a proper methodological and theoretical approach.[28] Both armed and unarmed resistance are examined descriptively, where establishing the facts is set out as the main aim.

Resistance to the Soviet and Nazi occupation regimes, like collaboration, is very closely linked to the idea of restoring national independence. From 1940 up to the mid-1950s, both armed and unarmed resistance (under the Soviet and likewise the Nazi occupation) was based on the conviction that there was a realistic possibility that national independence would be restored. The aim of resistance was to prepare for

this event both militarily and ideologically. Thus, Ieva Birgere, who had been active in one of the largest resistance organizations during the Nazi occupation, the Latvian Nationalist League (involving over 100 people), testified to investigators of the Soviet army counterintelligence service Smersh in 1945: "We wanted Latvia to be free, independent and democratic. We did not want the situation that Latvia experienced as a result of the German occupation, and neither did we want the situation that had existed in 1940–1941, when Latvia joined the Soviet Union."[29] The Latvian Central Council was likewise committed to the idea of Latvia's sovereignty. In the post-war years, too, as Zigmārs Turčinskis has pointed out: "the aim of the struggle pursued by all the national partisan organizations was restoration of Latvia's national independence, something that was also emphasized in the founding documents and statutes of these organizations."[30]

The second half of the 1950s was a kind of turning point in terms of the development of resistance in Latvia. A much smaller number of people was involved in active resistance, generally individuals or small groups. However, the idea of the legal continuity of the Latvian state did not disappear, and references to the UN Charter, the secret protocols of the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact and the fact of the occupation of Latvia, along with the demand for a referendum on leaving the USSR, run through the whole history of resistance in the 1960s–80s. For example, the 22-year-old student Bruno Javoišs raised the flag of independent Latvia atop the Riga radio tower, located in the center of Riga right next to the city's police administration and close to the central railway station on the night of 5 December 1963 (USSR Constitution Day). He reminisces about his motivation:

> If they arrest me, then there's bound to be a trial, and then I'll present and utilize all of what I've read in my books plus all of my theoretical knowledge, drawn from the works of Lenin and from the material of the CPSU congresses and plenary sessions; I'll explain that here you have a republic that wants to leave the *Sojuz nerushimij respublik svobodnikh* (Indestructible Union of Free Republics). Let them hold a popular vote on it! Let them hold a referendum!"[31]

The idea of restoring the independence of the Baltic States was also the basis of the "Baltic Appeal" signed in 1979 by 45 Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian dissidents, urging publication of the Secret Protocols of the Non-Aggression Pact between Germany and the USSR and the withdrawal of the Soviet forces from the Baltic States. This document was utilized in the declaration by the European Parliament on 13 January 1983 on the situation in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.[32]

At the same time, it should be noted that the issue of restoring national independence does not cover the whole spectrum of resistance in Latvia during the

period under discussion. This issue was significant for resistance organizations where the majority of participants were ethnic Latvians, but for instance, it was less significant or insignificant to Polish and Jewish resistance groups under both occupations, since their aims were different: survival, preservation of ethnic identity, and, in the Jewish case, also the possibility of emigrating to Palestine, right after the war, and to Israel later on. In the case of the Polish resistance during World War II, there was also the aim of restoring the independent Polish state and incorporating Polish-inhabited districts of Latvia into this state. Additionally, during the war there were Soviet partisans operating in Latvia as well, including local residents, but most of them recruited and trained on the Soviet side of the front and guided from Moscow. And there were communist underground groups that had developed independently. Of course, the Soviet partisans and members of the communist underground were hostile to the idea of restoring Latvia's independence. In the post-war years, too, there were quite a few resistance groups and organizations in the territory of Latvia for which the question of Latvia's independence was of little or no consequence, and the spectrum here was very broad: Russian monarchists and nationalists, various left-wing non-communist movements and supporters of "proper" communism (the mutiny led by Valery Sablin on the destroyer Storozhevoy in November 1975), Jews fighting for the right to emigrate and to maintain their religious and ethnic identity (Eduard Kuznetsov and others who were arrested in 1970 for their plan to hijack a plane in Leningrad in order to get out of the country), religious dissidents (Pentacostalists, Jehovah's Witnesses, etc.). In Latvian historiography, these groups have received little attention, although it cannot be said that such research has been completely absent.[33]

The question of the place of Soviet resistance and resistance by ethnic minorities within the overall conceptual framework of resistance during World War II was a subject of discussion some years ago between the historians Inesis Feldmanis and Uldis Neiburgs. In Feldmanis's view, "at least with regard to the active resistance movement, it should be taken to include only those groups (with individual exceptions) that expressed a readiness to resist both occupying powers, with the stated aim of restoring Latvia's national independence."[34] Accordingly, he excludes the communist underground and Soviet partisans from the scope of resistance, considering that they should be regarded as collaborators. He rejects as unfounded Neiburgs's objection that, in such a case, one should exclude from the resistance movement in Latvia, for example, the members of the Polish Armia Krajowa, which was active in Latvia and whose "aim was the restoration of Polish independence, some of them also wishing the annexation to Poland of the Polish-inhabited districts of Latvia."[35] He considers that in this case we are dealing not with the Latvian resistance movement but with the Polish resistance movement active in the territory of Latvia. On the other hand, with

regard to the Soviet resistance movement, Neiburgs and Dzintars Ērglis considered that we should exclude from it subversive and partisan groups sent into Latvia across the front line, whereas there is no basis for excluding the residents of Latvia and the Jewish and Polish resistance during World War II.[36] Neiburgs points out that Feldmanis's classification takes as its basis the goal of the resistance, whereas in his view the primary criterion should be the very fact of resistance to the occupation regimes.[37]

Neiburgs has set out his classification of forms of resistance during the Nazi occupation more comprehensively in a publication of 2012 (see Table 2). He emphasizes that in parallel with the national resistance movement, referring to all forms of resistance (individual and collective, armed and non-violent) to the Nazi occupation aimed at the restoration of the independent Latvian state, resistance against the Nazis should also include resistance representing other states and ethnic groups (Soviet and Polish), as well as individual resistance to the German occupation regime by Jews and by deserted German soldiers lacking any clear political aim.[38]

Table 2

Resistance to the Nazi Occupation Regime in Latvia in 1941–1945: The classification of Uldis Neiburgs

	Active resistance	Passive resistance
Character of resistance	"Opposed to"	"Not in favor of"
	Conscious, purposeful activity	Outward loyalty together with private, covert opposition to the occupying power
Political aims of resistance	"To resist + to struggle for"	"To resist"
	There is a clear political aim	No clear political aim; individual protest against actions directly affecting the individual; sympathy and solidarity with fellow humans

Compiled by the author after Uldis Neiburgs, "Pretošanās kustība nacionālsociālistiskās Vācijas okupētajā Latvijā (1941–1945)," *Latvijas Vēstures Institūta Žurnāls* 84 (2012): 74–99.

One may quite agree that resistance to the Nazi occupation cannot be reduced to just two ideological movements – national and Soviet – emphasizing these above all others. Moreover, in the case of both occupations, restricting resistance solely to those groups and organizations that aimed to restore Latvia's independence results in a one-sided picture of resistance as a whole. This means excluding from the history

of resistance not only Jewish, Russian and Polish resistance groups but also religious dissidence and other movements. Still valid, too, is the question posed by Neiburgs of how to assess those expressions of resistance that did not have far-reaching political goals. With respect to the Nazi occupation, he mentions sabotage of mobilization, hiding Jews, Soviet prisoners of war and other people subject to political persecution, non-fulfilment of economic contributions, etc. For example, the activity by Žanis Lipke to save Jews had no connection with the communist or other underground movement; he and his family were guided purely by humane considerations, but this activity falls entirely within the scope of resistance, since it counteracted Nazi policy. As Neiburgs point out, passive resistance ("not in favor of") can often border on collaboration, so it is important to establish in each particular case what was dominant in people's activities – resistance or cooperation.[39]

The scheme presented by Neiburgs is also applicable to the classification of expressions of resistance during the Soviet occupations, and it allows us to avoid an overly great number of different classifications of forms of resistance, which often overlap or are hard to define (active, passive, armed, unarmed, spiritual, cultural, civil, non-violent, etc.). In Latvian historiography, with respect to resistance against the Soviet regime, the traditionally accepted division into armed and non-violent (unarmed) resistance is highly problematic for two reasons. (1) In many cases the boundary between armed and unarmed (non-violent) resistance was not clearly marked. The national partisans of the post-war years often consciously strove to establish non-military resistance groups that would engage in propaganda. And many unarmed resistance groups and organizations strove to establish contact with armed resistance, wishing to obtain weapons and engage in armed struggle. If this did not succeed because of a shortage of resources, they employed non-violent forms of struggle (disseminating appeals, raising the national flag, putting up anti-Soviet messages in public places, etc.). Accordingly, in the 1940s and 1950s, in those cases where military means were not employed, it was very often a tactical and situative choice, rather than a matter of principle. (2) The term "non-violent resistance" is used to refer to all forms of unarmed resistance. This would raise no objection, were this term not being used in many cases as a synonym for such terms as civil resistance, civil disobedience, etc.

The theme of non-violent resistance in Latvia has been explored by a research group headed by Tālavs Jundzis in collaboration with Gene Sharp. The definition on which the research by this group is based, is a very broad one: "Non-violent resistance is the struggle by individuals, by social groups and even by entire peoples, to assert their vested rights by recourse to psychological, social, economic, political and other non-military methods."[40] Jundzis points out that in the literature

the term "non-violent resistance" is often replaced by such terms as "non-military resistance," "civil resistance," "social self-defense."[41] In a publication from 2017, Jundzis refines the term, describing it as "non-violent or non-military civil resistance" while repeating the above-mentioned definition.[42] Since the English word "civil" may be translated into Latvian in two ways – as *pilsoņu/pilsonisks* (civic) or as *nemilitārs* (non-military), this creates the impression that non-violent resistance is being equated to civil disobedience, which was possibly not the author's intention, but there is indeed a terminological overlap. In Jundzis's view, non-violent resistance may be both active and passive. "Active non-violent resistance is consciously purposeful resistance to the regime, while in passive non-violent resistance the attitude to the regime is hidden from the outside, ignoring or avoiding fulfilment of its instructions and demands."[43] His publication is restricted to active non-violent resistance.

Jundzis may be praised for defining with sufficient clarity the difference between active and passive non-violent resistance. Purposeful activity is a sufficiently clear criterion. The next step would be to define more clearly the differences between various expressions of active non-violent resistance. Critically important here is the difference between (1) organized and unorganized expressions and (2) mass and individual or group/organization actions. This would permit a separation of civil resistance from other forms of resistance as a form of organized and (in the ideal case) a mass non-violent resistance form. Civil resistance is in most cases based on the absence of violence/military action, which can be a matter of political and philosophical principle (in the case of *satygrakha*, for instance) but can also be a tactic of political struggle determined by particular circumstances, even if the possibility of armed struggle is not rejected.

In Latvia, during World War II and the 1940s–50s, under both Nazi and Soviet occupations, non-violence generally represents a tactic determined by the circumstances, rather than a matter of principle, although there were organizations and groups that deliberately chose non-violent methods. Thus, Birgere characterized the position of the Latvian Nationalist League as follows:

> Back then we did not consider the question of particular forms of struggle against the Germans for national independence, but placed the emphasis on ideological struggle against them, on preservation of the national spirit and culture as a guarantee of a national, independent Latvia in the future.[44]

Non-violence as a choice based on principles can bring success only in particular conditions. Examining the successful non-violent civil resistance to the Soviet regime by the Baltic states in the late 1980s and early 1990s, Mark Beissinger points to

several vitally important pre-conditions for this success: (1) appropriate goals of liberation; (2) political opening; (3) extreme imbalance in the means of coercion; (4) trong and broadly shared identities; (5) weak counter-movements; (6) significant support from external allies.[45] Such conditions were absent during the Nazi occupation and likewise in the Soviet period right up to the beginning of *perestroika*.

It is possible to speak with certainty of civil resistance in Latvia starting from the 1986 protests against the construction of the Daugavpils hydro-electric plant. This was the first case during the whole of the Soviet occupation where a mass protest campaign developed and was tolerated by the authorities. If we compare this with a similar attempt in 1958 to protest against the flooding of the Daugava valley with the construction of the Pļaviņas hydro-power plant, we see that back then the authorities and the KGB quickly and effectively stopped the collecting of signatures and did not permit an action by a group of intellectuals to turn into a mass campaign (it should be added that the initiators of the protest were themselves afraid of involving wider sections of society). With the establishment of the Latvian Popular Front in 1988, a political force had come into existence capable of organizing a mass movement and setting out political aims that could bring together people with different views and belonging to different groups, whereas the Kremlin was afraid to use force in order to crush the Baltic popular movements. Specific attempts to do this, in Vilnius and Riga in January 1991, brought about a negative world reaction, something that Mikhail Gorbachev could not afford. The choice of a non-violent tactic of struggle by the Baltic independence movements in conditions where it was widely reflected in the media also acted to create a positive picture of the Baltic and the aims of its struggle.

On the other hand, the coup of August 1991 revealed the shortcomings of non-violent action. Under conditions where contact with the outside world was cut off and where the coup leaders were prepared to use force in Latvia, non-violent mass action would have led to great loss of life and would have been fruitless. At the same time the government of the Republic of Latvia turned out to be unprepared to organize active resistance.

With regard to the problem of non-violent resistance, certain other aspects also need to be considered. Very commonly, all the expressions of non-violent resistance starting from the mid-1950s were referred to as *dissidence*, and Gunārs Astra, Lidija Doroņina-Lasmane, Knuts Skujenieks and other political prisoners of the 1960s–80s were often termed dissidents. It must be said that the application of this term, and not only in Latvia, is very contradictory and unclear. Very commonly, dissidence is equated with non-violent resistance. Accordingly, there is a need to establish what exactly dissidence means in the conditions pertaining in Latvia.

I consider that dissidence in the USSR needs to be distinguished as a special form of non-violent resistance, the characteristic trait being legalism: citing the constitution and laws of the USSR, as well as international legal documents. Citing Soviet legal norms and the violation of these norms by state authorities was typical of the whole of the Soviet dissident movement, although the emphases and aims differed in particular republics and ethnic groups. Thus, dissidence was a strong element of the resistance movement in Latvia, but its aims differed significantly from those of dissidents in Russia. This is also indicated by Indulis Zālīte:

> Dissidence in Latvia was not widespread, and this movement did not have the kind of influence on people's minds as it did in Russia. For the most part the dissident cases were fabricated so that the KGB in the Latvian SSR should not fall behind its "big brother," the KGB of the USSR, in exposing dissenters. Whereas dissidence in Russia regarded as its main aim the struggle for human rights, the strivings of Latvian dissidents were expressed in the struggle for the Latvian nation's right to self-determination and restoration of the independent state, applying methods that should be as legal as possible from the point of view of the laws of the USSR.

The author concludes that "in the 1970s and 1980s the resistance movement adopted maximally legal forms," pointing out that dissidence was becoming an ever more widespread expression of non-violent resistance.[46]

The direction of protest in Latvia did differ significantly: the central issue was that of national liberation and the ending of national repression. Certainly, it did also incorporate criticism of the political regime, but this was subordinated to the issue of the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact, the destruction of Latvia's independence, discrimination against the Latvian nation, etc. Thus, the restoration of national statehood was an important concept that continued to inspire political opposition to the Soviet regime. However, it would be wrong to assess all dissidence in Latvia solely in terms of national liberation. Dissidence in Latvia had a variety of ideological focuses. There were people whose dissidence proceeded from disillusionment with communist ideology and Soviet power, or from an orientation towards democratic values in general. These included figures such as Jānis Jahimovičs or Ilya Rips, the latter attempting self-immolation at the Freedom Monument in 1968 in protest against the USSR's invasion of Czechoslovakia. There was religious dissidence, Jewish dissidence, etc. Strict separation of different forms of dissidence would be inappropriate, because the dissidents, in spite of ideological differences and divergent aims, often collaborated, largely because of the personal connections forged at the places of incarceration.

Oftentimes, the activities of Eduards Berklavs and other Latvian national communists in 1956–59 are also included non-violent resistance or dissidence.[47] The name refers to a group within the leadership of the Latvian SSR who were removed from office following accusations of localism, as expressed in their strivings to promote reforms that would improve Latvia's situation as a Soviet republic and that of the Latvians as the titular nation. Specifically, they sought to end discrimination against the Latvian language and to improve the living conditions of the local population. To achieve this end, they tried to reduce immigration from other Soviet republics, achieve an increase in the output of consumer goods by industrial plants, etc. Their aims were purely reformist; they did not challenge Soviet power in principle or Latvia's status as part of the USSR; rather, they wished to counter the excesses of Soviet imperialism. The activities of the national communists brought about a degree of economic and cultural liberalization and a greater readiness on the part of the republic's leadership to heed public opinion, but at the same time they promoted society's adaptation to the Soviet system. Some of them, such as Eduards Berklavs, actively campaigned for Latvians to join the Communist Party and Communist Youth, with the aim of improving the position of Latvians within the power structures, and to defend their interests. If these activities did indeed promote a growth of resistance to the Soviet regime, it was an unintended side-effect of the national communists' policy. Overall, however, the national communists in the second half of the 1950s cannot be regarded as forming part of the national resistance or dissidence.

After the national communists had been ousted in 1959, one section of them did indeed gradually become dissidents. Eduards Berklavs himself went through such an evolution, even though he did not subsequently recognize himself as a dissident. A letter by 17 communists, which had, in fact, been written by him and signed by several of his former comrades-in-arms in the Latvian communist underground from the time of Latvia's independence, and which was published abroad in 1972, as well as other texts he wrote, do actually come within the scope of dissidence, since they opposed the distortion of Marxist-Leninist ethnic policy and were based on the principles of legalism. Because of Berklavs' evolution in the direction of radical nationalism, his earlier views nowadays tend to be viewed through this prism, but this may be an exaggeration. Moreover, not all of the victims of the persecution of the national communists in 1959–61 went through the same kind of evolution of views as Berklavs. The great majority never became involved in any dissident activity, and in terms of their political views they went no further than reformist communism.

Passive Resistance: "To Resist"

The classification of forms of resistance proposed by Neiburgs provides the possibility of defining more clearly those expressions of resistance that most commonly have no clear political aim but which are brought about by individual protest against actions or demands of the political power that a person finds disturbing or unacceptable, and which are often referred to by the hard-to-define term "passive non-violent resistance." Based on the work of Sheila Fitzpatrick, studies on Soviet society of the Stalin era very often include among forms of passive resistance by the farmers such behavior as avoidance of work, minor larceny, unwillingness to associate with party activists, denunciation of superiors, flight from the countryside, etc.[48] This approach can be applied not only to the farmers but also to industry and other spheres. In the historiography of Latvia there have been few attempts to conceptualize non-violent resistance. One of these is by Heinrihs Strods, who has included cultural and church resistance, as well as political non-cooperation, the latter incorporating economic and social non-cooperation. He divides active non-violent resistance into oppositional attitude (anti-Soviet conversations and anecdotes, circumvention of censorship and attempts at anti-Soviet propaganda) and active opposition "by a single person or a larger group of writers, artists or persons advocating alternative politics." Among these he includes, for example, the reading of uncensored literary works, the writing of letters and protests, damaging of Soviet symbols and cult objects, and the activity of the national communists.[49] Under non-violent resistance Strods also includes resistance by those subject to political persecution and flight abroad, the activities of exiles as well as "underground (clandestine) groups and organizations whose remit allowed for an element of opposition."[50] It can be seen that various forms of non-violent resistance overlap in this division, and there are no clear criteria for separating active from passive resistance.

One further issue should be highlighted, which appears in this and other studies: the classification into passive and active forms of non-violent resistance is commonly guided by the view of the Soviet security services as to what constituted anti-Soviet activity, even if the "guilty party" had no such intention. Undeniably, such an approach is forced on historians by the sources on which they rely, and these, for the most part, are the case files of people punished for political crimes as well as various reports from security and party organizations about anti-Soviet expressions.[51] A definition that separates the character of resistance from the political aims makes it easier to distinguish, for example, between the opposition by many cultural activists to the policy of the Soviet authorities in Latvia in the 1960s–80s, which generally corresponds more to the notion "not in favor of," and such individual acts of resistance as the telling of

political anecdotes, non-participation in elections and other events held by the Soviet authorities, etc.

It is undeniable that, while "not in favor of" resistance balances on the verge of collaboration, in the case of expressions of "to resist" it is wrong to automatically regard all actions detrimental to the Soviet regime as expressions of passive resistance. Thus, during the Stalin period anonymous denunciations were widespread, and in cases where they were directed against members of the Soviet administration, historians often present them as expressions of passive resistance. However, many kinds of motives are possible in such cases – personal retribution, for instance. Stalin's regime supported anonymous denunciation, and in fact provoked such activity. At the same time, collective letters of protest regarding the activity of officials very often aroused the attention of the security services, because this was seen as evidence of organized activity, and any kind of collective activity, even dissatisfaction with a collective farm brigadier for the allocation of pasture land to collective farm members, was viewed with suspicion.

Conclusions

The study of collaboration as well as resistance in Latvia has not involved major discourse on the concepts themselves, and the attempts at conceptualization have not been consistent enough.

Proceeding from the classification presented in 1968 by Hoffmann, this article argues that collaboration needs to be distinguished from collaborationism. In the former case, cooperation proceeds from patriotic motives, namely strivings to preserve the country's sovereignty or restore it at least minimally. In the latter case, cooperation is motivated by ideological or self-seeking considerations. In the case of both collaboration and collaborationism we are dealing with activities that have a political character or political consequences. The main criterion permitting a particular activity to be identified as an expression of collaboration/collaborationism is the attitude towards national statehood, and this criterion permits the identification of periods in Latvia's historical development for which the issue of collaboration/collaborationism is a productive topic of study: the first Soviet occupation of 1940–41, the Nazi occupation, the period from the mid-1940s to the second half of the 1950s, and the years 1989–91.

The major conceptual issues in the study of resistance are connected with research into non-violent resistance, which tends to be defined very broadly and without applying clearly formulated criteria. There is a need to define more clearly the content of various forms of non-violent resistance, especially the difference

between active and passive non-violent resistance, as well as expressions of passive resistance. It is hard to draw the line between collaboration, resistance and adaptation, and the actions of real people in specific historical circumstances are in many cases not amenable to strict classification. Nevertheless, a clearer research framework is needed, in order to better understand the choices and restrictions that have determined human actions.

Endnotes

1 John A. Armstrong, "Collaborationism in World War II. The integral nationalist variant in Eastern Europe," *Journal of Modern History*, 40.3 (1968): 396.

2 See, e.g., the thematic volume: "Everyday Collaboration with the Communist Regimes in Eastern Europe" of *The Hungarian Historical Review*, 4.1 (2015); Péter Apor, Sándor Horváth, James Mark, eds., *Secret Agents and the Memory of Everyday Collaboration in Communist Eastern Europe.* (London: Anthem Press, 2017).

3 Julian Jackson, France: *The Dark Years 1940–1944*, (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2001), 190 (Kindle ed.).

4 See *Okupācija, kolaborācija, pretošanās: vēsture un vēstures uztvere Starptautiskās konferences materiāli 2009. gada 27.–28. oktobrī Rīgā*, ed. Valters Nollendorfs and Erwin Oberländer, Symposium of the Commission of the Historians of Latvia 26 (Rīga: Latvijas Okupācijas muzeja biedrība, 2010).

5 See, e.g., Andrievs Ezergailis, *Holokausts vācu okupētajā Latvijā. 1941–1944* (Rīga: Latvijas vēstures institūta apgāds, 1999); Andrievs Ezergailis, "Kolaborācija vācu okupētajā Latvijā: piedāvātā un atraidītā, *Latvijas Vēsture*, 2 (2004): 42–53; Kārlis Kangeris, "Izvēles iespējas: 'Jaunā Eiropa,' padomju republika vai neatkarīga valsts. Valststiesiskie jautājumi un 'Lielā politika' kara gados (1941–1945)," *Latvija Otrajā pasaules karā. Starptautiskās konferences materiāli 1999. gada 14.–15. jūnijs, Rīga*, ed. Daina Bleiere and Iveta Šķiņķe, 2nd ed., Symposium of the Commission of the Historians of Latvia 1 (Rīga: Latvijas Vēstures institūts, 2007) 79–94; Antonijs Zunda, "Kolaborācija vācu okupētajā Latvijā: nostādnes vēstures literatūrā," *Okupācijas režīmi Latvijā 1940.–1956. gadā. Latvijas Vēsturnieku komisijas 2001. gada pētījumi*, ed. Irēne Šneidere, 2nd ed., Symposium of the Commission of the Historians of Latvia 7 (Rīga: Latvijas vēstures institūta apgāds, 2007) 141–64; Antonijs Zunda, "Vācijas okupācijas varas politika Latvijā (1941–1945): vērtējums historiogrāfijā," *Latvija nacistiskās Vācijas okupācijas varā, 1941–1945. Starptautiskās konferences referāti 2003.gada 12.–13.jūnijs, Rīga*. ed. Dzintars Ērglis, 2nd ed. Symposium of the Commission of the Historians of Latvia 11 (Rīga: Latvijas vēstures institūta apgāds, 2007) 17–29; Inese Dreimane, "Sieviešu sadarbība ar nacistu represīvajām struktūrām Latvijā 1941.–1944. gadā," *Okupētā Latvija 20. gadsimta 40. gados. Latvijas Vēsturnieku komisijas 2004. gada pētījumi*, ed. Dzintars Ērglis, 2nd ed., Symposium of the Commission of the Historians of Latvia 16 (Rīga: Latvijas vēstures institūta apgāds, 2007) 319–68.

6 Kangeris, 80.

7 Zunda, "Kolaborācija," 159–60.

8 Inesis Feldmanis, *Latvija Otrajā pasaules karā (1939–1945): jauns konceptuāls skatījums*, (Rīga: LU Akadēmiskais apgāds, 2012) 63.

9 Ibid., 64.

10 Ibid., 63–64.

[11] See interview with Inesis Feldmanis: Māris Zanders and Elmārs Barkāns, "Tauta nevar iztikt bez mitoloģizētas vēstures," *Nedēļa*, 30 October 2006. Available at: http://www.tvnet.lv/zinas/viedokli/293868-tauta_nevar_iztikt_bez_mitologizetas_vestures (accessed 5 January 2021).

[12] Ezergailis, "Collaboration," 119–40.

[13] See, e.g.: Ilmārs Šlāpins, "Sirdsapziņas noplēšamais talons." *Rīgas Laiks*, April 2003; Gunita Nagle, "Nepieradināmais Ojārs Vācietis." *Diena*, 11 April 2003; Elita Veidemane, "Lieciet beigtam Matisonam mieru!". *Neatkarīgā Rīgas Avīze*, 24 October 2008; S. Lasmane, D. Bērziņš, "Pakļaušanās paradums un pretošanās," Vilis Lācis, *Ceļojums uz Norieta pilsētu.* (Rīga: Divpadsmit, 2014) 291–303.

[14] See, e.g.: Gustavs Strenga, "Kolaboracionisms un kolektīvā amnēzija," *politika.lv*, 7 August 2007; Aija Cālīte, "Latvieši un kolaboracionisms: jautājumu vairāk nekā atbilžu," Internet portal of *Latvijas Vēstnesis*, 14 November 2011, https://lvportals.lv/viedokli/239383-latviesi-un-kolaboracionisms-jautajumu-vairak-neka-atbilzu-2011 (accessed 30 December 2020). The Latvian National Archive made the contents of the KGB files available in December 2018: https://kgb.arhivi.lv/login. Accessed: 1 February 2021. The article was completed before the publication of the files.

[15] Ibid., interview with Ritvars Jansons.

[16] Aleks Szczerbiak, "Communist-forgiving or Communist-purging? Public attitudes towards transitional justice and truth revelation in post-1989 Poland," *Soviet-Asia Studies*, 69.2 (2017): 326.

[17] Igor Yermolov, *Pod znamionami Gitlera: Sovetskiie grazhdane v soiuze s nacistami na okkupirovannykh territoriiakh RSFSR v 1941–1944 gg.* (Moskva: Veche, 2013).

[18] Boris Kovalev, *Kollaboracionizm v Rossii v 1941–1945 gg.: tipy i formy* (Velikii Novgorod: NovGU imeni Yaroslava Mudrovo, 2009).

[19] See, e.g.: Laine Randjärv, "Intellectual occupation and collaborationism in the cultural life of Estonia: reflected in the epistolary communication between Tuudur Vettik and Roland Laasmae," *Trames* 17.1 (2013): 3–34, available at: https://kirj.ee/public/trames_pdf/2013/issue_1/Trames-2013-1-3-34.pdf (accessed 30 December 2020).

[20] Quoted after Zunda, "Kolaborācija," 145.

[21] Stanley Hoffmann, "Collaborationism in France during World War II," *The Journal of Modern History* 40.3 (1968): 375–95. Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/1878146 (accessed 30 December 2020)

[22] Kaspars Zellis, *Ilūziju un baiļu mašinērija. Propaganda nacistu okupētajā Latvijā: vara, mediji un sabiedrība (1941–1945)* (Rīga: Mansards, 2012) 178.

[23] Rudīte Vīksne, "Members of the Arājs Commando in Soviet Court files: Social Position, Education, Reasons for Volunteering, penalty," *The Hidden and Forbidden History of Latvia under Soviet and Nazi Occupations 1940–1991*, ed. Valters Nollendorfs and Erwin Oberländer, 2nd ed., Symposium of the Commission of the Historians of Latvia 14 (Rīga: Institute of the History of Latvia Publishers, 2007), 188–206.

[24] Katrin Reichelt, "Between Collaboration and Resistance? The Role of the Organization *Pērkonkrusts,*" *Holokausta izpētes jautājumi Latvijā,* ed. Dzintars Ērglis, 2nd ed., Symposium of the Commission of Historians of Latvia 8, (Rīga: Latvijas vēstures institūta apgāds, 2007) 281.

[25] Scott Burchill, *The National Interest in International Relations Theory* (Houndmills, Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005) 211.

[26] See: Rudīte Vīksne, "Represijas pret Latvijas eliti (1940–1941)," *Latvija un latvieši*, vol. 2 (Rīga: Latvijas Zinātņu akadēmija, 2013) 385–404.

[27] On this issue, see Eva Eglāja-Kristsone, *Dzelzsgriezēji: Latvijas un Rietumu trimdas rakstnieku kontakti* (Rīga: Latvijas Universitātes Literatūras, folkloras un mākslas institūts, 2013). In 2017

it was also highlighted by the volume of writings by the former KGB operative Imants Lešinskis, who defected to the USA: Ieva Lešinska, ed. and transl., *Imants Lešinskis. Starp divām pasaulēm: Kalpības gadi un citi raksti* (Rīga: Domas spēks, 2017).

[28] Aleksandrs Ivanovs, "Nacionālās pretošanās kustība Latvijā pēc Otrā pasaules kara Latvijas historiogrāfijā (40. gadu otrā puse – 80. gadu otrā puse),"*Nacionālā pretošanās komunistiskajiem režīmiem Austrumeiropā pēc Otrā pasaules kara,* ed. Rudīte Vīksne, 2nd ed., Symposium of the Commission of Historians of Latvia 17 (Rīga: Latvijas vēstures institūta apgāds, 2007) 143–44.

[29] Quoted after Uldis Neiburgs, *"Dievs, Tava zeme deg!" Latvijas Otrā pasaules kara stāsti* (Rīga: Lauku Avīze, 2014) 150.

[30] Zigmārs Turčinskis, "Bruņotā pretošanās padomju un nacistiskajai okupācijai (1940–1957)," *Nepārtrauktības doktrīna Latvijas vēstures kontekstā (*Rīga: Latvijas Zinātņu akadēmijas Stratēģisko pētījumu centrs, 2017) 116.

[31] Bruno Javoišs, "Mans karoga stāsts," *Jaunā Gaita,* 272 (2013). Available at: http://jaunagaita.net/jg272/JG272_Javoiss.htm (accessed 30.12.2020).

[32] Tālavs Jundzis, "Nevardarbīgā pretošanās padomju un nacistiskajam režīmam Latvijā (1940–1986)," *Nepārtrauktības doktrīna Latvijas vēstures kontekstā*, *kontekstā* (Rīga: Latvijas Zinātņu akadēmijas Stratēģisko pētījumu centrs, 2017) 141–42.

[33] See, e.g., Irēne Šneidere, "Latvijas ebreji un padomju režīms, 1944–1953," *Latvijas ebreji un padomju vara 1928–1953* (Rīga: LU FSI, 2009) 215–55; Eriks Jēkabsons, "Poļu piedalīšanās pretošanās kustībā Latvijā 1944.–1950. gadā," *Okupācijas režīmi Baltijas valstīs 1940–1991*, ed, Dzintars Ērglis, Symposium of the Commission of Historians of Latvia 25 (Rīga: Latvijas vēstures institūta apgāds, 2009) 311–26.

[34] Inesis Feldmanis, *Latvija Otrajā pasaules karā (1939–1945),* 62.

[35] Uldis Neiburgs, "Pretošanās kustības nacistu okupētajās Baltijas valstīs (1941–1945): teorētiskās problēmas un praktiskie risinājumi," *Baltijas reģiona vēsture 20. gadsimta 40.-80. gados*, Symposium of the Commission of Historians of Latvia 24. (Rīga: Latvijas vēstures institūta apgāds, 2009) 446.

[36] Uldis Neiburgs and Dzintars Ērglis, "Nacionālā un padomju pretošanās kustība – kopīgais un atšķirīgais (1941–1945)." *Totalitārie režīmi un to represijas Latvijā 1940.–1956. gadā,* ed. Irēne Šneidere, Symposium of the Commission of Historians of Latvia 3. (Rīga: Latvijas vēstures institūts, 2001) 267–329.

[37] Neiburgs, "Pretošanās kustības," 446.

[38] Uldis Neiburgs, "Pretošanās kustība nacionālsociālistiskās Vācijas okupētajā Latvijā (1941–1945)," *Latvijas Vēstures Institūta* Žurnāls, 64 (2012): 80–82.

[39] Neiburgs, "Pretošanās kustība," 82.

[40] Tālavs Jundzis, "Introduction," Valdis Blūzma, Tālavs Jundzis, Jānis Riekstiņš, Gene Sharp and Heinrihs Strods *Regaining Independence: Non-Violent Resistance in Latvia 1945–1991* (Rīga: Latvian Academy of Sciences, 2009) 21.

[41] Ibid., 23.

[42] Jundzis, "Nevardarbīgā pretošanās," 124.

[43] Ibid., 125.

[44] Quoted after Neiburgs *"Dievs, Tava zeme deg!"* 150.

[45] Mark R. Beissinger, "The Intersection of Ethnic Nationalism and People Power Tactics in the Baltic States, 1987–1991," *Civil Resistance and Power Politics: The Experience of Non-violent Action from Gandhi to the Present.,* ed. Adam Roberts and Timothy Garton Ash (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2009) 231.

[46] Indulis Zālīte, "Galvenās nevardarbīgās pretošanās formas un slēptais nacionālisms kā iekšēja nepakļaušanās padomju režīmam Latvijā (70., 80. gadi),"*Crimes against Humanity*. Available at: http://lpra.vip.lv/vilna97l.html#Nevardarb%C4%ABg%C4%81 (accessed 30.12.2020).

[47] Jānis Riekstiņš, "The Struggle by Latvian National Communists against the Colonization and Russification of Latvia (1956–1972)," Valdis Blūzma, Tālavs Jundzis, Jānis Riekstiņš, Gene Sharp and Heinrihs Strods, *Regaining Independence: Non-Violent Resistance in Latvia 1945–1991* (Rīga: Latvian Academy of Sciences, 2009) 167–228.

[48] Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999).

[49] Heinrihs Strods, "Non-violent Resistance in Latvia (1945–1985)," Valdis Blūzma, Tālavs Jundzis, Jānis Riekstiņš, Gene Sharp and Heinrihs Strods, *Regaining Independence: Non-Violent Resistance in Latvia 1945–1991* (Rīga: Latvian Academy of Sciences, 2009) 115.

[50] Ibid. 148.

[51] This influence is also perceptible in an interesting, recently published study on Belarus in 1947–53. See Iryna Kashtalian, *The Repressive Factors of the USSR's Internal Policy and Everyday Life of the Belarussian Society (1944–1953)* (Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz, 2016).

SOVIET – GERMAN – SOVIET OCCUPATIONS 1940–1945

Jānis Viļums

Non-Violent Resistance to the Soviet Occupation Regime in Latvia in 1940–1941 and 1944–1953

On 18 November 1918, at the close of World War I, the new state of Latvia was founded. However, it existed as an independent state for only two decades. At the outbreak of World War II it was occupied by the USSR, then by Nazi Germany and then once again by the USSR. Latvia regained its national independence almost 50 years later. All this time, people in Latvia resisted the occupation regimes in various ways, until independence was finally regained through non-violent forms of resistance.

My article examines non-violent resistance to the Soviet occupation regime in Latvia during the period of Stalin's rule: in 1940–41 and 1944–53. It first gives an overview of the loss of Latvia's national independence. Secondly, it considers previous historical research on this subject. Thirdly, non-violent resistance under the conditions of the Stalinist regime is characterized, namely in the first year of Soviet occupation (1940–41) and during the initial period of the second Soviet occupation (1944–53). Fourthly, the final part of the article sets out general conclusions.

The Loss of Latvia's Independence

On 23 August 1939, two aggressive powers, National Socialist Germany and the Soviet Union, concluded the Molotov–Ribbentrop pact, with an attached secret protocol that split Eastern Europe into German and Soviet zones of influence. This agreement decided the fate of the Baltic States, including Latvia, for several decades.[1]

Nazi Germany's attack on Poland on 1 September 1939 began World War II. The Soviet Union, likewise, began its aggression towards the much smaller and less populous neighboring countries. Already in late September 1939, the USSR demanded that Latvia permit it to establish army bases on its soil. The authoritarian regime of the time, led by Kārlis Ulmanis, like the governments of Lithuania and Estonia (contrary to the response of Finland and without mutual consultation on other courses of action), decided against military opposition. The government agreed to

the ultimatum from the USSR and on 5 October signed a "Pact of Mutual Assistance Between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the Republic of Latvia" and the appended "Confidential Protocol." Subsequently, a bilateral commission agreed that the USSR would be permitted to station a land and air force contingent of up to 25,000 men (approximately equal to Latvia's peacetime army) in the territory of the Latvia.[2] This subsequently turned out to be just one stage in the process of erasing Latvia's national independence and seizing its territory.

The next step was taken on 17 June 1940: after an ultimatum was issued to Latvia by the USSR, its forces entered the country in unlimited numbers. Even though the Latvian army and the populace were ready to defend the country's independence militarily, the authoritarian regime led by Ulmanis did not choose this final opportunity of armed struggle but decided to take the route Ulmanis considered best at the time: not to resist and to submit to the aggressor's demands.[3]

Thus, in 1940, the USSR managed to seize the Latvian state relatively easily, utilizing its military superiority. However, it was much harder to subdue those inhabitants of the country who, contrary to the decision by the politicians, put up non-violent as well as armed resistance, which persisted during the whole period of Soviet occupation, starting in 1940–41 and continuing in the years 1944 up to 1990, until Latvia's sovereignty was restored by non-violent means.

Non-Violent Resistance in Latvia under the Conditions of Stalinism as Reflected in Historiography

Research into issues relating to non-violent resistance under the conditions of Stalinism is currently only just beginning, although almost 80 years have passed since that time. In Latvian historiography, research on this subject could begin only after the restoration of Latvia's national independence, at the beginning of the 1990s. Up to that time, this question could be addressed without restriction only by historians in the Western democracies, whose freedom of ideas was not affected by totalitarian regimes and their ideologies. Unfortunately, at that time research was hindered by the lack of sources. As a result, during the 50 years of Latvia's occupation, no study was undertaken specifically on non-violent resistance. The émigré Latvian historians considered issues relating to non-violent resistance in the frame of other themes, namely in their treatment of questions relating to the resistance movement during the first year of Soviet occupation or the resistance movement after World War II. In their studies they made use of the memoirs of contemporaries which were accessible outside the country, archive documents of Western countries and publications in the press during the Nazi occupation period, all of which described resistance by

Latvia's population in 1940–41. In many cases, the authors of studies written in exile had themselves taken part in the resistance movement during the first year of Soviet occupation. However, more complete examination of this theme was hindered by the inaccessibility of documents compiled by the Soviet occupation regime.

While the former residents of Latvia who were now in the West had themselves experienced the first year of Soviet occupation, their picture of occurrences in Latvia behind the Iron Curtain after World War II was very meager and hazy, and accordingly there were no studies of non-violent resistance in the period of Stalinism, from 1944 to 1953.

Under the Soviet totalitarian regime, history, and in particular twentieth-century political history, served as a means of consolidating the regime or as a weapon to attack its opponents. The historians under the Soviet regime referred to them as "bourgeois nationalists," "Nazi henchmen," "class enemies" and "fifth columnists," along with other disparaging terms, thus seeking to discredit the resistance movement as a whole.

Changes and wider opportunities for studying this theme came about with the restoration of Latvia's independence. Although almost 30 years have passed since then, Latvian historiography still does not include any general analytical study of non-violent resistance in occupied Latvia in 1940–91. Historian Aleksandrs Ivanovs has recognized that the most significant, if not the main, element of the twentieth-century history of the Latvian people is the history of the Latvian national resistance movement. This must be seen as a priority, because it expresses most vividly, "the Latvian people's spiritual life, mood and attitude towards the occupation regimes."[4]

The creation of such a general work is hindered by the absence of studies on this subject. There are several reasons for this. One of these is the lack of funding for research on the history of Latvia and the resistance movement. Issues relating to non-violent resistance under Stalinism (1940–41 and 1944–53) have at times been studied by no more than one historian. This, in turn, has precluded discussion and more definite conclusions. During the past 27-plus years, not a single doctoral dissertation has been defended on the subject of resistance to the Soviet occupation regime in Latvia. A second reason complicating the study of this theme is the great volume of factual material, which is dispersed in various documents compiled by the Soviet regime, namely in the criminal case files of participants in the resistance who were sentenced and persecuted, as well as in reports by Soviet institutions.

So far, only a few significant studies have been conducted into questions relating to resistance in 1940–41. However, none of these present an in-depth analysis of issues concerning non-violent resistance. Only the resistance activities of students in Latvian schools has been examined to some extent. In their resistance students

mainly employed non-violent methods. In his seminal study on this theme historian Tālivaldis Vilciņš concludes that, first, though patriotic and eager, the students did not have the necessary skills for success. Resistance was inevitable and widespread, but it was spontaneous, amateurish and dispersed in character. Secondly, the most active participants were the former members of youth organizations of the independence period, the Scouts, Jaunsargi and Mazpulki, the Latvian version of 4-H. Thirdly, the students did not appreciate the means available to their enemies and accordingly suffered heavy losses.[5]

Individual studies on the theme of resistance (including non-violent resistance) appeared at the turn of the century. A collection of articles brought together studies on resistance to the Soviet occupation regime in the Baltic in 1940–41,[6] including an article by Juris Ciganovs about resistance in Latvia that was later published in Latvian.[7]

Examination of these studies leads to the conclusion that the pattern of resistance and the character of the resistance movements in the three Baltic States shows more similarities than differences. In the first place, resistance was not organized; it was spontaneous. Second, young people were most active in resisting the Soviet occupation regime. Third, resistance may be divided into active and passive, non-violent and armed resistance. Fourth, there was no central leadership or united program. Fifth, most of the participants in the resistance were engaged in a struggle to regain the independence of their respective countries.

In the years that followed, the Latvian historiography on issues relating to the resistance movement was supplemented with a few more studies. My own study presented a comprehensive analysis of resistance to the Soviet occupation regime in Latvia in 1940–41. Non-violent resistance was examined separately, subdividing it into opposition to the Soviet occupation regime by individuals and by groups/organizations. Several different forms of resistance were distinguished. I divided resistance during the first year of Soviet occupation into two phases. The first was dominated by non-violent resistance, while in the second phase armed resistance prevailed. Unfortunately, the significance of this study is reduced by the lack of use of unpublished archive material.[8]

In the years that followed, thematic studies were published analyzing the two largest resistance organizations of 1940–1941, namely Tēvijas sargi[9] and the Latvian National Legion (Latviešu nacionālais leģions),[10] the participants of which, although they did aim to undertake an armed struggle against the occupation regime, actually restricted themselves essentially to non-violent resistance during their brief period of existence. The fate of the participants in this organization is revealed in the compilation of statistical data. This demonstrates how mercilessly the Stalinist regime dealt with members of the resistance movement, even though they had in practice been resisting

only by non-violent means. Through these studies, new and corrected facts about the resistance were introduced into Latvian historiography, thus enriching the history of the movement during the first year of Soviet occupation.

My study concerning the ways in which the idea of Latvia's statehood was maintained during the first year of Soviet occupation, led to the conclusion that it was achieved specifically by non-violent means.[11]

Non-violent resistance during the initial period of the second Soviet occupation (1944–1953) has likewise been examined only in a few thematic articles, two of these dealing with the struggle by school students against the Soviet occupation regime.[12] The article by the late historian Heinrihs Strods presents a general analysis and concludes that national resistance by students constituted an element of the overall national resistance movement and that it was, just as in the initial year of Soviet occupation, spontaneous, suicidally amateurish and lacking any multi-level structure or system, while its leaders and most of the participants had no sense of reality concerning the true strength, professionalism and unlimited material means of the enemy, or their ability to infiltrate agents into school resistance organizations and groups. However, in the overall context of the Soviet occupation, this particular period was characterized the most widespread avoidance and resistance.[13]

The most significant study to date on non-violent resistance under the conditions of Stalinism, however, is the extensive article by Strods that gives a general account of non-violent resistance in Latvia during the years 1944–85. The study appears in a publication on non-violent resistance from 1945 up to 1991.[14] It analyses the causes of non-violent resistance, its origins and the background of the participants. Non-violent resistance is divided into passive and active resistance. Passive non-violent resistance is taken to include cultural and church resistance, and political non-cooperation. Active non-violent resistance includes an oppositional attitude by the population, oppositional behavior, resistance by those subject to political persecution, emigration and flight abroad, activities in exile and resistance in groups. Thus, the study shows the diversity of non-violent resistance by the population of Latvia to the Soviet occupation regime.

Non-Violent Resistance in 1940–1941

In the summer of 1940, contrary to the actions of the Latvian government, which chose not to oppose the military occupation by the USSR, one section of the population demonstrated a different position, not merely expressing hushed dissatisfaction with the course of events but actually opposing the occupation regime.

In terms of the expressions of resistance, the first year of Soviet occupation may be divided into two phases. In the first phase, which began along with the military occupation by the USSR on 17 June 1940 and ended with the mass deportation of the Latvian population on 14 June 1941, non-violent resistance prevailed. In the second phase (14 June 1941 to early July, up to the occupation by National Socialist Germany), armed resistance became the dominant form of resistance as partisan warfare against the representatives of the Soviet occupation and its military forces. Armed resistance was provoked by the 14 June arrest and deportation and by the invasion of the USSR by National Socialist Germany on 22 June.

Resistance had several different causes. In the first place, there was the loss of Latvia's national independence contrary to the wishes of the population, which was prepared to defend its freedom even by force of arms. The authoritarian regime led by Kārlis Ulmanis took the decision not to resist militarily. This was not a democratic decision. Unable to countenance these events, on 21 July 1941, General Ludvigs Bolšteins (1888–1940), commander of Latvia's Border Guards Brigade, committed suicide. He gave his reason in a suicide note: "To my superiors. We Latvians have built for ourselves a new and stately building – our state. A foreign power wants to force us to tear it down. I cannot take part."[15]

Secondly, the resistance was brought about by the terror of the Soviet occupation regime against the population. In 1940–41, the Soviet regime persecuted at least 20,000–21,000 people.[16] The persecution culminated on 14 June 1941, when 15,424 people were deported from Latvia.[17] This destroyed the military, political and cultural élite of the Latvian people.

A third factor was the economic transformation, when economic life was reorganized in accordance with the socialist model of the USSR (nationalization of property, etc.), which meant a dramatic fall in people's level of welfare.[18]

Fourthly, there was the imposition of communist ideology, permitting only a Soviet totalitarian interpretation of the ideas of Marxism–Leninism.[19]

School students constituted one of the first sections of society to form small groups and organizations. So far 22 teaching institutions in Latvia have been identified where the pupils formed underground groups and organizations. At many teaching establishments there was more than one such group. Altogether, several hundred young people participated in these groups.[20]

In parallel with students, there were adult resistance groups and organizations. Although preparing for armed struggle, they were meanwhile also engaged in non-violent resistance. Several large organizations were established: Guards of the Fatherland (Tēvijas sargi), Young Latvians (Jaunlatvieši), the Latvian National Legion (Latvijas Nacionālais leģions), the Military Organization for the Liberation of Latvia

(Kaujas organizācija Latvijas atbrīvošanai) and the Latvian People's League (Latviešu tautas apvienība). These were led by people from various social groups: students, officers, workers, etc.[21]

For the population of an occupied country to be able to oppose an aggressor by non-violent means, an important pre-condition needs to be met: the people must be either trained in how to engage in such resistance, or else the group needs a leader who issues instructions on how to proceed, although Gene Sharp, researcher of non-violent resistance, considers that non-violent resistance does not require a charismatic leader.[22] However, Latvia's experience in the twentieth century demonstrates the opposite. National independence could be restored, because a leader first came on the scene and a group emerged that stimulated people to engage in a mass non-violent struggle and provided advice on how best to pursue this struggle.

During the first year of Soviet occupation, the resistance movement lacked such a charismatic, widely known leader whom a large mass might follow. It is possible that the emergence of such an individual was hindered by the preceding authoritarian regime headed by Kārlis Ulmanis. In the late 1930s, he himself had become a charismatic leader of the people. However, it was the government he led that had accepted the USSR's ultimatums. When it was necessary to decide whether the people of Latvia and the army should resist occupation by the USSR, he and his associates decided to capitulate to the Soviet demands. Even more than that, in the first month of the Soviet occupation, he actively cooperated (probably not voluntarily) with the occupation regime and approved many decisions that shattered Latvia's independence and dismantled its structure. Ulmanis' activities from 21 June up to 21 July 1940 did not promote resistance to the occupation; quite the opposite, they were a factor encouraging collaboration.[23] His actions contributed to the lack of comprehension among the population as to the political developments in the country. They became clearer only after the staged "democratic" elections to the Saeima, following which the new government went to Moscow to request Latvia's incorporation into the USSR.

That the population did not understand what was going on is shown by a testimony written on 22–23 December 1941 in his own hand by an arrested former Latvian army soldier Ludvigs Ozols, who subsequently became a member of the resistance:

> When on 17 June 1940 the Soviet forces entered Latvia, the majority of soldiers and nationally oriented citizens were of the opinion that in Latvia the government would be changed so as to permit a better understanding with the government of the [Soviet] Union and with the leadership of the forces stationed in Latvia, whereas there would not be any other changes or interference in Latvia's internal affairs, either political or economic or in any other sphere, but these hopes were

> not borne out, because the Latvian Saeima elected on 14 July 1940 voted in its session on 5 August for Latvia's complete incorporation into the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, thus ending the existence of Latvia as an independent republic. On that day [...] I listened to the broadcast of the historic session of the Saeima [...] and after the announcement of Latvia's incorporation into the Union, I was very alarmed and disappointed with such a decision and, ignoring the presence of the soldiers under my command, I commented that such a decision meant the selling out of Latvia and treason, and that this is the most shameful act that Latvians had ever done.[24]

Individual leadership at that time was not assumed by any of the most prominent intellectuals, politicians or military personnel. They chose a tactic of waiting, although they were generally dissatisfied with the changes, or of cooperation, or else – they were neutralized.

Neither were there any groups that could organize people for a common struggle on a mass scale, employing non-violent means of resistance. True, democratically oriented politicians might have taken on this role. They did become more active when the bogus elections to the Saeima were announced. This was the election platform Democratic Latvian Appeal created by Atis Ķeniņš, erstwhile Minister of Education, often referred to in historical literature as the Democratic Bloc or the Blue List. It enlisted Latvia's most prominent politicians and prominent figures in society.[25] They agreed to participate with their citizens' list in the "pseudo-democratic" Saeima elections announced by the transitional government of Latvia appointed by Andrei Vyshinsky, Deputy Chairman of the USSR Soviet of People's Commissars and long-serving chief prosecutor of the Soviet State, which were held on 14 and 15 July 1940. These experienced politicians likewise believed that it is possible to safeguard Latvia's independence by political means.

The platform of the Democratic Bloc, which was disseminated among the population, stated openly and clearly: "[...] We wish to preserve a free and independent Latvia; we do not wish to lose it."[26] Of course, no such step was permissible in the scenario of Vyshinsky, who organized and oversaw Latvia's annexation to the USSR. By employing a very wide variety of pretexts, changing the law and using repressive methods, the Democratic Bloc was banned and crushed. Unfortunately, this would be the last open bid under Stalinist conditions to preserve Latvia's national independence that involved former politicians of the independent state and well-known figures in society. The path they chose, namely to regain independence by peaceful political means through elections, turned out to be farsighted. Only it was necessary to await the right moment, when the aggressor, the USSR, had grown weaker, and achieve political support from the Western democracies. Fifty years later, Latvia's

independence was regained in a similar way, when the Latvian Popular Front took part in elections as a political force and obtained a majority in the Supreme Soviet, after which the deputies voted to restore Latvia's independence. Unfortunately, this was impossible to achieve in the early period of the occupation.

In spite of these setbacks, resistance began spontaneously. People organized themselves into underground groups and organizations. The leaders, however, were little-known but patriotically oriented members of the younger generation, while the members came from all different social groups. Unfortunately, these were local-level leaders, who were not charismatic enough to implement mass non-violent resistance under the conditions of the Stalinist regime. They themselves were well aware of this and strove to involve more prominent figures in the resistance movement. This proved unsuccessful, because the people they addressed turned them down. The reasons varied greatly: fear that this could be a provocation, as well as a lack of belief that Latvia's independence might be restored by the Latvians on their own.[27]

None of these managed to become a central organization leading many resistance groups in a coordinated way. This can be explained, in the first place, by the absence of charismatic leaders already mentioned. Secondly, there was a lack of knowledge as to how to conduct underground activities and organize a struggle against the occupation regime. Thirdly, the secret police, which already had long experience in crushing and eliminating resistance. Within a short space of time, the occupation regime in Latvia had managed, with Moscow's support, to create a large and effective secret police force in Latvia, which actively rooted out attempts at resistance by the populace.[28] As a result, most members of the underground groups and organizations were identified and arrested in the first half of 1941.

Although the organizations and groups of the resistance movement in Latvia in 1940–41 were not united, their goal was one and the same: the struggle against the Soviet occupation regime and the desire to restore Latvia's national independence.

The majority of resistance groups and organizations set as their task the preparation for an armed struggle in the event of a war between the USSR and one of the Western European countries. It seemed to people at the time the only way that Latvia's independence would be regained. Such a position may have been based on the historical experience, namely that Latvia's independence had been won in 1918–20 through armed struggle, the War of Independence. Evidently, there was no appreciation that success can also be achieved through non-violent resistance. In spite of this, however, practical people resisted the occupation regime specifically using non-violent methods. These were employed, because people were aware they could not achieve a positive outcome militarily on their own. The idea of preparation and waiting for an opportune moment is also conveyed in the appeals

being disseminated. Thus, in late December 1940, a group of young people in Riga distributed the following appeal: "Latvians! Assemble and organize under the red-white-red flag! We must restore the Latvian state. Do not forget that your duty, too, is: all for Latvia! Be prepared when the fatherland calls!"[29]

In 1940–41 we see a variety of forms of non-violent resistance. In the first place, this involved the dissemination of various printed and handwritten appeals, written on paper or painted on buildings and fences. The dissemination of such appeals was carried out by individuals as well as groups. It was employed as a means of non-violent struggle by people from a very wide variety of social groups. These appeals were directed against local collaborators,[30] against soldiers of the occupation army, i.e., Red Army servicemen,[31] and against the forcibly imposed, unacceptable ideology, namely communism.[32] Unfortunately, expressions of anti-Semitism are also observable, because Jews were seen as associated with the occupation regime. Although their number among the officials of the occupation institutions was not large, they did occupy high positions in the security services.

The appeals also urged people to boycott an event organized by the occupation regime, namely the election of deputies to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR on 12 January 1941.[33] Upholding the idea of Latvia's independence, they urged people to be patient and endure the conditions of occupation, because freedom would be regained.[34] These appeals were generally disseminated on a local scale. The largest campaign to disseminate an appeal was undertaken on 13 May 1941, where, during one hour of coordinated action, a group of school pupils from Jelgava distributed leaflets in different towns and cities: Riga, Cēsis, Valmiera, Rēzekne, Bauska, Tukums and Jelgava. A total of 4000 copies were disseminated, thus encompassing all the historical regions of Latvia.[35] This showed the importance of careful planning.

Secondly, there were boycotts of the undemocratic elections to the Saeima on 14–15 July 1940 and the election of deputies to the USSR Supreme Soviet on 12 January 1941. Thus, the Red Army's 24th Territorial Rifle Corps, consisting of Latvian soldiers, expressed its negative attitude towards the election of deputies to the USSR Supreme Soviet on 12 January 1941: 15% of the voters in this military unit refused to vote, and 9.3% voted against the candidates.[36] Even though much of the population boycotted the elections, the occupation authorities announced, as was customary in the USSR, that almost a hundred percent had voted

Thirdly, underground press was published by the resistance. The publication and dissemination of underground news bulletins, carried out mainly in Riga, was a way of expressing one's attitude towards the Soviet occupation policy in Latvia, because the official newspapers were controlled by the Soviet occupation authorities and did not

permit any plurality of political opinion. One of the resistance organizations most active in this sphere was Tēvijas sargi, which in the period from late 1940 to March 1941 published six issues of its bulletin *Ziņotājs*. The first four had a circulation of 30–40, increasing to 80 for the last two.[37]

Ziņotājs published various articles on foreign affairs, especially in the section "The testimony of statistics," which compared the economic and cultural achievements of Latvia and the Soviet Union in the inter-war period. The section "Know and implement" urged the members of Tēvijas sargi to donate money to the organization, along with articles condemned the economic changes in the country.[38]

A number of articles attacked Communism. Thus, the article "National pride" emphasized:

> [...] We are currently experiencing a time when two different ideas are clashing in a fierce battle, where each strives to prevail and dominate. This battle of ideas has drawn us, against our wishes, into a situation resembling the serfdom that accompanied medieval feudalism, where the nation's rights and needs are placed in a state of injustice and immorality. The goal we have been set is the irreal nightmare of Communism […].[39]

In the pages of *Ziņotājs*, Tēvijas sargi urged the people to remain united, because they considered unity as one of the ways in which to withstand the occupation and prevail: "Come, Latvians: the old appeal rings out again. No matter, who you are, let's stand shoulder to shoulder again, as in 1915–19: farmers, workers, students, civil servants and school pupils alike! We'll have the chance to go our separate ways, once we're free again."[40]

The bulletin gave advice on how to act under the conditions of occupation: "Latvians! Keep your heads and don't let yourselves be provoked. No rash acts – that's exactly what our "friends" want. Attend all the lectures and political seminars diligently: learn, see for yourself and judge for yourself! Compare the promises with what they deliver in reality."[41] Thus, they were urging people to hold back rather than actively show their attitude towards the occupation regime, because they were asking people to save their strength for the decisive moment. This is also demonstrated by the following excerpt:

> More than ever before, the present time requires from the Latvian people calm, considered action and coolheadedness. Ill-considered, individual "antics" have no significance, and are even detrimental. We will show ourselves to be great patriots, real nationalists, if we hold back ourselves and others from emphasizing our national feeling on the wrong occasions. Let's not allow our hatred towards others, the Communists and the Russians who have come over, be expressed outwardly. The

> right time has not yet come. Let's save our strength and build up our hatred. How valuable every Latvian heart, glowing with hatred against the enemy, and every hand will be, when the alarm bells ring!"[42]

They also tried to bolster Latvian self-esteem to help deal with the situation:

> [...] Since we have come under this yoke, let us bear it in such a way as the honor, character and cultural achievements of the Latvian people demand. The prestige of two million Latvians is incomparably higher within the community of nations than that of the Russian people, numbering more than 200 million, because we have been able to develop and create cultural values of general significance in politics as well as in art, sciences, etc. We can sneer at the Communists, because it was only due to the Latvian Rifles that they came to power, and it will be due to the same that it will be taken away from them.[43]

Other such publications included the *Tautas Balss,* published by the Jaunlatvieši, *Degsme*. published by the youth resistance organization at the Riga 2nd State Grammar School, and *Latvijas atbrīvotāji* published by the eponymous underground group.[44] Even the small underground group in the 24th Territorial Rifle Corps had its own underground publication. During its brief existence, this group, consisting of Latvian soldiers, published a single issue of the underground bulletin *Gaišais Ceļš*, in 20 copies, a proportion of which were sent by post to friends and acquaintances.[45] Unfortunately, not all underground publications have been preserved. It may be that additional publications by the resistance movement could be discovered by examining the criminal files of the arrested members of the resistance. However, considering the small circulation, they cannot be regarded as having had a major impact on the population.

Fourthly, non-violent resistance took the form of honoring Latvian symbols: singing the national anthem, raising the red-white-red flag, marking Independence Day on 18 November, placing flowers at the Freedom Monument and at the sites commemorating the Independence War. Already in the summer of 1940, during the first days of occupation, and later as well, people would gather spontaneously at the Freedom Monument, placing flowers and ribbons in the national colors. Such cases were described in the newspaper *Cīņa*, the voice of the occupation regime. It noted with scorn that "[...] it's time to end these 'flower demonstrations' and 'antics' by layabouts."[46] Although Independence Day celebrations on 18 November were banned, many did mark this occasion among friends, and in many cases even at teaching institutions, where solemn events were held, in the course of which God, Bless Latvia!" would be sung. For example, so many pupils were involved in the 18 November celebrations at Dzērbene Agricultural School that even the secret police were confused as to how they

should react.[47] This example demonstrates that mass participation plays a major role in non-violent resistance, since it renders the enemy powerless.

The red-white-red flag would usually be raised in a prominent place on the official holidays of the time of independence: 18 November and 15 May (the anniversary of the *coup d'état* by Ulmanis). Such activities began on a mass scale following Germany's attack on the USSR, when it seemed that Latvia's independence might be restored very soon.[48]

Fifthly, non-violent resistance was also expressed as dissatisfaction on the part of the population with the occupation regime and its ideology, along with the boycotting of meetings held by Soviet functionaries and activists.[49]

Sixthly, the forms of non-violent resistance also included fleeing from the occupation regime abroad, although this was very difficult, because the Soviet regime sealed the border already in the first months to prevent people from escaping the "sunny future" promised by propaganda.

Seventhly, non-violent resistance was also expressed by Latvia's diplomats who remained outside the country. Many of them refused to cooperate with the Soviet occupation regime and by discounting their activities. Quite the opposite, they continued to represent the Republic of Latvia as a *de iure* state and its last pre-occupation government.[50]

The non-violent resistance campaigns of 1940–41 never grew to a mass scale, because society was not unified in undertaking them. Individuals and small groups could not have much impact. Active non-violent resistance was primarily shown by college-educated young people. Unfortunately, no specific concept of non-violent resistance or any comprehensive program of action had been developed. The use of methods of non-violent struggle was largely a matter of improvisation, and often had the character of spontaneous action. It was not the result of careful planning and preparation.

The actions of the Soviet regime's security services were also very significant for limiting this struggle, since they would react very quickly in various ways and would mercilessly put down expressions of resistance. A year later, the situation during the year of Soviet occupation in one county of Latvia was described in the following terms: "[...] However, the inhabitants of Ludza County cannot boast of having engaged in much anti-Bolshevik activity. The first and main reason for this was the profusion of Cheka agents and various traitors everywhere; secondly, the boldest fighters had been 'rounded up' in advance."[51] Unfortunately, this was true, because most of the participants in the underground groups and organizations active in 1940 and 1941 were uncovered and arrested. They did not manage to establish a center of resistance, either in occupied Latvia or abroad, able to lead the population more effectively in a non-violent struggle against the occupation regime.

Non-Violent Resistance in 1944–1953

In the late summer of 1944, part of Latvia came under the control of the USSR once again, and in May 1945, with the capitulation of National Socialist Germany, the whole of Latvia's territory came under Soviet rule. Thus, occupation by National Socialist Germany was succeeded by Soviet occupation. One evil, defeated in World War II, was replaced by another, which had at this time succeeded in strengthening its position in the international arena as an ally of the West in the clash with National Socialist Germany. During World War II, inhabitants of Latvia had fought and fallen in the ranks of the German and the Russian army, but it had not been possible to restore independence. This time, as during the first Soviet occupation, there was the hope that the situation would not continue for long. It was hoped that, with assistance from the Western allies, the Latvian people would soon succeed in re-establishing the independent Latvian state.

In 1944, when the Eastern Front and the Red Army approached the borders of Latvia, the people had no illusions about a repeated Soviet regime, because of their historical experience during the first year of Soviet occupation (1940–41), during which they had suffered from the terror. Many thousands of people left their homes and fled to Western Europe. Others, who could not or did not wish to flee, stayed behind in the hope that this time, too, they would manage to survive the Soviet occupation and see the restoration of independence. Others actively adapted to the demands of the occupation regime and actively cooperated. Still others decided to engage in active resistance. This group increased gradually, once people came face to face with the reality of the Soviet occupation regime. Just as during the first year of occupation, after World War II the population was subjected to terror, to economic changes (from private ownership to collectivization) and to imposition of communist culture and ideology.

In Latvia and the other Baltic States, Lithuania and Estonia, armed resistance became the dominant form of resistance under the Stalinist regime in 1944–53. Without support from any third country, partisan groups and organizations developed spontaneously, engaging in partisan warfare against the Soviet occupation regime. Alongside armed resistance, non-violent resistance continued as well. In contrast to armed resistance, which gradually dwindled away during the 1950s, non-violent resistance continued, since it was more accessible and easier to undertake.

Non-violent resistance in this period can be divided into active and passive resistance. Active resistance could be individual or collective. Just as in the first Soviet occupation of 1940–41 and during the occupation by National Socialist Germany, there was no charismatic leader in Latvia or abroad who could lead the struggle throughout Latvia. Even though the Latvian Central Council, established as

a resistance organization under the German occupation, included many well-known figures from different social groups, in reality this organization and its members never became a center leading resistance in Latvia. Neither did such a center form among the people from Latvia who were now in Western Europe. Moreover, non-violent resistance in Latvia did not receive any support. One of the reasons was the standpoint of the Latvian diplomats and politicians in exile that it was not desirable to set up a large underground movement in Latvia, because it would be rapidly discovered cause suffering to the best and most loyal citizens.[52] The people once again had to engage in self-organization. New regional leaders and groups of people emerged, who began to organize people for a struggle against the occupation regime.

In the years 1945–53, several major national partisan organizations with several hundred members emerged in Latvia. In addition to armed resistance, they also engaged in non-violent resistance. Unfortunately, these were local-scale organizations operating in particular regions of Latvia. The only partisan organization that set itself the task of uniting partisans across Latvia was the Defenders of the Fatherland (Partisan) League (Latvijas Tēvzemes sargu (partizānu) apvienība). Unfortunately, these ambitions were never realized, because the secret police crushed the organization. There were other major organizations as well, such as the Latvian National Partisan Organization (Latvijas nacionālo partizānu organizācija), the Latvian National Partisan League (Latvijas nacionālo partizānu apvienība) and Tēvijas vanagi.[53]

In their struggle against the Soviet occupation regime, the partisan organizations employed not only armed resistance but also non-violent means, publishing and disseminating among the population various appeals and periodical publications. One of these appeals, issued by the Latvian National Partisan League, listed the major aims of the national partisan struggle. These were more like demands, and permit an appreciation of the situation at that time and the conditions in which people had to live after Latvia's occupation by the USSR. These were demands for things people in democratic countries took for granted. Some of the points may be quoted:

> 1. For a democratic and independent Latvia. 2. For freedom of speech, conscience and written expression. 3. For security of the state and individuals. 4. For property rights and the inalienability of property. 5. For freedom of labor. 6. For freedom of private business. 7. For Latvians' rights to land. 8. For religious and denominational freedom. 9. For the right to equality, regardless of social estate, class or status. 10. For unrestricted, universal education.[54]

All of this was denied the population of Latvia under Soviet occupation.

Altogether, the national partisans issued hundreds of different appeals and more than 19 periodical and non-periodical publications, describing the situation in Latvia and the attitude of foreign countries regarding the prospects for Latvia's independence.[55] In this period the national partisans were the ones to organize non-violent resistance (not joining the collective farms, not paying taxes, not taking part in elections, etc.).

As in the first year of Soviet occupation, in 1944–53 it was school pupils who most actively engaged in the non-violent struggle. One form of non-violent resistance was the evasion movement. Young people refused to join the Pioneers or the Communist Youth, and evaded instruction in Marxism–Leninism. In the first year of re-occupation, 1945, of all the schools in Latvia (numbering 772), Communist Youth organizations were set up and active in only 23% of schools (181). Out of 24,899 students in the Communist Youth age group, only 2739 or 11% had actually joined the organization.[56] This showed clearly that the communist ideology enforced by the occupation regime was not acceptable to Latvian youth. In order to increase the numbers of Pioneers and Communist Youth, the regime voiced the threat that those who refused to join the Communist Youth would not be allowed to graduate from secondary school and enter higher education institutions, and that parents who did not allow their children to join the Communist Youth would be regarded as kulaks and enemies of the people, and would be exiled to Siberia. After the restoration of Latvia's independence, Valija Kronberga testified: "I can't say anything about the Pioneers, but even after 1950 they would force people to join the Communist Youth, because, if you refused to join, then they threatened not to let you graduate from school. It was possible not to join, but in that case you would be regarded as an anti-state individual." [57] However, these threats, too, did not really produce results; it was only the reality of mass deportation on 25 March 1949 that prompted people to join. By early 1953, the number of Young Communists had reached 21,017. However, as recognized by researchers, these organizations in most schools (75%) were small (5–25 Young Communists), and this could not significantly promote the work of Communist instruction in the schools. The situation with the number of Pioneers was even more dramatic: in certain regions of Latvia, such as Kurzeme, less than half of school pupils had joined the Pioneers.[58] These statistical data indicate that communist ideology was not acceptable to the majority of students, their parents or teachers.

School pupils engaged not only in passive but also active resistance. Thus, under the conditions of Stalinism, many youth underground organizations and groups formed, employing non-violent methods to resist the communist regime. Of the young people belonging to pro-independence organizations exposed by the secret police in 1944–53, 95% were Latvians, and 99% of the resistance groups among school pupils

from 1944 up to the mid-1950s exposed by the secret police considered as their aim the restoration of a democratic, independent Latvian state.[59] In 1944–53, the resistance movement among school pupils in Latvia included more than 100 decentralized youth resistance groups and organizations with at least several thousand participants, about half of whom were discovered by the secret police, tried and given a variety of sentences.[60]

Underground youth organizations developed spontaneously or taking example from the national partisans. Young people planned group flights abroad, agitated against the occupation regime and published and disseminated various appeals. On 18 November, the anniversary of the foundation of the Latvian state, they would raise the red-white-red flag in public places. They published underground periodicals, countering the utopian communist propaganda of the occupation regime's official newspapers and magazines. In their appeals, the young people, like the national partisans of that time, urged the farmers not to deliver grain to the Soviet state and not to fulfil the imposed labor duties in order to weaken the regime that had been forced on them. They would listen in secret to news broadcasts by foreign radio stations. A cause of great elation in the Latvian national resistance movement, and likewise in the youth resistance movement, was Winston Churchill's speech in Fulton, Missouri, on 5 March 1946 and the Soviet government's reaction to it, seen as potentially heralding a real attack by the imperialists against the USSR. An unfounded hope was born in the population that Latvia would soon regain its national independence as a result of the potential outbreak of war. This hope prevailed throughout the Stalinist era and only dissolved gradually at the time of the Hungarian Rising of 1956.

Apart from these forms of non-violent resistance, the underground youth organizations disseminated anti-Soviet literature (in many cases works by Latvian authors published during the time of Latvia's independence and prohibited under the Soviet regime), and sang songs that were directed against the Soviet regime or were forbidden.[61] This was a reaction against the withholding of freedom of speech and conscience by the Soviet regime, which one section of young people found unacceptable.

Latvia had for many centuries belonged to the Western European cultural space, and the Latvian state had been founded on the basis of Western democratic values. The population retained its love of Western culture even after the Latvian state had been occupied in spite of the communists' prohibition and disparagement of Western values and culture. This ban also brought about forms of non-violent resistance that were expressed as an interest in Western culture, namely illicit appreciation of literature and art. In early 1951, the secret police arrested the so-called "French Group" – a group of creative intellectuals who came together illicitly to discuss the

literature and art of the Western countries. The communist regime considered this activity threat to the existence of the communist world. The group members were arrested and received sentences of up to 25 years of hard labor in Siberia.[62] However, if we consider Latvian intellectuals in general, we must recognize that artists and writers tended to cooperate with rather than resist the Soviet regime.[63] Artists and writers produced the kind of work required for the Soviet regime's propaganda, thus reinforcing the position of the Soviet regime.

Conclusions

The authoritarian regime ruling Latvia at the beginning of World War II was forced under military pressure to comply with the dictates of the USSR, and Latvia was occupied as a result. Although Latvia did not resist the aggressor militarily, the population did engage in various forms of resistance, including non-violent resistance.

During Stalin's rule, the population of Latvia was not able to restore the country's sovereignty by means of non-violent struggle, because several pre-conditions were absent. In the first place, the participants in the resistance and its leaders could not appreciate the significance and potential of non-violent resistance. Non-violent resistance was not a purposefully chosen form of resistance. It was chosen because the means for conducting armed resistance were unavailable, and it represented no more than a preparation for armed resistance. It was possibly also hindered by the generally-accepted practice in the world and the historical experience, namely that the Latvian state, like many other countries of Eastern Europe after World War I, had been established through armed struggle, namely in the Independence War of 1918–20. Secondly, in the years of Stalin's rule, the occupation regime was particularly strict and merciless. Any sign of resistance, regardless of the form it took, would be harshly punished. Persecution was directed not only against the individual who had taken part in the resistance movement, but also against their family. Thirdly, the population of Latvia was not able to create organized, massive non-violent resistance against the occupation regime to have an impact.

Within the general population, young people were the most active in terms of non-violent resistance during this period. They largely constituted the driving force behind the resistance movement.

The participants in non-violent resistance were not able to influence Latvia's situation in the specific historical conditions of the time, but their struggle was not in vain, because they were able to keep alive, under a totalitarian regime, the idea of Latvia's national independence, which would be brought to life half a century later, with the restoration of the sovereignty of the Latvian state.

Endnotes

[1] "Sekretnij dopolnitel'nij protokol," *Novaya i novejshaya istoriya*, 1 (1993): 89; Inesis Feldmanis. "The Occupation of Latvia: Aspects of history and international law." Available at: https://www.mfa.gov.lv/en/component/content/article/369-domestic-news/5632-the- (accessed 28.03.2021.)

[2] "Latvijas armijas un PSRS Strādnieku-zemnieku Sarkanās armijas pirmās komisijas 1939. gada 23. oktobra konfidenciālās vienošanās protokols Rīgā par PSRS karaspēka daļu novietošanu Latvijas teritorijām," *Pakta zona: Latvijas Okupācijas muzeja Gadagrāmata 2003*, ed. Heinrihs Strods (Rīga: Latvijas 50 gadu okupācijas muzeja fonds, 2004) 111–12.

[3] See Daina Bleiere, Ilgvars Butulis, Inesis Feldmanis, Aivars Stranga and Antonijs Zunda, *Latvijas vēsture 20. gadsimts* (Rīga: Jumava, 2005) 182–83.

[4] Aleksandrs Ivanovs, "Nacionālā pretošanās Latvijā 20. gadsimta 40.–80. gados Latvijas historiogrāfijā," *Okupētā Latvija 1940–1990*, ed. Dzintars *Ērglis*, Symposium of the Commission of the Historians of Latvia 19 (Rīga: Latvijas vēstures institūta apgāds, 2007) 28.

[5] Tālivaldis Vilciņš, *Skolu jaunatne nacionālajā cīņā (1940.–1941.)* (Rīga: Latvijas Valsts arhīvs, 1997) 79 pages.

[6] Arvydas Anušauskas, ed., *The Anti-Soviet Resistance in the Baltic States,* (Vilnius: Du Ka, 1999) 272 pages.

[7] Juris Ciganovs, "The Resistance movement against the Soviet regime in between 1940 and 1941," in the volume cited above, pp. 123–30; Juris Ciganovs. "Pretošanās padomju okupācijas režīmam Latvijā 1940.–1941. gadām," *Komunistu un nacistu jūgā: Latvijas Okupācijas muzeja Gadagrāmata 2000,* ed. Heinrihs Strods (Rīga: Latvijas 50 gadu Okupācijas muzejs, 2001) 45–55.

[8] Jānis Viļums, "Pretošanās okupācijai Latvijā 1940.–1941. gadā," *Varas patvaļa: Latvijas Okupācijas muzeja Gadagrāmata 2002*, ed. Heinrihs Strods (Rīga: Latvijas 50 gadu okupācijas muzeja fonds, 2003) 127–60.

[9] Jānis Viļums, "'Tēvijas Sargi': Pretpadomju pagrīdes organizācijas Latvijā 1940.–1941. gadā," *Atbrīvotāji kā iekarotāji: Latvijas Okupācijas muzeja Gadagrāmata 2005* (Rīga: Latvijas Okupācijas muzeja biedrība, 2006) 13–35.

[10] Jānis Viļums, "Latvijas Nacionālais leģions: pretpadomju pagrīdes organizācija Latvijā 1940.–1941. gadā," *Okupācijas režīmi Baltijas valstīs 1940–199,* ed. Dzintars *Ērglis*, Symposium of the Commission of the Historians of Latvia 25 (Rīga: Latvijas vēstures institūts, 2009) 77–99.

[11] Jānis Viļums, "Latvijas valstiskās neatkarības idejas uzturēšana pirmajā padomju okupācijas gadā (1940–1941)," *Latvijas valstiskumam 90. Latvijas valsts neatkarība: ideja un* realizācija, ed. Jānis Bērziņš (Rīga: Latvijas vēstures institūta apgāds, 2010) 240–51.

[12] Heinrihs Strods, "Latvijas skolu jaunatnes nacionālā pretošanās kustība (1944. gads – 50. gadu vidus)," *Totalitārie režīmi un to represijas Latvijā 1940.–1956. gadā*, ed. Sarmīte Kļaviņa, Symposium of the Commission of the Historians of Latvia 3 (Rīga: Latvijas vēstures institūta apgāds, 2001) 592–675; Irēna Šaicāne, "Viļakas jauniešu nevardarbīgās pretošanās organizācijas 1945. gadā," *Latvijas vēsture 20. gadsimta 40.–90.* gados, ed. Rudīte Vīksne, Symposium of the Commission of the Historians of Latvia 21 (Rīga: Latvijas vēstures institūta apgāds, 2007) 475–501.

[13] Strods, "Latvijas skolu jaunatnes nacionālā pretošanās kustība."

[14] Heinrihs Strods, "Non-Violent Resistance in Latvia (1945–1985)," Valdis Blūzma, Tālavs Jundzis, Jānis Riekstiņš, Heinrihs Strods and Gene Sharp, *Regaining Independence: Non-Violent Resistance in Latvia 1945–1991* (Riga: Latvian Academy of Sciences, 2009) 61–166.

[15] Ciganovs, "Pretošanās padomju okupācijas režīmam Latvijā," 47.

[16] Irēne Šneidere, "Padomju pirmā okupācija Latvijā: daži aspekti," *Totalitārie okupācijas režīmi Latvijā 1940.–1964. gadā*, ed. Dzintars *Ērglis*, Symposium of the Commission of the Historians of Latvia 13 (Rīga: Latvijas vēstures institūta apgāds, 2004) 21.

[17] Ibid., 20.

[18] Viļums, "Pretošanās okupācijai Latvijā," 131–32.

[19] Ibid., 134.

[20] Jānis Viļums. "Tēvijas Sargi," 16.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Gene Sharp, "The Significance of the Baltic Struggles for Independence," Valdis Blūzma, Tālavs Jundzis, Jānis Riekstiņš, Heinrihs Strods and Gene Sharp *Regaining Independence: Non-Violent Resistance in Latvia 1945–1991* (Riga: Latvian Academy of Sciences, 2009) 41.

[23] Aleksandrs Ivanovs, "Okupācijas varu maiņa Latvijā 1940.–1945. gadā Latvijas historiogrāfijā," *Okupētā Latvija 20. gadsimta 40. gados*, ed. Dzintars *Ērglis*, Symposium of the Commission of the Historians of Latvia 16. (Rīga: Latvijas vēstures institūta apgāds, 2005) 37.

[24] National Archives of Latvia, State Archive of Latvia (LVA), 1986. f., 2. apr., P-11024. l., 3. sēj., 12.–13. lp. Criminal case of Ludvigs Ozols. The document erroneously refers to the date of the Saeima session which unanimously asked for Latvia's admission to the USSR. The vote was taken on 21 July 1940; on 5 August 1940 Latvia was unanimously admitted to the USSR in Moscow.

[25] Jēkabs Ozols, "Pirmais latviešu pretestības nogrupējums," *Kara Invalīds*, 34 (1989) 43–48. Besides Ķeniņš the list included four former prime ministers, namely Hugo Celmiņš, Ādolfs Bļodnieks, Marģers Skujenieks and Voldemārs Zāmuēls, along with Bishop Jāzeps Rancāns, writer Kārlis Skalbe and others.

[26] Edgars Andersons and Leonīds Siliņš, *Latvija un Rietumi. Latviešu nacionālā pretestības kustība, 1943.–1945* (Rīga: Latvijas Universitātes žurnāla "Latvijas Vēsture" fonds, 2002) 446.

[27] Viļums, "Tēvijas Sargi," 22.

[28] Alexander Kokurin, "The basic activity directions of the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs of the Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic in 1940–1941," *Latvija nacistiskās Vācijas okupācijas varā, 1941–1945*, ed. Dzintars *Ērglis*, Symposium of the Commission of the Historians of Latvia 11 (Rīga: Latvijas vēstures institūta apgāds, 2004) 141–53.

[29] LVA, 1986. f., 1. apr., 9424. Surveillance case of Eduards Zeibe.

[30] For instance, on 1 October 1940, a group of school pupils in Cēsis distributed the appeal: "Down with the traitors, long live free Latvia!". See Vilciņš. *Skolu jaunatne nacionālajā cīņā*, 9.

[31] Thus, on 1 October 1940, a group of Cēsis school pupils disseminated 1000 copies of the appeal "Down with the Red Army!". Ibid.

[32] For instance, in early December 1940, members of Tēvijas sargi painted the slogan "Down with communism!" on fences and walls in Riga, in the environs of the 1905 Park. Ibid., 38.

[33] LVA 1986. f., 1. apr., 39785. l. 31. lpp. Criminal case of Jānis Stradiņš and Staņislavs Bojārs.

[34] Vilciņš. *Skolu jaunatne nacionālajā cīņā*, 34.

[35] Ibid., 69.

[36] Vitālijs Šalda,"Pirmo Latvijā notikušo PSRS Augstākās Padomes vēlēšanu atspoguļojums LKP CK dokumentos," *Latvijas Arhīvi*, 1 (1994): 32.

[37] LVA, 1986. f., 2. apr., P-10779. l., 1. sēj., 46. lp. Criminal case of Juris Cālītis.

[38] *Ziņotājs*, 4 (1941) [January]. Latvian War Museum (LKM), Inv. no. 5 – 16405/1079 – Dk.

[39] *Ziņotājs*, 4 (1941) [January]. Latvian War Museum (LKM), Inv. no. 5 – 16405/1079 – Dk.
[40] *Ziņotājs*, 2 (1940) [December]. LKM, Inv. no. 5 –4312 – DK/p.
[41] *Ziņotājs*, 1 (1940) [November]. LKM, Inv. no. 5 – 431 – Dk/p.
[42] *Ziņotājs*, 3 (1940) [December] (LWM, Inv. no. 5 – 4313 – Dk/u.)
[43] Ibid.
[44] LVA, 1986. f., 2. apr., P-10462. l. 1. sēj., 31. lp. Criminal case of Harijs Lamberts.
[45] LVA, 1986. f., 1. apr., 39785. l. 54. o. p., 54. lp. Criminal case of Jānis Stradiņš and Staņislavs Bojārs.
[46] *Cīņa*, 3 July 1940.
[47] Vilciņš, *Skolu jaunatne nacionālajā cīņā*, 58–59.
[48] Viļums, "Pretošanās okupācijai Latvijā,"138.
[49] Olga Krēgere, "Komunistu varas laiks Ludzas apriņķī no 1940. gada 17. jūnija līdz 1941. gada 4. jūlijam (Documents prepared for publication and commented by Olga Krēgere)," *Latvijas Vēstures Institūta Žurnāls*, 2.7 (1993): 139–62.
[50] Ainārs Lerhis, "Latvijas Republikas Ārlietu dienesta ieguldījums Latvijas valsts interešu aizstāvēšanā neatkarības un okupācijas laikmeta pieredze (1918–2008)," *Latvijas valstiskumam 90. Latvijas valsts neatkarība: ideja un realizācija,* ed. Jānis Bērziņš (Rīga: Latvijas vēstures institūta apgāds, 2010) 112.
[51] Krēgere, "Komunistu varas laiks Ludzas apriņķī," 158. LVA, 1412. f., 2. apr., 97. l., 35. lpp.
[52] Strods, "Non-Violent Resistance in Latvia," 142. Strods quotes a letter in his archive from Artūrs Silgailis to Kārlis Zariņš 24 March 1952.
[53] Heinrihs Strods, ed., *Latvijas nacionālo partizānu karš. Dokumenti un materiāli, 1944–1956* (Rīga: Preses nams, 1999) 157–210.
[54] Ibid., 305.
[55] Heinrihs Strods, "Neatkarības ideja okupētajā Latvijā (1939–1991), *Latvijas valstiskumam 90. Latvijas valsts neatkarība: ideja un* realizācija, ed. Jānis Bērziņš (Rīga: Latvijas vēstures institūta apgāds, 2010) 304.
[56] Strods. "Latvijas skolu jaunatnes nacionālā pretošanās," 602.
[57] Ibid., 606.
[58] Ibid., 606–07.
[59] Ibid., 666.
[60] Ibid., 645.
[61] Ibid., 592–675.
[62] LVA, 1986. f., 2. apr., 4657. l., 2. sēj., 215.–218. lp. Criminal case of Ieva Birgers.
[63] On the life of artists under Stalinism, see Ilze Konstante, *Staļina garā ēna Latvijas tēlotājā mākslā, 1940–1956* (Rīga: Neputns, 2017) 798 pages.

Jānis Tomaševskis

Latvian National Partisans in the Summer of 1941: The Example of the Battle of Limbaži

History is replete with paradoxes. Right up to World War II, the image had become established in Latvian society of the Germans as the arch-enemy of the Latvian nation. During World War I and the Latvian War of Independence (1918–1920), Latvian soldiers fought fierce battles with German soldiers. Such a conviction had formed due to the experience of the previous centuries, when Latvian peasants had been forced to serve Baltic German nobles. It seemed to be an attitude that nothing could change. However, the occupation of Latvia by the Red Army of the Soviet Union in June 1940 and the ensuing persecution had the effect of radically altering the public mood. On 22 June 1941, when war broke out between the Soviet Union and Germany, the absolute majority of the Latvian public regarded the Germans as liberators and friends. A witness of those times, Jānis Freimanis, later recalled: "Girls were giving the soldiers flowers. Strange. In school we had been taught that the Germans had kept us in servitude for seven centuries, but now we greet them with flowers. [...] Stalin and his henchmen had in the space of a year cardinally changed the attitude towards the Germans."[1] Even more than that, one section of society not only hailed the "liberators" but was also prepared to give armed support to the German army to drive out the Soviet soldiers and activists from the territory of Latvia. Such a militant attitude was brought about primarily by the persecution against the civil population and the military carried out during the year of Soviet occupation, and the wish to prevent this from reoccurring.

The Soviet repression reached its culmination in mid-June 1941, when 15,443 residents of Latvia were deported to Siberia in a single night. The people of Latvia were experiencing mass persecution and deportations for the first time, and this resulted in psychological shock on a national scale.[2] Simultaneously with the deportations, the former Latvian army officers and men, now serving in the 24th Territorial Rifle Corps of the Red Army, suffered persecution at their summer camp in Litene. Those arrested, deported or killed included 1086 officers, 3579 NCOs and

men, 4665 in total (19.4%).[3] This violence was the reason why many officers and men deserted and tried to hide in rural areas and forests. Here, the deserters were joined by former members of Latvia's Aizsargi (Home Guard) organization and civilians who no longer felt safe in their homes. There was reason to believe that further waves of persecution would follow. Partisan units began to form spontaneously, awaiting an advantageous moment to begin resistance against the Soviet occupation forces. Once war broke out between the Germans and the Soviets, the partisan units started to undertake military actions.

In the first days and weeks of the war, the national partisan movement encompassed the whole territory of Latvia. In the absence of a national army, the only possible form of armed struggle in these specific conditions was partisan warfare. In most cases, the partisans' strength and their armament were inadequate for them to engage major units of the Red Army or Soviet activists on their own. They supported the German offensive as best they could with partisan methods, perceiving the Germans as allies in the struggle against the Communist regime.[4] Researchers are agreed that the partisan units helped the Germans drive the Red Army forces from Latvia more quickly, and in several cases prevented the Soviets from carrying out reprisals against the civilian population and causing intentional damage.[5] It is estimated that a total of 6000–8500 national partisans were involved in the battles, and that they were active in one out of four civil parishes of Latvia.[6] Historian Heinrihs Strods considers that the national partisan movement of 1941 may be termed a "popular rising against Communist occupation."[7] While one may essentially concur with this conclusion, it must be pointed out that the Latvian national partisan movement was not homogeneous. It may be divided into two segments, the goals of which coincided only partially:

1. The spontaneous movement by Latvian officers and soldiers, Aizsargi members and other voluntary partisans aimed at driving the Soviet forces from the territory of Latvia and renewing national independence.

2. The network of "liaison agents" (*Vertrauensleute*) organized in Latvia already in advance of the German–Soviet war, which received instructions from Germany.[8] The Germans organized it in cooperation with Latvian officers who had left their occupied homeland during the time of Soviet occupation and had taken refuge in Germany. Their aims were similar to those of the partisans, whereas they coincided with Germany's aims only up to the point when the Soviet soldiers and activists had been neutralized or driven from the territory of Latvia. The German army's intelligence service sought, with the help of these officers, to establish contact with pre-existing anti-Soviet groups in order to control and direct them in accordance with their political goals. A significant contact person between the German army's

intelligence service and resistance groups in Latvia was the former Latvian military attaché to Germany, Colonel Aleksandrs Plensners. Latvian historian and theologist Haralds Biezais has proved documentarily that Plensners was receiving orders from the German intelligence service, which he translated into Latvian and issued to agents who were to take them to Latvia. In this way he was deluding the resistance at the behest of the Germans. The agents were meant to believe that the orders were coming from the military attaché of free Latvia in Germany.[9] An unknown number of such officers were active as German army intelligence agents. These officers instilled in the national partisans a belief that they were working solely for the restoration of Latvia's independence, whereas the reality could be different. True, in the absence of written sources, it is not possible to say which of the partisan groups were established with the help of the German intelligence service. Moreover, in most cases the German side contacted them only after they had gone into action.[10] But even in such cases, the contact person had to be a figure of authority in that area; otherwise they would not have any followers.[11] This aspect of the partisan movement would merit a separate study.

In chronological terms, the Latvian national partisan war lasted one month, from 22 June[12] to 20 July.[13] Essentially, this war represented a set of independent episodes, with various attempts to coordinate activities. At least from 4 July, there was a Latvian Self-Defense Forces Headquarters in Riga, commanded by Colonel Kārlis Dzenīt-Zeniņš. This headquarters not only issued orders to partisan units, but also organized the dispatch of additional contingents of soldiers and armaments to various locations in Latvia.[14] On 5 July, Plensners arrived at the headquarters, producing an authorization from Germany's Rear Admiral Franz Claassen "to take over the organization of Latvian national self-defense in the coastal districts of Latvia captured by the German fleet."[15] In spite of the very dubious character of this authorization, Plensners became the head of the Latvian self-defense forces, even though he had played no part in organizing the partisan units or coordinating their activities.

The partisans (and self-defense units) took control of four county towns in Latvia, as well as 13 small towns and many civil parishes. The partisans in the north-eastern region of Vidzeme were particularly active, taking over power in three county towns and eight small towns.[16] There were several reasons for the relatively intensive activity by partisans in Vidzeme. In the first place, the German army's rapid advance towards Pskov created a great deal of chaos in the Red Army ranks, whereby soldiers lost contact with their units and began roaming the roads and rural areas. For a while, the main concentration of such men was in the Vidzeme region, where the consequences of this were felt. Accordingly, the local population wished to defend itself against marauding and killings. Secondly, this area had the highest concentration of deserters and demobilized soldiers of the 24th Territorial Rifle Corps, a large section of whom

joined the resistance. Thirdly, the German army reached Vidzeme more than a week after the outbreak of hostilities, thus giving the partisans time to prepare their activities and plan larger military operations.

One of the most salient episodes during this period was the Battle of Limbaži on 4 and 5 July. This battle has obtained historical significance because in this case the partisans carried out a purposeful operation to liberate the town, having planned the operation, and secured weapons and ammunition. This is one of the best-documented partisan battles, and provides an insight into the development and composition of a Latvian partisan group, its armaments and where they were obtained, as well as the preparations for the battle and its outcome. This battle is a characteristic example of the Latvian partisan war in terms of the composition of the partisan group and motivation for battle, but is something of an exception if we consider the scale of the operation, the sources of armaments and the course of the battle. The aim of the article is to examine the Battle of Limbaži as an example revealing the composition, motivation, means of resistance and outcomes of the activities of the Latvian national partisan movement.

The Causes behind the Battle of Limbaži

In the initial hours of the German attack on 22 June 1941, units of the German Army Group North crossed the border of occupied Latvia, entering Liepāja County. The Wehrmacht advanced in three main directions in Latvia: towards Liepāja, Riga and Daugavpils. Daugavpils was taken on 26 June, Liepāja on 29 June and Riga on 1 July. By the first days of July, German mechanized units were rapidly advancing along the roads of Vidzeme, not paying much heed to the situation in their rear. The main emphasis was on the speed of advance, and accordingly in Latvia and Lithuania the German army's advance guard was as much as 300 km in front of the infantry, and indeed the high command was concerned about the fate of the advance units.[17]

Surprised by the German attack, the Red Army's 27th Army, stationed in Latvia, as well as the 8th and 11th Armies, retreating from Lithuania, could not muster significant resistance. There was a rapid retreat in the direction of Narva and Pskov. The retreat often became a flight, the commanders losing track of the whereabouts of their men. Armored units took the main roads, while infantry retreated along all possible roads, including those that did not offer the straightest route. In Valmiera County, no engagements between the regular forces of the opposing sides occurred. A stream of military transports, army units and individual soldiers traversed the county on 2 and 3 July.[18] One section of the Red Army units retreated through the town of Limbaži, in Valmiera County.

Offensive of the German army in the territory of Latvia. June-July, 1941

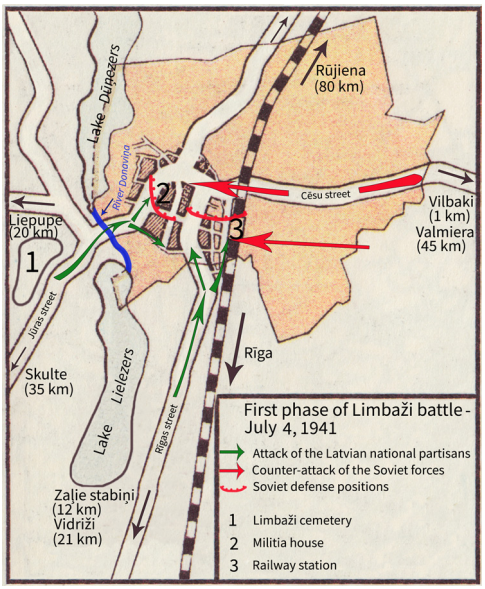
→	Directions of the offensive	(26.06.1941)	Dates when German army invaded populated places
VENTSPILS	Towns liberated by Latvian national partisans	VIDZEME	Vidzeme region
	Valmiera district	Limbaži	Town Limbaži

Map 1

Limbaži is a small town located 87 km north-east of Riga and 45 km west of the county town of Valmiera (Map 1). In 1935, the town's population was 2870, more than 92% of whom were ethnic Latvians; the rest were Jews, Germans, Russians and other ethnic minorities.[19] Here, ordinary small-town life proceeded under the regulation of the Soviet authorities. Limbaži was one of the few places in Latvia where the population (with rare exceptions) managed to avoid the deportation of June 1941. According to local tradition, Voldemārs Dambītis, clerk of Limbaži Executive Committee, delayed compiling the list of people to be deported from the town, thus saving many Limbaži residents from deportation.[20] A total of 11 people were deported from the town: Jānis Zeidmanis, commander of the Aizsargi battalion, and four members of his family, as well as six soldiers from Limbaži serving in the 24th Territorial Rifle Corps.[21]

With the outbreak of the German–Soviet war, the Red Army units stationed in Limbaži abandoned the town, and its defense was taken over by the Limbaži Workers' Guard, consisting of about 50 local Soviet activists, most lacking previous military training. About 30 militiamen from Valmiera were sent to reinforce them, stationed in

the large two-story building that served as the town's militia headquarters (Map 2).[22] Starting from 27 June, various Soviet military and security units began to arrive in the town and the surrounding area. In addition, about four hundred marines of the 98th Coastal Artillery Battery had halted in Limbaži, having retreated from Mangaļsala, on the north-eastern outskirts of Riga. These marines camped at the Vilbaki Woods , a few kilometers east of the town. Their intention was not to defend Limbaži but rather to reach Pärnu in Estonia and then proceed to Leningrad.[23] Moreover, as recalled by seaman and later Limbaži resident Anatoly Jekarashev, they were joined in Limbaži by another group of marines, whose ships had been bombed by the German air force on 1 or 2 July in the Gulf of Riga at Vitrupe. Bringing their dead and wounded in requisitioned carts, the marines were retreating in the direction of Valmiera. On the morning of 4 July, they passed through Limbaži and camped outside Vilbaki Woods to rest. In the afternoon, when the Battle of Limbaži began, the town militia urged the marines to come to their aid. Being exhausted, the marines had no wish to join the battle, but they agreed in the end.[24]



Map 2

On 2 July, the militia and worker guards in the civil parish of Katvari were provoked into an exchange of fire with local partisans, as a result of which two militiamen were killed and one wounded. The militia and guards returned to Limbaži with their fallen and wounded comrades.[25] The next day, several innocent people were shot on suspicion in Limbaži and the surrounding area as an act of revenge. For example, local teacher Teodors Brīvulis was shot because an *Aizsargi* uniform had been found in the adjacent flat of the house he lived in. He just happened to be the first person the Soviet authorities encountered after making this discovery.[26] Such acts of revenge were not unusual in elsewhere in Latvia at the time. With their unexpected attacks, the partisans caused a feeling of insecurity not only among the officials of Soviet state and municipal institutions but also among Soviet soldiers and activists.

The funeral of the fallen militiamen was to take place on 4 July, but it was interrupted by the partisans, who had already on 3 July arrived in the Limbaži

cemetery on the outskirts intending to start an attack after reconnoitering the enemy. On the morning of 4 July, the partisans captured a guard named Semjonovs, who had been sent to there to assess the situation. He managed to escape and fled by swimming across the lake Lielezers on the outskirts of the town. After several unsuccessful attempts, the partisans succeeded in shooting him, which raised the alarm in the town and caused the battle to commence prematurely.[27] The marines outside the town returned to Limbaži and engaged the partisans together with the local worker guards and militia. The strength of the Soviet side is not known precisely. The German propaganda newspapers in Latvia claimed there had been 1000 marines in Limbaži, but there is reason to believe that the number of militia, guards and marines taking part in the battle did not exceed a few hundred.[28] In addition to their own arms, the Soviet defenders of Limbaži had access to an abandoned Red Army weapons and ammunition store in the town.[29]

In parallel with the Battle of Limbaži, which took place on 4 and 5 July, a German army operation was underway that directly depended on the outcome of the battle. Thus, on 1 and 2 July, former Latvian army officer Lieutenant Colonel Jānis Bāliņš began to form a self-defense unit at Pabaži in order to free the coastal district in the direction Saulkrasti–Liepupe–Limbaži–Aloja–Rūjiena from Soviet forces. The unit was under the control of the 291st Infantry Division of the German 26th Army Corps. The Latvian unit was charged with defending the Riga–Rūjiena railway line and securing the railway to prevent the fleeing Red Army soldiers from destroying it. As recalled by Limbaži resident Zenta Miruškina-Plūme, who lived near the station, right after the Battle of Limbaži there was very intensive railway traffic on this line in the direction of Rūjiena. She did not know what was being transported, but there were apparently a great many passengers and goods trains.[30] The report of the German Army Group North on its action in 1941 states that after the end of the battle, on 5 July and in the next days, the German 217th Infantry Division was transported northwards along this railway line.[31]

The Composition of the Partisans

As noted above, the formation of Latvian national partisan groups was brought about by the persecution of civilians and former Latvian army soldiers in June 1941. It was promoted by the outbreak of war between the USSR and Germany. Historian *Jānis* Viļums has revealed that major anti-Soviet groups (Latvian National Legion, Battle Organization for the Liberation of Latvia, Young Latvians and Guards of the Fatherland) had been preparing for partisan warfare in autumn 1940 and the first months of 1941. However, since these organizations had partly been crushed in spring

1941, there was no joint command center that might organize and lead the people who had decided to take up arms, as well as those who began spontaneous activities when favorable conditions emerged. Accordingly, the formation of partisans into groups and their activity was dependent on individual initiative.[32]

The core of the partisan units of summer 1941 consisted of people with military skills, namely former Latvian army officers and men, as well as the members of the paramilitary organization Latvijas Aizsargi (Home Guard) outlawed by the Soviet authorities. They were significantly strengthened by the involvement of officers, non-commissioned officers (NCOs) and men who had deserted or had been demobilized from the 24th Territorial Rifle Corps in late June and early July.[33] Historian V. Savčenko notes that up to the outbreak of war, about 600 officers and 1400 NCOs and men had been discharged from the corps. Their numbers were swelled by 124 officers and 463 NCOs and men who deserted in the first week of the war.[34] This process continued in the following days with the desertion not just of individual servicemen but in some cases even whole detachments. Thus, for example, on 30 June, three companies deserted along with all their arms, led by Lieutenant-Colonel Kārlis Aperāts, commander of the corps signals battalion. This officer became the leader of 847 former officers, NCOs and men of the corps, the majority of whom were active in the following days and weeks as partisans in the Madona and Vecpiebalga areas.[35] Both here and in other areas of Latvia they were joined by previously demobilized officers and men, as well as Aizsargi members and civilians. The proportion differed in each partisan unit, but in most cases the leaders and members of partisan units were people with military experience.

With regard to the area closest to Limbaži – the eastern part of Riga County – it is known that up to 5 July at least 300 officers and men demobilized from the Latvian corps arrived in the *Ādaž*i, Sigulda and Mālpils areas either singly or in small groups.[36] These military personnel organized and joined various-sized partisan units to protect themselves, because of their anti-Soviet orientation and for other reasons. In the view of historian Juris Pavlovičs, officers and NCOs who had suddenly lost their status, their career possibilities and in many cases their whole "meaning of life" strove at least to preserve corporate unity. A sense of belonging to a particular social group, a kind of *esprit de corps*, stimulated these people to join forces spontaneously, right after demobilization.[37] When possible, the former Latvian army soldiers formed partisan units close to their native area. This was a phenomenon of the time: partisan units intended to protect or liberate specific population centers were mainly constituted of local residents or people from nearby parishes. It was less common for towns and parishes to be liberated or protected by people without links to these places. The Battle of Limbaži represents one such case.

The combatants in the Battle of Limbaži were mainly professional military personnel. The partisan unit for the liberation of the town consisted of four major groups:

1. *The group led by Lieutenant Colonel Arvīds Reke.* Reke, the former Chairman of the Regimental Courts of the Latvian Military Court began forming a partisan unit on 3 July with deserters from the 24th Corps. Reke's unit consisted of 54 soldiers, including five officers. On the way to Limbaži, the group was joined by several volunteers, including Corporal Smiltēns with a light tank, who had deserted from the Red Army near *Ādaži*. Thus reinforced, the volunteer group passed through Saulkrasti and Skulte to Liepupe (20 km west of Limbaži), gathering intelligence about the enemy along the way.[38] In accordance with his military rank, Reke eventually became the head of the operation to liberate Limbaži. It is mentioned in the literature, although there is no documentary evidence, that Reke, had received a German army authorization to undertake operations along the coast of Vidzeme, and this is viewed as being reflected in his very audacious actions both before and after the liberation of the town.[39]

2. *The group led by Captain Jānis Lūsis.* In late June Lūsis, an officer of the Separate Signal Battalion of the 24th Corps, received the order to dismantle the telephone lines and radio posts of the corps' 181st Rifle Division. This officer had under his command another three officers, and 40 NCOs and men, with six trucks. The Latvians loaded all the signal equipment along with most of the weapons and ammunition into the first three trucks, which they themselves also boarded. When the retreat began, the driver of the fourth truck feigned a mechanical breakdown, thus enabling the first three trucks to move off quickly and turn off onto forest roads. In this way, the Latvians not only avoided potential pursuit but also made off with the division's signal equipment. On 3 July at Liepupe Lūsis' group met up with the group led by Reke, and the two groups advanced towards Limbaži under Reke's command.[40]

3. *The group led by Captain Ernests Ķeselis.* Information concerning the formation of this group can be obtained from the criminal files of *Ķeselis* and soldiers Elmārs Harjo, Jānis *Šulcs-Šulte* and Jānis Dzenītis, who were all tried after World War II by the Latvian SSR Committee for State Security (Cheka). *Ķeselis*, a former Latvian army officer, had worked up to the outbreak of the German–Soviet war at the Riga machinery and metalworking factory Vairogs. Having learned of the Red Army's retreat from Riga, on 28 June *Ķeselis* left his workplace and went to visit his brother Eduards. On his brother's initiative, an armed group of 12 men was formed, which in the coming days guarded abandoned Red Army ammunition dumps in Riga.[41] The group included several acquaintances of Ķeselis' brother, a Red Army deserter and several other workers from the factory.
   After the German entry into Riga, one member of this group informed the others about the formation of a "Latvian national government" led by Voldemārs Veiss, Ernests Kreišmanis and others.[42] On 3 July, the group obtained a truck and a car, along with six armed men. Veiss, as the Latvian commander in Riga, instructed

the group to proceed to the 50-km-distant village of Zvejniekciems, on the coast of the Vidzeme region, where there were reports about gunfire between supporters of the Soviets and Red Army deserters (evidently Latvians). On the way they were joined by three Latvian deserters from the Red Army, so that now they had 21 armed men. Upon arriving in the village of Saulkrasti, Ķeselis learned that the unit led by Reke had departed in the direction of Skulte. Ķeselis sent a messenger to Reke asking for further instructions and received an order from Reke to go to Skulte. The next day Reke sent him an order to proceed to Limbaži.[43]

4. *Civilians.* A significant fact pertaining to the Battle of Limbaži is that the residents of the town played practically no role in liberating it from Soviet soldiers. There were three reasons for this. First, the liberation of the town was organized "from outside," with the help of the partisan groups described above. Secondly, the relatively strong Soviet forces inside the town. The militia, workers' guards and marines, would probably not have allowed the formation or activities of an anti-Soviet group in the town. Thirdly, there was a shortage of armaments. One partisan later wrote that a group of people from Limbaži and the environs had wished to join Reke's force, which was advancing towards Limbaži, but were turned away because they lacked appropriate weapons[44]

Motivation

Although the partisans' motivation for the battle was essentially clear-cut and has not aroused any particular discussion among researchers, it is necessary to briefly consider the reasons why the partisans were prepared to risk life and limb to free the territory of Latvia from the Soviet occupation forces.

In the first place, they had a general hatred and antipathy towards the Soviet occupation regime and its expressions; this applies even to those who had suffered minimally or not at all from the policies of the regime.

Secondly, there was a wish to prevent any repetition of the persecution carried out by the regime, especially mass deportation. This seems to have been a motivating factor for almost all of those organizing or joining the partisan units. Participation in an armed group constituted a form of self-defense against potential attempts by the regime to continue persecution.

Thirdly, there was the wish to avenge the wrongs committed against compatriots and kin. For example, after his family had been deported, Corporal Žanis Butkus, head of the Tērvete Aizsargi branch, formed a partisan unit and commenced an active struggle against the officials of the regime. He would later also serve in the Latvian Legion of the German Waffen-SS, reaching the rank of captain and receiving various high decorations.[45] Involvement in the partisan movement and in German military

units could not bring back his deported relatives. However, many of those who joined the partisans would subsequently pay for it with their lives or with deportation to the punitive camps in the USSR.

The fourth and final motivation was the partisans' main positive goal of restoring Latvia's independence. As Elmārs Pelkaus has ascertained in his research, this aspect is almost unanimously the main one mentioned by the former partisans at the political trials in post-war Latvia.[46] All of the above-mentioned motivational aspects promoted the collapse of the occupation regime in June and early July 1941.

Neither immediately after the Battle of Limbaži, nor subsequently did the combatants discuss their motivation for engaging in the battle. It may be understood from various testimonies (interrogation records) and from the general context that the great majority took part in the battle because they had fiercely anti-Bolshevik views and wished to defend themselves and their compatriots, avenge the wrongs committed by the Soviet authorities, drive the Red Army and Soviet activists from Latvia as quickly as possible and prevent them from doing any more damage. Other motivating factors can be regarded as less significant: these could have included possible remuneration, career opportunities or the officers' wish to gain honor by inflicting defeats on the enemy.[47]

Armament

Partisan warfare was a novel situation not only for Aizsargi members and civilians, but also for experienced Latvian army officers. Partisan tactics had not been taught as part of army training, and so the actions and tactics of a particular partisan unit were mainly dependent on the ability of the group's commander to improvise.[48] However, not only improvisation but also the availability of armaments was of significance.

Following Latvia's occupation in 1940, the Soviet authorities did all they could to disarm the residents of Latvia and limit their capacity for armed resistance. The Aizsargi organization was banned, and its members had to hand over all of their firearms except for hunting rifles. Nevertheless, a part of the population managed to conceal their weapons, and these provided the initial armament of the partisan groups. For the most part, these were hunting guns, rifles and pistols. However, though firearms were in short supply, ammunition was even more limited.[49]

It is hard to describe precisely the arms of the partisan units and their particular characteristics, because the accounts of the partisan units' activities and their armament are very incomplete. Some kind of general picture and trends emerge in the reports of Latvian partisan and self-defense units written from on 3–15 July to Colonel Kārlis Dzenīt-Zeniņš, commander of the Latvian self-defense units (outside of Riga).

Out of 38 reports, almost one in three included remarks concerning a shortage of weaponry. A particularly widespread issue was the lack of semi-automatic, automatic and heavy weapons. In many cases, the lack of armaments was the main reason why the units were not more active and did not undertake larger-scale operations.[50] For example, the partisans of Mazzalve did not engage Red Army units armed with light and heavy machine guns but did express the readiness to so, if they could get a sufficient amount of weaponry and ammunition.[51] The Latvian partisans did not accept this situation and sought to obtain arms by various means. One of the most common ways of getting weapons was to attack officials of the occupation authorities and disarm them. Once they obtained weapons and grew bolder, the partisans would carry out attacks against individual Red Army personnel or small units. This was a successful tactic.

Of the above-mentioned reports by Latvian units, 28% mention trophies, for the most part weaponry.[52] The greatest recorded capture was made by the partisans of Balvi: 500 Red Army soldiers with 32 heavy machine guns, 24 light machine guns, 500 rifles, 80 horses and 308 barrels of fuel. True, the partisan unit only used a small part of the supplies, the rest being handed over to the German army.[53] The partisans doubtless obtained trophies as a result of the Battle of Limbaži as well, but the question of interest here is the situation before the battle.

Armament was one of the main factors affecting the outcome of battles against the Red Army and Soviet activists. Weapons and ammunition might run out or malfunction, so it was important to have a reserve supply. Overall, the combatants in the Battle of Limbaži were better armed than the average partisan. The liberators of the town, the absolute majority of whom were deserters from the 24th Territorial Corps, had a diverse collection of firearms: pistols, rifles, sniper rifles and even machine guns, as well as grenades.[54] It is known that in the group of 55 soldiers led by Ķeselis, 30 were armed with rifles, and the rest with automatic pistols.[55] The fighters even had an "exotic" weapon: a Vickers Carden-Loyd Mk. IV light tank with a turret-mounted 12.7 mm machine gun, designed for infantry support. This armor had been inherited by the 24th Corps from the Latvian Army. The light tank was driven by Corporal Smiltēns, who had deserted from the corps. However, in spite of these advantages, the armament of the participants in the Battle of Limbaži was inadequate, and in this regard help from elsewhere was needed.

Several preserved reports contain requests from the partisans attacking Limbaži for additional arms. Help was requested not only before but also during the battle and during an interlude in the fighting, on the night of 4–5 July. The first report was written in the early morning of 4 July by Captain Ķeselis, asking for a couple of tanks or light tanks for his group, as well as five or six light and two heavy machine guns. Help was

soon forthcoming; it did not come from the headquarters, however, but from Captain Jēkabs Dzenis, "self-defense group commander" in nearby Carnikava, who provided two Russian and two British machine guns, two British light machine guns with eight magazines, 22 Russian rifles, four rocket pistols, 85 helmets as well as 500 British and 300 Russian cartridges.[56] Also, during the battle, at 17:30 on 4 July, Lieutenant-Colonel Voldemārs Bišentrops, commander of the self-defense group in the civil parish of *Ādaži* and the environs, wrote to the headquarters, having learned of a "fierce battle at Limbaži." Colonel Zīverts and he each dispatched to Liepupe two groups of soldiers with one heavy and two light machine guns.[57] These men were to provide security in the area, rather than reinforce the fighters in the Battle of Limbaži.

Soon after this report was written, the Latvian partisans retreated in the face of enemy superiority, intending to strengthen their numbers and await the next opportunity to free the town. On the evening of 4 July, Reke, commander of the liberators of Limbaži, himself arrived at the self-defense forces headquarters in Riga in order to obtain additional arms. In this he succeeded, and the partisan units obtained an anti-tank gun, machine guns and ammunition.[58] It was the additional armaments that enabled another attack, and Limbaži was taken on the morning of 5 July after the Red Army had left the town during the night.

There is no doubt that arms alone will not win a battle; this requires skill in the use of weaponry and the courage to go into battle. This was duly noted by the German-controlled Latvian newspaper *Tēvija*: "The battle was fierce, because the Reds had superior weaponry (a heavy machine gun and light machine guns), but the courage of the partisans, and especially the immense self-sacrifice and valor of the Latvian officers (3 officers fell in the battle) inspired the liberators, who drove the bandits from the town. The red-white-red flag was raised atop the station building."[59]

The Battle of Limbaži and Its Consequences

Until the outbreak of war, the partisan groups avoided engaging regular Red Army units, their attacks being aimed primarily against individual soldiers of the Interior Forces as well as officials of the occupation authorities. An effective combat technique of this time was to mislead the enemy: a group would spread information specially prepared in such a way as to create an impression of the group's composition, armaments and capability that did not correspond to reality. By spreading disinformation and conducting ambush attacks, small units could fight very effectively against larger Red Army and units of the Interior Forces. A rapid surprise attack, after which the group moved its hiding place, could paralyze the enemy.[60] After the outbreak of war, attacks on retreating Red Army units began to dominate. This required just a few brave partisans who could create a

false impression of the true strength and capability of the attackers. Thus, for example, in the civil parish of Vildoga, Cēsis County, four partisans attacked 35 militiamen, killing ten of them, while the rest fled.[61] Such attacks sowed panic among the Soviet forces, and they could not feel safe anywhere.

Reconnaissance and offensive tactics were important for attacks on population centers, large or small. Consideration of the tactics of national partisan groups in this period leads to the conclusion that the partisans would undertake offensive actions only when they were convinced their tactic was appropriate. The partisans took most of the county towns and small towns without a fight, making use of the power vacuum that came about after the Soviet occupation forces left the population center. After this, the partisans would take over the strategic sites in the respective center, namely the post office, telegraph, militia station, parish council and other municipal institutions, and would maintain order until the German army arrived, handling questions relating to economic life, issuing instructions, etc. True, things did not always go smoothly. Recklessness or inept planning of an attack could lead to serious losses. Thus, for example, in the Prinduļi battle not far from Alūskne on 7 July, the local partisans came under heavy machine gun fire on an open field, and 23 out of the approximately 45-strong group were killed, another three being wounded.[62] Such heavy losses also showed that the partisans did not always have sufficient skill and knowledge to assess the situation and prepare for all possible scenarios. For partisan warfare, one required a special kind of thinking and planning, which could be mastered only "in practice." In the Battle of Limbaži, the partisans openly engaged the enemy.

The attack against the Soviet forces in Limbaži was planned by military professionals led by Reke. The attack on the town began on the afternoon of 4 July. The partisans had divided into two groups. Reke's group, led by First Lieutenant Jānis Brunovskis, attacked on the left flank, along Jūras iela, while *Ķeselis*' group, led by J. Lūsis, was on the right flank. First, the light tank entered the town, followed by Latvian soldiers armed with light machine guns and rifles. There were exchanges of fire with the Soviet forces, but initially the partisans had the initiative and controlled the situation. Subsequently, however, difficulties were encountered. Thus, the left-flank group led by Brunovskis, moving towards the railway station, was caught in a crossfire. Brunovskis himself was killed in the fire, and another two soldiers wounded. The rest of the force managed to take up position in a house, returning fire and gradually retreating, after which they took up position in garden plots on the outskirts of Limbaži, by the shore of Lake Lielezers. Because of poor visibility during a thunderstorm, the light tank, which had hitherto successfully supported the attack with machine gun fire, became mired in a boggy place in the meadows along the Donaviņa stream and had to be temporarily abandoned.[63]

The right-flank group led by Captain Lūsis was more successful. They managed to take part of the town and raise the Latvian flag above Limbaži railway station. However, the marines then entered the town again. When they returned to Limbaži, the marines met up with a border guards' unit about 30 strong led by Red Army Major Oļģerts Krastiņš. The marines and border guards agreed on a joint attack on the town. The border guards advanced along Cēsu iela towards the town center, while the marines attacked across the railway line from Kaupiņciems. After this, part of the marines' force took up position near the town's churches while the rest fanned out in the direction of Lake Lielezers. After a battle lasting about two hours, the Latvian soldiers and partisans were forced to retreat because their ammunition ran out.[64]

The partisans retreated to Vidriži, 16 km away, while Reke went to Riga to obtain additional arms for a continuation of the attack. During the night the total strength of the partisans increased to about 220 men.[65] Thus reinforced, the forces under Reke once again advanced on the town in the morning. After firing two mortar rounds, the partisans entered the town, not meeting any resistance. The guards and marines had left the town during the night, abandoning to their fate ten badly injured men in the hospital and the men who had fallen in battle. Soviet officials in Limbaži also stayed behind: the chairwoman of the town's executive committee Zelma Zālīte, workers' guard Jūlijs Mīlbergs and others. After the battle they and other Soviet functionaries were arrested and shot by the partisans.[66]

Seven national partisans were killed in the Battle of Limbaži: two officers, and five NCOs and men. Another six partisans were wounded, including Captain Ķeselis, who sustained a head injury from a rifle butt. Twenty-six Soviet marines were killed, along with several militiamen, who were buried next to the town's orthodox cemetery. As recalled by Juris Golvers, participant in the Battle of Limbaži, the national partisans took hardly any Soviet fighters prisoner, regardless of whether they had been wounded or had been forced to surrender. In most cases they were shot right away. The defenders of the town acted likewise.[67] Accordingly, there were only few men left wounded after this battle. Such a cruelty could be explained with hatred both sides faced each other and as a specific feature of the period.

On 5 July, the partisans marched into Limbaži behind the Latvian flag and assembled in Baumaņu Kārļa laukums. The soldiers who had fallen in the liberation of Limbaži were buried on the next day. The core of Reke's unit continued its military activities along the coast of Vidzeme, also driving the Soviet forces from Salacgrīva and Ainaži and reaching Pärnu in Estonia on 8 July. Ķeselis' group also received "an offer" to continue their activities further north, but Ķeselis refused because of the small size of his group and because of the "uncertain political situation in Latvia." Instead, Ķeselis and his men returned to Riga, where his unit was disbanded on 9 July.[68]

In the meantime, a self-defense commandant's office was established in Limbaži with First Lieutenant Fricis Švēde as commandant. The office, which consisted mostly of local national radicals with hardly any partisans among them, did not hesitate to start action against the "Red" officials, Soviet fighters and other undesirable individuals who remained in the town. In the following days and weeks, the commandant's office under German supervision carried out actions that only remotely could be considered as combatting the Communist regime and its followers.

Conclusions

The Latvian national partisan war, which lasted a few weeks in June and July 1941, was an attempt by the Latvian people to drive those upholding the Soviet occupation from Latvian soil by their own force of arms. The reason for the emergence of the partisan movement may be sought in the activities of the Soviet regime, namely the persecution of residents of Latvia, which culminated on 14 June 1941, when more than 15 thousand innocent people were deported to Siberia. The outbreak of war between the Germany and the USSR was like a spark that set alight the fire of the partisan war. In a matter of days, the spontaneously formed partisan units encompassed practically the whole country, commencing an armed struggle against the retreating Red Army columns, Soviet officials, militia and Soviet activists, protecting the population against marauding and killing, and helping the attacking German army to drive the Soviet forces from Latvia more quickly.

According to a report submitted by Aleksandrs Plensners as commander of the Latvian self-defense forces to the 291st Infantry Division, up to 9 July 1941, Latvian partisans had captured 1540 Soviet soldiers and had killed 805, while their own losses were 12 officers, and 91 NCOs, men and Aizsargi.[69] These figures, albeit approximate, testify to the scale of the partisan movement and the results of their activity. Thus, the partisans were able, with their limited strength and armament, to inflict serious damage on the retreating Soviet units. Others, who had not suffered from the partisan attacks directly, could have, and did, form an impression of a local "fifth column" that had begun a rising against Soviet rule in Latvia. By their actions, the partisans realized the unfulfilled desire among a large section of the people during the occupation to show resistance towards the unacceptable political and social reforms by the Soviet authorities, and especially their persecution of various groups in society.

The Battle of Limbaži was a vivid episode in the history of the Latvian national partisan war. It differs from other operations in that here the Latvian partisans, independently planning a military operation and providing their own arms, were able to drive the supporters of the Soviets from Limbaži, thus preventing retaliation against

innocent people. It also differs from other episodes of the partisan war in that local partisans played almost no part in the liberation of the town; instead, it was carried out by military professionals who had deserted or had been demobilized from the Red Army's 24th Territorial Rifle Corps. Rather than having the character of partisan warfare, this battle was more like an engagement between regular army units in an urban setting. In this battle the Soviet marines, border guards, militia and workers' guards had a superiority in numbers and armament, as is clear from the outcome of the first day's fighting, where the Latvian partisans were forced to retreat because they ran out of ammunition. Nevertheless, the partisans were more highly motivated to engaged in battle and drive the Soviet forces from the town as quickly as possible. It is hard to say how long the battle would have continued, had the Soviet side not abandoned the town on the night of 5 July. The known facts concerning the additional arms received by the partisans suggest that, considering their low morale, the Red Army soldiers and Soviet activists could not have held out much longer. Certainly, the partisans deserve full credit for the liberation of Limbaži from Soviet rule and from its defenders.

On the other hand, the Battle of Limbaži did not significantly influence the course of the German–Soviet war. The liberation of Limbaži did force a greater part of the Soviet forces to retreat, thus reducing the Soviet forces which constituted a threat in the German rear. An army in retreat is less dangerous than an army that has previously taken up position. Accordingly, liberation of the town helped the German army advance more rapidly and drive out the remaining Soviet forces in Latvia. Once the town had been liberated, railway transport in the direction of Rūjiena could be re-established.

The Battle of Limbaži involved elements of both sections of the national partisan movement (voluntary as well as German-planned or led), where the former was dominant. The absolute majority of the combatants were fighting for the aims of the partisan movement, remaining ignorant of the German plans for Latvia. Even Lieutenant-Colonel Arvīds Reke, who led the liberation of Limbaži, while he had possibly been granted an authorization by the German army, was not informed about their long-term plans. The Latvian repatriates led by Aleksandrs Plensners could have known of or surmised these plans, but since they were working for the German army's intelligence service, they were not allowed to communicate these to the partisans. The mysterious death on 17 July of one such repatriate, former Latvian army officer Lieutenant Colonel Viktors Deglavs, testifies to the German intention of preventing "initiatives" by Latvian officers and potential attempts to re-establish the Latvian army. This had to serve as a warning to the rest of the Latvian officer corps not to put up any opposition to the Germans' plans.

Regardless of the liberation of Limbaži and other successes by the partisans, this movement involving nationally oriented Latvians soon came to an end. Those partisan units that were not disbanded right away were transformed into self-defense forces, implementing orders from the German authorities, until they, too, were disbanded. The partisans' dream of restoring Latvia's independence was not to be realized. The Germans had achieved their aim: with the help of the Latvians, they had driven the Red Army units and Soviet activists from the territory of Latvia, but had essentially given nothing in return. Latvians had given their lives to liberate their homeland, but had gained a new occupation regime, one no less cruel that that of the Soviets.

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Endnotes

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8 Haralds Biezais, "Nacionālie partizāni," *Latvijas Vēstures Institūta* Žurnāls, 4 (1992): 132.
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11 Pelkaus, *Cīņa un cerība*, 149.
12 The outbreak of warfare and the entry of the first German forces into Latvia.
13 On this date, SS Brigadeführer and Major-General of Police Walter Stahlecker, commander of the German Security Police and SD Operational Group "A," issued an order to form Latvian "auxiliary police" in Riga and the environs, which ended the formation of any other Latvian partisan or self-defense units. See Osvalds Freivalds, ed., *Latviešu karavīrs Otrā pasaules kara laikā: dokumentu un atmiņu krājums*, vol. 2 (Västerås: Ziemeļblāzma, 1972) 29–31.
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[33] *Latvija Otrajā pasaules karā*, 249.

[34] Vasilijs Savčenko, "24. strēlnieku korpusa liktenis," *Padomju Latvijas Komunists*, 2 (1989): 68.

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[38] "Ko stāsta cīņu dalībnieki," *Tēvija*, 14 July 1941.

[39] Pavlovičs, "Okupācijas varu maiņa Rīgas apriņķa austrumu daļā," 149.

[40] "Ko stāsta cīņu dalībnieki."

[41] National Archives of Latvia, State Archive of Latvia (LVA), 1986. f., 1. apr., 840. l., 1. sēj., 23.–24. lp.

[42] In actual fact, no Latvian government was set up. This refers to the "Latvian Organizational Center" in Riga, which included several former ministers of the Ulmanis government and officers, who consulted among themselves about the future of Latvia during the first days of July.

[43] LVA, 1986. f., 1. apr., 840. l., 1. sēj., 24.–25. lp.

[44] Bruno Plūme, ed., *Limbažu stāsti: Atmiņu stāsti par miera un juku laikiem Limbažos un novadā* (Limbaži; Bruno Plūme, 2003) 108.

[45] Osvalds Freivalds, ed., *Latviešu karavīrs Otrā pasaules kara laikā: dokumentu un atmiņu krājums*, vol. 1 (Västerås: Ziemeļblāzma, 1968) 267.

[46] Pelkaus, *Cīņa un cerība*, 149.

[47] It is known that the *Ķeselis* group were paid 375–600 rubles for about two weeks of service. LVA, 1986. f., 1. apr., 840. l., 1. sēj., 24.–25. lp.; 2. sēj., 29. lp.

[48] Viļums, “Pretošanās okupācijai,”153–54.
[49] Ibid., 116.
[50] Tomaševskis, “Latviešu pašaizsardzības spēku štāba…,” 196.
[51] Latvian War Museum (LKM), inv. no. 5-49353/2383-DK.
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[62] Pelkaus, *Cīņa un cerība*, 149.
[63] Ko stāsta cīņu dalībnieki.
[64] Pelkaus, *Cīņa un cerība*, 125.
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[66] Plūme, *Limbažu stāsti*, 118–21.
[67] Juris Golvers, “Ko esmu atklājis,” *Atmiņu stāstījumi: 1941. gada 4. jūlijs: veltījums visiem otrā pasaules karā kritušiem Nacionālajiem karavīriem* (n.p.: Latvijas nacionālo karavīru biedrības nodaļa, 1990) 46.
[68] LVA, 1986. f., 1. apr., 840. l., 1. sēj., 26.–27. lp.
[69] Biezais, “Nacionālie partizāni.” 139.

Katrin Reichelt

Rescue and Resistance: Solidarity and Aid for Persecuted Jews in Nazi-Occupied Latvia 1941–1945

It took about 50 years following the end of World War II for in-depth research on responses to the crimes of the Nazi regime to unfold. It took scholars decades to develop systematic and analytical approaches to the issues of collaboration, indifference, and solidarity.[1] And the work continues. Systematic research on solidarity with the victims of the Nazi oppression and rescue began only in the 1990s. For decades, the Yad Vashem "Department of the Righteous" was the single institution collecting and evaluating cases of the rescue of Jews. Starting in the 1990s a number of local historical societies, museums, individuals, particularly survivors of the Holocaust, began opening the collected memories, witness testimonies and diaries of the victims. Some individuals spoke up for the first time. These sources are now being tapped.[2]

In 2011 Arno Lustiger, a Polish–Jewish survivor and historian, published a book entitled *Rettungswiderstand* (Rescue as Resistance)[3]. Lustiger summarized his decade's long work on rescue and he introduced a new concept -- rescue as an act of resistance. His work broadened the field immensely, and he placed rescue squarely in the literature of resistance against the Nazi regime.[4] The term "Recue as Resistance" includes all individuals who challenged the Nazi persecution of the Jews, as well as those targeted. Lustiger discusses groups and networks that had long been overlooked. These include diplomats, clerks, family members, as well as individuals who conducted acts of solidarity or who provided essential information for the Jews seeking shelter and a place to hide. As Lustiger explains, rescue was a very complex process and to be successful it required a number of elements to fall into place. He did not pass judgment on the actions of individuals involved in aid and rescue. More important, he writes, than the success or failure of rescue was the fact that attempts were made. Thus, Lustiger argues, by aiding or rescuing Jews, these individuals engaged in resistance. He writes that the conditions of the Nazi occupation in each

country shaped the networks, the patterns and paths of rescue, as well as the sources available to historians. Every case of opposition and resistance differed, each case was unique. For decision-making and actions in times of crisis, chaos and war were based on a complex of factors in constant motion and change. Lustiger's approach marked a step forward in the research on rescue and resistance.

It is, however, important not to equate rescue with resistance without qualification. While partisan groups actively resisted the Nazi forces throughout occupied Europe, many remained hostile toward Jews and even took measures against those already victimized. Also, some rescuers were not openly opposing the Nazi occupation; they acted out of compassion toward Jewish friends, neighbors or acquaintances.[5]

Jewish self-rescue and resistance shows the complexity of motivation and response. The available information on Nazi intentions and actions was crucial in prompting them to act. Those Jews, forced into ghettos, had a fragmented view of the oppression and killings. For those who chose to act, their decision was based on sparse information.[6] For many Jews confined to the ghettos of Eastern Europe cultural activities served as acts of resistance. Some termed it a survival strategy.[7] In the study of rescue and resistance the adoption of more terminology and more definitions does not bring us much farther. For each case was unique, and each story so unique that collectively they defy ready categorization. Only by collecting and analyzing as many details as possible about each available rescue story can researchers identify patterns and examples from which generalizations can be made and conclusions drawn.

My paper presents several examples of rescue and resistance of Jews in Nazi occupied Latvia, acts that demonstrate the variety of circumstances, the diverse motivations and patterns that offered solace for some victims. First, the numbers. The Department of the "Righteous among the Nations" of Yad Vashem has identified and commended 138 Latvians for their role in the rescue of fellow citizens of Jewish faith. Marģers Vestermanis, the long-time director of the Riga museum Jews in Latvia, undertook exhaustive research that led to different figures. Vestermanis did not follow the strict guidelines of Yad Vashem, and he identified more than 600 Latvians who had aided Jews.[8]

In Latvia, German occupation policy followed the racist and destructive guidelines of Hitler's vision for the future landscape of Eastern Europe. The goals were to occupy the territory and not inflict too much damage that might hinder the exploitation of the economy and agriculture for the war. Another goal, a war of annihilation, a *Vernichtungskrieg*, meant the destruction of the Jewish communities in the Baltic States as well. Already before the German invasion the fate of the Jews in the Baltic countries had been decided upon.[9] On 17 June 1941, the head of the Reich Security Main Office (*Reichssicherheitshauptamt*) Reinhard Heydrich instructed

the leaders of the Operational Unit A (Einsatzgruppe A) on their mission.[10] Once the invasion was launched on 22 June 1941, squads of Operational Unit A, some 660 men, followed closely behind the advancing troops of the Army Group North. Along with gathering intelligence the squads carried out a series of executions.[11] Ostensibly their assignment was to secure the areas behind the front line. In practice this meant the systematic murder of Jews. The number of victims grew steadily: both Jews and alleged Communist functionaries. By 15 October 1941, Operational Unit A had murdered 30,025 civilians on Latvia´s territory; most of the victims were Jews.[12] Local police, militia or security forces, Latvian Self-Defense units and even civilians sometimes participated. Some carried out operations in towns and in the countryside that targeted Jews and Communists. While Nazi authorities welcomed and encouraged this initiative, they also monitored the killings closely in order to maintain control and authority.[13]

The most active of the local commandos was the so-called Latvian Auxiliary Security Police, a unit led by former law student Viktors Arājs which operated in close conjunction with the German security police. In the summer of 1941 Latvia was in turmoil. The Soviet occupation that began in June 1940 had meant a year of terror. Arrests, seizure of property, mass deportations, and killings went far to disrupt the social fabric of Latvia. Already fragmented along ethnic lines, Latvian civil society was shaken to its core by the violent restructuring launched by the Soviet occupiers. With the German invasion, the arrival German troops or even simply the rumor that they were near raised hopes that the hated occupation was over. It also triggered a range of reactions. Many hoped for a reestablishment of an independent Latvian state, or at least autonomy under German rule. Some turned to criminality and took revenge on Jews, whom they viewed as communists or Soviet collaborators. The German occupation authorities had their own plans. By the fall of 1941, a German civilian administration was in place. Police and security measures were handled by Higher SS-and Police leaders, the Security Police, and local Wehrmacht officers. These measures often involved the forceful confinement of Jews in ghettos or their outright murder.[14]

For the Jewish communities of Latvia the initial occupation policies meant arrests, physical abuse and a series of massacres that ran from early July to September 1941. The killings were particularly devastating. During these months alone some 30,000 individuals were murdered.[15] Systematic persecution continued. Restrictions excluded Jews from public life. They had their property confiscated, their status and rights as citizens abrogated. In some areas Wehrmacht officers ordered them to wear the yellow star, further isolating Jews in their communities. The pre-war Jewish population of 93,000 fell precipitously. By the fall of 1941 only 40,000 Latvian Jews

remained alive within its borders. Concurrently, German authorities ordered the establishment of ghettos in the three largest cities, Riga, Daugavpils and Liepāja. The date of establishment and other details varied; each had its own characteristics. Throughout, Nazi objectives were the same: to sever the Jewish population from the rest of the citizenry, to exploit their labor, to rob them of their remaining property, and lastly to facilitate their murder. In Riga two major killings took place as local officials "cleaned out" the ghetto to make room for Jews deported from Austria, Germany and the former Czech state. The massacres came on 30 November and 8 December 1941 when some 25,500 Latvian Jews were shot in Rumbula, approximately nine kilometers from Riga. Further actions and killings followed until the ghettos were liquidated on the order of Himmler in the fall of 1943. The last of the Jewish survivors were herded into the Kaiserwald Concentration Camp located on the outskirts of Riga. Later, with the Red Army advancing in summer and fall 1944, Kaiserwald and its sub-camps were liquidated and their inmates evacuated to the West. Many Latvian Jews did not survive the murderous path that lead via the Stutthof Concentration Camp near Danzig to concentration camps in Germany.[16]

How did Latvians react to the lethal persecution of their fellow citizens of Jewish faith? Most of civilians attempted to stay out of the political turmoil. They sought to protect their own lives and their families. Already during the Soviet occupation many had experienced oppression, extreme fear and instability, and they developed survival strategies. Despite the brutality of Soviet occupation and a desire for retribution, the number of the active and violent collaborators was limited. The number of Latvians who resisted was also small in number, while the number of those who aimed to profit from the misery of the Jews must be estimated as considerably higher.[17] Another feature of Soviet occupation made it easier to persecute the Jews once the Nazi invaders arrived. Soviet authorities ordered the registration of Latvia´s population and local authorities introduced a passport system that identified the ethnicity of the individual. When the German forces arrived they had only to check the documents of individuals to determine if they were Jews.

Throughout the years of Nazi occupation, resistance and the rescue of Jews persisted. During his decades of research and analysis, Vestermanis has identified patterns of rescue, manifestations of compassion and solidarity, the providing help and assistance, and the rescue of individuals.[18] He found that compassion was shown most often by Latvians speaking out against the violent mistreatment of the Jews. Aid and assistance came through the sharing of food and the maintenance of contacts with Jews after the restrictions against them had been introduced. Many non-Jewish shop keepers continued to sell food to Jews even after that became an illegal act. Others aided by preparing false passports and documents or by not reporting Jews.

Particularly courageous were a number of supervisors in apartment buildings. They doctored or hid from authorities the house registers, the inventory of residents that also identified religion. For example, the supervisor of the building where Valentina Freimane, neé Löwenstein resided, a Jew who went underground following the arrest of her (officially) non-Jewish husband, told the police force that "the Jews" had moved out or had been deported by the Soviets on 14–15 June 1941.[19] A number of supervisors safe-guarded the valuables of the Jewish tenants forced into the ghettos.

Those who hid Jews and saved their lives did so at great risk. Many Latvians did not choose that route, for they knew that any rescue attempt, if detected, meant death for them and the entire family.[20] Another factor that affected aid to fellow Jewish citizens was the lack of contact during the previous the decades. While Latvia had long been a multi-ethnic state – the constitution of 1922 provided each ethnic group with cultural and religious freedoms and rights – daily life moved in another direction. Society became increasingly splintered and ethnic groups – isolated.[21] Civil society had been severely disrupted by the year of the Soviet occupation. For a variety of reasons, hostility against Jews grew during the occupation, and the Nazi occupants used this mistrust to gain cooperation. Because of the divisions, many Latvians were reluctant to risk their life and that of their family for a Jewish neighbor who had long been a stranger. On the other hand, many Jews hesitated to reach out for help. A significant number of Jews did not speak Latvian, nor did they have Latvian friends or acquaintances, except for those with maids or domestic servants. The characteristics of the Nazi invasion and the brutality of Latvian collaborators left Jews deeply fearful and mistrusting.

Through exhaustive research Vestermanis prepared a time-line of Nazi persecution of the Jews, how this shaped Jewish responses and the actions of non-Jews who aided them. During the initial months of the Nazi occupation, characterized by the rigorous pursuit of Jews and mass shootings, particularly in the countryside, acts of rescue came spontaneously.[22] In the urban areas, the arbitrary arrests, looting, and killings also resulted in spontaneous acts of assistance. Impromptu hiding became more common, as Jews knocked on the doors of strangers after escapes from killing sites. The number, however, remained small. The case of Frīda Frīd (Michelsone) is revealing.[23] Having barely escaped death in Rumbula she knocked on the doors of strangers in a desperate effort to find aid and shelter. When a door opened it meant the beginning of contact with a long series of helpers. These individuals, their names forgotten, enabled her to survive. She also faced a number who refused to take her in, most, she later recalled, were simply too afraid to help.[24]

Latvian Jews who had survived the bloody massacres from June to September 1941 were forced into ghettos. The structure of ghetto life had a far-reaching impact on rescue and resistance. This now had to include an escape plan and a place to

hide. Pressure mounted with each massacre, particularly the mass killings in Rumbula in late November and early December 1941. They triggered attempts to escape from the Riga Ghetto. These killings impacted rescue and resistance. Until then, the ghetto population in Riga had consisted of entire families. Older individuals were oftentimes too frail to attempt an escape. Great effort was made to keep the family together. Also, it was risky to go into hiding with a large family, and shelter for more than a single individual was difficult to find. Following the Rumbula massacres, some 4.500 Jews remained alive in the ghetto. Most were young men who had lost their families. Their willingness to attempt an escape or to resist grew. For potential rescuers helping a single individual was considerably less risky. One element that complicated rescue and resistance immensely was the fact that after these massacres most of the former Riga ghetto territory became increasingly populated with deported Jews from Germany, the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia and Austria. The ghetto administration and police were not in the hands of local Latvian Jews any longer.[25]

Prior to the Rumbula massacre and the killing of ghetto Jews in Liepāja and Daugavpils, individual family members tried to escape and find a safe hideout. Often parents tried to find a safe haven for their children. Those with young children sought out orphanages to shelter them.[26] A few religious groups played a prominent role in Latvia, particularly the Adventists and the Baptists. Members acted out of religious convictions and they used their networks to aid Jews. For those Jews deported to Riga from Western Europe rescue proved more difficult. They lacked any knowledge of Latvian and had no connections with the community. Only a single case that of a rescued Jewish woman from Berlin and her daughter, is documented. Sophie and Hanna Stern survived with the help of Jānis "Žanis" Lipke.[27] Lipke built a complex network of helpers and hiding places, and rescued at least 54 Jews from the Riga Ghetto, a powerful statement of resistance.[28]

Escape from the Riga Ghetto entailed crawling through a break in the fence or fleeing a work detail. Individuals had to act on their own. Vestermanis has identified another dimension of rescue that came following the liquidation of the ghettos in Latvia during the fall of 1943. Jews were then imprisoned in the Kaiserwald Concentration Camp and its sub-camps, guarded by members of the German Security Police. Escapes became well-nigh impossible. Yet by this date many Latvians no longer saw the German forces as liberators from the Soviet terror. Now they were viewed as forces of occupation and ruthless exploitation. A growing number of Latvians were now willing to aid Jews.[28] The last months of German occupation were chaotic. Fear of the German´s faded as the threat of the approaching Red Army grew closer.

The return of the Soviet Army in 1944 was brutal.[30] The small number of liberated surviving Jews faced questioning at the hands of the NKVD. How had they possibly

managed to stay alive? The Soviets did not believe that any Jew had survived without collaborating with the Nazi occupiers. During the ensuing decades research in rescue and solidarity was a taboo topic. After Latvia regained independence in 1991, much of the focus of historical research shifted to collaboration. Rescue of Jews was largely a neglected topic.

Throughout the postwar decades Vestermanis single-handedly collected and archived materials on rescue and survival. He identified patterns of aid, solidarity and rescue, and these paralleled the experiences of other countries occupied by German forces. These materials offer a good basis for comparative study. Despite the varying details of occupation policy in the different countries and in the persecution of the Jewish population, some patterns of motivation to rescue, such as compassion, and methods of rescue, such as networking, were in many ways similar. There were, however, significant differences. In Norway, for example, rescue focused on aiding Jews to escape to Sweden.[31] The Portuguese consul in Bordeaux issued visas for emigration, as did a few other diplomats, thereby enabling some Jews to leave Europe.[32] In Latvia rescue efforts meant aiding the fleeing Jew to find safe heaven within the borders of the country. Another difference is the link between rescue and a national resistance movement. In occupied Belarus, for example, many of the resisting partisan groups hiding in the forests held decidedly hostile attitudes towards Jews. Despite that, some Jews were able to join them, though often aided by false identity papers or simply by hiding their origin.[33] In contrast to Belarus, Latvia did not have ample wooded areas where partisan groups could operate effectively. In addition, the small national partisan groups in Latvia did not receive support of the Soviet leadership.

Rescue in Latvia was largely an individual act. Augusta Bērziņa was a single working mother with a teenager son. When in October 1941 Zarah Frenkel, a total stranger, knocked at her door seeking shelter she did not hesitate to share her tiny apartment and hid the woman. Nor did she seek a network to obtain more food or safety. The only other individuals involved in the process of rescue were the members of the Ozols family who lived in Mežaparks, well away from the Riga city center.[34] Augusta Bērziņa, a member of a small religious sect, the Danubes, did not share her dangerous secret with community members. In the case of others, such as Frīda Frīd (Michelsone) and Valentīna Löwenstein (Freimane), members of the Adventists and Baptists used their connections to find shelter for them.

Jānis "Žanis" Lipke used the network built up during his time as a dock worker at the "Red Storehouses" to aid Jews.[35] He knew whom he could trust and rely on in his ambitious efforts to rescue as many Jews as possible, a deliberate act of resistance to the Nazi occupation. During the initial phase of rescue Lipke brought Jews to his house in Ķīpsala. When it became too crowded he and his associates built a bunker

in his yard. They found hiding places throughout Riga. Soon these no longer sufficed. In a second phase the Lipke network grew substantially and even found aid in Dobele, about 75 kilometers distant from Riga. The transport of Jews to the countryside was complex and difficult, but it also offered more promise for their survival. Several dozen Jews found shelter and work on three farms in the countryside. In addition to being safer than in Riga, they grew their own food. Essential to these efforts was the cooperation of Willi (Fritz) Bienenfeld, the Baltic-German mayor of Dobele.[36] Conspiring, hiding and keeping quiet about every aspect of the rescue were key elements and each demanded a high degree of risk taking and mental fortitude.

In every case, rescue was dependent upon an interaction between the rescuer and the persecuted. In those dangerous times they had to cooperate. Roberts Seduls in Liepāja was an individual who acted without a network. He depended upon his family and an old friend Ottilie Schimmelpfennig who sheltered Ada Zivcon, an infant at the time.[37] Seduls, his wife and two daughters lived in an apartment building. He organized everything himself and worked closely with the Jews he hid, a total of eleven.[38] Hiding and feeding that number of individuals presented challenges. Neighbors and especially those living in the same apartment block knew each other. For Seduls that meant that each person hiding in the cellar underneath the bakery in his building had to participate in maintaining and sustaining the rescue operation. The first individuals who came to him built the necessary infrastructure in the cellar.[39] That included an electric alarm system that led from the cellar to the Seduls' family apartment in the next courtyard. David Zivcon, hidden by Seduls, had useful skills. He repaired broken watches that Seduls obtained on the black market. These were in turn sold and the funds used to purchase food. Providing food for this many people was handled by Seduls himself. Known locally as active in the black market he always carried a suitcase. Many thought it held his booty but in fact he was often carrying food for those he had hidden. His efforts were cut short when shrapnel hit the apartment in March 1945 and killed him. Seduls' family continued his valiant efforts. The cooperation between them and the Jews in hiding became close. Had they been caught, the Jews and those aiding them faced the same fate – summary execution.

The pattern of resistance and rescue in the Riga Ghetto differed from ghettoes in the other Baltic occupied countries, especially Lithuania. For example, the Kaunas or Vilna Ghetto. Providing armed fighters for the partisans played an essential resistance role in rescue and resistance. In the Lithuanian ghettos, the underground specialized in rescuing individuals, oftentimes women and children, and in finding shelter in monasteries, with farmers, or with families. In some cases members of the ghetto police were involved in the rescue activities. The so-called "potato sack escapes" from the Kaunas Ghetto rescued a number of small children from certain death and got them to the countryside.[40]

The situation in the Riga Ghetto was different. Here, the resistance movement came about only after most of the women and children had already been killed. The Jewish ghetto police had been targeted in the second killing action on 8 December 1941, and many lost family members. The surviving ghetto police members did not have much hope for survival left; therefore, they had little to lose by engaging in armed resistance. The initial incentive came from Ovsei Okun, an engineer, and a lawyer named Jevelson. They were the first to raise the prospects of armed resistance. Support also came from Eliyahu Latt, Botwinik and Michelson, respected members of the ghetto police. They met a number of times.[41] They discussed in detail how to resist. Should they try to get as many armed individuals out of the ghetto as possible, or should they stand and fight from within the ghetto? The resistance was aided by a group of Latvian Jewish forced laborers in the Pulverturm Commando. They smuggled weapons and ammunition into the ghetto.

The next step was to contact with a group of former Soviet POW´s who had escaped. Led by Aleksej Makarov and Boris Pismanov, the group was a well-established part of the broader Communist resistance with strong links to Moscow. They aimed to obtain information and carry out sabotage against the German occupiers. Pismanov found refuge with a Latvian Jew named Shapiro. That he was also a Jew and former NKVD lieutenant were facts that Pismanov kept secret. He soon contacted some in the Riga Ghetto. From his contact person in the ghetto named Russ, Pismanov learned that the Latvian Jews planned armed resistance and that they had obtained weapons. Russ also knew that the group aimed to escape and join the partisans. Eager to make personal contact with them and see what firearms they possessed, Pismanov smuggled himself into the ghetto. The ghetto proved to be a good place for him to hide out. What became a complex network between the Pismanov group and his contacts within the Riga Ghetto had a significant disadvantage – complete conspiracy was not possible. Too many individuals knew of the plans. Before long, the Gestapo had placed an agent within the group. It now gained information on the activities and makeup of resistance group. It knew they planned to act soon. A transport of Jews aimed to flee the Riga Ghetto at 5:00 am on 28 October 1942. The Gestapo knew of these plans too. The Gestapo intended to permit the transport to leave the ghetto for Abrene. There they were to be arrested. The German police would then send a message back to the ghetto that the escape had in fact succeeded. They would await the next truck of Jews. The plans went awry. When the security policemen stopped the vehicle carrying the Jews they opened fire on the Germans. The skirmish went on for an hour and a half. In the end only two Jews remained alive, Hirsch Bank and Chaim Eliaschewitsch. Not a single German policeman was killed. The files of the German authorities document the chagrin at having found a veritable arsenal of guns in the truck.[42]

After crushing of the Pismanov group, a German Security Police detachment of 48 men surrounded the Riga Ghetto and conducted a raid. They had obtained the names and addresses of those in the underground group. The police aimed to kill them and to confiscate all weapons, ammunition and valuables hidden in the ghetto. The Ghetto commander Kurt Krause oversaw the action. At 5:30 am on 31 October 1942 his forces acted. The Security Police ordered everybody in the Small Ghetto to assemble.[43] The Jewish police were ordered to gather at the *Blechplatz* and face the wall. When they realized that that they were to be shot, Anatoly Nathan screamed to the others to run. They scattered in all directions. Wild shooting followed, and almost all of the Jewish policemen were killed. A German policeman was also shot dead. A few of the Jewish police and a handful of resistance fighters hid for several days. After a thorough search, Genkin and Okun were found and shot. Following this massacre, the tasks of the Jewish police in the Riga Ghetto was transferred into the hands of the deported Jews. That ended any attempt at organized resistance in the Riga Ghetto. Individual escapes did continue, however.

In many cases, resistance and rescue of Jews took place in close proximity. Sometimes they used a common network. The efforts of Pauls Krūmiņš and the rescue of the Gradis sisters in Daugavpils shows the fine line between conspiracy and open resistance.[44] A violin teacher well known in Daugavpils, Krūmiņš decided to rescue two Jewish students, Cecilia and Nadia Gradis. But a former classmate of the girls recognized them and went to the authorities. Rather than being summarily shot, Krūmiņš, faced charges in a local court. Remarkably, public opinion and the Latvian mayor of the city stood firmly behind Krūmiņš. Even while held in jail, he remained active and arranged for the sisters to escape to Lithuania.[45] The court found him guilty of aiding Jews and sentenced him to eight months imprisonment, which he served under tolerable conditions. He survived because the city administration kept the case local and did not report its full dimensions to the German authorities. After serving the sentence Krūmiņš resumed life as a respected person in his hometown.[46]

Rescue and self-rescue sometimes involved exploiting the system that was oppressing them. The activities of Fritz Scherwitz are well known, though whether he was a Jew, as he later claimed, remains uncertain.[47] Nevertheless, as director of a forced labor site, the workshops of Lenta factory, he did offer a number of Jews from the Riga ghetto a better chance for survival.[48] Another individual who used establishments of the Nazi system for his survival was Boris Rudovs. Born in Riga, Rudovs became one of the city's most respected furriers and tailors. The mounting demands of the German "customers" at Lenta gave him an opportunity. In March 1943m Scherwitz set up a tailor workshop solely for Rudovs. That entailed a number of privileges, though Rudovs had never asked for privileged status. His main concern

was to work well enough to secure a chance for survival for himself and his family. With his new position his status changed significantly. Now Rudovs did not have to wear the Jewish star. His family was given a private apartment outside the ghetto. On occasion he even had use of a private chauffeur. Rudovs did not use these privileges to the disadvantage of other Jews. Nor did he use his position to gain privileges for other Jews. He knew that the quality of his work was the sole guarantee of his status and his survival. He knew that it affected only him and his family. They survived the war. On 8 February 1951, Rudovs was arrested by the NKVD. Somebody had denounced him, calling him a collaborator with the German police. After numerous interrogations and statements by many witnesses, the Soviet authorities sentenced Rudovs to 25 years imprisonment and hard labor in Siberia.[49] He did not survive the incarceration. This case shows that the whims of the German occupation can lead attempts for survival not only to resistance but even to collaboration, becoming a part of the system of occupation.

Another element of rescue was mercenary: taking money from persecuted Jews in exchange for aiding or hiding them. As the cases of Lipke and Seduls demonstrated, rescue was a long-term commitment. Food, false documents or weapons, and even medical care had to be secured for those in hiding, and that cost money. Some of the rescuers, such as Seduls, developed a shrewd system by which those in hiding labored and paid much of the costs. Other rescuers, however, demanded exorbitant sums from the desperate Jews as they sought to profit from the misery of their fellow citizens. A few documented cases reveal that some who promised aid to the Jews simply took the payment and then handed them over to the police.[50] Some Latvian fishermen, for example, promised Jews an escape route across the Baltic Sea to the safe haven of Sweden. In exchange they took large sums of money. At sea some threw the passengers over board. On other occasions they simply did not show up, having already pocketed the funds. These individuals knew full well the plight of the Jews and exploited their misery. Such behavior must be viewed in the same light as that of people who profited from the theft of property belonging to the persecuted, arrested or murdered Jews. These were criminal acts carried out under the guise of rescue.

How was the rescue of Jews Nazi occupied Latvia connected to the broader resistance movement? First, there were no significant or formal links between the oppressed Jews and the resistance. Latvijas Centrālā Padome (LCP), Latvian Central Council, the most prominent of the resistance groups, did not have aiding Jews on their agenda. Besides their political work, they focused on helping Latvians who attempted to escape from forced labor service or conscription into the Latvian Legion.[51] Some members of the LCP, such as the Bishop Jāzeps Rancāns did aid

Jews who sought shelter. Samuel Shefer found safety in a Catholic chapel. He survived with the help of the Catholic family Korčevskis and of Bishop Rancāns.[52] The ghetto underground resistance had plans to smuggle Jews from the ghetto to the woods to join partisan units. But it was not able to find shelter for the Jews once outside the Riga Ghetto.

Overall, the complex of rescue and resistance can best be understood in terms of the individual cases. Each individual who reached out for aid and rescue committed an act of resistance. That included both parties, the rescuers, who risked their own and the lives of their families, and the Jews. The latter had to take the dangerous first step to contact potential helpers and to leave their family members behind in the ghettos. Going into hiding meant disappearing. The decision to shelter a Jew pushed the rescuers into what the occupation authorities viewed as a serious crime.

Following Lustiger´s definition of "rescue as resistance" these individuals did in fact commit resistance. Many of those who offered aid and shelter thought little about whether they were part of the resistance or not. Rather, they acted to demonstrate their refusal to forfeit their humanity and to show their compassion to those oppressed by the occupation power. They reacted spontaneously to the desperate plight of others. Years or even decades after the end of the war, many of the rescuers did not speak about what they had done. In their understanding, individuals such as Jānis Lipke or Pauls Krūmiņš did what a human should do, namely aid another in misery. Nor can rescuers in Latvia be categorized as belonging to a specific group. They came from all levels of society. There are, however, a few common characteristics and patterns. Some were members of small religious groups. Others were intellectuals or politicians (Paul Schiemann). Rescuers included workers and building superintendents (Jānis Lipke or Roberts Seduls). Among the rescuers were also rural people (Frīda Frīd's rescue network). Most had one thing in common: they lived and operated on the edge of society, often in very modest circumstances. Their own experiences on the fringes enabled them to feel compassion with the Jews who were also cut off from Latvia´s society. It also enabled them to act more effectively without being detected. Each case of rescue also had its own dynamics.

Understanding human behavior in extreme circumstances is surely a challenge for the historian. Evaluation and judgment of an individual's behavior, placing a moral value on his or her decision, is not the historian's task. However; identifying patterns and the circumstances of specific cases of rescue, studying the motivations and social background of the individuals involved – is. Here, too, Arno Lustiger offers guidance. He chooses not to make judgments or evaluate the motivation of the rescuers. From the point of view of the rescued individual and the rescue act as a whole, each step

is significant. The constant danger cause rescuers to change priorities repeatedly. Fortuity often plays a crucial role. An exit door that is unlocked at the right moment or wearing soft shoes that make walking noiseless can save a life.[53]

Lustiger also points out the significance of placing rescue within the broader aspects of Nazi occupation policy. In the case of Latvia, several factors shaped the landscape of solidarity with and aid for Jews. The severe disruptions of the social fabric caused by the year of Soviet occupation facilitated collaboration with the Nazis. That caused an increased danger for the rescuers. It is also important to identify patterns and reveal the links between rescue and resistance. Here too, patterns, motivations and the background of a specific case can contribute to our understanding of the common elements of rescue. Based on these considerations, one must conclude that the cases of rescue in Nazi-occupied Latvia were indeed acts of resistance. Each act of rescue meant that an individual took a conscious decision and refused to acquiesce to the orders of a criminal regime. Rescuers acted in full knowledge about the lethal consequences for aiding Jews and placed their own life and their families in danger.

Arno Lustigers' focus on Jewish self-help offers another useful approach. The success of rescue efforts by the victims depends heavily upon the goodwill of those in the broader community who are willing to help. This interaction between the helper and the persecuted Jew makes rescue and survival possible. The rescue of Jewish infants and very young children is, however, different. In many of these cases parents reach out to find shelter for the children, and this, too, involves great risk. For those in Latvia who aided Jews of whatever age the decision to help marked the beginning of a perilous journey of unknown duration. Many rescuers put their lives in jeopardy for two or three years. Though they had to act with stealth and in silence their actions were not silent resistance. Acting in the underground, in hiding, in disguise and being quiet did not mean silence in word and deed. Rather, it was a strong statement of self-assertion and defiance. Rescue indeed meant resistance. Each case of rescue called for an immense amount of bravery and sacrifice on the part of the rescuers and the rescued.

In light of the consequences, the motivation to act did not come easily and it varied in every case. Scholars have only of late begun to trace the links between rescue and resistance, as well as the motivations of those involved. What both themes have in common is that it is almost impossible to systematize and analyze without subjective evaluation and judgment. The historians´ dealings with the contested issue of collaboration must face these issues as well. The fact that the actions of the rescuers mandated no open communication and correspondence shapes the corpus of available sources. Also, details from personal notes, narratives, diaries and memories need to be examined within the context of the occupied country's history, its culture, its

identity. As noted, the experiences of Latvia in the year prior to the German invasion went far in shaping the reactions to the German invasion, especially anti-Semitism, collaboration, as well as ignorance and indifference towards the victims. Still, these experiences did not only lead to compliance and passivity; they also triggered compassion and extended a helping hand.

Endnotes

1 Raoul Hilberg, *Perpetrators Victims Bystanders. The Jewish Catastrophe 1933–1945* (New York: Aaron Asher Books, 1992).

2 In 2009, the Lithuanian Gaon State Jewish Museum initiated research and exhibition on the specific topic "Rescued Jewish Child." The research, however, had started earlier and still continues. The Jewish Community in Minsk, especially under the initiative of survivor Maija Krapina (†), has been collecting extensive material on rescuers and rescued individuals in Nazi-occupied Belarus. In 2008, an exhibition on the German rescuers of Jews opened in Berlin's museum Silent Heroes. The Silent Heroes, a branch of the German Resistance Memorial Centre, documents rescue in Germany and has recently broadened its scope to include the aid to and rescue of Jews in those countries occupied by Nazi troops.

3 Arno Lustiger, *Rettungswiderstand. Über die Judenretter in Europa während der NS-Zeit* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2011).

4 Arno Lustiger, *Zum Kampf auf Leben und Tod! Vom Widerstand der Juden 1933–1945* (Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 2003).

5 This was for most rescuers in Nazi occupied Latvia the main source of motivation, as Marģers Vestermanis concluded. Conversation with Dr. Marģers Vestermanis, 11 September 2012. Vestermanis pointed out in nearly every conversation that this motivation is a key element in understanding rescue in occupied Latvia.

6 The Austrian "rescuer in uniform" Anton Schmid used his position as supervisor of a *Wehrmachtsdienststelle* in occupied Vilnius to rescue Jews. He smuggled Jews from the Vilnius ghetto to neighboring occupied Belarus, assuming that the mass killings of the Vilnius ghetto were a local crime. The conclusion that occupied Belarus was a safer haven for Jews shows that he, like the Jews in the ghetto, did not have full knowledge about the degree and dimensions of the systematic mass murder of the Jews in Europe. In 1942, most individuals still believed that crimes against the Jewish population were temporary and localized.

7 Grigorij Schur and Wladimir Porudominskij, *Die Juden von Wilna: die Aufzeichnungen.* (München: DTV, 1999).

8 Conversation with Dr. Vestermanis, September 2012.

9 Hitler's speech of 30 March 1941 to high-ranking Wehrmacht officials did not leave any doubts about the crimes that were planned against the civilian population.

10 Telegram by Heydrich from 29 June 1941 to the leaders of the operation units, Bundesarchiv, R 70SU/32.

11 Helmut Krausnick and Hans-Heinrich Wilhelm, *Die Truppe des Weltanschauungskrieges. Die Einsatzgruppen der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD 1938–1942* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1981).

[12] Nürnberger Dokument L-180 (Einsatzgruppe A, Gesamtbericht bis zum 15. Oktober 1941), in: National Archives and NARA, Washington, D.C., Record Group 238.

[13] See Ereignismeldungen UdSSR, in: National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland, Record Group 175 (Persönlicher Stab des Reichsführers SS), rolls 233–37.

[14] On the establishment, tasks, and structure of the German Civilian Government in Latvia see Sven Jüngerkes, *Deutsche Besatzungsverwaltung in Lettland 1941–1945: eine Kommunikations- und Kulturgeschichte nationalsozialistischer Organisationen* (Konstanz: UVK Verlagsgesellschaft, 2010).

[15] Katrin Reichelt, *Lettland unter deutscher Besatzung 1941–1944. Der lettische Anteil am Holocaust* (Berlin: Metropol, 2011) 74–145.

[16] Ibid, 145–286.

[17] Conversation with Dr. Vestermanis 18 September 2012.

[18] Marģers Vestermanis, "Retter im Lande der Handlanger. Zur Geschichte der Hilfe für Juden in Lettland während der 'Endlösung'," *Solidarität und Hilfe für Juden während der NS-Zeit*, ed. Wolfgang Benz and Juliane Wetzel (Berlin: Metropol, 1998) 231–72.

[19] Valentina Freimane, *Ardievu Atlantīda!* (Riga: Atēna, 2010).

[20] The case of Anna Alma Pole who hid seven Jews in her basement in the Riga Old Town became well known in Riga when the Security Police found out and stormed the place on 24 August 1944. All Jews in hiding and Alma Pole were shot. For the Jews in hiding in Riga that incident was a warning sign to be extra cautious.

[21] Edward Anders, *19 Months in a Cellar. How 11 Jews Eluded Hitler´s Henchmen. The Holocaust Diary of Kalman Linkimer 1941–1945* (Burlingame: Anders Press, 2011). Conversations with Prof. Anders in mid-March 2015.

[22] Vestermanis, *Retter*, 260ff. Dr. Vestermanis mentioned the case of a Jew who showed up in underwear and asked for help in Kleperi. He had obviously escaped a mass shooting. People gave him clothes and food. In the end he was found by the local police and killed. Somebody had reported him.

[23] Frida Michelsone, *I survived Rumbuli*. The author used the book published in 1999 by the USHMM in Washington, D.C.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Vestermanis, *Retter*, 267. Dr. Vestermanis noted that in this final period of the occupation, the numbers of rescue increased remarkably.

[26] One example was the Riga orphanage lead by Emīls Resnais. Ina Michelsone survived in hiding there. Roberts Seduls in Liepāja could not hide the little infant Adinka, the daughter of Riva Zivcon, in his cellar. He asked an older German Baltic woman Ottilie Schimmelpfennig to take care of the child, and Ada survived at her place.

[27] David Silberman, *Like a Star in the Darkness. Recollections about Janis (Zhan) Lipke* (Riga: D. Silberman, 2007) 27. The Žāņa Lipkes Memoriāls in Riga has the case of the Stern family in their files.

[28] Silberman, *Like a Star*. Exhibition of the Žāņa Lipkes Memoriāls Riga. Jānis Lipke is better known by his byname Žanis.

[29] Some of these "last minute rescuers" were attempting to obtain a clean status, free from all allegations of collaboration with the German occupiers.

[30] Now many Latvians were not only charged by the NKVD for being anti-Soviet, but also as collaborators with the "German Fascists." This was a convenient excuse to once again suppress the population and to eliminate any potential opposition.

[31] Claudia Schoppmann, *Das war doch jenseits jeder menschlichen Vorstellungskraft. Hilfe für verfolgte Juden im deutsch besetzten Norwegen 1940–1945* (Berlin: Lukas Verlag, 2016).

[32] In summer 1940, Aristides de Sousa Mendes issued approximately 30,000 transit visa, one third of them to Jews so they could escape Nazi occupied France. He was stripped of his diplomatic title and died in poverty in 1954.

[33] However, documents did not help when joining an anti-Semitic partisan group. Often the only possible way was to have the protection of the unit leader, who was the only person capable to control the partisan´s racism to a certain degree. For Latvian Jews crossing the border to occupied Belarus was often the only way to find partisan units. Soviet partisan´s units in Belarus were often the only groups whose leaders sometimes were in control of the unit´s anti-Semitism, see Katrin Reichelt, *Der Wald war ein letzter Ausweg. Hilfe für verfolgte Juden im deutsch besetzten Weißrussland 1941–1944* (Berlin: Lukas Verlag, 2017) 71.

[34] Soon Zarah Frenkel´s sister Regina asked for shelter, too. Augusta Bērziņa did not have the space to hide her and sent her to the Ozols family. Katrin Reichelt, *Rettung kennt keine Konventionen. Hilfe für verfolgte Juden im deutsch besetzten Lettland 1941–1945* (Berlin: Lukas Verlag, 2016) 215–18.

[35] The German Air Force used the historical Riga port facilities known as the "Red Storehouses." Lipke and a small circle of individuals used this area for black market trades.

[36] Silberman, *Like a Star*. Conversation with Lolita Tomsone Director of the Lipke Memorial, in November 2014.

[37] Anders, *19 Months*; Reichelt, *Rettung*, 126–27.

[38] Roberts Seduls had initially assured David Zivcon he would offer shelter in case of danger. 11 individuals came to the Seduls family and were welcomed.

[39] Anders, *19 Months*.

[40] Solomon Abramovich and Yakov Zilberg, ed., *Smuggled in Potato Sacks. Fifty Stories of the Hidden Children of the Kaunas Ghetto* (London, Portland: Vallentine Mitchell, 2011).

[41] It was a great advantage that members of the Jewish ghetto police could walk freely outside the ghetto in Riga and did not have to obey the curfew in the ghetto.

[42] See Angrick and Klein, *"Endlōsung"*, 361ff.

[43] The so-called Small Ghetto was the part of the Riga Ghetto now populated by the approximately 4500 Latvian Jews who had survived the Rumbula massacres. The larger ghetto part was the "Reichjudenghetto" where deported Jews had settled.

[44] Yad Vashem Archives, M 31, 4174 (Statement Cecilia Baruchowitz); Uldis Neiburgs, *"Dievs, Tava zeme deg!" Latvijas Otrā pasaules kara stāsti* (Riga: Latvijas Mediji, 2014) 155.The author thanks Dr. Uldis Neiburgs, who brought her attention to this interesting case.

[45] After having spent time in the Wilna ghetto, the Gradis sisters were rescued by Juozas Rutkauskas who organized falsified documents with Lithuanian identities. They were sent to forced labor to Germany but survived. Rutkauskas and his helper were killed by the Security Police in Vilnius. See website www.rescuedchild.lt.

[46] Neiburgs, *"Dievs.Tava zeme deg!"*

[47] Anita Kugler, *Schwerwitz, der jüdische SS-Offizier* (Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 2004).

[48] Hilde Sherman-Zander, *Zwischen Tag und Dunkel. Mädchenjahre im Ghetto* (Frankfurt/Main, Berlin: Ullstein, 1989); Reichelt, *Lettland unter deutscher Besatzung*, 210.

[49] State Archives of Latvia, LVA, KGB Archives Riga, Case# 39890 (Boriss Rudovs).

[50] Conversation with Dr. Vestermanis on 26 September 2012.

[51] Uldis Neiburgs, *Draudu un cerību lokā. Latvijas pretošanās kustība un Rietumu sabiedrotie (1941–1945)* (Riga: Mansards, 2017); Uldis Neiburgs, "Pretošanas kustība Vācijas okupētajā Latvijā (1941–1945)," *Latvijas Vēstures Institūta Žurnāls*, 3 (2012): 74–99.

[52] Talk with Dr. Vestermanis on 26 September 2012; Marģers Vestermanis, *Pretdarbība holokaustam nacistu okupētajā Latvijā.* Available at: http://ebreji.lv/lv/piemiņa/glabeji/.

[53] In the case of one big episode in the long line of rescue that Valentīna Freimane, neé Löwenstein went through precisely such a constellation saved her life: When her hiding place in Vidus iela 9 was compromised and her husband was arrested, she could escape through a back door wearing rubber-soled shoes. Freimane, *Ardievu Atlantīda!,* 295–99.

Uldis Neiburgs

Planned and Attempted Military Resistance: The Latvian Central Council and General Kurelis Group 1943–1945

The essential character of the resistance movement in Nazi-occupied Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia may be appreciated only if we examine the special situation of these countries, which lost their statehood during World War II and experienced successive Soviet–Nazi–Soviet occupations. Accordingly, cooperation with the Nazis meant cooperation with the second occupier – the enemy of one's own enemy – whereas resistance to the Nazis was undertaken at a time when there was the threat of a recommencement of the first occupation, that of the Soviets. While the invaded Western European countries could regain their freedom through the defeat of National Socialist Germany, opposition by the Baltic States to only one of the occupying powers could strengthen the position of the other. Accordingly, the struggle to restore *de facto* national sovereignty was directed against both the Communists and the Nazis. Moreover, in a situation where it was not in the Baltic peoples' interests to weaken Germany's military might in its struggle against the Soviet Union, the resistance movement was primarily non-violent.[1]

Another unusual feature of the resistance movement in Latvia was that the Soviet occupation of 1940–41 and the Nazi occupation that followed in 1941–1944/45, and people's experience of these occupations, had the effect of creating divisions between different groups of people. During the war years, in the *de facto* absence of a Latvian state, each group was oriented towards its own personal survival, either in the Soviet deportations or in the Nazi Holocaust and other persecution, and accordingly tried to survive the war by avoiding the "greater evil." This was often possible only through direct or indirect support for the "lesser evil," the choice of which in each individual case was often determined not only by affiliation to a particular ethnic group but also by German and Soviet military victories or defeats in the war, along with other factors. Because of World War II, many residents of Latvia who had hitherto lived side by side in their own country, with no overwhelming mutual enmity, were either turned

into enemies or were placed in opposition to one another.[2] Their actions were mostly determined by their existential interests of survival, while the view, which dominates the present-day outlook, of German National Socialism as absolute evil and Soviet Communism as relative evil, had no firm basis at that time.

Accordingly, there were objective reasons why a broad national resistance movement actively involving all the different ethnic groups and the full spectrum of political opinion was an impossibility under Nazi occupation. The wartime reality was that in the territory of the Republic of Latvia, occupied *de facto* but remaining in existence *de iure*, several different resistance movements were simultaneously active, including those of other states and peoples (i.e., using this territory for achieving their own aims, and pursuing activities that involved residents not only of foreign countries but also residents of occupied Latvia), which, though they had a common enemy, also had differing political aims, which meant that they hardly cooperated among themselves:

1. The Latvian resistance movement expressed the self-determination strivings of the Latvian people and in its struggle for the restoration of the real sovereignty of the Republic of Latvia proclaimed on 18 November 1918 opposed not only the Nazi German occupation of that time, but also the Soviet occupation that had already been experienced and was drawing close once again due to the course of the war.[3]

2. The Soviet resistance fought for the USSR and for the restoration of Soviet statehood in the occupied and incorporated territories; the methods it used in this struggle often involved terror and diversionary attacks, causing suffering to innocent civilians. Its opposition to the aggressor – the occupation regime of Nazi Germany and its collaborators – was legitimate and justified within the territory of the Soviet Union itself, but had no basis in the countries occupied and annexed by the USSR after the outbreak of World War II on 1 September 1939 (including Latvia), which had first suffered aggression from the USSR and only subsequently from Nazi Germany. The oppositionary activities by the Soviet resistance (including the citizens of the Republic of Latvia participating in it) to one of the occupying powers can be viewed positively from the perspective of the interests of the countries engaged in the struggle against Hitler's Germany, and they hastened the defeat of the National Socialist regime in World War II. At the same time it was a struggle for the return of another occupying power, namely the Stalinist USSR, which starkly contradicted the international legal position of Latvia and other occupied countries and promoted the consolidation in Eastern Europe of another, no less criminal regime, that of the Communists, and may accordingly be viewed in a negative light;[4]

3. The Polish resistance fought for the restoration of Poland's national independence. Like the Latvian resistance movement, it was essentially opposed to two aggressors: the Soviet Union and Germany. This resistance movement in Latvia consisted

> mainly of ethnic Polish residents, whose political stance was somewhat dubious, because some of them also favoured the annexation to Poland of Polish-inhabited areas of Latvia.[5]

In order to achieve its political aim of restoring Latvia's sovereignty, the participants in the Latvian resistance movement planned to await a favorable situation between the retreat of the German army from the territory of Latvia and the invasion by Soviet forces, when they might take over power with the help of Latvian armed units and would declare Latvia's independence and the establishment of a provisional government, in the expectation of support from the Western Allies. This article reveals and analyses the strivings by the Latvian Central Council and the military unit led by General Jānis Kurelis to implement such a plan during the final phase of the Nazi occupation, in 1943–45, and the obstacles they faced.

The Latvian Central Council and Its Attempts to Obtain Foreign Military Aid

The Latvian Central Council (LCC), secretly established in Riga on 13 August 1943, developed into the ideological and political centre of the resistance movement. The council formulated its position in relation to international law, produced political declarations on the restoration of Latvia's sovereignty and strove to establish contacts with the West. The LCC included representatives of parties that had won 49 out of 100 seats in the last (fourth) elections to the Saeima, the parliament of the Republic of Latvia, held in 1931: the Latvian Social Democratic Workers Party, the Latvian Farmers Union, the Latgale Christian Farmers and Catholic Party and the Democratic Center. Elected Chairman of the LCC was Professor Konstantīns Čakste, son of Jānis Čakste, the first President of Latvia; his deputy was Bruno Kalniņš. Ludvigs Sēja, former Latvian envoy to Lithuania, was chosen as Secretary-General of the LCC.[6]

The LCC's aim was to restore true sovereignty of an independent and democratic Latvia based on the Constitution of 1922. The LCC had seven commissions – foreign affairs, military, information, legal, economic, fund-raising and communications – which differed in terms of the intensity and results of the activities. The clandestine meetings organized by the LCC leadership, where political and other questions were discussed, generally took place in Riga but were relocated to the Kurzeme region (western Latvia) in late 1944. The academic society Austrums had an important role in supporting the LCC's clandestine activities, and several of the active participants came from its ranks. Several LCC members were active at the Academy of Agriculture in Jelgava, while the LCC Contact Group in Ventspils had a significant role in implementing the secret

refugee transport by boat organized by the LCC and maintaining clandestine radio contact between Latvia and Sweden in 1943–44.[7]

The LCC officially set out the principles behind its activities in a political platform adopted in August 1943, which envisaged "restoration of the independent and democratic Republic of Latvia, where the future state system will be determined by a freely and democratically elected Saeima [...] Until such time, the current Constitution of the Republic of Latvia, from 1922, remains in force."[8] This was supplemented with a declaration by the LCC directed against the Soviet and German occupation, expressing the hope of the victory of the Western democratic countries in the war and implementation of the principles of the Atlantic Charter, along with other documents with information and political analysis. The LCC also established contact with representatives of the Lithuanian and Estonian resistance movements, who participated in several clandestine political meetings in Riga in January–April 1944. On the initiative of the LCC, in March 1944 a declaration (memorandum) was drawn up and signed by 188 Latvian social and political figures and intellectuals, expressing the Latvian people's strivings for independence, counter to the policy of the National Socialist occupation authorities, along with the wish to inform Western governments.[9]

In 1943–44, the LCC managed to establish clandestine contact with Voldemārs Salnais, former Latvian envoy in Stockholm, which was very significant for the provision of information and for organizing refugee transports across the Baltic Sea to Sweden.[10] Various resistance groups and organizations in Latvia were gathering ammunition and weapons that could prove useful in the event of an armed struggle to restore the country's independence, making use of the military resources accessible locally under Nazi occupation,[11] but the LCC also strove to obtain military assistance abroad, through its cooperation with Salnais.

The LCC's plans for obtaining armaments are confirmed by a message from Čakste to Salnais already on 16 November 1943, expressing the hope that, if they fought alongside the Germans, then they would provide weaponry, whereas if the battle were to be fought separately, then weapons would have to be obtained from abroad. In Čakste's view, the greatest need would be for:

> Automatic weapons (pistols, light and heavy machine guns, which could also dropped by air) with ample ammunition and anti-tank weapons, including specialized guns with ample ammunition. Also, very useful would be tanks, artillery and aircraft. A certain quantity of the rifles will be available locally, but about 20,000 more would be needed, a proportion of which could be carbines (short rifles), because it is unclear what form the fighting here will take, and ample ammunition.[12]

That the LCC leaders had discussed the possibility of military involvement by the Western states or Sweden to secure the Baltic theatre is also indicated by a letter from Čakste to Salnais on 31 January 1944, in which he asks: "Are you also considering weaponry and potential evacuation? [...] Also let us know whether we may reckon with the possibility of receiving weapons and ammunition from abroad?"[13]

The provision of armaments for Latvian military units was the responsibility of the LCC Military Commission, led by Latvian army General Jānis Kurelis and Captain Kristaps Upelnieks. At their request, a plan for the necessary arms, ammunition and supplies for Latvian armed forces was prepared in January 1944 by Colonel Vilis Janums, commander of the 33rd Grenadier Regiment of the 15th Latvian Waffen-SS Division. The LCC leadership sent this plan to Salnais in Stockholm, emphasizing that "Latvia has decided to fight the Russians and the Germans to regain its independence. The falling of the Baltic States, Poland and Finland into Russian hands may in the future prove fateful also for Sweden's independence, and so we are asking for real assistance already at this time, before it's too late."[14] According to a letter from Čakste to Salnais on 24 March 1944, the LCC considered that "our resistance to the Bolsheviks is and can be a question of our very existence, and it is dependent on the question of arms. On this score, do all you can, so that at the decisive moment everything is here without delay. Please send a coded message as to which institutions you have been negotiating with and how far you have proceeded."[15]

However, these efforts were doomed to failure. As late as 31 March 1944, Envoy Salnais stated that there was at least a small hope of receiving arms and ammunition from Finland; however, on 13 April he wrote that a negative reply had been received from Finland, while at the same time urging them not to lose heart altogether, in case of a possible change in the military situation. And in a letter to the LCC leadership on 10 August, Salnais was forced to conclude that on the matter of weapons "the locals (meaning the Swedes) have given a final and negative reply. Only the Lake Country (meaning Finland) has promised some anti-tank equipment. Whether this will still be honored by the current government, I don't know."[16] The correspondence known at present between Salnais and the LCC in Latvia indicates that he really did do his best to further the question of weaponry and armaments in his talks with various Swedish and Finnish institutions and officials but that, mainly for lack of funds, and later in connection with Finland's exit from the war, these strivings did not bring any results.

The LCC and Plans for Setting up a Provisional Government

Alongside the provision of military assistance, the LCC's plans included setting up a Latvian Provisional Government, the role of which was seen as linked to a takeover of power, i.e., an armed struggle. Accordingly, "LCC Bulletin No. 3" of 27 February 1944 emphasized that the only possibility of defending Latvia's borders could arise if, when the German army is in retreat, "we can take a political and military stand independently from Germany."

> This means that at the decisive moment we would have to declare the restoration of the *de facto* sovereignty of the Republic of Latvia, appoint a government and announce a mobilization in the name of the Republic of Latvia. The government would then have to address the people with a proclamation, exhorting it to defend independent, democratic Latvia against Russian invasion. Only such a promise, given in the name of Latvia and for Latvia, could succeed, and only if the whole of the Latvian people is prepared to fight. [...] It is currently hard to say what the situation will be in the case of a Russian invasion. But in principle we have decided to attempt to show autonomous military resistance, doing it in the name of independent, democratic Latvia.[17]

Although Salnais, as Latvian envoy in Stockholm, like his colleagues in the West, took a very reserved stance towards the wish for the LCC to be regarded as representing the supreme authority of the Latvian state, he, too, tended to support the LCC's planned tactic of struggle and the idea of establishing a government in the situation where the threat of a second Soviet occupation was close at hand. This is confirmed by a passage in a letter from Salnais to the LCC in Latvia on 10 August 1944 that "in my view and that of Cinis (meaning Fēlikss Cielēns, Social Democrat LCC member), in our future interests it would be absolutely essential for the LCC to take power into its hands immediately and declare an independent Latvian government. Under certain conditions, this can turn out to be the only ace for defending our independence at the peace conference. So, if possible – do it."[18]

Such a position was largely in accord with the claims to represent supreme state authority in Latvia that the LCC had previously expressed, envisaging that the restoration of national independence would be declared and a government set up during an interregnum between the retreat of the German army and the ingress of Soviet forces, as expressed in several political documents adopted by the LCC and in its wartime correspondence. The LCC's underground publication *Jaunā Latvija* (New Latvia), dated 10 March 1944, states unmistakably:

> 1. The Latvian state is to be restored without delay, and a Latvian government is to be established, with a coalition including figures of authority representing all the major Latvian political movements. 2. In accordance with Latvia's constitution, still legally in force, it would, in cooperation with municipal institutions, ensure internal security and order and would convene a Saeima elected by the whole people as soon as possible in order to draft a new, reformed Constitution. 3. In foreign affairs, this government must organize and lead the defense of the Latvian state against the Soviet Union and establish diplomatic relations with all the countries willing and able to provide military or other support in the sacred struggle for the freedom and independence of the Latvian state. 4. The government must immediately begin the closest political and military collaboration with the other Baltic States.[19]

According to information provided already after the war by Oskars N. Alksnītis from the LCC's Ventspils Contact Group, Captain Upelnieks had already in June 1944 considered the possibility of: (1) declaring the restoration of the Latvian state as planned by the LCC and establishing a provisional government, (2) arranging for this information to be published in a newspaper and for this paper to be distributed, (3) arranging to conceal the publisher and editors of the paper from the German SD and their potential transfer to Sweden. Apparently, Alberts Cīrulis, editor of the Ventspils newspaper *Ventas Balss*, had even agreed to print the LCC proclamations, but this idea was never implemented.[20] The file of the criminal case by the Latvian SSR Committee for State Security against Eduards Andersons, one of those who had provided boat transport, contains evidence that in July 1944, when LCC courier Leonids Siliņš was in Latvia, he had informed Andersons about the plans of the LCC and General Kurelis' group to carry out a military insurrection in the immediate future and proclaim Latvia's independence, which would also be announced abroad by radio. This was to be carried out before Riga came under renewed Soviet occupation, making use of all available Latvian military forces: the former Home Guard (Aizsargi), the police and the Latvian Legion units, while at the same time also anticipating support from the Americans and the British.[21]

In the first half of August 1944, Latvian diplomats in the West and certain British foreign affairs institutions became somewhat alarmed at an announcement by American reporter Bjernson of *The New York Times* national news service in Stockholm on 2 August that an anonymous underground organization in Latvia was planning to declare war on Russia and Germany. This news was also received by Kārlis Zariņš, holder of extraordinary powers and Latvia's Envoy in London, from Alfrēds Bīlmanis, Latvia's Envoy in Washington. Zariņš submitted his comment to the British Foreign Ministry that same day and subsequently as well, on 11 August, emphasizing that no anonymous organization had the right to make such a declaration

of war; this could be done only by a sovereign state. In his correspondence with Bīlmanis and Salnais, he suggested that the announcement could be either some kind of provocation by Germany, or, more likely, it should be regarded simply as a false report.[22] Britain's Foreign Office did not, however, accept Zariņš's explanation unequivocally: the possibility was entertained that this could indeed be the intention of the national resistance movement, the LCC, which had earlier declared its determination to fight against both Nazi and Soviet occupation, and moreover, as indicated by documents previously submitted to the British by Zariņš, this organization could more or less pretend to the status of a legal government.[23]

An overview by Cielēns addressed to the US Embassy in Stockholm in late at June/early July 1944, "The internal political situation in Latvia at the end of the fourth year of occupation," also stated that the LCC had appointed various commissions of scientists and specialists of all political trends to study the special concrete problems in connection with the restoration of the Latvian State. One commission is drafting the new constitution; the other is dealing with principles and forms of the new Baltic Confederation; and the third is formulating a ten-year plan for the economic reconstruction of Latvia, especially from the viewpoint of resuming economic relations with the United States, which will be the decisive power in the world economy after World War II. Cielēns provided even clearer information to the US Embassy in Stockholm concerning the plans of the Latvian national resistance movement in a report on 15 August entitled "Recent military and political information about Latvia," in which he revealed that it had been expected two weeks previously that the secret LCC would proclaim a Latvian Government. Some preparations have been made in the provinces in order to assume the supreme power. [24]

In his notes on these documents to the State Department in Washington on 5 July 1944, US Ambassador to Sweden Herschel V. Johnson recorded that they give the impression of the Latvian people as naive and almost childlike in their belief that somehow or other, possibly through the application of the principles of the Atlantic Charter, their national independence is to be restored to them. This hope would appear to be very closely akin to wishful thinking, in view of the extremely complex situation which now exists in the Baltic area. On 28 September he also notes that, taking into account the contending Latvian, Soviet, and German interests and activities, the situation is necessarily very complicated and difficult to analyze. However, it may be assumed that the entry of the Red Army through the "back door" in July 1944, i.e., from the south by way of Lithuania, has taken the Germans as well as the Latvian underground organizations by surprise. The Latvian organizations had apparently been planning to proclaim a Latvian Government during the interregnum between the German and Soviet occupations.[25]

It should be taken into consideration that the information concerning the emergence of a potential "third force" in the territory reached the West at a time when, after successful offensive operations by the Red Army in July 1944, the front had reached the Baltic region, and the Soviet forces were gradually advancing ever deeper into Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. On 30 July, with a sudden attack, they reached the Gulf of Riga and took the town of Tukums, cutting the territory of Latvia in half for several weeks. Even though a successful counter-attack by the German forces permitted the previous status of the front to be renewed on 20 August, the Red Army's successes gave cause for serious concern in the power structures of the German occupation, as well as among the Latvian public at large. It is possible that because of this previously unforeseen situation, all plans for declaring Latvia's independence and forming a provisional government in July–August 1944 lost their significance. It seems quite credible that, following the arrest of the LCC leaders Konstantīns Čakste, Bruno Kalniņš and Ludvigs Sēja, other LCC members still in Latvia were thinking more of their own flight into exile to Sweden, rather than preparing to openly challenge the Nazi occupation regime, which would have been indicated by the formation of a Latvian government and suchlike political activities.

Since a situation did not arise where the German army was retreating from the territory of Latvia while the Soviet forces had not yet invaded, the LCC did not have the chance to openly proclaim the declaration on the restoration of Latvia's independence that was signed at the last meeting of its leadership in the Riga apartment of Bishop Jāzeps Rancāns on 8 September 1944, which may rather be viewed as a desperate step, thinking of the future, rather than as a real political act with far-reaching consequences. In the course of this meeting, LCC member Pauls Kalniņš, as acting President of Latvia and Speaker of the Saeima, signed a Declaration on the Restoration of the Latvian State and an instruction to establish a Cabinet of Ministers. The declaration stated:

> The Latvian nation has taken over sovereign power in the territory of Latvia freed from foreign rule and has restored the Republic of Latvia as a sovereign state. The Constitution of the Republic of Latvia, as adopted in 1922, is in force from this day in the liberated territory of the state as the fundamental law of the Republic of Latvia, until such time as the constitution is reformed. In accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of Latvia (Article 52), fulfilment of the post of President has passed to me, as Speaker of the last legally elected and legally empowered Saeima. From this day I undertake to fulfil the post of President until the election of a new President in accordance with the procedure envisaged in the Constitution.[26]

Moreover, probably for security reasons, the declaration and instruction signed by Kalniņš was initially left undated: evidently, the LCC planned to date it only in the event that the document was made public, i.e., at an opportune moment when it might be possible to implement the undertaking to restore Latvia's *de facto* sovereignty and form a government. However, because of the rapid developments in the military sphere and the unfavorable military and political situation, such an opportunity never actually arose. That the restoration of independence and formation of a provisional government declared at the LCC leadership meeting in Riga on 8 September 1944 was never communicated more widely is confirmed by the text of a letter written to Latvia by the Latvian envoy Salnais in Stockholm on 11 September: that he had for a long time not received any definite news from the LCC, and had not received information as to whether the LCC had or had not taken a standpoint in the current course of events.

In this atmosphere of uncertainty, Salnais voiced the erroneous prediction that the imminent truce or peace agreement between Finland and the USSR, which would be more like a capitulation, could be followed by a German pull-out of its forces from the Baltic, along with another reminder that the LCC must be ready to take over power. He also suggested that "the LCC should now prepare a new declaration, in which it would announce that it would take over full power at the first opportunity, but that for the moment, as long as the Germans are still to some extent fighting against the Bolsheviks, it urges the people to support this fight, but at the same time it exhorts all patriotic partisans to organize themselves in accordance with the plan developed by the LCC and to be guided in their actions by instructions from the LCC."[27]

The Plans for Armed Insurrection by the General Kurelis Group

From October 1944 onwards, after one occupying power in the Latvian capital Riga had been replaced by another, whereby Kurzeme remained the only region not yet invaded by the Red Army, the efforts to bring about an armed rising and restoration of national sovereignty by the Latvian resistance involved the military unit led by General Jānis Kurelis, which had reached Kurzeme in late September 1944. It had officially been formed on 28 July 1944 in Skrīveri Parish, in the Vidzeme region (north-central Latvia), after the German occupation authorities had permitted a "General Kurelis Group of the Riga Aizsargi Regiment" to be formed from former Home Guard members of the Riga County 2nd, 3rd and 4th Police Districts. It had originally been intended for defense of the anticipated Pļaviņas–Lielvārde sector of the front and for sending specially trained groups to fight as partisans behind the front line, in the Red Army's rear.[28] From 15 August 1944, it operated in accordance with powers granted by

the German 16th Army's 212th Front Reconnaissance Section (*Frontaufklärungstruppe 212*), which were valid up to 15 November, and from 3 November it was subordinated to SS Obergruppenführer Friedrich Jeckeln, Higher SS and Police Leader in Ostland and Northern Russia.[29]

On 23–29 September 1944, the Kurelis Group retreated to Strazde Manor in Talsi County in the Kurzeme region, and on 29 October it arrived in Puze Parish of Ventspils County. In November 1944, the unit was over 3000 strong, and was reinforced by soldiers from the Latvian Legion who did not wish to leave for Germany as well as civilians who had evaded mobilization. The frontline units of the Kurelis Group comprised: the Skrīveri Battalion commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Eduards Graudiņš, stationed at Stikli; a Separate Battalion commanded by Lieutenant Roberts Rubenis, at Ilziķi; a battalion commanded by Vilis Strautnieks, at Ēdole; a company led by Warrant Officer Stenders, at Iliņi; units led by Captain Jansons and Warrant Officer Indulis Dišlers at Smuģi and Piltene; and another 18 smaller mobile units in various parishes of Ventspils and Talsi counties.[30]

Even though the Kurelis Group started out as a legal unit and was subordinate to the military-police structures of the German occupation authorities, it gradually transformed into an autonomous national military unit. The Kurelis Group turned down a proposal that it join the Latvian Legion and fight at the front or operate within the structure of the "National Partisan Headquarters" formed by the SS Jagdverband Ostland, and did not obey Jeckeln's order to submit to the control of the SS and hand over the deserters from the Latvian Legion who had joined their ranks.[31] Instead, the leaders of the Kurelis Group set as their aim the restoration of Latvia's independence at such time when the German Army left the territory of Latvia while the Red Army had not yet conquered it.

In the course of talks with the Kurelis Group, SS Obergruppenführer Jeckeln repeatedly urged General Kurelis to sign a propaganda call for soldiers roaming the forests to sign up to fight at the front. Jeckeln added that they might write in the call that Latvia would be independent after the war, and SS Oberführer Wilhelm Fuchs, Security Police and SD Commander in Ostland, even claimed that "an absolutely definite decision on this matter had been taken by the German government." Captain Upelnieks replied with the request that this be officially published, emphasizing that "an independent Latvia is also the heartfelt wish of every Latvian, including General Kurelis, myself and my people."[32] In their negotiations with the Germans, Kurelis and Upelnieks emphasized that it was not enough for Latvian soldiers to know against whom they were fighting; they also had to have a positive aim: what they were fighting for. Consequently, it was necessary to restore the Republic of Latvia *de facto*, which would make it possible to mobilize 40–50,000 fighters in Kurzeme.

On 16 October 1944, the staff of the Kurelis Group, not having received any specific instructions concerning further activities from the LCC leadership of the time, which was preparing to cross the sea to Sweden from Ventspils, prepared two plans for an armed rising. Upelnieks considered that a situation resembling that of 1919 had developed, in which it was necessary to proclaim Latvia's national independence and form a provisional government, under whose control Latvian and German armed forces in Kurzeme should thereafter fight. The port of Ventspils was to serve as the last path of retreat to Sweden, should it prove impossible to hold Kurzeme. The first of these plans envisaged that the Kurelis Group would be transferred to Sweden in the case of a rapid German evacuation from Kurzeme. For this purpose, it was necessary to secure an enclave along the coast between Ventspils and Liepāja, and to hold it against the Germans and the Russians, so as to facilitate complete evacuation. Since their strength was too small for an operation on this scale, it was decided that they should join forces with units of the Latvian Legion and carry out this operation jointly. In the second case, should it prove impossible to gain control of such an enclave, the plan was to separate into smaller groups, hide in the forests and await an opportune moment to rise up against the Soviet forces.[33]

A reply to these plans was received from LCC representatives in Sweden only in late October or early November 1944, when LCC courier Valentine Jaunzeme arrived at the Kurelis headquarters, reporting that:

> (1) On 25 October, L. Siliņš met with staff of the British intelligence service SIS[34] in Sweden and received confirmation that Britain would provide aid to the LCC, if the British fleet were in the Baltic Sea in April or May, and if the Germans were still in Kurzeme at that time. (2) The Swedish government, after diplomatic talks with the USSR, had forbidden the LCC's illegal boat traffic, but this would henceforth be facilitated by the British SIS. (3) All the members of the future Latvian government had already been transferred to Sweden. (4) J. Kurelis is appointed Minister of War and President of Latvia pending an announcement on the future Latvian government.[35]

Thus, the two plans of the Kurelis Group were neither endorsed or rejected. According to information from Sweden, the Germans would not hold Kurzeme longer than three months, and at the time when they retreated the British fleet was to enter the Baltic and would assist the Kurelis Group in their evacuation to Sweden. In accordance with the information they received, the leaders of the Kurelis Group understood that it was in their interests for the German forces to stay in Kurzeme for at least three or four months more.

Confirmation of this information comes from a radio telegram published by Leonids Siliņš, received in Kurzeme on 9 November 1944 from the LCC leadership in Sweden, which stated that "the instructions from British representatives are to hold Kurzeme until such time as the British and American fleet enters the Baltic Sea. The time when the fleet will enter the Baltic cannot be determined. Depending on conditions and the means at your disposal, you must decide whether this can be done and act accordingly. Local conditions permitting, it may be necessary to declare the restoration of Latvian national sovereignty. If the LCC does not form a provisional government locally, which would issue the proclamation, then such a proclamation should be issued by the commander-in-chief of the armed forces General Kurelis, who, until such time as the provisional government has been formed, shall take over all military and civil authority. In such a case the composition of the provisional government will be announced later."[36]

It is also necessary to consider the information given after the war by Vilis Pāvulāns, staff sergeant of the Kurelis Group, that a similar message from Sweden, namely that "the plan is aborted, go to Sweden or Germany. Henceforth we will send messages only concerning transport" was received even earlier, on 27/28 September 1944.[37] This does, however, seem less credible, because it comes soon after the Kurelis Group's move to Kurzeme, and it may be that Pāvulāns simply erred with regard to the month and date. On the other hand, only shortly before this, on 22 September, the Red Army had occupied Tallinn, thus preventing the activities of the provisional government of Otto Tief, which had been formed by the Estonian resistance, and in the coming days took the whole territory of Estonia. These events could have played a decisive role in the deliberations and strategic plans of the Western allies' military institutions with regard to the future of the Baltic States.

One is forced to conclude that, for objective and subjective reasons, the activities of the Kurelis Group, and especially that of the LCC representatives in Kurzeme and Sweden, with regard to starting an armed rising, proclaiming Latvia's independence and announcing a provisional government, were inadequately coordinated and indecisive. On the one hand, this allowed the LCC leaders to avoid possible persecution by the Nazi or Soviet occupation regime and instead flee as refugees to neutral Sweden; on the other hand, this contradicted to some degree the goals of the resistance movement and its sacrifices in the struggle to restore Latvia's independence.

It seems the position of the top commanders of the Kurelis Group in seeking to preserve the lives of their soldiers up to the last moment, rather than wasting them in an unequal battle against an overwhelming enemy, is revealed quite precisely in the characterization of General Jānis Kurelis by LCC radio telegraphist Boriss Mangolds

as a person who perceived clearly that Germany would lose the war and that Latvia could not expect any Western aid, and nevertheless, in thinking with foresight of the future "purposefully, through the provision of military intelligence to the Swedes 'paid' for the favor of the Swedish government towards the LCC and the transport it was organizing primarily for social activists, intellectuals and political refugees."[38]

A similar impression comes across from the determination recorded in the staff diary of the Kurelis Group to retain patience and endurance to the last, even if it should prove necessary to "die in battle for Latvia."[39] The drama of the time is vividly conveyed in a letter written by Captain Upelnieks on 13 October 1944 in Strazde to his 15-year-old daughter Lauma, who had already gone to Germany as a refugee: "We believe in Latvia, even though our skies are at presently covered in very heavy, dark cloud. Every evening and morning, and waking in the middle of the night, I pray to God for you, my beloved child, so that God might bring you back to Latvia alive and well. I hope that God will allow me to experience this joy. But if not: be a good person and a good Latvian. If indeed we are to die – Latvia will live. We will sell our lives as dearly as we can."[40]

Defiance by Lieutenant Rubenis' Battalion

Reacting to the way the Kurelis Group was avoiding compliance with the orders they had been issued, and aware of the anti-German national orientation of Kurelis's officers and their foreign contacts, on the early morning of 14 November, German SS and SD units with more than 700 soldiers led by SS Obergruppenführer Jeckeln stormed Stikli, surprising the guards, smashing the telephone equipment and surrounding and arresting the staff of the Kurelis Group. In order to intimidate them, they shelled them with mortars, killing two women and wounding three soldiers. Additionally, German and Soviet agents had infiltrated the Kurelis Group, and there was no proper system for defense or communication. The leaders of the group knew they might be surrounded, disarmed and disbanded, but were not prepared for an open battle with the Germans.[41]

About 1000 members of the Kurelis Group were incarcerated in Talsi, Ventspils and Liepāja, subsequently being sent to the concentration camps of Stutthof, Buchenwald, Neuengamme and near Königsberg. Many of them were later transferred to construction battalions or the Latvian Legion and sent to the front.[42] In order to avoid distressing the Latvian public, General Kurelis and his family were sent to Danzig at the disposal of the staff of the Inspector-General of the Latvian Legion. The rest of the staff officers were taken to Talsi, where, imprisoned in an abandoned shop, they quietly spent Latvia's national day, 18 November. Paradoxically, the red-white-red

Latvian flags had been hung out in the town streets for the occasion, while the people arrested for their efforts to liberate Latvia were awaiting an unknown fate.

On the night of 19–20 November 1944, a so-called state-of-exception war tribunal was held in the security investigation prison in Liepāja. It was an open show of contempt, because the interrogator and interpreter were drunk, and no statements were taken into account. Already on the afternoon of 20 November, eight staff officers and technical staff of the Kurelis Group were shot in Liepāja Military Harbor: Colonel Pēteris Liepiņš, Captain Kristaps Upelnieks, Captain Jūlijs Mucenieks, First Lieutenant Jānis Gregors, First Lieutenant Teodors Prikulis, First Lieutenant Jānis Rasa, Lieutentant Filipsons and Adjutant Kārlis Valters. Three of the accused, namely Lieutenant General E. Grauduņš, Lieutentant Ankravs and Sergeant V. Pāvulāns, had their sentences commuted.[43]

The final report on the events by SS Obergruppenführer Jeckeln on 21 November 1944 included the statements that Kurelis' agents had been carrying out recruitment in the port of Liepāja, spreading information that General Kurelis had received certain guarantees from Britain. One of the arrested Kurelis radio operators had apparently said that another radio operator had been given the task of going to Sweden. Also noted was the establishment of contacts by the Kurelis Group with Latvian diplomats L. Sēja (intended: V. Salnais) in Stockholm, Kārlis Zariņš in London and Alfrēds Bīlmanis in Washington, who were claimed to be acting as intermediaries for contacts with the West via Sweden.[44]

The German surrender demand was rejected by the unit under the command of Lieutenant Roberts Rubenis, stationed on the Ilziķi farmstead and in bunkers in the forest. It consisted of four companies (two heavy companies, one machine gun company and one rifle company), as well as supply columns with 23 horse-drawn carts, with a total strength of about 500–600.[45] After the German 594th Rear Service and 18th Army Corps units had interned about 1000 members of the Kurelis Group, the Rubenis unit refused to disarm and retreated into the forest tracts south-east of Lake Usma, where they continued their resistance. During a battle near Renda on 18 November 1944, Rubenis was fatally wounded, and command of the battalion was taken over by Warrant Officer Aleksandrs Druviņš. Initially, a German battalion commanded by an officer named Schatz was sent to attack the Rubenis unit, along with other SS and SD units. Having suffered significant losses in the Battle of Renda on 18 November, the German units were supplemented with the formation of a reinforced battalion under Captain Held, having a strength of four companies (140 men in each), together with reconnaissance companies, destroyer companies with mortars and a heavy anti-tank gun, along with other German SS and SD units.[46]

The fighting against the Germans recommenced on 6 December in the forest tract between the Zlēkas–Cirkale road and the River Abava. The following morning at Kunarāji Dam, the Rubenis unit killed SS Obersturmbannführer Kurt Krause, the former commander of Salaspils camp, along with Captain Held and other German officers. Repulsing many enemy attacks, the Rubenis unit continued the fight until 9 December, when, following the orders of its last commander Druviņš, it separated into smaller groups and successfully escaped the encirclement. It is estimated that approximately 50 soldiers of the Rubenis unit were killed in these battles, while the units fighting on the German side lost about 250 men.[47]

The capacity for resistance of the battalion led by Rubenis was also affected by the fact that it had been formed as a regular army unit, rather than an armed unit consisting of smaller and more mobile battle groups intended specifically for partisan warfare. Its bunkers had been built more as shelters for the winter of 1944/1945, rather than for mobile defense against armed units of the Nazis or the Soviet occupation regime that would replace them. Although the battalion did include men who had served in the Latvian Legion and had fighting experience on the Eastern Front, most of the soldiers had no such experience. The battalion's movements were also hindered by the large quantities of food and ammunition that had been brought over from Vidzeme, and the civilian refugees accompanying the unit. The system for reconnoitering the surrounding area and maintaining communications was also inadequate. Accordingly, in these very adverse conditions, the resistance to the military forces of the German occupation by the battalion of Lieutenant Rubenis, lasting almost a month, can be regarded as a major achievement.[48]

Part of the Rubenis unit, after their battles with the Germans and hiding in the forest, were brought to the 212th Front Reconnaissance Section and other German military intelligence units, or else were forced, as a matter of survival, to make contact with the Soviet fighters who had taken up positions in the forests of Kurzeme. At the same time, we may reject the erroneous assertion commonly made in the historical literature that the Rubenis battalion engaged in joint battles with the Soviet subversive unit Sarkanā bulta (Red Arrow) during the Zlēkas punitive expedition on 6–9 December, because, in spite of claims made in post-war historical works, the Soviet fighters had concealed themselves in the Upati forest district and did not take part in the fighting against the Germans.[49] It remains to establish the fate of several hundred former members of the Kurelis Group, part of whom tried in the spring of 1945 to reach the Kurzeme coast and cross over to Sweden in boats, while many others continued to fight for Latvia's freedom as post-war national partisans.

Future research might investigate the formation and activities of military units consisting of deserters from the Latvian Legion and other similar units, assessing

these outside of Soviet ideological strictures. Such research could also examine the contacts they maintained with Soviet fighters and reconnaissance groups for practical reasons, rather than because they shared their political views or goals, and their armed resistance to various military police structures of the Nazi occupation in Kurzeme.[50] For example, there was a partisan group commanded by Lieutenant Edvīns Zelmenis, mainly consisting of about 180 former Latvian Legion servicemen, in the forests of Engure, which engaged in battles with German forces in the Ādleri Forest district on 27–30 October 1944. Then there was a military unit led by Kārlis Salmiņš (Sniedziņš), consisting of 32 Latvian and two German soldiers, defeated in a battle on 1 January 1945 in the Zūras forest tract of Ventspils County. Further, there were the approximately 100-strong Ūķenes mežinieki (Ūķene Foresters), led by Warrant Officer Aleksandrs-Ernests Trukmanis in Semba Bog, Talsi County in December 1944 – May 1945. And there is the question of the fate of the company of 70 Latvian soldiers led by Ernests Pagasts, which had taken up position on the Biema headland at the shore of Lake Usma, when they tried to cross the Kurzeme front in January 1945 in the Saldus–Skrunda area. The history of other nationally oriented armed units also remains to be studied.[51]

Conclusions

At the time when one occupying power in Latvia was succeeded by another, for objective reasons the LCC did not manage to set up an effective Latvian provisional government and realize its plan to receive military aid from abroad, and thus could not make effective use of the military potential of the group led by General Kurelis and other Latvian units with the aim of regaining Latvia's independence. This was also precluded by the general course of World War II and the international situation as it affected the warring sides. The defiance shown by the Rubenis battalion turned out to be the final episode in the attempts by members of the Latvian resistance to engage in armed struggle against both the Nazi and the Soviet occupation in Kurzeme in the final phase of the war.

The most recent historical research offers very contradictory assessments of the political and military strivings of the LCC and the Kurelis Group in Nazi-occupied Latvia, and they require more detailed investigation in the future. British historian Geoffrey Swain sees the LCC as a major center of national resistance, under the leadership of which various underground organizations and armed units were formed across Latvia. In his view, the LCC had real military potential, and its ideas coincided with the standpoint of a large section of society in Latvia. He considers that the LCC's activities have not been sufficiently appreciated in current Latvian historical research

and in the historical consciousness of society, and he rejects the idea that in 1944–1945 the LCC members were being deluded as to the possibility of British assistance, and that for this reason their activity does not deserve to be taken seriously.[52]

On the other hand, Latvian historian Andis Rasums considers that, while individual LCC members and the commanders of the Kurelis Group did plan to turn this group into the core of a Latvian national army, the majority of the soldiers mainly wished to survive and make it through to the end of the war. In his view, the intransigence of the Kurelis Group's commanders, defying the orders of Obergruppenführer Jeckeln, Higher SS and Police Leader in Ostland and Northern Russia, and thus exposing more than a thousand men to the risk of annihilation, is quite incomprehensible. In his view, it was altogether naive to imagine that the Germans would passively look on as a large, armed military unit developed and existed in their rear, refusing their orders, moreover at a time when each and every soldier was needed at the front. Because of the intransigence of the Kurelis Group's commanders, Latvia lost about 1000 men who later could have contributed to the national partisan struggle.[53]

Even though the military plans and attempts by the LCC and the Kurelis Group to resist the Nazis, and then potentially also the Soviet occupation, ended in failure, the existence of such goals and the individual attempts to attain them demonstrated the wish on the part of the Latvian people to realize its right of self-determination and live in a restored independent Latvian state, rather than submit to the Nazi German or Soviet occupation regimes. Accordingly, ideas expressed in the most recent historical literature, namely that the national resistance under the German occupation was not capable of presenting a real threat of any kind to the stability of the Nazi occupation regime or influencing the residents of Latvia, must be regarded as overly modest, and possibly influenced by the intentionally misleading ideas promoted for many decades in Soviet historical literature and among the public.[54]

Rather, it transpires that only in the future, by identifying new historical sources and critically evaluating the currently available sources and research, will we be able to draw maximally comprehensive conclusions regarding the significance and social impact of the Latvian resistance movement during the occupation, including its military plans and attempts, and shed more light on such questions as the social background of the participants in the resistance movement, their political orientation and regional distribution, the intensity of such activities, etc. This will also permit us to evaluate more seriously than hitherto the activities of the resistance movement during the German occupation in the overall context of the whole period of occupation in Latvia's history, and in the frame of resistance, cooperation, adaptation and survival during this time.

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[41] "Bericht über die Auflösung des Verbandes des Lettischen Generals Kurelis," 21.11.1945. BArch, R 90/4; Lagebericht Kurland, Hasselmann, [23.11.1944.]. Bundesarchiv–Militärarchiv, Freiburg (BArch-MA), RH 2/2129.

[42] Report by Colonel J.Palkavnieks, Chairman of the Special Military Court, on the investigation of former members of the Kurelis group in Stutthof concentration camp, 1 Dec. 1944. LOM, Inv. no. OMF 11650/68; HI, Latviešu Centrālā komiteja, Box. 1. Dzintars Ērglis, "Nacistu arestēto kureliešu liecības Hūvera institūta arhīvā," *Latvijas Vēstures Institūta Žurnāls*, 3 (2010): 152–60.

[43] Report by Major K.Augstkalns with notes by General J.Kurelis on the formation and activities of his group, 23 November 1944. LOM, Inv. no. OMF 11650/67.

[44] "Bericht über die Auflösung des Verbandes des Lettischen Generals Kurelis," 1.11.1945. BArch, R 90/4. Vilis Samsons, ed., *Latvijas suverenitātes ideja likteņgriežos: Vācu okupācijas laika dokumenti. 1941–1945* (Rīga: Zinātne, 1990) 158–62.

[45] Uldis Neiburgs, "Leitnanta Rubeņa bataljons: Kureļa grupas darbības militārie aspekti," *Virzība uz demokrātisko Eiropu 2. pasaules kara laikā*, ed. Inesis Feldmanis (Rīga: LU Akadēmiskais apgāds, 2010) 101–09.

[46] BArch-MA, RH 20-16/611. Heinrihs Strods, ed., *Latvijas nacionālo partizānu karš: Dokumenti un materiāli 1944–1956* (Rīga: Preses nams, 1999) 70–75.

[47] Material in the Lieutenant Rubenis Battalion Museum in Ugāle.

[48] Valdis Kuzmins, "Rubeņa bataljona cīņas Kurzemē." *Vide. Vara. Varoņi. Zinātniska konference veltīta cilvēku likteņiem Kurzemē II pasaules kara laikā* (Ugāle: Rubeņa bataljona muzejs, 2012) 57–68.

[49] Material on the expedition to Zlēkas, 1961, LKM, Inv. no. RM 4-56150/900-VIII; BArch-MA, RH 20-16/613. Biezais, *Kurelieši*, 93–94.

[50] Vilis Samsons, *Kurzemes meži šalc... Partizāņu un izlūku cīņa kara pēdējā gadā Kurzemē 1944–1945* (Rīga: Liesma, 1974) 249–309.

[51] BArch-MA, RH 24-1/289; LVA, 1986-2-P-3100; Archive of the Latvian Academy of Sciences, 40-5-22, 225.–342. lp., Herberts Knēts, "Cilvēku likteņi Kurzemē Otrā pasaules kara laikā,"*Vide. Vara. Varoņi*, *Zinātniska konference veltīta cilvēku likteņiem Kurzemē II pasaules kara laikā* (Ugāle: Rubeņa bataljona muzejs, 2012) 57–68.

[52] Geoffrey Swain, "Latvia's Democratic Resistance: a Forgotten Episode from the Second World War, *European History Quarterly*, 39.2 (2009): 260–61.

[53] Andis Rasums, "Nacistiskās Vācijas specdienestu slepenās operācijas – kurelieši un 'mežakaķi' (1944–1945): kopīgais un atšķirīgais," *Latvijas vēsture krustcelēs un jaunu pieeju meklējumos*, ed. Inesis Feldmanis and Jānis Taurēns (Rīga: LU Akadēmiskais apgāds, 2014) 281–82.

[54] Tālavs Jundzis and Zigmārs Turčinskis, "Resistance to the Soviet and Nazi Regimes in Latvia, 1940–1985," *Latvia and Latvians*, ed. Jānis Stradiņš, vol. 2 (Riga: Latvian Academy of Sciences, 2018) 724.

Zigmārs Turčinskis

The Latvian Armed Resistance Movements Against the Soviet Occupation 1944–1957

Armed resistance to the Soviet regime in Latvia after World War II, taking the form of warfare waged by the national partisans, was not a local or unique phenomenon. Such fighting also took place in Lithuania, Estonia and in the western parts of Ukraine and Belarus, namely in countries that the USSR had occupied and completely annexed. In contrast to the rest of Eastern Europe, these countries had not even been allowed to keep an illusion of independence. It may be said that the struggle of the national partisans demonstrated these people's desperate wish to break out of the politically and mentally alien yoke of Soviet occupation.

In most of Europe, World War II ended on 8 May 1945, but in these countries it continued right up to the early 1950s. At the time of the worldwide Cold War, the war here was a very real one, with bloody battles, the murder of civilians, arrests and deportations. Overwhelmed by mass persecution and a sense of hopelessness, partisan warfare began to dwindle only in about 1953. The last armed resistance fighters gave up the struggle only in 1957.

When the second Soviet occupation began, no groundwork for a resistance movement had been laid in Latvia: there were no bases for support, no communications, not even an understanding of the struggle that lay ahead. There existed no Latvian state that could have initiated the struggle. Neither were there any outside powers giving real organizational and material support to the armed resistance movement. In the chaos of retreat, the Germans did make a last-ditch effort to set up groups of Latvian subversives, but the formation of these groups remained incomplete, and they disintegrated in the space of a couple of months.

The Beginnings of the National Partisan War. August 1944 – May 1945

The fighting began quite spontaneously. The first armed clashes came about as a result of the mobilization into the Red Army announced by the new occupiers. This was declared in the first days of August 1944. About 20% of the men called up did not submit to the mobilization, either simply ignoring the call-up notices or else deserting at the first opportunity.[1] The first armed clashes resulted from the NKVD forces' attempts to catch draft-dodgers. On 27 August 1944, the first armed engagement took place between residents of Latvia and the occupation forces. Thus, while inspecting farms in Baltinava civil parish, Abrene County, four NKVD soldiers went missing.[2]

Initially, partisan activities took place mainly in the eastern counties of Latvia, in Latgale, where partisans began organizing in the winter of 1944/1945. The climax was a battle in Stampaki Bog, where 350 partisans had assembled and established a permanent camp. On 2 March 1945, Stampaki Bog was encircled by the NKVD forces, with a strength of 483. As a result, the battle, in which the forces were initially rather equal, continued the whole day. In the night, the partisans abandoned their camp and, having broken out of the encirclement, dispersed to previously established hideouts across Abrene County. In the Stampaki battle, the Soviet side lost at least 32 men, while the partisans lost 28.[3]

In central Latvia the situation was still relatively calm. Partisan groups began to form in the Vidzeme region only in May 1945, when the snow melted and the warm weather made it possible for men hiding out illegally to meet up. In many locations, small groups of 5–20 men formed, which disarmed, beat and in some cases killed the more active local collaborators.[4]

In the Kurzeme region, western Latvia, armed resistance began after the capitulation of the German Army Group Kurland. Several thousand soldiers and officers of the Latvian 19th Division refused to submit to the capitulation, and instead went to the forests and continued the fight as national partisans. Very active fighting took place in the first days after capitulation, when massed forces of the Red Army systematically combed the forests and searched homes. A vivid testimony to these battles is to be found in Talsi, a small town in the north of Kurzeme, where no fighting took place during World War II. Nevertheless, there is a Red Army cemetery in the town, with about 150 burials. The names and dates of death of 89 of the men buried here are known, and in fact 67 of them (75.28 %) were killed in the period from 8 May 1945 up to 1950.[5]

After seeking to suppress armed resistance with the help of the Red Army in Kurzeme in the summer of 1945, the occupiers tried to do the same in the Latgale region

of eastern Latvia. In the period from 31 May to 9 August, an operation under the code name *Vostok* was carried out in the eastern counties of Latvia, involving four Red Army divisions and three battalions of the NKVD forces. The military combed the forests methodically, but they only killed 21 partisans and wounded seven. Meanwhile, the filtration process resulted in the detainment of 3471 people, which means that the Red Army was engaged more in a struggle with the civilian population than with partisans.[6]

The forest-combing by the army did not actually interrupt partisan activities at all. The partisan attacks were directed against the parish and village executive committees. In such cases, people were spared if they put up no resistance. Secondly, attacks were directed against Soviet activists: party organizers, NKVD personnel, Communist Youth organizers and executive committee chairmen. These collaborators received no mercy. By such means, the national partisans would usually paralyze or restrict the activities of the Soviet civil authorities. This could affect whole counties. A representative of the Latvian Communist (Bolshevik) Party from Ilūkste complained that "the party committee can't even put a head out the window." During a ten-day period in July 1945, a total of 32 Soviet officials were shot in Ilūkste County, and another 10 were wounded. Essentially, the Soviets had control only in the county seat, Ilūkste.[7]

The situation was similar in other places as well. In Abrene County the partisans completely paralyzed the activities of the village soviets: 30% were wiped out and 30% never even managed to start their activities. The partisans also attacked strongly defended parish centers. On the night of 4/5 July 1945, 50 men under Heinrihs Vestmanis ("Bārda") captured the parish center of Tilža in Abrene County, burning down the executive committee and five other buildings. The partisans also freed 11 people from the local NKVD prison.[8]

National Partisan Organizations

In the course of their armed struggle the partisans established several large as well as small organizations. The North Kurzeme Partisan Organization (1945) operated in northern Kurzeme, in the forests of Dundaga and Ventspils, while Kurzeme's largest partisan organization, the Latvian National Partisan Organization (LNPO, 1945–47), operated in the central part of the region, in the area around Kuldīga and Talsi. The Tēvijas Vanagi (Hawks of the Fatherland) league was formed in the Liepāja area (1947). In the Ērgļi area of Vidzeme, the fight was undertaken by members of the "Latvian Self-Defence" partisan organization (1944–45). The Latvian Defenders of the Fatherland (Partisan) League" (LDF(P)L, 1945–46) encompassed southern Latgale, the Sēlija region and partly also Vidzeme. This organization based its structure on that of the Latvian army, dividing the partisans into platoons, companies, battalions and regiments,

and seeking to create division-level structures.[9] The Latvian National Partisan League (LNPL) operated in northern Latgale and the northern and central parts of Vidzeme (1944–53). The North Latgale Independence Unit (NLIU, 1947–51) was active in Rēzekne County and partly also Viļaka County. Most of the partisan organizations managed to continue their activities for a year or two, but the oldest of them, the LNPL, was active for as many as nine years: from 10 December 1944 up to 15 January 1953.[10]

All of the national partisan organizations had as the goal of their struggle the restoration of Latvia's national independence, as emphasized in their founding documents and statutes. For instance, article 1 of the LNPL statutes declared: "We fight: for the restoration of the *de facto* sovereignty (independence) of the Latvian state, based on the still legally valid democratic legislation of the Latvian Constitutional Assembly and the Declaration of United Nations, in accordance with which the Latvian people must themselves be masters of their land and decide its future."[11]

The statutes of the LDF(p)L stated that the organization was acting "In accordance with the undivided wishes and strivings of the whole Latvian people to regain its own Nationally Independent, Democratic Latvian state, basing these strivings on the proclamation of the independent, democratic Latvian state founded already on 18 November 1918, recognized by all peoples and states of the world, and on the guarantee in the statutes of the international 'United Nations' organization."[12] The LDF(p)L promised "To use all the forces and means at its disposal to further the attainment of the stated aims."[13]

Each partisan organization also sought to publish underground news bulletins and various proclamations, which were typewritten and duplicated on carbon paper. Altogether during the partisan struggle they published at least 14 different news bulletins, with a circulation of 10 up to about 100. However, the last of these news bulletins, *Dzimtene* in 1950, was handwritten by the partisans, because technical equipment was no longer available.[14]

The continual organization and re-organization, along with the extensive propaganda activity, show that, rather than simply acting out of desperation to save their own lives, the partisans were consciously engaged in purposeful activity in order to fight for Latvia's independence and remind the people of this struggle.

Latvian National Partisan League (LNPL)

The Latvian National Partisan League (LNPL; Latvijas Nacionālo partizānu apvienība) was established on 10 December 1944 in the civil parish of Viļaka in Abrene County. The leader was Pēteris Supe ("Cinītis"). Staņislavs Ločmelis ("Dūze"), former student of the Faculty of Economics, University of Latvia, became the second-in-command,

and Antons Circāns ("Vārpa") became the head of the Communications Section of their headquarters. The authority of the partisans was enhanced by the involvement of Ludvigs Štagars ("Pabērzs"), the dean of Šķilbēni Catholic parish. At the time it was established, the LNPL brought together 123 partisans, and after the establishment of a joint camp in Stampaki Bog in the parish of Viļaka, there were about 350 partisans active in the organization. The LNPL reached its maximum strength of about 1000 in the autumn of 1945. On the other hand, in terms of territory the LNPL attained its maximum in the summer of 1946, when it controlled partisan groups in the counties of Viļaka, Alūksne, Valka, Gulbene and Cēsis, and partly also in Madona County.[15]

On 2 March 1945, the camp in Stampaki Bog was encircled by NKVD forces together with a military unit of *istrebiteli* ("destroyers"), consisting of local collaborators, giving a total strength of 483. The attackers were convinced that the camp held only about 30–35 "bandits." As a result, the battle, begun with fairly evenly matched forces, continued the whole day long. During the night, the partisans abandoned the camp and, having broken through the encirclement, dispersed to previously arranged hideouts in the whole of Abrene County. In the Stampaki battle, the Soviet side lost at least 32 men, while the partisans lost 28.[16]

Because of the continual battles, there were very frequent changes in the leadership of the LNPL. Thus, in February 1945 the leadership of the LNPL was taken over by a professional officer, former Latvian army Captain Rolands Ozols ("Kapteinis Bārda"), who fell in battle on 28 April 1945.[17] Ločmelis ("Dūze") died of injuries on 26 March. After this, the LNPL was led by Pēteris Supe, who was killed by a secret police agent on 1 April 1946 along with his second-in-command, Captain Heinrihs Auseklis ("Tērauds").[18] After Supe's death the leadership of the partisan organization was taken over by Antons Circāns ("Vārpa"), having served until then as the head of the LNPL Communications Section.

The new leader reformed the LNPL structure, establishing several regional headquarters, because the central headquarters lacked the means of communication to direct its many groups. The LNPL Alūksne Sector, led by Jānis Liepacis ("Captain Skujiņš"), operated in the eastern part of Alūksne County. The LNPL North-East Vidzeme Headquarters, led by Latvian army Lieutenant Elmārs Ginds ("Garais"), commander of the Sinole Parish partisans, was formed in Valka County and the western part of Alūksne County. The partisans of Cēsis County were under the LNPL Central Vidzeme Headquarters, headed by Kārlis Rusovs ("Salna"), former Cesvaine Grammar School teacher. And the North Latgale Area Headquarters operated in Viļaka County of the Latgale region, led by Latvian army lieutenant Broņislavs Sluckis ("Indulis").

In the initial period after it was established, the LNPL did not issue any written documents. These appear only starting from April and May 1945, and by June

and July they were being compiled on a mass scale. Evidently, the leaders of the organization began to appreciate that the struggle would be longer than they had initially hoped and that they also had to create a legal basis. In July 1945, the LNPL issued a program for their struggle, initially written by hand in a squared notebook. Representatives of the LNPL headquarters presented it to be signed by the commander of each group which had joined or planned to join the LNPL. It stated:

> We fight:
> 1. for the restoration of the *de facto* sovereignty (independence) of the Latvian state, based on the still legally valid democratic legislation of the Latvian Constitutional Assembly and the Declaration of United Nations, in accordance with which the Latvian people must themselves be masters of their land and decide its future.
> 2. Against despotic Soviet rule imposed by force, which has illegally falsified the will of the people, and which is the oppressor of the people – against Soviet rule, against the dictatorship of the Bolshevik Party, against its class-conflict ideology and its social order of servitude in Latvia.
>
> [...]
>
> We fight:
> 1. For the expression of the true will of the Latvian people in general, direct, secret elections to the *Saeima* and municipal authorities.
> 2. For the participation of all parties and all citizens of the Free Latvian state in elections, regardless of class, ethnic affiliation, religion, social background, education or property status.
> 3. For the withdrawal of the Red Army and Cheka organs from the territory of Latvia, so that completely free elections may take place in the very near future, in the spirit of the United Nations Charter.
> 4. For the return to the territory of Latvia of all the Latvian citizens who have been arrested and deported by the Russian occupiers and the German occupiers.[19]

In the second decade of October 1945, Circāns, as head of the LNPL headquarters Communications Section, arrived at Strautmaļi in Grundzāle, Valka County, where a meeting was held of the commanders of the partisan groups from the area. The participants included Arsēnijs Dreijblats, former history and sports teacher of Gaujiena Grammar School, who commanded the groups from Gaujiena, Aleksandrs Sarja, who commanded the partisans of Birzuļi parish, and the partisan courier Paulis Birzulis, pastor of the Birzuļi, Aumeistari and Velēna congregations.[20] At this meeting, a proclamation was written, addressed to the partisans of northern Vidzeme, in which the LNPL leaders strove to explain the goals and significance of their struggle to the partisans and to the population at large. It reads:

> In these harsh times of suffering, when, as a result of international events, the Asiatic Bolshevik regime has won control of a major theatre of war and is beginning to threaten democracy around the world, on account of its geopolitical and strategic situation, the very basis of the existence of our Latvian people is under threat from Bolshevik power.
>
> In 1940, brutally violating the non-aggression and friendship pacts, the Bolshevik Russian Empire occupied Latvia.
>
> In terms of international law, this act of violence has not ended the existence of the free Latvian state.
>
> In 1941, the Russian occupation was succeeded by a German military occupation, equally hostile to the Latvians.
>
> In 1944, with the military defeat of Germany, Latvia once again came under Bolshevik rule.
>
> The facts demonstrate that Russian Bolshevism, in cooperation with a small number of bought-up traitors among ethnic Latvians, has decided to wipe out the Latvian people.
>
> The arrest, deportation to Russia or torment in the Cheka torture chambers of nationally oriented Latvians is continuing unabated. A systematic destruction of the Latvian economy, and in particular the farmers, is being undertaken; the church is being persecuted, and all freedom of speech is suppressed.
>
> The Bolsheviks attack Latvian intellectuals with particular determination. [...]
>
> As a result of such actions, the Latvian land has been emptied of its Latvian population. Some of them have managed to save themselves from the terrible persecution in the forests of their homeland. [...]
>
> We fight and will continue to fight against the dictatorship of the Bolshevik party in Latvia, against the destruction of the farmers, against the introduction of collective farms, against persecution of religion and the Church.
>
> We fight and shall continue to fight for a democratic Latvia; we demand equality of all classes and social strata.
>
> We demand the implementation in Latvia of the San Francisco Charter of the United Nations on the equality and self-determination of peoples, holding democratic elections."[21]

Also meriting special emphasis is a phrase from the partisans' declaration that seems highly significant today, particularly in the context of our allies, the USA and NATO: "We wish to remain in the circle of European culture, and so our orientation is Anglo-American."[22] Nowadays, Latvia is a NATO member state and may feel reasonably secure even in an unstable international situation. The national partisans after World War II could only dream of such a state of affairs.

The LNPL was a sufficiently strong adversary to win a degree of respect from its direct enemies, the NKVD and NKGB. In the autumn of 1945 this resulted

in one of the most unusual events in the partisan war: a truce between the LNPL partisan groups and the NKVD and NKGB sections in Valka County. An active role in concluding this truce was played by pastor Eduards Grāvītis of the Zeltiņi Lutheran Congregation, who had gone underground. The truce was concluded in the building of the executive committee of Alsviķi civil parish, Valka County, by Lieutenant Colonel Korneyev, head of the Latvian SSR NKVD OBB,[23] and Antons Circāns ("Vārpa"), head of the Communications Section of the LNPL headquarters. The truce applied throughout Valka County and was in force from 28 September up to 9 October 1945.

It seems that one year later the partisans had decided to continue these "diplomatic relations." On 8 August 1946, the chairman of the Lizums Parish Executive Committee in Cēsis County received a letter that he handed over right away to the Latvian SSR MVD OBB section, which was directly responsible for the struggle against "nationalist bandits." This was a "Memorandum from the Free Fatherland League, the Latvian National Partisan League and representatives of workers, farmers and intellectuals" addressed to A. Kirhenšteins, Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Latvian SSR, V. Lācis, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Latvian SSR and J. Kalnbērziņš, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Latvian Communist Party (Bolsheviks). On 21 September, having been translated into Russian, it reached one of the addressees, namely V. Lācis, attached to a letter from the Latvian SSR MVD minister, marked "Top secret." The memorandum read:

> The decision by the Saeima to ask the Supreme Soviet of the USSR to allow the Latvian SSR to join the USSR, following the occupation of Latvia on 17 June 1940 and the declaration of a Soviet Socialist Republic, is illegal, because it does not comply with international law, which has been given legal force by the Hague Convention in 1940, and does not comply with the state constitution passed in 1922 with a referendum [...] Thus, Latvia's annexation by the USSR was illegal, a gross violation of international law and the state constitution. Likewise, according to the charter passed by the United Nations in 1945, which once again recognizes and reaffirms that the future of each people, large or small, shall be determined by that people's will, as expressed in free, proportional, direct and open elections, this act of violence is illegal.

Essentially, the authors of the memorandum were adhering to the doctrine of continuity, which was to prove exceptionally significant in the process of regaining Latvia's independence. On this basis, the authors demanded an end to persecution and terror against the civil population, and the withdrawal from Latvia of the "forces of Russian occupation – the Red Army, NKVD and NKGB units." The demand

was expressed that a free referendum be held already in 1946 on whether Latvia should stay in the USSR or leave it. “Failing this, in order to fight against the current lawlessness and violence [...], we will be forced to resist with all the means at our disposal, so as to prevent the annihilation of the Latvian people and the destruction of the Latvian state.”

The authors of the memorandum were LNPL Head of Staff Antons Circāns (“Vārpa”), along with the Staff Secretary Vilis Toms (“Kārlēns”), head of the Information and Propaganda section Oļģerts Melderis (“Siliņš”) and head of the LNPL Central Vidzeme Region Kārlis Rusovs. The authors did not, of course, receive any reply to the memorandum. However, as shown by the archive documents, the Russian translation was at least received by Vilis Lācis, who must have become acquainted with it.

The situation in the partisan war was changing all the time. Partisan groups were destroyed and their commanders killed or captured, but new leaders emerged in their place. On 25 October 1946, the LNPL North-East Vidzeme Headquarters group was surrounded and destroyed. Its leader Ginds and four partisans were killed, and one was captured.

The partisans were becoming aware that freedom would come neither that year nor the next, but most probably many years later. In the issue of the news bulletin *Tālavas Taure* marking Latvia’s national day, 18 November 1946, the Information and Propaganda Section of the LNPL North-Eastern Vidzeme Headquarters wrote:

> Free Latvia is not lost; it lives on in our hearts, our thoughts and our dreams. The story of 18 November is preserved by the father for his son, and by the mother for her daughter. This gives us unshakeable faith that, when commemorating 18 November and bringing flowers to the heroes, we will once again be able to sing “God, Bless Latvia!” proudly and in safety.[24]

On 7 July 1947, while in the process of organizing a conference of the Vidzeme groups, LNPL commander Circāns was killed. After his death, the central headquarters group of the LNPL went out of existence.[25] Real control over the activities of the LNPL passed to the regional Alūksne Sector and the Central Vidzeme and North Latgale Headquarters. In 1948, there were 40 LNPL partisans in the Alūksne Sector, 45 in central Vidzeme and 80 in Latgale. There was communication between the Alūksne Sector and the North Latgale regional headquarters, whereas the LNPL Central Vidzeme group was acting completely autonomously.[26] On 4 July 1948, Rusovs, the head of staff of the LNPL Central Vidzeme Headquarters, was captured, and the secret police also obtained the archive of the LNPL general staff, which had been in his keeping. The Central Vidzeme partisan groups suffered heavy losses in a battle on 8 July.

Accordingly, the activities of the LNPL now continued only in northern Latgale and in the Alūksne–Mālupe forests. The LNPL groups suffered particularly heavy losses during major anti-partisan operations in the period from January to March 1950, but the survivors continued to maintain contact. By early 1953, the LNPL only had five activists, three of whom were women. On 15 January 1953, the head of staff of the LNPL North Latgale Headquarters Lieutenant B. Sluckis and his wife were captured. In the exchange of fire, Sluckis also managed to kill a member of the MGB. He was sentenced to death.[27] J. Liepacis, commander of the Alūksne Sector, was killed by a secret police agent on 22 August 1953. With this, the LNPL as an organization ceased to exist.

In addition to its military plans, the LNPL undertook extensive propaganda. A propaganda section was set up at each regional staff, and these published underground news bulletins. The following news bulletins were published in the LNPL area: *Māras Zeme* (1946–49), *Tālavas Taure* (1946–47), *Sudrabota Saule* (1946–48), *Dzintarzeme* (1946), *Tautas Sargs* (1948) and *Dzimtene* (1950). The last of these news bulletins was handwritten because of lacking equipment. The editors of these publications were mainly former teachers who had gone underground and their secondary-school pupils.

Latvian Defenders of the Fatherland (Partisan) League (LDF(p)L)

The catalyst for partisans to organize in southern Latgale was the attack by NKVD soldiers on Vanagi Catholic church in Līvāni civil parish on 28 January 1945. Several Red Army deserters had been hiding out here with the support of dean Antons Juhņevičs. The newly-formed partisans managed to fight off the attack in a brief battle, and Juhņevičs himself joined the partisans in the forest.[28]

One of the main activities by dean Juhņevičs in the first half of 1945, after taking refuge in the forest, was to unite the people living illegally in the forests of Vārkava and Līvāni civil parishes into national partisan units. Together with Jānis Zelčāns (“Zeltiņš”), he drew up the statutes of a partisan organization, which was given the name “Latvian Defenders of the Fatherland (Partisan) League” (LDF(p)L; Latvijas Tēvzemes sargu (partizānu) apvienība).

The goals of the organization’s activities and the means to attain them were formulated. According to the LDF(p)L, the organization was acting “In accordance with the undivided wishes and strivings of the whole Latvian people to regain its own Nationally Independent, Democratic Latvian state, basing these strivings on the proclamation of the independent, democratic Latvian state founded already on 18 November 1918, recognized by all peoples and states of the world, and on the

guarantee in the statutes of the international 'United Nations' organization." The LDF(p)L promised "To use all the forces and means at its disposal to further the attainment of the stated aims."

The presence of a clergyman in the leadership of the organization is reflected in the mention of "faith in God and the Fatherland" in the partisans' oath, and the appeal for "aid from God and foreign countries" for the successful outcome of the partisan struggle. Juhņevičs himself, under the alias Antons Vientulis, held the post of chairman of the presidium of the LDF(p)L.[29]

The LDF(p)L leaders envisaged that its military structures should be modelled after the Latvian army. The territory of Latvia was divided between four divisions that were to be formed. Formation of the divisions commenced, but they never became functioning structures. Lieutentant Kārlis Blūms-Blīmhens ("Misters") was appointed commander of the 2nd Zemgale Partisan Division, and Captain Dāvis-Roberts Timmermanis ("Mežsargs") was appointed to the command of the 4th Vidzeme Division. Pēteris Supe, leader of the neighboring organization, the LNPL, agreed to become commander of the 3rd Latgale Division. LDF(p)L representative Jānis Vilcāns ("Mazais") was sent to Kurzeme. Captain Legzdiņš took on the command of the Kurzeme Division, but he fell on 27 December 1945. Contacts with Kurzeme were disrupted, and Vilcāns returned to Latgale.

The LDF(p)L did manage to form partisan regiments. Already active in October 1945 were: the 3rd Ilūkste Regiment, with a strength of about 200, commanded by Lieutenant Staņislavs Urbāns ("Kalpaks"), the 5th Daugavpils Regiment, with about 300 men, commanded by Juris Rudzāts ("Rūsiņš"), as well as the 6th Rēzekne Regiment, commanded by Staņislavs Strods ("Tālivaldis"), about 100-strong, and the Jēkabpils Regiment, with about 50 men, led by Mārtiņš Poklevinskis as acting regimental commander. Formation of a Madona Regiment also commenced. LNPL commander Supe, who had been appointed to command the 3rd Latgale Division, agreed to reorganize the partisans of Abrene County into the 7th Abrene Regiment.[30]

Initially, the LDF(p)L did not seriously consider the idea of partisan warfare, and thus did not observe secrecy. The partisans were issued passes in their real names, aliases being introduced only in autumn 1945. The league had essentially been formed with the idea of leading a general insurrection, rather than engaging in a protracted partisan war, since the organizers were convinced that war between the Western powers and the USSR would break out no later than the autumn of 1945. Accordingly, there was no plan for what to do in winter, especially if the secret police managed to drive the partisans from their encampment. There were no reserve bases or food stocks. Because of the centralized structure, if one group was taken out, then it could bring down the organization as a whole.

The collapse started when on 23 October 1945 the secret police forces encircled the headquarters of the Ilūkste Regiment. The partisans held out for almost 24 hours in a frontal battle with the attackers. Both sides suffered heavy losses. On the morning of 24 October, the partisans broke out of the encirclement and relocated to other forests.

Since the regiment was practically out of ammunition, S. Urbāns began talks with the NKVD on legalization. In the period from 15 December 1945 to the beginning of 1946, 90 out of about 200 men obtained legal status. After a battle on 17 November, in which, J. Rudzāts, the commander of the Daugavpils Regiment, was killed, four fifths of the partisan regiment legalized their status.

The LDF(p)L was crushed completely when Jānis Klimkāns, the head of its youth organization, turned traitor, having been recruited under the alias "Dubin." He provided information that permitted the capture of J. Zelčāns, the head of the organization, on 9 February 1946. Based on information from Klimkāns, the NKVD arrested 35 people, a large proportion of whom were subsequently sentenced to death. The series of operations ended on 25 February 1946, when the last active section of the LDF(p)L leadership, the Blūms-Blīmhens group, was destroyed. After this, the LDF(p)L as a unified organization went out of existence. This was one of the first major successes of the secret police in their battle against the partisans.[31]

The Partisans Organize in Kurzeme

After Germany's capitulation, many members of the Latvian Legion who did not wish to capitulate took refuge in the extensive forests of Kurzeme. Some managed to pass through filtration and register with false documents. One such individual was Lieutenant Miervaldis Ziedainis, who now worked under the name Miķelis Pētersons as an accountant at the Ventspils company Gossemovoshch. However, making use of the opportunity to travel around the parishes, he sought contacts with his former army comrades hiding in the forest. He soon contacted Lieutenant Aleksandrs Zutis, First Lieutenant J. Bērziņš, First Lieutenant Ēvalds Robežgruntnieks and others. In late August 1945 it was decided that a partisan organization would be established. The leitmotif was: "We will shoot long and hard, to wash off the shame our government brought about when it let the Russians into Latvia unopposed."

On 9 September 1945, the founding meeting of the North Kurzeme Partisan Organization (NKPO; Ziemeļkurzemes partizānu organizācija) took place in Šalkas forest, in the civil parish of Zlēkas in Ventspils County. The legally resident Ziedainis was elected leader, and Zutis was elected chief of staff. A participant in the meeting was partisan courier Freds Launags, who had journeyed through all the forests

of Ventspils County and partly also the counties of Talsi and Kuldīga. He counted 510 former Latvian Legion soldiers in the forests of these counties.

A specific characteristic of the national partisans in Kurzeme was that here the majority were professional soldiers, former officers of the Latvian army and legion. They were practical men, and in their organizations, meetings and written documents they mainly discussed and recorded practical matters. Neither much time nor paper was wasted on eloquent phrases concerning lofty future aims. The goal of the struggle, Latvia's freedom, was known and understood by all. The "Minutes no. 1" of the NKPO meeting of 9 September exemplify this practical approach. The agenda was as follows:

1. If the Russian army stays over the winter:
   a) bunker construction,
   b) aid from the people: food supply, money for medicine, provision of dress and technical equipment,
   c) the placement of individual partisans on farmsteads,
   d) the relocation of groups of people from Kurzeme and Vidzeme to their own areas.
2. If war breaks out between the Allies and the Soviet Union.
3. If an Allied inspection arrives.
4. Provision of documents.

The NKPO wished to establish links with the West. Launags had connections with Leonīds Siliņš, the Latvian Central Council representative in Stockholm. For this purpose, on 30 October 1945, 17 men (15 Latvians, one Estonian and one German) led by First Lieutenant Elmārs Šķobe voyaged to Sweden from Jūrkalne in a fishing vessel. At the coast, they were covered by a group led by Pēteris Grabusāns ("Mazā Līzīte"). After 20 hours at sea Šķobe's group reached the shore of Gotland.

The NKPO was crushed soon after its founding. Head of staff Zutis was arrested on 30 September 1945, followed by the arrest of Ziedainis on 2 October, along with many of the legally resident couriers. However, none of those arrested betrayed the groups in the forest, and these continued their activities.[32]

In 1945, the Latvian National Partisan Organization (LNPO; Latvijas Nacionālo Partizānu organizācija) was established in Talsi County, led by Alberts Feldbergs, former commander of the Jagdverband group in the civil parish of Ārlava. Groups led by Nikolajs Straume and Jānis Bonzaks also submitted to his control. These were very strong and active groups. Feldbergs' group published a partisan news bulletin, *Mūsu Sauksme*, edited by Vilis Tālavietis, who had formerly published the Valmiera county newspaper. The LNPO also had its own document forger, Kurts Grīnups.[33]

At the same time, in autumn 1945, ever greater numbers of men began to join the group led by Lieutenant Ēvalds Pakulis ("Šerifs") in Kabile parish of Kuldīga County.

By early 1946, he had 40 fighters. They formed the Latvian National Partisan Union Kurzeme (LNPK).

The first joint meeting of the LNPO and the LNPK was held on 9 May 1946. There is no definite information about this meeting. A second meeting took place in the forests of Renda in July, attended by 50 men from the LNPK and 20 from the LNPO. Evidently, both organizations were demonstrating their strength, because it was not necessary to gather in one place in such large numbers. The two organizations agreed to maintain close contacts.

The third meeting, on 5 September 1946 was attended by eight representatives of the LNPK. four from the LNPO and five delegates from independent groups. They discussed future prospects and the coming winter period. The independent groups joined the two organizations. At this time, in the autumn of 1946, the LNPK consisted of 17 groups with 250 partisans, while the LNPO had four groups with 95 men. It was decided that the two organizations would be unified under the joint name "Latvian National Partisan League Kurzeme. Ē. Pakuls was elected its commander.

Unfortunately, the secret police managed to infiltrate its agent Marģeris Vītoliņš, alias "Gri" (a.k.a. "Tankists") into this meeting; he posed as British representative "Baltais Klakts." Vītoliņš managed to convince the partisans that they would henceforth be led by the British intelligence service. Accordingly, the partisan commanders were invited to Riga to meet the British resident and agree on cooperation. The partisans had so long been waiting for Western assistance that they believed this news. As a result, six partisan commanders were arrested in Matīsa iela, Riga on 13 October 1946. Gradually, the secret police managed to crush LNPK. Its leader Pakulis was arrested on 10 December 1946.[34]

At the same time, the national partisan groups in Kurzeme were among the best-organized and militarily most formidable in Latvia. The professional officers were able to maintain a fighting spirit and discipline among experienced soldiers and newcomers alike. Thus, the partisan commander Pēteris Čevers, captured on 2 November 1950, whose 20-strong group had operated in the Talsi area, testified during interrogation by the secret police that he considered his group a Latvian army unit forced to live in the forest because the enemy had such overwhelming superiority.

Major Operations of the National Partisans 1945–1948

One of the ways of reducing armed resistance was to offer wavering individuals the chance to legalize, namely to cease their struggle and hand over their weapons in return for a promise not to persecute the individual who had thus legalized. The widest and strongest appeal for partisans to legalize was published on 12 September 1945

in the newspaper *Cīņa*. It was signed by the Latvian SSR NKVD People's Commissar A. Eglītis. The appeal came at a time when it was already clear that a new war would not break out so soon and the partisans had to start preparing for winter in the forest. Altogether 1268 partisans and persons living illegally obtained legal status in 1945.

The appeals for partisans to legalize were repeated from time to time. On 16 August 1946, an announcement was published in all the county newspapers that the legalization conditions of 12 September 1945 were still valid. In 1946 a total of 2567 people in Latvia obtained legal status. The last appeal for people to legalize their status was published on 11 January 1956.[35]

As can be seen, two opposed processes were taking place in autumn 1945: unification of the partisan groups and intensification of attacks, along with legalization of wavering elements. This resulted in one of the most unusual events in the partisan war: a truce between the LNPL partisan groups and the NKVD and NKGB sections in Valka County. The truce applied throughout Valka County and was in force from 28 September up to 9 October 1945.

This is the only case in the post-war partisan warfare in Latvia when the occupying forces and the leaders of the partisan movement agreed in open talks on an official ceasefire, which, moreover, applied across a whole county.[36] This was essentially a reflection of the strength of the partisan movement and the inability of the occupation security services to deal with them.

The top leadership of the secret police in Moscow was also dissatisfied with the course of the struggle against armed resistance in Latvia. In Riga in August and September 1945 the local secret police leaders were given a dressing down by Lieutenant-General Leontyev of the Section for Combatting Banditry of the USSR NKVD – the GUBB, and by Colonel-General Kobulov, first deputy of the People's Commissar of the USSR NKGB.[37]

In order to improve the work of the secret police, a new tactic was developed. The territory of Latvia was divided into three operational sectors: Kurzeme, Vidzeme and Latgale. Each sector was led by a unified NKVD–NKGB operational headquarters. By thus joining forces, the two institutions could combine their agents' operations and make better use of the information available to the secret police, striking stronger blows against the partisans. Two NKVD regiments were attached to each operational headquarters.[38] This was a tactic already being used in Lithuania, the territory of which had been divided into 10 NKVD–NKGB operational sectors.

In connection with this concentration of forces, and also because the partisans were starting to establish winter quarters and had thus lost their mobility, very fierce battles broke out. For example, on 1 January 1946 in the parish of Kabile, Kuldīga County, a force of about 300 men engaged a 25-strong partisan group. The partisans

held out until darkness fell. About 50 soldiers were killed or wounded, while the partisans lost three men.[39] The secret police gradually succeeded. Many partisan groups that spent the winter months with snow in permanent camps or in underground bunkers were destroyed or suffered heavy losses in battles. It was in winter that one of the largest partisan organizations, the LDF(p)L, was essentially destroyed.

Briefly, in the spring of 1946, the partisans drew some optimism from the speech that Winston Churchill, by then no longer British prime minister, gave in Fulton, USA, on 5 March, when he stated: "[...] an iron curtain has descended across the continent." This the partisans perceived as giving new hope of the imminent outbreak of another war and the liberation of Latvia.[40] This speech had a similar reception among the resistance movements of other nations – in Lithuania, Estonia and western Ukraine. In general, however, partisan warfare began to decrease in 1946. There were only small armed groups of 3–10 men still holding out in the forests, which gradually lost touch with one another and essentially switched to tactics aimed at hiding and surviving. The only partisan organization to continue its activities was the LNPL, operating in north-eastern Latvia. The LNPL even continued to disseminate the news bulletins of its three regional sub-units, namely *Māras Zeme*, *Sudrabota Saule* and *Tautas Sargs*. Accordingly, the LNPL's major contribution in this period was specifically in the sphere of propaganda.

Two new partisan organizations also developed. In western Latvia, such an organization was *Tēvijas Vanagi*, which became active in 1947. Meanwhile, in the east, in Latgale, the North Latgale Independence Unit (NLIU, Ziemeļlatgales Neatkarības vienība) came on the scene, beginning its activities in 1947. This organization, led by Augusts Kudreņiskis ("Grants") and Antons Gabrāns ("Zemitāns"), established an extensive underground network. The NLIU groups consisted of only about 15 partisans, but the organization also controlled some legally resident reservists with weapons, who were ready to join the partisans.[41] At the same time, under the leadership of the NLIU there was a youth group Latgales vanagi at Nautrēni Secondary School, Rēzekne County, with 27 members, who were also armed. These young people disseminated anti-Soviet leaflets, which they wrote themselves and received from the partisans.[42]

In order to force the partisans to legalize themselves, the secret police practiced hostage-taking on a mass scale. Family members were held in prison until the partisan "voluntarily" left the forest and gave himself up. In some cases, people remained incarcerated in this way, without the issue of an arrest warrant, for as long as a year and a half. Because of the terror, whole families would take refuge in the forest. And consequently, not only men but also women and even children were killed in the countless battles in the forest. In the spring of 1946, the Upītis family fled into the forest

in Liepna Parish of Viļaka County. In the period up to 1952, the father, mother and seven children were killed.[43] And in 1948, the Sprukuļi family in Viļaka Parish – the parents and six children – took refuge in the forest. In 1950 they were surrounded and all killed.[44]

One more method used by the Soviet occupiers to intimidate the population was the display of bodies. The bodies of partisans killed in battle were stripped and displayed for public viewing and identification outside the parish executive committees, and likewise in the streets of towns such as Balvi, Cēsis, Madona, Viļaka and others. The dead were often left there for as much as a week, until they were replaced with new victims.

Accordingly, in this period the resistance movement was reduced to secretly smoldering unrest. The deceptive silence would suddenly be broken by shooting, after which either the bodies of the dead "bandits" would once again be displayed in the parish center, or else an assassinated Soviet activist would receive a public funeral. Certain people would suddenly be arrested, and others disappeared, giving rise to rumors that they had fled to the forest. Leaflets would appear in public places urging people to prepare for the fight. Many still cherished the quiet hope of changes, namely assistance from the British or Americans. People continued to implement the instructions of the Soviet authorities without enthusiasm. Neither was the establishment of collective farms proceeding well.

The Deportation of 25 March 1949 in the Campaign against the National Partisans

Since it had proven impossible, after five years of fighting, to eliminate the armed or the non-violent opposition against the occupation, and since collectivization was proceeding slowly, without the necessary enthusiasm, the decision was taken in Moscow to implement an operation aimed at destroying the basis of the resistance movement by mass deportation of the population. The deportation operation, code-named *Priboi*, was implemented simultaneously in all three occupied Baltic countries, on the night of 24–25 March 1949.[45] A total of 94,779 people were deported from the Baltic, including 42,149 from Latvia. It is calculated that 72.9% of all the deportees were women and children.[46] This meant that the deportation constituted an act of revenge by the Communist regime for the resistance shown to the occupiers and was a way of cleaning the ground for the collectivization that was to follow.

The deportation was aimed at two major categories of the population: the prosperous farmers, which the occupation authorities dubbed "kulaks," in accordance with Communist ideology, and "nationalists." namely families in which someone had cooperated with the German occupation authorities, had belonged to a national resistance group, or had themselves participated in or supported the armed resistance

movement. Out of all the deportees from Latvia, 29,954 people, or 67.7%, were deported as "kulaks" and 14,317 people, or 32.3%, were deported as "nationalists."[47] Thus, two-thirds of the deportees were being sent away for belonging to a category of the population hostile to Bolshevik ideology, and one third as people who had more or less actively opposed the Soviet authorities.

Contrary to what the occupiers had hoped, namely that the resistance movement would be crushed, the ranks of the pre-existing partisan groups in Latvia were massively reinforced, and new ones started to form. The people who had escaped deportation joined the partisans. In several areas, such as the Sinole forests of Alūksne County and the Jaungulbene forests of Gulbene County, the remnants of groups, numbering only 3–4 men, swelled into groups as large as 18–23. Only this time the majority of the newcomers were women, even accompanied by children. As a result, many partisan groups had more women and children than fighting men, a situation that brought the threat of bloody catastrophe.[48]

Operations of the National Partisans 1949–1957

The most active groups began revenge attacks on Soviet activists who had taken part in the deportations. At the same time, there were carefully planned attacks on the occupation security forces. For example, on 28 July 1949, a group in Jēkabpils County led by Mārtiņš Poklevinskis ambushed and killed the leaders of the MGB in this county: four officers including Major Sokolov, head of the county MGB department.[49]

Major anti-partisan operations were undertaken in the second half of 1949, continuing up to spring 1950. Among the casualties in these battles, the majority were in many cases women or even children. For example, on 2 August 1949, the Eikloni group in the parish of Sinole, Alūksne County, was destroyed. Ten partisans were killed, among them five women and two children.[50]

Some of the battles were desperately fierce. In Aknīste District on 25 February 1950, 550 MGB soldiers encircled a united 13-strong group led by Grāversons and Indāns. In a battle lasting five hours, 12 of the partisans were killed and one woman captured. Seven MGB soldiers were killed and another seven wounded.[51]

In many cases, to avoid capture, the partisans would collectively commit suicide. Thus, for example, on 16 April 1952, a group consisting of six people led by Dailonis Breikšs committed suicide in the territory of Rauna village, Cēsis District. Two of the dead were women.[52]

The year 1953 was the last year of bloody armed conflict in Latvia, when 100 Latvian "forest brethren" lost their lives.[53] In the following years, the secret police continued smaller-scale operations against the partisans. From 1 April 1954 up to

30 October 1956, 12 people were killed, 81 captured and 401 legalized.[54] Accordingly, it is clear that there were at least 533 people still living illegally. They were generally hiding out alone, isolated from each other, but there were also small groups of 2–4 people.[55]

The last episode in the partisan war in Latvia took place in Viļāni District on 13 February 1957. Here, the Mičulis family, consisting of three men and two women, emerged from the forest and obtained legal status. The Mičulis family had been in the forest since 1945. When they legalized, they handed over two light machine guns, three submachine guns, two rifles, four hand grenades and ammunition.[56]

It is interesting to note that in the years 1945–46 the Mičulis family had been active in the 6th Rēzekne Partisan Regiment of the LDF(p)L, and it may be that participation in this partisan organization had enabled them to survive so many years of partisan warfare. This is a common feature which appears in the criminal cases of captured partisans. Many of the partisans captured in the early 1950s had in their possession various documents of partisan organizations dating back to 1945–46: instructions, orders, passes and various news bulletins of partisan organizations. In many cases, these were in poor condition: very worn and torn. By that time – five or more years later – these documents no longer had any practical significance, but they were psychologically important, helping people to hold out and continue the fight, rather than give up hope.

The popular attitude towards the national partisans is reflected very precisely in the name they used to refer to them. It can be said with a high degree of certainty that most of the population called them *mežabrāļi* – "forest brethren." This is a name for Latvian partisans that came about during the Revolution of 1905, used semi-secretly in a positive sense at the time and likewise after World War II. Significantly, it corresponds to the terms used for the national partisans by the two neighboring peoples: *misko brolai* in Lithuania and *metsavennad* in Estonia. The meaning – "forest brethren" – is the same in all three languages.

Endnotes

1 Jānis Riekstiņš, "Latvijas iedzīvotāju mobilizācija Sarkanajā armijā (1944–1945)," *Okupētā Latvija 20. gadsimta 40. gados*, ed. Dzintars Ērglis, Symposium of the Commission of the Historians of Latvia 16 (Rīga: Latvijas vēstures institūta apgāds, 2005) 420.

2 Nacionālo partizānu uzskaites tematiskā kartotēka. Abrenes apriņķis. National Archives of Latvia, State Archive of Latvia (LVA), 1825. f., 1. apr.; Kriminālllietas materiāli. LVA 1986. f., 1. apr., 14677. l., 1. sēj., 225.–30. lp.

3 Zigmārs Turčinskis, "Latvijas nacionālo partizānu apvienības izveidošanās un darbība Stampaku periodā (1944. gada oktobris–1945. gada marts),".*Okupācijas režīmi Latvijā 1940.–1959. gadā*, ed. Dzintars Ērglis, Symposium of the Commission of the Historians of Latvia10 (Rīga: Latvijas vēstures institūta apgāds, 2004) 433–82.

[4] Zigmārs Turčinskis, "Ziemeļvidzemes nacionālie partizāni: 1945.–1953. gads," *Okupācijas režīmi Latvijā 1940.–1956. gadā*, ed. Irēne Šneidere, Symposium of the Commission of the Historians of Latvia 7 (Rīga: Latvijas vēstures institūta apgāds, 2002) 285–368.

[5] *Bratskoje kladbishche (Talsi, ulica Brivibas)*. Website *Ruskije memoriali v Latvii.* Available at: http://voin.russkie.org.lv/talsi_brivibas.php (accessed 28.10.2018).

[6] Materials of the Fifth Rifle Division of the USSR MVD Internal Forces. LVA 1847. f., 1. apr., 6. l., insert inside cover.

[7] Correspondence about combatting "banditry" and the operations of the "destroyer (*istrebitel'*) battalions." LVA 101. f., 8. apr., 1. l., 123. lp.

[8] Criminal case materials. LVA 1986. f., 1. apr., 45123. l., 1. sēj., 34–120. lp.

[9] Criminal case materials. LVA 1986. f., 1. apr., 7016. l., 3. sēj., 29.–31. lp.

[10] Criminal case materials. LVA 1986. f., 1. apr., 21637. l., 1. sēj., 25. lp.

[11] Criminal case materials. LVA 1986. f., 1. apr., 30641. l., 3. sēj., 64.–66. lp.

[12] Criminal case materials. LVA 1986. f., 1. apr., 7016. l., 3. sēj., 29.–33. lp.

[13] Ibid., 3. sēj., 30. lp.

[14] Criminal case materials. LVA 1986. f., 1. apr., 30641. l., 1. sēj., 28. lp.

[15] Turčinskis, Latvijas nacionālo partizānu apvienības izveidošanās..."

[16] Ibid.

[17] Indictment of Jānis Ozols and 59 other defendants. LVA 1986. f., 1. apr., lieta Nr. 18145., 1. sēj., 25.–31. lp.

[18] LVA 1825. f., 1. apr., Card file of national partisan leaders.

[19] Indictment of Elza Lācis. LVA 1986. f., 1. apr., 3064. l., 3. sēj., 64.–66. lp.

[20] Indictment of Pauls Birzulis. LVA1986. f., 1. apr., 8702. l., 1. sēj., 24. lp.

[21] Indictment of Eduards Grāvītis. LVA 1986. f., 1. apr., 1949. l., 1. sēj., 28. lp.

[22] Ibid.

[23] NKVD OBB — Section for Combatting Banditry (*Otdel po borbe s banditismom — OBB*). This was a special section within the USSR NKVD system at the level of the oblast and the union republic concerned with combatting "political banditry" and the implementation of special operations against the armed resistance movement. In Moscow, the top apparatus of the USSR NKVD included the Main Board for Combatting Banditry (*Glavnoye Uparavleniye po borbe s banditismom — GUBB*), which was responsible for undertaking this struggle. This board oversaw the corresponding NKVD OBB sections in each oblast and union republic of the USSR.

[24] L. Mežgals, "Nacionālie partizāni mūsu novadā," *Dzirkstele*, 14 November 1997.

[25] Testimony of Pēteris Logins. Recorded on 12 February 2006.

[26] LVA 1825. f., 1. apr. Card file of national partisan leaders.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Inese Dreimane, "Latvijas kristīgo konfesiju garīdznieki nacionālās pretošanās kustībā (1944–1953)," *Okupācijas režīmi Latvijā 1940.–1956. gadā*, ed. Irēne Šneidere, Symposium of the Commission of the Historians of Latvia 7 (Rīga: Latvijas Vēstures institūta apgāds, 2002) 221–84.

[29] Ibid.

[30] LVA 1986. f., 1. apr., 7016. l,. 3. sēj., 29.–31. lp.

[31] Heinrihs Strods, *Latvijas nacionālo partizānu karš 1944.–1956* (Rīga: Preses nams, 1996) 158–68; Andris Rūtiņš, "Latvijas Tēvijas sargu (partizānu) apvienība," *Es sapni par dzimteni pagalvī likšu*, ed. Zigurds Akots, part 2 (Rīga, 1994) 379–94.

[32] Jānis Vasiļevskis, "Ziemeļkurzemes partizānu organizācija," *Uz ežiņas galvu liku*, ed. Aleksandrs Kalvāns, vol. 2 (Rīga: Daugavas Vanagu organizācija, 1995) 307–11.

[33] Kurts Grīnups, *Cauri komunistu ellei* (Rīga: n.p., 2005) 111.

[34] Tālivaldis Bāliņš, "Kurzeme nepadevās," *Uz ežiņas galvu liku*, ed. Aleksandrs Kalvāns, vol. 2 (Rīga: Daugavas Vanagu organizācija, 1995) 351–75.

[35] *Cīņa*, 11 January 1956.

[36] Turčinskis, "Ziemeļvidzemes nacionālie partizāni."

[37] See note 23.

[38] Orders to the Latvian SSR NKVD and NKGB for 1945. LVA 1822. f., 1. apr., 244. l., 187. lp.

[39] Ritvars Jansons and Indulis Zālīte, "LPSR valsts drošības dienesta izveidošana un tā galvenie represīvie uzdevumi 1944.–1956. gadā," *Totalitārie režīmi un to represijas Latvijā 1940.–1956.* gadā, ed. Irēne Šneidere, Symposium of the Commission of the Historians of Latvia 3 (Rīga: Latvijas vēstures institūta apgāds, 2001) 373–476.

[40] Uldis Šmits, "Aukstā kara sākums," *Lauku Avīze*, 3 March 2001.

[41] Criminal case materials. LVA 1986. f., 1. apr., 21822. l., 1. sēj., 28. lp.

[42] Criminal case materials. LVA 1986. f., 1. apr., 25476. l., 1. sēj., 80., 82. lp.

[43] Criminal case materials. LVA 1986. f., 1. apr., 7006. l., 1. sēj., 15.–49. lp.

[44] Criminal case materials. LVA 1986. f., 1. apr., 29482. l., 1. sēj., 12.–33. lp.

[45] Henrihs Strods, "PSRS Valsts Drošības ministrijas pilnīgi slepenā Baltijas valstu iedzīvotāju izsūtīšanas operācija "Krasta banga" ("Priboj")," *Latvijas vēsture*, 2 (1998): 43; see also Heinrihs Strods and Matthew Kott, "The file on operation 'Priboi': A Re-assessment of the Mass Deportations of 1949," *Journal of Baltic Studies*, 33.1 (2002): 1–36

[46] Ibid., 44.

[47] Andra Āboliņa, Aija Kalnciema, Daina Kļaviņa, Jānis Riekstiņš and Iveta Šķiņķe, "1949. gada 25. marta deportācijas struktūranalīze," *Aizvestie. 1949. gada 25. marts*, ed. Daina Bleiere (Rīga: Latvijas Valsts arhīvs, 2007) 179–180.

[48] Criminal case materials. LVA 1986. f., 1. apr., 39276. l., 1. sēj., 16.–24 .lp.

[49] Criminal case materials. LVA 1986. f., 1. apr., 28156. l., 4. sēj., 321. lp.

[50] Criminal case materials. LVA 1986. f., 1. apr., 39276. l., 1. sēj., 16.–24. lp.

[51] Excerpt from a history submission form of the MVD Internal Force 24th Rifle Regiment. LVA 1847. f., 1. apr., 14. l., 26–27. lp.

[52] Criminal case materials. LVA 1986. f., 2. apr., P-10433. l., 251.–55. lp.

[53] LKP CK Sevišķais sektors. LVA 101. f., 17. apr., 102. l., 19. lp.

[54] Official report "Concerning the liquidation of armed nationalistic underground in the territory of the Latvian SSR." LVA 270. f., 1.s. apr., 1095. l., 286–287. lp.

[55] Ibid.

[56] Special report about the surrender of the illegals Mičulis. LVA 270. f., 1.s. apr., 19. l., 31.–37. lp.

SOVIET OCCUPATION
1945–1991

Geoffrey Swain

Resistance, Collaboration, Adaption in Soviet Context

The Soviet Era: An Overview

Stalin's ambition during World War II was simple. Once it was clear that the Soviet Union had survived the initial Nazi onslaught of June 1941, he was determined that at the end of the fighting the Soviet Union should emerge intact, and retain the territory it had acquired between 1939 and 1941; if the social unrest provoked by the war more generally should provide the opportunity for further revolutionary advance beyond the Soviet Union, then those opportunities should be seized. Exporting the revolution would be a bonus, whereas the security of the Soviet Union was the first priority. For this to be achieved, two things were essential: first, any anti-Soviet opposition in the newly acquired territories had to be overcome, and second, pliant governments needed to be established in those neighbouring states which had been forced to cede territory to the Soviet Union. As the Red Army marched westwards in 1944-45 and the 1939 and 1940 boundaries were crossed, so the Soviet security forces followed in behind the Red Army, looking to avenge any example of collaboration and crush any forces which took up arms against the return of Soviet control. Thus, the future Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev, who had overseen the "liberation" of western Ukraine from Polish rule in September 1939, returned to Kiev with the Red Army in November 1943 and took charge of the war against Ukrainian nationalists in the west. During regular visits to the western city of Lviv, Khrushchev oversaw not only the fight against the nationalist "Banderites" from 1944-46, but also the forced exchange of Ukrainian and Polish populations which was supposed to bring ethnic stability to the region.[1]

On the diplomatic front, Stalin made certain that the new post-war government established in Poland was firmly under his control from the start. As an insurance policy, Stalin had made sure during the German occupation of Poland not only to develop a domestic communist party operating underground inside Poland, loyal to Władisław Gomułka, but a Soviet-based party in Moscow, loyal to Bolesław Bierut. Stalin's support for Bierut meant that in 1945 and afterwards concessions to Poland's other political parties were kept to an absolute minimum; even when, after the

Potsdam Conference of summer 1945, a coalition "Unity" Government was formed, the communists were firmly in control. Such control was essential because, at all costs, Stalin wanted a "friendly" government in Poland, one which would recognize the territorial changes of September 1939.

Elsewhere in Eastern Europe, except for Romania which had also ceded territory to the Soviet Union prior to June 1941 and where Stalin had also taken the precaution of preparing a Moscow-based communist movement, the Soviet Union settled for influence rather than outright control. Tito's revolution in Yugoslavia was a pleasing bonus. Up until spring 1947, when the Truman Doctrine was declared by the United States and the communists were forced out of the post-war coalition governments in France and Italy, Stalin's ambitions for the rest of Eastern Europe were limited. However, when Marshall Aid was offered to Europe in summer 1947, Stalin interpreted the move as "dollar imperialism," an attempt to persuade the socialist parties of Eastern Europe to end the post-war coalition governments, break with the communists as had happened in France and Italy, and form new governments sympathetic to the West and hostile to Stalin. His response was to establish the Cominform in September 1947 and start the process of welding all of Eastern Europe into a uniform communist bloc. Impressed with the way Tito had dealt ruthlessly with Yugoslavia's pre-war political parties, he entrusted the Cominform to the Yugoslavs.[2]

Stalin realized his mistake almost at once. Tito thought the Cominform could take initiatives independently of Moscow. He revived plans for a Balkan Federation, a political formation to be led by the Yugoslavs and to include Greece, even though the Truman Doctrine had made clear that the United States would not tolerate a communist victory in the Greek Civil War. For Stalin, the Cominform was in danger of evolving into a revolutionary entity outside of his control, with the potential for destabilizing both Soviet interests in Eastern Europe and the emerging post-war order. Tito was expelled from the Cominform, but not brought to heal and, as a result, from 1949 Eastern Europe experienced a series of purge trials to oust suspected "Titoites." As had been the case in Poland as early as 1944, those communists who had spent the war with the underground or in partisan formations were most open to the charge of "Titoism." The most prominent "Titoite" of all was Hungary's Lázló Rajk, a former volunteer for the International Brigades in Spain, who had returned to Hungary from French internment in 1941 to head the illegal Communist Party. His trial in September 1949 set the benchmark for other states to emulate, most notably the trial in November 1952 of the former General Secretary of the Czechoslovak Communist Party Rudolf Slánský.

After Stalin's death in March 1953, Khrushchev was appointed to head the Soviet Communist Party, although it took some time before he had emerged as the

dominant figure in the apparatus of the state. However, even during his campaign against "nationalist bandits" in western Ukraine in the immediate post-war years, he had clashed with the security forces, and immediately on his appointment as Party leader a program of rehabilitating political prisoners began. As that program gained pace, in 1955 Khrushchev decided to end the dispute with Tito, which, he claimed, had been started on Stalin's whim and without endorsement from the Politburo. He flew to Belgrade in June and issued a rather grudging apology for the Soviet actions. A year later that apology became more fulsome. At the Twentieth Party Congress in February 1956, Khrushchev denounced Stalin in a secret speech which was quickly leaked to the world at large. By the summer, he had accepted that reconciliation with Tito required the rehabilitation of "Titoites"; in Hungary, Rajk's persecutors would have to be removed from power. However, engineering this change of leadership released so much pent up emotion in Hungary that Khrushchev soon faced an anti-communist popular uprising.

When Khrushchev denounced Stalin's crimes to the Twentieth Party Congress, he gave delegates copies of Lenin's Testament and other documents relating to the disagreements on nationality policy in 1922–23, in the aftermath of the Soviet invasion of Georgia and the subsequent formation of the Soviet Union. On 30 October 1956, as part of Khrushchev's continuing discussions with Tito, the Soviet Union signed the Declaration of the Principles of Development and Further Strengthening of Friendship and Co-operation between the Soviet Union and other Socialist States, which recognized that socialist states had the right to determine their own road to socialism. This declaration, signed at the height of the Hungarian crisis, was not violated, in the eyes of its signatories at least, by the Soviet Union's decision, endorsed by Yugoslavia, to invade Hungary on 4 November. Socialist states could follow their own road to socialism, but not a road which ran the risk of capitalist restoration. The Declaration was the basis on which Gomułka extended the authority of his government in Poland, and on which Romania negotiated the withdrawal of the Red Army in 1958. The Declaration ushered in a decade of talk about possible "national roads to communism."[3]

Khrushchev's next big reform affected the nations within the Soviet Union, rather than those outside it. The formation of *sovnarkhozy* (economic councils) to run the economy involved devolving a great deal of economic power to the constituent republics of the Soviet Union: before Moscow intervened to prevent this happening, each republic used the reform to raise the standard of living within that republic, ignoring the overall good of the Soviet Union.[4] Indeed, the proposals for the *sovnarkhoz* reform provoked a backlash against Khrushchev. Hardliners sought to remove him, but, having successfully mobilized support within the Central Committee,

Khrushchev was able to defeat the so-called "Anti-Party Group" and consolidate his support in June 1957. From 1958 onwards, he proclaimed the concept of the "all people's state," that the class struggle and associated political violence were things of the past. He used this notion to launch first a new Party program, endorsed by the 22nd Party Congress in October 1961, and then a new Constitution, due to be adopted by the 23rd Party Congress planned for early 1965. Between these congresses, "hare-brained" schemes for further reforms followed thick and fast. After Stalin's body had been removed from the Lenin Mausoleum in 1961, Khrushchev asked whether purged former Party leaders like Nikolai Bukharin should be re-habilitated. As repeated moves to re-organize the system of economic planning got nowhere, he asked whether it was time to balance planning with the reintroduction of the profit motive in industry. Over summer 1964 it became clear that Khrushchev wanted to rejuvenate the Politburo, reduce the size of the Party apparatus, extend the powers of the Supreme Soviet, and expose the link between the collectivization campaign and the famine in the early 1930s. Not surprisingly, this led to several clashes with conservative figures like Party ideologue Mikhail Suslov, and when it became clear that Khrushchev wanted to summon a Central Committee Plenum in November 1964 to endorse some or all of these proposals, he was ousted from power.[5]

The dismissal of Khrushchev was not quite the end of Khrushchevism, however. In August 1964, Khrushchev had visited Slovakia to mark the twentieth anniversary of the Slovak National Uprising. There, at the very height of his reforming zeal, he got to know Alexander Dubček, then the Secretary of the Slovak Communist Party. The Prague Spring of 1968, which began with the appointment of Dubček as Secretary of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, was the last attempt to put Khrushchevism into practice, and its crushing, by Khrushchev's successor Leonid Brezhnev, made clear that all talk of "national roads to communism" was dead. With the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968, Brezhnev had declared illegitimate Dubček's attempt to turn the clock back to the pre-Cominform days in Czechoslovakia, when the Communist Party had relied on its political authority to rule, rather than its control of the secret police.[6] Until 1968 the possibilities offered by a reformed communism tailored to national peculiarities seemed real. Thereafter, interest in reform communism disappeared. By and large, the dissident movement which emerged in the Soviet Union in the 1970s and 1980s looked to human rights rather than communist ideology. Dissidents tried to force the Soviet Union and East European states to abide by the commitments undertaken by all those states which, in summer 1975, had signed in Helsinki the Declaration of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe. It recognized, among other principles, freedom of thought, freedom of conscience and freedom of religion, alongside the right of peoples to self-determination.

For the inhabitants of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, life during the Brezhnev years could be good, as long as the Soviet interpretation of the Helsinki Declaration was accepted. That meant accepting the untruth that the rights enshrined in the Helsinki Declaration corresponded to the reality of life in the Soviet Bloc. Indeed, under Brezhnev, conforming to the Soviet system by adapting to it became the norm. "Normal life" itself had political overtones: in Czechoslovakia the purge of Dubček's supporters was carried out under the slogan "normalisation." In the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in the 1970s and 1980s, those people happy to leave politics to the Party apparatus were allowed to live modestly and even to prosper. However, those who chose not to conform faced a series of ever greater obstacles to a successful career, with arrest and the gulag a distant but very real end point.

To understand how Latvia's historical experience mapped onto this picture it is best to consider, in outline, events under Stalin, Khrushchev and Brezhnev.

Stalin's Rule

Although Stalin was always determined to retain the Baltic States within the Soviet Union, it was only after the Tehran Conference in November 1943 that he was absolutely certain that his wartime allies would allow this to happen. The result was a confusion of policies for those Latvian communists sent by Moscow to encourage partisan warfare in Latvia. The first serious attempt to implant a Soviet partisan movement in Latvia took place in July 1942. It was inspired by the success of the Red Army's counter-attack of spring that year and a belief that Nazi Germany would be quickly defeated. In this context, there was no need to question the legitimacy of the August 1940 falsified referendum which had seen Latvia being incorporated into the Soviet Union. The partisans used the slogan "For a Soviet Latvia" – and as a result made absolutely no progress, quickly retreating to Soviet controlled territory. When a second attempt was made in spring 1943, this time co-operating with Byelorussian partisans, the slogans used by the Latvian Soviet partisans were very different: "Long live the freedom loving Latvian people and its gallant patriots" was an appeal which was supposed to enable joint resistance with other political groupings, and as the year progressed several attempts were made to hold talks with partisan groups loyal to the pro-western and democratic Latvian Central Council. In a similar vein, for the twenty fifth anniversary of the formation of Latvia in November 1943, Moscow Radio's Latvian service had planned to broadcast an article by the Communist but former Social Democrat Jānis Niedre, which linked the People's Government of June 1940 to "the ideals of 1918" rather than the Soviet Republic of 1919. At Tehran, Stalin learned from the Allies that he would regain the Baltic States at the end of the war and so put an end to such vacillation.[7]

Nevertheless, similar to the case in Poland between 1944 and 1947, there were several clashes between those Latvian Communist Party cadres who had been imported into the country from the Soviet Union, and those who had been involved in partisan operations. Milda Birkenfelde, the Jēkabpils District Secretary, was an early thorn in the side of Moscow. She had spent several months during 1943 with the Latvian Soviet partisans, and at the first Party Plenum held in August 1944, as the Red Army returned to Latvia, she informed delegates that there were many Latvians who had opposed the Nazis in a variety of ways, and "they must be found and trusted"; "if we rely only on the activists who have come from the Soviet Union, we shall achieve nothing." She was in trouble again at the next Plenum in November 1944, for questioning the extent of kulak "sabotage" of the land reform and criticizing the security forces for frustrating the efforts of the Party in recruiting local sympathizers. In this she was supported by other Party secretaries, one of whom spoke darkly about the return of 1937–38. At the July 1946 Plenum she made a similar point when she clashed with Arvīds Pelše, the leading ideologist of the Latvian Communist Party, who had been educated and trained in the Soviet Union. She noted that for the Russians and for those Latvians who had grown up in the Soviet Union "all Latvians were as gray as cats [and] they cannot distinguish the difference in thought between a middle peasant and a kulak."[8]

That definition of a kulak was a crucial concern for these "native" communists. In October 1946 Birkenfelde was given a Party warning for not taking the kulak issue seriously, and Third Party Secretary Jānis Jurgens was expelled from the Party at the same time for having suggested that "we must win the personal respect of all peasants." As the future Minister of Agriculture and national communist Aleksandrs Nikonovs told the Central Committee that July, the problem was that the 1944 land reform had actually made peasants poorer rather than richer, and in these circumstances the idea of obtaining 40% of the country's grain from those "kulaks" who owned between 20–30 hectares was a nonsense. As another critic noted, with no farms larger than 30 hectares the kulak class had effectively disappeared. These views were criticized by Moscow's "Latburo," set up in December 1944 to oversee the work of the Latvian Communist Party, and had been silenced by the time the "Latburo" was abolished in March 1947.[9]

What alarmed Moscow as much at this time was Jurgens' attitude towards the national partisans. Armed resistance to the return of the Red Army had been at its most threatening to Soviet rule over the summer and autumn of 1945, when the Potsdam Conference and the international agreement on Poland's future seemed to offer the possibility of some form of Allied intervention in support of an independent Latvia. As it became ever clearer that Poland's "Unity" Government was actually under

Stalin's thumb, and as the British Government made clear to those national partisans with whom it was in contact, and to the Latvian population more generally, that a World War III would never be risked for the sake of Latvia, the national partisan movement began slowly to decline. However, it was still a significant force in summer 1946 when Jurgens referred to the national partisans not as "bourgeois nationalists" but "fellow Latvians" and appeared to express doubts about the tactic of using force against them: "we could put the army into every forest to destroy every last bandit, but we think, however sad the fact, that they are our Latvians too, and may be they will understand and leave the forest." These "native" communists in Latvia were "Titoites" before Stalin's clash with Tito.[10]

The Stalin–Tito dispute had a direct impact on Latvia, however. One of the main charges Stalin laid against Tito was that he had failed to collectivize Yugoslav agriculture; it was therefore a worrying anomaly that in Latvia so little progress had been made to bring the country's agriculture into line with the rest of the Soviet Union. Moscow had not wanted to push the issue of collectivization in the immediate post-war period because it feared that the future of the Baltic States might be brought up at the Paris Peace Conference, which met in the summer and autumn of 1946 to discuss the fate of the allies of Nazi Germany. Once that treaty was signed, in February 1947, there was no reason to delay and the first serious initiatives towards collectivization were taken in autumn that year. The response was a dramatic resurgence in activity by the national partisans in spring 1948, followed by the widespread slaughter of cattle in the autumn. In one incident at the end of 1948, the chairman of the Aglona soviet was gunned down and the collective farm cowshed set on fire, after which the local peasants decided to abandon the collective farm. With the Party leadership and the Latvian Ministry of Agriculture in disagreement on the best way forward, and Pelše warning that the process of collectivization could not be allowed "to drag on for 15–20 years," Stalin intervened to cut the Gordian Knot. Early in January 1949 he resolved that Latvia's kulaks and their supposed supporters should be deported to Siberia. Deportations were to be carried out on 25 March.[11]

The only narrative Moscow wanted to hear under Stalin was that of Great Russia leading the struggle against fascism, joined by subordinate representatives of comrade nations who followed that lead. This was the tenor of the new Soviet anthem adopted in 1944, and this meant that the war-time experience of most Latvians excluded them from participation in public life. The Party insisted that the only people welcome in the Party or Komsomol were those whose actions fitted into the Soviet paradigm of the war. Thus, among the first to be recruited to the Komsomol were Russian Old Believers, who had been deported to Germany in 1942 for forced labor, or in 1943 when they had been accused of being partisan sympathizers. The niece of one of the

victims of the Audriņi killings was a textbook example. Smaller groups of early recruits were surviving Jews, and the children of Soviet activists imprisoned and killed by the Nazis. As Amir Weiner commented in his *Making Sense of War*, the Great Patriotic War "served to validate the original revolutionary prophecy while at the same time almost entirely overshadowing it." It had been "the Armageddon of the Revolution," but the Soviet Union had survived. As Stalin made clear in his election speech of February 1946, victory in the Great Patriotic War vindicated him and his policies. As Weiner suggests, participation in the wartime victory was the new cement of the Soviet regime.[12]

Only very occasionally could those who had been "passive" make progress. In October 1949, Rafaels Blums, the Jewish editor of *Padomju Jaunatne*, made an impassioned plea about the danger of exaggerating the extent of "bourgeois nationalism" among Latvian youngsters. He won the guarded support of the then Komsomol leader Vilis Krumiņš, and there followed a determined year-long campaign to recruit Latvian youth. Against the backdrop of *Padomju Jaunatne*'s transformation into a readable and popular newspaper, ideological concessions were made to expand the number of Latvian recruits. Such issues as occasional church attendance – a friend's wedding, or the christening of a relative – were no longer seen as reasons for immediate expulsion, and a greater indulgence was shown towards "youthful misdemeanors" – membership in the Mazpulki, the Latvian version of 4-H, for example, or being the child of a "kulak." The daughter of a member of the wartime Latvian Police was even allowed to join once it became clear that the father had deserted the family home and hardly knew his daughter. This laxity came to a sudden end in spring 1952, and by October of that year Blums had been sacked.[13]

Khrushchev's Rule

The impact of Stalin's death was felt in Latvia immediately. Among the post-Stalin leaders, security chief Lavrentii Beria had been the first to raise the issue of Russification within the Soviet Communist Party. Khrushchev, however, wanted to ensure that the process of eradicating Russification was the work of the Party, not the security forces, and as new Party leader he was determined to take the lead. A report on the Russification of the Latvian Communist Party was one of the first things he brought to the Politburo after Stalin's death. The report was clear: cadre policy had violated nationality policy and had to be corrected. The Russian Second Secretary of the Latvian Communist Party was recalled. The Latvian leadership was summoned to Moscow and instructed to organize a Plenum to discuss Khrushchev's findings. Held on 23 June 1953, the Plenum passed a resolution entitled "Shortcomings in directing

the political work and cultural development of the republic," and, briefly, enthusiastic Latvian communists were reported to be throwing Cyrillic typewriters out of the window to symbolize the end of Russification.[14] However, within days, Beria was overthrown on 26 June, and the anti-Russification policy, associated with him rather than Khrushchev, stalled. It was not until Khrushchev's Secret Speech in February 1956 and the formal denunciation of Stalin that Russification was again questioned, as the issuing to delegates of Lenin's Testament made clear.

As the events of 1956 developed, particularly the popular insurgency in Hungary and the bloody vengeance taken there on communist activists, some of the more nationally inclined leaders within the Latvian Communist Party began to worry that they could be the next to be hanging from lamp posts unless policy changes were implemented. Latvian National Communism had begun. Thus, on 19 November the ruling Bureau of the Latvian Communist Party issued a statement on "certain failings in implementing Leninist nationality policy," which prompted the Riga City Bureau to decide on 30 November that all Party cadres needed to know both Latvian and Russian, and that from 1 January 1957 they would have two years to acquire whichever language they lacked. This decision, justified with reference to the Twentieth Party Congress and the need "to pay particular attention in practical work to the national peculiarities of each nation and people of the USSR," was extended to the whole country at a Central Committee meeting on 6 December. Although in November 1956 the Soviet Communist Party Central Committee drafted a report "On nationalist and anti-Soviet manifestations in the Baltic Republics," which accused Kārlis Ozoliņš, Chairman of the Latvian Supreme Soviet, and Deputy Premier Eduards Berklavs of expressing "non-party views" when discussing the language issue, Khrushchev received Ozoliņš, the leader of the Latvian Communist Party Jānis Kalnbērziņš, and Premier Vilis Lācis later in December and backed their initiative.[15]

The national communists began to make real headway at the 15th Congress of the Latvian Communist Party in January 1958, after the defeat of the Anti-Party Group and the start of the "all people's state" initiative. The congress gave what amounted to a vote of no confidence in the Russian Second Secretary of the Latvian Communist Party, who resigned in May, enabling Krūmiņš, the former Komsomol leader, to take on the post, thus repeating the pattern of June 1953. When the Central Committee apparatus questioned this, Khrushchev ignored their concerns and at a meeting with Krūmiņš informed him that the decisions taken at the 1953 June Plenum were still in force.[16] A series of key personnel moves were then taken to strengthen the hands of the national communists, including the appointment of a new Komsomol leader Vladislavs Ruskulis, and a new Minister of Culture, Voldemārs Kalpiņš.

The changes introduced by the national communists resulted in a series of complaints being sent to Moscow. At first the Baltic Sector in the Soviet Central Committee paid little attention, but in March 1959 one of the complaints came from the former Deputy Premier Nikolai Ponomarev, who accused the national communists of deliberately dispersing Russian cadres. The Baltic Sector asked Krūmiņš to investigate, but did not at this stage see the need to send in its own team to investigate. The Latvian response played down the issue: Khrushchev's *sovnarkhoz* reform had required a complex response in terms of staffing; not only did a whole level of former economic ministries have to be wound up, but a new *sovnarkhoz* established for the whole of Latvia; lots of ministers and deputy ministers had inevitably lost their jobs, but more than half of those dismissed had been Latvians and it was simply not the case that Russians had been targeted. This explanation did not satisfy the complainants, and in mid-May 1959 the Central Committee decided to send its own investigative team, helped by Ponomarev, which bypassed the national communist leadership and liaised only with the Latvian Communist Party Central Committee's Department of Party Administration, headed by the "Russian" Latvian Augusts Voss.[17]

The investigative team presented its report to Moscow on 8 June 1959. It reasserted the claim that Russian cadres had been targeted for removal, claiming to have identified fourteen incidents where the best qualified candidate for a post, a Russian, had been replaced by a less qualified Latvian. This claim was put in the context of other "anti-Soviet" policies. Berklavs had supposedly opposed any further industrialization of Latvia in order to halt the influx of migrant labor; those non-Latvians who had tried to settle in the country had found themselves facing a discriminatory policy when it came to registering in major cities, Riga in particular. On top of that, some of the recent appointments made in the realm of culture had been clearly nationalist in nature – the Union of Composers was headed by someone who had collaborated with the Germans, the Union of Journalists by a former *aizsargs*, member of the National Guard, the report alleged.[18]

Khrushchev had ignored such reports in the past, so to ensure this report was taken seriously, it was decided to make use of Khrushchev's visit to Riga, from 9–12 June, in the company of the East German leader Walter Ulbricht. Using a mutual wartime acquaintance as an intermediary, Ponomarev presented Khrushchev with a colorful account of Russians being persecuted at the hands of Latvian "bourgeois nationalists." The result was that back in Moscow the ruling Soviet Communist Party Presidium (as the Politburo had been renamed) discussed the affair on 13 June and resolved to send its own representative to Latvia to assess the situation. This assessment was then discussed briefly at a further Presidium meeting on 22 June, and again on 1 July after a Plenum of the Soviet Communist Party Central Committee.

The Presidium then held a meeting with the Latvian leadership, at which Khrushchev gave them a good dressing down, before concluding: "this is no big tragedy, all will be put right, and it will be put right locally." The Latvian leadership was to take into consideration the "exchange of views" which had taken place in Moscow and correct its work accordingly.[19]

The Latvian Central Committee held a Plenum on 7–8 July to discuss this "exchange of views," and, as proceedings developed, it became clear that those setting the scene in Riga were those who fully accepted the claims of the Central Committee investigative team, most significantly Pelše, who had worked closely with it. The Plenum was framed by the investigation report, and it ended by going significantly beyond Khrushchev's previously stated position; it passed a resolution which rescinded, as the "work of Beria," the decisions taken at the June 1953 Plenum. The arguments advanced by the national communists on 7–8 July – that the report of the investigative team was inaccurate, and that all the national communists were trying to do was to encourage Latvian workers to join the party – held no sway. What obsessed Pelše was not the success claimed in recruiting new members, but the fact that to achieve this recruitment rules had been relaxed to allow some of those once mobilized into the Latvian Legion to join the Party.[20]

Within two months of Pelše becoming the new Secretary of the Latvian Communist Party in autumn 1959, Krūmiņš had been removed as Second Secretary, and this was despite Khrushchev's clear statement to Pelše that he did not want the Second Secretary to come from "his apparatus." There followed a slow but steady purge of all those associated with the national communists, including the economist Pauls Dzērve, who had previously told a Party meeting called to condemn the Yugoslav League of Communists that "the danger in Latvia is not [Yugoslav] revisionism but dogmatism, dogmatism which ignores the specificities of building communism in Latvia." Between 1959 and 1962 this rolling purge of the Latvian Communist Party took out some two thousand Party members.[21] Pelše set the new tone when, in August 1961, he submitted a report to the Latvian Central Committee complaining about the harmful consequences of the recent increase in contacts between Latvians at home and those in emigration. The rate of correspondence had increased eight-fold since 1955 and this growth, along with the growth in tourism, had had only negative consequences in his view. In the meantime, the decision in March 1961 to provide housing for nearly three thousand Soviet Army officers who had decided to retire to Latvia set an important precedent for the future.[22]

The irony here was that Pelše's purge put Latvia completely out of step with the intellectual excitement of the last wave of Khrushchev's reforms. Not only was Stalin's body removed from the Lenin Mausoleum and the article "Plan, Profits and Bonuses"

published in *Pravda*, but a decision swiftly followed to allow the publication of Alexander Solzhenitsyn's novel *A Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*. A few days later, on 21 October 1962, *Pravda* published Evgenii Evtushenko's masterpiece *The Heirs of Stalin*. Then, in April 1963, the jamming of western radio broadcasts was stopped, and in late August 1963 Khrushchev paid a triumphant visit to Yugoslavia, returning to call for "the democratization of management in enterprises" in the Soviet Union. Khrushchev's greatest critic, Mikhail Suslov, was Pelše's brother-in-law, and both of them found the order which prevailed in Latvia during those years, more conducive than Khrushchev's "hare-brained" obsession with the radical transformation of Soviet society. The Pelše regime in Latvia after 1959 foreshadowed what the USSR was to become under Brezhnev.[23]

Brezhnev's Rule

The Prague Spring had such an impact on Eastern Europe that it found an echo even within the much-purged Latvian Communist Party. The dissident communist Jānis Jahimovičs signed a letter of protest issued by the most active Soviet dissident of the time, the former general Pyotr Grigorenko; later, in April 1969, a Latvian student emulated the Czech student Jan Palach and died after setting fire to himself at the Freedom Monument in central Riga. Such protests were met with a determined response, and among those arrested in 1969 was the 84-year-old Fricis Menders, a former leading member of the Latvian Social Democratic Party in the inter-war years and a deputy in all four Saeimas. Menders, like other Social Democrats, had briefly co-operated with the Soviet authorities in 1940, but later in World War II he had joined the pro-Western Latvian Central Council and had been arrested in 1948 as one of its activists. After his release from Siberian exile in 1955, the security services had been monitoring his activities – a report of January 1958 expressed concern at the way he had become a focal point for other former Social Democrat activists – and Khrushchev had been briefed on his endorsement of many of the policies enacted by the national communists. Menders was put on trial in late October 1969 for attempting to smuggle the manuscript of his memoirs to Sweden, where he was still in contact with Social Democrat exiles.[24]

Although the final hurrah for the ideas of National Communism came in January 1972 when Berklavs wrote an Open Letter to the Communist Parties of Yugoslavia, Romania, France, Austria and Spain – the communist parties which had condemned the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia – his notion that "the present policies of the Communist Party leaders in the Soviet Union are destroying the world communist movement" was no longer a concern for most Latvians.[25] The time when the reform

of communism seemed possible was long gone. The dissident movement, which emerged in Latvia in the 1970s and 1980s, was motivated by a concern for civil rights, not reform communism, as was the case throughout the Soviet Union, but for Latvia there was the issue of national survival as well. The Latvian Independence Movement was concerned that the falling birth rate among ethnic Latvians, coupled with the mass immigration of non-Latvians to the republic, spelled disaster. In October 1975 it issued an Open Letter raising these issues and predicting that "our nation has little hope of survival."[26]

That same month the Latvian Democratic Youth Committee sent a letter to Latvian organizations abroad, and at the end of the year circulated New Year cards calling on Latvians to emulate the stance taken by Academician Andrei Sakharov and "lead a life marked by integrity and human dignity [without] participating in hypocritical activities in which the truth is disfigured"; Latvians should also "be aware of their rights and demand that they be respected." On 17 June 1976, the anniversary of the Red Army's occupation of Latvia in 1940, the Latvian Democratic Youth Committee issued a joint statement with the Latvian Independence Committee condemning that occupation as an act of "imperialist aggression."[27] The arrest of the art historian Jurģis Skulme and his trial in August 1977 for sending "false information" to Sweden caused a stir in intellectual circles. Skulme had been sending to Sweden reports of labor unrest in Liepāja and Daugavpils, and the KGB were convinced that with his arrest they had found the source of the "Observer" column in the émigré newspaper of the Latvian Social Democrats. In May 1976 strikes in protest at food shortages had taken place throughout the country, but particularly in the Riga Dockyards.[28]

Such actions were inspired by the national nihilism of the Latvian Communist Party leadership, which was determined to wipe out any memory of Latvia's time as an independent state. Menders' memoirs were an obvious example: the focus of the manuscript was not his suffering under the Soviet regime but his active political life until 1940. Augusts Voss, a key figure in the ousting of the national communists in 1959, took over from Pelše as First Secretary in 1966 and continued his hardline policies. At the 21st Congress of the Latvian Communist Party in February 1971 he attacked what he called the recent fashion for "so-called museums" which were devoted to the activities of writers of the inter-war years; these writers were all members of the "Latvian national bourgeoisie," he asserted, and the ideas they propagated were alien.[29] A report on censorship for the years 1975–76 revealed how obsessive such petty fears could become: a proposed book on the opera stars of inter-war Latvia was banned; a study of the national poet Rainis had to be re-written to exclude his activities in the Social Democratic Party and aspects of his private life which might produce "a lack of clarity" about his career; and a collection

of poetry had to be withdrawn because it contained a poem celebrating the beauty of the countryside drowned by the Pļaviņas dam, a dam which the national communists had tried to prevent being constructed in the late 1950s. In the same vein, in 1979 the Komsomol journal *Liesma* was prevented from publishing some reminiscences of the inter-war years because they referred to how Vilis Lācis, whose renown as an author had made him a darling of society, had shared a box at a film premier with President Ulmanis.[30] Only very occasionally was there the slightest hint of concern for national culture or the fate of the nation itself: in February 1975, *Literatūra un Māksla* complained how few plays by Latvian authors were staged in Riga, and in July of that year the health journal *Veselība* raised the issue of Latvia's extraordinary low birth rate, the lowest in the USSR.[31]

By the 1980s, the regime was entirely divorced from the population. A security report of October 1980, discussed in great detail by the Latvian Communist Party leadership, argued that the intelligence services of the imperialist powers were trying to undermine Soviet youth by encouraging an interest in "discotheques": twenty of these operated in Riga on a permanent basis with official sanction, while a further fifty operated occasionally and informally. These "discotheques" were, supposedly, causing serious political harm.[32] Clamping down on discotheques did not stop dissident activity, however. In 1983 over one hundred dissidents were arrested and two put on trial that November accused of distributing copies of the *Bulletin of Latvia's Independence Movement*, which had just produced its tenth issue.[33]

Everything changed in March 1985 with the appointment of Mikhail Gorbachev as the new head of the Soviet Communist Party. Almost at once national communist voices were heard once again. On 30 August, to mark his 80th birthday, the Latvian Supreme Soviet awarded Kārlis Ozoliņš, who had been in disgrace for some twenty five years, the Friendship Between People's medal; the next day *Cīņa* carried an article about Ozoliņš written by Voldemārs Kalpiņš, the former national communist Minister of Culture; the two men had been editor and deputy editor of *Cīņa* in 1940.[34] But, thirty years on, Latvians were even less interested in Gorbachev's reform communism agenda than the other peoples of the Soviet Union. The right of national self-determination, recognized at Helsinki, fought for by dissidents for two decades and acknowledged on paper in the Soviet Constitution, was the only possible basis for renewal. Recognizing that right would result in a new popular vote which could nullify the false referendum of July 1940.

Endnotes

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3 Swain and Swain, 69–73, 61–64, 95–104.

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5 Swain, *Khrushchev*, 180–91.

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7 Geoffrey Swain, "Latvia's Red Partisans Reconsidered," *Humanitāro zinātņu vēstnesis: Daugavpils Universitāte*, 4 (2003): 89. For talks between Soviet Partisans and National Partisans, see National Archives of Latvia, State Archive of Latvia: LVA 301.1.29, 23&46, and Vilis Samsons, *Partizanskoe dvizhenie v severnoi Latvii v gody Velikoi Oteshestvennoi Voiny* (Riga: Latgosizdat, 1951) 168. For Niedre, see Geoffrey Swain, "Forgotten Voices: Reflections in Latvia during World War T*wo," From Recognition to Restoration: Latvia's History as a Nation-State*, ed. David J. Smith et al. (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2010) 47, citing LVA 101.3.2.51.

8 These incidents are discussed in Geoffrey Swain *Between Stalin and Hitler: Class War and Race War on the Dvina, 1940–46* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2004) 144, 151, 168, citing LVA 101.3.5.13/15; 101.3.7.11; and 101.3.13.64. See also Geoffrey Swain "'Cleaning up Soviet Latvia': the Bureau for Latvia (Latburo), 1944–1947" *The Sovietization of the Baltic States, 1940–1956*, ed. O. Mertelsmann (Tartu: Kleio, 2003) 77, citing LVA 101.9.6.217/218.

9 For Jurgens, see Swain "Latburo," citing Russian State Archive for Social and Political Research (RGASPI) 600.1.11.121. For the broader debate about collectivisation, see Geoffrey Swain "Deciding to Collectivise Latvian Agriculture," *Europe–Asia Studies,* 55.1 (2003).

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11 Summarised from Swain "Collectivisation." For Aglona, see LVA 101.11.68.51.

12 Recruitment to the Komsomol is discussed in Geoffrey Swain, "Before National Communism: Joining the Latvian Komsomol under Stalin," *Europe-Asia Studies*, 64. 7 (2012). For the reference to Audriņi, see Interview 616, Oral History Centre, Daugavpils University. The quote from Amir Weiner is from his *Making Sense of War: The World War and the Fate of the Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2001) 7, 17.

13 Swain "Komsomol," 1259–64.

14 For the Khrushchev report, see E. Yu. Zubkova, *Pribaltika i Kreml'* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2008) 328. Also V. Krumin'sh, "Dolgaya doroga k demokratii," *Kommunist Sovetskoi Latvii*, 3 (1990): 89.

15 Tynu Tannbergm *Politika Moskvy v respublikakh Baltii v poslevoennye gody (1944-1956): issledovaniya i dokumenty* (Tartu: Tartu UP, 2008) 164, 168.

16 Krumin'sh, "Dolgaya doroga," *Kommunist Sovetskoi Latvii*, 4 (1990): 86.

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18 *Regional'naya politika N. S. Khrushcheva. TsK KPSS i mestnye partiinye komitety 1953–1964 gg.* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2009) 223–31.

19 *Arkhivy kremlya: Prezidium TsK KPSS, 1954–1964* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2003) 355-57.

[20] These issues are discussed more fully in Geoffrey Swain, "'Come on Latvian, Join the Party – We'll Forgive You Everything': Ideological Struggle during the National Communist Affair, Summer 1959," *Latvia – A Work in Progress?* ed. David J. Smith (Stuttgart: ibidem, 2017) 108–09.

[21] Michael Loader "The Death of 'Socialism with a Latvian Face': the Purge of the Latvian National Communists, July 1959–1962," *Journal of Baltic Studies*, 48.2 (2017): 176. For Dzērve, see *Latvija padomju režīma varā: Dokumentu krājums* (Riga: Latvijas Vēstures institūta apgāds, 2001) 233.

[22] *Latvija padomju režīma varā*, 179, 245–49.

[23] Khrushchev's last reforms are discussed in Swain, *Khrushchev*, 168–86.

[24] *Radio Liberty Research Bulletin* 17.12.76. For the security services, see *Latvija padomju režīma varā*, 112–15; for Khrushchev's reference to Menders, see *Arkhivy kremlya*, 357.

[25] George Saunders, ed., *Samizdat: Voices of the Soviet Opposition* (New York: Monad Press, 1974) 430.

[26] *Radio Liberty Research Bulletin* 7 May 1976.

[27] *Radio Liberty Research Bulletin* 17 December 1976.

[28] *Radio Liberty Research Bulletin* 3 December 1976.

[29] *Latvija padomju režīma varā,* 407.

[30] *Latvija padomju režīma varā*, 276, 278, 287.

[31] *Radio Liberty Research Bulletin*, 4.7.75; 12.9.75.

[32] *Latvija padomju režīma varā*, 414.

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[34] *Situation Report* 20 May 1986.

Ilze Boldāne-Zeļenkova

Internationalism and Soviet Ethnic Policy: The Retention of Ethnic Characteristics as a Form of Resistance in Post-World War II Occupied Latvia

Following Latvia's occupation in 1940 and in the post-war years the country became part of the Soviet Union, its population supplementing the ethnic diversity of the USSR and being subjected to intensive processes of unification, so as to correspond in theory and in practice to the criteria of the concept of the "Soviet people." Under the conditions of Soviet occupation, Latvia's ethnic composition experienced a major shift in terms of the proportions of particular ethnic groups, along with significant changes in the division of social roles and associated privileges. Thus, the Latvians lost the status of the titular nation, whereas in Soviet historiography the concept of minority ethnic groups (*mazākumtautības*, *nacionālās minoritātes*) came to be used as a term for describing the social realities of Tsarist Russia and the so-called bourgeois states. In spite of the totalitarian system's repressive apparatus and the massive arsenal of propaganda, in everyday life and sometimes also in the public sphere, the residents of Latvia cultivated and demonstrated their affiliation to a particular ethnic culture and values, which can be viewed both as a necessity for upholding family tradition, and as constituting resistance to the regime.

The aim of the article is to provide, as far as the limitations of the utilized sources permit, an insight into the retention of ethnic identity by the Latvians and members of certain other ethnic groups living in the Latvian SSR in the context of the ethnic policy pursued by the USSR.[1]

Internationalism, the Soviet People and the Latvian Socialist Nation

The preamble of the USSR Constitution (1977) asserted that social and ethnic animosities ("class antagonism and ethnic hatred") had been eliminated in this state, along with the development of a socialist society and a "historic new human community," namely the Soviet people. We also find such terms as the "USSR

nation" and the "ethnic groups of the USSR," "internationalists" and "international responsibility."[2]

In Soviet historiography we find a string of analytical works providing definitions and interpretations of the terminology used in Communist Party documents, plenary sessions and congresses,[3] which served as a cloak for the ethnic policy it was pursuing, oriented towards unification and assimilation. The adjectives "voluntary," "willing," "friendly," "fraternal," etc., are very prominent in these texts, which were intended mainly for public lecturers tasked with conveying this message to the masses. Also very revealing is the fact that, in spite of the emphasis on the leading role of the Communist Party, brochures characterizing various social processes employ the active mood of the Latvian language (e.g., traditions "come in"), rather than the passive mood (e.g., traditions "are introduced"), which would better correspond to the actual course of development in the Soviet state. This seems absurd, knowing that the Latvian SSR even had several commissions involving Communist Party officials, scientists and practicians responsible for the development, introduction and monitoring of Soviet traditions.[4] Equally ironic from the present-day perspective is the assertion expressed in these texts that the Russian language was "voluntarily" and "willingly" adopted by the Soviet socialist nations, since we know the fate of Eduards Berklavs (1914–2004), Deputy Chairman of the Latvian SSR Council of Ministers, and like-minded individuals, who, making use of the rights envisaged in the USSR Constitution, strove in the late 1950s to oppose the Russification and uncontrolled immigration taking place in the republic. However, these works constitute significant source material for understanding the ethno-social hierarchy in the Soviet Union.

All the citizens of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics together constituted the "Soviet people," which consisted of "Soviet socialist nations" and "ethnic groups." In terms of definitions accepted in the social sciences, and from a logical perspective, the hierarchy accepted in the USSR presents quite obvious contradictions: thus, in this hierarchy, a nation, namely a supra-ethnic community of people united by their affiliation to a state, is viewed as forming part of a "people" – "a human community with a particular culture and traditions differing from others."[5] Certain texts polemicize with researchers from Western countries, disputing "the theories of bourgeois ideologues," which suggests that there was an awareness of this contradiction.[6] Indications as to why the "people" in particular were placed at the apex of the hierarchy may be found in a work by Soviet historian Maksim Kim (1908–1996).[7] The historian refers to the idea widely reflected in Soviet historiography that in Tsarist Russia and the capitalist countries the word "people" was used with reference only to the lower strata of society – the workers and peasants, which in Soviet terminology constituted the "community of the exploited."[8]

By analogy, if the avant-garde of the USSR was constituted of the working masses, the "people," unified by "socioeconomic and moral-political links," had to be placed at the apex of the hierarchy of socio-ethnic groups.[9]

The utilized works offer several mutually non-exclusive definitions of the term "Soviet people." Some examples may be given. Thus, the Soviet people is: (1) "a highly organized, ideationally committed, highly conscious society of working people – patriots and internationalists";[10] (2) "the first interethnic, socialist human community in history";[11] (3) "a socio-ethnic community that represents neither a new class nor a new nation; it is a cardinally new formation – inter-class, interethnic and multi-ethnic."[12] The authors proudly note that "the Soviet people" brings together more than 100 different ethnic groups.[13]

It is seen as characterized by the following features: (1) a framework of Marxist-Leninist ideology, and socialist economics and politics; (2) a voluntary coming together and merging of nations; (3) the working class as the ideal type; (4) the equality of nations and ethnic groups in a legal, real-life and cultural sense; (5) the unification of nations and ethnic groups; (6) a harmonious combination of the flourishing and coming together of nations.[14] What is meant by the repeatedly mentioned "coming together"? The party's public pronouncements emphasize that it is not opposed to the ethnic distinctiveness of the republics and supports the flourishing of cultures, which is possible through the sharing and borrowing of the experience of other Soviet socialist nations. In the sharing of experience, a major role was allocated to the Russian language, which had been adopted "voluntarily," developing into the second language of the nations of the USSR. The closer relationship also had to be promoted through the absence of internal borders in the Soviet Union. Each Soviet republic had its own territory, and they all held in common the expanse of the Soviet Union. This opened up extensive opportunities for internal migration, which was additionally stimulated by means of economic, social and other instruments available to the authorities.

What, then, did the Soviet Sciences of Society mean by *nation*?[15] It is defined as a "historically developed stable human community exhibiting the following main features: a common language, a common territory, a common economic life and a common psychic structure, as expressed in a set of specific traits of national culture."[16] Soviet historian Kārlis Strazdiņš (1890–1964) and his colleagues are at pains to emphasize that the absence of any one of these features indicates that we are not dealing with a nation.[17] The description of the Latvian socialist nation emphasizes that it is constituted of two "friendly classes" – the workers and the farmers – along with the Soviet intelligentsia; its culture is socialist in content and national in form; it has "a firmly established ideology of socialist internationalism and friendship between peoples."[18]

The question arises: what, in the view of the Soviet authorities, was the status of Latvia's historical ethnic minority groups? Are they "a separate set of people,[19] as described by Strazdiņš, or "Others," as they appear next to the columns "Latvians" and "Russians" in the records of the deportation of 25 March 1949? The constitution of the Latvian SSR (1940) also defines the rights of citizens of "various races and ethnic groups" (Article 34).[20] The works of Soviet ethnographers utilize the following terms: "members of ethnic groups" (*tautību pārstāvji*), "ethnic groups" (*tautības*), "members of various nations" *(dažādu nāciju pārstāvji*), "those born in or outside of Latvia" (*Latvijā un ārpus Latvijas dzimušie*) and "immigrants" (*iebraucēji*).[21] In the 1980s, suggestions appear in Soviet historiography that in parallel with the concept of the Latvian socialist nation the broader, more inclusive term "the people of Soviet Latvia" be employed,[22] which would also encompass "the indigenous inhabitants of Latvia – Russians, Poles and Belarusians in Latvia, who have lived here for many generations."[23]

Internationalism – the ideological basis for all processes of ethnic socialist consolidation "does not permit ethnic isolationism or chauvinism, and creates favorable conditions for applying the experience of other peoples and for drawing closer to other peoples and ethnic groups (minorities)."[24]

So, we have ethnic groups, Soviet socialist nations and the Soviet people, with internationalism as the glue sticking them together. What would come next? In the early 1960s the answer to this question was unequivocal: it would be followed by communism! This envisaged the merging of peoples into one group with a common culture and language. For Latvia, this meant ever-closer integration into the Soviet Union's planned economy, an ever-increasing scale of migration and the merging of the Latvians "into the family of other nations, while those who had come to Latvia would join the Latvian socialist nation.[25] And, as historian Ilga Apine (1927–2019) writes, in the more distant future all nations would merge into a united humanity, with a common world culture and a common language, but this would happen only after the complete victory of communism at the world scale.[26]

The Role and Tasks of the Communist Party and Its Achievements in Addressing Ethnic Issues[27]

The Communist Party's concern for all aspects of society also extended to ethnicity. "The CPSU and its CC [...] stand guard vigilantly over the Soviet Federation and act to strengthen it, viewing it as a dynamic form of state-level unification of the Soviet nations and ethnic groups, intended to last the whole of the historical period right up

to communist self-government."[28] The position with respect to ethnic issues is set out in the final documents of Communist Party congresses and plenary sessions, which laid down the guidelines for local party organizations. These repeatedly emphasize the party's duty to strengthen the fraternal friendship of the peoples of the Soviet Union, giving strong attention to instructing society "in a spirit of socialist internationalism" and strictly countering any expressions of nationalism: "narrow localism, promotion of ethnic exclusivity and isolation, idealization of the past and praise for reactionary traditions and customs."[29] Of course, the Communist Party's activity in addressing the ethnic question was not limited to directives and propaganda; it was a complex of actions that significantly affected the economic and social sphere of every Soviet republic.

An important pillar of support for addressing ethnic issues in the USSR was the creation of a unified information space or "cultural milieu."[30] This included TV and radio broadcasts with similar content (the central TV channel was broadcast in all the Soviet socialist republics, which were unified in a joint USSR TV network; Soviet radio broadcasts in 61 languages of the peoples of the USSR could be heard across the USSR), as well as teaching aids analogous in terms of content, intended for the network of institutions of mass culture and education.

A second basis was the creation of an equally multi-ethnic milieu in all of the republics, this being achieved by means of intensive migration. Mass deportations were undertaken, transferring members of the republic's titular nation to distant regions of the USSR, on the pretext that they were necessary for resolving nationally important issues – the struggle against enemies of the people, traitors and their henchmen, kulaks, *budži* (well-to-do farmers) and other reactionary elements. This provided space for bringing in people from other ethnic groups, reflected in the propaganda as fraternal assistance to develop the republic's economy. In the absence of borders, workers came voluntarily in order to provide support and instruction. And why should they not do so, when state social support for the newcomers gave them easier access to housing, a problematic issue in the Soviet Union?[31] The migration instituted by the Soviet Union led Latvian demographers to conclude at the beginning of the 1990s that ethnic diversity in the Latvian SSR was absolutely analogous to that of the USSR as a whole, with people from more than 100 ethnic groups living in Latvia.[32] Table 1 shows this transformation, reflected in the increase in the "others" column. It also shows how intensively the proportion of East Slavic peoples – Russians, Belarusians and Ukrainians – was growing within the population of the Latvian SSR.

Table 1.
The major ethnic groups in Latvia, 1935–1989[33]

→ Year ↓ Ethnic group	1935	1943	1959	1970	1979	1989
Latvians	1467035 76.9%	1441536 81.9%	1297881 62%	1341805 56.8%	1344105 53.7%	1387757 52%
Russians	168266 8.8%	167773 9.5%	556448 26.6%	705999 29.8%	821464 32.8%	905515 34%
Jews	93370 4.9%	?	36584 1.8%	36671 1.6%	28318 1.1%	22897 0.9%
Germans	62116 3.3%	17648 1%	1609 0.1%	5413 0.2%	3299 0.1%	3783 0.1%
Belarusians	26803 1.4%	48601 2.8%	61587 2.9%	94898 4%	111505 4.5%	119702 4.5%
Poles	48637 2.6%	37996 2.2%	59774 2.9%	63045 2.7%	62690 2.5%	60416 2.3%
Lithuanians	22843 1.2%	24094 1.4%	32383 1.5%	40589 1.7%	37818 1.5%	34630 1.3%
Estonians	6928 0.4%	5389 0.3%	4610 0.2%	4334 0.2%	3681 0.1%	3312 0.1%
Roma	3839 0.2%	2998 0.2%	4301 0.2%	5427 0.2%	6134 0.3%	7044 0.3%
Ukrainians	1844 0.1%	11339 0.6%	29440 1.4%	534612 3%	66703 2.8%	92101 3.5%
Others	3692 0.2%	2788 0.2%	8841 0.4%	12485 0.5%	17099 0.6%	29410 1%
Total	1905373 100%	1760162 100%	2093458 100%	2364127 100%	2502816 100%	2377383 100%

The changes in demographic data of the population of Latvia during the years of Soviet occupation, which affected interethnic relations in that period and continue to affect them, have been examined by various researchers. The statistical data have been analyzed in works by Soviet demographers and by demographers in independent Latvia.[34] The demographic situation under the conditions of occupation has repeatedly also been considered by Latvia's Commission of Historians.[35] Neither can it be ignored in the context of the present study.

The immigrants settled mainly in those cities, towns and other locations in Latvia where "socialist construction, namely the building of hydro-electric plants and major industrial complexes, was actively being undertaken and where factories and plants created in the course of industrialization were operating, thus reducing the proportion of ethnic Latvians in these population centers to under 50%. Of course, this situation – the development of multi-ethnic factory and collective farm workforces – was not fortuitous. As recognized by Dzidra Šmidre (1923–2020), docent of the Department of USSR History at the P. Stučka Latvian State University,[36] "intensive migration of the population is a significant factor promoting the ethnic consolidation of the nation. People exchange work experience, mutual adaptation reduces cultural and social differences, regional and local dialectical differences disappear."[37]

In the Latvian context, elimination of the Augšzemnieki regional dialect, which its users referred to as the "Latgalian language," was hailed as a great achievement and an example of progress.[38] Since it curtailed the possibilities of education in one's native language, the prohibition against the press and book publishing was presented in propaganda as a step in the direction of equality, ostensibly removing barriers to raising the level of education and culture among the Latgalian population.

Latvia's historical ethnic minorities – Belarusians, Jews, Estonians, Lithuanians and Poles – were likewise affected by the closure of schools and restrictions on the use of their native tongue in the public sphere, having developed their own school networks, their press and cultural societies in independent Latvia between the wars.[39] The first blow came already in 1940, and minority schools were completely eliminated by the end of the 1940s. These people, who had long lived in Latvia, were given a stark choice: they must educate their children either in Latvian or in Russian. There was no other possibility. From 1949 onwards, the schools in Latvia taught only in the language of the titular nation – Latvian, or in Russian.[40]

In the Communist Party's scenario for consolidating each Soviet socialist nation and the Soviet people as a whole, the Russian language was allotted a special role. It was presented as an instrument for bringing nations and ethnic groups closer together, and for bringing them closer to the "elder brother, namely the Russian people. Literary works and scientific studies and findings by authors from various ethnic groups were brought together in Russian, and thus communicated to all who knew Russian. The historian Kārlis Strazdiņš emphasized that it was hard to describe a person as cultured in the Soviet land, if he or she had not mastered or was not striving to master the Russian language.[41] The historiography devoted to this theme particularly emphasizes Lenin's position: that no nation should be favored above

others, in accordance with which he was opposed to Russian being declared the official language *de iure*,[42] whereas in the conditions that had been created it would in any case obtain this status *de facto*. In 1972, Leonid Brezhnev, General Secretary of the CPSU CC (1906–1982), recognized that Russian had already become the language of mutual communication for all the nations and ethnic groups of the Soviet Union.[43]

Why was Russian, in particular, fated to become the official language "voluntarily" accepted in the Soviet Union? At least four reasons are set out in the historiography: (1) it is the language of the most numerous socialist nation; (2) it is related to the languages of the numerous Ukrainian and Belarusian peoples; (3) it offers the widest range of literature in science, technology and other spheres of culture; (4) it is a world language.[44]

In the Soviet perception, the meaning of the word "voluntariness" has been distorted, similar to the usage of the terms "people" and "nation." It was seemingly impossible not to learn and become fluent in Russian, since official documents had to be in two languages, Russian dominated in shops and commercial services, and Russian was the language of communication in workplaces with a multi-ethnic workforce. The historian Ļubova Zīle (1928–2016) links the phenomenon whereby the presence of just one non-Latvian in an assembled company was sufficient to cause Latvians to change to conversing in Russian to a fear of being condemned for expressing "bourgeois nationalism."[45] "Bourgeois nationalism" was a concept antithetical to Soviet internationalism, and accordingly was a phenomenon to be rooted out in the Soviet state.[46]

The data of sociological studies published in Soviet historiography show that among the intelligentsia of the non-Russian ethnic groups in the Latvian SSR the proportion of people with a knowledge of Russian was 87.96%. The proportion was 99.2% among Belarusians, 96.5% among Ukrainians and 98.6% among Jews, and many of them regarded Russian as their native language. With a figure of 86.9%, the Latvian intelligentsia was in this regard considerably ahead of the Estonian colleagues resident in the Estonian SSR (60.3%).[47] Taking into account the statistical data on language knowledge in the Latvian SSR (Table 2), for reasons of economy, official letters to private individuals would be sent out in Russian. Accordingly, as concluded by linguist Aina Blinkena (1929–2017), Latvian was being eliminated from the official sphere.[48]

The educational, cultural and language policies implemented in the Soviet socialist republics, as well as the relatively high proportion of mixed marriages really did act to fuse people from many different ethnic groups into an ethno-social community nowadays known as "Soviet Person" or *Homo Sovieticus*.[49] The catalyst for this process was the high proportion of non-Russian informants who gave Russian as their native language.

Table 2.

Language skills among the population of Latvia in 1989 (%)[50]

Ethnic group	Knowledge of one's own ethnic language			Knowledge of Latvian			Knowledge of Russian		
	Native language	Second language	Total	Native language	Second language	Total	Native language	Second language	Total
Latvians	97.4	1.3	98.7	-	-	-	2.6	65.7	68.3
Russians	98.8	1.0	99.8	1.1	21.1	22.2	-	-	-
Ukrainians	49.5	14.7	64.2	0.9	8.9	9.8	49.4	43.8	93.2
Belarusians	32.2	11.6	43.8	2.5	15.5	18.0	64.8	29.7	94.5
Poles	27.3	33.8	61.1	14.7	22.8	37.5	54.2	33.8	88.0
Lithuanians	63.9	9.6	73.5	23.8	40.3	64.1	11.9	36.0	47.9
Jews	22.5	4.4	26.9	2.0	27.0	29.0	74.9	17.5	92.4

In its role of promoting the unification of the Soviet people, the Communist Party led the way in creating and introducing unified socialist traditions. As elsewhere in the world, the Soviet state marked national festivities (establishment of the state and the most significant historical events), celebrations devoted to particular professions and festivities relating to the human life cycle.[51] The celebrations to be observed throughout the Soviet Union were the anniversary of the October Revolution (7 November), USSR Constitution Day (5 December) and Victory Day (9 May). Each republic marked its accession to the Soviet state. In the Latvian SSR, this event was celebrated on 22 July. Emphasizing the importance of the workers in the Soviet state, the calendar included a very wide range of celebrations for particular professional groups: Army Day (23 February), Teachers' Day (the first Sunday of October), Militia Day (22 December), Forestry Workers' Day (21 September) and many others. A third sphere, that of family custom and tradition, which often included a religious influence, was subject to particular attention. The activities in this area were directed towards: (1) reducing the role of religion; (2) unifying these processes through the principle that was applied to culture in general, namely that they should be socialist in terms of content and national in terms of form; (3) increasing the role of the collective (the work collective cares for/is responsible for the private life of its members).

Religion, as an important element of the ethnic identity of particular peoples, and likewise the influence of the capitalist world with its harmful praising of "bourgeois nationalism," are mentioned as obstacles to the development of a consolidated "Soviet people."[52] Various means of overcoming these influences were identified,

namely comprehensive attacks against the clergy, the use of radio jamming stations, minimization of contact with people from capitalist countries and promotion of the ideas of scientific communism.[53]

The Ethnic Groups in Latvia under the Conditions of Soviet Occupation

In the early 1960s, the historian Kārlis Strazdiņš wrote:

> Characteristic traits of the Latvian people were hatred of exploiters and oppressors, which had become ingrained during the centuries of struggle against exploiters and oppressors, a love of work, assiduity and perseverance in achieving their aims, sincerity and congeniality, and revolutionary traditions. Within the family of Soviet republics [...] there has been a marked growth in the people's friendliness, faith, love and fidelity to the socialist homeland, Soviet patriotism, a socialist love of labor, and a resolve to overcome obstacles and shortcomings in building the communist system.[54]

If we are aware of how the simulation of Soviet reality was cultivated in the Soviet public sphere, where the desired result was presented as the existing state of affairs, and of the mechanisms employed to construct this reality, we may naturally ask: was it really so?

Although the security services in the USSR gave heightened attention to the disposition of members of society, including the various ethnic groups of the Latvian SSR, their attitudes and their assessment of the conditions in which they found themselves, there were no official opinion polls. Oral history sources, namely people's recollections of life during the years of Soviet occupation, which have been correlated with documents and with contemporary historical and sociological studies on Soviet socialist reality and the history of ethnic groups in Latvia,[55] provide the basis for studying the ethnic self-identification of members of society as a form of opposition to the Soviet occupation regime.

Narratives told by Latvians about their first encounters with and impressions of Soviet rule, which followed after the "good times of Ulmanis,"[56] initially convey fear of the invading army's soldiers, along with amazement at their appearance and behavior,[57] followed by the conclusions that "Latvia is lost!",[58] "We no longer existed; we had been written off,"[59] and so forth. Schoolchildren and young people were equally amazed when the Wehrmacht marched into Latvia, shattering their established view of the Germans as malefactors against the Latvians. "Our world view was shaken – not everything that was taught at school." "They [the Germans] were greeted as liberators!?!"[60]

Historians recognize that in many respects the model of the Soviet state had already been constructed by the time its Joseph Stalin (1878–1953) died, and was thereafter maintained with varying degrees of success. Under the cloak of slogans proclaiming the preservation of (progressive) ethnic traits, the Soviet occupation officials and Communist Party activists applied various directives to undermine the essential postulates of Latvian ethnic identity, namely the Latvian language and culture, single farmsteads and land ownership, the rights to property, as well as the boundaries of privacy and ethics,[61] not to mention the imposition of a new view of history.[62]

The courageous struggle by the national partisans in Latvia's forests, defeated in the second half of the 1950s by greatly superior forces,[63] is the most conspicuous form of Latvian resistance to the Soviet occupation regime. Hoping for British and American support in the restoration of national independence, Latvian "forest brethren" (*meža brāļi*) and "forest maidens" (*meža meitas*)[64] sabotaged and disrupted the activities of local-level Soviet institutions. Their struggle would have been impossible without the support of the local population, which mainly provided food and clothing. The recollections of people in Latvia about this period and about the motives behind aid to the partisans reveal a range of different motivations: some were guided by their ideological support for the struggle of the national partisans; others shared food with the partisans as well as with their enemies out of fear. One side would come along and would be given food; and then the others would likewise be fed; and people would maintain silence. They learned to avoid unnecessary talk and to speak in hushed tones, so that only their own circle would understand. These skills would be finely honed during the 50 years of Soviet occupation.

In the persecution of 1949, 42,975 residents of Latvia, comprising more than 13,000 families, were deported from Latvia: 41,084 Latvians, 772 Russians, four Germans and 1114 people from other ethnic groups.[65] More than half were farmers. The aim behind the deportations was to reduce the base of support for the partisans and promote collectivization. The intended result was achieved: both Soviet farms, sovkhozes, and collective farms, kolkhozes, where all property was held in common and everyone was responsible for everything, i.e., nobody was responsible for anything. The individual farmsteads were eliminated, thus significantly eroding an element of Latvian ethnic consciousness that had been promoted especially during the years of Kārlis Ulmanis' authoritarian regime, namely of the Latvians as a farming people.

For the rural population, this collective lack of responsibility was especially painful: to engage in the work of sowing and harvesting in accordance with a set plan, irrespective of climatic conditions, was unbearable. Equally unacceptable was life in the collective farm villages,[66] where neighbors could keep an eye on each other. Many began to leave the countryside for the cities, joining the ranks of the workers and civil

servants. Others simply gave up and took to drink. Many adapted, making use of every opportunity and sphere of activity that had not been placed out of bounds, staying in the countryside and maintaining the Latvian character of rural areas, in spite of the ethnic affiliation of the administrators (Russians, especially at the beginning) and the imported seasonal labor force and construction brigades (interviewees most frequently mention Ukrainians and Hutsuls[67]).

As described by an informant born in 1931, "when the collective and state farms were begun here, people who were not used to work arrived as managers and leaders! Even though they themselves were quite ignorant. And thus our agriculture was ruined."[68] In the narratives told by Latvians from the countryside, former collective farm members, we may note a discourse on the incongruence between the quality of work and remuneration, as recorded in narratives on Hutsuls, seasonal laborers in agriculture and construction, who received a significantly higher remuneration for their work.

> The Hutsuls [...] went looking for work, just like our people do today in Ireland. There were caricatures in the papers. [A Hutsul] is sleeping in a railway carriage with his feet on the seat [caption] "Don't disturb me! I'm travelling to the Baltic!" Some of them worked well, but others were sloppy workers! [They would do the work] any old how! The collective farm would hire and feed them. Their wages were different, too. Higher wages!"[69]

This was more than just an unfounded assertion.

Because of their distinctive appearance, the Hutsuls stood out among the East Slavic immigrants, who in the Latvian perception belonged to a single supra-ethnic category, namely "Russians." One sense of the term "Russians, as used by the informants, encompasses all Russophones in Latvia, including people from other ethnic groups – primarily the Belarusians, Jews who had arrived after World War II, Ukrainians and others who communicated in Russian.[70] And all of the Russians were seen as privileged: they could get more senior positions (including nomenklatura posts), they had priority in the allocation of flats, along with special shops for military personnel and special services for war veterans.

In recalling the experiences of the years of Soviet occupation, the attitude of the Russians as the dominant people towards the Latvian language is viewed in the narratives as discriminating.

> And for example, I worked in a factory [as an accountant], and there you wouldn't hear any Latvian spoken! [...] There I had to write everything in Russian, because all the records were in Russian. I could write in Russian so well that I even graduated from technical college in Russian. [...] My husband had to serve in the Soviet army.

> Everything was in Russian. This was an integral aspect. [...] And you didn't need other languages. A knowledge of Russian would suffice.[71]

The choice of which language – Latvian or Russian – to align with was also influenced by the place of residence of people from other ethnic groups. In the Latgale region and the major cities the choice fell in favor of Russian, whereas Latvian was given favored status in the Vidzeme, Zemgale and Kurzeme regions. This applies to the Poles, Lithuanians and Roma. The Russians and the related East Slavic ethnic groups, namely Ukrainians and Belarusians, making use of the freedom of choice enshrined in the USSR Constitution, were very slow at learning Latvian or did not learn it at all, because "in the name of the common good" one could avoid using it. A collective farm village or urban district would exist alongside a military township, constituting two parallel worlds in the same temporal space. The military townships were created next to military bases for the officers' families, and were provided with special infrastructure: apartment buildings and a rich stock of food and industrial goods in the shops, in a situation where goods in general were in short supply. "We shared, said a resident of one such military township.[72] Russians truly did believe in the idea promoted officially that they were heroes who had liberated the Latvians from "bourgeois dictatorship" and the "German Hitlerist" invaders. Their attitude also conveyed a somewhat arrogant, parochial stance towards the generally friendly but ungrateful Latvians, among whom there were fascists.[73] Russians were convinced that they had brought the Latvians culture and welfare. The central press also strove to convince Latvians of this.

> Treasuring the legacy of the great Stalin, it is the duty of the Soviet peoples to consolidate, under the leadership of the Communist Party, even more tightly around the Russian people, which has been acting and continues to act most swiftly towards building Communism as the bright future of all the Soviet peoples. The Russian people has always been a selfless brother, a faithful companion and a patient tutor to the members of the present family of Soviet peoples. We see at every step the selfless assistance of the Russian people in improving the economic and cultural life of the Latvian people, and the historical role of the Russian people in the life of the Latvian people, when we consider what we have at present, what we can and will achieve, and what we as a people have experienced in the past.[74]

One of the most important research themes that the USSR Academy of Sciences delegated to ethnographers of the Latvian SSR was cultural contact between the Latvian and Russian peoples and the role of Russian scientists in the development of Latvian scientific research.[75]

Accordingly, if ethnically mixed families chose to send their children to Latvian schools, or if a non-Latvian spouse chose Latvian as the language in which to

communicate, this may be regarded as a form of resistance to the prevailing attitude of the occupation regime. A clear example is an informant belonging to the Volga Germans. She became acquainted in Siberia with her future husband, a Latvian, and, after they moved to Latvia, would consistently communicate in Latvian in spite of condemnation from the local Russian community. "The Russians here in Latvia initially considered me Russian. When I started learning Latvian, oh my God, they were so angry with me! 'What a fool you are – you're really going to learn Latvian?! Let them learn Russian! We liberated them, so they should speak Russian!"[76]

The exaggerated role of the collective under Soviet rule also impinged on the private life of the local population: thus, work colleagues celebrated special occasions in a person's life, took part in funerals and even became involved in resolving domestic conflicts.[77] The Latvians, reserved and jealous of their privacy, also found unacceptable the practice by their new neighbors of visiting them unannounced, whereas visiting uninvited is an accustomed practice among the East Slavs – a mutual expression of hospitality.

> I can't stomach the Russians' excessive hospitality! [Female students met on the Riga–Voronezh train] were polite and no more than that ... But there was this one girl I couldn't be rid of in Voronezh. She said she was going to visit a friend and would take her with me "to drink tea" and would afterwards take me to that institute ... I had just one desire: I wish you would leave me alone with all your hospitality! Your average Latvian, if they met a complete stranger on a train would never take them along to drink tea with her neighbor?! [...] We just don't do that! We're not like that, and there's nothing we can do about it!"[78]

What the Russians saw from their perspective as a lack of hospitality and reserve on the part of the Latvians was in the Soviet context an accustomed model of behavior by the titular people, and in the years of Soviet occupation it also served for self-protection. Under conditions where even the presence of a Christmas tree in one's apartment on Christmas Eve could be presented as religious cult activity, it was best to be overcautious![79] But this did not hold people back from celebrating their traditional family festivals: in the spring, eggs were dyed in onion peel; the Midsummer (Jāņi) festival would be celebrated even in adverse times;[80] and in many Latvian families the official celebration of New Year's Eve began already on 24 December. Amid the great variety of recipes available in the frame of international Soviet cuisine and pastry-cooking, it was the traditional field peas with bacon, sauerkraut, sausages and pig's snout that had a prominent place on the table when Latvians celebrated festivities such as the official New Year's Day holiday.

Those families that did not join the tendency of collective amnesia would share stories from family history within their own circle. These would differ markedly from the

official interpretations of Latvia's history presented in the public sphere, with a different perception of the terms 'kulak,' 'enemy of the people,' 'bourgeois nationalist,' etc., that were so frequently employed in Soviet terminology. Evidence of cultural activities in the time of Latvia's independence might also be found in books from the 1920s and 1930s carefully preserved in the family library.

In the conditions of Soviet occupation Latvians could survive by accepting the regulations set by the occupation authorities while retaining their language and at least some elements of traditional culture, namely traditional cuisine, folksongs, choral singing and decorative applied art. A kind of divide formed: that which the Soviet authorities regarded only as form (since Soviet culture was to be socialist in content and national in form!), the Latvians instilled with content recognizable only to themselves. The folksongs taught at school that were in accord with Marxist ideology, about Latvians hating class enemies, namely the German nobles and the pastors, represented part of the rich Latvian non-material cultural heritage. The song festivals, while they had been adapted to the anniversaries of the "founding" of Soviet Latvia, became an occasion – once the compulsory songs with socialist content had been sung – for singing the "Castle of Light" by Jāzeps Vītols (1863–1948), as well as folksongs and other songs that expressed allegorically the longing for an independent Latvian state.

Under the leadership of the Communist Party intensive activity against the influence of religion on the Soviet people as a whole and on each particular socialist Soviet nation commenced in the 1960s. It was aimed at developing Soviet socialist traditions.[81] Latvia led the way in this process. Maintaining the accustomed, traditional forms, a socialist name-giving day (equivalent to christening) was created, as was the childhood festival and the coming-of-age day (equivalent to confirmation), along with Communist Youth weddings, secular commemorations of the dead to replace the traditional religious commemorations in summer and late autumn, and secular funeral ceremonies. However, the Soviet authorities failed to root out traditions involving religious ritual that had been practiced in families for generations. The data from 1987 held by the official responsible for religious affairs show that, taking together all religious denominations, during the past 5–10 years 18–19% of babies had been christened, 4–5% of weddings had been held in churches, and 19–20% of funerals had been held with the participation of a clergyman.[82]

Monitoring the introduction of Soviet traditions into social life, ethnographers in Soviet Latvia repeatedly noted that the people in Latgale, where the Catholic faith and the Old Believer ritual constitutes an element of local identity, were slowest to adopt "progressive" innovations.[83] At a symbolic level, Catholic parishes managed to retain their churches, whereas Lutheran churches would be converted into sports

halls, grainaries or warehouses. The Poles, Belarusians and Lithuanians in Latvia were likewise Catholic. In order to reduce the risk of losing their jobs (especially in the case of schoolteachers), Catholics would take their children to be christened in other cities, including Riga. The Catholic church and the religious seminary were the one place where Poles could use their native language, and they made good use of this opportunity.[84] The same is true of the Latgalians. For a long time, the Estonians, too, had their own Lutheran congregation in Riga, the services being held by a pastor who traveled from Estonia.[85]

With the aim of achieving social acceptance of the new traditions, they incorporated specially selected "progressive" elements of Latvian traditional culture: Latvian folksongs, as mentioned above, as well as traditional folk dress and folk art, such as wooden or ceramic candlesticks decorated with Latvian geometric designs, woven blankets, basketry and so forth.[86] Local workshops and the Daiļrade production cooperative became involved in producing such work, in addition to which the services of local craftsmen – potters, weavers, woodcarvers, etc. – were utilized. Starting from 1971, the popular annual market held at the Ethnographic Open-Air Museum became a platform for artisans to share their experience, showcase their work and meet customers.[87] For many Latvian families this was an important annual event, and has retained its significance up to the present day.

As mentioned above, the Latvians also included in the category of "Russians" those Jews who had arrived after the World War II,[88] because they spoke Russian and there was a prevailing view that they held leading positions in the Communist Party. The Jews were city-dwellers, and in the confines of the city it is easier to remain inconspicuous than in the wide-open countryside. Moreover, Latvia's Jewish society was not homogeneous: one section accepted the system imposed by the Soviet authorities, while others engaged in various activities – instruction and prayer – in order to learn Yiddish and practice their religion, exposing themselves to considerable risk (especially after the so-called "Jewish Doctors' Plot" of the 1950s). Contravening the official position of the time, they would commemorate fellow Jews killed in the Holocaust at Rumbula, in Riga Biķernieki Forest and elsewhere in Latvia. Only in 1972, when the Soviet authorities retreated from their disapproval of giving prominence to "the sufferings of one particular people (i.e., the Jews),[89] along with growing international pressure, were the Holocaust victims officially commemorated in the Latvian SSR.

In the late 1960s, the Jews once again attracted the Soviet authorities' attention, because of the numerous requests for permission to leave the country and settle in the homeland of Israel. The obstacles placed in their way by Soviet bureaucracy even led to desperate act: a plane hijack attempt. The plan was hatched in Riga, but was to be

implemented in St. Petersburg (known at the time as Leningrad). Naturally, this act was followed by a show trial of traitors to the fatherland.[90] Another desperate act was the attempted self-immolation in 1969 by the Jewish youth Ilya (Eliyahu) Rips (born 1948) at the Freedom Monument in Riga.[91]

The itinerant Roma (known at the time as Gypsies, *čigāni*) also gave the Soviet occupation authorities cause for concern. So as to disrupt the traditional lifestyle of the Roma, a directive was issued to Soviet executive committees and village soviets to register the Gypsies in their territory and attach them to a place of employment.[92] People in the town of Krāslava observed that the Roma were able to circumvent these official regulations. "He would officially be recorded as working as a house caretaker, for example, but would pay a Latvian or find some other way to get him to work in his place."[93] The low level of education among the Roma prevented them from occupying senior positions, and this remains a significant problem within this ethnic group. In the years of Soviet occupation, Roma women could often be encountered in the yards of country houses, begging or trading (and swindling) illegally in various goods that were in short supply at the time.[94] The Roma of the Kurzeme region would take to the forests in summer, where they would live and collect berries for sale. In formal terms, the Roma adapted well to the milieu in which they lived: they spoke Latvian as well as Russian and maintained their traditional professional skills as traders and horse-dealers, where it was essential that the seller could extoll their merchandise in the language spoken by the customer. At the same time, they involved themselves in the life of society at large only to the extent necessary for their own survival and safety.

Conclusion

Although the statistical data showed that in terms of ethnic diversity the Latvian SSR was becoming a miniature model of the USSR, the party's comprehensive measures aimed at creating a unified Soviet people were oriented towards suppressing this diversity. In the blueprint for the new ethno-social community, where the unifying elements would be Marxist-Leninist ideology, the Soviet economy, the Russian language, internationalism and socialist traditions, the ethnic distinctiveness and maintenance of this distinctiveness among the peoples inhabiting the Soviet Union, including the Latvian SSR, was very restricted: ethnic minority schools were closed, and public use of one's native language and religious practices were restricted to a minimum.

Within the Latvian SSR there were several forms of resistance to the Soviet occupation regime. Examples of active resistance include: the armed struggle by the national partisans in Latvia's forests, anti-Soviet agitation, the attempted self-immolation by a Jewish youth at the Freedom Monument in protest to the events

of 1968 in Czechoslovakia, as well as the placing of candles on the graves of the statesmen of independent Latvia on All Souls' Day. The upholding of ethnic consciousness, though less conspicuous, was nevertheless viewed by the Soviet authorities as an expression of bourgeois nationalism – which was to be rooted out. Accordingly, the use of one's native language, participation in religious rituals, the longing for life on a family farmstead, and the capacity for exploiting the regime's weaknesses all constituted resistance to the existing regime.

The Constitution of the USSR defined extensive freedoms and rights both for its constituent Soviet socialist republics and for its citizens. Strivings to exercise these rights could sometimes lead to conflict with the security services of the occupation authorities. However, this did not prevent Latvia's historical minorities (at least one section of them, namely the Estonians, Poles, Lithuanians and others) from maintaining their ethnic distinctiveness and resisting collective amnesia. Gatherings of the graduates of the formerly existing minority schools (held by the Estonians in Alūksne,[95] by the Poles in Rēzekne[96] and by the Lithuanians in Riga[97]), the publication of books on the history of ethnic minority societies and schools (Estonians[98]) and the holding of unsanctioned gatherings at places significant to community memory (Jews), were some of the activities that helped people preserve their memories. The same is true of the maintenance of contacts with the homeland through excursions, organization of cooperation societies and attempts to move to the homeland, as well as religious practices, which contributed significantly to keeping alive the native language (Jews, Estonians and Poles). Just like the Latvians, the historical ethnic minorities of Latvia learned to exploit the system and its weaknesses in order to preserve their ethnic distinctiveness. And in this they succeeded! Already in the late 1980s, within the frame of the Latvian National Awakening, efforts began in the Latvian SSR to establish cultural societies of Latvia's ethnic minorities, including the Russians, Jews, Belarusians, Poles, Lithuanians, Estonians and others.

Adaptation and acceptance of the rules of the game, namely to speak Russian and learn to work Soviet-style, where the time spent at work was considered more significant than the result, invites the conclusion, when looking back at this period from a twenty first-century perspective: the years of Soviet occupation ruined the Latvians[99] and taught them to regard with great bitterness the Russian ethnolinguistic group of present-day Latvia, which, in contrast to the Latvians back then, nowadays makes no attempt to adapt to the existing conditions and expresses its dissatisfaction most vociferously in the public space of Latvia, Russia and Europe. The unrealized expectation, "We adapted. Why can't they?"[100] continues to maintain a certain interethnic tension, especially among the older generation.

Endnotes

[1] Primarily 137 interviews with residents of Latvia conducted by the author, kept at the Repository of Ethnographic Material of the Institute of Latvian History, University of Latvia, Collections E 74 and 72. Also utilized are oral histories from the National Oral History Archive held at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, University of Latvia (NMV), the Audio-Visual Archive of the Museum of the Occupation of Latvia (OMF), and the Oral History Collections of Daugavpils University (DU MVC).

[2] *Padomju Sociālistisko Republiku Savienības Konstitūcija / Pamatlikums* (Rīga: Liesma, 1977) 3–5.

[3] Ilga Apine, *Latvijas komunistiskās partijas nacionālā politika, 1917. gada oktobris–1920. gada janvāris*, (Rīga: Avots, 1980,) 237 pages.; Ilga Apine, Ļeņiniskā *programma nacionālajā jautājumā*, (Rīga: Pētera Stučkas Latvijas valsts universitāte, 1963) 54 pages; Ilga Apine, *Nacionālais un internacionālais latviešu sociālistiskās nācijas psiholoģijā,* Series: Proletāriskā internacionālisma un buržuāziskā nacionālisma ideju pretcīņa (Rīga: Latvijas PSR Zinību biedrība, 1985) 39 pages; Maksims Kims, *Padomju tauta – jauna vēsturiska kopība*, (Rīga: Liesma, 1974) 303 pages; Astrīda Muceniece, Jadviga Partizpanjana and Jānis Ūdris, *Kultūras sakari – miera un tautu draudzības veicinātāji* (Rīga: Latvijas PSR Zinību biedrība, 1981) 44 pages; *Partijas nacionālās politikas jautājumi* (Rīga: P.Stučkas Latvijas Valsts Universitāte, 1977) 147 pages; Jadviga Partizpanjana, *Kultūras uzplaukums padomju Latvijā* – Ļeņiniskās *nacionālās politikas* īstenošanas *rezultāts* (Rīga: Latvijas PSR Zinību biedrība, 1973) 28 pages; Jadviga Partizpanjana, *Mūsdienu ideoloģiskā cīņa un kultūra*. Rīga: Latvijas PSR Zinību biedrība, 1977, 32 p.; *Sociālie procesi un nacionālās attiecības Padomju Latvijā* (Rīga: Zinātne, 1987) 284 pages; Kārlis Strazdiņš, *Latviešu sociālistiskā nācija* (Rīga: Latvijas PSR Zinātņu akadēmijas izdevniecība, 1961) 107 pages.

[4] Ilze Boldāne-Zeļenkova, "The Invented Traditions: the Calendar of Festive Days and Family Customs in the Latvian SSR," *Latvijas Vēstures Institūta* Žurnāls, 104 (2017): 122–50.

[5] For a glossary of terms See Ilze Boldāne, *Latviešu etniskie stereotipi 20. gs. beigās–21. gs. sākumā: vēstures faktoru ietekme,* (Doctoral diss. Rīga: LU Latvijas vēstures institūts, 2012) 290–91.

[6] Strazdiņš, 39.

[7] Maksim Pavlovich Kim, *Informatsionnaia sistema Rossiiskoi Akademii nauk. Arhivi.* Internet resource. Available at: isaran.ru/?q=ru/person&guid=27AB1266-55CE-8D59-AB20-7913D695B938, accessed 17.02.2018.

[8] Vladimirs Iļjičs Ļeņins, *Kopotie raksti*, vol. 31: 157–58.

[9] Kims, *Padomju tauta,* 6–7.

[10] *Padomju Sociālistisko Republiku Savienības Konstitūcija,* 4.

[11] Kims, *Padomju tauta*, 43.

[12] Ilga Apine, "PSKP nacionālās politikas teorētiskie pamati un principi," *Sociālie procesi un nacionālās attiecības padomju Latvijā* (Rīga: Zinātne, 1987) 11.

[13] Kims, *Padomju tauta* 43, 242; Strazdiņš, 41.

[14] Kims, *Padomju tauta,* 43–49.

[15] "Sciences of Society" (Latvian *sabiedriskās zinātnes*) – the term used in the USSR for the humanities and social sciences. The Latvian SSR Academy of Sciences included a Sciences of Society Section.

[16] Strazdiņš, 3.

[17] Ilga Apine, Ļeņiniskā *programma nacionālajā jautājumā* (Rīga: Pētera Stučkas Latvijas Valsts Universitāte, 1963) 7.

[18] Strazdiņš, 75.

[19] Ibid., 3.

[20] Latvijas PSR Konstitūcija, 1940.

[21] Saulvedis Cimermanis, "Jauno darba un sadzīves elementu veidošanās Daugavpils lokomotīvju remontu rūpnīcas strādnieku kolektīvā," *Arheoloģija un etnogrāfija*, vol. 6 (Rīga: Latvijas PSR Zinātņu akadēmijas izdevniecība, 1964) 229; Lidija Jefremova, "Par mūsdienu lauku darbaļaužu ģimeni Latgalē,? *Arheoloģija un etnogrāfija*, vol. 10 (Rīga: Latvijas PSR Zinātņu akadēmijas izdevniecība, 1973) 235; Antoņina Zavarina, "Par strādnieku kadru veidošanos rūpniecības uzņēmumos Latgalē," *Arheoloģija un etnogrāfija*, vol. 10 (Rīga: Latvijas PSR Zinātņu akadēmijas izdevniecība, 1973) 269.

[22] Jāzeps Brolišs, "Padomju Latvijas tautas internacionālistiskais briedums." *Sociālie procesi un nacionālās attiecības padomju Latvijā* (Rīga: Zinātne, 1987) 58.

[23] Ilga Apine, "PSKP nacionālās politikas teorētiskie pamati un principi," *Sociālie procesi un nacionālās attiecības padomju Latvijā* (Rīga: Zinātne, 1987) 19.

[24] Dzidra Šmidre, "Latviešu nācijas tālāka konsolidācija attīstītā sociālisma posmā," *Partijas nacionālās politikas jautājumi* (Rīga: P.Stučkas Latvijas Valsts Universitāte, 1977) 120.

[25] Strazdiņš, 101.

[26] Apine, Ļeņiniskā *programma*, 54.

[27] "Ethnic issue" is almost always a synonym for "ethnic animosity."

[28] Ilga Apine, *Nacionālais un internacionālais latviešu sociālistiskās nācijas psiholoģijā* (Rīga: Latvijas PSR Zinību biedrība, 1985) 29.

[29] *KPSS o kul'ture, prosvischenii i nauke* (Moskva, 1963) 111.

[30] Kims, *Padomju tauta*, 267.

[31] Jānis Riekstiņš, "Migrantu privilēģijas dzīvokļu sadalē Latvijā (1941–1956),"*Okupācijas režīmi Latvijā, 1940.–1956. gadā. Latvijas Vēsturnieku komisijas 2001. gada pētījumi*, ed. Irēne Šneidere, , 2nd ed., Symposium of the Commission of the Historians of Latvia 7 (Rīga: Latvijas vēstures institūta apgāds, 2007) 444–93.

[32] Bruno. Mežgailis and Valdis Gailītis, *Latvijā dzīvojošie etnosi un to cilvēku skaits 1897.–1989. gadā* (Rīga: Latvijas statistikas institūts, 1993) 30.

[33] Table compiled after: Mežgailis and Gailītis; Marģeris Skujenieks, ed. and Vilmārs Salnītis, comp., *Ceturtā tautas skaitīšana Latvijā 1935. gadā. IV: Tautība* (Rīga: Valsts Statistikas pārvalde, 1937) 292; Ilmārs Mežs, *Latvieši Latvijā. Etnodemogrāfisks apskats* (Rīga: Zinātne, 1994) 67.

[34] Daiga Joma, "Migrācijas procesi Latvijā," *Latviešu valoda 15 neatkarības gados. Lingvistiskā situācija, attieksme, procesi, tendences* (Rīga: Zinātne, 2007) 161–71; Gunta Kļava and Kristīne Motivāne, "Migrācijas raksturojums,"*Migrācijas ietekme uz valodas vidi Latvijā* (Rīga: Zinātne, 2009) 9–32; Bruno Mežgailis, *Padomju Latvijas demogrāfija: Struktūra, procesi, problēmas* (Rīga: Avots, 1985) 362 pages; Bruno Mežgailis and Pēteris Zvidriņš, *Padomju Latvijas iedzīvotāji* (Rīga: Liesma, 1973) 371 pages; Ilmārs Mežs, *Latvieši Latvijā: Etnodemogrāfisks apskats* (Rīga: Zinātne, 1994) 67 pages; Jānis Riekstiņš, ed., *Migranti Latvijā. 1944.–1989. Dokumenti* (Rīga: Latvijas Valsts arhīvs, 2004) 245 pages; Pēteris Zvidriņš, and Inta Vanovska, *Latvieši: statistiski demogrāfisks portretējums* (Rīga: Zinātne, 1992) 165 pages.

[35] Jānis Riekstiņš, Migrantu kolonizācija Latvijā. 1944. gads – 50. gadu vidus, *Totalitārie režīmi un to represijas Latvijā 1940.–1956. gadā*, ed. Irēne Šneidere, 2nd ed., Symposium of the Commission of the Historians of Latvia 3 (Rīga: Latvijas vēstures institūta apgāds, 2007) 676–745; Pārsla Eglīte and Ilmārs Mežs, Latvijas kolonizācija un etniskā sastāva izmaiņu cēloņi 1944.–1990. gadā, "*Okupācijas*

režīmi Latvijā 1940.–1956. gadā, ed, Irēne Šneidere, 2nd ed. Symposium of the Commission of the Historians of Latvia 7 (Rīga: Latvijas vēstures institūta apgāds, 2007) 405–43, etc.

36 The Department of USSR History at the P. Stučka Latvian State University - was established shortly after WWII, in the 1980s it provided, in accordance with the requirements of the time, studies of the history of the USSR and Latvia, with the history of Latvia being treated as a part of the history of the USSR. Alberts Varslavāns, Uldis Sūna. Vēstures un filozofijas fakultāte. *Latvijas Universitāte 75,* ed, Alberts Varslavāns (Rīga: Latvijas Universitāte, 1994) 254.

37 *Partijas nacionālās politikas jautājumi* (Rīga: P. Stučkas Latvijas Valsts Universitāte, 1977) 101.

38 Janīna Kursīte and Anna Stafecka, *Latgale: valoda, literatūra, folklora* (Rēzekne: Latgales kultūras centra izdevniecība, 2003) 44–59; Daina Bleiere, Ilgvars Butulis, Inesis Feldmanis, et al., *Latvijas vēsture. 20. gadsimts*. (Rīga: Jumava, 2005) 360; Pēteris Zeile, *Latgales kultūras vēsture* (Rēzekne: Latgales kultūras centra izdevniecība, 2006) 571.

39 See Leo Dribins, ed., *Mazākumtautības Latvijā. Vēsture un tagadne* (Rīga: LU FSI, ĪUMSILS, 2007) 326 pages.

40 Eglīte and Mežs, "Latvijas kolonizācija,"424.

41 Strazdiņš, *Latviešu sociālistiskā nācija*, 94.

42 Apine, Ļeņiniskā *programma*, 27.

43 Leonīds Brežņevs, *Par Padomju Sociālistisko Republiku Savienības piecdesmito gadadienu* (Rīga: Liesma, 1972) 22.

44 Jadviga Partizpanjana, *Kultūras uzplaukums Padomju Latvijā* – Ļeņiniskās *nacionālās politikas* īstenošanas *rezultāts* (Rīga: Latvijas PSR Zinību biedrība, 1973) 17, 18.

45 Ļubova Zīle, "Latvijas rusifikācija (1940–1990)," *Latvijas Vēsture*, 1 (1991): 34.

46 In the context of the Latvian SSR, "bourgeois nationalism" is a concept referring to the concept and social values of the independent Latvian state (1918–1940).

47 M. Krūmiņa, "Darbaļaužu internacionālā audzināšana un inteliģence," *Partijas nacionālās politikas jautājumi* (Rīga: P. Stučkas Latvijas Valsts Universitāte, 1977) 138.

48 Aina Blinkena, "Valodas situācija 60.–80. gados un Latvijas Padomju Sociālistiskās Republikas Valodu likums," *Latviešu valoda 15 neatkarības gados. Lingvistiskā situācija, attieksme, procesi, tendences* (Valsts valodas komisija. Rīga: Zinātne, 2007) 37–52.

49 It should be added, however, that in the most recent historiography doubts are expressed as to the homogeneity of *Homo Sovieticus*, emphasizing that "individuals belong to specific groups in Soviet society, [...] that not every Soviet person was a 'Soviet person'." See Ineta Lipša, "Padomju subjektivitāte: 'vecie' avotu veidi un 'citas' pieejas padomju perioda izpētē," *Latvijas vēsturnieku II kongress Rīgā, 2018. gada 18.–19. jūnijā. Tēžu krājums*, eds. Kristīne. Beķere and Guntis Zemītis (Rīga: LU LVI, 2018) 17 (E-Resource Repository of the University of Latvia).

50 Republished from: Eglīte and Mežs, "Latvijas kolonizācijas un etniskā sastāva izmaiņu cēloņi," 423.

51 Boldāne-Zeļenkova, *The Invented Traditions.*

52 Kims, *Padomju tauta*, 258; Strazdiņš, *Latviešu sociālistiskā* nācija,71.

53 Jadviga Partizpanjana, *Mūsdienu ideoloģiskā cīņa un kultūra* (Rīga: Latvijas PSR Zinību biedrība, 1977) 32; Astrīda Muceniece, Jadviga Partizpanjana and Jānis Ūdris, *Kultūras sakari – miera un tautu draudzības veicinātāji* (Rīga: Latvijas PSR Zinību biedrība, 1981) 3.

54 Strazdiņš, *Latviešu sociālistiskā nācija* 67.

55 Ilga Apine, *Baltkrievi Latvijā* (Rīga: LZA FSI Etnisko pētījumu centrs, 1995) 90; Leo Dribins, *Ebreji Latvijā* (Rīga: LZA FSI Etnisko pētījumu centrs, 1996) 117 pages; Leo Dribins, ed., *Latvijas*

ebreji un padomju vara, 1928–1953. Zinātnisks apcerējums (Rīga: LU FSI, 2009) 307 pages.; Leo Dribins, ed., *Mazākumtautības Latvijā. Vēsture un tagadne* (Rīga: LU FSI, ĪUMSILS, 2007) 326 pages; Ēriks Jēkabsons, *Poļi Latvijā* (Rīga: LZA FSI Etnisko pētījumu centrs, 1996) 167 pages; Ojārs Niedre, "Pretošanās kustība Latvijā 60. un 70. gados," *Latvijas Vēsture*, 3 (1995): 26–29; Ojārs Niedre, "Pretošanās kustība Latvijā 60. un 70. gados," *Latvijas Vēsture*, 3 (1996): 49–53; Vladislavs Volkovs, *Krievi Latvijā (*Rīga: LZA FSI Etnisko pētījumu centrs, 1996) 142 pages; Henrihs Strods, "Nevardarbīgās pretošanās formas Latvijā. 1944–1985, *Nevardarbīgā pretošanās. Latvijas pieredze. Rakstu, dokumentu un atmiņu krājums, veltīts barikāžu atceres 15. gadadienai* (Rīga: Latvijas Zinātņu akadēmija, 2006) 23–33.

56 "The good times of Ulmanis," namely the period of authoritarian rule by Kārlis Ulmanis (1877–1942) in Latvia (1934–1940), appears in Latvian collective memory as a "golden age," when Latvian values and interests were placed above the needs of Latvia's other ethnic groups. See Ilze Boldāne, "'Labo Ulmaņlaiku' mīta vitalitāte Latvijas iedzīvotāju apziņā," *Mīti Latvijas vēsturē*, ed. Kaspars Zellis (Rīga: Žurnāla "Latvijas vēsture" fonds, 2006) 65–72; Vita Zelče, "Ievads. Reiz dzīvoja, reiz bija..." *Agora 6: Reiz dzīvoja Kārlis Ulmanis...* (Rīga: Zinātne, 2007) 8.

57 Repository of Ethnographic Material of the Institute of Latvian History, University of Latvia, Collections E 74 and 72. The Red Army soldiers are described as "bedraggled" (E 74 261, 249, 310, 331, 320, etc.), "scrawny" (E 74 E74 309, 302, 249, 266, 294, etc.), "dirty" (E 74 E 74 294, 322, 320, 555, 295, etc.), "a cap with a peak and a fool underneath!" (E 74 555, 320, 294, 261), which was completely contrary to expectations in society in Latvia as to the proper appearance of soldiers. See also Ilze Boldāne, *Latviešu etniskie stereotipi,* 123–24.

58 Audio-Visual Archive of the Museum of the Occupation of Latvia (OMF). OMF 2300/129.

59 E 74 256.

60 OMF 2300/159.

61 On these and other elements of Latvian self-identification, See Ilze Boldāne, *Latviešu etniskie stereotipi*, 75–86.

62 The only recognizable characteristic from the time of Ulmanis's rule was hatred of the Germans, who were presented in the already familiar guises of the enemy: thus, "German barons" and "German pastors" were now supplemented with "German Hitlerist invaders."

63 See Tālavs Jundzis, and Zigmārs Turčinskis, "Resistance to the Soviet and Nazi Regimes in Latvia, 1940–1985,"*Latvia and Latvians: Collection of Scholarly Articles*, vol. 2 (Riga: Latvian Academy of Sciences, 2018) 710–50. Ritvars Jansons, "Bruņotā pretošanās padomju okupācijas režīmam 1944.–1956. gadā," *Latvieši un Latvija. II sējums. Valstiskums Latvijā un Latvijas valsts – izcīnītā un zaudētā* (Rīga: Latvijas Zinātņu akadēmija, 2013) 497–513; Zigmārs Turčinskis, *Ziemeļvidzemes mežabrāļi. Latvijas nacionālo partizānu cīņas Valkas apriņķī un Alūksnes apriņķa rietumu daļā, 1944. – 1953. gads* (Rīga: Latvijas vēstures institūta apgāds, 2011) 398 pages.

64 After the title of the book *Meža meitas* by folklore researcher Sanita Bērziņa-Reinsone (Rīga: Dienas grāmata, 2015). This book brings together narratives by 12 women on their experiences in the forests and bogs during the time they supported the national partisan movement in Latvia after World War II.

65 Indulis Zālīte and Sindija Dimante, Četrdesmito *gadu deportācijas. Struktūranalīze.* Internet resource. Available at: lpra.vip.lv/strukturanalize.html (accessed 18.02.2018); Daina Bleiere, "Repressions against Farmers in Latvia in 1944–1953," *The Hidden and Forbidden History of Latvia under the Soviet and Nazi occupations 1940 – 1991*, ed. Valters Nollendorfs and Erwin Oberländer, Symposium of the Commission of the Historians of Latvia, 14. (Riga: Institute of History of Latvia, 2005) 245.

[66] In analyzing the development of collective farm villages, Soviet ethnographers emphasize the uniformity of their layout. They were planned to consist of three functional zones: (1) a public zone, including the collective farm administrative building, club, canteen, shop, health center and school; (2) the residential zone, with plots of land and buildings provided for individual use by the workers; (3) the production zone, with livestock and poultry barns, storehouses, workshops and other structures. Henrihs Strods, ed., *Latviešu etnogrāfija* (Rīga: Zinātne, 1969) 502–503.

[67] Hutsuls – a Ukrainian ethnic group, inhabitants of the Hutsulshchyna culture-historical region of Western Ukraine.

[68] Ludza, Material of the 2004 field project.

[69] E 74 297.

[70] Boldāne, *Etniskie stereotipi Latvijā*, 115, 116.

[71] E 74 241

[72] See Ilze Boldāne-Zeļenkova, "Mārciena – between Legacy and Nostalgia,"*Folkore. Electronic Journal of Folklore*, 70 (2017}: 149–70. Available at: https://www.folklore.ee/folklore/vol70/boldane_zelenkova.pdf (accessed 06.01.2021)

[73] E74 114, 279.

[74] E. Dzirkale pseud. [Ernestīne Niedra], "Krievu un latviešu tautas mūžsenā draudzība.," *Cīņa*, 15 March 1953..

[75] Latvijas PSR ZA Etnogrāfijas un folkloras institūts. Institūta zinātniskā darba plāns 1952. gadam. 2372. f., 1. apr., 83. l., 7. lp.

[76] E 74 559.

[77] See Ineta Lipša, "Privātās dzīves uzraudzīšana un kontrole LPSR (1944–1953), izmantojot valsts represīvos mehānismus," *Totalitārisma sabiedrības kontrole un* represijas, , ed. Kristīne Jarinovska, VDK Zinātniskās izpētes komisijas raksti 1 (Rīga: LPSR Valsts drošības komitejas zinātniskās izpētes komisija, 2015) 443–74.

[78] E 74 255.

[79] Such a breach of the social order (especially on the part of a teacher!) could end, at the very least, in an official reprimand at the workplace.

[80] Condemnation of the Jāņi (Midsummer) festival took place in the late 1950s, concomitantly with condemnation of the ideas and activities of the national communists. This process was led by Arvīds Pelše (1899–1983), First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Latvia. While there was no official directive prohibiting the festival, celebrating Jāņi was an undesirable activity in the reality of Soviet life, and this gave rise to many jokes. For example, redcurrants, *jāņogas* in Latvian, were dubbed *pelšenes*, etc.

[81] Strods, *Latviešu etnogrāfija*, 525–39; Boldāne-Zeļenkova, "he Invented Traditions," 127.

[82] Quoted after Daina Bleiere, "Latvijas sovetizācija un tās ietekme uz sabiedrību un ekonomiku," *Latvieši un Latvija,* vol 2*: Valstiskums Latvijā un Latvijas valsts – izcīnītā un zaudētā* (Rīga: Latvijas Zinātņu akadēmija, 2013) 492.

[83] Lidija Jefremova, Dažas Latgales latviešu zemnieku ģimenes svinības 19. gs. otrā pusē, "*Arheoloģija un etnogrāfija*, vol. 1 (Rīga: Zinātne, 1957) 126.

[84] Jēkabsons, P*oļi Latvijā,* 69–70.

[85] Kārlis Krūzs, "Igauņi Latvijā no 1940. gada līdz mūsdienām,". *Mazākumtautību vēsture Latvijā*, ed. Leo Dribins, 84.

[86] Aina Alsupe, and Saulvedis Cimermanis, eds., *Padomju Latvijas lauku iedzīvotāji un viņu kultūra mūsdienās* (Rīga: Zinātne, 1985); Saulvedis Cimermanis, ed., *Sociālistiskie svētki un ieražas* (Rīga: Zinātne, 1989).

[87] Daina Kraukle, *Gadatirgi Latvijā* 5 vols. (Rīga, Jumava, 2010–2015).

[88] It should be added that the most of Latvia's Jews were killed in the Holocaust, and after World War II there was an influx of Jews from Ukraine, Russia and other Soviet republics. They did not have close ties with Latvia, and their language of communication was Russian. See Dribins, *Ebreji Latvijā*, 224.

[89] Dribins, *Ebreji Latvijā*. 101; Didzis Bērziņš, *Sociālās atmiņas komunikācija un* ētika*: holokausta diskursi Latvijā (1945–2014),* Doctoral dissertation (Rīga: LU SZF, 2015) 498.

[90] Olga Aleksejeva, "The Jewish movement in the Latvian SSR in the 1980s: The emergence of the Jewish community," *Ethnicity*, 10 (2014): 41–60.

[91] Lolita Tomsone, "Sērkociņš Ripss," Internet resource. Available at: www.satori.lv/article/serkocins-ripss (accessed 06.03.2021.).

[92] See Čigānu *stāvoklis Latvijā* (Rīga: Cilvēktiesību un etnisko studiju centrs, 2003) 15.

[93] E 74 274.

[94] E 74 557, 125, 258, 318.

[95] Krūzs, "Igauņi Latvijā," 83.

[96] Jēkabsons, "Poļi Latvijā,". In: Dribins, L. (ed.) *Mazākumtautību vēsture Latvijā*..., p. 177.

[97] Jēkabsons, "Lietuvieši Latvijā," *Mazākumtautību vēsture Latvijā*, ed. Leo Dribins, 55.

[98] Krūzs, 83.

[99] E 74 260, 247, 251, NMV 1001.

[100] E 74 241, 264.

Michael Loader

Collaborators or Dissidents? Resistance and Collusion Among the Latvian National Communists

The term "national communism" is oxymoronic. By its very nature, communism is incompatible with national aspirations because of its basic tenets: the socialization of the means of production and the Communist Party's dominance. National communism implies that Marxism can and should be adapted to local conditions, as interpreted by the local leader.[1] In Soviet Latvia, during the mid 1950s, a Latvian variant of national communism emerged when a group of likeminded individuals with underground, wartime and Komsomol (Soviet Youth Organization) connections coalesced within the Communist Party of Latvia (CPL). The national communists gained control of many levers of power within the CPL from 1956 until 1959, when they were ousted in a purge. The question of the motivations for their actions – opportunistic careerism or adherence to Leninist national policy against Russian chauvinism – has remained largely buried for the last sixty years.[2] Utilizing archival sources, memoirs and published interviews, I will examine the complex characterization of the national communists in post-Soviet Latvian narratives.

As the USSR began to fracture in the late 1980s, the former national communists, hitherto pariahs, emerged from obscurity keen to tell their stories in interviews and serialized memoirs published in popular news organs. Like other national communist leaders who shaped and personified their varieties of socialism, so too former national communist leader and Council of Ministers Deputy Chairman Eduards Berklavs was central to the formation and development of Latvian national communism. Berklavs published some seven articles and, in 1998, his autobiography. The other high-ranking national communist, former Second Secretary Vilis Krūmiņš, alone published at least eight articles and interviews between 1988 and 1990.[3] The discrepancies between the activities of the national communists as committed members of the Party and their later recollections are too problematic to be overlooked. They suggest a readjustment designed to influence the Latvian public in the face of criticism, which

raises the question of how we should consider the national communists, since they are characterized by extremes – either as collaborators or dissidents.

In the early 1990s, some journalists and commentators in post-Soviet Latvia viewed the former national communists as collaborators despite their attempt to improve the position of ordinary Latvian citizens within the Soviet system. This was because of the relationship between the national communists and the regime. An important distinction that separates national communism from other terminology is that its proponents wanted to maintain the one-Party system and remain committed to Latvia's membership of the USSR. Instead, they sought autonomous control over aspects of life in Latvia, but crucially, within the bounds of the Soviet system. The national communists attempted to curtail Russian migration to Latvia, reorient the Latvian economy towards traditional enterprises that prioritized the Latvian populace, and resolutely defended the status of the Latvian language and culture. In their quest for autonomy, they enthusiastically supported efforts in the Center to decentralize the Soviet system. The national communists were for the reform of the Soviet system, not its overthrow.

The national communists occupied key posts in the regime and were committed activists who were instrumental in the Sovietization of Latvia in the 1940s. They were loyal to the USSR in wartime and in its aftermath, and at least initially, "true believers" in the Soviet socialist model. As Aldis Purs puts it, however, "they became disenchanted with the Russian face of socialist construction."[4] They objected to the priority accorded to the interests of the Center over the Republics. In their publications in the late 1980s, the former national communists defined national communism as "an attempt to improve the system, to make it more humane, more appropriate to the Latvian nation's interests."[5] The national communists wanted their own socialist transformation according to Latvian conditions and without the "assistance" of post-war Russian functionaries dispatched to Sovietize Latvia, who were generally unwilling to learn Latvian and understand Latvia's culture and customs.[6] Ilga Apine defines national communism as "opposition with a national hue" and argues that it was the manifestation of the Latvian response to Moscow's chauvinistic national policies.[7] National communism was a form of resistance to official policy. It was not opposition to the regime as such; it was opposition to the official line on national politics, which favored Russians.[8] It is in this context that the national communists sought to blend communism with the interests of the Latvian nation, to build "socialism with a Latvian face." In the 1950s, the national communists would not have benefitted from Latvian independence, as they controlled the CPL and relied on it for legitimacy.[9] From 1988 onwards, however, the independence movement offered the former national communists the opportunity to return to politics in a different guise: as renegades who had battled Moscow in the 1950s. For the most part, the Latvian public and most

Latvian historiography accepted this portrayal and this position has not been critically reexamined. In the 1980s, the former national communists portrayed themselves as heroic objectors against Soviet occupation (and even as dissidents).[10] This contrasts with their portrayal by their detractors as colluders with Soviet authorities. To answer the question of the place of the national communists in Latvian historical memory and examine the problems associated with depictions of the former national communists, I focus on the two central figures Eduards Berklavs and Vilis Krūmiņš, the most prolific authors and personalities of the national communist movement.

Beginning in 1988, there was an upsurge of public and academic interest in the 1959 purge of the national communists, particularly because the political struggle had taken place in secret. Editors filled newspapers and journals with articles about national communism.[11] In the conditions of the late 1980s, the former national communists sought to present their accounts of the political situation in Latvia during the Khrushchev era but they also wanted to control how the story was written. They aimed to be seen not as communists but as popular defenders of the Latvian culture and language. According to this narrative, they had bravely resisted Russian encroachment and stood up to Moscow before being purged and spent the next 30 years as non-persons working in humble, unimportant jobs.

At a CPL plenum in May 1988, First Secretary Boris Pugo questioned whether there had been sufficient reason to accuse the national communists of nationalism. Pugo ordered the Latvian Institute of Party History to investigate the circumstances of the July 1959 plenum concerning the purge.[12] From June 1988, public clamor for information about the circumstances surrounding the purge compelled the CPL Central Committee (CC) Bureau to publish the July 1959 plenum's uncensored transcript in the journal *Kommunist Sovetskoi Latvii*. This meant that the public could interpret what happened in summer 1959. As a result, several former national communists, such as Krūmiņš, who allied with Russians and Muscovite Latvians in the hopes of saving themselves from the purge were keen to present their version of events to justify why they jettisoned national communism. For these reasons, they embarked on a "tour" of the Latvian media at the end of the 1980s and early 1990s in order to shape the narrative.

Characterization of Berklavs as Both Maverick and Collaborator

The former national communists were strongly affected by the period in which they were writing. They wrote their impressions of their activities in the 1950s in the shadow of the negative press coverage they experienced in the early 1990s. Various press articles targeted Berklavs and Krūmiņš, accusing them of involvement

in the deportations of Latvians to Siberia in 1941 and their role in identifying guerrilla fighters during the partisan war in the late 1940s. Berklavs' writings refuted these claims. He wrote the article "For those with an interest in me" as a direct rebuttal to a critical article published by Olģerts Dzenītis in March 1993.[13] In his memoirs, Berklavs claimed not to have suspected "a terrible crime" when, on 13 June, the eve of the deportations, he was asked to prepare 150–200 communists and dedicated commissars for a special task for the Riga City Party Committee (*gorkom*). This was apparently because such orders were not unusual; it was only when he saw evidence of looting that he became suspicious. While he expressed regret: "Even now, I cannot fully understand why I did not see much earlier how the Party accomplished such massacres," Berklavs also transferred blame onto the Party for concealing "its terrible works, even from Party members."[14] Historian William Prigge concurs that Berklavs sought to "shift responsibility for his own dubious activities in the early years."[15]

Berklavs faced some uncomfortable questions at a sensational meeting of the Institute of Party History where Latvia's illegal annexation by the USSR was discussed. Both Berklavs and Krūmiņš spoke and were introduced as "participants in the events of 1940." This forthright and open discussion at the beginning of the National Awakening was first public appearance of the former national communists since 1959. Berklavs recommended fully supporting glasnost and publishing the protocols of the 1939 Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact about the illegal annexation of the Baltic States. He was applauded by some and treated skeptically by others in the audience, even being accused of demagoguery. One question posed was: "Tell me, were you sincere when you were our Komsomol leader, or now?" Berklavs replied: "I was always genuine. Only then, I was mistaken. I was frightened. I joined the Party as a shepherd, with an elementary education, without life experience. That is why I was so easily subjected to Moscow's propaganda."[16]

Dzenītis' aforementioned article, "The 1949 Deportation and a Latvian 'national hero,'" offers a stinging critique of Berklavs. "Certain people," he begins, "including the national communists, created the dictatorship of Russian Soviet imperialism." Remarkably, Dzenītis equated Berklavs with arch-Stalinist Arvīds Pelše in bringing about the "disaster" of Soviet occupation.[17] Dzenītis could not forgive Berklavs' role in the Sovietization of Latvia, stating that he had fought against Latvian independence and for the nation's subjugation: "In 1940, he helped open the gate for the invasion of Latvia by the Russian Soviet imperialist beast until 1959, when he suddenly saw that this beast had morally, spiritually and largely physically destroyed the Latvian people."[18] Dzenītis found Berklavs' ascendancy problematic but he unfairly conflates the 1949 deportations with Berklavs, when, at the time, he was a student in Moscow.

"When the mass exile of Latvians to Siberia took place," wrote Dzenītis, "Berklavs held the highest political and administrative positions in occupied Latvia." Yet, Berklavs' career only took off in the mid-1950s. Strangely, Dzenītis believed Berklavs only began subverting the Soviet authorities in 1959, discounting his efforts with the national communists but recognizing him as an opponent of Moscow, when "he finally realized what was going on and turned against the Russification of Latvia" he lost his position.[19]

Dzenītis draws an interesting parallel between Berklavs' fate and deported Latvians. He quotes from the entry for Berklavs in Latvia's 1991 *Encyclopedic Dictionary*:

> "[...] in 1959, deported. Worked in Vladimir in 1959–68." This is a lie. What does deportee mean? To be forcibly taken to some remote corner of the USSR with a harsh climate, have your property confiscated, and be without the right to return. Can a person who has retained an apartment and dacha in Latvia and who visited Riga at the weekend be considered exiled? Tens of thousands of my nation's brothers and sisters, who have been tortured and afflicted in Siberia, do you consider Berklavs to have suffered like you? He was not DEPORTED, but SENT to Vladimir.[20]

Dzenītis goes on to complain that the *Encyclopedic Dictionary* omitted references to Berklavs' Party posts in "order to continue to fool people," and that in exile Berklavs still held an ideologically sensitive job as a film rentals bureau chief in Vladimir following the purge. Much of Dzenītis' article is hysterical in nature and makes some dubious claims against Berklavs. Yet, it is a remarkable indictment and seems to have been spurred by post-Soviet Latvia's lionizing of the former national communists. Like many articles critical of them, it is simply not discussed in the Latvian media or historiography. Furthermore, with these denunciations appearing in the press, it was logical that the former national communists would respond and offer their own interpretations.

In his memoirs, Berklavs recounts his first doubts about the Party following his visit to Moscow in autumn 1940, painting himself as a naïve idealist.[21] Trapped between the advancing Germans and hostile Latvians it was logical that Berklavs remained in the Party and volunteered for service as a political worker in the Red Army where he received several honors including the Order of the Red Banner in 1941 for his part in the defense of Moscow in the Battle of Naro-Fominsk. The USSR Institute of History's Mints Commission interviewed Berklavs and Krūmiņš about their wartime experiences towards the end of the war.[22] Returning to Latvia with the Red Army in 1944, Berklavs was at the forefront of the new Sovietization campaign. On this, Berklavs said to his Mints Commission interlocutor:

> When we entered Latvia, we tried to establish good relations with local residents, held rallies, meetings, gave concerts in every rural center. It was necessary to explain the Constitution and the Soviet system, the friendship of peoples, tell them about all the good things that we had seen with our own eyes, when we lived and fought in the USSR, about the great concern that Comrade Stalin personally showed towards the Latvians.[23]

Berklavs' conversation with the Mints Commission was not a "free" conversation. Yet, that he was interviewed at all points to his status within the Party: the Commission only interviewed distinguished soldiers, commanders and political workers.[24]

In his memoirs and interviews, Berklavs repeatedly attempted to downplay his participation in the regime: He claimed that he had gone to Moscow's Higher Party School in 1948 as a way of escaping Party work (after demobilization he was First Secretary of the Latvian SSR Komsomol between 1946 and 1948). The dogmatic Stalinism espoused by the lecturers of the Higher Party School exasperated him, which broke his Marxist spirit. Based on his interviews with Berklavs, Prigge believes that Berklavs was embarrassed about his complicity in the occupation and would have preferred to retire from the Party.[25] Berklavs claimed that after being voted in "behind his back" ("I was elected to the Riga *gorkom* without my consent. After a year and a half, then, again against my will, I was elected Riga *gorkom* First Secretary") he told the Chairman of the Latvian SSR Council of Ministers Vilis Lācis that he was no longer enthusiastic about Party work, but Lācis dissuaded Berklavs from resigning.[26] While Berklavs' claims of forced promotion may raise eyebrows, Prigge found Berklavs' testimony authentic, remarking, "The young functionary, who once fancied himself as part of the socialist avant-garde, now came to the realization that the Soviets had duped him into collaboration; he even felt ashamed to speak in public."[27]

Retrospectively, Berklavs claimed that he was only a loyal communist until 1954 and that after that period he "did everything possible against Communist Party goals."[28] Berklavs' assertion that he was a dissident from this moment is unconvincing. In some publications, he was vague about when this change of heart took place. In 1988, one interviewer asked him: "When did you start to doubt the correctness of the situation in Latvia and the USSR for the first time?" Berklavs responded:

> It's hard to name a specific date, even a year. I was deeply absorbed and did not come to my senses for a long time. Everyone had been taken over by Stalin's omnipotent psychosis. Seeing Russification and knowing how the elections results were fabricated, my faith in the Party and Soviet power crumbled.[29]

In an interview in 2000, Berklavs said he did not realize that there was a plan for Russification until the drafting of the new Party program announcing the advent of a new Soviet people. "I cannot deny that, until the mid-fifties, I was a convinced communist," he said.[30] Didzis Liepiņš, a confidant of Berklavs in the 1990s, who studied around 800 of Berklavs' letters to his wife, Marga, in the 1950s and 1960s, estimates that Berklavs' opposition began to surface around 1955.[31]

So why did he remain in the Party after losing "faith"? Berklavs says that while he viewed the Soviet Union as a form of Russian imperialism, he realized the futility of joining the armed resistance or resigning from the Party because it would have meant deportation to a labor camp. Therefore, he chose to work within the Party to slow down Russification and the flood of settlers. To achieve this end, he formed a coterie with colleagues, ensuring their promotion.[32] In his own words, from 1992:

> From 1953 or 1954, I was no longer a national communist or an international communist, although I was officially in the Party. In the 1950s, I had to decide whether to immediately throw away my Party card, which meant I would disappear, or try to use my quite high position to prevent the ruination of the Latvian people. I chose the second option, and this decision, at least temporarily, had a positive effect.[33]

This was a remarkable statement by Berklavs, claiming not to be a national communist from 1953 or 1954 when Latvian national communism is only be regarded as beginning as early as 1953, or in 1956 by some historians. Despite his controversial national communist policies, Berklavs exaggerated his rebelliousness. From 1954, he rose prominently within the Party leadership: becoming a Council of Ministers Deputy Chairman in June 1954, Riga *gorkom* First Secretary in December 1955, and in January 1956, he joined the CC CPL Bureau, the Republic's highest executive organ. Though Berklavs insists he resisted promotion on several occasions, he was repeatedly promoted up the Party ladder from 1940-1956 until he became a leading cadre.[34]

In his memoirs, entitled *To Know and Not to Forget* (*Zināt un neaizmirst*), Berklavs claims he had a reputation in Moscow as a troublemaker following the national communists' successful 1958 quest to oust the Russian Second Secretary, Fillip Kashnikov. Berklavs states that Moscow and the Latvian Stalinists would have never tolerated his own elevation to Second Secretary; therefore, he "proposed" Krūmiņš as the compromise candidate.[35] Prigge believes Berklavs attempted to portray himself in his memoirs as "an uncompromising maverick."[36] While Berklavs espoused this attitude in the post-Soviet period and perhaps even believed this characterization, it is unconvincing. This self-portrait of Berklavs suited his interpretation of his own

dismissal in 1959, and in the post-Soviet period helped him distance himself from allegations of collaboration. Historian Daina Bleiere rates Berklavs' memoirs more highly than Krūmiņš's, because the former uses documents and acknowledges that his memory could not be relied upon. It is clear that Berklavs attempted to grapple with his past, while Krūmiņš made no such attempt. Bleiere adds that Berklavs' views were "significantly influenced by everything he read about the history of the USSR and the national communists. The available documents, which mostly reflected the discourse of 'nationalism,' as well as the work of historians and publicists, have absolutely influenced Berklavs' memory."[37]

There is evidence to suggest that even in 1958, at the height of his power, Berklavs did not have a reputation as a renegade. At a Bureau meeting, First Secretary Jānis Kalnbērziņš revealed that Berklavs was marked to join the Central Committee apparatus in the Soviet capital in the future.[38] He was also permitted to holiday in East Germany in 1957, implying that his loyalty was rewarded by Moscow.[39] Furthermore, Lācis designated his Deputy Berklavs as heir apparent for the post of Chairman of the Council of Ministers.[40] This suggests that, contrary to Berklavs' assumptions, his foray into national communism had not damaged his reputation and that he was well regarded by the Soviet upper echelons in both Riga and Moscow until early 1959.[41]

In February 1959, Berklavs published an unauthorized article entitled "Conversation from the Heart" in the CPL's main newspapers. Berklavs recognized that the Party controlled all decision-making. Therefore, he made a desperate plea for Latvians to join the Party. Yet, it was a strange move for someone hostile to the Party, even if he thought he could undermine Moscow's control through packing the Party with ethnic Latvian supporters.[42] Prigge also recognizes the contradiction, noting, "We only have Berklavs's word that he was hesitant to continue in the Party. The paradoxical fact that he attempted to recruit Latvians as late as 1959 obscures his true beliefs further. It is conceivable that this picture of a reluctant functionary was a later re-imaging."[43] Historian Geoffrey Swain is similarly skeptical, referring to Berklavs' professed loss of faith in his memoirs as "surely hindsight talking; the passion with which Berklavs defended his cause at Party meetings in summer 1959 when under attack from Pelše suggests the very opposite."[44]

After a backlash against national communism, conservatives in Riga and Moscow worked to oust Berklavs and his allies. Following the July 1959 purge of the national communists, Berklavs was exiled to Vladimir.[45] Almost immediately after returning to Latvia in 1968, he became a fully-fledged dissident, secretly co-authoring a *samizdat* letter smuggled out of the USSR and published in the West in 1972, which protested Latvia's Russification, entitled the "Letter of 17 Latvian

communists."[46] Yet, even this was confusing given the title. The letter proclaimed in no uncertain terms the political affiliation of its authors: "We are not opportunists, nor are we 'leftists' or 'rightists.' We are Communists, and most of us have been such for 25, 35 years and more. We wish only well to socialism, Marxism–Leninism, and mankind."[47] In a 1992 article, Berklavs explained this away, stating that his co-authors had not made the transition away from the Party at that point: "Everyone who sanctioned the letter I wrote was not yet completely free from Communism, which, like a terrible drug, destroys a person's ability to think rationally. All my sympathizers were against Communist Party politics, but not everyone saw the real causes of evil."[48]

As the USSR collapsed, Berklavs experienced a "political rebirth" becoming a Popular Front Deputy in the Latvian parliament and as a founder of a radical nationalist party. On the centenary of his birth, one newspaper ran a finely balanced tribute to Berklavs' participation in the Latvian Awakening:

> Although at the Awakening's beginning, the legendary national communist was over seventy, his character did not allow him to miss the opportunity to determinedly pursue what Berklavs had sought all his life – Latvia's prosperity, in his understanding. As an independent thinker rather than a dogmatist, Berklavs managed to both change his mind and criticize his own youthful misconceptions while at the same time not losing the part of his nature corresponding to the way his contemporaries saw him – principled and with integrity and courage in defending his convictions.[49]

So, did Berklavs experience a metamorphosis; was he always a nationalist, or merely a fickle opportunist? Berklavs' evolution was inconsistent and at times paradoxical. In the 1940s, he was for Soviet socialism, in the 1950s, it was national communism, and in the 1980s, it was pure nationalism. Yet, Berklavs had his principles. Unlike his colleagues, he refused to recant his position in 1959 and paid for it with nine years of exile. His dissidence, however, only manifested itself after he had exhausted his options within the Party.

"Two Shores that Never Joined?" Vilis Krūmiņš: the CPL Member and Latvian Patriot

To some, the former national communists appeared disingenuous in their attempts to demonstrate their commitment to Latvia's burgeoning independence movements. In the 1990s, after Vilis Krūmiņš's political resurrection, he became Chairman of the new Union of Latvian Riflemen. As one observer put it, "Krūmiņš and Berklavs were set up as exemplary – the media emphasized that they bravely fought for the interests of the

Latvian people, against migration, in defense of the Latvian language, and expressed the aspirations of the people. Knights without fear and beyond reproach. Nobody questioned this version."[50] In 1990, veteran rifleman I. Ulass asked how someone like Krūmiņš could publish a newspaper advert asking his wartime comrades not to participate in events dedicated to the 46th anniversary of Riga's liberation. "How can it be that a person who was in a leading position now denies everything that happened in the post-war years?" wrote Ulass. He went on, "The year 1959 became a personal tragedy for you and for many leaders, but none of them raved, wept and sulked about this abusive behavior as you have." Ulass concluded by asking Krūmiņš if he did not think that he and his "closest sympathizers have acted wickedly, taking the Republic down the most radical nationalist path?"[51]

In March 1991, G. Sashans published an article entitled "The Secrets of Vilis Krūmiņš." Sashans contrasts how in his memoirs Krūmiņš seemed "as a soft, intelligent person capable of critical thinking, who did not approve of Stalinism" with his own accusation that Krūmiņš was "the most faithful Stalinist. He searched everywhere for 'enemies,' tirelessly demanded increased vigilance, fought for the purity of Stalinist ideology, and poisoned the intelligentsia." Sashans highlights Krūmiņš's over the top glorification of Stalin, beyond the era's norms and concluded that "Krūmiņš made his career due to his unrestrained eulogy of Stalin and writing denunciations." Sashans compares Krūmiņš's words in 1990 about the tragedy of collectivization with his 1949 protestations against nationalists and kulaks who opposed collectivization. Sashans asked how he could complain in his memoirs about the underrepresentation of Latvians in the Party when his speeches attacked "bourgeois nationalists" and called for a struggle against them.[52] Krūmiņš himself was accused of being from a kulak family after First Secretary Pelše deposed him in 1961.[53] Sashans claims Krūmiņš fully participated in the witch-hunts of the Stalinist period by reporting various individuals to the MVD. The article recounts how Krūmiņš sent a letter to the Ministry of Education detailing the anti-Soviet activity of teachers: one who disparaged several Soviet songs, another who told improper jokes, and one who was a former Legionnaire. After demanding their dismissal, he sent a follow up letter six weeks later enquiring about the measures taken against them.[54]

In his memoirs, Krūmiņš pleads ignorance about the 1941 deportations, saying he had only just joined the Komsomol and did not learn what happened until later.[55] Regarding the 1949 deportations, Krūmiņš alleges that they were "a complete surprise. 'Someone' made sure that long-distance phone calls did not reach us." Krūmiņš claims he visited CPL Second Secretary Fyodor Titov to complain about the deportation of Komsomol members, but if so, it reveals his focus was not on ordinary Latvian deportees.[56]

The memoirs and recollections of former national communists must be treated with great caution: their authors deliberately sought to create black spots around uncomfortable events, tailor their recollections to a particular audience in order to help quash accusations of collaboration, and reinforce the Latvian public's perception of their dissidence. Krūmiņš's memoirs are as remarkable for their omissions as for their revelations. According to Bleiere, doubtful anecdotes occur frequently in Krūmiņš's memoirs and this leads to distrust of his recollections on the most important issues.[57] Krūmiņš published many articles, but he tells his story differently in each interview or article, leaving out various details in some but including them in others. To get the full story from Krūmiņš's point of view they have to be assembled and compared. It is likely that there was some intentionality behind this.

In his serialized memoirs "The Long Road to Democracy," Krūmiņš claimed that Khrushchev did not invite Pelše to the historic 20th Party Congress and that this showed he was not favored.[58] Upon further investigation, it appears Krūmiņš distorted this episode. It may seem innocuous but it points to a degree of unreliability. The Congress transcript lists all 1436 delegates to the Congress including Pelše as delegate No.869 and Berklavs as delegate No.110. Krūmiņš himself is absent from the list.[59] Krūmiņš reputedly received a special invitation from a Party friend in Moscow.[60] The problem is exacerbated because historians such as Prigge repeat this episode and cite Krūmiņš.[61] In another example, the *Archives of the Kremlin* collection provides the full transcript of the classified 1 July 1959 Presidium meeting in which Khrushchev decided *not* to order a purge of the national communists. In his account, Krūmiņš credits himself with turning around Khrushchev's opinion but the transcript reveals that he overstates his part in the Premier's reconsideration.[62] Finally, both Berklavs' and Krūmiņš's writings claim that Khrushchev's Presidium envoy Nuritdin Mukhitdinov reprimanded Berklavs, stating "Beria was shot for holding similar views, what do you propose we do with you?"[63] Yet, this remark is absent in the archival transcripts of the 20 and 21 June 1959 Bureau meetings, and in an interview with Latvian historians in 1990, Mukhitdinov makes no mention of it, though it is possible that the remark could have been made "off the record."[64]

Conclusion

The former national communists were desperate to control the narrative about their tenure in power. In their memoirs and serialized writings, they strove to redefine their image from apparatchiks who climbed the Party ladder to maverick dissidents, working from inside the Party to secure greater rights and autonomy for Latvians and Latvia. As is common in all autobiographical writing, the former

national communists were selective in their recollections: Berklavs and Krūmiņš left embarrassing and inconvenient moments out of their memoirs. Berklavs, for example, "forgets" to mention his supplicatory letter to Moscow in January 1965, in which he pleads to be allowed to return to Riga. He adopted an uncharacteristically submissive tone, speaking of being only "temporarily" against importing labor from Russia but claiming, "I never even thought about opposing the Party line and I did not."[65] Yet, these were the words of a homesick man who had been in exile for over five years.

The former national communists all had axes to grind, and they aired their grievances in memoirs and interviews to settle old scores. They groused about Pelše for undermining their efforts and deposing them. Krūmiņš and Berklavs also blamed one another. In all of his publications, Krūmiņš scrupulously avoids mentioning his participation at the July 1959 plenum where he repented his "sins" and ultimately threw in his lot with Pelše, or his December 1959 article in *Sovetskaia Latviia* criticizing Berklavs for writing the "Conversation from the Heart" article.[66] Berklavs reserves special criticism for Krūmiņš for this betrayal, which he considered not merely political, but personal.[67] The pair never spoke again, and Berklavs said he did not forgive Krūmiņš until he attended the latter's funeral in August 2000.[68] Krūmiņš devotes attention to the witch-hunt and humiliation he endured from Pelše during the purge and the consequent deterioration of his health, possibly to encourage the reader's sympathy.[69] These omissions and contrasting accounts reveal that the former national communists' target audience was the Latvian public, whom they hoped to persuade of their point of view.

If some critics saw the national communists as collaborators during perestroika, by the late 1990s those accusations were no longer propagated. Both Berklavs and Krūmiņš succeeded in persuading newly independent Latvia of their authenticity. They positively reinvented themselves as populist nationalists and experienced a political resurgence as a result. As Bleiere puts it, "The evolution of Berklavs into a pronounced nationalist is evidence that few people were aware what national communism was, and many of Berklavs colleagues had not changed their ideology all that much." The public's lack of familiarity with national communism facilitated Berklavs' rebranding. If people had known more about his communist past, then it would have been a more difficult transition and less convincing and he would have been less of a clear-cut hero.[70] As such Berklavs emphasized his exile and 1970s dissidence. Berklavs was a founding member and first chairman of the Latvian National Independence Movement, active in the Latvian Popular Front and the Congress of the Citizens of Latvia. During this period, Berklavs was one of the most prominent independence activists. He was elected to the Latvian parliament in 1990 and reelected in 1993. In September 1988,

Krūmiņš participated in the founding congress of the Latvian Popular Front and was a member of its organizing committee.

Independent Latvia continues to venerate the national communists as dissidents of the Soviet era. A favorable Latvian language film about Berklavs entitled *Berklavisms* was made about his life and politics in 2007. Events and exhibitions take place on the birthdays of national communists where speakers reminisce. On 25 May 2009, there was an exhibition of Krūmiņš's poetry, books and other publications, where acquaintances shared their memories of Krūmiņš to posthumously mark his 90th birthday.[71] In 1995 and again in 2000, the Latvian government awarded Berklavs the Order of Three Stars, Latvia's highest civilian honor. On the centenary of his birth, a plaque was dedicated outside his home on Brīvības iela with commemorations in Riga and his hometown of Kuldīga. This nostalgia overlooks the complexities and complicity of the national communists in establishing and maintaining the Soviet system in Latvia in the 1940s and 1950s. In the Latvian popular consciousness, the former national communists were judged by their actions in the 1950s and late 1980s in turn absolving them of their activities in the 1940s.

The debate about national communism is dominated by what Bleiere identifies as the "nationalist" discourse. Bleiere writes, "an examination of archival material, allows one to look at the memoirs discourse from another point of view to demonstrate that it was consciously or unconsciously designed as a polemic with the 'nationalist' discourse."[72] Despite the thirty-year gap between the events of 1959 and the publication of these memoirs, their vagaries and mistakes, the national communists' memoirs and interviews remain valuable historical sources if they are treated rigorously and their claims reinforced or countered by archival evidence. Memoirs are not always accurate and rarely objective. Yet, in studying high politics, which fundamentally involves personalities, reflections in memoirs help to flesh out the persons described by historians in their own words. They provide a useful supplement to archival evidence and assist in our understanding of the subtexts of official documents. They provide remarkable insight and reveal opinions formed on the basis of subtle policy shifts, personal relationships, secret discussions and changes in behavior. By testing the veracity of the former national communists' memoirs and examining how public perceptions changed as a result of their writings, we can understand more about how public figures in the post-Soviet states sought to reshape their past to reflect new narratives.

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Endnotes

[1] Thomas Hammond, "The Origins of National Communism," *The Virginia Quarterly Review,* 34 (1958): 277–78. The conditioning of communism and its limitation by national considerations is the antithesis of classical Marxism. National communism can be described as an "independent road to socialism" in contrast to the orthodox Soviet-style socialism dictated by Moscow. By implying there were other paths to communism, it was a rejection of the Kremlin's own strategic imperatives. These other socialist paths during the construction of communism should account for the individual characteristics and conditions of each republic in which they are attempted, hence the "national" element. Walter Kemp, *Nationalism and Communism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union: A Basic Contradiction?* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999) 127; Daina Bleiere, Ilgvars Butulis, Inesis Feldmanis, Aivars Stranga, and Antonijs Zunda, eds., *History of Latvia: The 20th Century* (Riga: Jumava, 2006) 393.

[2] Eduards Berklavs believed that it was the ambition of his national communist colleague Vilis Krūmiņš to become First Secretary. Eduards Berklavs, *Zināt un neaizmirst* (ebook: Eraksti, 2011) 160. For the national communists' Leninist ideology see: Michael Loader, "A Stalinist Purge in the Khrushchev Era? The Latvian Communist Party Purge, 1959–1963," *Slavonic and East European Review*, 96 (2018) 274–75.

[3] Other national communists such as Arnolds Zandmanis, Benjamiņš Treijs, Voldemārs Kalpiņš, Visvaldis Vallis, Indriķis Pinksis and Aleksandr Nikonov published their own accounts.

[4] Aldis Purs, *Baltic Facades: Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania Since 1945* (London: Reaktion Books, 2012) 68.

[5] Roundtable between Daina Bleiere, Irēne Šneidere, Jānis Stradiņš, Segei Kruks, Līvija Akurātere, Voldemārs Krustiņš and Guntis Zemītis, "Nacionālkomunisti 1959 gada notikumu kontekstā: Apaļā galda diskusija 'Latvijas Vēstures Institūta Žurnāla' redakcijā," *Latvijas Vēstures Institūta* Žurnāls*,* 71 (2009): 150.

[6] Bleiere, *History of Latvia* 395; Michael Loader, "The Thaw in Soviet Latvia: National Politics 1953–1959," Ph.D. thesis (King's College London, 2015) 17–18.

[7] Ilga Apine, "Latviešu nacionālkomunistu politiskās sagrāves sociālpolitiskie aspekti," *Latvijas Zinātņu Akadēmijas Vēstis*, 1/2 (2000), 69.

[8] Ilga Apine, "Vai Latvijā arī bija nacionālkomunisti?" *Neatkarīgā Cīņa,* 6 October 1993.

[9] Even in the late 1980s, some former national communists, such as Benjamiņš Treijs, were still against Latvian independence. Benjamiņš Treijs, Interview with Guntis Rozenburgs, "Zaudētais laiks," *Padomju Jaunatne,* 8 April 1989.

[10] Romuald Misiunas and Rein Taagepera considered as dissidents those "who attempted to save their identity as a movement, trying to protect national culture and language from Russification," which includes the national communists. Romuald Misiunas and Rein Taagepera, *The Baltic States: The Years of Dependence, 1940–1990,* (Berkley: University of California Press, 1993), 359. Aleksandrs Ivanovs considers that Western scholars lump together resistance to the Soviet occupation in Latvia. This oversimplification does not distinguish between national communism and mass dissatisfaction with the occupation power including protests though there was some commonality in their goals and characteristics. Aleksandr Ivanovs, "Latvijas disidentu problēmas apskats ārzemju historiogrāfijā," *Latvijas Vēsture*, 4 (1992): 37. Other historians, such as L.P. Baradat, consider the defeat of the national communists as the beginning of the dissident movement. L.P. Baradat, *Soviet Political*

Society, (New Jersey: Engelewood Cliffs, 1986) 378. Apine is an exception, arguing that the national communists were not dissidents. Ilga Apine, "Disidentisms Latvijā," *Latvijas Vēsture,* 9 (1993): 51.

[11] Many of these publications were in the form of interviews. Most of the people who conducted these interviews in the late 1980s were not historians but journalists. This raises the question of the intentions of the interviewers and their role in shaping how the national communists' stories were told.

[12] State Archive of Latvia, (LVA), PA-101. fonds., 61. apr., 3. lieta., 10. lp. CC CPL Plenum transcript, 5 May 1988; LVA, PA-101. f., 63. apr., 8. l., 12. lp. CC CPL Bureau meeting minutes, 18 January 1989.

[13] Eduards Berklavs, "Visiem, kam ir interese par mani," *Montreālas Latviešu Biedrības Ziņotājs*, 1 July 1993, 17.

[14] Egīls Zirnis, "Maldugunīs rūdītais Eduards Berklavs," *Diena*, 14 June 2014. Zirnis' article, written to commemorate Berklavs' centenary, accepts Berklavs own characterization of his youthful self as "foolhardy."

[15] Prigge notes that during the post-war armed resistance, the Communist Youth Organization (Komsomol) (with Berklavs as its leader) assisted the Interior Ministry (MVD) in identifying guerrilla fighters and that neutrality was not an option. William Prigge, *Bearslayers: The rise and fall of the Latvian national communists* (New York: Peter Lang, 2015) 26.

[16] LVA, PA-200. f., 13. apr., 79. l., 44–45 lp. Transcript of the joint meeting of the Institute of Party History and the Latvian SSR Academy of Sciences Institute of History, 8 July 1988.

[17] Oļģerts Dzenītis, "1949. gada deportācijas un Latviešu 'nacionālais varonis'," *Rīcība*, 26 March 1993, 1.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Berklavs, *Zināt un neaizmirst,* 38–39.

[22] Russian Academy of Sciences Institute of History Archive (INI RAN), fond 2, opis 223, dela 8, list 1–10. Transcript of the conversation with 130th Latvian Corps Political Department Inspector E. K. Berklavs, 21 July 1945. Krūmiņš was interviewed in May 1943. LVA, PA-301. f., 1. apr., 28 l.

[23] INI RAN f.2, op.223, d.8, l.5.

[24] D. D. Lotareva, et al., *Vklad uchenykh-istorikov v sokhranenie istoricheskoi pamiati o Velikoi Otechestvennoi voine. Na materialakh Komissii po istorii Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny AN SSSR, 1941–1945* (St. Petersburg, Tsentr gumanitarnykh initsiativ, 2015) 74.

[25] Prigge, *Bearslayers*, 47.

[26] Eduards Berklavs, Interview with Aleksandrs Kiršteins, "... Neuzskatu par savu pienākumu klusēt!" *Avots*, 12 (December 1988): 59.

[27] Prigge, *Bearslayers*, 33, 30.

[28] Berklavs, *Zināt un neaizmirst*, 150.

[29] Berklavs, "… Neuzskatu," 59.

[30] Eduards Berklavs, Interview with Dace Bebre, et al., "Mēs — par sevi, par dzīvi, par laiku," *Latvijas Vēstnesis*, 13 April 2000.

[31] Viesturs Sprūde, "Eduards Berklavs – no fanātiska komunista līdz Latvijas valsts atjaunotājam," 12 June 2014. Available at: https://www.la.lv/latvietis-uz-visu-muzu%E2%80%A9 (accessed 30.12.2020.).

[32] Berklavs, "Visiem, kam ir interese," 16.

[33] Eduards Berklavs, "Par kādu vēstuli no Rīgas," *Neatkarīga Cīņa*, 4 February 1992.

[34] Berklavs paints himself as a reluctant apparatchik in the Komsomol from 1946. Berklavs, *Zināt un neaizmirst,* 89–90; Prigge, *Bearslayers*, 33, 47.

[35] Berklavs, *Zināt un neaizmirst,* 110. Daina Bleiere uses archival materials to show how Berklavs distorted this episode in his memoirs to make himself appear more popular and his opponents appear weaker. Daina Bleiere, "Vēstures Avoti par nacionālkomunismu Latvijā – kritisks skatījums," *Latvijas Vēstures institūta* Žurnāls, 102 (2017), 101–102.

[36] Prigge, *Bearslayers*, 137.

[37] Bleiere, "Vēstures avoti," 101.

[38] LVA, PA-101. f., 22. apr., 48a. l., 102. lp. CC CPL Bureau meeting transcript, 20–21 June 1959.

[39] Berklavs, *Zināt un neaizmirst,* 93.

[40] Egīls Zirnis, "Latviskā sociālisma gals," *Diena*, 5 July 2009. Berklavs was aware of Lācis' poor health and admits that he aspired to succeed him as Council of Ministers Chairman. Berklavs, *Zināt un neaizmirst,* 111.

[41] In interviews with Prigge in 2003, Berklavs enjoyed saying he was Moscow's "enemy number one." He believed that Moscow was aware of his systematic replacement of cadres in the Riga *gorkom* and that the Kremlin wanted to remove him. Prigge, *Bearslayers*, 58. Yet, Moscow did not interfere with national communist policies until three years later in March 1959.

[42] Berklavs was conflicted about Latvians joining the Party. Prigge claims that under Berklavs the Komsomol did not receive many recruits. Yet, during the 1950s, Berklavs says he came to see cooperation with the authorities (some might term this collaboration) as the only way to secure greater powers for Latvia. Therefore, Latvians needed to comprise a greater proportion of the Party, necessitating more local recruits. Berklavs, *Zinat un neaizmirst,* 119-120. Berklavs told Prigge that while it was gratifying that Latvians did not readily join the Party, it limited their influence. Prigge, *Bearslayers*, 33.

[43] Prigge, *Bearslayers*, 143.

[44] Geoffrey Swain, "Review of Bearslayers. The Rise and Fall of the Latvian National Communists," *Europe–Asia Studies*, 67 (2015): 1721-22.

[45] On the purge itself and Berklavs' exile, see: Michael Loader, "The Death of 'Socialism with a Latvian Face:' The Purge of the Latvian National Communists," *Journal of Baltic Studies*, 48 (2017): 161–81; Michael Loader, "A Stalinist Purge in the Khrushchev Era? The Latvian Communist Party Purge, 1959–1963," *Slavonic and East European Review*, 96 (2018): 244–82.

[46] Regarding the letter, Berklavs recalled: "I could not just stay out of it all and do nothing. Since I did not have the opportunity to publish or to climb the rostrum, I looked for people who had such opportunities." The KGB repeatedly interrogated Berklavs about the letter, and he was finally expelled from the Party in 1974. Bebre, "Mēs – par sevi."

[47] Available at http://www.letton.ch/lvx_17com.htm (accessed 30.12.2020). Berklavs might have used Marxist rhetoric because the letter was addressed to the Italian, French, Romanian and Yugoslav communist parties, but the letter was actually first published in Sweden in 1972.

[48] Berklavs, "Par kādu vēstuli," 2.

[49] Zirnis, "Maldugunīs rūdītais."

[50] G. Sashans, "Taina Vilisa Krumin'sha," *Sovetskaia Latviia,* 27 March 1991.

[51] I. Ulass, "Pa kuru ceļu, Krūmiņa kungs?" *Cīņa*, 13 November 1990.

[52] Sashans, "Taina Krumin'sha," 3.

[53] Vilis Krūmiņš, "Dolgaia doroga k demokratii," *Kommunist Sovetskoi Latvii*, 1 (1990): 101.

[54] Sashans, "Taina Krumin'sha," 3. The Latvian Legion was a formation of the German Waffen-SS during World War II, consisting of primarily of ethnic Latvian personnel, some of whom were volunteers.

[55] Krūmiņš, "Dolgaia doroga," 2 (1990): 90.

[56] Krūmiņš, "Dolgaia doroga," 3 (1990): 88.

[57] Bleiere, "Vēstures avoti," 101.

[58] Krūmiņš, "Dolgaia doroga," 3 (1990): 92.

[59] *20-i s'ezd Kommunisticheskoi Partii Sovetskogo Soiuza: Stenograficheskii otchet. Tom 2*, (Moscow: Gospolitizdat, 1956) 532.

[60] Voldemārs Hermanis, *Zem LKP kupola: Ieskats Latvijas Komunistiskās partijas līkločos (1945–1991)*, (Riga: Jumava, 2016) 22. It is quite plausible that as a guest he listened to the Secret Speech.

[61] William Prigge, "The Latvian purges of 1959: A revision study," *Journal of Baltic Studies*, 35 (2004): 222.

[62] Krūmiņš, "Dolgaia doroga," 4 (1990): 88; Vilis Krūmiņš, Interview with Jānis Lapsa, "Tas drūmais piecdesmit devītais," *Karogs*, 9 (1988): 135; A.A. Fursenko,ed., *Arkhivy Kremlia: Prezidium TsK KPSS: 1954–1964, Tom 1,* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2003) 377.

[63] Berklavs, *Zināt un neaizmirst*, 132; Krūmiņš, "Tas drūmais," 136.

[64] Nuritdin Mukhitdinov, Interview with Ļubova Zīle and Valdis Blūzma, "1959 god v Latvii: vzglyad izvne," *Kommunist Sovietskoi Latvii*, 5 (1990): 85–93.

[65] Elena Zubkova, Interview with Vladimir Tol'ts, "'Latviiskie delo' 1959," *Radio Free Europe*, 3 July 2004.

[66] LVA, PA-101. f., 22. apr., 15 l., 45. lp. CC CPL Plenum transcript, 7–8 July 1959. Vilis Krūmiņš, "Otbirat' v partiiu luchshikh, dostoineishikh," *Sovetskaia Latviia*, 20 December 1959, 2.

[67] Berklavs, *Zināt un neaizmirst*, 155.

[68] Zirnis, "Latviskā sociālisma gals."

[69] Krūmiņš, "Dolgaia doroga," 4 (1990): 90. Due to his repentance, Krūmiņš' punishment was not as severe as Berklavs': he was relegated to Director of the Natural History Museum (1962–1999), but he was able to remain in Latvia.

[70] Daina Bleiere, "Mānīgais atkusnis," *Diena*, 18 September 1999.

[71] Lāsma Vagoliņa, "Latvijas Dabas muzeja bijušā ilggadējā direktora Viļa Krūmiņa 90. gadadienas atzīmēšana muzejā," *Latvijas reitingi*, 25 May 2009. Available at: http://www.reitingi.lv/lv/news/daba/30638.htm (accessed 30.12.2020).

[72] Bleiere, "Vēstures avoti," 97.

Mārtiņš Mintaurs

The Social Context of Expressions of Anti-Soviet Activity in Occupied Latvia in the 1960s–1980s

In the Soviet Union one of the main tasks of state power was social control and combatting what was referred to as anti-Soviet activity. Although there was no such term in the official Soviet political lexicon, it did appear the criminal law. The annexation of Latvia by the Soviet Union in summer 1940 did not automatically mean the loyalty of the population of Latvia to the Soviet regime. Loyalty to the regime had to be achieved through persecution as well as through mechanisms of awarding privileges. Anti-Soviet activity was a reality, and was expressed in a variety of forms, from armed resistance to the dissemination of information forbidden by the regime. In Latvian historiography there has been little study of how these processes developed in the period after 1953, when Stalinism ended, because this involves the awkward issue of how society in Latvia regarded the *status quo* of that time.

In my article the term "social context" is understood as the set of social relationships existing in the Latvian SSR that influenced the everyday life of society in the period of relative stability of the Soviet regime from the second half of the 1960s up to 1989. The social context, in this sense, has two aspects. First, there is the understanding of the Communist Party and the Committee for State Security (KGB) as to what constitutes anti-Soviet activity and its expressions. Secondly, in order to characterize the social context of these expressions, it is necessary to ascertain their causes, which related to the political, economic and psychological conditions of Soviet social life. The social context thus influenced both those members of society who voiced dissatisfaction or protest against the Soviet regime or some aspect of its policy, and those in the state security apparatus whose task was to note such expressions of dissatisfaction and supervise the political climate in the state.

The chronological boundaries of the article encompass the period from the intensification of Soviet security service activities from 1966–67 to the institutional changes in the KGB in 1989. In this period the main task of the Soviet security service in occupied Latvia was not to crush armed resistance, which had ended in

the mid-1950s, but rather to control society by other means. In the second half of the 1960s, the political leadership of the Soviet Union decided to intensify the struggle against the influence of Western countries. Accordingly, the activities of the security service, which had been restricted during the period of the "Thaw" (1953–1964) of Nikita Khrushchev (1894–1971), were once again intensified as well. Already in the early 1960s an effort had begun to restore the reputation of the KGB, which had been tarnished by the de-Stalinization measures, which had revealed the security service's role in the acts of state terror and in the Soviet system as a whole.[1] After 1964, the KGB's influence on domestic politics grew again, but now the methods of social control were altered.

In 1967, the criminal codes of the union republics were supplemented with new legal norms envisaging liability for crimes against the Soviet state. At the same time, a special 5th Directorate was established in the USSR KGB structure (the 5th Section at the level of the Latvian SSR KGB) for the struggle with ideological subversion against the Soviet Union by the capitalist states.[2] It was this unit of the security service in particular that concerned itself with identifying and combatting so-called anti-Soviet expressions. The 5th Section of the Latvian SSR KGB had at its disposal about 15% of the service's resources in the form of agents (570 agents out of a total of 4300, not counting the KGB's "persons of trust," who numbered about three times more than actual agents). Likewise, during a period of twenty ears – from 1970 up to 1990 – the number of operatives working at the 5th Section doubled.[3] The struggle against ideological subversion was seen as the third most important sphere of KGB activities after intelligence and counterintelligence,[4] having the goal of combatting "the hostile actions of citizens with extremist views of anti-Soviet character, directed towards undermining and destroying the existing system."[5] In the records of operations by the Latvian SSR KGB,[6] such "hostile actions" are referred to as anti-Soviet expressions. The theme of the article relates to the part of society in Latvia that, representing a variety of social groups, did not belong to the resistance movement but nevertheless, because of their anti-Soviet expressions, did come to the attention of the KGB.

The term "anti-Soviet activity" (Russian *deyatel'nost' antisovetskaya*; Latvian *pretpadomju darbība*), used as a synonym for the term "subversive activity" (against the Soviet Union and its security interests) (Russian *deyatel'nost' podryvnaya*), was created and applied by the state security service itself, taking it to include actions that were oriented, directly or indirectly, against the ideology of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) or that expressed criticism of the Soviet state.[7] My article analyses those anti-Soviet expressions that were not punishable in accordance with the Latvian SSR Criminal Code's Article 65 (anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda[8]) or Article 183[1] (dissemination of intentionally false fabrications that discredit the Soviet

state and social system[9]). Engaging in anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda was classified as a particularly dangerous state crime (along with terror acts, subversion, sabotage and participation in anti-Soviet organizations), carrying a penalty of six months to seven years in prison; in case of a repeated offense, the prison term was up to ten years. An offense under Article 183[1] belonged to the category of "crimes against the system of government," punishable by up to three years in prison or a fine of up to 300 rubles.

As Staņislavs Zukulis, the last chairman of the Latvian SSR KGB (1984–1989), explained in 1989, it was under these articles of the criminal code that KGB investigators instituted criminal proceedings not only against people forming organized resistance groups but also against those who raised the Latvian national red-white-red flag in public places or created and disseminated political or literary texts that KGB experts identified as literature discrediting the Soviet Union and its state system. Criminal proceedings could be brought against people for such transgressions up to April 1989, when a decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR changed the law with respect to criminal liability for state crimes, suspending (but not revoking!) the corresponding criminal codes of the republics.[10] In August of that same year, the 5th Section of the Latvian SSR KGB was deprived of its main task, namely the struggle against ideological subversion, and was transformed into the Section for Supervising the Constitutional System.[11] Thus, the legal basis for combatting anti-Soviet expressions was removed.

In formal terms, the legal criterion helps to separate the processes examined in this article from the general study of the history of the resistance movement. The amorphous definition of anti-Soviet expressions gave the security service the possibility of manipulation, so that, depending on the conditions, an act by a KGB informer – an agent or "person of trust" – could either be regarded as subject to criminal punishment or could be treated as belonging to a different category, one that fell outside the norms stipulated in the criminal code. An indirect pointer to such a practice is the fact that the dictionary of categories of operations of the Latvian SSR KGB included about 400 semantic codes that could be used for subtle interpretation of the "signs of activity by elements deleterious" to Soviet rule.[12]

The term "anti-Soviet expressions" is accordingly employed in this article to refer to those activities that were not subject to criminal punishment under Soviet law but were nevertheless considered dangerous to the state security interests of the USSR. These were defined in a secret handbook for the KGB, published in Moscow in 1972, by the term 'politically harmful action' (Russian *politicheski vrednyj postypok*). Such actions were taken to mean "inappropriate statements or other actions counter to the domestic and foreign policy of the CPSU and the Soviet government and which are

detrimental to socialist society, if undertaken without the intention of undermining or weakening the Soviet social and state system, and if they are not found to involve criminal acts."[13]

Politically harmful action is explained as a lack of political maturity or misapprehensions among individual Soviet citizens, and accordingly the forestalling of such actions is formally linked to instruction rather than punishment. However, it is also stated that politically harmful actions can potentially develop into state crimes; accordingly, preventive measures are to be undertaken against individuals who have "allowed themselves" politically harmful actions. Any act whatsoever could be deemed politically harmful, from the telling of political anecdotes to the singing of "nationalistic" songs and expressing dissatisfaction with social issues, to public criticism of the Soviet regime. The level of danger from such anti-Soviet expressions was assessed, and the decision to undertake preventive measures against an individual was taken by a KGB operative.[14]

Let us briefly examine the essential character of these preventive measures. In accordance with the declared goal, the task of the preventive measures was to avert state crimes or actions harmful to the security interests of the USSR before they were carried out. To this end, so-called individual preventive methods were employed, namely persuasion and compulsion, "which affect the consciousness, feelings, will and behavior of the person subject to preventive action."[15] Preventive measures were divided into overt and covert prevention (Russian *zlasnaya i nezlasnaya forma profilaktiki*). The aim of overt prevention was to affect the person's views and actions, employing pressure created by the administration, Communist Youth and party cell of the person's place of work, or in the case of students, their teaching institution, acting on the instructions of KGB personnel.[16] Since the time of Stalinism, when so-called criticism and self-criticism had been widely practiced as a means of psychological influence, in the 1960s and 1970s the form of this method had changed, but not its essence. Overt prevention also included a summons to the prosecutor's office or the KGB, or an interview with a member of the security service at the person's place of work or teaching establishment in the presence of the management.

Covert prevention was aimed at influencing a person without directly revealing that the warning about politically harmful activity was coming from the security service.[17] This would usually involve colleagues of the person subject to preventive action who were linked to the KGB. Thus, the term "prevention," which appears in the KGB records in 1964, was in fact a euphemism for persecution by the security service, without legal sanction, of individuals that the KGB suspected of anti-Soviet activities. The Russian society Memorial has calculated that in the 1980s about one out of a hundred people subject to preventive action was actually sentenced for a crime against the state.[18]

In contrast to the direct persecution implemented by the KGB, the results of which are fairly well documented and accessible to researchers,[19] the study of so-called preventive measures is problematic, because the files on residents of Latvia subject to prevention in the archive of the Latvian SSR KGB were destroyed in the late 1980s.[20] Thus, it is possible to reconstruct the number of people subject to preventive action only partially, making use of the reports prepared by the KGB to the Central Committee of the Latvian Communist Party, which are accessible in the Latvian State Archive of the Latvian National Archives, as well as utilizing indirect evidence from historical sources. In assessing the source value of the reporting documentation of the KGB and the Central Committee of the Latvian Communist Party, it needs to be taken into account that the party leadership had no interest in exaggerating the number of anti-Soviet acts, because an excessively large number of enemies of the regime could be taken to indicate that the Latvian Communist Party was not able to control the situation in the republic.[21] Such considerations evidently also influenced the position of the party and the KGB on whether a particular transgression should be classified as an act subject to criminal punishment, or should be included among the anti-Soviet expressions that were to be suppressed using the so-called preventive measures.

The preventive actions undertaken by the Latvian SSR KGB are reflected in the security service's electronic information system "Delta Latvija," which includes reports by about 8000 informers on 35,656 people who had come under the scrutiny of the secret police between 1975 and 1989. It should be noted that these data cover not only the themes of ideological subversion or anti-Soviet expressions but also the combatting of economic crime, which fell within the competency of the KGB.[22] A study by Indulis Zālīte on the KGB's struggle against Latvian nationalism as an expression of anti-Soviet activity shows that content corresponding to this category occurs in approximately 22% of the total number of informers' reports, i.e., slightly more than 2000 reports received by the KGB from their agents and "persons of trust." In these, the majority of recorded anti-Soviet activities consisted of various "statements," which are referred to as "harmful," "nationalistic" or "anti-Russian," along with appeals to break free from the USSR, which could potentially be qualified as anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda. This category also included information given in the reports concerning the raising of the red-white-red flag and tearing down the flag of the USSR or Latvian SSR.[23] The decision on whether the person who had committed this offense should be subjected to preventive measures or should have criminal proceedings instituted against them was initially taken by KGB personnel.

In the 1970s and 1980s, the so-called preventive method became one of the most widespread techniques used by the KGB in combatting ideological subversion. For

example, in 1975 the KGB in Latvia arrested two persons for anti-Soviet activity and undertook preventive actions against 522.[24] Even taking into account the tendentious characteristics of the official reports, intended to downplay the number of dangerous "anti-Soviet elements" while at the same time demonstrating the great volume of work being undertaken by the security service in providing instruction to members of society, these figures do indicate that the method was being employed very widely. As shown by a report sent in 1977 to the Central Committee of the Latvian Communist Party on a group of like-minded individuals led by Pēteris Krūmiņš, which had planned to set up a "nationalistic youth organization," prevention involving a summons to the KGB was also employed against juveniles, namely the 16 and 17-year-old youths involved in this group.[25] Thus, the "instructional measures" mentioned in official documents essentially constituted intimidation. In the first place, preventive measures by the KGB did not have to be sanctioned by the prosecutor's office. Secondly, the KGB could initiate an inspection operation, if it suspected that a person subject to preventive action had links to an anti-Soviet organization. Thirdly, even if persons retracted their views in the course of preventive action and promised to cease or desist from actions harmful to Soviet rule, the KGB could initiate surveillance operations against them, if it was considered that the aim of the warning, i.e., intimidation, had not been achieved.[26]

Characteristically, in the memoirs of Edmunds Johansons (1936–2017), the last Chairman of the Latvian SSR KGB, preventive actions are mentioned only in passing. Since the tasks of the KGB's 5th Section also included monitoring of members of the Latvian exile community, preventive action was sometimes also taken against Latvians from abroad who had arrived in Latvia as tourists. If they violated the visa regulations and travelled outside of Riga illegally and were followed, "the offender would be detained and our operatives would politely explain to him that this is inappropriate and can lead to criminal punishment. In some cases, this provided the basis for further operative cooperation. The heaviest penalty imposed for this was refusing an entry visa to the USSR."[27] The note regarding "further operative cooperation" reveals one of the true tasks of preventive action, namely to recruit KGB agents by means of blackmail. Johansons has neglected to mention that such measures were also undertaken against residents of Latvia who wished to meet their relatives in exile: this is confirmed by information contained in KGB reports that in 1979 and the first half of 1980 more than 600 residents of Latvia were subject to preventive action for establishing such contacts.[28]

A significant element of preventive action was the widespread fear in society of omnipresent KGB informers. In 1989, journalist Dace Balode gave an accurate description of the atmosphere prevailing in the first half of the decade:

> […] it had already become hard to conceive the number of people and their positions who were identified in the society as defenders of state security. Inevitably, because this was a mass phenomenon, a degree of dilettantism also appeared in the manifestations of their activity. But they have become an essential element of our everyday life [...] After all, we consider it self-evident that stool pigeons must be present, and so we accept this information only as a concretization. We are persuaded that we ourselves and other people are incapable of resistance against this institution, although most people's attitude towards it is quite clear, and we are convinced of its pervasive and paralyzing effect on each and every individual and sphere of life. [...] By the way, the KGB personnel are aware of such a thing as mass psychosis, and they put it to use for intimidating people.[29]

This is confirmed by Edmunds Johansons, even though the seemingly critical remarks he expresses *post factum* are nothing more than excuses:

> For example, the committee had to undertake preventive actions against people who made negative statements about the problems of life or the party general secretary. But this is not, and cannot be, the task of a security institution. Its task was to concern itself with the enemies or potential enemies of the USSR, rather than with people who erred in their ideology. [...] Rather than improving the situation, on the contrary, this circumstance acted to deepen the crisis. There developed an erroneous view of the KGB as a repressive body repressing society's creativity.[30]

While Johansons considered that the Communist Party's unwillingness to "become involved in discussion" and the deficiency of its ideological work with society was to blame here, it apparently never occurred to the secret police general in the course of his official duties to question the rights and tasks of the KGB with respect to the so-called preventive measures.

The psychological effect of intimidation was further heightened by the fact that the consequences of denunciation could not even be predicted in advance: they could take the form of a "preventive interview" with a member of the security service, but might also unexpectedly affect any other aspect of a person's life. Thus, they might suddenly be dismissed from work or expelled from higher education, or they might unexpectedly encounter obstacles in dealing with issues of everyday life, be denied the chance to travel abroad to visit relatives, etc.

Because of the absence of sociological studies on Soviet society, with the exception of its late phase of existence during the last years of the perestroika begun by Mikhail Gorbachev, reconstructing the socio-psychological atmosphere prevailing in the 1960s–80s is very difficult. In Latvian historiography, life in the time of Soviet occupation has so far been studied from this perspective only in the

context of the events of 1940–41,[31] but there is a lack of such studies on the post-war period. The documentary material created by contemporaries (diaries, personal and official correspondence, and written memoirs) can be regarded as authentic, although fragmentary and, quite clearly, subjective historical sources. A reflection on Soviet society published by psychologist Leonīds Radzihovskis in 1990 contains the characteristic generalizations occurring in such texts, but does offer authentic observations.[32] Radzihovskis finds that, along with a relatively small number of dissidents, the majority of Soviet society could be divided into two categories: conformists and people who both believed and did not believe in the postulates of Soviet ideology. The characteristic features of so-called real socialism in the 1970s and 1980s are also analyzed in the monographs by Aleksei Yurchak[33] and Natalya Kozlova,[34] confirming Radzihovskis' conclusions regarding Soviet society.

In contrast to the view expressed in certain academic publications[35] concerning the mass nature of the resistance movement in Latvia in the 1960s and 1970s, I consider that such a view needs to be critically evaluated and corrected. It is debatable whether people "who openly demonstrated their attitude towards the existing regime but did not break the law" can be regarded as belonging to the non-violent resistance movement.[36] Of course, for as long as the repressive Soviet regime was in existence in the territory of Latvia, there were people who wished to express their attitude towards the regime, but it is doubtful whether the expression of such an attitude automatically constituted resistance to the regime. The boundary between a crime against the Soviet state and anti-Soviet expressions that were not subject to criminal punishment was vague not only from the perspective of the KGB or Soviet law, but also from the perspective of the resistance movement. Unless we wish to reduce the resistance movement to include every case where unsanctioned criticism of the Soviet regime was voiced in public in Latvia, we have to recognize that important criteria for a resistance movement are, for example, organized activity, the aim of which is not only to offer a reminder of the Latvian state and the crimes of the Soviet regime, but also to achieve the restoration of that state or to oppose the occupation regime. Such an approach would significantly limit the possibilities of identifying features of resistance in the activities of the Soviet Latvian intellectuals and in all the so-called anti-Soviet groups that the Latvian SSR KGB was engaged in combatting. It would permit a clearer identification of the boundaries between collaboration and resistance.

It can be asserted that most of Soviet Latvian society strived in their lives to "balance on the line between fear and resistance," in the belief that significant changes were not to be expected in their lifetime.[37] Right up to the second half of the 1980s, the USSR essentially managed to ensure obedience to the Communist regime on the part of most of society in the occupied Baltic States.[38] In this situation, the so-called

anti-Soviet expressions could have their uses for both sides: from conflicts at the level of everyday life to purposeful, individual protest, raising the red-white-red flag or disseminating literature banned by the regime, they enabled those who did not accept the occupation regime to manifest their will to resist. Meanwhile, the KGB's painstaking classification and monitoring of anti-Soviet expressions served to demonstrate to the Communist Party the security service's vigilance and its essential role.

In the 1970s, an image emerged in society of Soviet reality as a never-ending present, in which only an illusion of change was possible:

> There was no reason to believe in the reality of social life [...] This unhealthy sense of delusion also spread to other people, to those who aspired to something, who were building something, who were writing and talking about something, but it was all as unreal as the movements of a marionette that imagines itself a free person.[39]

In such a psychological atmosphere the security services achieved not only formal loyalty to the Communist regime, but at the close of the decade they were also successful in reducing the influence of the dissident movement.[40] Why, then, did the generally apathetic society of the Latvian SSR display the anti-Soviet expressions regularly reported by KGB informers?

At least two socially significant factors can be identified, the effects of which on social life in Latvia need to be considered in seeking to answer this question. The first of these has as yet received relatively little research attention in Latvian historiography, but research in this direction could provide significant answers to questions relating to the dominant mood in Latvian society during the final decade of the USSR's existence.[41] This is economic history, which could reflect not only changes in the gross national product of the Latvian SSR, and the balance between production and consumption, but could also reveal in detail the mechanisms behind the development and functioning of the Soviet "economy of deficit." The socio-political significance of these mechanisms seems self-evident to the contemporaries of late Soviet socialism who retain the memory of everyday life, but there has still been little reflection on this experience and its impact on people's political activity in the second half of the 1980s.[42] At present, only conjecture is possible on this subject, and so a treatment of it must be postponed until a more comprehensive assessment of the empirical material becomes available to researchers.

The second factor, about which more can be said, is nationalism. In Latvia, the impact of ethnic nationalism had an abiding significance, resisting the Soviet regime's unification policy in the name of preserving Latvian cultural autonomy and the status of the language. Latvian bourgeois nationalism is frequently mentioned as one kind of anti-Soviet expression in the official publications of the Latvian Communist Party and

in the secret reports by the Latvian SSR KGB to the Communist Party leadership. At the level of an ideological cliché, bourgeois nationalism had been cited in the rhetoric of the Latvian Communist Party at least since the end of World War II as a dangerous remnant of capitalist society that needed to be suppressed.[43] The first attempt at a conceptual treatment of this term in the Latvian SSR goes back to 1953, but the fact that bourgeois nationalism was never clearly defined certainly did not hinder its application in political practice.[44]

Bourgeois nationalism was successfully exploited in internal power battles within the Latvian Communist Party, the accusation serving as a means of redistributing influence between different interest groups and removing one's competitors from power. At the same time, bourgeois nationalism was a convenient designation for discrediting any kind of criticism of Soviet policy. It could be directed against a member of any social stratum, from a collective farm laborer to a member of the Latvian Communist Party nomenklatura. This made the charge of Latvian bourgeois nationalism a universal weapon, and at the same time one that, because of its exclusivity, served to further reinforce the idea in ethnic Latvian society that the occupation regime's policies were aimed at the Russification of Latvia.

The leadership of the Latvian SSR KGB was aware of this fact. For example, in 1973, the security service found that "in spite of the great successes in building communism, nationalistic and other hostile phenomena continue to appear in the republic, and the anti-Russian mood among a section of the republic's population is not lessening."[45] Such a conclusion was confirmed by the fact that the KGB had that year "uncovered and interrupted the hostile activity of a group of intellectuals aimed at arousing nationalism and an anti-Russian mood, and preparing cadres for anti-Soviet opposition."[46] This group included more than 40 people, mainly teaching staff of higher education institutions and scientists. The activities of the group were characterized in the following terms by Longins Avdjukevičs (1916–1988), Chairman of the Latvian SSR KGB:

> Holding to the view that a policy of Russification of the titular nations in the Soviet Baltic republics and destruction of their culture is being carried out, the active members of the group set as their task the struggle to preserve the cultural heritage and the traits of the Latvian people. In this way, they are essentially proceeding from a legal position to oppose Soviet rule in Latvia.[47]

As a result of the policies implemented by the Communist Party, the suppression or restriction of nationalism in Latvia was being undertaken by means that actually had the effect of helping overt or covert nationalism to retain its role as the decisive anti-Soviet factor.

The KGB, too, perceived bourgeois nationalism as a danger to the security interests of the USSR, considering the "aim of nationalist activities is the struggle to separate the respective territories from the Soviet Union," but in accordance with the ideological position of the CPSU, it asserted that in the USSR all nations and ethnic groups are guaranteed equality, and consequently that there are no preconditions for the emergence and development of such a phenomenon.[48] Accordingly, bourgeois nationalism was declared to be an element of ideological subversion incited by foreign states, essentially meaning the USA, which was defined as the Soviet Union's main political enemy.[49] One may agree with the conclusion of historian Ritvars Jansons that such an approach ignored the true causes of anti-Soviet activity, which were rooted in society's dissatisfaction with: (1) the Soviet political system, which restricted human rights; (2) the ethnic policy implemented by the CPSU, with Russification as an instrument of ethnic "consolidation" and (3) the worsening economic conditions in the USSR in the 1980s, as it lost out in the geopolitical competition with the Western countries.[50] That there was a contradiction between the concept of ideological subversion as an "imported product" originating in the capitalist countries and the true causes of anti-Soviet sentiment is also indicated by the fact that the activities of the agents of the 5th Section of the Latvian SSR KGB, its repressive measures and the preventive measures undertaken against people suspected of politically harmful actions were mainly directed against residents of the country,[51] whose foreign contacts were in any case restricted.

Theoretically the task of the preventive actions implemented by the KGB was to ascertain the causes of politically harmful activities and to avert the conditions promoting the expressions of such activities, but for the above-mentioned reasons this was impossible to do.[52] The lack of professional foresight on this score by the Soviet security service may appear strange and hard to explain, because this would contradict the generally accepted view that the KGB was best informed of the real situation in the country. Ever since the collapse of the USSR, at the level of academic research as well as in popular interpretations of history, many attempts have been made to explain the relative passivity of the KGB during the period of decline of the Soviet state.[53] In general, such interpretations balance on the verge of conspiracy theories and are impossible to verify. The assertion that the Communist regime was already accustomed to anti-Soviet expressions as a kind of background that it could successfully control is not a very convincing argument. The analysts of the security service understood very well that the causes of anti-Soviet activity could not be eliminated while preserving the existing Communist regime.[54] The liberalization of the regime gradually begun in 1985 could have given the architects of "restructuring" and "openness" a conviction as to the effectiveness of this kind

of experimental, controlled democracy. In Latvia this is confirmed by the protest campaign against the construction of the Daugavpils hydroelectric power station organized in autumn 1986.

Critical examination leads one to question the currently widespread narrative, according to which this campaign led to the National Awakening movement. The Soviet regime had all the necessary means at the time, including the methods employed by the KGB, to prevent public agitation and the collection of signatures against the Daugavpils power station, were it in some way reminiscent of anti-Soviet activity. This was shown by the quick and merciless reaction of the security service to the actions by the human rights defense group Helsinki'86 in autumn 1987, only months after the "battle" against the construction of the Daugavpils power station had ended. The Helsinki'86 group did not even theoretically have any hope of gaining the kind of broad public support that the campaign against the Daugavpils power station received, thanks to the publicity provided by the Soviet authorities.[55] The protest against the hydroelectric power station was, after all, not a protest against Soviet rule in Latvia, and the leadership of the Latvian Communist Party in the person of Boris Pugo (1937–1991), the former Latvian SSR KGB chairman, at that time already First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Latvian Communist Party, did not identify it as a direct threat, whereas Helsinki'86 was considered by the Soviet authorities as its political enemy, and it took action accordingly. The question remains as to how this precedent of "controlled democracy," successful from the Soviet regime's perspective, influenced the regime's attitude towards the emergence of a legal political opposition.

Anti-Soviet expressions were present in occupied Latvia in the 1960s–80s, from occurrences in everyday life up to the purposeful establishment of resistance organizations. These expressions could not always be qualified as acts punishable under Soviet criminal law. Accordingly, direct persecution was gradually and selectively replaced by preventive measures involving intimidation and blackmail of the Soviet regime's opponents and people dissatisfied with the regime. Such a tactic was employed because it was more advantageous for the security service and for the leadership of the Latvian Communist Party, under whose control the KGB operated. The social context of anti-Soviet expressions was constituted by the realities of the period of occupation: the conditions of everyday life and the ethnic policy of the Communist Party in occupied Latvia, as well as the growing economic problems throughout the USSR. These factors were created and maintained by Soviet rule, and so the causes of anti-Soviet expressions could not be resolved while the occupation regime continued to exist without significant changes.

Endnotes

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2 Ritvars Jansons, "PSRS cīņa ar kapitālistisko valstu ideoloģisko diversiju (1967–1989)," *Latvija un Austrumeiropa 20. gadsimta 60.–80. gados,* ed. Rudīte Vīksne, Symposium of the Commission of the Historians of Latvia 20 (Rīga: Latvijas vēstures institūta apgāds, 2007) 108–09.

3 Indulis Zālīte, "LPSR VDK uzbūve un galvenie darba virzieni (1980.–1991. g.)," *Latvijas Vēsture*, 1 (1999): 115–16.

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5 Aivars Kļavis, "Intervija ar Latvijas PSR Valsts drošības komitejas priekšsēdētāju Staņislavu Zukuli," *Avots*, 8 (1989): 64.

6 See Aldis Bergmanis, Indulis Zālīte, "Padomju Latvijas drošības iestādes un iedzīvotāju pretpadomju izpausmju apkarošana," *Latvieši un Latvija*, ed. *Tālavs Jundzis* and Guntis Zemītis, vol. 2 (Rīga: Latvijas Zinātņu akadēmija, 2013) 443–69.

7 Vitaly F. Nikitchenko, ed., *Kontrrazvedyvatel'nyj slovar'* (Moskva: VKSh KGB SSSR im. F. E. Dzerzhynskogo, 1972) 87–88.

8 *Latvijas Padomju Sociālistiskās Republikas Krimināl kodekss* (Rīga: Avots, 1984) 78–79.

9 Ibid., 161–62.

10 Kļavis, "Intervija," 65.

11 Jansons, "PSRS cīņa," 111.

12 Indulis Zālīte, "Galvenās nevardarbīgās pretošanās formas un slēptais nacionālisms kā iekšējā nepakļaušanās padomju režīmam Latvijā (70. un 80. gadi)," *Latvijas Vēsture*, 4 (1997): 82.

13 Nikitchenko, *Kontrrazvedyvatel'nyj slovar'*, 220.

14 Indulis Zālīte, "Ideoloģiskās kontroles mehānismi Latvijas PSR augstskolās," *Latvijas Vēsture*, 1 (1998): 135.

15 Nikitchenko, *Kontrrazvedyvatel'nyj slovar'*, 163.

16 Ibid., 71–72.

17 Ibid., 175.

18 Elkner, *The changing face of repression*, 153–56.

19 See Kārlis Kangeris and Rudīte Vīksne, *No NKVD līdz KGB. Politiskās prāvas Latvijā, 1940–1986. Noziegumos pret padomju valsti apsūdzēto Latvijas iedzīvotāju rādītājs* (Rīga: Latvijas vēstures institūta apgāds, 1999) 975.

20 Zālīte, "LPSR VDK uzbūve," 117.

21 Bergmanis and Zālīte, "Latvijas PSR Valsts drošības komiteja," 452.

22 Zālīte, "Galvenās nevardarbīgās pretošanās formas," 79.

23 Ibid., 82–85.

24 Bergmanis and Zālīte,"Latvijas PSR Valsts drošības komiteja," 496.

25 "Latvijas PSR Valsts drošības komitejas priekšsēdētāja L. Avdjukeviča slepenais ziņojums Latvijas Komunistiskās partijas Centrālajai komitejai par jauniešu pagrīdes grupas atklāšanu Rīgā," *Latvija padomju režīma varā, 1945–1986: Dokumentu krājums*, ed. Irēne Šneidere (Rīga: Latvijas vēstures institūta apgāds, 2001) 148–51.

[26] Zālīte, "Ideoloģiskās kontroles mehānismi," 135–36.

[27] Edmunds Johansons, Čekas ģenerāļa piezīmes. Atmoda un VDK (Rīga: 1991. gada barikāžu dalībnieku biedrība, 2006) 27–28.

[28] Jansons, "PSRS cīņa," 110.

[29] Dace Balode, "Bailēs par bailēm. Pārdomas par nesenu pagātni," *Avots*, 5 (1989): 66.

[30] Johansons, Čekas ģenerāļa piezīmes, 63.

[31] Danute Dūra, Ieva Gundare, "Okupācijas vara un Latvijas cilvēks: izmaiņas sabiedrības psiholoģiskajā noskaņojumā (1940–1941)," *Okupācijas režīmi Latvijā 1940.–1959. gadā*, ed. Dzintars Ērglis, Symposium of the Commission of the Historians of Latvia 10 (Rīga: Latvijas vēstures institūta apgāds, 2004) 88–141.

[32] Leonīds Radzihovskis, "No psihologa redzes viedokļa." *Avots*, 4 (1990): 50.

[33] Alexei Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More. The Last Soviet Generation* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2005) 331.

[34] Natal'ia Kozlova, *Sovetskie lyudi: sceny iz istorii* (Moskva: Evropa, 2005) 526.

[35] See, e.g., Ojārs Niedre, "Pretošanās kustība Latvijā 60. un 70. gados," *Latvijas Vēsture*, 3 (1996): 53. A similar approach is seen in Heinrihs Strods, "Non-violent resistance in Latvia (1944–1985)," *Regaining independence: non-violent resistance in Latvia, 1945–1991*, ed. Tālavs Jundzis (Rīga: Latvian Academy of Sciences, 2009) 70–163.

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[37] Balode, "Bailes par bailēm," 67.

[38] Bergmanis and Zālīte, "Latvijas PSR Valsts drošības komiteja," 453.

[39] Olga Hrustaļova, "Leonīdam Žuhovickim, kurš ir no paaudzes, kuras nav," *Avots*, 4 (1989): 52.

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[43] Juris Goldmanis, "LKP darbība krievu un latviešu tautu vēsturisko sakaru propagandā sociālisma celtniecības periodā republikā," *Latvija un Krievija. Vēsturiskie un kultūras sakari: Zinātniski teorētiskās konferences materiāli*, ed. Vincents Karaļuns (Rīga: Zinātne, 1987) 123.

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46 Ibid.

47 Ibid., 61.

48 Nikitchenko, *Kontrrazvedyvatel'nyj slovar'*, 173.

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51 Zālīte, "Galvenās nevardarbīgās pretošanās formas," 79–80.

52 Nikitchenko, *Kontrrazvedyvatel'nyj slovar'*, 237.

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Eva Eglāja-Kristsone

Expressions of Conformism and Adaptation Among Creative Intellectuals in Occupied Latvia in the 1960s–1980s

Conformism is defined as compliance with standards, rules or laws; it is behavior that accords with socially accepted conventions or established practices.[1] Accordingly, conformism is, on the one hand, a conceptual phenomenon relating to the social system. On the other hand, each system has always included this kind of self-integration, whereby people seek to avoid confrontation. In existential terms, adaptation is a special kind of choice for peaceful coexistence, since it is morally dubious – like collaboration, which is likewise a form of adaptation but additionally represents conscious cooperation with the regime. Conformism, more than collaborationism, involves erasing the boundary between "us" and "them," removing the clear moral difference between "good" and "evil," avoiding categorical classifications and developing the capacity to live with the resulting ambiguity.[2] Conformism was an impossibility under Stalinism; it had almost no place in the Stalinist world, which was constituted of tension and opposition: terror/enthusiasm, fear/triumph, oppressors/victims, heroes/enemies, our own/others. Starting from 1953, the general demoralization of Soviet society increasingly affected intellectuals. The level of cynicism increased. In the 1960s and 1970s, many outstanding scientists did not seek to conceal their general disillusionment with moral values and their conviction that satisfying egotistical needs has always been an important motivation for human behavior. Undeniably, an important aspect was the arrival on the scene of a new generation that had grown up under the Soviet regime, rather than in bourgeois society, at the time when the Stalin era and the strict regime of Socialist Realism had ended.

In the 1960s, when the middle class of Soviet society had already emerged, a "double consciousness" developed: inward cynicism/outward hypocrisy, private freedom/official loyalty. Such a conclusion is borne out by the thinking of political science professor Oleg Kharkhordin on the difference between the personality in early

and mature Soviet society. In his view, the main question relates to the genesis of the Soviet personality, involving a complex interplay of consumer interests and moral values, where one created for oneself a convenient model of adaptation. In the time of liberalization, the so-called "Khrushchev Thaw," "the individual pretense or hypocrisy spread, which effectively protected the personality and supplemented the private life, always potentially subject to external intervention in the USSR, also in the sphere of private or intimate life of the personality."[3] The changes found clearest expression in the generation of the 1960s, and in the comparison with earlier generations, since it was the first generation to have grown up without experiencing war, terror or forced resettlement. It was better educated and had gradually regained a demographic balance of the sexes. Studies on the Soviet youth of the 1960s show that romanticism and idealism was continuing to decline, along with the spread of cynical conformism, a term that may also be applied to society in Latvia.[4] Ever greater numbers of young people had become materialistic and indifferent to ideas, principles and major social issues. The emphasis was more on personal freedom, property and effectiveness as the main values. Young people "expressed total loyalty to the Soviet system, the party, the state, and the Komsomol itself. Nobody suggested any fundamental changes. Nobody advocated dissent."[5] Thus, on the one hand, the Soviet regime had achieved what it wished to, namely an awareness of boundaries, so that even fierce criticism would be expressed without overstepping these boundaries: "The new young cohort, to put it simply, accepted the status quo as the norm. They just wanted to improve their own lot."[6]

During Soviet occupation Latvia witnessed periods of resistance, along with occasional revolt against this objectionable system. But for most of the duration of the occupation regime the majority of people opted for a strategy of adaptation based on an imaginary compromise that creates at least a certain outward adaptation to a regime that was "not accepted" inwardly. The extent of such individual adaptation to the political system and its consequences are very important questions for the social sciences, and for students of ethics and cultural history.[7] Research into these questions involves several subsidiary questions: Where does the boundary lie between simulated obedience and undesirable opportunism? What level of compromise can be achieved in the conscience? What kind of compromise is acceptable, and how often is a person prepared to accept it? These are questions that countless people have come up against, and which they have answered in various ways. And they have often inherited or chosen an existence that does not demand answers to such questions. Avoiding them allows one to live out an inherited or constructed human condition that offers existential security while avoiding or reducing the possibility of potentially disquieting ethical questions. Telling the truth and thus "disturbing the peace"[8] means

living in accordance with morals, but often the price may be too high. Throughout history, many people have tried to understand how to live, earn their keep, care for the family and nevertheless retain a minimal element of integrity in a political system that is "alien," enforced, unacceptable. Is it possible to live in a closed bubble, in complete isolation from the official sphere, which has been taken over by the "winners" or by autocrats? Of course, there have always been separate small-scale communities that have achieved this kind of isolation, such as the hippy movement or, in a sense, the "French Group,"[9] but the great majority have sought a middle road.

Because of several different factors, namely the death of Stalin, liberalization of the regime, the loss of illusions as to Western intervention, and anticipation of a long period of life under this regime, starting from the mid-1950s in Latvia and in the Baltic as a whole, society became predominantly open towards cooperation with the Soviet regime, whereby an intensive struggle against an alien occupation was replaced by defense of one's own interests within the frame of this alien authority. Soviet dominance led to what Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin refer to as "abrogation" and "appropriation."[10] Local communities shaped their identity in tandem with the newly introduced Soviet ideology. Estonian scholar Epp Annus writes:

> [B]y the mid-1950s, the general population in the Baltics started to collaborate with the new regime. Membership in the Estonian Communist Party rose from just 133 (in spring 1940) to 22,000 by 1953, the Latvian Communist Party recorded 42,000 members and the Lithuanian Communist Party 36,000 members. [...] Nonetheless, the numbers altogether suggest a significant and growing degree of local accommodation to communist rule. The expansion in party membership is attributed not primarily to a growing devotion to communist ideology, but rather to a growing realization that the new regime would be in place for the foreseeable future.[11]

Accordingly, the value system changes, adaptation occurring at the individual as well as the broader social and cultural scale, with the emergence of new, local, hybrid forms of identity in the Soviet milieu.

Local history and the cultural heritage were reassessed and, in many cases, re-written, emphasizing left-wing activities and erasing undesirable examples of modernity. For example, undeniably an important key figure in Latvian literature is Aleksandrs Čaks (1901–1950), who retains his status as a youthful poet in both form and content. However, in the eyes of the Soviet custodians of culture, the modern, urban poetry he had written in the time of independent Latvia was incompatible with the dominant concept of Socialist Realism. In spite of his immense popularity, no major, comprehensive version of the poet's oeuvre was published during the Soviet period; and moreover, his unpublished work had either been lost or had

"disappeared," one section of this work having been stored away, out of bounds, in the literary museum. Moreover, in a volume of memoirs published in 1969, it was first openly admitted that Čaks' work had often been printed inaccurately in Soviet publications, his texts having been arbitrarily altered and shortened, thus creating a distorted version of his literary legacy, which was subsequently repeated in the published selections of his work.

In the Soviet period, the authorities strove to introduce new customs and festivities, thus changing people's everyday life. Communist propaganda attacked bourgeois culture and enforced certain standards of the Soviet way of life. The main purpose of Soviet festivities and customs was to shape the social consciousness of the workers. Christening was replaced by the festival of childhood, and confirmation was replaced by the maturity festival: they were marked, respectively, by the solemn registration of the birth of the child, the solemn presentation of a Soviet passport, etc. On the one hand, this can be seen as integration into the Soviet system, while on the other hand it is necessary to consider that in the transformation of the economic, cultural and social model, local interests were largely being ignored, and so we may speak of colonization from outside, along with an internal wish to adapt. As noted in the contribution to this volume by Ilze Boldāne-Zeļenkova, ethnic characteristics were respected to some degree when introducing the new models of social organization.

The tradition of the Jāņi (Midsummer) festival provides one example. When occupying Latvia, it was important for the new Soviet government to make people believe that the regime was benign towards them, and so in May 1941 the new regime declared Jāņi, 24 June, a national holiday. When the war ended, the authorities decided to maintain this idea.[12] After the deportations of 1949, the Jāņi festival was removed from the list of official holidays, and it became a working day. Following Stalin's death, the celebrations on this day were gradually and unobtrusively revived. After the national communists in the Latvian SSR were ousted from their posts in 1959, the festival came under heavy attack. Academician Jānis Stradiņš writes:

> Insiders relate how, already on 9–13 June 1959, when Nikita Khrushchev was in Riga, two local officials drew his attention to the traditional Līgo festival that was soon to come. Having become annoyed for various reasons, Khrushchev questioned the leaders of the republic about this festival that involved such a lot of drinking and singing. [...] On the basis of such arbitrary considerations not only Jāņi festivities were forbidden in 1961, along with the traditional songs and fun-making, but also anything connected with Jāņi in literature, music, cinema and even cuisine was mercilessly vilified."[13]

The Jāņi festive tradition was also strongly affected by Arvīds Pelše, who in the early 1960s became First Secretary of the Latvian Communist Party. The regime even strove to find a scientific basis for viewing Jāņi as a festival observed by individuals out of touch with life, drunkards, nationalists and reactionaries, considering that Jāņi is a pernicious remnant from the past with pagan and exploitative origins. It is important to note that this absurd campaign was a strong affront to Latvian pride, and at the time many social activists at various levels sacrificed their careers in defending Jāņi. This unprecedented "anti-Līgo campaign" in Latvia lasted from 1961 to 1965, after which the tradition returned, albeit distorted in many respects. However, it needs to be borne in mind that already at that time it was declared and accepted by the 22nd Congress of the CPSU that by about 1980 Soviet society would have come very close to Communism and that national differences would very soon disappear.

The indifference of the power structures to local opinion or to the opinion of particular individuals is vividly demonstrated by a very brief entry in the diary of playwright Gunārs Priede. One of the most important Latvian playwrights of the second half of the twentieth century commented ironically in 1959: "[…] there was a call from Voss.[14] He wouldn't even listen to what I was telling him; it was all clear and decided in his mind. I said 'no,' but I might just as well have said 'moo' or '*tutū*'."[15] A local atmosphere of resistance changed to hybrid coexistence with the new power. If occupation does not result in the expulsion of the occupied society from the occupied territory, then the relationship constitutes a kind of colonial model, where the ideology of the occupier changes the perception of the occupied society. This could even extend to the quite absurd idea of complete convergence, as vividly reflected in another entry in Gunārs Priede's diary, dated 1 November 1959:

> The day before yesterday, there was an open party meeting at the W[riters]U[nion].[16] Friendship between peoples. It was proposed that people should consider the more distant future, the time when the Latvian people would no longer exist: there would be no peoples at all, just people, humanity. (Gunārs) Selga[17]: Is it not premature to talk about that? That's so far away. "If one says that the Latvian people will disappear, then this seems tragic to me." Krauliņš:[18] "It doesn't seem tragic to me; it seems magnificent! There's a bright joy in seeing the little flowing into the great, etc."[19]

These examples show quite clearly that right after the plenary session of the Latvian Communist Party Central Committee in July 1959 the ideological pathos is burgeoning.

In 1960, the Latvian exile professor Pauls Jurēvics describes the Soviet type of person:

> […] discipline is combined with a more developed and critical intelligence, the result of forced schooling. Accordingly, among the younger generation of today not just fanatical communists but convinced communists as such are hardly to be found any longer. On the other hand, conformism is exceptionally well developed, so that people say the things the situation demands and simulate enthusiasm as required (and the Russians are great actors). In other words, we see extensive development of what is known in biology as mimicry: taking on the color of the environment, this being the only means of protecting oneself.[20]

In the 1960s, the number of fanatical communists had decreased, most having become conformists who behaved towards the authorities and visiting foreigners as the Soviet system demanded and expected. Jurēvics accurately concluded that people had learned to live a double life: one life in their thoughts and feelings, another in their expressions and speech, and he refers to the works of George Orwell, where so much of this had been accurately predicted.

Privilege is an effective instrument of social control, especially in a culture of perpetual poverty, because it diverts people's attention from scarcity as such (primarily the result of arbitrary actions) to the granting by the state, as the distributor of all material and non-material goods, of positions of advantage. People accept these unwritten rules of privilege, which may be seen less as a mark of recognition, and more as an instrument to force even greater obedience. Their ideology becomes more profound, and their understanding of the rules less open to doubt; loyal allegiance to the central authority creates a constant awareness of what is permitted and what is not.

In the educational system, teachers as well as pupils and students were carefully supervised, checking their family background. Only approved candidates could aspire to work in educational establishments and decision-making institutions. It was only possible to engage in the sphere of culture if you had mastered the Soviet mode of expression and the key vocabulary. Soviet conformism represents a dense network of survival-oriented praxis, which incorporates various deals, exceptions, offers, exchanges, compromises and betrayals. On the one hand, conformists are people who correspond to social norms, rather than heroes or rebels; they have understood the rules of the game and seek to be successful in this game with power. The aim of the game is positive: creativity, high professionalism, skills and strivings to develop culture. It's a question of how to achieve this through offers and exchanges, because there is no other possibility; it's only a matter of the price to be paid and the result obtained. On the other hand, the conformists, accepting cooperation with the regime as a method, risk never actually creating anything worthwhile. At least from the non-conformist perspective, any kind of deal

with the authorities is always associated with a loss of talent. This kind of extreme view existed and continues to exist.

However, more empathetic and charitable appraisals are also to be found. For instance, Christina Ezrahi, in her study of Soviet ballet, offers the term "artistic repossession," referring to deep structures of resistance and systematic interception, a tactic that operates within the system but tries to exploit the system in order to achieve other aims: in a sense, repossessing art (at least partially) from ideological control by the Soviet system.[21] Artists in the Soviet Union, including those from Latvia, had no other choice than to accept the political and organizational structures and the ideological framework imposed on cultural creativity, but one section of the creative intellectuals learned to creatively adapt and redefine the rules imposed on them, and even to exploit these for their own artistic aims, which bore no relation to the aims of the regime or the structure and ideological values they were to promote.[22] Accordingly, "repossession of art" does not include such informal praxis as samizdat or underground music, which unequivocally rejected and contested the official Soviet system of cultural production. The term applies primarily to subconscious means by which artists, striving to shape their own lives within the parameters of the system, coexisted with this system and weakened it.

Interestingly, "conformism" was one of the words in Soviet media lexicon used for the purpose of intimidation: it was applied in the context of the Western capitalist states but not recognized at all as relating to Soviet everyday life. Conformism was an undesirable state into which one could easily fall but from which it was hard to break free again. Such an idea is seen in the response offered by Ieva Iltnere, a young artist of the 1980s, towards the situation of Latvian art, with respect to regulation "from above" and artistic self-expression:

> On a white canvas, I can do anything – but a painting only reveals that which is in you and what you are. You are your own master and servant. Of course, the milieu, society, the material and spiritual condition influences you, but the work has its own existence. Whether it's commissioned work, a diploma work, a work of inspiration or simply a work of genius. It's often hard to draw the boundary between conscious and unconscious conformism. For example, when [in 1985] preparations began for the exhibition dedicated to the anniversary of the Victory, for a long time I couldn't focus on work precisely out of a fear of conformism, of the degradation of a theme already seen before, of a stereotype. (The mass media also play a role here.) But in essence, the theme of war is profound and unique. There's loyalty and treachery, life and death, love and hate, etc. But there were few works that elevate these above the function of replicating reality. The same is true of the exhibition dedicated to K. Barons. This theme, too, is broad and all-encompassing. We could have pondered

> on ourselves, our people and its experience in the past and the future. There could have been emotion, philosophy, mystery, fantasy, a personal attitude. There could have been fewer versions of the Father of Folksong painted after old photographs.[23]

This demonstrates vividly that "repossession of art" was certainly no simple matter; prevalent instead, and more convenient, was adaptation to the regulations and to artificially contrived public opinion, as propagated by the Soviet media.

With respect to the history of science under the Soviet regime, the political scientist Eva-Clarita-Pettai, proposes four main intellectual and professional strategies as having been used by historians of the time: conformism, opportunism, exclusion and passive resistance. And among the early Soviet Estonian historians, conformism in particular "was mostly encouraged by the wish for political and social survival and outright fear, since, until Stalin's death, a historian could face interrogation, repression, and even physical harm. By complying strictly with the Party and instructions from above, many historians hoped to remain invisible. This necessitated rigid self-censorship and great caution among historians."[24]

Jānis Škapars, long-serving editor of the Latvian culture newspaper *Literatūra un Māksla* (Literature and Art), wrote in 1988 in an article on the outstanding poet Ojārs Vācietis and the intellectual climate in Latvia in the 1960s and 1970s. He mentions several "back-benders" affecting the intellectuals of this time, identifying conformism as one of the most dangerous. He emphasizes that high-handedness, aggression and hostility towards that which was innovative, unusual or different largely destroyed the independently thinking personality, replacing it with the art of pandering and adaptation. And he adds that the drama of the problem lies in the fact that the majority of conformists were followers, associates, supporters, admirers and even worshippers of Vācietis:

> I'm not trying to assert that a conformist betrayed Vācietis. That would be putting it too strongly and aiming too directly. But in the sphere of intellectual existence, the conformist is deadly precisely because of seemingly innocent, natural reconciliation and concessions. After all, it seems so human. And in the end, one becomes reconciled to everything, and accustomed to everything. It is a ravishing of the soul and the flesh. The bureaucrat and despot has so often strode in triumph through this thicket of conformism. And please do not consider this as impiety or disdain towards the intelligentsia and writers. The hunched back is our common tragedy. A tragedy of our people.[25]

Conformism is related to another significant term: the "politics of fear," referring to a set of strategies applied in order to ensure political control by authoritarian regimes.[26] The "politics of fear" performs a preventive, admonitory political function:

it demonstrates to the élite and the ordinary citizen that signs of disloyalty can lead to tears, losses and damage. This approach is more convenient for maintaining authoritarian regimes than mass persecution, on the condition that it must skillfully apply various instruments of political control. The Soviet repressive apparatus developed an effective mechanism for monitoring and intimidating disloyal citizens. The arsenal of the coercive apparatus included not only the threat of persecution and/or career problems but also strategies of co-option, which involved promises of career development, material advantages and other benefits in return for loyalty to the regime. A significant number of intellectuals actively justified their conformist behavior, asserting that each non-conformist act would provoke the authorities, which are just waiting for an excuse to attack the intellectuals. In the Soviet Union, including Latvia, there was a widespread perception that the Committee for State Security (KGB) was behind each and every activity that seemed to be uncontrolled. This was a society in which people believed in all-powerful political supervision that utilizes a range of different tricks to confront people who had earned the system's disapproval. This conviction was so strong that at the Twentieth Party Congress in 1956, at which Nikita Khruschev condemned Stalin, some of the most suspect intellectuals were subjected to horrific experiences to reveal the hidden enemies of the system

To join the Communist Party was one of the ultimate expressions of the acceptance of cooperation, one that simultaneously offered the possibility of career development and guaranteed the "transparency" of one's private and social life. An unwritten "code of conduct" in one's personal life was monitored: thus, the model of the private life of a Soviet person was hard to reconcile with divorce, unmarried cohabitation or different sexual orientation. Accordingly, there was also a kind of conformism at the level of personal life. A vivid example is a document in the file of high-ranking KGB operative Imants Lešinskis. He reports on the state of his marriage and parallel relationships, as well as his illness:

> To Comrade A. Jemeljanovs, Secretary of the Party Organization of the Latvian SSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs
> Report by Imants Lešinskis, 1965:
> In connection with my registration as a member of your party cell, I consider it my duty as a communist to report to you the following facts: on 2 March of this year, the case of my divorce from Marta Lešinska will be heard at the Moscow District People's Commission.

He details the whole story of their relationship and marriage (going back to 1956), describing the crisis in their relationship and how they were jointly caring for their daughter Ieva. These matters are quite well known, but one paragraph is surprising:

> On 22 May 1964, I had a serious nervous breakdown, in the course of which I battered myself with an iron bar and was hospitalized with concussion. While still in hospital, I agreed with my wife that we would divorce. Since June 1964, I am cohabiting with Rasma Enkūze, with whom we have decided, after the matter of the divorce is completed, to be lawfully married.
> I take upon myself full responsibility for our divorce. In reporting these facts to the party organization, I would like to ask you to take into account my strict undertaking to live always and in all respects in such a way as to be worthy of the lofty name of a communist.[27]

This demonstrates the sensitivity of the question of one's private life in relation to party affiliation, and especially with respect to employment in organizations affiliated to the KGB.

In an article on the Polish post-colonial perspective, Hanna Gosk very aptly refers to "the non-heroic everyday reality," which powerfully impacts on the individual and collective sense of identity.[28] The enforced conditions, in their turn, create a cynical way of thinking, shameless and hopeless action or, at best, passive retreat. The experience of dependency, which is no different from straightforward colonization, acted to change society's mentality, ruling out any sense of identity with the state, including state administration and institutions of power, which during the twentieth century were almost always regarded as something alien. In an article on Soviet political conformism, sociologist Vladimir Shlapentokh uses as a theoretical basis the concept of a "two-level mentality," which helps explain how people can readily separate their behavior from their value system.[29] The political conformism of intellectuals was an interesting product of the system, and it is even suggested as constituting a special kind of mythology serving to vindicate those intellectuals who were passive as well as those who cooperated with the authorities and betrayed their colleagues.

Ultimately, the contradiction between intellectuals' attitudes and their behavior proceeds from another basic conflict, namely the conflict between different internalized values, which directly affects their behavior. In Soviet society, no other social group was subject to such a powerful collision between values as the intellectuals. On the one hand, intellectuals have a very high regard for such values as freedom, pluralism, democracy, national tradition and religion, which are antithetical to the actions of the Soviet system. On the other hand, even more than other groups, intellectuals seek prestige, material comfort and power: all things that can be granted only by the political élite. The conflict between values that place the intellectuals in opposition to the state, and hedonistic values that make them cooperate with the state is exacerbated, because it is connected with additional conditions, namely fear of imprisonment and the persecution of family members. Hedonistic values, together with fear of persecution, in

most cases triumphed over the values that force intellectuals to confront the authorities. The period of political reaction that began in the late 1960s. following the 1968 Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, showed that only some intellectuals succeed in resolving the internal conflict in favor of the values of democracy, religion and resistance. At the same time, intellectuals are cushioned by their desire to obtain prestige in official and unofficial form. Moreover, their self-image has a major role in their intellectual life, possibly more than for groups less strongly oriented towards self-reflexion.

The question of collaboration and conformism is a question of the degree of adaptation and of forced compromise, when the fine line between morally acceptable and morally unacceptable conformism becomes unclear, and in certain conditions also shifts. Without any conformism at all – adaptation to existence under the conditions of occupation – probably neither the individual nor society could have survived.

Endnotes

1 Conformist: A person who conforms to accepted behavior or established practices. *Oxford Dictionaries*. Available at: https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/conformist (accessed 30.12.2020).

2 "The unlocking power of non-conformity: Cultural resistance vs. political opposition," *Global Encyclopaedia of Informality, Volume 1: Towards Understanding of Social and Cultural Complexity*, ed. A. Ledeneva, A. Bailey, S. Barron, C. Curro and E. Teague (London: UCL Press, 2018) 336–84. Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt20krxh9.14 (accessed 30.12.2020).

3 Oleg Kharkhordin, *Oblichat i Litsemerit Genealogiia Rossiiskoi Lichnosti* (Sankt-Peterburg, Moskva: Izdatel'stvo Evropejskogo universisteta v Sankt-Peterburge, 2002) 475.

4 Gleb Tsipursky, "Conformism and Agency: Model Young Communists and the Komsomol Press in the Later Khrushchev years, 1961–1964," *Europe-Asia Studies*, 65.7 (2013): 1396–1416; Tatiana Kruglova, "The conformism of the 60s generation at an aesthetic distance. *KinoKultura*, 44 (2014). Available at: http://www.kinokultura.com/2014/44r-ottepel-TK.shtml (accessed 30.12.2020).

5 Vladislav Zubok, *Zhivago's Children* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP 2009) 316.

6 Ibid.

7 Russell Jacoby, *Social amnesia: A Critique of Conformist Psychology from Adler to Laing* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1975) 528; Thomas O. Cushman, "Ritual and Conformity in Soviet Society," *Journal of Communist Studies* 4.2 (1988): 162–80; Stephen Coleman, *Popular Delusions: How Social Conformity Molds Society and Politics* (Cambria Press, 2007); Noah Norman Shneidman, *Soviet literature in the 1970s: Artistic diversity and ideological conformity* (Toronto: Toronto UP, 1982).

8 Vaclav Havel's phrase from the title of his book *Disturbing the Peace* (New York: Vintage Books, 1991).

9 The "French Group" is the name given by the Latvian SSR Ministry of State Security to a dissident group of Latvian intellectuals who were accused of bourgeois nationalism and participation in anti-Soviet meetings in 1950 and 1951. The group members received prison sentences of 7–25 years and were deported to places of exile in the USSR. The aim behind this persecution was to isolate individuals disloyal to the regime and intimidate Latvian intellectuals.

[10] Bill Ashcroft, Garteh Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-colonial Literatures* (London: Routledge, 2002).

[11] Epp Annus, *Soviet Postcolonial Studies: A View from the Western Borderlands* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017) 99.

[12] On 19 June 1945, the newspaper *Cīņa* published a decision by the Presidium of the Central Council of Trade Unions of the Latvian SSR that instructed its committees to involve workers on a mass scale in Līgo festival celebrations, travelling around giving lectures, proclaiming the labor achievements of the workers, etc. The aim was unmistakable: to turn Jāņi (also known at the time as the Līgo festival) into a Soviet propaganda holiday.

[13] Jānis Stradiņš, "Par Jāņu svinēšanu un Jāņu apkarošanu," *Lauku Avīze*, 18 June 1988.

[14] Augusts Voss (1919–1994), Latvian SSR politician. He became First Secretary of the Latvian Communist Party Central Commitee in 1960.

[15] Ieva Struka, ed. and foreword, *Gunāra Priedes dzīve un darbi*, vol. 2.: 1959–1968 (Rīga: Jumava, 2014) 543.

[16] Evidently, the party cell of the Writers' Union had discussed the issue of ethnic policy, which had been considered in the closed 7th Plenary Session of the Central Committee of the Latvian Communist Party on 7 and 8 July 1959, as a result of which Eduards Berklavs, the leader of the national communists, lost his post as Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers.

[17] Gunārs Selga (real name Gunārs Zaķis, 1929–1986), poet. Selga started his career as a painter, then climbed the career ladder – even without special education he worked at the Polygraphers' Club as a head of the mass sector, as a cultural inspector at the Central Council of Trade Unions. He became a freelance correspondent for the Radio Committee and the director of the Latvian Soviet Writers' Union Club.

[18] Kārlis Krauliņš (1904–1981), literary scholar. After returning from the Red Army, where he had been a correspondent during World War II, he worked at the Institute of Language and Literature of the Academy of Sciences and at the Faculty of Philology of the State University of Latvia.

[19] Struka, *Gunāra Priedes dzīve un darbi*, 2: 35.

[20] Pauls Jurevičs, "Iekšējā pārveidošanās Padomju Savienībā," *Latvija Amerikā*, 2 November 1960.

[21] Christina Ezrahi, *Swans of the Kremlin: Ballet and Power in Soviet Russia* (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh UP, 2012).

[22] Ibid., 17.

[23] Ieva Iltnere, "Galvenais – kur ir tava patiesība," *Māksla*, 2 (1986): 6.

[24] Eva-Clarita Pettai, ed., *Memory and Pluralism in the Baltic States* (London: Routledge, 2011) 80. Also *Journal of Baltic Studies*, 41.3 (2010)

[25] Jānis Škapars, "Vācietis un viņa laiks," *Padomju Jaunatne*, 5 October 1988.

[26] A. Bailey, S. Barron, C. Curro, and E. Teague, "Control: Instruments of Informal Governance," *Global Encyclopaedia of Informality,* vol. *2: Understanding Social and Cultural Complexity*, ed. A Ledeneva (London: UCL Press) 420–86. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt20krxgs.13 accessed 8 March 2021).

[27] State Archive of Latvia, LVA, Fonds 7211-1-7, p. 129.

[28] Hanna Gosk, "Counter-discourse and the postcolonial perspective: The Polish Complex by Tadeusz Konwicki," *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, 48.2 (2012): 200–08.

[29] Vladimir Shlapentokh, "The justification of political conformism: The mythology of Soviet intellectuals." *Studies in Soviet Thought* 39.2 (1990): 111–35.

Gints Zelmenis

The Resistance Movement and Dissidents in Occupied Latvia in the 1960s–1980s

If someone were to try to compile a list of the least concrete and most diversely understood concepts in twentieth-century history, it would probably also include the word 'dissident.' In the 1960s, the term began to be applied to people in the Soviet Union (and later also in China and other undemocratic countries) who opposed the regime or the prevailing ideology. However, it has to be borne in mind that the Soviet Union was a multi-ethnic state. In the 1920s and 1930s, the Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians had lived in their own independent countries. Following the occupation by the USSR, resistance to the occupation regime began in all three Baltic republics, altering its forms over the years but continuing with varying intensity throughout this time. It is clear that political opposition or a divergent opinion concerning the dominant ideology of one's own country is something entirely different from resistance to an occupation regime imposed by another country. Nevertheless, the members of the resistance in the Baltic States are likewise referred to as dissidents. And there is indeed some basis for this. In all three Baltic States there were also people who truly believed the dogmas of communist ideology and earnestly regarded the occupation of 1940 as a "liberation," but who in later years came to consider that socialism should be built "with a human face," that the Soviet leaders had discredited socialist ideas and that accordingly there was a need to return to the "pure" or "true" ideas of Marx / Engels / Lenin ... In other words, there were people who regarded themselves as communists or "Soviet people" (rather than Estonians, Latvians or Lithuanians), who followed a career in the power system of the USSR, but who at some point nevertheless came into conflict with the Soviet institutions of power and thus correspond to the concept of dissidents. In some cases, these people's ideas or strivings could correspond partially or in full to the strivings of members of the resistance.

Accordingly, before examining the dissident movement in Latvia under Soviet occupation, we first need to be clear about the terms used. Who were the dissidents? Did they differ from members of the resistance, and if so, then in what way? Or where these similar phenomena?

What is a Dissident?

There is no common opinion on the question of who the dissidents were, and who should or should not be numbered among them. For example, Sergei Grigoryants, one of the activists in the dissident movement within the USSR, does not particularly like the term 'dissidence.' In his view, it would be more accurate to speak of the democratic movement, regarding dissidence only as an element of this movement.[1] Gleb Pavlovsky considers that the democratic movement existed up to 1973–74, and dissidence was a chronological continuation of this movement, lasting up to 1982.[2] On the contrary, one of the researchers of dissidence, Cécile Vaissié, defines it as a movement that incorporates various currents: Russian nationalists, Jews wishing to emigrate to Israel, religious people who wished to practice their rituals, along with many others, and the dissident movement included people with a very wide variety of views.[3] One of the first researchers of dissidence, Ludmila Alekseyeva (who was in the 1970s herself a member of this movement), presents a general overview of dissent in the Soviet Union, including the national movements in the non-Russian republics of the USSR, along with the human rights movement and the Jews' struggle for the right to emigrate to Israel and the struggle by various religious movements for freedom of religion.[4]

Neither is there a common understanding in Latvia of the meaning of the term 'dissident.' For example, a string of former political prisoners incarcerated during the Soviet occupation consider that they were not dissidents but members of the resistance movement.[5] On the other hand, Ints Cālītis, who likewise spent long years in the Gulag during the Soviet occupation, considers that, if we refer to all the political opponents of the Soviet regime as dissidents, then in this sense he has no objection to be seen as a dissident.[6] It is in this sense – as a person actively opposing the prevailing ideology and politics – the term dissident is used by the renowned Latvian historian in exile Edgars Dunsdorfs, and in his view dissidents are freedom fighters.[7] In some cases the term 'prisoner of conscience' is used in a fairly similar sense to that of the term 'dissident.'[8]

Filipp Bobkov, former head of the 5th (ideological) Directorate of the USSR KGB, considers that the term *dissident* was itself invented by the Western secret services, using the name to refer to all dissenters,[9] but in his view the KGB did not concern itself with "dissenters," and accordingly there is a confusion of different concepts.[10] Although Bobkov's assertion is extremely dubious, the most significant aspect lies elsewhere: all of the above shows very clearly that different people (academic researchers, former political prisoners and KGB officers) tend to define and use the term 'dissident' in very different senses.

If we consider the original meaning of the term (remembering that in the eighteenth century it referred to Protestants or "deserters from the faith"), it would be inappropriate to refer in this sense to all those who dissented or were dissatisfied with the regime in Latvia (or Estonia and Lithuania) as dissidents. Most of the inhabitants of Latvia were indifferent to communist ideology (even if they did not outwardly oppose the occupation regime), and accordingly their dissatisfaction with the occupation regime was not, and could not be, any kind of "desertion from the faith." Accordingly, if such an individual became involved in "anti-Soviet" activities, and did so consciously and regularly, in essence that person became a member of the resistance (for instance, Gunārs Astra, Gunārs Rode, the brothers Olafs and Pāvils Brūvers, and others). And then there were people who really were (or at least had previously been) convinced communists began, over the course of time, to appreciate the shortcomings of the existing system, its injustice, ineffectiveness and other problems, and accordingly began to show various forms of resistance to the regime (for example, Eduards Berklavs, Ivans Jahimovičs and others). These people really can be termed dissidents in the full sense of the word.

For this reason, the examples relating to the resistance movement will be discussed separately to the examples of dissidence. Although the majority of researchers do not employ such a division, whether one was or was not a member of the Communist Party determined a different model of behavior, which is discussed below. However, it should be noted right away that such a division is very approximate, because the two groups (participants in the resistance and dissidents) had in common a dissatisfaction with the existing regime (or at least certain of its expressions) as well as a reliance almost exclusively on non-violent methods of resistance.

Thus, it is impossible to completely separate members of the resistance from dissidents. For example, Eduards Berklavs, mentioned above, not only altered his communist views in the second half of his life, but in the 1970s and 1980s also became involved in activities no different from those of members of the resistance. In the final years of his life, he became a nationally oriented Latvian politician, who began to actively promote the idea of Latvia's independence at a time when this was not yet being openly discussed by most other politicians in Latvia.

With regard to periodization, it is usually considered that the democratic, or dissident, movement in the Soviet Union appeared approximately in the 1960s and continued up to the 1980s, when perestroika began and when various expressions of free thought not sanctioned by the authorities emerged on a mass scale in the Soviet Union. Of course, the dates are very approximate, and different authors have different views as to when dissident activity began in the Soviet Union.[11]

In Latvia, the period from the 1960s up to the 1980s, when the "Third Awakening" began, is a period that followed relatively soon after the crushing of the widespread

post-war partisan movement in the Baltics and Ukraine (which happened in the mid-1950s). The years after 1959 also witnessed the ousting of the "national communists" and the commencement of intensified Russification of Latvia, which continued right up to the second half of the 1980s. The resistance persisting in occupied Latvia during this period was almost exclusively non-violent, continuing in a variety of forms and manifestations up to the second half of the 1980s. Although individual cases may be identified in this period that do display elements of armed resistance,[12] these constitute isolated and quite rare episodes, rather than a widespread phenomenon.

Before considering particular examples of the resistance movement and dissidence in occupied Latvia in the 1960s–80s, the specific characteristics of the sources must also be mentioned. Of course, information about the resistance movement and dissidents can be found in Latvia's archives (especially the records on criminal prosecution of these people), but it has to be borne in mind that the majority of the Latvian SSR KGB archive was taken to Russia in about 1990, and part of it has been destroyed, which means that researchers nowadays lack significant groups of documents that could contain information about the resistance movement and dissidents in Latvia during the occupation by the USSR.

As regards the documents that are available for research, one always has to consider the bureaucratic jargon of the officials of that time: in describing one thing, they actually meant something else. For example, on 24 October 1980, Boriss Pugo, head of the Latvian SSR KGB, reported to the Central Committee of the Latvian Communist Party that "the intelligence services of the imperialist countries, their ideological centers and foreign anti-Soviet organizations" were having a pernicious influence on Soviet youth through discotheques, because "a significant section of the discotheque programs is devoid of ideas and is full of tendentious information and is of dubious character."[13] It is hard to say whether the authors of this report themselves seriously believed there was a link between discotheques and "the intelligence services of the imperialist countries," but the real aim of this report was "to establish effective and permanent supervision of the activity of discotheques."[14] Accordingly, all of the wording in the report that relates to "intelligence services" and the "adoration of Western mass culture" by discotheque organizers was necessary only in order for the Communist Party officials to justify "ideologically" their wish to introduce stricter supervision of discotheques. Thus, not everything in the documents written by Soviet officials should be accepted at face value. Often, the true significance of the information in the documents can only be revealed from the context.

Another kind of source material that must be used with great caution in studying the themes discussed here is the press. The press in occupied Latvia was generally silent on the subject of the resistance movement and dissidents; on the rare occasions

that something was published, it was usually in the form of propaganda mockery against "anti-Soviet elements," "backsliders," "henchmen of Western intelligence services" and similar texts. Of course, it is practically impossible to obtain any credible information from such articles, because propaganda, lies and half-truths are so tightly interwoven that the essence of the matter and the true circumstances are almost entirely obscured. The only use that can be made of such articles is for the study of propaganda techniques employed to combat various undesirable phenomena. On the other hand, the information to be found in the periodicals published by the Latvians in exile in the west concerning developments in Latvia had generally been obtained by a circuitous route, with many intermediaries, and often quite belatedly. Accordingly, the information published in these newspapers cannot always be utilized in full for reconstructing various events. Even more than that, the KGB would set up provocations for those Western journalists who tried to establish contact with dissidents in the Soviet Union, and even tried to put them in touch with their own people posing as dissidents. Thus, a journalist might not even know whether they were meeting real dissidents or people sent by the KGB.[15]

For the reasons described here, the information available to researchers concerning the resistance movement and dissidents in the Baltic republics (and in the rest of the USSR) is in many cases incomplete, and needs to be "deciphered" in the light of the specific characteristics of the above-mentioned sources.

The Resistance Movement

Although the term "resistance movement" generally implies that resistance to the occupation regime involved a fairly wide section of the population, it is almost impossible to determine the size of the resistance movement in Latvia. A few dozen? If we base our assessment on the number of people arrested, tried and imprisoned during the last decades of the USSR, then this is so. But the KGB did not succeed in finding all of them, and not all were arrested and imprisoned. It is no secret that in the period after Stalin the KGB made extensive use of "preventive measures" (surveillance and intimidation of disloyal or at least suspicious individuals – a kind of psychological terror). The number of people subject to this kind of "preventive action" in the Soviet Union in the 1970s–80s was many times greater than the number arrested and tried in political cases.[16]

Unfortunately, I do not have such statistics specifically with regard to Latvia. There are other kinds of data, albeit rather meagre. For example, from 1974 up to 1987, several dozen people each year received "warnings" from the KGB in Latvia for "nationalist antics," "politically incorrect opinions," "reading of ideologically harmful

literature," "slandering the reality of Soviet life," "glorifying the Western way of life" and suchlike "ideationally" inappropriate activities.[17] Since "warnings" were just one of the forms of KGB "preventive action," most probably the number of people subject to such measures in Latvia each year reached the thousands,[18] although it has to be taken into account that not all of the people subject to "preventive action" can be regarded as members of the resistance movement. There is evidence that each year in Latvia during the years 1970–80 the KGB eliminated from five to 12 "anti-Soviet" and "nationalist" groups.[19] Although it is problematic to determine the size of the resistance movement in occupied Latvia in the 1950s–80s, one can at least reckon that we are talking about several hundred people (although, of course, they differed in terms of their level of activity and involvement in particular activities.)

In the second half of the 1950s, there was a significant reduction in the intensity of political persecution across the Soviet Union, but this does not mean there was a fall in the number of people dissatisfied with the regime. This applies in particular to the Baltic republics, where at that time a high proportion of the population still consisted of those born before the occupation, and it is logical that a majority of these people were dissatisfied with the imposed communist ideology as well as the intensified Russification, the relatively low standard of living and all the other negative aspects of the occupation regime. Moreover, almost everyone still had recent memories of the mass persecution under Stalin. The scale of the persecution was so great that there were few families in the Baltic republics that had not been directly affected by them or whose close relatives had not suffered. Naturally, such conditions provided fertile ground for various expressions of dissatisfaction.

However, it was not only the older people, with their memories of pre-war life, who were dissatisfied with the existing regime; the disaffected also included students, who had little or no memory of life before the war. The Latvian SSR KGB reported on cases in various schools, higher education institutions and other bodies where young people had distributed "anti-Soviet leaflets," had formed "anti-Soviet groups," had raised the Latvian national flag or had simply been reading "books by bourgeois philosophers" that "slandered Marxism."[20]

Many people in Latvia, even if they were not active participants in the resistance movement, did take part in what is known as the "silent resistance"[21] or "hidden political protest."[22] A practical expression was the widespread practice of placing flowers during all the years of the occupation on various symbolic dates (11 or 18 November, All Souls', 14 June, etc.) at monuments from the time of Latvia's independence or at the graves of the Latvian statesmen of the 1920s and 1930s (often arranging them in the combination red-white-red, i.e., in the colors of the Latvian national flag). Although such activities were not punishable under the laws of

the USSR, they were very much disliked by the authorities, which variously strove to restrict or at least hinder them. In a way, one might evidently try to draw the boundary between the "silent resistance" and the active resistance movement in Latvia by considering whether a person who placed flowers or candles at a monument was also involved in other "anti-Soviet" activities that were regarded by the occupiers as more serious.

A fairly widespread expression of resistance, and one that threatened much more serious consequences for those caught, was to raise the Latvian national flag. During the time of occupation, the Latvian national flag would regularly be raised in a great variety of places: on towers, on house roofs, on smokestacks and even on Communist Party administrative buildings. And in many cases people would undertake such actions on various significant dates: 18 November, the anniversary of the proclamation of the Republic of Latvia, on 7 November, the anniversary of the communist coup, etc.[23] Of course, flag-raising did not always occur on these dates; nevertheless, 18 November was such a favored date for various actions of this kind that the KGB and all the other repressive institutions would be on heightened alert on this date in Latvia.

A good example is that of Bruno Javoišs, who on 5 December 1963 raised the Latvian national flag atop the Riga radio tower. In this case, the act by Javoišs might be said to have been even a triple challenge to the occupation authorities. In the first place, he had raised the Latvian national flag on USSR Constitution Day. Secondly, before raising the flag of the Republic of Latvia, he removed the flag of the Latvian SSR (i.e., the occupation regime), which was flying there. And thirdly, the Riga radio tower was located in the very center of the city, right next to the main administrative building of the militia.[24] Accordingly, it can be said that he was undertaking his "anti-Soviet" act literally under the noses of the regime's institutions, and on a day when the Soviet flags had to be flying and a Soviet holiday was to be celebrated. Raising the Latvian flag on precisely this date was like a slap in the face for the Soviet authorities. Evidently, it was for these reasons that he was sentenced to seven years – the maximum term of incarceration for violating this article of the criminal code.

Here one may ask, however, if every person who once during the occupation raised the Latvian national flag somewhere should be included in the resistance movement. For a proportion of these individuals, raising the flag and being arrested, as would inevitably happen if they were caught, remained the only serious act of resistance during that time. On the other hand, people at the time were very well aware that in reality the occupation regime was very sensitive to such acts, which may outwardly seem quite insignificant. Accordingly, the authorities interpreted this as "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda," and would arrest the perpetrators. Such acts clearly demonstrated that, in spite of all the persecution, the deafening communist

propaganda, the total censorship of the press, the informers and all the other attributes of totalitarian power, popular consciousness not only preserved the memory of the time of Latvia's independence, but some people were even ready to risk their liberty in order to offer a reminder of independent Latvia, albeit in such a purely symbolic form. Such acts also showed clearly that at least part of society had by no means attained the condition of primitive *homo sovieticus*, who unthinkingly, obediently "support the policy of the party and the government." After all, the majority of people did not even dare to perform one-off acts of this kind. Accordingly, individual cases of the raising of the Latvian national flag should also be regarded as constituting part of the resistance movement (albeit a minor one), even when the individual performing such an act was acting alone and was not linked to other participants in the resistance movement.

However, the resistance movement certainly did not consist solely of one-off acts undertaken individually. As already mentioned, in the 1970s and 1980s the KGB eliminated between five and 12 "anti-Soviet" and "nationalist" groups every year. There remains, though, the question of how many of these groups actually existed, and how many were no more than circles of acquaintances which were construed as organized "anti-Soviet groups" only on paper by the secret police in the course of their investigations.

It is significant that illegal groups could become "anti-Soviet organizations" in the eyes of the secret police even in cases where the members of these groups demanded only that which was guaranteed in the USSR Constitution. There is information about cases where people had discussed the possibility of Latvia (or any other republic of the USSR) leaving the Soviet Union, and had been arrested, tried and imprisoned for "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda" or even for "treason to the homeland," even though the right to leave the Soviet Union was guaranteed in the constitutions of the USSR and the Latvian SSR.

An example is the group that formed and conducted its activities in Latvia in about 1960 and was later named the Baltic Federation. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, Viktors Kalniņš, Uldis Ofkants, Dailis Rijnieks, Jānis Rijnieks, Gunārs Rode, Ziedonis Rozenbergs, Knuts Skujenieks and Aina Zābaka along with several acquaintances discussed ideas relating to the possibility of the Baltic republics leaving the Soviet Union to form a Federation of Baltic States. It must be said that, in discussing questions relating to the Baltic's leaving the USSR, at least some of them also talked of the need to organize an insurrection, obtaining weapons (it is known that the group did actually have at least one rifle and one pistol), and even the use of nuclear and bacteriological weapons against Soviet Army units. True, the group discussed most of these questions at a purely theoretical level (none of the group members had any access to weapons of mass destruction, but discussion of such questions does reveal

the hidden hatred existing in a section of society against the occupation army and the regime's authorities in general).[25] Moreover, it is possible that this group had at least partly been created by the secret police, because poet Knuts Skujenieks, for example, who was tried along with all the other members of the group, had previously refused to become involved in the organization.[26]

Although the group members considered the possible separation of all three Baltic republics (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) from the USSR, in reality the group included Latvians only. Rijnieks had tried to involve in the organization a Lithuanian named Antanas Preisas, with whom he had become acquainted during army service, but in practice Preisas' involvement in the organization was limited to an exchange of letters with Rijnieks.[27] No other Lithuanians, and no Estonians were linked to the group.

As regards the fate of the members of this group, they were all given prison sentences from six years (Rozenbergs) up to 15 years (Rijnieks and Rode) in a strict-regime "corrective labor colony."[28] The majority of them served the full term of their sentence. Several became involved in the non-violent resistance movement in the second half of the 1970s and the 1980s. Gunārs Rode and Viktors Kalniņš were expelled from the Soviet Union in the late 1970s, after they had served their sentences, and both subsequently played an active part in various information campaigns in the west, in which they shared their knowledge of the situation in occupied Latvia and the political prisoners in the USSR.[29]

Joint activities involving members of the resistance from the Baltic republics were much more in evidence in the second half of the 1970s. It is known that former political prisoners from the Baltic republics would meet from time to time and discuss various issues, including the question of the Baltic republics leaving the USSR, political persecution in the Soviet Union, Russification, etc. In August 1977, several former political prisoners even formed a "Main Committee for the Estonian–Latvian–Lithuanian National Movement" (it is known that the Latvian participants were Ints Cālītis, Viktors Kalniņš and Juris Ziemelis). This committee prepared a string of documents, which they addressed to the governments of several different countries (the USA, West Germany, Britain, etc.), asking them to give greater attention to human rights issues in the Soviet Union, and urged various foreign radio stations to start broadcasting in Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian. One of the documents of this committee even included a request to Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev to free from prison Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian political prisoners. The committee members planned to hold a press conference for foreign journalists in Moscow in August 1977 in the apartment of former Soviet army general and human rights activist Pyotr Grigorenko, making their demands known to the public at large through the intermediacy of the journalists. However, the KGB learned of all this, arrested

the Lithuanian representative Viktoras Petkus, confiscated the tickets that Cālītis and Kalniņš had already bought for the trip to Moscow, searched their homes and confiscated all the documents they found.[30] This essentially paralyzed the activities of the Main Committee for the Estonian–Latvian–Lithuanian National Movement.

Much more significant in terms of international resonance was a letter from 49 Balts compiled in August 1979, addressed to the governments of the USSR, West Germany, East Germany and other countries that had signed the Atlantic Charter, and to UN Secretary General Kurt Waldheim.[31] The authors indicated that 40 years after the conclusion of the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact its consequences still remained, namely the occupation of the Baltic States, and they urged that these protocols be declared null and void from the time they were signed. The initiative for the letter and the majority of signatories were from the Lithuanian resistance movement, but it was also signed by four members of the resistance in Latvia: Ints Cālītis, Uldis Ofkants, Juris Ziemelis and Ivars Žukovskis.[32]

The Latvian Independence Movement (Latvijas Neatkarības kustība) was active from the mid-1970s up to 1983.[33] As far as is known, there were several dozen people active in this organization, making and raising Latvian national flags, placing various posters in public places, duplicating and disseminating illegal (samizdat) literature and also duplicating and distributing various leaflets across Latvia. Several members of this movement had links to the Gaismas akcija (Action of Light) campaign led by Pauls Kļaviņš, a Latvian clergyman living in West Germany (and future Saeima deputy). In this way, continuous contacts were maintained between occupied Latvia and Latvians abroad. Through these contacts, information about the most important activities of members of the Latvian Independence Movement, about political persecution and about other significant developments was conveyed to the West.[34]

It may be noted that the people who received the illegal leaflets disseminated by the Latvian Independence Movement would in many cases hand them over to the militia or KGB.[35] In the majority of cases, such a reaction evidently relates to the so-called *homo sovieticus* syndrome. Quite possibly, many considered the leaflets they had received as a provocation. There were curious occurrences, too. Jānis Vēveris[36] recalls that in 1980 or 1981 he had put Latvian Independence Movement leaflets in the mailboxes of an apartment house in the town of Tukums and had found out subsequently that the whole "corps of party and Soviet activists" lived in this house. As a result, almost all the people living in this building immediately informed the KGB that they had received such a leaflet.[37]

This overview of the resistance movement would be incomplete without considering the figure of Gunārs Astra, who apparently also took part in the

activities of the Latvian Independence Movement. Nowadays, he is often referred to as the "Latvian of the twentieth century"[38] and is undoubtedly one of the most vivid personalities in the resistance movement. Astra, born in Riga on 22 October 1931, had started work at the young age of sixteen at the State Electrotechnical Factory, initially pursuing a technical career. In 1957 he was appointed head of a department of the Radio Production Plant and deputy head of the plant. However, one year later he left the factory, suddenly interrupting the career he had begun so successfully. He touched on the reasons for his sudden departure in his final statement of 1983, a quarter of a century later:

> They tried to involve me in the Communist Party, openly explaining that if I were to be promoted further, then I first had to "align myself politically." I had to take part in backroom meetings where people and events were discussed openly, talking about things as they really were, assigning positions and proposing candidates in advance, who would ostensibly be elected by the workers afterwards.[39]

In the late 1950s he repeatedly met with US diplomats, corresponded with Latvians living in the West, listened to the Voice of America and discussed what he had heard with his colleagues at work. In February 1961, the KGB arrested Gunārs Astra, ostensibly because he was meeting US diplomats for espionage purposes, while the rest of his activity constituted "anti-Soviet agitation." For this he was sentenced to 15 years in prison. After serving the full term, he returned to Riga, where, in spite of constant surveillance by the KGB, he regularly met with former fellow prisoners and sometimes even with foreigners (in December 1979, the KGB "warned" him about his contacts with foreigners), and engage in photographing and duplicating underground literature.

He was arrested for a second time in September 1983, when Latvia experienced the last major persecution campaign during the occupation. It was largely his arrest and his subsequent conduct that would earn him such exceptional respect among the people. Already on the day of his arrest, he declared to the investigator his refusal to give any evidence or participate in any way in the investigation. He consistently maintained this position throughout the course of the investigation. When Astra was tried, in December of that year, he gave a final statement at the close of the trial, the text of which was subsequently published repeatedly in the newspapers of the Latvian exile community in the West, and later also in various publications in Latvia. In his final statement of 15 December 1983, Astra discussed the occupation and Russification of Latvia, the restrictions against freedom of speech and other matters that many were aware of but feared to discuss under the conditions of communist totalitarian dictatorship and accordingly kept silent.[40] It was for his civic courage in

particular, saying openly things that many were afraid to bring up even among their closest associates, and also because of his untimely demise under very suspicious conditions[41] that Astra later became a symbol of the Latvian resistance movement.

Although only a few examples from the resistance movement have been considered here, and this treatment can by no means be considered complete, the general observation may be made that the resistance movement in Latvia did not have a unified center, a unified leadership or extensively coordinated activities. There were separate groups that managed to continue their activities for an extended period, but in all cases such groups in the 1960s–80s rarely included more than a few individuals. The majority of the different underground organizations that formed from time to time were in truth relatively small groups of like-minded individuals, which generally operated at a fairly local scale. Gaismas akcija and the Latvian Independence Movement can partly be regarded as exceptions, along with the people connected with it, who strove to engaged in activities encompassing the whole of Latvia. This is a significant difference, for example, from Lithuania, where the resistance was closely connected with the Catholic Church, for which reason the church had at least partly become a kind of center for the resistance movement (although not all the resistance activists in Lithuania were linked to the church). In Latvia, there was no such unifying center.

The Dissidents

If we use the term ‘dissident’ to refer to people who, though belonging to the Communist Party, dared to think and act not as the party leadership decided but rather as they themselves considered right, then the best-known among them in Latvia would seem to be Eduards Berklavs. He was born in 1914, had become enthusiastic about Marxism in his youth and had become a convinced communist. In the summer of 1940, when the Soviet Union occupied the Baltic States, he supported the occupation and even joined the power structures of the occupation. During World War II Berklavs fought in the Red Army, and after the war he began a fairly rapid career in the Communist Youth and Communist Party power structures in Latvia. In the 1950s he was at the apex of power. In 1954–56 he was Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Latvian SSR (i.e., deputy prime minister); in 1955 he was elected a deputy of the Supreme Soviet of the Latvian SSR; in 1956–58 he was First Secretary of the Riga City Committee of the Latvian Communist Party (essentially the mayor of the capital city) and member of the Bureau of the Central Committee of the Latvian Communist Party; and in 1958–59 he once again served as deputy chairman of the Latvian SSR Council of Ministers, while also retaining the status of a member of the Bureau of the Central Committee of

the Latvian Communist Party.[42] Although he was serving the occupation regime in this period, he wrote in his memoirs that he had already at that time come to appreciate various shortcomings of the regime in power.[43] There was no dissident element to his activity at the time, but Berklavs was one of the people in the Latvian Communist Party leadership who in 1950 initiated decisions on the necessity for top officials working in Latvia to have a knowledge of Latvian language and to limit, at least to some degree, the migration of people from other republics of the USSR to Latvia[44] (it was specifically for this reason that Berklavs and his associates later came to be known as "national communists"). Of course, these decisions caused considerable dissatisfaction among those leaders of the Communist Party and other state institutions who had been sent to Latvia from other republics of the USSR and among local Stalinists. Over a period of time, they wrote various complaints to Moscow that the leadership of the Latvian SSR was permitting "bourgeois nationalism" detrimental to Soviet power. In summer of 1959, when the Soviet leader Khrushchev visited Latvia, the opponents of the national communists, making use of support from Moscow, managed to gain the upper hand. As a result, in 1959–62, the top leaders of the republic were replaced almost entirely: all "national communists" (and people suspected of belonging to them) were removed from office or at least demoted.[45] This even included the long-serving First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Latvian Communist Party Jānis Kalnbērziņš and Chairman of the Latvian SSR Council of Ministers Vilis Lācis, neither of whom can be considered a national communist. They were replaced by figures (Arvīds Pelše, later Augusts Voss and others), who, right up to the mid-1980s, promoted accelerated Russification of Latvia in all possible ways. Berklavs himself was removed from all offices and transferred to work outside of Latvia, as manager of the Glavkinoprokat (Chief Film Distribution Agency) office in the Vladimir District of Russia, which in terms of the Communist Party nomenklatura of the time represented a very big fall, even a punishment.

However, this career fall and the "severe reprimand" from the party did not stop Berklavs. After eight years of work in Russia, in 1968 he was permitted to return to Latvia. The Communist Party leadership did not allow Berklavs to hold any prominent positions, and at the same time he began to undertake activities that were illegal from the perspective of the Communist Party leaders of that time. In 1969 Berklavs wrote the so-called "Letter by 17 Communists," signed by himself along with 16 of his associates, all Communist Party members.[46] This document reached the West in late 1971 and was published only in 1972. It was highly significant, because the author and the signatories were Communist Party members and because they described in real terms, without propaganda embellishment, the situation in Latvia, namely Russification, colonization and the assimilation of Latvians.

In 1973 Berklavs was expelled from the Communist Party.[47] The KGB even threatened to arrest and imprison him. Although Berklavs was not arrested (in late 1974 the KGB limited itself to issuing a "warning"[48]), in the years after that he was forced to live under constant KGB surveillance, and accordingly he concentrated his activities (which, from the perspective of the authorities were, of course, illegal) mainly on writing letters to various intellectuals of the time in Latvia, Latvian exiles and their organizations and even institutions of power within the Soviet Union.[49] Finally, in the late 1980s, Berklavs returned to politics and in 1990 was elected to the Supreme Soviet of the Latvian SSR,[50] where he was one of the most radical advocates of Latvian independence.

Berklavs is certainly not the sole example of an individual in the Latvian Communist Party who considered the policy of the top party leadership as misguided or even detrimental to the interests of the Soviet Union. A very vivid example from the 1960s is the story of Ivans Jahimovičs, chairman of the Jaunā gvarde collective farm. Jahimovičs was born in 1931. At the time of the Second World War he was still at school, and in 1956 he graduated from the Faculty of Philology of the Latvian State University. After this, up to 1960, he worked as a teacher and school inspector, and in 1960 was appointed chairman of the collective farm.[51]

Even though he held only a relatively low, local-level economic post, in the 1960s Jahimovičs became involved in protest against the persecution of writers and human rights activists in Moscow (Andrei Sinyavsky, Yuli Daniel, Alexander Ginzburg and others), and in 1968 he protested against the occupation of Czechoslovakia. He would also send his letters of protest to the Central Committee of the Communist party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), considering that it was his "duty as a Communist to warn the party Central Committee" about problems that might result from the restriction of freedom of speech and the occupation of a foreign country.[52] Evidently the Communist Party leaders in Moscow were so astounded at the audacity of an ordinary communist in expressing openly his views to the top leadership of the party that they regarded Jahimovičs as crazy. In any case, a couple of months after Jahimovičs wrote a letter to Mikhail Suslov, Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU, a commission of doctors at the Riga Republic-Level Psychiatric Hospital deemed Jahimovičs insane and committed him to forcible treatment at a "special" hospital.[53]

In spite of suffering persecution (dismissal from his post, the criminal proceedings against him and arrest), he remained a convinced communist. In the findings of the psychiatric examination, the description of Jahimovičs' personality is in places reminiscent not of a person whose sanity is in doubt, but of an exemplary member of the communist movement that the party is about to decorate for special merit. Some excerpts from the conclusions of the psychiatric examination:

> [Jahimovičs] has always been principled, honest and fair, and has not tolerated abuse of weaker people. Since childhood, he has not been able to accept various kinds of injustice [...] While studying at university, he participated in social and Young Communist activities [...] He declares that he will not, under any circumstances, give up the struggle for the Communist system, for socialism [...]. He is excellently acquainted with the literature of the Marxist-Leninist classics; he is very familiar with the major works of many philosophers and political figures. [...] He considers that his ideational and political duty and also his duty to society is significantly more important than his duties towards his family [...].

Communist propaganda had always presented such people as examples for others to follow, but this document ends with the conclusion: "I. Jahimovičs displays the paranoid development of a psychopathic personality. The patient's condition may be equated to a mental illness, and accordingly I.Jahimovičs may be regarded as legally incompetent with respect to the activities incriminated against him."[54] Vladimir Bukovsky has suggested that perhaps in this case we are seeing an expression of passive resistance by the Riga psychiatrists: "We're producing the conclusion we've been told to, but we're describing things as they are."[55] It is doubtful whether anyone can nowadays provide an authoritative confirmation or refutation of Bukovsky's assessment, but in these particular conditions such a possibility appears quite credible.

It should be noted that Jahimovičs was by no means the only member of the Latvian Communist Party to protest against the occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1968. In September of that year, Vladimir Slushny, secretary of the party cell of the Jelgava Line Signals and Communications Service at the Baltic Railway company publicly voiced criticism of the occupation of Czechoslovakia. In Ventspils in October, Nikolai Akulov, Head of the Militarized Fire Service Guards, made so bold as to assert that "there is no counter-revolution in Czechoslovakia" (contrary to what Soviet propaganda was saying). Vilen Tolpezhnikov, a doctor at the Riga First Hospital, openly stated at party meetings that the Soviet Union's action in Czechoslovakia was an occupation.[56] All of them were expelled from the party for their dissension. Can these people be regarded as dissidents? After all, they were not questioning any postulates of "Marxism-Leninism," only expressing their opinion concerning the particular event. On the other hand, from the perspective of the leadership of the USSR at the time, all those who made so bold as to question the decisions of the leadership were "deserters from the faith."

It seems likely that quite a large section of the Communist Party nomenklatura harbored some degree of disaffection with the existing regime, but, since they were well integrated into the system of power, they generally did not show it. This is indicated by the fact that during the whole existence of the USSR fairly high-ranking

Communist Party nomenklatura officials quite regularly fled abroad or refused to return to the Soviet Union. One of the most prominent Latvian examples is Imants Lešinskis: he had held important posts in the Communist Party nomenklatura and had collaborated with the KGB but in 1978 requested political asylum in the USA and refused to return to the USSR. He himself admitted that in his youth he had "succumbed" to the "Stalinist Bolshevik illness" but had later come to understand that the system in the USSR manifestly contradicted Marxist and communist ideology, and had thus gradually become an anti-communist. In fact, it is known that already from 1960 he had been an agent of the CIA, considering that this was a way he could oppose the occupation of Latvia.[57] Although Lešinskis cannot be termed a dissident in the generally accepted sense (defectors and intelligence service agents are, after all, a different category of people), but it should be noted that prior to his cooperation with the CIA and his defection he essentially experienced the same kind of personal evolution as Eduards Berklavs. The difference is only that Berklavs at some point began openly working against the system of communist power in Latvia, whereas Lešinskis, up until he sought asylum in the USA, did so in secret.

Due to limitations of space, this account of the resistance movement and dissidents in Latvia is, naturally, very schematic, but I would like to point out the most significant aspect that distinguished the members of the resistance movement in Latvia from dissidents. The two categories of people had in the initial stages of their activity a different *modus vivendi*. The members of the resistance movement generally were not linked to the Communist Party or its institutions of power, and so, right from the start, these people were active outside of the power structures or worked directly against them. The dissidents, on the other hand, at least in the initial stage of their activity or even during an extended period, strove to act within the frame of the Communist Party and other power structures. At that time, there was quite a widespread myth that as many Latvians as possible should join the Communist Party, in order to change it from within, something that Berklavs also promoted. And it was only when it became clear there was no possibility of making significant changes within the existing system of power that the dissidents went on to engage in activities corresponding almost entirely with the methods of the participants in the resistance movement (and in many cases suffered the same kind of persecution by the institutions of the regime).

In closing this chapter, it should be noted that the Communist Party and KGB officials generally regarded the members of the resistance movement and dissidents either as Western intelligence agents or people under the influence of Western propaganda. On the other hand, the Latvian exiles in the West and their organizations, which variously strove to uphold the idea of Latvia's independence, were consistently

viewed by the KGB and the Communist Party officials as "agents of the intelligence services of the imperialist countries."[58] Accordingly, in the criminal cases investigated by the KGB, the term 'dissident' was either not used at all, or used only in the formula "so-called dissidents," moreover seeking to emphasize either their links with Western intelligence services or at least the "pernicious influence" of Western radio stations (Radio Free Europe, Voice of America, etc.).

Some Aspects of the Legality of Political Persecution and Punishment

One of the arguments employed by former officials of the USSR's institutions of power to justify their participation in political persecution of members of the resistance and dissidents is that "such was the law back then." In actual fact, this argument is by no means so watertight, and in some cases it is simply untrue. As regards the law, we may remember that the Nazi war criminals at the Nuremberg Tribunal used the same argument, namely that their acts had been in accordance with the law and instructions from above. However, in the Soviet Union the legislation, too, was problematic.

It has already been mentioned above that the constitutions of the USSR and Latvian SSR envisaged the right of "union republics" to leave the Soviet Union. At the same time, the criminal codes of all the "union republics" (including the Latvian SSR) include articles on "treason to the homeland." The definition of this crime was extraordinarily broad, and included, among other things, a penalty for actions detrimental to the "territorial integrity" of the USSR. Naturally, it would be impossible to leave the Soviet Union without affecting its "territorial integrity." Thus, on this point the law had been written in such a way that the criminal code essentially penalized the exercise of a constitutionally guaranteed right. This gave rise to the ironic comment that in the Soviet Union the criminal code had greater legal force than the constitution.

Articles of the criminal code very commonly used as a basis for charges in political cases included "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda"[59] and "dissemination of intentionally false fabrications discrediting the Soviet state and social order."[60]

The law stated clearly that "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda" is "the dissemination of slanderous fabrications discrediting the Soviet state and its social order" as well as "dissemination, creation or possession of literature with such content," where all of this was being done with the aim of "undermining or weakening Soviet power or bringing about the perpetration of individual particularly serious state crimes." The "dissemination of false fabrications" was very similarly defined in the criminal code.[61] To put it simply, "anti-Soviet agitation" and "intentionally false fabrications" were defined as the spreading of lies. However, many of the people

arrested, charged, tried and imprisoned on the basis of these articles of the law in the 1960s–80s had been collecting, reading, discussing and disseminating various kinds of material about the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact, about the occupation of Latvia in 1940, about the mass deportations from Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia in 1941 and 1949, and other historical facts.[62] Accordingly, there was nothing untrue in what they were saying, reading and writing. Here, the conclusion may be drawn that these people were being persecuted for "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda" illegally even in terms of the Soviet criminal code of the time. However, one more element needs to be considered, namely communist propaganda. Up to 1989, the Soviet Union denied the existence of the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact. Communist propagandists and the historians who had to adhere to their standpoint consistently termed the occupation of the Baltic States in 1940 a "socialist revolution." And the deportations of 1941 and 1949, along with other persecution, were depicted as a preventive measure in the struggle against "kulaks," "bandit supporters" and other "hostile elements." Thus, communist propaganda created within the Soviet Union's official information space a kind of "virtual reality" (or more precisely, a "propaganda reality"), and any information contradicting this "propaganda reality" was defined as "anti-Soviet agitation" and "intentionally false fabrications."

In the case of a larger-scale campaign of political persecution, special propaganda measures were usually undertaken in order to provide the ideological justification. For example, in preparing the 1983 campaign of political persecution in Latvia, in late December 1982 the Latvian Communist Party Central Committee newspaper *Cīņa* and the Latvian Communist Youth Central Committee newspaper *Padomju Jaunatne* simultaneously published an article asserting that Gaismas akcija was undertaking "ideological subversion" against the Soviet Union at the behest of the CIA and could now expect to be "caught red-handed."[63] A week after this article appeared, the Latvian SSR KGB began large-scale house-searches and interrogation, several people being arrested and others subject to "checking" and "prevention," all of which culminated in the second half of 1983 in several political trials, in the frame of which nine people altogether were tried and imprisoned.[64] And when this campaign of persecution had ended, in mid-January 1984, *Cīņa* published another article, which emphasized the links between the people sentenced in the campaign of persecution (Ints Cālītis, Lidija Lasmane-Doroņina, Jānis Rožkalns and Jānis Vēveris) and Gaismas akcija, as well as other organizations of the Latvians in exile in the West, all of which were alleged to be working for the CIA.[65] In this way, the political persecution in the Soviet Union was portrayed in terms of the struggle of the Soviet authorities against "ideological subversion" by the West.

Thus, during this period as a whole the USSR's machinery of political persecution practiced a kind of "division of labor" according to the following scheme. Communist

propagandists, acting in accordance with directives from the leadership of the CPSU Central Committee, decided what was and was not true, and why it is necessary to continually struggle against the "subversive activities" of the Western intelligence services. The legislators (officially the Supreme Soviet of the USSR and the Supreme Soviets of the republics, but in reality, the top Communist Party leaders) issued broadly interpretable laws, in accordance with which even a person's individual opinion could be regarded as criminal. Meanwhile, the repressive institutions (acting under the leadership of the Communist Party) instituted persecution against the people most actively disseminating alternative information on the basis of this legislation.

As a result, even the gathering of true information concerning the situation in the Soviet Union could become a "crime," even though there was no law formally prohibiting the collection of such information. A vivid example in this regard is the activity of the Brūvers brothers in Latvia in 1973–74. Two brothers, Olafs and Pāvils Brūvers, decided to study the depth of the rift in the Soviet Union between the official position and the real opinion of the people. For this purpose, they created a small questionnaire with seven different questions, asking people to state whether they are satisfied with their work, where they spend their holidays and where they would like to spend them, what social events they take part in, what radio broadcasts they listen to, etc. They managed to distribute some of the questionnaires and get replies, but never managed to distribute the rest. When the KGB learned of this questionnaire, the two brothers were arrested, their home was searched and all of the forms confiscated, since, in the view of the secret police, the questions had been framed in such a way as "to be able to slander the reality of Soviet life."[66] As can be seen from this, even asking outwardly innocuous questions could be (and was) interpreted by the occupation authorities in Latvia as criminal.

As regards the sentences meted out in the political trials, in most cases they were prison terms of varying duration, depending on the article of the criminal code under which the person was sentenced. In the most lenient cases, it could be a deferred sentence, as in the case of Pāvils Brūvers, or a relatively brief prison term (six months), as with Olafs Brūvers,[67] since they had been charged with "dissemination of intentionally false fabrications," and this article carried a penalty of no more than three years in prison. As can be seen, in this case the court even imposed a lighter sentence than the law permitted, although the fact as such that a person received a criminal sentence simply for conducting an opinion poll is, of course, completely absurd.

The severest sentences meted out in the political trials of the 1960s–80s were 15 years in prison (Gunārs Astra in 1961, Gunārs Rode in 1962 and others), imposed on people charged with "treason to the homeland." It should be noted that from 1958 onwards, 15 years was the maximum term of incarceration that a Soviet court could

impose. In accordance with the criminal code of the Latvian SSR, "treason to the homeland" was even a capital offense, but no death sentences were passed in the political trials during the last decades of the occupation of Latvia.

Another kind of punishment, which the Soviet authorities began to institute ever more often against members of the resistance movement and dissidents starting from the 1960s, was psychiatric persecution, namely declaring a person insane, forcibly placing them in a psychiatric hospital and administering large doses of powerful medication. Although the precise number of people admitted to psychiatric hospitals in Latvia under the Soviet occupation for their political views or activities is unknown, it is clear that several dozen people were affected.

For example, in 1969 Ilya Rips was committed to a psychiatric hospital for protesting against the occupation of Czechoslovakia.[68] Since emigrating from the USSR, Rips lives in Israel, is a mathematics professor and has never been diagnosed outside of the USSR as having any kind of mental illness. In 1979, Pēteris Lazda was placed in a psychiatric hospital for distributing leaflets (demanding that Latvia leave the USSR). In 1989, he was examined by a council of psychiatrists in Starnberg, Germany, which declared him mentally sound, noting additionally that his personality showed no indication of previous mental illness.[69] In 1986, Anatoly Sokurenko was put in a psychiatric hospital because in conversation with colleagues he had criticized the existing order in the USSR and the Soviet aggression against Afghanistan, and had claimed that genocide against the Latvian people was taking place in Latvia (Sokurenko was an ethnic Ukrainian). Sokurenko was freed already in 1987 and allowed to emigrate to Canada in 1988.[70] Unfortunately, I have no information about what became of him. These are just a few examples of psychiatric persecution in occupied Latvia.

Naturally, persecution and "preventive measures" were not the only methods by which the KGB sought to control or influence the resistance movement and dissidents. Of course, the KGB tried to recruit agents in their midst, both with the aim of obtaining information concerning these people's plans, activities, contacts, etc., and with the intention of using the agents to influence the activities of the resistance movement and dissidents. Although important KGB documents are missing in Latvia, it is known from the available records that several members of the resistance movement cooperated with the KGB.[71] It is quite another matter that we can in many cases only roughly imagine the methods used by the KGB to force these people to cooperate (in many cases, this involved blackmail or the threat of persecution) or the value of the information they provided to the KGB.

In 1987–88, when the political situation in the Soviet Union changed, the attitude towards the members of the resistance movement and dissidents also shifted. At this

time, most of the political prisoners in the Soviet Union and also in occupied Latvia were freed. However, although the authorities freed the political prisoners due to international pressure, they were very unwilling to see the former political prisoners become involved in the life of society. Whereas previously the border of the USSR had been closed, so that people could in many cases not obtain permission to leave[72] (and there are even known cases where a person was declared insane and placed in a psychiatric hospital for attempting to leave the Soviet Union[73]), in about 1987 a tendency began of forcing the former political prisoners to emigrate. Raimonds Bitenieks, Jānis Rožkalns and Rolands Silaraups were just some of the people forced by the KGB to emigrate from Latvia after being freed from imprisonment. This was evidently a deliberate tactic aimed at isolating the most active members of the resistance from the developments taking place in Latvia and preventing them from participating in larger-scale social action.

Overall, it can be seen that in occupied Latvia, as elsewhere in the USSR, political persecution was in formal terms being implemented in accordance with the legislation in force at the time, but in reality an ideological basis was being created by Communist Party propagandists in order to give the political persecution the appearance of legality. In the frame of political persecution, people were not only incarcerated in prisons or concentration camps (known in the official Soviet terminology as "correctional labor colonies") but also in psychiatric hospitals. And in the final years of the USSR, one section of the participants in the resistance movement were forced to emigrate from Latvia.

Conclusions

The division employed in the article between participants in the resistance movement and dissidents is probably a rather approximate one, because most authors describing expressions of dissidence in the Soviet Union do not utilize such a division, or sometimes use the two terms as synonyms. However, as can be seen from the account given here, they were not always referring to the same phenomena. So, it is worth remembering that in the context of the history of the Baltic States in the 1960s–80s the two terms can indicate different phenomena.

As regards the study of the resistance movement and dissidence in Latvia during the time of occupation by the Soviet Union, there is much more research still to be done in Latvia. From various documents and memoirs, we know of a variety of groups and individual activities, but the documents continue to reveal episodes that have received little or no research attention, as well as little-known groups. How many were there? How long were they active? What activities did they engage in? What was the

total number of participants of the resistance movement? How did it change over the years? Nowadays we only have rough answers to these questions. It is significant that resistance to the Soviet occupation regime continued with varying degrees of activity during practically the whole period of the occupation. Although some episodes can be identified in the 1960s–80s when particular groups strove to create something like armed resistance, such cases were exceptionally rare. Essentially, during this period we are dealing with non-violent resistance. Even within those groups that from time to time discussed at a theoretical level the need for armed resistance, such ideas of armed resistance generally remained at the level of ideas and theories.

The Soviet occupation regime strove to maintain its influence through outwardly legal methods: participants in the resistance movement and dissidents in Latvia (as in other republics of the USSR) were arrested, tried and incarcerated in prisons, concentration camps and psychiatric hospitals on the basis of the laws in force in the Soviet Union. However, in the first place, the criminal law in the USSR, at least in some respects, contradicted the constitutions of the USSR and its republics. Secondly, political persecution in occupied Latvia (and in other republics of the USSR) was always linked either to the general standpoint in communist propaganda as to what had or had not occurred (whether or not the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact had been signed; whether or not Latvia had been occupied, etc.), or in some cases to special propaganda campaigns, in the frame of which the repressive bodies gave their version of the activities of the resistance movement or dissidents. The authorities would always interpret these activities in terms of the "subversive activity of Western intelligence services," as the "harmful influence" of the organizations of the Latvian émigré community in the West, etc., but those upholding communist power (or at least a large section of them) did not appreciate that the resistance movement and dissident activity in Latvia (and in the Baltic as a whole) were consequences of the occupation regime.

Endnotes

1 Sergei Grigoryants, "Vo vrazhdebnoj srede s takim kolichestvom stukachej raskrytie neizbezhno," in: Gleb Morev, *Dissidenty. Dvadtsat' razgovorov* (Moskva: Ast, 2017) 13–14.

2 Gleb Pavlovsky, "Ideya zanyatsya politikoj dialoga v Butyrke byla plokhaya," Gleb Morev, *Dissidenty*, 228–32.

3 Cécile Vaissié, *Za vashu i nashu svobodu! Dissidentskoe dvizhenie v Rossii*, *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie*, 87 (2015): 127.

4 Liudmila Alekseeva, *Istoriya inakomysliya v SSSR.* Available at: http://old.memo.ru/history/diss/books/ALEXEEWA/index.htm (accessed 31.01.2018); see also: Leonīds Batkins, "Disidents," *Latvijas Jaunatne*, 21 Mar. 1990, etc.

5 Elita Veidemane, "Gunārs Astra nebija disidents," *Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze*, 14 November 2008. *Atpūta*, 5/6 (1995): 19.

[6] Quoted after Vilis Seleckis, *Tas bija brīnums, ko mēs paveicām* (Tukums: Vilis Seleckis, 2013) 12.

[7] Edgars Dunsdorfs, Edgars, "Brīvības cīnītāji – disidenti,"*Archīvs*, vol. 27 (Melburna: PBLA un Kārļa Zariņa fonds, 1987) 193.

[8] For example, Uldis Bluķis, "Sirdsapziņas cietumnieki," *Laiks*, 21 May 1977; *Laiks*, 25 May 1977; *Laiks*, 28 May 1977; *Laiks*, 1 June 1977; *Laiks*, 4 June 1977; *Laiks*, 8 Aug. 1977; etc.

[9] Compared with the two English terms 'dissident' and 'dissenter,' the corresponding terms in both Latvian and Russian differ much more, both in meaning and in form: 'disidents' and 'citādi domājošais' in Latvian; 'dissident' and 'inakomyslyashchij' in Russian.

[10] Filipp Bobkov, *Kak gotovili predatelej. Nachal'nik politicheskoj kontrrazvedki svidetel'stvuet...* (Moskva: Algoritm, 2016) 109–10.

[11] See, for example, Vaissié,. *Za vashu i nashu svobodu!*, 11; Aleksandr Daniel', "Topologiya sovetskogo inakomysliya: 1950–1960-e gody, *Povsednevnaya zhizn' pri sotsializme. Nemetskie i rossijskie* podkhodym, ed. . Ya. K. Berends, V. Dubina and A. Sorokin (Moskva: ROSSPEN, 2015) 91; Aleksandr Daniel', "Istoki i korni dissidentskoj aktivnosti v SSSR," *Neprikosnovennyj zapas*, 1 (2002); available at: http://magazines.russ.ru/nz/2002/21/dan.html (accessed 26.01.2018); Pavlovksij, "Ideya zanyatsya politikoj," 231–32; Batkins, *Disidents*; Larisa Bogoraz and Aleksandr Daniel', "Dissidenty," *Rodina*, 19 (1989): 13, etc.

[12] For example, the so-called "Zilberts band." See Gints Zelmenis and Rudīte Kalpiņa, "Bandīti vai pretestībnieki?" *Domuzīme*, 3 (2016) 66–71; Jānis Rimšāns, "Jaunatnes pretošanās izpausmes komunistiskajam režīmam Latvijas PSR," *Latvija un Austrumeiropa 20. gadsimta 60.–80. gados*, ed. Rudīte Vīksne, Symposium of the Commission of the Historians of Latvia 20 (Rīga: Latvijas vēstures institūts, 2007) 125–26; Ojārs Niedre, "Pretošanās kustība Latvijā 60. un 70. gados," *Latvijas Vēsture*, 1 (1996): 20.

[13] Tālavs Jundzis, ed., *Nevardarbīgā pretošanās: Latvijas neatkarības atgūšana (1945–1991) dokumentos*, vol 1. *Nevardarbīgā pretošanās padomju okupācijas režīmam (1945–1985)* (Rīga: LZA Baltijas stratēģisko pētījumu centrs, 2013) 76–77.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Thus, Aleksandr Podrabinek describes an example in the 1970s, when *Financial Times* journalist David Satter arrived in Lithuania and Latvia to meet the dissidents there. Only later did he learn that he had not actually met any real dissidents in Riga and had instead been set up by the KGB to meet with its own people. See Aleksandr Podrabinek, *Dissidenty* (Moskva: AST, 2014) 126.

[16] In the years 1977–1984, the number of people subject to "preventive measures" fluctuated between and 15,720–21,169 per year. At the same time, the number of people punished for "particularly dangerous state crimes" did not exceed 91 people per year, while the number of people punished for "other state crimes" did not exceed 491 people per year. See Nikita Petrov, "Podrazdeleniya KGB SSSR po bor'be s inakomysliem 1967–1991 godov," *Povsednevnaya zhizn' pri sotsializme*, 164–66. It should be remembered that the euphemisms "particularly dangerous state crimes" and "other state crimes" generally referred in the USSR to such violations as "treason against the homeland," "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda" and "dissemination of intentionally false fabrications," which were all employed in order to provide a legal basis for political persecution.

[17] For example, the KGB "warned" at least 41 people in Latvia in 1974, at least 18 in 1979 and at least 31 in 1984. The number of "warnings" issued by the KGB in Latvia in other years between 1974 and 1985 falls in approximately within the same limits, whereas in 1986–87 a fall in the number of people "warned" can be seen. These data have been compiled from reports by the Latvian SSR

KGB to the state prosecutor's office. See National Archives of Latvia, State Archive of Latvia (LVA) Collection 1221, description 1-c, files 2604, 2610, 2791, 2803, 2816, 2829, 2931, 2945, 2989, 2999, 3076.), but there is reason to believe that these reports do not include all the "warnings" issued by the Latvian SSR KGB.

18 For example, it is known from the data available in Latvia, although they are incomplete, that in the 1970s and 1980s at least 1998 people were subject to preventive measures. See Aldis Bergmanis and Indulis Zālīte, " Maigais instrumentārijs. Profilakse – valsts drošības orgānu pielietota sabiedrības uzraudzības un ietekmēšanas metode." *Domuzīme*, 2 (2018): 77.

19 Indulis Zālīte, "Galvenās nevardarbīgās pretošanās formas un slēptais nacionālisms kā iekšējā nepakļaušanās padomju režīmam Latvijā (70. un 80.gadi)," *Latvijas Vēsture*, 4 (1997): 81.

20 *Nevardarbīgā pretošanās: Latvijas neatkarības atgūšana (1945–1991) dokumentos*, vol. 1, 58–75.

21 Elmārs Pelkaus, ed., *Policy of Occupation Powers in Latvia 1939–1991. A Collection of Documents*. (Riga: The State Archives of Latvia, Nordik, 1999) 490.

22 Daina Bleiere, Ilgvars Butulis, Inesis Feldmanis, Aivars Stranga and Antonijs Zunda, *History of Latvia. The 20th Century* (Riga: Jumava, 2006) 369–70.

23 See Anta Bergmane, ed., *Mūsu karoga stāsti 1940–1991* (Rīga: Lauku Avīze, 2015).

24 LVA, collection 1986, description 1, file 45007; Bruno Javoišs, "Mans karoga stāsts, *Mūsu karoga stāsti 1940–1991*, ed. Anta Bergmane (Rīga: LA, 2015) 75–104; Bruno Javoišs, "Mans karoga stāsts," *Gunārs Astra. Un citi*, ed. Austris Grasis (n.p.: Drukātava, 2015) 68–81; *Latvijas karogs virs okupētās Rīgas: Bruno Javoiša varoņdarbs*; available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R2JSeKpX44M (accessed 26.01.2018).

25 LVA, collection 1986, description 1, file 44865; collection 1221, description 1-c, files 375., 375a.

26 LVA, collection 1986, description 1, file 44865, volume 3, p. 91; ibid., volume 5, pp. 20., 71., 327.; ibid., volume 14, pp. 193., 236; Ritvars Jansons, "Kriminālvajāšana par pretpadomju propagandu un aģitāciju PSRS/Latvijas PSR: 1953–1967," *Latvijas vēsture 20. gadsimta 40.–90. gados,* ed. Rudīte Vīksne, Symposium of the Commission of the Historians of Latvia 21 (Rīga: Latvijas vēstures institūta apgāds, 2007) 415–16.

27 LVA, collection 1986, description 1, file 44865, volume 1, pp. 188.–196; ibid., volume 8, pp. 278.–289; ibid., volume 9, pp. 144.–158.

28 LVA, collection 1986, description 1, file 44865, volume 15, pp. 607.–610; ibid., volume 16, pp. 55.–58.

29 See, for example, "Hamburgā viesosies Gunārs Rode," *Latvija*, 15 September 1979, 34: 6; Gunārs Rode, "Sodi par ārzemju saiņiem," *Londonas Avīze*, 6 April 1984; "Gunāra Rodes vēstule ASV prezidentam," *Brīvā Latvija*, 8 December. 1986; "Viktors Kalniņš Austrālijā," *Austrālijas Latvietis*, 6 October 1978; "Viktors Kalniņš apsūdz," *Latvija Amerikā*, 21 October 1978; Viktors Kalniņš, "Ideoloģijas orģijas. Komunistu partijas ideoloģijas aparāta uzdevum." *Londonas Avīze*, 15 July 1983, etc.

30 LVA, collection 1986, description 2, file P-9274, volume 1, pp. 170.–326; ibid., volume 2, pp. 1.–195.; ibid., volume 4, pp. 196.–198.; "Searches, Interrogations and Arrests," *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*, 30 [1977]; available at: http://lkbkronika.lt/index.php/en/issue-no-30/1281-searches-interrogations-and-arrests.html (accessed 31.07.2018); Seleckis, *Tas bija brīnums,* 18–21.

31 This document is also known under the name "Baltic Charter" or the "Letter by 45 Balts" (although the total number of signatories was actually greater).

32 LVA, collection 1986, description 2, file P-9274, volume 2, pp. 229.–290.; ibid., volume 4, pp. 195.–196.; ibid., volume 5, pp. 35.–48.; *Laiks*, 26 September 1979; Seleckis, *Tas bija brīnums,* 22–24; "Charter 77 – the Inspiration for the Baltic Charter"; available at: http://www.archiv.org.lv/Praga68/

index.php?id=1040 (accessed 31.07.2018). Interestingly, the names of all four Latvians may be found in the published card catalogue of Latvian SSR KGB agents (available at: https://kgb.arhivi.lv/dokumenti/vdk/agenti/alfabetiski. Accessed 06.03.2019). Accordingly, it is possible to obtain the impression that this was a KGB-controlled provocation. On the other hand, I. Cālītis, U. Ofkants and J. Ziemelis were subject to KGB "preventive measures" in December 1979 for signing this Baltic letter, considered a document with "fallacious content" (see: LVA, collection 1986. f., description 2, file P-9274, volume 1, pp. 39.–42.; ibid., volume 5, p. 157.; LVA, collection 1221, description 1-c, file 2791, pp. 25.–26.). Accordingly, it would probably be wrong to reduce this solely to the activity of the KGB.

33 Not to be confused with the Latvian National Independence Movement (*Latvijas Nacionālās neatkarības kustība*), established in 1989.

34 Pauls Kļaviņš, *Gaismas akcija 1969–1989. Liecības un dokumenti par Gaismas akcijas slepeno un atklāto darbību dzelzs priekškara abās pusēs* (Mārupe: Drukātava, 2012) 35–84, 137–42, 149–84, 224–53, 283–312; *Atpūta*, 5/6 (1995): 29–30; LVA, collection 1986, description 1, files 45322., 45323.

35 See, for example, the submissions from citizens in the case of J.Rožkalns and J.Vēveris (see LVA, collection 1986, description 1, file 45323, volume 7, pp. 135–191).

36 Jānis Vēveris (born 1954). Not to be confused with Jānis Vēvers (1899–1978), former Latvian SSR KGB Chairman.

37 Kļaviņš, *Gaismas akcija*, 305.

38 For example, Māris Ruks, *20. gadsimta latvietis Gunārs Astra* (Rīga: Antava, n.d.); available at: https://gunarsastra.wordpress.com/ (accessed 02.02.2018).

39 *Laiks*, 6 March 1985; *Latvija* Šodien, 13 (1985): 6.

40 Gubts Zelmenis, "Kā tiesāja Gunāru Astru, *Gunārs Astra. Un citi*m ed. Austris Grasis (Rīga: Drukātava, 2015) 25–49. See also http://www.archiv.org.lv/astra/index.php?id=102 (accessed 02.02.2018).

41 Gunārs Astra died on 6 April 1988 in Leningrad (present-day St Petersburg). On 1 March he and his wife went by train to Leningrad to sell flowers. On the train, two young strangers treated him to some tea. Soon afterwards, Astra was taken ill. In Leningrad, he was hospitalized and subsequently transferred to a military hospital, where he was operated. Soon after this, Astra died. After his death, the relatives received his body, from which all the internal organs had been removed. Because of these circumstances, the suspicion arose that the KGB had poisoned Astra. The real cause of his death remains unknown.

42 LVA, collection PA-15500, description 2, file 74.

43 Eduards Berklavs, *Zināt un neaizmirst* (Rīga: Preses nams, 1998) 104, 148, 187–91.

44 Jānis Riekstiņš, "The struggle by Latvian National Communists against the colonisation and russification of Latvia (1956–1972)," Valdis Blūzma, Tālavs Jundzis, Jānis Riekstiņš, Gene Sharp and Heinrihs Strods, *Regaining Independence: Non-violent resistance in Latvia 1945–1991* (Riga: Latvian Academy of Sciences, 2008) 175–93.

45 Berklavs himself states that about 1500 people whose appointment he had recommended or who had worked together with him were dismissed at this time (Berklavs, *Zināt un neaizmirst*. 257). Elsewhere he mentions that about 1000 Latvians were removed from prominent positions. (Berklavs, *Zināt un neaizmirst*, vol 2 (Rīga: Signe, n.d) 278.

46 Jundzis, *Regaining Independence*, 203–28; *The 17 Latvian Communist Protest Letter;* available at: http://www.letton.ch/lvx_17com.htm (accessed 28.01.2018).

47 LVA, collection PA-111, description 42, file 345; Berklavs, *Zināt un neaizmirst*, 370–75.

48 LVA, collection 1221, description 1-c, file 2604, p. 40.

49 LVA, collection 1221, description 1-c, file 3093; Berklavs, *Zināt un neaizmirst*, 378–446.

50 In May 1990, after the Declaration of the Restoration of the Republic of Latvia was passed, the Supreme Soviet of the Latvian SSR was renamed the Supreme Council of the Republic of Latvia.

51 LVA, collection PA-4120, description 23, file 94.

52 LVA, collection 1986, description 2, file P-10997.

53 The "special" psychiatric hospitals in the Soviet Union were basically prison-like institutions where people were essentially incarcerated, and moreover were forcibly "treated," i.e. made to take strong medication. In addition to mentally ill people, the communist authorities also locked up politically undesirable individuals in these "special" institutions. That these "hospitals" were, in fact, places of incarceration, is indicated by the fact that they were under the control of the Ministry of Internal Affairs rather than the Ministry of Health (see further *Karatel'naya psikhiatriya v* Rossii, (Moskva: Mezhdunarodnaya Khel'sinkskaya federatsiya po pravam cheloveka, 2004) 39–114; Aleksandr Podrabinek, *Karatel'naya meditsina (*N'yu Jork: Khronika, 1979) 69–139; etc.).

54 LVA, collection 1986, description 2, file P-10997, volume 2, pp. 178.–83.

55 Vladimir Bukovskij, *I vozvrashchaetsya veter... Avtobiografiya* (Moskva: Zaharov, 2007) 334; Vladimir Bukovsky, *To Build a Castle*, 364–65; available at: http://antisoviet.imwerden.net/bukovsky_v_to_build.pdf; https://static1.squarespace.com/static/57798b38414fb50acf42cc9b/t/58e827153e00be51b422e37a/1491609375946/To_Build_a_Castle_V4+%281%29.pdf

56 Niedre, "Pretošanās kustība Latvijā, 19; see also http://www.lvarhivs.gov.lv/Praga68/index.php?id=1010 (accessed 30.01.2018).

57 Imants Lešinskis, *Starp divām pasaulēm. Kalpības gadi un citi raksti* (Rīga: Domas spēks, 2017) 9–202.

58 For example, *Kontrrazvedyvatel'nyj slovar.* (Moskva: Vysshaya krasnoznamennaya shkola Komiteta gosudarstvennoj bezopasnosti SSSR) 149–50; see also the reports from the KGB on 9 August 1983 on Paulis Kļaviņš and the Brūvers brothers, which in various ways emphasize their links to the Western intelligence services (LVA, collection 1986, description 1, file 45323, volume 7, pp. 119–23), although, as far as is known, there is no objective information regarding links to intelligence services.

59 This was Article 65 of the Criminal Code of the Latvian SSR, passed in 1961, and Article 70 of the Criminal Code of the Russian SFSR.

60 This was Article 183.[1] of the Criminal Code of the Latvian SSR, and Article 190.[1] of the Criminal Code of the Russian SFSR.

61 *Latvijas Padomju Sociālistiskās Republikas Krimināl̦kodekss* (Rīga: Liesma, 1976) 63–64, 132. The official text with appendices setting out material systematized by article. *Latvijas Padomju Sociālistiskās Republikas Krimināl̦kodekss* (Rīga: Avots, 1984) 78–79, 161–62. The official text with appendices setting out material systematized by article.

62 Documents indicating that the collection, reading and dissemination of books and other material relating to historical facts was interpreted by KGB investigators as "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda" may be found in many criminal case files of the 1960s–80s. For example, the criminal case against Gunārs Freimanis and Gunārs Astra (LVA, collection 1986, description 1, file 45322.), the criminal case against Ints Cālītis (LVA, collection 1986, description 2, file P-9274.) and other criminal cases.

[63] L. Švarca un B. Čehoņins, "Pieķerti nozieguma vietā," *Cīņa*, 28 December 1982; *Padomju Jaunatne*, 28 December 1982.

[64] Gints Zelmenis, "1983. gada politiskās represijas okupētajā Latvijā," *Latvijas Arhīvi*, 3–4(2014): 163–203; see also: http://www.archiv.org.lv/1983/index.php?id=301 (accessed 14.02.2018).

[65] V. Siliņš, "'Gaismas akcijas' tumšie darbi,"*Cīņa*, 17 January 1984.

[66] See LVA, collection 1986, description 1, file 45241; collection 1221, description 1-c, file 2456; P. Brūvers, *Kā rodas disidenti* (Ķelne: self-publication, 1978).

[67] See LVA, collection 1986, description 1, file 45241; collection 1221, description 1-c, file 2456.

[68] See LVA, collection 1986, description 1, file 45165; collection 1221, description 1-c, file 2070. See also http://www.archiv.org.lv/Praga68/index.php?id=1020 (accessed: 11.02.2018).

[69] LVA, collection 1986, description 1, file 45282; LVA, collection 1221, description 1-c, file 3098; Pēteris Lazda, "Komunistu režīma patiesā būtība. Psihiatrijas izmantošana pret disidentiem," in Kļaviņš, *Gaismas akcija* 330–44.

[70] LVA, collection 1986, description 1, file 45341; Gints Zelmenis, "Valsts drošības komiteja un divdesmitā gadsimta astoņdesmito gadu politiskās represijas okupētajā Latvijā: izpētes iespējas," *Totalitārisma sabiedrības kontrole un represijas*, ed. Kristīne Jarinovska, VDK zinātniskās izpētes komisijas raksti 1 (Rīga: LPSR VDK Valsts drošības komitejas zinātniskās izpētes komisija, 2015) 94–95.

[71] The names of several participants in the resistance movement may be found in the published card catalogue of the Latvian SSR KGB (see: https://kgb.arhivi.lv/dokumenti/vdk/agenti/alfabetiski; https://kgb.arhivi.lv/dokumenti/vdk/agenti/statistiski), and their reports are to be found in the electronic anti-espionage database *Delta Latvija*.

[72] For example, in January 1983, several families requested permission to emigrate from the USSR but were refused (see: LVA, collection 1986, description 1, file 45323, file 7, pp. 109.–111.).

[73] Gints Zelmenis, "20. gadsimta astoņdesmito gadu 'nepolitiskie' noziegumi okupētajā Latvijā un VDK," *Lielais brālis tevi vēro*, ed. Kristīne Jarinovska, Kārlis Kangeris and Didzis Šēnbergs, VDK un tās piesegstruktūras. VDK zinātniskās izpētes komisijas raksti 4 (Rīga: LPSR VDK Valsts drošības komitejas zinātniskās izpētes komisija, 2017) 252–54.

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