

LATVIA
Historical Background (1939-1991)
Information – Facts – Truth
by
Andrejs Mežmalis
Rear Admiral (L), Retired

The motto of this international conference is “A true understanding of history for a common future.” Therefore it is essential that we look at the past objectively, separating facts from fiction and truth from propaganda, especially when reviewing the information presented by the two most notorious counterfeiters of history that the world has ever known – the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany.

The Baltic States – “Squeezed between USSR and Germany” (1920s-1930s). After being subjugated by the German-Russian rulers for several centuries, the Latvian, Finnish, Estonian, Lithuanian and Polish nations finally found an opportunity to break free from their bondage during the Russian Revolution (1917-1920); Latvia declared her independence on November 18, 1918. During the wars for independence (1917-1920), frequently fighting side-by-side, the Baltic States were also forced to fight against a German occupation force (Bermont's Army); these were German soldiers that had remained behind after World War I and the Baltic Germans that were vying for the reestablishment of their dominance over Latvia and Estonia. The Baltic States also had to fight against an invading Soviet Red Army during 1918-1920. Finally, the forces of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland emerged victorious. On August 11, 1920, Latvia concluded a Treaty of Peace with Russia, whereby ***“...Russia without any reservation recognizes the independence, self-determination and sovereignty of Latvia, and that Russia, of its own free will and forever, renounces all sovereign claims, that belonged to Russia in regards to the Latvian people and land ...”*** Similar treaties of peace were completed by the other involved nations with the Soviets-Russia.

After World War I, the defeated Germany and the emerging Soviet Union found it advantageous to cooperate and collaborate with each other, especially after Stalin had completely consolidated his totalitarian power in the Soviet Union and Hitler had assumed dictatorial powers in Nazi Germany. The Nazi-Soviet collaboration and cooperation became especially pronounced during the latter part of the 1930s through an economic partnership, military cooperation and via several secret agreements. This arrangement gave the Soviets the much needed technology to modernize their antiquated industry and the Germans the much needed raw materials for the revitalization of their war machine. In parallel with these developments, both, the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany, were actively engaged in political agitation within the Baltic States. Prior to World War II, the Baltic States and Poland found themselves “politically squeezed” between these two dictatorial superpowers. Both of these dictatorships were actively engaged in exporting “political propaganda merchandise” to the Baltic States and Poland; also, both dictators had visions of making these relatively fragile new nations part of their empires – the Soviet Union and the *Greater Germany*. This political

reality is illustrated below by a cartoon in the Latvian newspaper “Jaunākās Ziņas” (Latest News) from December 23, 1933.



Travelling salesmen: "Madam, take these beautiful Christmas ornaments – great merchandise."
 Madam (Latvia): "Thanks! Foreign products are too expensive for me."

In order to protect themselves, the Baltic States and Poland sought assurances against these covert and overt intrusions into their internal affairs. Latvia had joined the League of Nations on September 22, 1922 and sought assurances from the West and from the East. Thus, on February 5, 1932, Latvia signed a Treaty of Non-Aggression with the Soviet Union, whereby it was agreed that all conflicts will be settled peacefully by non-violent means and it also reaffirmed the Treaty of Peace of August 11, 1920 by declaring that the terms of that treaty **"inalterably and for all time form the firm basis"** between the two nations - Latvia and the Soviet Union.

National survival and authoritarian governments. The global economic crisis, that had started in 1929 in the United States and continued during the 1930s, had a devastating impact on the newly established nations of Eastern Europe; the increasing unemployment and social unrest became a fertile ground for political activities by the *far left and right-wing* groups. The apex of this economic crisis in Latvia and the other Eastern European nations was reached in 1932. The emerging power of the Soviets and their philosophy of "exporting revolutions" in Europe and elsewhere were especially noticeable in the countries bordering the Soviet Union; a small but very active left-wing minority in Latvia supported bolshevism and advocated violent means to overthrow the government in order to gain political power. Likewise, the emergence of National Socialism in Germany had similar impact on those countries that bordered Germany; this "emerging reality" was especially evident in Latvia among the German minority that embraced Hitler's philosophy of National Socialism, in particular during 1933-1934 and thereafter, when Hitler managed to assume full dictatorial powers in Germany. Many other countries of Europe had already earlier become vulnerable to the far-left wing

political agitations and choose rather, sometimes by military means, their own forms of authoritarian governments (1922 - Italy; 1923 - Bulgaria, Spain, Turkey; 1925 – Albania; 1926 – Poland, Portugal, Lithuania, followed by Rumania) rather than submitting to Communism and eventual subjugation by Moscow. In light of the degrading overall economic situation in Europe, the Government and the Parliament of Latvia became more and more ineffective and unable to legislate or manage the impact of the continuing global economic crisis of the 1930s. In this environment and under the emerging circumstances, national security and the survival of the nation was foremost on the minds of Latvia's leaders. The Cabinet of Ministers of Latvia was composed from various political factions that also had seats in the Parliament. At that time, for example, there were over 100 political parties in Latvia and it proved to be an impossible task to get any kind of political consensus on issues that faced the nation during these extremely difficult times. In addition, some of the smaller parties were very vocal and espoused the political ideologies of the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany; the vast majority of the Latvians, however, rejected both, the German and the Russian influence, having fought both of them fifteen years earlier to gain independence. Nonetheless, Latvia did seek assurances from her big neighbors and on April 4, 1934 in Moscow, Latvia signed an extension of the Treaty of Non-Aggression of 1932 with the Soviet Union. The extension of this treaty was to be in force for ten years until December 31, 1945; it provided assurances by the Soviet Union for peace and stability between the two nations and for the nations of Eastern Europe.

The political situation in Europe, however, became more and more unstable with the emergence of a militarily strong Germany and the secret close cooperation and collaboration between the Communist Soviet Union and Nazi Germany. Consequently, the Presidents of Estonia and Latvia in March 1934 and May 1934, respectively, decided that a crisis situation existed in each of their respective nations. Even though Article 62 of the Constitution of Latvia gave the Prime Minister and his Cabinet "the right to proclaim a state of enforced defense" in Latvia, the Cabinet had to notify the Saeima (Parliament) of their actions within twenty-four hours for a vote. Prime Minister Kārlis Ulmanis, however, went a step further - he dismissed the Saeima altogether and, backed by several of the major political parties, the military leadership (the Army and the National Guard) and some non-governmental organizations, assumed authoritarian powers contrary to the provisions of the Constitutions. The fact that the President of Latvia, Alberts Kviesis, continued to hold office after the Ulmanis' takeover until the end of his term in 1936, leads the author to conclude, that President Kviesis concurred with the actions taken by the Prime Minister. In 1936, when the President's term in office ran out, Prime Minister Karlis Ulmanis also assumed the powers of the President. The Kārlis Ulmanis years, 1934-1940, are fondly remembered by most Latvians as the *good years*; the economic situation stabilized, jobs were created and prosperity returned to the country. It was a very mild authoritarian form of government - existing laws were enforced, not suspended, and the extremists, both right and left wing radicals, were jailed for only a few weeks or months to cool off. Not a single person was ever killed, unjustly imprisoned or unfairly treated during this period. After assumption of power, Ulmanis appointed capable and experienced individuals to the new Cabinet of Ministers from the major political parties and soon stability and prosperity returned to the nation. Germany (Hitler) was pursuing an expansionism policy and had already occupied-

annexed Austria in 1938 and Czechoslovakia in 1939. Like other nations of Europe, Latvia sought assurances and on June 7, 1939 signed a Treaty of Non-Aggression with Germany. Paragraph 1 of this treaty states, ***“The Republic of Latvia and the German Reich will not under any circumstances go to war or use any kind of force against each other. If a third party takes actions against one of the parties stipulated by the first sentence, the second party to this treaty will not in any way support such action.”***

Soviet-German cooperative plans (1939). The Soviet-German cooperation and collaboration was on a vast scale and even included a secret cooperation/collaboration agreement between Soviet Secret Police (NKVD - KGB) and the German Gestapo.¹



Hitler and Stalin. Both dictators had a mutual admiration for each other; they collaborated and cooperated until 1941 when Nazi Germany attacked her former ally, the Soviet Union.

The culmination of the German-Soviet collaboration was the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and the attendant secret Supplementary Protocol on August 23, 1939 that sealed the fate of Eastern Europe. In retrospect, the Soviet (Stalin's) plan of action for the occupation and annexation of the Baltic States, Finland and Poland was planned and executed as follows:

First, reach an agreement with Nazi Germany for the division of Eastern Europe between Germany and the Soviet Union.

Second, force on each of the small nations of Eastern Europe (Finland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) to sign a “Treaty of Mutual Assistance” that would allow the stationing of Soviet military troops in each country.

¹ *The Soviet Story*. A film by Edvīns Šnore, 2008.

Third, accuse the small nations of non-compliance with the Treaty of Mutual Assistance, issue an ultimatum to allow unlimited number of troops to enter each country.

Fourth, invade and occupy each of the countries.

Fifth, hold “elections” and install a Soviet puppet regime and, finally – annex each country. Note: The first step was realized with the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact in Moscow on August 23, 1939, together with its attendant secret Supplementary Protocol for the “division of Eastern Europe” (spheres of influence) between the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany (see below).



German-Soviet officer fraternization – 1930s.



Stalin welcomes Ribbentrop – 1939.

“THE SECRET SUPPLEMENTARY PROTOCOL” TO THE MOLOTOV-RIBBENTROP PACT

On the occasion of the signature of the Non-aggression Pact between the German Reich and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics the Undersigned plenipotentiaries of each of the two parties discussed in strictly confidential conversations the question of the boundary of their respective spheres of influence in Eastern Europe. These conversations led to the following conclusions:

1. In the event of a territorial and political rearrangement in the areas belonging to the Baltic States (Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania), the northern boundary of Lithuania shall represent the boundary of the spheres of influence of Germany and the USSR. In this connection the interest of Lithuania in the Vilna area is recognized by each party.”

2. In the event of a territorial rearrangement of areas belonging to the Polish state, the sphere of influence of Germany and the USSR shall be bounded approximately by the line of rivers Narew, Vistula and San.

The question of whether the interest of both parties make desirable the maintenance of an independent Polish state and how such a state should be bounded can only be definitely determined in the course of further political developments. In any event both governments will resolve this question by means of a friendly agreement.

3. With regard to Southeastern Europe attention is called by the Soviet side to its interest in Bessarabia. The German side declares its complete disinterestedness in these areas.

4. This protocol shall be treated by both parties as strictly secret.

Moscow, August 23, 1939

For the Government of the German Reich: V. Ribbentrop

With full power of the Government of the USSR: V. Molotov



Ribbentrop signing for Germany (Adolf Hitler).



Molotov signing for USSR (Joseph Stalin).

Geheimes Zusatzprotokoll.

Aus Anlass der Unterzeichnung des Nichtangriffsvertrages zwischen dem Deutschen Reich und der Union der Sozialistischen Sowjetrepubliken haben die unterzeichneten Bevollmächtigten der beiden Teile in streng vertraulicher Aussprache die Frage der Abgrenzung der beiderseitigen Interessensphären in Osteuropa erörtert. Diese Aussprache hat zu folgenden Ergebnis geführt:

1. Für den Fall einer territorial-politischen Umgestaltung in den zu den baltischen Staaten (Finnland, Estland, Lettland, Litauen) gehörenden Gebieten bildet die nördliche Grenze Litauens zugleich die Grenze der Interessensphären Deutschlands und der UdSSR. Hierbei wird das Interesse Litauens am Wilnaer Gebiet beiderseits anerkannt.

2. Für den Fall einer territorial-politischen Umgestaltung der zum polnischen Staate gehörenden Gebiete werden die Interessensphären Deutschlands und der UdSSR ungefähr durch die Linie der Flüsse Narew, Weichsel und San abgegrenzt.

Die Frage, ob die beiderseitigen Interessen die Erhaltung eines unabhängigen polnischen Staates erwünscht erscheinen lassen und wie dieser Staat abzugrenzen wäre, kann endgültig erst im Laufe der weiteren politischen

SECRET
SUPPLEMENTARY PROTOCOL
August 23, 1939

Entwicklung geklärt werden. beide
In jedem Falle werden bei Regierungen diese Frage
im Wege einer freundschaftlichen Verständigung lösen.
3) Hinsichtlich des Südostens Europas wird von
sowjetischer Seite das Interesse an Bessarabien betont.
Von deutscher Seite wird das völlige politische Desinteresse
an diesen Gebieten erklärt.
4) Dieses Protokoll wird von beiden Seiten streng
geheim behandelt werden.

Moskau, den 23. August 1939.

Für die Deutsche Reichsregierung
V. Ribbentrop

In Vollmacht
der Regierung der
UdSSR:
V. Molotov

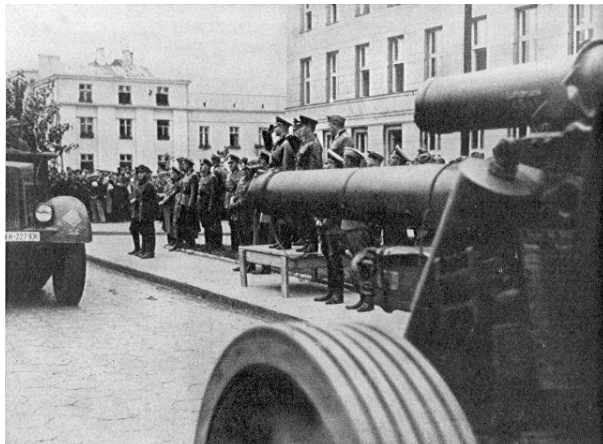
World War II. A week after the Soviets and the Nazis had signed the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, Germany invaded Poland on September 1, 1939. Great Britain had delivered an ultimatum to Germany on September 3 - if Germany did not stop their hostile actions and did not remove their army units from Poland by 11:00 o'clock (British summer time), then a state of war would exist between Great Britain and Germany. Hitler did not respond but instead went to Poland. On the same day, a German submarine torpedoed the British passenger ship "Athenia" – a state of war now existed between Great Britain and Germany; France declared war on Germany the same day and WWII was underway.² On September 17, the Soviet Red Army invaded Poland,

² Alfreds Berzins. 1939. New York, 1976; p. 176-177.

thereby breaking the Polish-Soviet Treaty of Non-Aggression of May 5, 1934. By September 23, 1939 all of Poland was occupied jointly by the Soviet Union and Germany; their joint victory parade was held on September 23 at Brest-Litovsk. The next step for both, the Germans and the Soviets, was the division of the “spoils of war” – Poland. The Soviets were very anxious to get a free hand in Finland and the Baltic States and Bessarabia. Therefore, the next step was a border agreement dividing Eastern Europe between Germany and the Soviet Union.



A week after signing the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact's secret Supplementary Protocol on August 23, 1939, Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union jointly attacked and occupied Poland.



Die Parade deutscher und sowjetrußischer Truppen in Brest-Litowf.
 • Nachdem der Kommandierende General des deutschen Armeekorps in Brest-Litowf mit dem sowjetrußischen Bevollmächtigten Borowenhi alle Einzelheiten der zu besetzenden Demarkationslinie besprochen hatte, fand eine gemeinsame Parade von deutschen und sowjetrußischen Truppen statt.

Source/Quelle: "Der große deutsche Feldzug gegen Polen", Verlag A. Franz Göth & Sohn, Wien, 1940



A joint Soviet-German victory parade at Brest-Litovsk on September 23, 1939.

Five days later, on September 28, 1939, the Soviets and the Germans signed a “*Border and Friendship Agreement*” in Moscow and the cooperation-collaboration continued.

GERMAN-SOVIET BORDER AND FRIENDSHIP TREATY

Source: Documents on Nazi-Soviet Cooperation 1939-1941, Yale University webpage.

The Government of the German Reich and the Government of the U.S.S.R. consider it as exclusively their task, after the collapse of the former Polish state, to re-establish peace and order in these territories and to assure to the peoples living there a peaceful life in keeping with their national character. To this end, they have agreed upon the following:

ARTICLE I. *The Government of the German Reich and the Government of the U.S.S.R. determine as the boundary of their respective national interests in the territory of the former Polish state the line marked on the attached map, which shall be described in more detail in a supplementary protocol.*

ARTICLE II. *Both parties recognize the boundary of the respective nation interests established in article I as definitive and shall reject any interference of third powers in this settlement.*

ARTICLE III. *The necessary reorganization of public administration will be effected in the areas west of the line specified in article I by the Government of the German Reich, in the areas east of this line by the Government of the U.S.S.R.*

ARTICLE IV. *The Government of the German Reich and the Government of the U.S.S.R. regard this settlement as a firm foundation for a progressive development of the friendly relations between their peoples.*

ARTICLE V. *This treaty shall be ratified and the ratifications shall be exchanged in Berlin as soon as possible. The treaty becomes effective upon signature.*

Done in duplicate, in the German and Russian languages.

Moscow, September 28, 1939.

For the Government of the German Reich: J. RIBBENTROP.

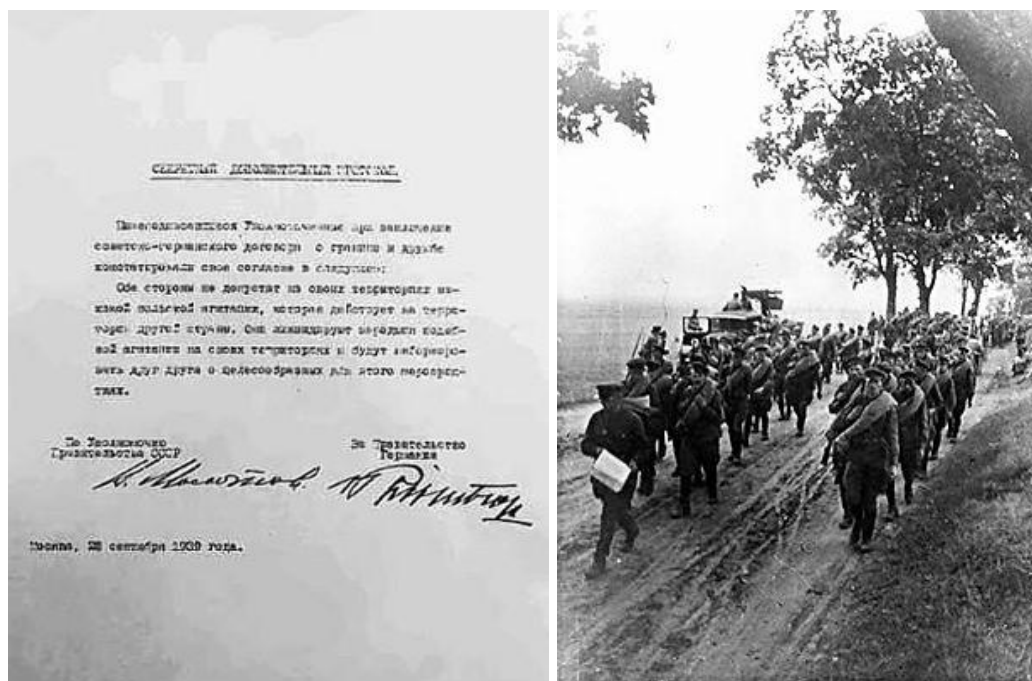
By authority of the Government of the U.S.S.R.: W. MOLOTOV.



The “Border and Friendship Agreement” contained a map (seen on the left) with Stalin’s and Ribbentrop’s signatures. The map clearly cuts Poland in half and “gives” the Baltic States and Finland to USSR.

This German-Soviet *Border and Friendship Agreement* was especially important to the Soviets (Stalin) to make sure that there could not be any misunderstandings with Nazi Germany (Hitler) for the planned invasion and occupation of Finland and the Baltic States of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. The importance of this fact is clearly illustrated by the above “border map” that was personally signed by Stalin himself. This map solidified the understanding between the two dictators that Finland and the Baltic States were indeed within the Soviet “sphere of influence” as stipulated by the secret *Supplementary Protocol to the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact*.

The Soviet-German “Suppression Agreement”. In addition to the Soviet-German *Border and Friendship Agreement*, both parties also signed on September 28, 1939 a secret “Supplementary Protocol” (see below) for the suppression of the Polish people; again, that was a war crime and a crime against humanity. In retrospect, this was also the “green light” to Stalin for carrying out similar acts in the Baltic States later.



The document on the left is a German-Soviet agreement for the suppression of the Polish people. The photo on the right shows Soviet troops occupying Poland during 17-23 September 1939.

Secret Supplementary Protocol 28.09.1939 on Nazi Soviet cooperation against Poles.

Undersigned : W.Molotow J.Ribbentrop - Russian text

Source: Documents on Nazi-Soviet Cooperation 1939-1941, Yale University webpage.

The undersigned plenipotentiaries, on concluding the German Russian Boundary and Friendship Treaty, have declared their agreement upon the following:

Both parties will tolerate in their territories no Polish agitation which affects the territories of the other party. They will suppress in their territories all beginnings of such agitation and inform each other concerning suitable measures for this purpose.

Moscow, September 28, 1939.

For the Government of the German Reich: J. RIBBENTROP

By authority of the Government of the U.S.S.R.: W. MOLOTOV

Soviet atrocities in Poland. To carry out the *suppression* of the Polish people in the Soviet occupied territory of Poland and in the Soviet NKVD (KGB) administered prisoner of war camps, the highest ranking Soviet officials in USSR approved a special document that was prepared by the Soviet NKVD (KGB) Chief, Lavrentij Beria, on March 5, 1940. This document was countersigned and agreed to by Stalin, Molotov, Voroshilov, Mikoyan, Kalinin and Kaganovich. These individuals in fact orchestrated and ordered the mass murders from their offices in Moscow, as can be seen by the detailed “course of action” mapped out by their close comrade, the NKVD (KGB) Chief Beria.



NKVD (KGB) Chief's (Beria's) prepared document of March 5, 1940 for the proposed liquidation of Poles and agreed to (signed) by Stalin, Molotov, Voroshilov, Mikoyan, Kalinin and Kaganovich.

The accepted proposal of Lavrentiy Beria to execute former Polish army and police officers in NKVD prisoner of war camps and prisons - March 5, 1940.³

TOP SECRET

From the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union to comrade STALIN

In the NKVD POW camps and in the prisons of the western oblasts of Ukraine and Belorussia there is currently a large number of former officers of the Polish army, former Polish police officers and employees of intelligence agencies, members of Polish nationalist c-r (counterrevolutionary) parties, participants in underground c-r rebel organizations, defectors and so on. All of them are implacable enemies of Soviet power and full of hatred for the Soviet system.

POW officers and policemen located in the camps are attempting to continue c-r work and are leading anti-Soviet agitation. Each of them is simply waiting to be freed so they can have the opportunity to actively join the fight against Soviet power.

NKVD agents in the western oblasts of Ukraine and Belorussia have uncovered a number of c-r rebel organizations. In each of these c-r organizations the former officers of the former Polish army and former Polish police officers played an active leadership role.

Among the detained defectors and violators of the state- (a summary list follows on pages 2 and 3; Beria's signature on page 4)

(Signatures: In favor – Stalin, Voroshilov, Molotov, Mikoyan)

(In margin: Comrade Kalinin - In favor. Comrade Kaganovich - In favor.)

³ Allen Paul. *Katyń*. Warsaw, 2007, 2010. (Translation into Latvian by Māra Poļakova. Riga, 2011; p. 555-558.)

доставку в течение 24 часов (Пост. ПБ ЦК от 5.V.27 г., пр. № 100, п. 5)
часть Особого Сектора ЦК

СТРОГО СЕКРЕТНО
(из 5. п.)

соезная Коммунистическая Партия (большевиков). ЦЕНТРАЛЬНЫЙ КОМИТЕТ

№ ПБ/144. Тон, Борн я.

и марта 1990 г.

A painting of two soldiers in World War I uniforms. The soldier in the foreground is looking upwards with an open mouth, while the soldier behind him looks on with a smile. They are in a trench with other soldiers visible in the background.

Подать руку помощи братьям народам Западной Украины и Западной Белоруссии — наша священная обязанность!



Note: In 1941, the Germans did the same in their occupied territories of Eastern Europe.

The continuing Soviet-German collaboration. By signing the Soviet-German *Border and Friendship Agreement*, Germany (Hitler) in fact gave the Soviet Union (Stalin) a free hand to do whatever he desired in the Baltic States, Finland and Basserabia. Stalin's next step was to force the "victim states" to allow the Soviets to station their troops in each of the noted countries. While Stalin and his fellow comrades were implementing their plan, they also made advance preparations already in October 1939 for the occupation and the liquidation/deportation of people in each of the to-be-occupied countries. Meanwhile, collaboration and collaboration continued between the Germans and the Soviets and they even were **trying to blame England and France for the continuation of the war (see below).**

Declaration of the Government of the German Reich and the Government of the U.S.S.R. of September 28, 1939.

Source: Documents on Nazi-Soviet Cooperation 1939-1941, Yale University webpage.

After the Government of the German Reich and the Government of the U.S.S.R. have, by means of the treaty signed today, definitively settled the problems arising from the collapse of the Polish state and have thereby created a sure foundation for a lasting peace in Eastern Europe, they mutually express their conviction that it would serve the true interest of all peoples to put an end to the state of war existing at present between Germany on the one side and England and France on the other. Both Governments will therefore direct their common efforts, jointly with other friendly powers if occasion arises, toward attaining this goal as soon as possible. Should, however, the efforts of the two Governments remain fruitless, this would demonstrate the fact that England and France are responsible for the continuation of the war, whereupon, in case of the continuation of the war, the Governments of Germany and of the U.S.S.R. shall engage in mutual consultations with regard to necessary measures.

Moscow, September 28, 1939.

For the Government of the German Reich: J. RIBBENTROP

By authority of the Government of the U.S.S.R.: V. MOLOTOV

The very intensive and ongoing German-Soviet military cooperation and collaboration can be readily seen from the photographs below.



German-Russian collaboration and cooperation started already during 1930s and reached even higher levels with their joint occupation of Poland in 1939. This joint military venture reached even higher levels with the German invasion of France, Belgium, etc. and the Soviet occupation of the Baltic States.

The multifaceted cooperation and collaboration between Germany and USSR was actually expanded and became easier, after their joint occupation of Poland as can be

seen from the below communiqué, because now both dictatorship nations had common borders with each other.

The Reich Foreign Minister to the Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the Soviet Union (Molotov)

Source: Documents on Nazi-Soviet Cooperation 1939-1941, Yale University webpage.

Moscow, September 28, 1939.

MR. CHAIRMAN: *I have the honor to acknowledge receipt of your letter of today, in which you communicate to me the following:*

"With reference to our conversations I have the honor to confirm herewith that the Government of the U.S.S.R. is willing on the basis and in the sense of the general political understanding reached by us, to promote by all means the trade relations and the exchange of goods between Germany and the U.S.S.R. To this end an economic program will be drawn up by both parties, under which the Soviet Union will supply raw materials to Germany, for which Germany, in turn, will make compensation through delivery of manufactured goods over an extended period. Both parties shall frame this economic program in such a manner that the German-Soviet exchange of goods will again reach the highest volume attained in the past. Both Governments will at once issue the necessary directives for the implementation of the measures mentioned and arrange that the negotiations are begun and brought to a conclusion as soon as possible."

In the name and by authority of the Government of the German Reich I am in accord with this communication and inform you that the Government of the German Reich in turn will take the necessary steps for this purpose.

Accept, Mr. Chairman, the renewed assurance of my highest consideration.
VON RIBBENTROP

The joint occupation of Poland was a definite military and political partnership between the German Reich and the Soviet Union. The various diplomatic notes exchanged clearly indicate that both countries intended to continue this partnership, especially in light of the ongoing war in the West and the Soviet planned invasion and occupation of Finland and the Baltic States. Also, the above document very clearly indicates that the Germans and the Soviets already had very close commercial and other arrangements in the past during the 1930s and that their future commercial cooperation has to be done in such a manner so that the **"German-Soviet exchange of goods will again reach the highest volume attained in the past."** This also included products needed for the German war machine, such as oil, as can be seen from the communiqué below.

The Reich Foreign Minister to the Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the Soviet Union. (Molotov)

CONFIDENTIAL

Moscow, September 28, 1939.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have the honor to acknowledge receipt of your letter of today, wherein you communicate to me the following:

"Implementing my letter of today about the formulation of a common economic program, the Government of the U.S.S.R. will see to it that German transit traffic to and from Rumania by way of the Upper Silesia-Lemberg-Kolomea railroad line shall be facilitated in every respect. The two Governments will, in the framework of the proposed trade negotiations, make arrangements without delay for the operation of this transit traffic. The same will apply to the German transit traffic to and from Iran, to and from Afghanistan as well as to and from the countries of the Far East."

"Furthermore, the Government of the U.S.S.R. declares that it is willing, in addition to the quantity of oil previously agreed upon or to be agreed upon hereafter, to supply a further quantity of oil commensurate with the annual production of the oil district of Drohobycz and Boryslav, with the proviso that one half of this quantity shall be supplied to Germany from the oil fields of the aforesaid oil district and the other half from other oil districts of the U.S.S.R. As compensation for these supplies of oil, the U.S.S.R. would accept German supplies of hard coal and steel piping."

I take note of this communication with satisfaction and concur in it in the name of the Government of the German Reich.

Accept, Mr. Chairman, the renewed assurance of my highest consideration.
VON RIBBENTROP

Stalin forces "Mutual Assistance" treaties upon the Baltic States. With World War II in full swing in the West, Stalin wasted no time to take the next step for the Soviet-planned occupation of Finland and the Baltic States – the imposition of a Treaty of Mutual Assistance on each of these states. The talks between the Soviets and Latvia began on October 2, 1939. When the Latvian delegation (Munters and Kociņš) arrived at the Kremlin, Stalin made the following statement to them: **"If we reach an agreement, there are good prospects for commercial and economic deals. Austria, Czechoslovakia and Poland as nations have already disappeared from the map. Others also can disappear. What was agreed to in 1920 cannot remain in force forever. Peter the Great made sure that we have access to the sea. At present, we don't have such and this situation cannot continue."**⁴ Thus, Stalin essentially said – "Do as I tell you or else!" Finally, after these direct threats and severe political pressure from the Soviets, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania reluctantly signed such a treaty each on 27 September, 5 October and 10 October of 1939, respectively. Finland refused to sign an identical treaty and six weeks later, on 30 November 1939, the Soviet Union attacked and invaded Finland. However, the Soviets ran against stiff resistance; the Finns had devoted much time, resources and training for such an eventuality and the Soviets were not able to achieve their goal for a total occupation of Finland. Much speculation has been espoused whether or not the Baltic States should have resisted the Soviet initial occupation – the establishment of military basis in the

⁴ Ilgonis Upmalis, et al. *Latvija Padomju Militaristu Vara*. Riga, 2011; pg. 28.

Baltic States as per the Soviet Treaty of Mutual Assistance with each of the Baltic States. Unknown to the Baltic States of course was the secret Soviet-German Supplementary Protocol to the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. It is very likely that the Baltic States would have chosen to fight the Soviet Union, had this been known to them. Additionally, it must be pointed out that the Treaty of Mutual Assistance very clearly stated, in the case of Latvia, that the USSR will continue to respect the Latvia-Russia Treaty of Peace of August 11, 1920. Additionally, paragraph 4 of the Treaty of Mutual Assistance stated that **“Both sides agree not to conclude any partnerships or coalitions that are aimed against one of the sides that are party to this agreement.”** Thus, the Soviets had already broken this treaty before they signed it, since they already had signed the secret Supplementary Protocol with Nazi Germany, a protocol that was very clearly aimed against Finland and the Baltic States. By international standards, this was also a crime against peace! Nonetheless, Stalin had now concluded his second step, the forced-upon Treaties of “Mutual Assistance” and the stationing of Soviet troops inside the Baltic States.



After forcing the Treaty of Mutual Assistance upon the Baltic States, the Soviet Union showed what they actually meant by “mutual assistance” and on 30 November 1939 the Soviet Red Army invaded Finland.

In parallel with the treaties of “mutual assistance”, the Soviet leadership was already preparing genocide plans for the liquidation of tens of thousands of innocent and peace-loving citizens of the Baltic States. This was the Soviet NKVD (KGB) “*Secret Deportation Plan Nr. 001223 of October 11, 1939*” that was prepared only six days after they had signed the Treaty of Mutual Assistance; this plan was utilized and executed eighteen months later to deport thousands of citizens of Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania.

On October 30, 1939, Germany concluded a Repatriation Treaty with Latvia; approximately 60,000 Baltic Germans left Latvia for Germany, many of them to return after June 22, 1941 to help Nazi Germany with the German subjugation of Latvia. In retrospect, the Repatriation Treaty was a signal to the Baltic Germans that the Soviets were about to occupy the Baltic States. After the Soviet occupation in 1940, approximately 10,000 additional Baltic Germans left Latvia for Germany.

The occupation and subjugation of the Baltic States by the Soviets (1940). Having failed to occupy heroic Finland, but getting some territorial concessions from the Finns, the Soviet Union’s (Stalin’s) next step now was the complete subjugation of the Baltic States. Stalin chose Lithuania as the initial victim by accusing Lithuania of having captured several Soviet soldiers and killing one of them in order to obtain from them Soviet military secrets; these fake and laughable charges were specifically created for mass media consumption which culminated in a Soviet ultimatum to Lithuania on 15 June 1940 to form a new government and admit additional Soviet troops to enter the country. This was, of course, in total violation of the Lithuania-USSR Treaty of Mutual Assistance of 10 October 1939 which did not contain provisions for the issuance of such demands. Lithuania reluctantly accepted the ultimatum without resistance. Lithuania’s President Antanas Smetona went into exile as a sign of protest.

In the case of Latvia, Soviets had stationed in 1939 approximately 25,000 Red Army troops in Latvia alone in connection with the Latvia-USSR Treaty of Non-Aggression; this number did not include the Soviet naval and air force personnel also inside Latvia. As a provocation, on 15 June 1940, the Soviets attacked three Latvian border posts on Latvia’s eastern frontier bordering Soviet Russia and killed/kidnapped 37 personnel of Latvia, including some women. Next, on June 16, 1940, the Soviets delivered an ultimatum to Latvia demanding that a new government be formed and that unlimited number of Soviet troops be allowed to enter Latvia. Almost simultaneously, similar Soviet accusations were launched against Estonia. Meanwhile, the Soviets had massed along the borders of the Baltic States three Soviet armies consisting of 39 divisions, including sizable tank units – all awaiting orders to commence the invasion of Baltic States. In fact, this was an identical plan that the Soviets had employed against Finland on 30 November 1939. Each of these ultimatums accused the small nations of violating their treaties of Mutual Assistance with the Soviet Union and demanded that each of them form a new government and allow unlimited number of Soviet troops to enter their countries. The ultimatums required almost immediate responses; in the case of Latvia,

the ultimatum had to be answered in six hours, thus allowing no time for mobilization to resist the already poised Soviet Red Army at the border and the Soviet “mutual assistance” troops already inside the country. In view of the large number of Soviet troops already inside each of the Baltic States at their “mutual assistance” bases, the Soviet armies massed along their borders and no help in sight from the West, the Baltic States very reluctantly agreed to the Soviet demands in order to prevent bloodshed. On 17 June 1940, Soviet tanks entered Riga, the Capital of Latvia; the same kind of events also took place in Estonia and Lithuania.

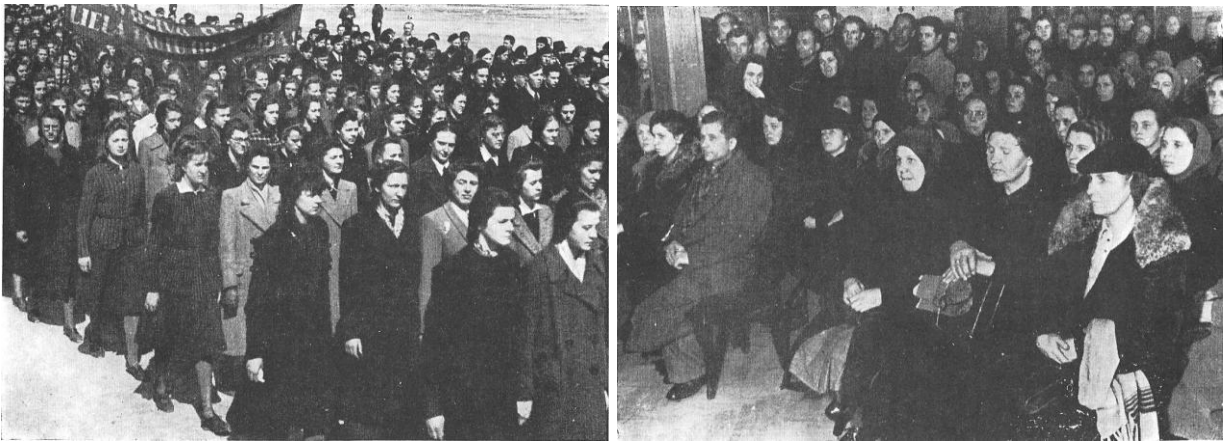


Soviet Red Army tanks entering Riga on June 17, 1940.



Moscow organized demonstration to support the new Communist puppet regime. The posters are those of Soviet leaders and Communist ideology gurus (Marx and Lenin), except for the second one from the right, Prof. Augusts Kirhenšteins, the head of the new government.

Immediately after the Soviet occupation of Latvia, Andrei Vyshinsky, the Chief Prosecutor of USSR during the Stalin's purge trials, arrived in Riga to supervise the installation of a new government for Latvia that had been already selected in Moscow prior to his arrival; two days later, on June 19, 1940, the new Cabinet of Ministers was announced, headed by Augusts Kirhenšteins; all of them were far-left radicals. At that time, the Communist Party in Latvia numbered only about 400 members. Immediately afterwards, Soviet mass demonstration experts from Moscow arrived and organized forced-mass rallies to create a "revolutionary atmosphere" in Riga and in the other cities of the Baltic States. The next and final step of the Soviet plan of action in the Baltic States was to hold Soviet-style "elections" and install Soviet puppet regimes, followed by the annexation of the Baltic States. Specifically in Latvia, the Soviets announced Saeima (Parliament) elections to be held 14-15 July 1940 with only one party allowed, *The Working Peoples Party of Latvia*. At that time, even though there had been an authoritarian Government in Latvia (1934-1940), there had been about 100 or so political parties, many of them still active, that wanted to participate in the Saeima elections. The announced results are also very revealing about the Soviet-style elections in that the Soviets claimed that 97.6% of the citizens of Latvia had "voted" for the one party allowed, the Communists, all under the watchful eye of the present Soviet Red Army and the NKVD (KGB). The same "democratic process" was also carried out in each of the other Baltic States. These elections, of course, were in violation of Latvia's election laws and its Constitution. Nonetheless, the newly "elected Saeima" and the newly formed government, headed by Augusts Kirhenšteins, "petitioned" the USSR to "join" the Soviet Union. **A United States Department of State Memorandum of July 15, 1940 very clearly and very correctly captures these events by stating that 500,000 Soviet-Russian troops have occupied the Baltic States and the Governments of the Baltic States have been replaced by "mere Soviet puppets."**



University students in Riga forced to march in mass rallies and factory workers being indoctrinated into the marvels of Communism. The facial expressions of these people tell it all – "It's all a bunch of crap!"

It is truly amazing that in just five weeks, from 16 June to 21 July 1940 in the case of Latvia, the Soviets had: (1) issued an ultimatum; (2) invaded and occupied Latvia; (3) backed by 500,000-men Soviet Army, had held elections; (4) installed a new government; (5) and, annexed Latvia and made it part of the Soviet Union. All of these actions, of course were illegal and criminal acts under international law, in violation of

the Constitution and the laws of Latvia. These acts were also against the will of the citizens of Latvia and the other Baltic States. However, this was just the beginning of the terrible things yet to come for the Baltic States. What is even more amazing is that the Soviet Union since 1940 and the Russian Federation (USSR's legal successor) have clung to the absurd position that the Baltic States voluntarily joined the Soviet Union. Both of them (basically Russia) have spent a lot of time and effort to mislead the nations of the world by creating an impression that the Baltic States joined the USSR voluntarily and that the annexation of Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania was legal. In reality, the USSR appropriated territories that belonged to other countries; it was occupation and annexation by force, acts taken in violation of international law and many international and bilateral treaties. The USSR even failed to take the time and the steps normally taken to draft a "voluntary treaty of union" under the principles of international law. Boris Meisner, an eminent German scholar of international law, has very clearly addressed this point by stating: *"The Soviet Union seemingly adopted a contract with itself and with the act of annexation clearly violated not only the sovereignty of the Baltic States but also the right of self-determination of the Baltic nations which was the basis of the 1920 peace treaty (with Soviet Russia)."*⁵

Immediately, after the above noted events had taken place, the brutal, very efficient and very experienced Soviet secret police (NKVD/KGB) and the Soviet occupation apparatus swung into action for the total subjugation of the Baltic States, including the "indoctrination operations" to mold the captive populations into "Soviet-style" citizens of the USSR.



Latvian Army recruits being indoctrinated by Russian political commissars and school children forced to participate in organized pro-Stalin and pro-Soviet events. Again, the facial expressions tell it all – "Crap!"

⁵ Meissner, Boris. "The Occupation of the Baltic States from a Present-Day Perspective" in *The Baltic States at Historical Crossroads. Political, economic, and legal problems and opportunities in the context of international co-operation at the beginning of the 21st century. A collection of scholarly articles.* Second revised and expanded edition. Published in memory of Senator August Loeber and on the occasion of the 75th birthday of Professor Dietrich Andre Loeber. Edited by Dr. habil. Tālav Jundzis. Rīga: Latvian Academy of Sciences, 2001, p.440.

Following the occupation and consolidation of power within the Baltics States, a Russification program was introduced, whereby Russian language teaching became mandatory in all schools starting with the third grade; additionally, “Stalin’s constitution” had to be taught starting with the seventh grade.⁶ Private properties, especially business enterprises, were nationalized on a vast scale. All national symbols were forbidden and were replaced by Soviet-Communist ones, including the national flags; the singing of national anthems, possession of national patriotic literature, including unacceptable history books were not allowed and were considered as criminal acts under the newly introduced Soviet laws. However, this was just the beginning of the worst yet to come – mass murders and deportations to the Gulag (Siberia). Meanwhile, collaboration and cooperation continued at enhanced levels between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union while World War II was raging in Western Europe and the subjugation of the Baltic States by the Soviet Union was taking place in Eastern Europe.



Germans-Russians shaking hands in Poland – 1939. Ribbentrop greets Molotov in Berlin, 14 Nov 1940

After the occupation of the Baltic States, cooperation and collaboration between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union continued well into 1941, the year that the two dictatorial countries began their own struggle for supremacy in Europe. The question of Lithuania had not been fully settled between the two dictatorships and they were tying up loose ends in regards to the secret Supplemental Protocol of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of August 23, 1939. As can be seen from the Pact, "In the event of a territorial and political rearrangement in the areas belonging to the Baltic States (Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania), the northern boundary of Lithuania shall represent the boundary of the spheres of influence of Germany and the U.S.S.R." The Soviets had already taken military steps in regards to their “sphere of influence” also in Lithuania. Therefore, the two nations concluded a secret deal by which Germany actually sold that part of Lithuania to the Soviet Union that had not been included by the Pact as per the map attached to the Pact that had been signed by Stalin and Ribbentrop. The price for this Lithuanian territory was 7,500,000 gold dollars or equivalent to 31,500,000 German marks - a sale of property and of people which neither of these dictatorships had ever owned.

⁶ Latvijas valsts arhīvs. *Okupācijas varu politika Latvijā (1939-1991)-Dokumentu krājums*. Nordic, 1999; p.422.

*(Cover sheet:) STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL
SECRET PROTOCOL*

The Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR V. M. Molotov, with the authorization of the Government of the USSR on one side, and German Ambassador Count von der Schulenburg, with the authorization of the Government of Germany on the other side, have concurred on the following:

1. The government of Germany renounces its claims to the part of the territory of Lithuania indicated in the Secret Supplementary Protocol of September 28, 1939, and shown on the map that is attached to this Protocol;

2. The Government of the USSR agrees to compensate the Government of Germany for the territory indicated in point 1 of the present Protocol with a payment to Germany in the amount of 7,500,000 gold dollars, the equivalent of 31,500,000 German marks.

Payment of the sum of 31.5 million German marks will be made as follows: one-eighth, i.e., 3,937,500 German marks, in deliveries of nonferrous metals over a three-month period beginning from the day of signing of the present Protocol, and the remaining seven-eighths, i.e., 27,562,500 German marks, in gold through deductions from German payments of gold that the German side has to make before February 11, 1941, based on an exchange of letters between the People's Commissar of Foreign Trade of the USSR A. I. Mikoyan and the Chairman of the German Economic Delegation Mr. Schnurre that took place in conjunction with the signing of the "Agreement of January 10, 1941, on Mutual Deliveries of Commodities for the Second Treaty Period according to the Economic Agreement of February 11, 1940, between the USSR and Germany."

3. The present Protocol has been prepared in two Russian and two German originals and comes into force immediately upon signing.

Moscow, January 10, 1941

*With the authorization of For the Government of Germany
The Government of the USSR
(signed) V. Molotov (signed) Schulenburg*

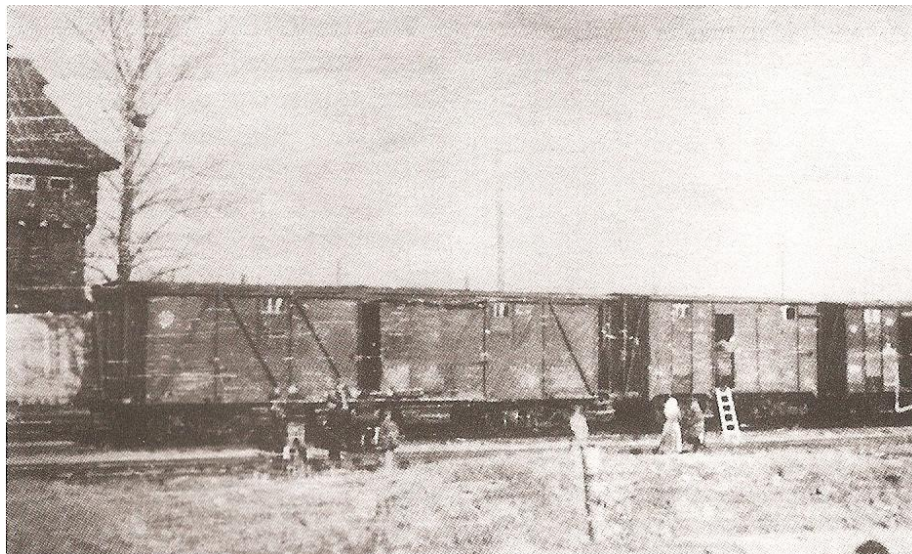
Communist-led mass rallies by propaganda experts from Moscow became a common occurrence and created an artificial revolutionary atmosphere within just a few days after the Soviet occupation; all of that was, of course, for the public and the foreign mass media consumption and for the eyes of the foreign diplomats still resident in the Baltic States.

Soviet-led mass murders and deportations (1941). Meanwhile, communist militia units and Communists, backed by Soviet military and NKVD (KGB) overwhelming might, took over all police and administrative functions. Latvia's laws were suspended and the laws of the USSR become the laws of the Baltic States; these statutes, fit for keeping dictatorships in power, were applied retroactively, especially Article 58 of the Soviet 1926 Criminal Code of Soviet Russia, for imagined and drummed-up "anti-Soviet charges" going back to the 1920s and even for having been involved in the war for independence against the Soviet Union. Next, Soviet NKVD9KGB) arrests took place

throughout the Baltic States; many people became “missing” and terror struck the Baltic populations. Later, during the night of 14-15 June 1941, the Soviet NKVD (KGB) troops executed their in-advance prepared “*Secret Deportation Order No. 001223*” for the Baltic States; this secret deportation order had been already prepared and signed on October 11, 1939, only six days after the Soviets had signed the Treaty of Mutual Assistance with Latvia on October 5, 1939. Now we know what the Soviets meant by “mutual assistance” as Soviet terror spread throughout Latvia and the other Baltic States; people were rounded up and either shot, imprisoned or deported to Siberia. In Latvia alone, 15,424 citizens of Latvia were arrested and forcibly loaded into railroad cattle cars and shipped off to the slave labor camps in the Gulag during the night of 14-15 June 1941.



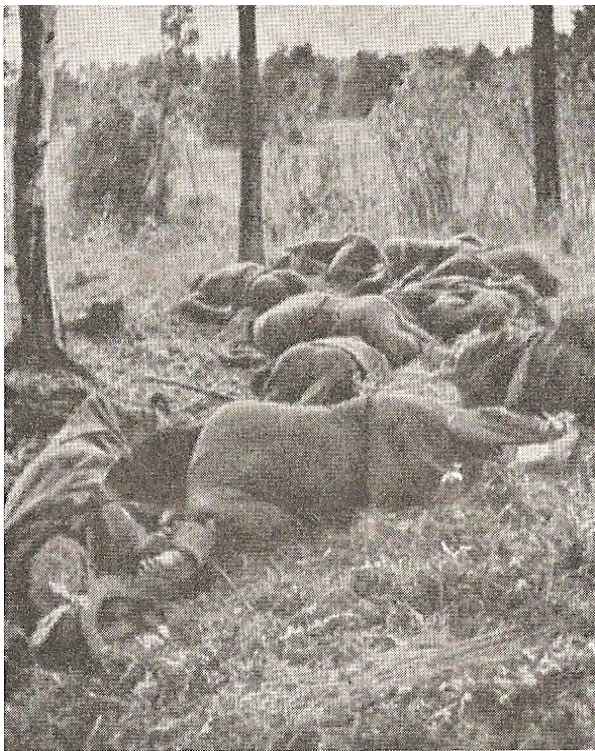
Latvians being shipped off to Siberia in railroad cattle cars during the night of 14-15 June 1941.



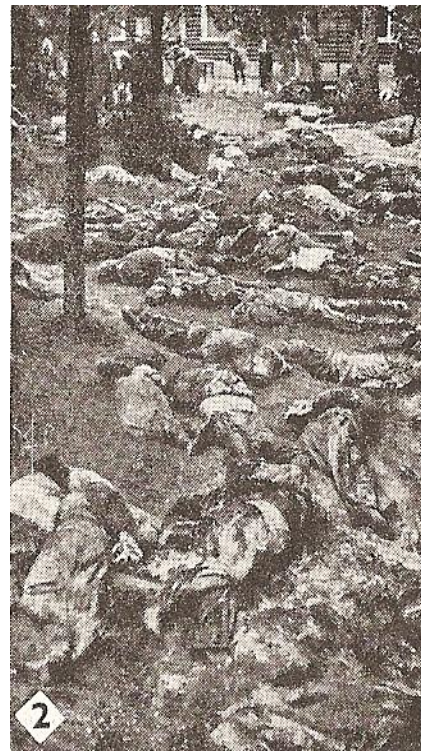
A June 1941 deportation train. Men were separated from their families, few to be seen ever again.

During these deportations and mass murders, Latvia lost 34,250 people, including 50% of the Latvian Army's officers that included also 22 generals and 1 admiral; this happened in just one year after the Soviet occupation. Similar events also took place in Estonia and Lithuania. The Soviets had planned to liquidate 200,000 citizens of Latvia, but their plans were suddenly interrupted by the swift German invasion of the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941 – *Operation Barbarossa*. The sudden German attack against USSR was launched on a wide front, stretching from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea in a coordinated invasion with some of Nazi Germany's Tripartite Pact (TP) allies.

The Soviets-Russians were caught by complete surprise and the German Army units entered Riga, Latvia already on July 1, 1941. As the German Army was rapidly advancing and occupying the Baltic States, the surprised and retreating Soviet-NKVD (KGB) troops committed additional mass murders, not only in Latvia but also in the other Baltic States; they also forced Latvian youth, those that had been inducted into their army for training, to accompany them into the Soviet Union - most of them never to be seen again. By July 7, 1941, all of Latvia had been occupied by the Germans. Because of the rapid German advance, the Soviet NKVD(KGB) personnel did not have time to cover up their crimes against humanity and many documents were captured; also, terrible scenes unfolded before eyes of the Baltic peoples – torture rooms, execution chambers and many mass murder sites.



Murdered Latvian Army officers at Litene, Latvia.



Murdered civilians at Baltezers, Latvia

The captured documents reveal the absolute totalitarian power that the Soviet NKVD (KGB) personnel possessed under the Stalin regime. These personnel, even at the lowest levels, made life and death decisions, not based on any lawful judicial or legal

basis, but on their own whims. The NKVD (KGB) was the foundation of the Communist government, keeping them in power through terrorism and mass murders.

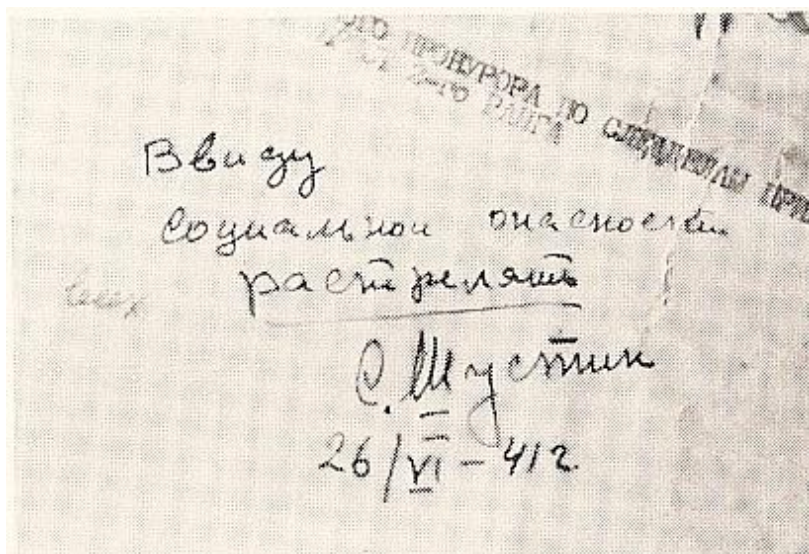


July 1941 - Central Prison in Riga, Latvia.



July 1941 - Dreilini, Latvia.

One such captured document, as can be seen below, clearly illustrates this animal-like behavior toward their recently conquered Baltic States, in this specific case – Latvia.



The note states: "Considering the social danger, kill them all."
26 June 1941 /Signed/ S. Shustin



Semyon Shustin
NKVD (KGB) Chief in Latvia

German occupation of the Baltic States (1941-1945). As the Germans were rapidly advancing and occupying foreign lands, they also had horrific plans of their own for these occupied territories. One such plan was the liquidation of Jews in all of their occupied territories, including the Baltic States. Researchers and historians now have a pretty clear picture about the Nazi killer groups and commandos that the Nazis used, the so-called "*Einsatzgruppen*" or EG groups that were further divided into sub-units called "*Einsatzkommandos*" (EK). These were specially trained Nazi SS/SD killer units that carried out "special operations" in Nazi occupied Eastern Europe during WWII. The *Einsatzgruppen* killer force consisted of four EGs numbered EG-A, EG-B, EG-C and EG-D and numbered around 3,000 men. These EG groups, each the size of an army battalion, including some women, were trained at the German Border Police School at

Pretzsch; their mission - follow behind the *Wehrmacht* (German Army) as it was occupying a territory and immediately commence “*special operations*” (kill Jews). Already on April 28, 1941, Reinhard Heydrich of the Reich Main Security Office and General E. Wagner of the *Wehrmacht* reached an agreement for their joint cooperation to implement the *Einsatzgruppen* (EG) “*special tasks*” in the German “to-be-occupied” territories. A month later, on May 29, 1941, a secret meeting of high ranking Nazi officials took place to coordinate Nazi state level institutional and public relations (propaganda) for the planned liquidation of Jews, with prime emphasis being placed on *killing the Jews immediately after an area is occupied by the Wehrmacht and arranging to make it look like that the locals are doing these killings.*

An analysis of this secret meeting⁷ reveals the following:

- (1) The Nazis had definite plans to kill Jews in the to-be-occupied USSR territories (including the Baltic States)
- (2) Blame the locals (Eastern Europeans) for the killings.

Additionally, *Reinhard Heydrich's Directive*⁸ to his men his EG men in the field:

- (1) Confirms the Nazi German intentions to kill Jews and Communists
- (2) Gives instructions to conceal the killings by making it appear that the “locals” are doing it and not the Germans.

The *Einsatzgruppen* units arrived in Riga simultaneously with the first *Wehrmacht* units and were led by German SS-General Walter Stahlecker, the Commander of *Einsatzgruppen A*. He and his men had already been conducting their “*special operations*” in Liepāja, Jelgava and Jēkabpils (all occupied on 29 June 1941) and Daugavpils (occupied on 26 June 1941) before they entered Riga on July 1, 1941. Stahlecker immediately issued orders that he and he alone is responsible for all security behind the *Wehrmacht's* front lines. One of his subordinates in Latvia was Dr. Rudolf Lange shown below. In general, the orders and reports concerning these “*special operations*” were to be carried out verbally so as not to leave behind a trail of evidence about the German “*special tasks*” operations entrusted to them. Thus, very little hard documentation actually exists; however, some reports have been preserved for posterity from that horrific period. One such document is the “*Stahlecker Report.*”

It seems that the rationale and purpose for the occupation of the Baltic States by Germany was guided by Hitler himself. During the Nuremberg Military Tribunal proceedings, a document, that had been transcribed by Martin Bormann from a Hitler's meeting with his co-harts at his “den” in East Prussia, maps out the rationale for the occupation of the Baltic States: “....*we were forced to occupy, administer, and secure a certain area; it was in the interests of the inhabitants that we provided order, food, traffic, etc., hence our measures. Nobody will be able to recognize that it initiates a final settlement. This need not prevent our taking all necessary measures – shooting, resettling, etc. – and we shall*

⁷ Andrew Ezergailis. *Nazi-Soviet Disinformation*; Riga, 2005. pg. 7-10.

⁸ Ibid. pg. 11.

take them ... To do nothing that might obstruct the final settlement, but to prepare for it only in secret ... To emphasize that we are liberators ... This partisan war again has some advantage for us; it enables us to eradicate everyone who opposes us ... Our iron principle is and has to remain: We must never permit anybody but the Germans to carry arms! The Führer emphasizes that the entire Baltic countries will have to be incorporated into Germany. Hitler 17 July 1941”⁹ Note: In this document, Hitler mentions “final settlement” twice; he also states that only Germans must carry arms, implying that the locals must be disarmed.



SS-General Walter Stahllecker in uniform and civilian attire.
Commander of *Einsatzgruppen A*.
SS and Police Chief of Ostland



Dr. Rudolf Lange
Commander of *Einsatzkommando 2*
Chief, Nazi Security (SD) in Latvia



Riga, Latvia. Germans occupied Riga on July 1, 1941.

⁹ *Military Tribunal (Nuremberg), vol. 38, document 221 L, pg.86-89.*

Three days after German occupation, on 4 July 1941, a Jewish synagogue in Riga was burned with entrapped Jews inside the synagogue and various repressive actions were taken by the Nazi functionaries against the Latvian citizens (Jews and Latvian nationalists). "There is an abundance of evidence that in Latvia the first organizational steps toward the killing of the Jews were made by the Wehrmacht."¹⁰ In addition, **Stahlecker issued initial German orders to the population of Latvia for immediate compliance as follows:**

- (1) Latvia's national and local governments are shut down;
- (2) Latvia is declared part of the so-called "*Generalkomisariat of Ostland*";
- (3) Soviet Union's laws are to be retained and enforced;
- (4) The wearing of Latvian uniforms is strictly forbidden;
- (5) Under penalty of death, all weapons are to be turned over to the Germans.

The *Generalkomisariat of Ostland* included all three Baltic States and Belarus. After the terrible Soviet atrocities and mass deportations, the initial Latvian reaction was that they were "liberated" but in reality it was a similar to the Soviet occupation. The German Gestapo (SD) and the SS tactics were the same as those used by the Russian NKVD (KGB); the German Gestapo (SD) had actually learned a lot during their "SD-NKVD (KGB) collaboration of the 1930s."¹¹ In November 1941, SS-General W. Stahlecker was replaced by SS-General Friedrich Jeckeln, to become the SS and Police Chief of Ostland. On October 15, 1941, just before he was replaced by SS-General Jeckeln, General Stahlecker made a written report, known as the "*Stahlecker Report*" (Nuremberg Documents, L-180). It is a very revealing document and excerpts from this document state, "It was the duty of the Security Police to initiate these *self-purging efforts* and to guide them in the proper channels, so that the goal set for cleansing the area is reached as quickly as possible." It also states, "It was significantly more difficult to start similar cleansing operations and *pogroms* in Latvia. The reason for this could be traced to the fact that the entire national leadership, especially in Riga, was murdered and carried off by the Soviets." The conclusions that can be drawn from the *Stahlecker Report* are that:¹²

- (1) **Jews were being killed upon higher German orders;**
- (2) **they had limited success in organizing "spontaneous pogroms";**
- (3) ***pogroms* were German organized events;**
- (4) ***natives* should be killing Jews as a revenge;**
- (5) ***natives* (locals) were reluctant to kill Jews;**
- (6) **his assignment was to deceive the world about the killings;**
- (7) **it was important to show that the Germans had nothing to do with the killings;**
- (8) **the duties of organization were carried out by his outfit, the Security Police, and by the Wehrmacht.**

¹⁰ Andrew Ezergailis. *Nazi-Soviet Disinformation*, Riga, 2005; p. 9.

¹¹ *The Soviet Story*. A film by Edvīns Šnore, 2008.

¹² Andrew Ezergailis. *Nazi-Soviet Disinformation*, Riga, 2005; p. 12-16.



Alfred Rosenberg¹³
Reichminister
of Ostland



Heinrich Lohse
Reichkommissar
of Ostland



Otto-Heinrich Drechsler
Generalkommissar
of Latvia



General Friedrich Jeckeln¹⁴
SS and Police Chief
of Ostland

Notes: (*) A. Rosenberg was of Estonian Baltic German descent and is considered to be one of the main authors of the key Nazi ideological creeds, including its racial theory and in the persecution of the Jews. (**) F. He worked very closely with Stahlecker, Lange and Jeckeln. Jeckeln's direct superior was Himmler, the SS-Reichführer and Chief of the German Police.

The initial killing of Jews was done by the Germans. **"The killing of Jews began when Nazi Germany occupied Latvia. Up until that time, there is no documentation found that Latvians had killed Jews before the arrival of the Germans."**¹⁵ **"The basic principle of the German plan was for the *EK-SD* to organize and carry out the killings, yet in locations where there were no *SD* personnel, the Wehrmacht was obliged to take over."**¹⁶ Both, the Wehrmacht and the *EK/SD* had orders to kill Jews immediately after they had occupied a territory and to make it look like that the "locals" had done these deeds. Later, the Germans organized some Latvian *SD* units (Latvian auxiliaries), recruited from families killed, tortured or deported by the Soviets (people who would have a "revenge" motive); such units were all under direct command of Dr. Lange and SS General Stahlecker. "The Germans made them and the Germans unmade them." The best known and infamous one is the *Arājs Kommando*. Evidence shows that the *Arājs Kommando* participated in the killing of Jews under strict German orders and oversight.¹⁷ We have to keep in mind that the German *EG/EK* and *SD* operated without written orders and they kept no records. Note: Latvian legionnaires themselves identified Viktors Arājs as a war criminal immediately after WWII in a POW

¹³ A. Rosenberg was of Estonian Baltic German descent and is considered to be one of the main authors of the key Nazi ideological creeds, including its racial theory and in the persecution of the Jews.

¹⁴ Jeckeln's direct superior was Himmler, the SS-Reichführer and Chief of the German Police.

¹⁵ *The Holocaust Research in Latvia - Materials from an International Conference*. Rudite Viksne. "The Liquidation of Jews in Latvia's Small Towns - Research problems and results". Volume 12, pg. 42. Publisher: Latvia's Institute of History. Riga, 2004.

¹⁶ Andrew Ezergailis. *Nazi-Soviet Disinformation*. Riga, 2005. pg. 33.

¹⁷ Ibid. pg. 37-38.

camp; he was sentenced in 1979 to life imprisonment in Germany; Konrads Kalējs, another Latvian *SD* man, was tracked down by Herman Redin, a Latvian; Kalējs died before he could be extradited from Australia to Latvia.¹⁸ **Who was Viktors Arājs?**

Viktors Arājs. His mother came from a wealthy Baltic German family; his father was a Latvian blacksmith. In 1932, Arājs studied law at the University in Riga, but dropped out and joined the police force; he served as a provincial policeman and was promoted to a police lieutenant prior to the 1940-1941 Soviet occupation. As a police lieutenant, he would have been a prime target by the Soviet NKVD (KGB). In July 1941, he *magically appears* together with his old high school body, Hans Dressler, who just happens to be the German-Latvian translator for the Commander of *Einsatzgruppen A*, SS- General Franz Walter Stahlecker, and Robert Stieglitz; both of these individuals were the direct superiors of the *Arājs Kommando* that appeared after the German Wehrmacht entered Riga. It is obvious, that being of German blood and from a wealthy German family, he was trusted by Stahlecker and Stieglitz. Arājs was promoted to a police major in 1942 and to *SS-Sturmbannfuhrer* in 1943. (Ref: From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia). Note: The author of this paper raises some questions: Was Arājs in communication with the Germans prior to or during the 1939-1940 Soviet occupation? Or, was he one of the 70,000 Baltic Germans that had repatriated from Latvia to Germany in 1939 and 1940? Or, was he one of the 300 Latvian officers who had gotten refuge in Germany in 1940-1941? Many of these repatriated Baltic Germans returned to Latvia with the advancing German Army to assume positions of authority? It does appear that Arājs was not a newcomer to the *Einsatzgruppen/Einsatzkommando (EG/EK)* “special tasks” and he seems to be already “trusted, trained and motivated” for the German *EG/EK* “special operations” tasks at hand as the Germans were occupying Latvia in 1941.

Nazi German organized holocaust in 1941. The Germans established the Riga Ghetto on October 23, 1941 containing approximately 25,000 Jews. SS-General Friedrich Jeckeln, immediately after replacing SS-General Walter Stahlecker as the SS and Police Chief of *Ostland* in mid-November 1941, ordered the liquidation of the Riga Ghetto and personally supervised this “special operation” that took place during the 30 November - 8 December 1941 period. We now know that this Holocaust in Latvia was planned and executed by Germans and only by Germans – no locals (Latvians) involved. German SS and German police units, under the direct command of Jeckeln, carried out this “special task” at Rumbula, located about 10 kilometers from Riga.¹⁹ Ever since WWII, but especially during the Cold War period and later, the Soviets-Russians were “pinning” these German crimes on the Latvian self-defense and police units or legionnaires; Soviet objective was to discredit the Latvians living in the West for their strong anti-Communist stance. The Russians went out of their way to supply false evidence, fabricate documents and other materials and brand the Latvian leaders in the West as fascists. The direct testimony of SS-General Friedrich Jeckeln was deliberately kept secret and unavailable to the West by the Russians until 2005 - that the Germans

¹⁸ Andrew Ezergailis. *Nazi-Soviet Disinformation*. Riga, 2005; p. 37; 189.

¹⁹ Andris Grūtups. *Ešafots*. Riga, 2005. p. 40-42.

and only the Germans were involved in these and other horrific mass murder acts. The Soviet-era fabricated propaganda had served the Soviets-Russians well and is continuing even to this very day. Also, the Soviets held “show trials” in Latvia, similar to the Vyshinsky-Stalin “purge trials” in the USSR during the 1930s. In two separate “group trials” they accused members of the Latvian 18th and 21st Police Battalions for being involved in war crimes during WWII, again for killing Jews; some of them had just recently returned from their ordeals in the Siberian slave labor camps. In reality these were fabrications and innocent people were condemned to death or imprisoned again in the Gulag for a second time, just to satisfy Kremlin’s order to stage mass media propaganda shows; foreign press was allowed to be present during these Soviet-style trial theatrical proceedings. Since regaining independence in 1991, Latvia has investigated both of these trials and proven conclusively that indeed these trials were “show trials” for the consumption by the mass media in the West and in the USSR.

The Soviet “show trials” during the post-WWII period. Soviets accused members of the former Latvian 18th Police Battalion, dressed in German uniforms, of committing war crimes during WWII. The 18th Battalion “show trial” began in March 1964 and accused the members of this battalion of mass murder at Slonim on 29 June 1942. German records, however, show that the Germans, dressed in German uniforms, killed 4,000 Jews at Slonim. The Latvian 18th Battalion arrived at Slonim much later, on August 18, 1942, and they were dressed in Latvian uniforms. During the alleged crime of 29 June 1942, the 18th Battalion was located 100 kilometers away at Nalibotski fighting partisans; this fact is confirmed by the 18th Battalion’s official orders archived at the Hoover Institution and by a deposition given by Johannes Feder found in the records of the Heuser Trial. The 21st Battalion “show trial” was conducted in 1974 and accused this battalion of killing Jews in Liepāja in 1941. Andrew Ezergailis points out that the intention to form the 21st Battalion was made only in mid-December 1941 and the actual formation of the battalion did not take place until February 1942; thus, this battalion could not have participated in this act. Additionally, there is evidence that the German SD men did in fact carry out such a task, perhaps with the *Arājs Kommando* assistance. Analysis by Latvia’s prosecutor, Astra Leicenکو, in 1999 confirmed that this was in fact a show trial; “the case was a total fabrication” and the convictions were based on “patched-together evidence and falsified testimony.”²⁰ Other sources also confirm the dates when the 21st Battalion was formed in 1942. The bottom line is that “Mass murder was an invention of the Nazis, not Latvians.” It was also an invention of the Soviets.

Reportedly, the Germans took pictures of the killings; yet, it was strictly forbidden by the Germans to do so. If in fact pictures were taken, was it done for propaganda purposes to blame others or were such pictures fabricated after the fact. One such well known picture shown below is supposed portray a group of people about to be executed at Skēde near Liepāja in December 1941. The author believes that this was a fabricated picture (see note below).

²⁰ Andrew Ezergailis. *Nazi-Soviet Disinformation*. Riga, 2005; p. 44-53.



Note. This is reportedly one of the best known “Skede” photos depicting a person on the left in a Latvian uniform guarding a group of Jews just before they are to be executed. It is obvious, even to the untrained eye, that something is wrong with this picture; note that the soldier’s feet are turned 90-100 degrees to the right and his body is not centered over his legs. Also, note the shadows for the huddled people and those in the background; there is no shadow at all under the soldier’s body. **Thus, we have to conclude that this picture was concocted either by the Germans or the Soviets for their own evil propaganda and disinformation purposes.**

SS General Friedrich Jeckeln stated something else during his trial in Riga in 1946 that was not known to the West until 2005: “I must however say that already prior to my arrival in Riga (meaning mid-November 1941), a large number of Jews had been killed in Ostland and in Byelorussia. That was reported to me.” Prosecutor’s question: “Who reported this?” Jeckeln’s answer: „Stahlecker, Prützmann, Major General Schröder, the SS-Police Commander of Latvia, Major General Möller, the SS-Police Commander of Estonia, and Major General Wysocki, the SS-Police Commander of Lithuania.” Prosecutor’s question: “Who carried out these operations?” Jeckeln’s answer: “Those were led by Dr. Lange”²¹ (Ref: Grūtups, Andris. *Ešafots*. 2007; pg. 41). **Here finally was an admission by the man in charge that the Germans did the initial killing of Jews in the Baltic States after the German occupation. Who was Dr. Rudolf Lange?**

Dr. Rudolf Lange was one of the most infamous Germans from *Einsatzgruppen A* who participated in the initial killing of Jews while assigned to *Einsatzkommando 2*. Shortly after the initial “special operations”, he was promoted to become the commander of this “special task” (*EK-2*) killer unit; he was also the Chief of the SD in Latvia. One of the

²¹ Grūtups, Andris. *Ešafots*. 2007; p. 41.

things to keep in mind is that many of the Germans that came with the initial arrival of the Wehrmacht were Baltic Germans who spoke Latvian.

Rudolf Lange. He received a doctorate in law in 1933, and was recruited by the Gestapo. In September 1940, Lange assumed the position of Deputy Head of Police for Berlin and, in April 1941, he received a promotion to a major in the SS. On 5 June 1941 Lange was ordered to Pretzsch (the training site for the *Einsatzgruppen* personnel – the “special operation” groups) and the command staff of *Einsatzgruppe A (EG-A)* that was headed by SS- Brigade General (Brigadeführer) and Major General of the Police (Generalmajor der Polizei) Dr. Franz Walter Stahlecker. Lange was a *Teilkommando* (detachment) leader in *Einsatzkommando 2 (EK2)* that was engaged in the Jewish killings primarily in Latvia; he replaced EK-2 commander Eduard Strauch, becoming the Commander of EK2 on 3 December 1941. At the same time, Lange was also the Chief of the Nazi Security Service (*Sicherheitsdienst*) or SD in Latvia with the title *Kommandant des Sicherheitsdienst*.

Altogether, there were 25,000 various types of *German administrators and overseers*²² in Latvia; they controlled every facet of Latvian lives, including the orchestration of the holocaust, just like their Soviets-Russians had done it earlier in 1940-1941.

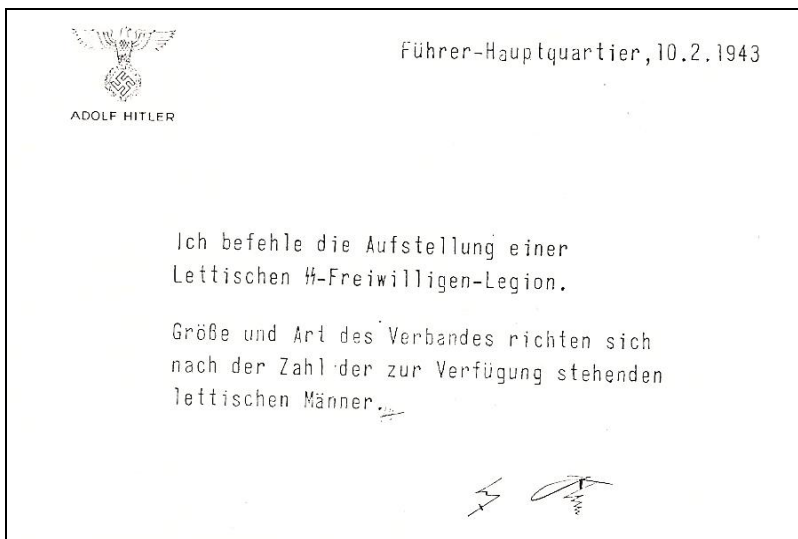
The Latvian Self-Government (1942-1945). In December 1941, some of the retired Latvian Army officers and ex-Government officials, those that had survived the Soviet-inflicted *Latvian Holocaust* in Latvia, approached the Germans with the idea of forming a Latvian Self-Government. Initially, the Germans rejected this idea altogether, but on March 1, 1942 the Germans finally agreed, with the strict provision that such a body had no authority or decision making powers. The need for a local government was very evident, especially in the areas of education, medicine, transportation, economy, police protection, etc. This body essentially was a means by which to help to provide the war-torn country and its inhabitants with some measure of organization and stability, especially in providing the needed food to the population centers. They did the best they could under the wartime conditions; the Self-Government also became the means by which to launch Latvian protests against the German excesses. Everything had to be approved by the Germans and this body never had any kind of authority for even little things; and, it functioned that way until the very end of WWII. The Latvian Self-Government, essentially an ad-hoc group, was organized as follows: General Director (GD) of the Interior – General Oskars Dankers; Deputy GD of the Interior and Director of Internal Security – Lt.Col. V. Veiss; GD of Education – Prof. M. Pīmanis; GD of Justice – A. Valdmanis; GD of Finances – J. Skujevics; GD of Economy – V. Zāgers; GD of Transportation – O. Leimanis; GD of Auditing – P. Vanags; Head of Administrative Office of the Self-Government – Capt. A. Skrēbers. Later, Valdmanis was replaced by Latvia’s former President A. Kvisis followed by T. Zvejnieks; O. Zāgers by O. Leimanis.

²² Arnolds Aizsilnieks. “*Latvijas saimnieciskā izmantošana vācu okupācijas laikā 1941-1945*”. *Okupācijas varu nodarītie postījumi Latvijā 1940-1990*. Sockholm-Toronto, 2001; p. 162.

German conscription of Latvians for combat duty. The Germans were having big problems with the increasing number of Soviet partisans operating in their occupied territories. Thus, already in 1941, ignoring the Hague Protocols, the Germans started to form police battalions, primarily from Latvian police units, the former Latvian National Guard “police battalions” and personnel who had served in the Latvian Army. Initially they used these battalions to guard military objects, to assist in law enforcement and maintenance of order, guarding of railroads and port facilities, etc.; on July 20, 1941, based on SS-General Stahlecker’s order, a 500-men “volunteer police reserve” was formed. After the Soviet atrocities of 1941 became widely known, young men did initially volunteer for this 1st Latvian Police Battalion. However, after the 1st Police Battalion (named later the 16th Battalion) was deployed on October 21, 1941 to the Eastern Front war zone and used for combat against the Soviet partisans (actually Soviet military units behind the German front lines), contrary to its initial mission of guarding rail lines, munitions dumps, etc., the number of personnel volunteering for the police battalions fell sharply. Of course, the Latvians also were aware that these were illegal German acts under the Hague Convention. Nonetheless, by the end of 1942, 20 such battalions had been conscripted and deployed to the Eastern Front by the Germans; this was a complete disregarding for the Hague Protocol that specifically prohibited the use of occupied territory populations for combat. By the end of 1944, nearly 40 such battalions had been formed and deployed by the Germans. Latvian estimates, from data from members of these police battalion, are that as many as 20,000 men were conscripted for this kind of combat duty, but the exact numbers may be even higher since the Germans had complete control over all registration and other processes; Latvians had no say whatsoever.²³

The Latvian Legion (1943-1945). During the winter of 1942-1943, the Battle of Stalingrad changed the fortunes of war for the worse for the Germans and they needed more men. Therefore, they made a decision to create the Latvian and Estonian “volunteer” legions, again of course, in violation of the Hague Convention. Initially, they issued a call for volunteers, but the response was so small that they could not even form a small unit. Thus, on February 10, 1943, Hitler issued a two-sentence order, **“I order the establishment of the Latvian SS-Volunteer- Legion. The unit’s size and type depends on the number of Latvian men available.”** /Signed/ Hitler and /Initials/ Himmler. The order itself leaves no doubt that the young men were going to be mobilized for combat duty and the label “Volunteer” was attached in order to fool the world, at least initially. The significant point to be pointed out in the actual language of the Hitler’s order itself are the words themselves that the **“size and type depends on the number of Latvian men available”** and not actually on the number of volunteers. Hence, the order itself acknowledges, that Hitler intended the Latvian Legion will be formed by forced conscription and not based on volunteerism. Indeed, the Germans were not able to get volunteers to form even a small unit, not to mention the 100,000-men Latvian Legion that they had initially envisioned.

²³ *Latviešu karavīrs Otrā pasaules kara laikā*. Västerås, 1972; p.56-57.



Hitler's order of February 10, 1943 to form the Latvian Legion.

To carry out Hitler's order, the Germans resorted to a two-step approach – first, mandatory registration for work; second, mobilization of those registered for work who were physically fit for the Latvian Legion.

Zur Beachtung! — Jevēriņai!
Personalausweis mitbringen!
Nemt līdz personas apliecībai!
Diese Aufforderung sofort dem Ar
beitgeber vorlegen und anhängen
den Beschäftigungsnachweis ausfüllen
lassen.
Šis uzdevums jāveic, kam jāizpilda
pavienotais nodarbošanās apliecība
raksts.

POSTKARTE
Einschreiben:
Ierakstīt:
1943. 26. FEBR
Horn
Janis Bens
kgm.
Vidusmēģe 26-18
Rīga

Tauglībasprüfung teilgenommen
am: 26. FEB 1943
Nēms dalību
der/guma pārbaudē
Zurückgestellt: *[Signature]*
Atbrīvots:
Vērtēšanas komisija Nr. 1
Arbeitsamt Riga
26. FEB 1943

**Der SS- und Polizeiführer
Lettland**
Auf Grund der Verordnung über die Einhaltung der Arbeitspflicht vom 19. 12. 41
und den dazu erlassenen Änderungen und Durchführungsbestimmungen findet
Pamatojoties uz 1941. g. 19. 12. rīkojumu par darba pienākuma izpildi un šī
rīkojuma pielikuma un izpildes noteikumiem
am: 26. 2. 43. kur in: Carl Schirmer Str. 14/45
kur: *[Signature]*
die Erfassung ihres Geburtsjahrganges statt — Erfassungsb. Nr. 1
notiks Jūsu dzimšanas gada galvas reģistrācija — reģistrācijas komisija Nr. 1
Herrn bitten Sie sich in seeligen Zustand einzufinden. Nichtbefolgung dieser
Aufforderung zieht schärfste Bestrafung nach sich. Der Arbeitgeber ist verpflichtet,
den erforderlichen Urlaub unter Weiterzahlung des Lohnes zu gewähren und hat den
abhängenden Beschäftigungsnachweis genau auszufüllen. Diese Aufforderung gilt als
Berechtigungsnachweis für die Benutzung öffentlicher Verkehrsmittel.
Uz reģistrāciju Jūs jāierodas tūlīt kopā. Nesekojoši šim uzdevumam, Jūs
stingri sodīti. Darba devējam ir jānodrošina pienācīgu vajadzīgo atvaidījumu.
Ja Jūs neizpildāt šo uzdevumu, Jūs tiksiet sodīti. Šī uzdevuma izpildē ir jānodrošina darba devēja
atvaidījumu, kas jānodrošina darba devēja atvaidījumu.

Im Auftrag:
Uzdevums: *[Signature]*
Rücknahme beachten! — Jevērot otro pusli!

Staatstruckerei Riga, Hermann-Göring-Str. 9 47 43

First step – registration for work.

**Ergänzungsamt der Waffen-SS
Ergänzungsstelle Riga**
Riga, Datum des Post-empfangs:
Pleskauer Str. 16

**Einberufungsbefehl
Iesaukšanas pavēle**

Sie werden hiermit zur Lettischen SS-Freiwilligen-Legion einberufen und haben sich am
Ar 30 esat ievācīs Latviesu SS-brīvprātīgo leģionā. Jums jāierodas
26. MÄRZ 1943. 1943 bis 18. 00 Uhr
līdz pulkst.

in **Riga, Abreiner Kaserne** zu melden
ieradās vietā

Mit der Erfüllung unterstehen Sie der Deutschen Wehrmacht und den für sie geltenden
Bestimmungen.
Ar iesaukšanos Jūs esat padots visu bruņotiem spēkiem un to pastāvīgam
notekumam.

Der Leiter der Ergänzungsstelle Riga der Waffen-SS
i. A. *[Signature]*
Hauptsturmführer

Second step – mobilization.

“With this, you are drafted into the Latvian Volunteer Legion. You have to report to At the moment of this order, you are subject to the authority of the German Armed Forces and their standing regulations.” This leaves no doubt in anyone's mind, that the Latvian youth were forcibly being drafted into the German-created Latvian Legion; the penalty for not reporting for the "draft" was imprisonment or a firing squad. Eventually, two divisions, the 15th and 19th, were formed from the mobilized Latvian youth. As noted earlier, the first German conscription of Latvian men for combat duty

began with the formation of the Latvian police battalions. The Latvian Legion mobilization covered the period from February 1943 until almost to the end of the WWII; some of the police battalions were later incorporated into the Legion after it was formed. The Germans did not miss any opportunities to pick up new recruits from the Latvian population. During the initial mobilization, those born in 1919-1924, the Germans wanted to mobilize mobilized around 60,000 men; actually, they mobilized about 42,000 with 15,000 for the Legion and 27,000 for the *Hilfwillige der Wehrmacht (HiWi)*. Those assigned to the HiWi were dispersed among various German Wehrmacht units. Out of the first 15,000 for the Latvian Legion, the first 1,000 men were sent to the front to complement a Latvian brigade being formed there and the remaining 14,000 were sent to Kurland for the formation of the first Latvian division. The total number of men mobilized was about 165,000 men during the course of WWII.²⁴ In addition, the Germans conscripted tens of thousands of boys, the 15 to 17 age group and some as young as 14 years old, including teenage girls, for *HiWi* service (Army and Air Force helpers).



The first 1,000 Latvian youth drafted into the Latvian Legion - 1943.

Note: The German SS soldiers wore on the right collar the "SS" letters. It was forbidden for the Latvian Legion to wear that insignia. SS Lieutenant General Jüttner's order: "At the present moment, the right collar patch is without runes. The left collar patch bears the insignia of rank." (Ref: SS- Lt. Gen. Jüttner's secret letter: *SS-Führungshauptamt, Amt II, Org.Abt. Ia/II, Tgb. Nr. II/1501/43 geh. Berlin-Wilmersdorf, Feb 26th, 43, Kaiseralee 188*). This order was completely ignored by the Germans, since used uniforms were being issued from German SS-stores with the SS insignia already attached. Nobody paid any attention to such a detail during the ongoing war and wartime conditions.

Retired Latvian Army General Rudolfs Bangerskis was appointed the Inspector General of the Latvian Legion with Colonel A. Plensners as his Chief of Staff; Plensners was replaced later with Colonel A. Silgailis when he took command of a regiment in the Legion. General Bangerskis was treading a "fine line" in his dealings with the Germans, especially when he protested against German excesses. He also kept good records,

²⁴ Andrejs Mežmalis. *The Latvian Legion*. Riga, 2010; pg. 41-42; 55.

which have survived and are available to researchers. For example, he protested against the German use of his name and his *Generalinspector's document stamp* during a new wave of mobilizations whereby the Germans were making to look as if he is behind the mobilizations in Latvia.



LATVIEŠU SS-BRĪVPRĀTĪGO LEĢIONA
ĢENERĀLINSPEKTORS Rīgā, 1943. g. 4. oktobrī
Nr. 3170

Augstākam SS- un policijas vadītājam Austrumzemē.

Noraksts: Zemes pašpārvaldei.

Atgriezies 2. oktobrī no izbraukuma uz Volchovas fronti, šodien dabūju zināt, ka pie 1918.—1924. g. dzimušo jaunekļu iesaukšanas kaŗa dienestā, iesaukšanas pavēles iesaucamiem tiek izsniegtas ar Latviešu leģiona ģenerālinspektora stūrstampu un it kā manā uzdevumā tās paraksta kāds SS- hauptsturmfirers.

Tā kā es līdz šim nekāds iesaukšanas rīkojumus neesmu devis un nevienam neesmu pilnvarojis rīkoties manā vārdā, tad šādu patvarīgu rīcību nevaru atzīt un lūdzu Jūsu rīkojumu tādu pārtraukt.

Manas kā ģenerālinspektora tiesības un pienākumi nav nekur noteikti, un līdz šim tie ir izpaudušies galvenokārt morālas dabas pienākumu izpildīšanā, bez tiesībām kaŗavīrus iesaukt dienestā, atvaļināt vajadzības gadījumā tos no dienesta vai piešķirt tiem atvaļinājumu.

Līdz šim vienmēr esmu gājis taisnus likumīgus ceļus un no tiem negribu novirzīties arī turpmāk, tāpēc lūdzu Jūsu steidzamu rīcību šinī lietā.

R. Bangerskis

SS- grupenfirers un ieroču-SS
ģenerālleitnants.

Generalinspector of the Latvian Legion, Lieutenant General R. Bangerskis,

Lieutenant General R. Bangerskis' protest letter Nr. 3170 of October 4, 1943 to SS-General F. Jeckeln: *"After returning on 2 October from the Volchov Front today, I found out that for the mobilization of the Latvian youth born in 1918-1924, the conscription orders are being issued with the Latvian Legion Inspector General's authorization stamp as if it is being done in my name with some SS-Hauptsturmführer's signature.*

Since up till now I have neither issued any mobilization orders nor authorized anyone to do so, I cannot recognize, therefore, such an action and I ask for your order to stop it.

My duties and authority as the Inspector General are nowhere defined and up to this time they have been expressed primarily as carrying out moral type responsibilities, without the authority to conscript soldiers for service, to discharge them from service in case of a necessity or to grant them leave.

Until now, I have always taken straight and lawful paths and I do not want to digress from them also in the future; therefore, I am asking for your prompt action in this case.

R. Bangerskis"

The Latvian Legion included two divisions, an anti-air unit and field support-depot unit. The German designations for these divisions were **"15. Waffen-Grenadier-Division der SS (lettische Nr. 1)"** and the **"19. Waffen Grenadier-Division der SS (lettische Nr. 2)."** Thus, by the designation alone, it is clear that these division were not SS divisions, but were assigned to the SS (*der SS*) as if they were some kind of property that belonged to them. The 19th Division started out as a regiment at the Leningrad Front in early 1943 and grew into a full division while at the Russian Front. It was constantly at the front lines and only the front lines for two and a half years without a break from early 1943 until the end of WWII, invariably facing the enemy ten times its own numbers. The 15th Division started to be formed in the spring of 1943 and was obliged to provide men to the 19th Division at the front. The 15th Division was not yet fully trained when the Germans ordered it to the front in the Nevel and Novo-Solkolniki region of Western Russia; initially, the 15th was not kept together under their Latvian

regimental commanders, but were split up into smaller units and assigned to German units. That caused tremendous commotion, complete disarray and destroyed command and control procedures (most Latvians did not speak German). Also the Latvian regimental and battalion commanders lodged protests; there were strong protests from the Latvian legionnaires themselves because they had trained together as a division. The units of the 15th Division suffered unnecessary losses and the Commander of the 19th Division, a German, was relieved of command for this fiasco; he said that he was only following orders. Finally, after strong protest from the Latvian Inspector General, the division was reunited. It had been obvious to the Latvians that the Germans did not want both of the Latvians divisions operating in close proximity to each other because of Latvian overtures that they wanted sovereignty and independence for Latvia. At last, because of combat necessity at the front, both divisions came together and were incorporated into an army corps, together with one or more German divisions in the Ostrova and Opočka region in March 1944.



New inductees for the Latvian Legion (1943-1945).

After exceptionally heavy fighting against the Red Army and after both divisions had sustained extremely high casualties, the 15th Division was pulled back and the remnants from this division were assigned to the 19th Division.²⁵ Altogether, the Latvians had lost the equivalent of an entire division while holding their lines against a Soviet Army several times their own strength. A “command skeleton” element from the 15th Division was kept together and sent back to Latvia to be reconstituted with new conscripts mobilized by the Germans from the Latvian population at large; afterwards, the skeleton command element of the 15th Division, together with conscripts, were sent to Germany for training.

These heavy losses on the battlefield are remembered by Latvians each year to this day because it touched nearly every family in Latvia. This event was forbidden in Latvia by the Soviets during their occupation period (1945-1991); free Latvians elsewhere,

²⁵ Andrejs Mežmalis. *The Latvian Legion*. Riga, 2008; p. 64-66.

however, were remembering the loss these Latvian youth by church services and community gatherings on March 16 each year.

Latvians now in Latvia continue this “*commemorative event of sorrow*” each year on March 16th by attending church services, laying of flowers at various monuments and going to cemeteries throughout the country. They remember not only this tremendous loss in lives, when approximately 15,000 Latvian youth were killed, mostly 18 to 19 years old, but they are also remembering all of the 80,000 Latvian youth killed during WWII, including those that perished as prisoners of war in the Soviet slave labor camps in Siberia after the war. Latvians also remember that these young men, at the very beginning of their lives - they had been forcibly mobilized by a foreign power, were dressed in uniforms which were not theirs, were ordered to the front by a foreign power and killed in a war that was not their own; they also know too well that WWII was started by both, the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany. To this day each year, the Russians, and even some German and other news media, assign this annual Latvian event the label as being the “rebirth of fascism” in Latvia. How absurd or stupid can these individuals be? It was the cooperation and the collaboration between the Soviets and the Nazis, the real fascists, that started World War II, initiated mass murders on a vast scale and committed crimes against humanity, including the untimely deaths of these young Latvian men. On September 1, 1939, Latvia had declared strict neutrality which the Soviets and the Germans had completely ignored.

WWII personnel losses in the Baltic States. As noted, the Latvian Legion’s combat casualty rates were very high because the Latvian legionnaires were invariably assigned combat sectors where they faced Soviet forces that were ten times their own. By the Legion’s own estimates, approximately 80,000 Latvian soldiers were killed during WWII.²⁶ The combat casualty rate, those actually killed in action, was approximately 55%.²⁷ Both of these Latvian Legion divisions, the 15th and the 19th, as well as other units, were reconstituted several times over with new inductees to replace those killed or wounded. Also, the Russians had mobilized at least 20,000 Latvian youth of which approximately 50% were killed or wounded; for example, the Soviet 43rd Latvian Infantry Division lost 50% (5,100 combat casualties) of the Division, either killed or wounded, during battles with the Germans from November to mid-December of 1942.²⁸ The Latvians were being decimated by both sides, the Soviets and the Germans.

During 1941-1945, the total population losses in Latvia caused by the Soviet and German occupations for a variety of reasons (killings, personnel inductions into their armed forces, deportations, etc.) are staggering. During the 1939-1941 period alone, the losses were approximately 165,000 people (repatriated to Germany- 70,000;

²⁶ *Latviešu karavīrs Otrā pasaules karā*. Plön, 1985; p. 468-469.

²⁷ Gunars Kurlovičs and Andris Tomašūns. *Latvijas vēsture vidusskolai II*. Riga, 2000; p. 243.

²⁸ *Latvia’s Occupation Museum Yearbook, 2000. Riga, 2001; p. 209-211.* (A document by K. Mahanko. *Secret Report of January 3, 1943 to J. Kalnbērziņš and V. Lācis*).

deported or killed by the Soviets – 35,000; mobilized in the Red Army – 20,000; refugees taken into the Soviet Union – 40,000). During 1941-1945, the Latvian losses were even higher or about 275,000 people (killed and deported during the 1941-1944 period – 90,000; transported as forced labor to Germany – 35,000; killed in the Latvian Legion – 80,000 as noted before; deported and killed during the 1944-1945 period – 70,000). In addition, other losses during 1941-1945 add up to 230,000 people (100,000 Latvian refugees going to the West; 50,000 lost due to the Soviet annexation of Latvia's province of Abrene; various others reasons – 80,000). Thus, **the total personnel losses by suffered by Latvia during 1939-1945 add up to 670,000 people²⁹ or nearly 33% of Latvia's population.** (Ref: *Gunars Kurlovičs and Andris Tomašūns. Latvijas vēsture vidusskolai II. Riga, 2000; pg. 264*) In comparison to this, the Soviet Union lost only 12% and Germany together with Austria lost only 10.5% of their populations during WWII. In addition, during 1945-1953, Latvia lost additional 100,000 people due to Soviet terrorism.³⁰ Also, the Soviets took 50,000 Latvian soldiers as prisoners of war and shipped them to the Gulag; only 10% survived the Gulag slave labor camps; additionally, 7909 Latvian partisans were either killed or arrested and sentenced.³¹ The below figures more or less confirm the total number of Latvian inhabitants deported or killed during 1940-1952.

Baltic victims during the Soviet occupation years	<u>Estonians</u>	<u>Lithuanians</u>	<u>Latvians</u>
- Deported or killed during the first Soviet occupation (1940-1941)	60,000	34,000	75,000
- Deported or killed during the second deportation (1944-1952)	75,000	136,000	245,000
Total	135,000	170,000	320,000

Ref: - Helmuth Weiss. Die Baltischen Staaten. Die Sowjetisierung Ost-Mittel-europas. A. Metzener, 1959

- Andrievs Namsons. "Die Nationale Zusammensetzung der Einwohner der Baltischen Staaten." Acta Baltica I. Konigstein, 1962. Pg.63-73.
- Adolfs Silde. The profits of Slavery. Stockholm, 1958. Pg.15.
- David J. Dallin. Forced Labor in Soviet Russia. New Haven, 1947. Pg. 264
- Okupācijas varu nodarītie postījumi Latvija 1940-1991. Pg. 497.

The Russian colonization, Russification and integration of the Baltic States into USSR. During the post-WWII years, after the deportations and subjugation were completed, the Russians had three primary objectives in mind for the Baltic States – colonization, the *Russification* of the Baltic populations and the integration of the previously West-oriented economies into the Soviet-Russian economy; it also included the nationalization of all private property, except for the immediate personal belongings. However, all personal property, that had belonged to the hundreds of thousands of the repressed or deported Balts, was confiscated (nationalized); these were people considered by the Soviets-Russians as being politically unreliable, or simply, *enemies of*

²⁹ Gunārs Kurlovičs and Andris Tomašūns. *Latvijas vēsture vidusskolai II.* Riga, 2000; p. 276.

³⁰ Ibid. p.276.

³¹ Andrejs Mežmalis. *Latviešu leģions.* Riga, 2010. p. 60.

the State. In essence, the Soviets-Russians picked up their work after WWII where they had left it off after June 1941.

The Soviet-Russian colonization of Latvia was directly linked to the deportations and repressions in Latvia and the other Baltic States. After each mass repression and deportation, there was a large influx of Soviets (especially Russians) into Latvia and the other Baltic States; the deportees, those that had not been killed in the NKVD (KGB) cellars, were not permitted to take anything along, except for 100 kilograms of personal belongings. The property of those killed or deported was nationalized and turned over to the arriving colonizers; that included the deportee houses, apartments and personal property (furniture, clothing, china and silverware, etc.). Initially, these colonizers were the Soviet military personnel, NKVD (KGB), Soviet administrators and Communist Party functionaries from Russia that arrived together with their families. During the first twelve years after WWII, more than 400,000 such colonists arrived and settled in Latvia, followed by 708,000 during the next forty years.³²

The most horrific period was immediately after the war when in Kurzeme the Soviets placed in filtration camps all male Latvians from the age of 16 to 60; thereafter, many were shipped to Siberia – about 50,000. In 1949, the Soviets-Russians again carried out mass deportations that included civilians from all walks of life.



Lieutenant General Sergej Ogolcov

**“The THIRD
Soviet-Russian
Occupation!”**

**The 1949
“Deportation
Chief”
A Soviet “hero”!**

This top secret “special operation” was named the “*Coastal Storm*” operation.³³ It was carried out by the Soviet Internal Army on March 25, 1949, deporting 100,000 people from the Baltic States; of these, 42,975 were Latvians that included, men, women,

³² Ilgonis Upmalis, et al. *Latvija Padomju militaristu vara*. Riga, 2011; p. 98-99.

³³ Unpunished Crimes. Sockholm-Toronto, 2003; p. 87-96 (Article by Heinrichs Strods. *Operation “Coastal Storm” (PRIBOY) – The deportation of the Baltic Peoples 1949*).

elderly and children.³⁴ The colonization of Latvia, which had started already during the first Soviet occupation (1940-1941), continued for the entire Soviet occupation period until 1991. Data indicates that the “immigrants” (colonizers) from USSR added up to about 535,000 people³⁵ (primarily from Russia) during 1945-1955. That figure does not include the military personnel living in Latvia. Also many Soviet military personnel were encouraged to retire in Latvia with their families and received special compensation and privileges to encourage them to do so.

The Soviet Russification program was very simply structured but strictly carried out and implemented. Everyone at school had to learn and study Russian and all official business had to be conducted in Russian. Eventually, every facet of life was influenced so that the Russian language would dominate – theater, movies, meetings, etc. If there were ten Latvians in a meeting and only one Russian, the language used had to be Russian; people did not dare to complain because of the constant watchful eyes of the NKVD (KGB) that were present everywhere. The Russian objective was to stamp out the Baltic languages, often being referred to by Russians as “dog” languages. Latvia was especially affected by this Russification program because of the large influx of Russians in Latvia. A Latvian could not buy even a loaf of bread, if he or she did not ask for it in Russian; that was the official Soviet policy and most of the store personnel selling goods were deliberately assigned from the *émigrés from Russia*. *“The widespread use of the Russian language was forced upon Latvia after the Second World War. Leading positions in Riga and regional institutions were taken by incomers who did not know Latvian, did not learn it, and issued all directives and notices only in Russian. Not infrequently, the local farmers did not understand a word of these.”*³⁶

The integration of the Baltic States’ economies was very simply but brutally accomplished. First, all private businesses were nationalized; the owners of all private enterprises were declared enemies of the State and killed or deported to the Gulag. Next, all productive farmers, especially those having more than 30 hectares (75 acres) of land were declared “*kulaks*” (successful farmers who opposed collectivization) and subject to arrests, deportations and confiscation (nationalization) of all land and property. The Soviets-Russians literally stole all of Latvia and all the fruits of labor that the Latvian nation had accumulated until the Soviet invasion and occupation. “So, in 2001, using Smulders calculated figures as a base, Latvia was owed US \$210 billion by the Soviet Union for the 50-year occupation and the material losses it caused.”³⁷ The Soviet military inflicted losses alone are calculated at 2,950,995,775 Ls (Latvian Lats) or \$5,713,422,920 (US Dollars).³⁸ No real or meaningful monetary value can be assigned to the suffering by the Baltic States during the fifty years of occupation by the Soviets-

³⁴ Unpunished Crimes. Sockholm-Toronto, 2003; p. 99-100 (Article by Sindija Dimanta and Indulis Zalite. “Structural Analysis of the Deportations of the 1940s”).

³⁵ Gunārs Kurlovičs and Andris Tomašūns. *Latvijas vēsture vidusskolai II*. Riga, 2000; p. 265.

³⁶ Unpunished Crimes. Sockholm-Toronto, 2003; p. 80-86 (Article by Janis Riekstins. *The Dictatorship of the Russian Language*).

³⁷ Ibid. p. 72-79 (Dissertation by Nikolajs balabkins. The Destruction of Latvia’s Economy, 1940-1941).

³⁸ Ilgonis Upmalis, et al. *Latvija Padomju militārist varā*. Riga, 2011; p. 225.

Russians. What kind of monetary value can be placed on the terror, mass murders and deportations that the Baltic Nations experienced under the Kremlin? There are still some ethnic Russians living in the Baltic States and in Russia who still believe the old Soviet fairy tale that they “liberated” the Baltic States. After regaining their independence, Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania had to reestablish everything that the Soviets-Russians had destroyed – trade; trading partners/networks with the Western nations; reestablishment of democratic forms of government; a true feeling of safety and security; reeducation of the entire populations from “*nonsense Soviet economics*” to common sense economics; and, the reintroduction of Christian ethical values that were completely destroyed during the Soviet-era. For fifty years, Latvia was a *Soviet military base, an armed camp*, in the fullest sense of the word; Latvia’s economy was completely integrated into the Soviet military-industrial economy; practically 80%+ of all of Latvia’s production capacity was converted to support the Soviet military, a good part of which was stationed in Latvia and the other Baltic States. In other words, 80% of Latvia’s GDP was utilized for Soviet military purposes. That means that practically, every 4 out of 5 Latvians were working simply to support the Soviet military establishment in Latvia and elsewhere, while production of consumer goods for Latvia and Latvians was not even a real consideration; and, this lasted for nearly 50 years.



This paper does not address the losses caused by the Soviet Union during their occupation of the Baltic States during WWII and after. Those topics were covered by other distinguished lecturers from Latvia, Estonia, Poland and the other nations participating in the international conference of June 17-18 June, 2011 in Riga, Latvia.