

Jānis Riekstiņš

**SOVIET COLONIAL POLICY AND
THE COLONISATION OF LATVIA
1940–1990**

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Soviet Colonial Policy and the Colonisation of Latvia 1940 – 1990

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One view of history not often associated with Europe is that of history writing from the perspective of colonised peoples. Europeans, as a whole, are often accorded the over-arching role of colonisers in the global context, but what of individual regions within Europe colonised by other European nations? The culture and language of smaller ethnic groups such as Basques, Catalans, the Sami, and the Roma are threatened in the face of the larger cultural entities into which they have been absorbed. The Baltic peoples, too, were threatened with such extinction, as described by Jānis Riekstiņš in his book *Soviet Colonial Policy and the Colonisation of Latvia, 1940 – 1990*.

Riekstiņš' historic interest focuses clearly on archival materials that document the actions of the repressive Soviet occupying regime in Latvia. While Riekstiņš offers sufficient evidence to indict the Soviet regime, there are other important and long-lasting factors that cannot be ignored.

Modern Latvia tries hard to identify itself as 'multicultural', basing this on the presence of many minorities, but if one compares multiculturalism in Latvia to that in other countries, this term may be misrepresented. Although other ethnicities have arrived in Latvia since regaining independence, they are too few to create what would be recognised as a multicultural society elsewhere. One could say that as a result of Soviet occupation, Latvian society consists only of two main groups: the titular nation – ethnic Latvians – who was the oppressed majority and the Russian-speaking collective made up of Russians as well as Ukrainians, Byelorussians, Lithuanians, Kazaks, Uzbeks, and a host of other ethnic groups from various parts of the former Soviet Union whose *lingua franca* was Russian and the majority of whom have been Russified over the course of time. The vocal members of the Russian-speaking collective are clear about their sense of identity, which is closely tied to Russia.

The injustices and neglect issues endemic to colonised peoples are many and varied and often treated as something to be hidden and never to be revealed, a sentiment often expressed in Latvian society and clearly apparent in the education system. Researchers note that such repression would never happen in an African or Jewish Studies programme and that the method of peeling away layers of familiar surfaces to reveal historic erasures would take away the 'automatisation' of internalised everyday situations. In Latvia, this

hesitancy to confront the issues manifests itself in an unsuccessful ‘bilingual’ education system, loss of collective memory, alternate interpretations of history, and inherent distrust in the government, just to mention a few societal problems.

Yet, all is not lost. The publication of documents that reveal the true nature of the Soviet totalitarian regime can only be beneficial, if not for a more comprehensive understanding of the painful pages of Latvian history under Soviet occupation!

Aija Abens, Dr.paed.

Soviet COLONIAL POLICY AND THE COLONISATION OF LATVIA 1940–1990

J. RIEKSTIŅŠ

The materials used in the preparation of this book are those of the Council of Ministers (CoM) of the LSSR, Central Committee of the Communist Party of Latvia (LCP), LSSR Central Statistical Office (CSO), LSSR State Planning Committee, Riga City Executive Committee, and other institutional collections held in the National Archives of Latvia. Studies by Latvian and other scholars on the course of colonial policies of the Soviet Union are also used.

The book shows that the colonisation of Latvia took place both through unrestricted spontaneous migration and, in particular, through organised migration and purposeful influx of retired Soviet military personnel into Latvia. An important factor in the consolidation of the colonial regime, as shown in this study, was the "cleansing" and "Russification" of local national officers.

The author devotes a great deal of space to the discovery and analysis of undeserved privileges that were granted to both civilian migrants and retired USSR servicemen by the USSR Council of Ministers, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and other central authorities.

The facts published confirm, once again, that one of the most important factors in the collapse of the Soviet empire was its ruthless colonial policy, both in Latvia and in other national republics.

Author

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FOREWORD

Archival material and recent work by scholars of national politics, confirms that the Soviet Union, like Tsarist Russia, pursued a deliberate policy of colonisation of the periphery. Latvia was also occupied and incorporated into the Soviet Union in 1940.

The colonisation that took place over many years had a particularly severe impact on the composition of the Latvian population. It was drastically altered by maximising the number of Russians and many other Russified nationalities, with the percentage of Latvians falling to catastrophically low levels. According to the 1935 Census, there were 1,461,000 Latvians (77%), 191,900 Russians and Belarusians – 10.1%, and 1800 thousand Ukrainians – 0.1%.¹ In 1989 in Latvia, there were 1,388,000 Latvians, 906,000 Russians, 120,000 Belarusians and 92,000 Ukrainians.² Demographer Pārsla Eglīte points out, “As Latvia's population was replenished over the last 45 years mainly by settlers and their descendants, the share of foreigners has increased from 23% in 1935 to 48% in 1989. In the cities, it reached 56 per cent and in Riga even more – 63.5 per cent. Although the non-nationals included people of different nationalities from the USSR, Russians were in the majority (70.8 per cent in 1989), and Russian was also the mother tongue of many non-nationals.”³

The State Statistics Committee of the Latvian SSR (LSSR) report of 15 June 1990 on the national composition of the Latvian population, according to the 1989 All-Union Census concluded:

Latvia is one of the republics with a high percentage of Slavic people living on its territory. Only two republics, Estonia and the Kazakh SSR, have the same high percentage of Slavs. However, while in the Kazakh SSR their share is steadily decreasing, in Estonia and

¹ B. Mežgailis, P. Zvidriņš. *Padomju Latvijas iedzīvotāji* [People of Soviet Latvia]. Riga, 1973, p. 151.

² NAL, 277. f., 17. desc., 445. file, pp. 9, 10.

³ Pārsla Eglīte. *Padomju okupācijas ilgāka laika demogrāfiskās sekas. - // Latvijas Vēsturnieku komisijas raksti, 9. sējums. Padomju okupācijas režīms Baltijā 1944.–1959.gadā: politika un tās sekas. Starptautiskās konferences referāti. 2002. gada 13.–14.jūnijs* [Demographic consequences of the Soviet occupation, Latvian Historical Commission articles, vol. 9. Soviet occupation regime in the Baltics in 1944-1959: politics and its consequences. Papers of the International Conference. 13-14 June 2002] - Riga, 23, p. 259.

Latvia it is increasing. As all post-war census data show, despite the absolute increase in the number of persons of Latvian nationality, the share of Latvians in the total population of the republic is steadily decreasing.

The decrease in the percentage of Latvians and in the absolute number of Latvians, compared to 1935, was due mainly to the war, repressions that followed, relatively older population, and unjustified development of industry and other sectors of the economy in the post-war years and associated influx of workforce from other areas of the country. In the last 3 years, migration has become the main factor in reducing the percentage of Latvians within the total population of Latvia."⁴

Throughout the Soviet union, the main topic of discussion was "spontaneous migration", and it was claimed that migrants came to Latvia from other Soviet regions only in search of better living conditions. But this was only part of the truth. What was not mentioned was that alongside this spontaneous migration, there was also "organised migration" carefully planned and implemented by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU – the "leading and guiding force" of society), the USSR government, the USSR State Planning Commission, and the heads of central ministries, departments, and enterprises.

Documents prove beyond doubt that for decades, along with machinery and raw materials, huge numbers of workers and specialists were imported into Latvia. This was justified by the needs of "socialist industrialisation" that was taking place in Latvia.

The Soviet leadership in Latvia expanded the military-industrial complex for which workers and specialists were selected very carefully. Clearly, the vast majority of these were not locals but migrants from the USSR.

The planners and organisers of organised migration based their actions not only on the needs of the enterprise workforce, but also on the words of Bolshevik leader Lenin: "The essence of the matter is that the diligent worker should feel himself not only the master of his factory, but also a representative of the whole land."⁵ But to make him or her (in this

⁴ NAL, 277.f., 17.desc., 445. file, 18., 19.lp.

⁵ Lenin V.I. Writings, vol. 27, p.317.

case, a newcomer to another country) feel that way, the concept of the "great Russian people" as "first among equals" and the "elder brother" of other nations was invented and widely and obtrusively propagated in the 1930s. Slogans were also constantly present about the "selfless help of the great Russian people to other nations", the "greatness" of its history, and the "inexhaustible riches" of its culture. The occupied country was sovietised with the help of trusted Moscow officials by expelling and often repressing local workers. The most reliable support for the occupation regime were officers retired from the USSR Armed Forces or enlisted in the reserves, whose influx into Latvia was stimulated by various Central Committee of the CPSU (CCCP) and Soviet government decisions. Many decisions and orders were made on their choice of future residence, including housing and other privileges, that caused real harm to the indigenous population of Latvia.

If we look at the decrees, decisions, and laws of the time, it would appear that any part of the union (union republic) was a sovereign state with the right to decide on and deal with all internally important issues. For example, the Constitution of the LSSR, adopted by the Extraordinary 8th Session of the Supreme Soviet of the 9th convocation of the LSSR on 18 April 1978, stated that "The LSSR is an equal member of the Soviet federation, a sovereign Soviet socialist state (Article 68)," and "the Constitution grants the LSSR, as a sovereign state within the USSR, extensive permanence. Soviet Latvia shall, except in matters provided for in Article 73 of the Constitution of the USSR, permanently exercise State authority over its territory, which shall not be altered without its consent. The LSSR shall have the right to freely withdraw from the USSR (Article 69), to establish relations with foreign countries, to participate in the activities of international organisations."⁶

In reality, these were just loud and empty phrases, just like the countless claims of a "successful resolution" of the national issue. For example, the "Programme for the Emancipation of Communist Society", adopted by the XXII Congress of the CPSU in 1961, stated: "The great conquest of socialism is the solution of the national issue."⁷

⁶ See Melķīsis E. *Padomju okupācijas ilgāka laika demogrāfiskās sekas*. [On the Constitution of the Latvian SSR] - Rīga, 1980.

⁷ Programme of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Adopted by the XXII Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. – Rīga, 1961, pp 15, 16.

Even as late as 1988, when national conflicts had already reached explosive levels in much of the union's periphery, the initiator of *perestroika* (reconstruction) and "new thinking", Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev declared: "If the national issue had not been resolved in principle in our country, the Soviet Union as it is today in its social, cultural, economic and defence spheres would not exist. Our country would not have endured if there had not been a real alignment of the republics if a union based on fraternity had not emerged. ... The Russian nation has played an outstanding role in the solution of the national issue."⁸

This statement, based on the conclusions of Soviet politicians, social scientists, and other experts on the "solution of the national issue" and "harmonious national relations", was clearly a political mistake. The collapse of the Soviet Union was only a few years away, and one of the most fundamental reasons for this collapse was precisely the failure to resolve the national issue. In fact, it was the natural result of many years of systematic colonisation of the periphery and the dictates of the centre.

Understandably, terms such as colony, colonisation, and colonialism were used in the Soviet Union only in relation to imperialism. In literature, they are defined as follows:

Colonisation – the forcible conversion of a country or area into a colony; the settling or settling of a population in unoccupied areas, on the outskirts of a country; the establishment of settlements on dependent land. Colonisation involved frequent wars, brutal exploitation of the native population, extermination. Colonisation led to the colonial enslavement of the peoples of Asia, Africa, Latin America.

Colony – (lat. *colonia* – settling in a foreign territory; colony):

1. A country or territory subject to metropolitan rule that has lost its political and economic independence. A colony governed under a special regime established by the imperialist powers.

2. Settlement of settlers of one nationality or one country in another country or in a city of that country.⁹

⁸ M. Gorbachev. *Pārkārtošanās un jaunā domāšana. Mūsu valstij un visai pasaulei* [Reconstruction and new thinking. For our country and the world]. - Rīga, 1988, p 103.

⁹ *Politiskā enciklopēdija* [Political Encyclopaedia]. – Rīga, 1987, p 298.

Soviet foreign policy supported the national liberation movement against national dependence. For example, at the proposal of the USSR, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly adopted a declaration on independence for colonial countries and peoples in 1960. Understandably, any existing colonialism was not recognised in Soviet domestic policy.

At that time, only foreign scholars and Latvian emigres were interested in and described Russia and the Soviet Union as colonial empires. For example, Jānis Bokalders states that Swedish author Hettner's conclusion about Russia is generally correct:

The Russian state is essentially a state of conquest and colonies. It consists not only of the mainland inhabited by Russians, but also of conquered lands with a population of equal or superior culture, and of colonies where the Russian population, economy and at least Russian rule have spread over subordinate peoples. Russia is not usually counted as a colonial power because it is spread over one continent. Such a perception is erroneous and can distract from a correct understanding of things. Whether a country extends over the sea or only over land is of little or no consequence in determining the nature of a colony if the extension of the country cannot be separated by any appreciable boundary, and when the metropolis merges with the colony.

... The whole history of Russia is a testimony to continuous conquests and various forms of Russification, to the oppression of peoples – to the denial of every cultural and political activity and autonomy. The bureaucratic policing-driven self-rule of the conquered lands did not lead to any significant cohesion of these lands with the common state, which also took little interest in their economic and cultural prosperity. ... Imperial and autocratic Russia, with all its huge military and bureaucratic power, was unable to unite the vast Russian territory into a single entity. It was and remained a conglomerate of nationalities, cultures and economies mechanically held together by the means of power. The Tsarist empire failed in its desire to transform multi-ethnic Russia by force into a national Great Russian state, and the Bolshevik Soviet Union could not and will not do so by even more draconian means.

Russia, however, was able to expand rapidly and rival even the Anglo-Saxon world empire in colonial lands. The administration, organisation, and improvement of life in the lands it has acquired have

been far from the favourable results achieved by the old colonial powers such as France and England. Russia's expansive imperial policy is more reminiscent of the conquistador conquests of the Iberian Peninsula of yore, which brought instant success and even great wealth, but did not provide the foundations for a long future."¹⁰

In 1975, Arturs Landsmanis wrote:

Can Latvia be considered a colony of the Soviet Union? The answer depends on what we mean by a colony. In political terms, Russia's position vis-à-vis the non-Russian peoples within its borders has often been compared to that of a metropolis and a colony.

At the autumn 1960 session of the UN General Assembly, US representative James Woodsworth spoke about the new colonialism, of which the Soviet Union was the main representative. This country, he said, was the largest colonial empire of modern times, which had steadily expanded its borders with a deceptive battle cry for liberation.

British Deputy Foreign Minister Ormsby-Gore said that since 1939 the Soviet Union had forcibly annexed six countries or parts of countries with a population of 22 million. Among them are the "three newest colonies" – Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. It is a tragic fact, he said, that the UN has little capacity to help these peoples under the Soviet yoke.

A year later, in 1961, the UN General Assembly again referred to the Soviet Union as a colonial empire. This was said, among others, by representatives of France, China (Formosa), New Zealand. They said that attention should also be paid to the forms of domination practised by the USSR. The US representative said that the Soviet Union was the only ... empire where no subordinate nation was given the opportunity to decide its own future and its own destiny.¹¹

The vast majority of countries in the world did not recognise the occupation of Latvia in 1940. Western policy towards Latvia was

¹⁰ Jānis Bokalders. *Koloss uz māla kājām. Okupācijas varu nodarītie postījumi Latvijā* [Colossus on Feet of Clay. The devastation caused by the occupying powers in Latvia], 1940-1990 – Stockholm – Toronto, 2000, pp 288, 289.

¹¹ Arturs Landsmanis. *Pastāvēt vai iznīkt. Baltijas tautu destrūkcija Padomju Savienībā* [Existing or Perishing. The Destruction of the Baltic Peoples in the Soviet Union] – Stockholm, 1975, p 81.

contradictory. On the one hand, some Western countries continued to recognise Latvia's foreign missions, thus recognising the existence of the Latvian state, but on the other hand, this was never done at the level of treaties of international organisations.

Not all Western scholars share the same view of the Soviet Union as a colonial empire. In the 1960s, English scholars Novea and Newth, refused to call the relationship between the Centre and the periphery "colonial" in terms of economic exploitation; nevertheless, they drew attention to the fact that the real decision-making power remained with Moscow: "Therefore, if we do not call the existing relationship colonialism, we must find a new name for what this subjugation is and how it differs from the imperialism of earlier times."¹²

Viktor Kotov and Vadim Trepavlov from the Institute of Russian History of the Russian Academy of Sciences wrote about the colonisation of the imperial periphery and its status:

Local national radicals in the united and autonomous republics often perceived Russians in general as superiors and competitors with an unjustifiably high social status. Anti-Russian sentiment in the national areas was in many ways the result of the massive relocation of the Russian population there. In the new places, they worked mainly in industry, construction, transport, forming the core of the working class and the scientific and technical intelligentsia; they were therefore in a social and economic environment which did not require rapid adaptation to local ethnic national peculiarities – learning the language, customs, etc. On the contrary, it was the Russian language and culture that expanded in the national areas, to the dissatisfaction of local advocates of "ethnic purity". As a result, lack of command of local languages was blamed on Russians as a sign of ignoring national culture.

The above-mentioned peculiarities of the administration and the convergence of Russians in the outskirts at the will of the authorities naturally led them to be associated with the authorities, to perceive them as expressions of statehood. But how justified is this view? ... This problem is raised in historiography and political science, for example, to determine the degree of dependence of the outskirts on the

¹² *Gosudarstvo nacyi: Imperija i nacionalnoe stroitelstvo v epohu Lenina i Stalina.* – Moscow, 2011, p. 10. [State of Nation. Empire and Nation – Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin], Oxford, 2001).

Centre, comparing it with the "classical" models of colonialism. This is the interpretation which, in our opinion, has been formulated most clearly by M. Voslevsky. He believes that, on one hand, the union republics had the characteristics of semi-colonies: they were part of the Soviet state as its administrative units; their administration was mainly local, but many key positions were held by metropolitan envoys; metropolitan troops were stationed in the republics; official business was conducted, and books were printed in both local languages and Russian. On the other hand, the colonial status was contradicted by the domination of a nomenclature of mainly local nationalities, a relatively small Russian nomenclature. The "semi-colonial dependency" features mentioned by Voslevsky are not such features, as they generally reflect the characteristics of a totalitarian regime in a multinational state and should not be equated with the regimes of colonial empires. The existence of national oppression in a polyethnic state is not at all indicative of the colonial nature of the administration.¹³

It is understandable that this explanation of the colonial policy of the Soviet Union, justified in fact, is not acceptable today.

American researcher Eva Thomson wrote:

In the case of Russia, the colonies bordered on ethnic Russian lands. The transformation of the Russian Empire into the Soviet Union further obscured the colonial nature of the Russian-dominated country. Its territory was increased at the expense of wars, annexations and diplomatic manoeuvres not too dissimilar to those of Western European states. But the proximity of the colonies to the ethnic Russian lands obscured the nature of the relationship between the metropole and the colonial outskirts, which begun to strive for sovereignty and their own identity. ... Modern Western historians have lost track of the causes and consequences of tsarism – Soviet colonialism. This is largely due to those who saw in Soviet Russia a type of future political structure. ... Scholars and politicians who deconstructed Western colonialism were often sympathetic to the political system of Soviet Russia. They believed that Tsarist Russia's past was one of feudalism, as evidenced

¹³ V. M. Kotov, V. V. Trepavlov. *Russkiy narod v HH veke: paradoksy istoricheskoy sudby* [Russian people in XX century: paradoxes of historical destiny]. Otechestvennaya istoriya [Russian national history] 2007. No 3, p. 56, 57.

by the lack of overseas colonies. The financial, military and diplomatic contribution that the Soviet Union made to the Third World "anti-imperial" cause obscured the fact that Russia was engaged in practices that it itself, outside its own sphere of influence, so thoroughly condemned. ... The West underestimated Russia's colonial policies and showed its blindness to colonial structures and methods of conquest that were not of its own making. ... In the post-Soviet period, when the republics of the Soviet Union broke away from the Russian Federation, the process of partial decolonisation was generally perceived as democratisation, which allowed the metropole to once again fall out of the focus of Western critics of post-colonial processes.¹⁴

In his geopolitical reflections, American politician George Kennan repeatedly suggested that the colonies of the Russian empire were on a "far lower level" politically and culturally, and that Russia had a "legitimate right to dominate Central and Eastern Europe for its own security reasons". Peter Ford pointed out that "Russia's attitude towards its former colonies is based on a deep conviction that it provided them with a positive influence that was welcomed by the peoples of the Caucasus, Central Asia and Eastern Europe."¹⁵

Estonian professor Kalev Kukk speaks directly about the colonisation of Estonia:

The process, which for ideological reasons in the post-war years was called the "economic reconstruction and socialist transformation of Estonia", had all the usual characteristics of colonisation, such as:

- 1) targeted destruction of the economic structure established in 1920-1940,
- 2) introduction of a structure serving the interests of the occupying power, described as "the intensive development of sectors in which Estonia specialises on the scale of the Soviet Union",
- 3) extensive and insatiable exploitation of local natural resources,

¹⁴ Eva Tompson. *Imperskoe znanie: russkaya literatura i kolonializm*. [Imperial Knowledge: Russian Literature and Colonialism] Perekrestki. Zhurnal isledovaniy vostochnoevropejskogo pogranichya [Crossroads. Journal of Eastern European Frontier Studies]. No 1-2/2007, pp. 33, 68, 69.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, pp 41, 42.

- 4) workforce and migration policy aimed at assimilating the indigenous population,
- 5) severing Estonia's former economic ties and isolation of the country from the global economy."¹⁶

Demographers Eglīte and Ilmārs Mežs write about the colonisation of Latvia and the colonists:

The connection to the power of the subjugators is an essential feature of the colonists, which distinguishes them from war or political refugees and economic migrants who change their country of residence in search of work or a higher standard of living, and to whom most modern immigrants to the countries of the European Union belong. Accordingly, the term 'colonisation' is defined by the Dictionary of Latvian Literature (1989) as the forcible subjugation of a country or an area, depriving it of its independence and subjecting the indigenous population to the rule of the colonisers and fostering settlers from the metropolis.

Latvia has been colonised several times in the last millennium and was one of Europe's few colonies. Colonists in Latvia include the Crusaders and over 700 years of their descendants, Tsarist Russia bureaucrats and labourers from the early 18th century until World War I, and immigrants of various social classes from other Soviet republics from the end of World War II until Latvia's Third Awakening in the 1980s-1990s.¹⁷

Svetlana Chervonnaya describes the methods with which the Soviet Union ruled its colonies:

Russia (autocratic Russia, Soviet Russia) has set a course for the military-political expansion of the Baltics, for the 'annexation' of the

¹⁶ Kalev Kukk. *Ekonomiskie zaudējumi, ko Igaunijas tautsaimniecībai radīja padomju okupācija. // Padomju Savienības nodarītie zaudējumi Baltijā. Starptautiskās konferences materiāli Rīgā*, [Economic damage caused to the Estonian economy by the Soviet occupation. Soviet damages in the Baltics. Materials of the International Conference in Riga], 17-18 June 2011. Riga, 2013, p 75.

¹⁷ Pārslā Eglīte, Ilmārs Mežs. *Latvijas kolonizācija un etniskā sastāva izmaiņu cēloņi 1944.–1990.gadā* [Colonisation of Latvia and causes of changes in the ethnic composition 1944-1990]. Articles of the Latvian Historical Commission. Volume 7. Occupation Regimes in Latvia 1940-1956. Riga, 2002, p. 406.

Baltics, taking responsibility for forcibly keeping the Baltic lands and peoples within the Russian state throughout the century and into the 20th century, when this expansion was developing and when the occupation of the Baltic States was actually continuing, it was unable to fulfil even the elementary function of cultural carrier, which is usually performed by any empire, accompanying its conquests with serious scientific studies of the conquered territories and ethnoses. It is undeniable that the English empire exploited its colonies and dominions for centuries, but it sent there not only soldiers and governors with administrative retinues, but also teachers and doctors, archaeologists, who extracted from these lands riches that became the wealth of mankind: ethnographers, who described the customs and mores of the indigenous peoples, and whose works defined the main lines of research in ancient Egypt, India, Hellenism, Islam and many other branches of science. The Baltics conquered and enslaved by the Russian and especially Soviet empire always surpassed Russia in their level of cultural and social development, as the conqueror was so lazy and indifferently ignorant of this land, so creatively and spiritually powerless before it, and so irresponsibly careless that it disdained and failed even to understand what belonged to it, and in its decades-long domination never managed to establish a sufficiently solid and strong Russian national school of Baltic studies in any humanities.¹⁸

Other scholars recognise that Western colonialism was characterised by the concentration of power and knowledge in the metropolis and that this was the basis of its claims to dominance. But the Russian colonial administration was largely based on power alone, not on a combination of power and knowledge.

Soviet national policy can undoubtedly be described as imperial. Its essence was expressed in the formula: one country, one people, speaking one language – Russian. The aim of the Soviet union was to create a denationalised, Russian-speaking community. Communist Party functionaries and members of Soviet economic, repressive, and military institutions sent to Latvia were openly arrogant and

¹⁸ Svetlana Chervonnaya. *Pētījums par Baltiju mūsdienu Krievijas zinātnes skatījumā* [A study of the Baltics from the perspective of modern Russian science]. Yearbook of the Latvian Museum of Occupation. 2001. A Nation in Captivity. - Riga, 2002, p.18.

contemptuous of the Latvian language, culture, and customs. In his 29 January 1947 report to the Central Committee of the AC(b)P (All-Union Communist Party [Bolsheviks]), Jānis Kalnberziņš, the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the LC(b)P (Latvian Communist Party of Bolsheviks) was forced to admit: "The initial practice of gross administration and violation of socialist legality and the ignoring of national peculiarities in the practice of Soviet organisations, aroused a negative feeling in the population, distorted the understanding of the essence of the Soviet system and of national politics"¹⁹ In the following years, as colonisation of Latvia became even more widespread, disregard for national particularities became even more widespread and aggressive, increasing negative sentiment of the local population towards the foreign power. Russian historian Yelena Zubkova writes:

National specifics – things the first Soviet emissaries in the Baltic States faced in 1940 – continued to play a role after the war as a factor that forced them to reckon with themselves in the continuation of the Sovietisation policy. In this case, it was not only a question of the attitude of Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians towards their own culture, language, national traditions, etc. They were also, in the full sense of the word, people with a different political culture, their perception of the Soviet order, political and economic practices was quite different – not like, for example, in Russia or Ukraine. ... Dissatisfaction with the Soviet order turned into anti-Russian sentiment. ... This attitude towards the Russians, which had already been shaped by events before the war – the circumstances of the 1940 coup d'état, the deportations that followed, etc., after the war, with the deployment of military garrisons in the cities, with the influx of people from other regions, with the promotion of Russians to leading positions, led to additional sources of dissatisfaction.²⁰

English professor Tony Judt noted the differences between the Baltic republics and other parts of the Soviet Union:

¹⁹ National Archives of Latvia, Party archives (hereinafter – NAL PA), Volume 10., 10.desc., 52. file, p 13.

²⁰ Yelena Zubkova. *Pribaltika i Kreml. 1940-1953* [The Baltics and the Kremlin. 1940-1953]. – Moscow, 2008, p. 153, 155.

The Baltic republics of the Union – Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania – were different in three important respects. First, they had more access to the West than any other region of the Soviet Union. Estonians, in particular, had been in contact with the Scandinavian countries since the 1970s, watching Finnish television and always aware of the contrasts between their own conditions and those of their affluent neighbours. Lithuanians, for whom the historical and geographical affinity with neighbouring Poland was key, could hardly have failed to notice that even under communism the Poles were certainly freer and more prosperous than they.

Second, and despite the unflattering comparison with their foreign neighbours, the Baltic States were still wealthy by Soviet standards. They were major producers of a large number of industrial products – railway carriages, radio sets, paper products – as well as the main source of fish, dairy and cotton products. With the goods they produced and which passed through their ports, Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians were at least remotely familiar with a way of life and standard of living that most of the other republics of the Soviet Union could only dream of.

But the third distinctive and by far the most important feature of the Baltic republics was that they were the only ones with a recent history of genuine independence. After initially gaining their freedom in 1919 following the collapse of the Tsarist empire, they were forcibly reabsorbed twenty years later by the Romanovs' Soviet heirs under the secret Molotov-Ribbentrop Pacts of August 1939. But the 1940 invasion was still largely a living memory. In the Baltics, Gorbachev's *glasnostj* – which elsewhere in the Soviet Union led to demands for greater civil and economic rights – inevitably reopened the question of independence. ...

An additional reason was the "Russian issue". In 1945, the populations of all three Baltic republics were homogeneous, with most of them belonging to the dominant national group and speaking the local language. But in the early 1980s, as a consequence of forced expulsions during and after the war and the constant influx of Russian soldiers, administrators and workers, the population was much more diverse, especially in the northern republics. In Lithuania, about 80 per cent of the population was still Lithuanian, but in Estonia only about 64 per cent were ethnically Estonian and spoke Estonian, while in

Latvia the native Latvian population was 1.35 million out of about 2.5 million according to the 1980 census: only 54 per cent. The countryside was still populated by Balts, but the cities were increasingly Russian and Russian speaking: this transformation caused great indignation.

The first waves of protest in the region therefore focused on the issue of language and nationality and the related memories of the Soviet deportation of thousands of local "seditionists" to Siberia²¹

Both Latvian national-communists and dissidents protested the colonisation and Russification of Latvia. Andris Cers, a worker at the Riga motor factory *Red Star*, distributed leaflets criticising the Soviet regime and migrants from other parts of the USSR.²² Viktors Kalniņš, a student at the Moscow State Pedagogical Institute, and poet Knuts Skujenieks expressed the idea that the Soviet Union had a national policy aimed at restricting the rights of minorities, which was why Latvians had to fight for Latvia's secession from the USSR.²³ In 1959, Fricis Menders, a veteran of the Latvian Social Democratic Workers' Party (LSDSP), sent a letter to Bruno Kalniņš, chairman of the Party's Foreign Committee, in which he pointed out that the Soviet government in Latvia was carrying out Russification of the Latvian people and that the mentality of the Latvian people was in danger. In his article "Russian imperialism and the Latvian people", Menders stressed that the Soviet Union had turned into a national-colonial and imperialist state with a semi-military dictatorship pursuing a policy of territorial expansion and that the Baltic States had been incorporated into the Soviet Union by direct expansion. He strongly criticised the colonisation of Latvia and the Russification of the Latvian people and pointed out that Latvians were considered second-class people compared to Russians and were oppressed.²⁴ After his return from a long imprisonment, Elmārs Prauliņš wrote a large philosophical essay "Quo vadis?" ("Problems of Social and Political Life") in which he mercilessly criticised Marxist-Leninist ideology and the imperialist national policy.²⁵ Dailis Rijnieks and Gunārs Rode argued in favour of

²¹ Tony Judt. *A History of Europe Since 1945*. – Riga, 2007, pp 714, 715.

²² NAL, 1986.f., 1.desc., 44990. file, 1.sēj., p 105

²³ NAL 1986.f., 1.desc., 44865. file, 14.sēj., pp 8, 16, 48

²⁴ NAL, 1986.f., 1.desc., 45164. file, pp 51, 172, 179

²⁵ NAL, 1986.f., 1.desc., 43906. file, 1.sēj., pp 252, 255

secession of the Baltic states from the USSR and the establishment of an independent Baltic federation.²⁶ In his poetry, poems, diaries, and other work, Voldemārs Zariņš strongly opposed the colonisation of Latvia, showing how the Latvian people lived under the oppression of foreigners and called on Latvians to unite in the struggle to establish a democratic state order.²⁷ In his last words before the Supreme Court of the LSSR CoM on 15 December 1983, Latvian freedom fighter Gunārs Astra denounced the colonisation and Russification.²⁸

In the summer of 1988, the Latvian intelligentsia began the formation of the Latvian Popular Front (LPF) and held its first congress in October 1988. The LPF became the umbrella organisation of the popular resistance movement for all national democratic forces. On 14 February 1989, the Council of Ministers (CoM) of the LSSR and the Republic Council of Trade Unions of Latvia adopted decisions "On measures to stop the unjustified mechanical growth of the population and to regulate migration processes in the Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic"²⁹ which became the basis for reducing the influx of colonists.

With the restoration of independence in 1990 and the collapse of the USSR, the empire's devastating colonial policies in Latvia came to an end.

The aim of this book is to explore the various aspects of Soviet colonial policy, focusing on issues related to the colonisation of Latvia and the consequences.

²⁶ NAL, 1986.f., 1.desc., 44805. file, 14.sēj., pp 8, 16, 36

²⁷ NAL, 1986.f., 1.desc., 44989. file, pp 2, 7-9

²⁸ The Time of Awakening in Documents - Riga, 1996, pp. 6-12

²⁹ NAL, 270.f., 7.desc., 1614. file, pp 79-92

HISTORIOGRAPHY

The history of the Soviet empire is incomparably more difficult to decipher and study than that of the preceding eras. This is not just because much of the material is still inaccessible today, but also because of the lack of clear, scientifically developed terms. This is also true for the implementation of Soviet colonial policy, processes of colonisation of the periphery of the empire, and for the study of these processes.

This section does not set out to provide a systematic historiography of the issue but only mentions those works which have contributed to the preparation of this monograph.

The comprehensive study of this problem began only at the end of the last century during the restoration of Latvia's independence and at the beginning of this century when the impact of years of unrestricted migration and colonisation on the ethnic Latvian population and distribution of powers between the metropolis (Centre) and the republics (what was decided in Moscow and what in the localities) came to the forefront of public attention. Which orders from the Centre could be relaxed in the Republics and which were implemented in practice in a unceremonious and unclear way? In a totalitarian system, it is, of course, impossible for the executors to change the nature of the system, but they have a certain freedom in demanding the most skilful execution of the orders they receive. It should also be remembered that at that time, all the mechanisms of governance were very secretive, and changes in the power structures were made for reasons that were incomprehensible to the general public. This makes it difficult to assess the role of the leadership of the Latvian Communist Party (LCP) and the government of the republic in the events of the time, including the colonisation of Latvia. As a result of total centralisation, the administration of civil society was superseded by administrative governance.

Among the first to reveal the unrestricted migration and colonisation of Latvia and its devastating consequences were demographers Eglīte³⁰ and historian Jānis Riekstiņš.³¹ Influx of colonists

³⁰ Pārsla Eglīte, Ilmārs Mežs. *Latvijas kolonizācija un etniskā sastāva izmaiņu cēloņi 1944.–1990.gadā* [Colonisation of Latvia and the Causes of Changes in the Ethnic Composition in 1944-1990] - Latvian Historical Commission. Volume 7. *Okupācijas režīmi Latvijā 1940.–1956.gadā* [Occupation regimes in Latvia in 1940-1956] - Rīga, 2002, pp. 405-443; Pārsla Eglīte. *Latvijas iedzīvotāju skaits un etniskā sastāva veidošanās XX gadsimtā*. [The formation of the population and ethnic composition of

into Latvia was closely linked to widespread "socialist industrialisation". These issues are extensively discussed in Irēne Šneidere's³² and Olga Krēgere's work.³³

One of the strongest pillars of the occupation regime was the Soviet Armed Forces troops stationed in Latvia. This is addressed by Ilgonis Upmanis, Jānis Dinevičs, Anatolijs Gorbunovs, Edmunds Stankevičs, and Ēriks Tilgass.³⁴

Much information on this topic can be found in materials published by the Latvian Society for Research on Occupation.³⁵ A collection of articles by Valdis Blūzma, Talavs Jundzis, Jānis Riekstiņš, Heinrihs Strods, and Gene Sharp address the Latvian people's resistance to the occupation regime.³⁶ The impact of migration and colonisation on the language environment in Latvia is discussed in the collection of articles prepared by the Latvian Language Agency.³⁷

Latvia in the 20th century]. - Yearbook of the Occupation Museum. 2001. A Nation in Captivity. - Rīga, 2002, pp. 94-110.

³¹ Jānis Riekstiņš. *Migrantu kolonizācija Latvijā, 1944.gads – 50.gadu vidus* [Migrant colonisation in Latvia, 1944 - mid-1950s Latvian Historical Commission]. Volume 3. Totalitarian regimes and their repressions in Latvia in 1940-1956 - Rīga, 2001, pp. 676-742; Jānis Riekstiņš. *Migrantu privilēģijas dzīvokļu sadalē Latvijā (1941-1956)*. [Migrants' privileges in the distribution of flats in Latvia (1941-1956)]. Vol. 7, pp. 444-493.

³² I. Šneidere. *Socialistiskā industrializācija v Latvijā. Hod, itogi, problēmy*. [Socialist industrialisation in Latvia. Progress, results, problems] – Rīga, 1989.

³³ O.Krēgere. *Industrializācijas destruktīvā politika Latvijā // Komunistiskā totalitārisma un genocīda prakse Latvijā* [The destructive politics of industrialisation in Latvia – The practice of communist totalitarianism and genocide in Latvia]. Conference materials. - Rīga, 1992, pp. 133-143.

³⁴ Ilgonis Upmalis, Ēriks Tilgass, Jānis Dinevičs, Anatolijs Gorbunovs. *Latvija – PSRS karabāze. 1939.–1998.: materiāli un dokumenti par Padomju armijas atrašanos Latvijā un tās izvešanu* [Latvia - a USSR military base. 1939-1998: materials and documents on the presence of the Soviet army in Latvia and its withdrawal] - Rīga, 2006; Ilgonis Upmalis, Ēriks Tilgass, Edmunds Stankevičs. *Latvija padomju militāristu varā. 1939.–1999* [Latvia under Soviet Military Rule]. 1939-1999 - Rīga, 2011.

³⁵ *Padomju Savienības nodarītie zaudējumi Baltijā* [Soviet losses in the Baltics]. Materials of the International Conference in Rīga, 17-18 June 2011. - Rīga, 2013.

³⁶ Valdis Blūzma, Talavs Jundzis, Jānis Riekstiņš, Heinrihs Strods, Džins Šarps. *Nevardarbīgā pretošanās: Latvijas atgūšanas ceļš* [Non-violent resistance: the road to Latvia's recovery]. 1945-1991. - Rīga, 2008.

³⁷ *Migrācijas ietekme uz valodas vidi Latvijā* [The Impact of Migration on the Language Environment in Latvia] - Rīga, 2009.

Latvian scholars Nikolajs Balabkins, Uldis Ģērmanis, Andrievs Ezerģailis, Jānis Mežaks, Tadeušs Puisāns, Aivars Ruņģis, and others have written much on the occupation of Latvia and its colonisation.³⁸ The *History of Latvia in the 20th Century*³⁹ extensively examines and assesses issues related to the colonisation of Latvia. Articles by legal specialists Dietrich Andreas Loeber and Egils Levits were important in the study of legal issues.⁴⁰

From the 18th century until the end of World War I, the territory of Latvia was part of Tsarist Russia. Even then, Latvia was flooded with a huge number of foreigners and colonisation began, which ended only with the establishment of the independent Latvian state on 18 November 1918. The consequences of this colonisation are shown by Marģeris Skujenieks⁴¹ and Jānis Sesks.⁴² Also important in this respect are the studies by G. Baltiņš and N. Baranovskis⁴³ and B. Mežģailis and P. Zvidriņš.⁴⁴

In recent years, Western scholars have produced several important studies on the national, including colonial, policies of Tsarist Russia and the Soviet Union. The colonial policy of Tsarist Russia is discussed in broad terms in a collection of articles edited by American

³⁸ *Okupācijas varu nodarītie postījumi Latvijā 1940-1990. rakstu krājums* [The devastation caused by the occupation powers in Latvia 1940-1990]. Collection of articles - Stockholm - Toronto, 2000; Arturs Landsmanis. *Pastāvēt vai iznīkt. Baltijas tautu destrukcija Padomju Savienībā* [Existing or Perishing. The Destruction of the Baltic Peoples in the Soviet Union] - Stockholm, 1975; Aivars Ruņģis “*iet latvieši caur gadu simteņiem*” [“... Latvians through the centuries”] - Brooklyn, 1982.

³⁹ Daina Bleiere, Ilgvars Butulis, Inesis Feldmanis, Aivars Stranga, Antonijs Zunda. *Latvijas vēsture. 20.gadsimts* [History of Latvia. 20th century] - Riga, 2005.

⁴⁰ D.A.Lēbers. *Latvijas valsts bojāeja 1940.gadā. starptautiskie aspekti. - // Latvijas valsts atjaunošana 1986.-1998.* [The Collapse of the Latvian State in 1940: International Aspects Restoration of the Latvian State 1986-1998] - Riga, 1998, pp. 7-41; E. Levits. *Latvija padomju varā* [Latvia under Soviet rule], *ibid*, pp. 42-63.

⁴¹ Skujenieks M. *Latvija: Zeme un iedzīvotāji* [Latvija: Land and its People] - Riga, 1920.

⁴² Seskis J. *Latvijas valsts izcelšanās un viņas izredzes* [The origin of the Latvian state and its prospects]. - Riga, 1921.

⁴³ G.Baltiņš, N.Baranovskis. *Latvijas valsts izcelšanās un viņas izredzes* [Workforce reproduction in the Latvian SSR] - Riga, 1983.

⁴⁴ B.Mežģailis, P.Zvidriņš. *Latvijas valsts izcelšanās un viņas izredzes* [The population of Soviet Latvia] - Riga, 1973; B.Mežģailis. *Latvijas valsts izcelšanās un viņas izredzes* [Demography of Soviet Latvia: Structure, Processes, Problems]. – Riga, 1985.

professors Ronald Sun and Terry Martin.⁴⁵ A valuable contribution to the study of national relations and Soviet colonial policy is T. Martin's publication⁴⁶ and German professor Victor Dönninghaus work on the situation of national minorities in the Soviet Union.⁴⁷ The “stagnation” of the Soviet Union is described by A. Shubin⁴⁸ and 20th century Russian history by Alexander Vdovin.⁴⁹ Yegor Gaidar, former Deputy Chairman of the CoM of the Russian Federation⁵⁰ analyses the causes and circumstances of the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the *White Book* prepared by the M. Gorbachev Foundation⁵¹ compiles documents and materials from the Politburo of the CCCP, the USSR Supreme Soviet, and other higher authorities from 1985 to 1991. It focuses on national politics and the collapse of the USSR. The colonial policy of the Soviet empire in the Baltics is extensively discussed by Russian historian Yelena Zubkova⁵² and Estonian scholar Tinu Tannberg.⁵³

⁴⁵ *Gosudarstvo nacij: Imperija i nacionalnoe stroitelstvo v epohu Lenina i Stalina*. [The State of Nations: Empire and nation-building in the era of Lenin and Stalin] – Moscow, 2011 (A State of Nation Empire and Nation – Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin. – Oxford, 2001).

⁴⁶ Terry Martin. *Imperia «polozhitelnoj deyatelnosti». Nacii i nacionalizm v SSSR, 1923-1939*. – Moscow, 2011. (Terry Martin. The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939. – Ithaca and London, 2001).

⁴⁷ Victor Dönninghaus. *V teni «Bolshogo Brata». Zapadnye nacionalnye menshinstva v SSSR 1917-1938* [In the shadow of "Big Brother". The Western National Minorities in the USSR 1917-1938] – Moscow, 2011. (Minderheiten in Bedrängnis. Sowjetische Politik gegenüber Deutschen, Polen und anderen Diaspora – Nationalitäten 1917-1938. – München, 2009).

⁴⁸ A.V.Shubin. *Ot «zastoya» k reformam. SSSR v 1917-1985 g.g.* [From "stagnation" to reform. The USSR in 1917-1985] – Moscow, 2001.

⁴⁹ Alexander Vdovin. *Podlinnaya istoriya russkikh. XX vek* [The true history of the Russians. The twentieth century] – Moscow, 2010.

⁵⁰ Yegor Gaidar. *Gibel imperii. Uroki dlya sovremennoi Rossii*. [Collapse of an Empire: Lessons for Modern Russia] – Moscow, 2007.

⁵¹ *Soyuz možno bylo sohranit. Belaja kniga. Dokumenty i fakty o politike M.S.Gorbacheva po reformirovaniyu i sohraneniyu mnogonacionalnogo gosudarstva*. [The Union could have been saved. White Paper. Documents and facts about Gorbachev's policy of reforming and preserving the multinational state] – Moscow, 2007.

⁵² Yelena Zubkova. *Pribaltika i Kreml. 1940-1953*. [The Baltics and the Kremlin. 1940-1953] – Moscow, 2008.

⁵³ Tõnu Tannberg. *Politika Moskvy v respublikah Baltii v poslevoennye gody (1944-1956)*. [Moscow's policy in the Baltic republics in the post-war years (1944-1956).] *Issledovaniya i dokumenty*. [Studies and documents] – Moscow, 2010.

SOURCES

Historical sources are evidence of the past. Working with them is the essence of the historian's research. Each researcher can choose, according to his or her own convictions, a vision of the meaning of his or her work and its significance and draw on a specific body of knowledge. The preparation of this work is largely based on the use of various kinds of statistical material, and it is therefore appropriate to give insight into the statistics of the Soviet Union.

Since the early years of the Bolshevik regime, Marxist-Leninist methodology in statistics became increasingly entrenched. In educational institutions, positions of responsibility were occupied by ideologically trained Party members, whose task it was to consolidate the principles of socialist teaching and accounting and to get rid of those who adhered to "incorrect views". Statistical indicators had to correspond to fixed categories, and any "unnecessary" and "superfluous" information was discarded. To prevent the truth from spreading, authorities and departments were instructed not to publish any figures in the press other than those supplied by the highest authorities. Readers were limited to materials that presented the achievements of the Soviet regime and the results of Soviet propaganda in a favourable light. Any attempt to verify official data was forbidden and censored.

The foundations of Soviet political statistics were laid in the early years of the Soviet totalitarian regime. Russian historian A. Sokolov describes its development:

The political statistics of the long term, from the point of view of the publications of the Soviet period, are a distortion of real political relations. Data on the social and political activity of the working class cannot be recognised as reliable because they served propaganda purposes as a means of manipulating figures. Even the composition of the Soviet representative organs was published mainly as a propaganda stamp. ... According to the 1936 Constitution, elections in the USSR were declared to be equal, direct, and secret. Their results, which were rarely less than 99 per cent or more of the votes cast for Communist and non-party bloc candidates, were regularly published. Rather, they showed the strictest control by the electoral commissions.

Of course, the results could have been presented in a smarter way, but unanimous support for the party and the government in the elections was much stronger.

More reliable information about the political system during the Soviet period should be found in the formerly closed collections ... which contained materials from the Politburo, People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs (NKVD), State Security Committee (KGB), ideological departments of the Party, and state institutions. They reveal and publish information on political discontent, activities of anti-Soviet parties and organisations, repression on socio-political grounds ..., on extension of political terror in 1937-1938, the struggle against the nationalist underground, against the dissident underground, etc.⁵⁴

Demographers Pēteris Zvidriņš and Edvīns Vītoļiņš also note:

As is well known, the methodological and practical issues of statistics were regulated from Moscow during Soviet occupation. Until 1990, most of the main statistical indicators for Latvia were approved by the Central Statistical Office of the USSR. As a rule, they could not be published without the appropriate authorisation. To conceal the extent of repression and population losses, all population data were secret and not published openly until the Khrushchev Thaw.⁵⁵

Statistician Gunārs Baltiņš describes the reliability of Soviet-era data:

In the press, there is sometimes the opinion that in Soviet times, statistics were made up as needed. However, this view is not true, because the production and processing of statistical data, starting with industrial enterprises, construction organisations, and various

⁵⁴ A. K. Sokolov. *Statisticheskie istochniki – Istochnikovedenie novejshej istorii Rossii: Teorija, metodologija, praktika*. [Statistical Sources – Source Studies of Contemporary Russian History: Theory, Methodology, Practice] – M., 2004. p.548-549.

⁵⁵ Pēteris Zvidriņš, Edvīns Vītoļiņš. *Demogrāfiskie zaudējumi un etniskā sastāva izmaiņas Latvijā 1944.–1959.gadā* [Demographic losses and changes in the ethnic composition of Latvia in 1944-1959] Articles of the Latvian Historical Commission. Vol. 9, p. 248.

institutions and organisations and ending with the central statistics authorities was regulated by a whole mountain of instructions, the violation of which in several cases was even criminalised and punishment actually enforced. The Central Statistics Authorities of the Soviet Union achieved the results they needed through specific methodological techniques.⁵⁶

Census records are of great importance for the study of Soviet colonial policies. In the post-war period, census surveys were carried out in 1959, 1970, 1979, and 1989. Eglīte describes the availability of census material:

For researchers who had “access” to service material, more detailed groupings in tables for service use were, however, available after all census surveys. However, calculations or conclusions based on them were not allowed in printed material. The General Directorate of Literature censors checked both the manuscript and typesetting several times, and again before typesetting, printing, and publication to ensure that there were no unreferenced data considered to be secret and no references to service-use material. Even manuscripts based on published data were rejected if their conclusions about changes in the age structure of the Latvian population due to migration and its foreseeable consequence seemed undesirable to the authorities.⁵⁷

The most important source for the study of the colonisation of Latvia and its devastating consequences are the documents in the National Archives of Latvia, file 101 – Central Committee of the Communist (Bolshevik) Party of Latvia. It contains extensive material on the sovietisation of Latvia, the course of socialist industrialisation, and the inability, even unwillingness, to stop the vast migration and colonisation movement in Latvia. Particularly valuable in this respect

⁵⁶ Gunārs Baltiņš. *Padomju perioda statistikas metodoloģijas specifika* [Specifics of statistical methodology in the Soviet period] Latvian Historical Commission Articles. Vol. 9, p. 243.

⁵⁷ Pārsla Eglīte. *Latvijas iedzīvotāju skaita un etniskā sastāva veidošanās XX gadsimtā* [The formation of the population and ethnic composition of Latvia in the 20th century] - Museum of Occupation Yearbook. A Nation in Captivity, p.94.

are the materials of the Bureau and Secretariat of the Central Committee of the LCP and of plenums and congresses, which, if examined, may provide an answer to the question of why, under certain historical conditions, the colonisation of Latvia assumed such sinister proportions. Spontaneous migration is revealed by CSO of the LSSR documents (file 277) and organised migration by LSSR State Planning Committee (file 693), Workers' Organised Reception Office of the LSSR CoM (file 1399), and LSSR CoM (file 270) documents, which indisputably prove that spontaneous migration was accompanied by planned or organised migration. This is also confirmed by Riga City Executive Committee documents (file 1400).

Many documents on the colonisation of Latvia have been published in the collections of the National Archives of Latvia, the Institute of History of the University of Latvia, and the Centre for Strategic Baltic Studies of the Latvian Academy of Sciences.⁵⁸ Important in understanding the topic is the memoirs of Eduards Berklavs, leader of the Latvian national communists, *Zināt un neaizmirst* [Know and Never Forget]⁵⁹. He also published a letter denouncing the colonisation and Russification of Latvia – *17 latviešu*

⁵⁸ *Okupācijas varu politika Latvija 1939-1991* [Politics of the occupying powers Latvia 1939-1991]. Collection of documents. (Ed. Elmārs Pelkaus) Riga, 1999; *Latvija Padomju režīma varā 1945.–1986.* [Latvia under the Soviet Regime 1945-1986]. Collection of documents. (Ed. Irēne Šneidere). Riga, 2001; *Nevardarbīgā pretošanās: Latvijas neatkarības atgūšana (1945-1991) dokumentos. 1.sējums. Nevardarbīgā pretošanās padomju okupācijas režīmam (1945-1985).* [Non-violent Resistance: Latvia's Independence (1945-1991) in Documents. Volume 1. Non-violent resistance to the Soviet occupation regime (1945-1985)]. (Collection by Heinrihs Strods, Jānis Riekstiņš. Ed. Tālavš Jundzis.). Riga, 2013; Jānis Riekstiņš. *Migranti Latvija 1944-1989. Dokumenti* [Migrants in Latvia 1944-1989. Documents]. Riga, 2004; Jānis Riekstiņš. *Izpostītā zeme. PSRS okupācijas armijas nodarītie zaudējumi Latvijas kultūrvidei. Dokumenti* [Devastated Land. Losses to Latvia's Cultural Environment caused by the USSR Occupation Army. Documents.] Riga, 1994; *Izpostītā zeme. PSRS okupācijas armijas nodarītie zaudējumi Latvijas laukiem. Dokumenti* [Devastated Land. Losses inflicted by the USSR occupation army on the Latvian countryside. Documents.] Riga, 1997; *Izpostītā zeme. PSRS okupācijas armijas nodarītie zaudējumi Latvijas laukiem. Dokumenti* [Devastated Land. The USSR military in Riga. Documents.] Riga, 1998; Jānis Riekstiņš. *Par latviešu valodu. Pret rusifikāciju. Dokumenti* [In favour of Latvian language. Against Russification. Documents]

⁵⁹ Berklavs E. *Zināt un neaizmirst* [To Know and Not to Forget]. Riga, 1998.

komunistu vēstule [Letter by 17 Latvian Communists]⁶⁰, which was also signed by Emma Erenštreite, Jānis Kacens, Jānis Galdiņš, Arnolds Zandmanis, Valentīna Borka, Jānis Gustsons, Pāvels Pizāns, and others. Berklavs explained why the letter was written and its purpose: "There were two main reasons: One – we wanted to inform the potentially most beneficial and largest communist parties, their leaders and, of course, the world community about what the actions of the Russian imperialists masquerading under the name of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and noble phrases really were – the conquest of other countries and the Russification of small nations, and two – ask the leaders of the Communist Parties of these countries and the world community to influence the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, thereby hoping to save Latvians from Russification, terror, and genocide."⁶¹

The opening paragraph of the letter "Who are we?" describes the authors' political beliefs ("We are not opportunists, we are not 'left' or 'right'. We are communists.") and draws an important conclusion:

In time we became convinced that **Bolshevik chauvinism was a carefully devised course by the leaders of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union**, the forced assimilation of the small nations of the USSR was destined to be one of the most important domestic tasks for the near future."⁶² The letter discusses at length the decisions of the June 1953 Plenary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party on the "gross distortions of national policy", shows the "national-communist resistance, the "gradual Russification of Latvia", and in the section "Forced assimilation programme" states: "... the main task is to **resettle as many Russians, Belarusians, and Ukrainians as possible from Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine and to settle them permanently in Latvia (and in the other Baltic republics).**"⁶³

⁶⁰ Berklavs E. *Zināt un neaizmirst* [To Know and Not to Forget], pp 322-334.

⁶¹ Berklavs E. *Zināt un neaizmirst* [To Know and Not to Forget], p 348

⁶² *Ibid*, p 322.

⁶³ *Ibid*, p 326.

The letter was a detailed denunciation of Soviet colonisation and Russification policies. It was the first time Latvian national communists expressed their views collectively, accusing the Soviet Communist Party of a policy of colonisation and Russification in a letter to the leaders of the communist parties of Italy, Yugoslavia, France, Spain and other countries and specifically to French communist writer Louis Aragon and columnist Roger Garaudy, recently expelled from the French Communist Party.

The letter was delivered to Bruno Kalniņš, head of the Foreign Committee of the LSDSP and Uldis Ģērmanis in Stockholm, who prepared it for publication in the LSDSP Foreign Committee monthly *Freedom* (January 1972). Simultaneously, the letter was broadcasted in Russian by Radio Liberty and then picked up by many other stations. The "Letter by 17 Latvian Communists" was published by newspapers around the world and widely reported on, and was used by Latvian exile organisations to denounce the colonisation of Latvia and the Russification of the Latvian people. It was included in the US Congressional Record.

Historian Jānis Amols rightly assesses the resonance of this letter:

The unprecedented attention paid by the mass media to the **Letter by 17 Latvian Communists**, as well as the resonance that the publication of this document caused both in the West and in the 'socialist camp', allow us to consider this letter as one of the most significant and successful Latvian anti-Soviet protest actions in the post-war period of occupation. The **Letter by 17 Latvian Communists** is perhaps the most significant and successful episode of the Latvian anti-Russification struggle during the Soviet occupation after the "purges" of 1959 up to the "singing revolution" of the late 1980s and early 1990s ...; it was an outstanding example of joint and successful cooperation between local and exiled Latvians in their struggle against the occupying power. The logistics of the letter's authors and distributors to ensure its widest possible dissemination in the West should be appreciated as outstanding.⁶⁴

⁶⁴ Amols I. *Izcils nacionālās pretestības paraugs. - // Okupācijas varu nodarītie postījumi Latvijā* [An outstanding example of national resistance. The devastation caused by the occupying powers in Latvia], p.460.

Although the designers and implementers of Soviet national policy were forced to reckon not only with the patriotic sentiment of the Latvian people, but also with the reaction of Western countries, widespread colonisation continued until Latvia regained its independence.

CHAPTER 1

The Colonial Policy of the Tsarist Empire. Colonisation and Russification of Latvia

1.1. Subjugation and colonisation of the Empire's periphery

If the English textbook convincingly treats the Indian colonial period as a "civilisation" of Indian tribes realised by heroic and selfless missionaries, the Indian textbook will describe the same period of history with horrific facts of brutal metropolitan violence and oppression of Indians. And there will be no words of gratitude to the colonisers in the pages of the book.⁶⁵

In April 1989 at a discussion in Moscow on the problems of intranational relations, popular Soviet artist Ilya Glazunov claimed that Russia was the only country that had no colonies.⁶⁶ Such beliefs have existed for a long time. In the history of the Russian Empire, it would be hard to find the terms "colony, expansion, and conquest. Formulations such as "conquest of new lands", "at their own request", and "joined" were preferred. However, as historian J. Anisimov rightly pointed out in his article "Shards of Empire", "...the imperial ideology of the movement to the East was guided by the typical Eurocentric notion of 'empty', 'unoccupied' expanses inhabited by 'savage hordes'. These 'savages' supposedly understood only the language of violence and were not subject not only to international law, but not even to the Christian ethic."⁶⁷

Since the liberation from the yoke of the Golden Horde, the Russian people had been involved in wars of conquest, which increased the geographical territory, including Russification and assimilation of

⁶⁵ Aleksandrs Ņikonovs. Who's first? The central enigma of World War II. Riga, 2011, p.4.

⁶⁶ Pravda, 3 Apr 1983

⁶⁷ Y. Anisimov. *Oskolki imperii* [Shards of the empire]. *Moskovskie novosti* [Moscow News] No. 51, 1989.

other peoples. This expansion were limited only by natural boundaries: in the north and east by the oceans and in the south by mountains and deserts, but in the west, where there were no such obstacles, the addition of new territories took place in every conceivable and, for the most part, unimaginable way. American politician and diplomat Henry Kissinger describes the Tsarist colonial policy:

Throughout its history, Russia has always been a special case. It appeared late on the European scene – well after the unification of France and Britain – and none of the traditional principles of European diplomacy seem to apply to it. Russia borders on three very different cultural spheres – Europe, Asia, and the Islamic world – and is populated by representatives of all these cultures. Russia has therefore never been a national state in the European sense. Constantly changing its borders, annexing neighbouring territories, Russia was an empire that could not be compared in size with any European country. What is more, with each new conquest, the character of the state changed as it incorporated yet another entirely new, intransigent non-Russian ethnic group. ... As Russia expanded from its original territories around Moscow towards the centre of Europe, the Pacific and Central Asia, its efforts to increase its security turned into expansion only to justify itself.⁶⁸

The subjugation of peoples took different forms. Sometimes, a nation's ruling group decided to adopt Russian citizenship, but more often than not, annexation was the result of hostilities organised by the Russian government, and the peoples incorporated into Russia became the object of colonial policy. This is evidenced by numerous examples.

One of the cruellest pages in the history of Russia's subjugation of other peoples is the conquest of the Caucasus. As early as the 17th century, punitive expeditions by Tsarist officers were organised in the North Caucasus. In these expeditions, the Tsar's generals subjected the highlanders to ruthless reprisals on the basis of joint responsibility, making large masses of the indigenous population of the North Caucasus answer for the actions of elements hostile to Russia. In 1822, during a campaign on the far side of River Kuban, the Cossack ataman M. Vlasov burnt 17 Circassian domes and confiscated thousands of

⁶⁸ Henry Kissinger. *Diplomacy*. – R., 1994, p 17, 145.

cattle.⁶⁹ In 1829, Tsar Nicholas I of Russia, in a petition to the Caucasian commander-in-chief I. Paskevich, demanded he "pacify the highland peoples once and for all or to exterminate the disobedient".⁷⁰ This directive further reinforced the Tsar's unbridled arbitrariness against the highlanders. The expeditions and reconnaissance marches organised by the Tsar's officers to force obedience on the local population were bloody and rife with military plunder. This was particularly evident during the conquest of the Western Caucasus. At a meeting of the Caucasus Viceroy and Commander-in-Chief Baryatinsky's staff in August 1860, where the objectives and methods of future operations were being discussed, one of the commanders of the Russian troops, N. Yevdokimov declared that intimidation and terror were the only way to deal with the highlanders and recommended that the entire population of the Western Caucasus be expelled from their homes to the Kuban or the Stavropol plains, or to Turkey, and that Russians be settled on their lands. This plan was accepted and implemented. To achieve their objectives, Russian troops burnt down the highland domes and either captured or killed the inhabitants. In his report on the last phase of this operation, Yevdokimov stated that he had achieved his goal: by 1864, the expulsion of the natives from the Western Caucasus had been completed.⁷¹ The official report on this violent operation ended with: "Now, in 1864, a fact has happened which is almost unprecedented in history: the mountain natives have suddenly disappeared from the land, an astonishing upheaval has taken place among them, none of the mountain inhabitants remain in their former place of residence and all are trying to clear the district in order to give it to the new Russian inhabitants."⁷² In 1864/1865, Russian officials carried out a number of surveys to determine how many

⁶⁹ *PSRS vēsture. I sējums. No vissenākajiem laikiem līdz 1861. gadam* [History of the USSR. Volume I. From the Earliest Times to 1861] - Riga, 1967, p. 642.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ Peter Holquist. *Vychislit, izyat i istrebit: Statistika i politika naselenija v poslednie gody carskoj imperii i v Sovetskoj Rossii. Gosudarstvo natsiy: Imperiya i nacionalnoe stroitelstvo v epohu Lenina i Stalina* [Calculate, Seize and Exterminate: Statistics and Population Policies in the Last Years of the Tsarist Empire and in Soviet Russia. The State of Nations: Empire and nation-building in the era of Lenin and Stalin]. M., 2011, p. 147.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p 149

highlanders were left living in the region. From these studies and the reports of the commission on the resettlement of Russians, the officials concluded that between 400,000-480,000 highlanders had left with only around 500,000 remaining. Scholars, on the other hand, believe that between 1859 and 1879, two million people were forced to leave the Caucasus. It is assumed that a quarter of them perished.⁷³

The annexation of new territories to Russia has always been linked to the colonisation of these lands. After the conquest of Transvolga, huge serf estates were established, as well as court and monastic properties. Immediately after the annexation of Bashkiria to Russia, people from the Volga region began to arrive. Russians settled mainly on the outskirts of Bashkiria. The government also built towns where Russian service people were settled and given land. In the late 16th and 17th centuries, Siberian regions were incorporated into the Russian state, one after the other where the Russian population grew rapidly. Every year, thousands of people employed in trade and industry arrived in Siberia and dispersed throughout the region in search of "good, stable areas". Alongside the big merchants and their representatives, there were also poorly educated people who went to Siberia, working within their meagre means or becoming servants of the rich. People were also forced to Siberia and volunteers were recruited. In the Far East, Tsarist officials robbed and oppressed undeveloped local tribes and peoples. In the North Caucasus, Tsarist colonial policy distributed the best lands of the Fore-Caucasus to the Russian nobility, while the nomadic Nogays and Kalmyks were driven to the distant, dry and salty lands of the Caspian lowlands. In the foothills, the area used by the indigenous population was decreasing due to Cossack military expansion and colonisation. Land plunder was particularly rapid in Bashkiria, Orenburg, and Ufa provinces. By the 1880s, Bashkirs were deprived of about two million decimals of land, which was given to the Russian aristocracy and government officials.

In the 1850s and 1860s, Russian ruling circles began to draw up plans for the political subjugation of the lands of Central Asia and the South Caucasus. The conquest of Central Asia was complete within ten years. In the mid-1980s, Turkmen lands were incorporated into Russia. In a relatively short time (1864-1895), the annexation of huge areas of

⁷³ Ibid.

Central Asia was complete. New lands were incorporated into Russia mainly by conquest, and the inhabitants of some areas accepted Russian rule without armed resistance.

The Tsar's government viewed Central Asia as its colony. The Tsar's generals and officials determined the administrative-political division of the Central Asian and Kazakh territories and the military-administrative governance. Administrative governance in Central Asia was typical of colonial administration. Immediately after the conquest, Russian peasants began to colonise Kazakhstan and Northern Kirghizia. There were no vacant lands for colonisation in other areas of Central Asia. There were few Russian colonisers in the countryside: Russian settlers poured into the towns, where the old "Asian" town was usually joined by the "new Russian" town. The new towns were the centres of Russian colonial administration.⁷⁴ In the national fringes, the Russian government first destroyed the institutions that had survived there from earlier times, and then, not content with this alone, began to implement a policy of consistent Russification.

With the subjugation and annexation of new lands came a massive exodus of peasants from the central and western Russian provinces to the southern and south-eastern areas of the empire. The peasants hoped to settle in the free lands that did not belong to the nobility. Rumours persisted that all settlers were promised freedom. Alarmed by this news, thousands of peasants left their homelands and made their way to the Caucasus or across the Volga. Unable to stop the peasants, the nobles turned to the Tsar's administration for help. Cordons of regular troops were placed along the roads; mass roundups of peasants were carried out and those who were captured were forcibly taken back to their homes.

The 1905 Revolution forced the tsarist government to move from restricting migration to encouraging it. The main cause was the defeat of the peasants in the Revolution of 1905-1907 when peasants' hopes of obtaining land from the nobility were temporarily dashed. Additionally, the industry that had survived the depression could not absorb all the poor fleeing the countryside. Between 1906 and 1916, a total of 3,139,000 peasants left for Siberia, the Far East, the Steppe region, and

⁷⁴ *PSRS vēsture. II sējums. 1861-1917* [History of the USSR. Volume II. 1861-1917] - Rīga, 1968, pp. 155-158.

Turkmenistan. Migration increased until 1909 (679,000 people), but began to decline and stopped completely during World War I.⁷⁵

On the methods used to administer the subjugated territories, American scholar Ronald Suny writes: "As soon as a region was incorporated into the empire, the tsarist state was ready to use brute force to prevent its loss. The rebellions were ruthlessly suppressed."⁷⁶ This was also the case in Central Asia. After the conquest of the Caucasus, Central Asia became the arena for the development of colonialism. The Tsar's officials believed that in the Semirechyenskaya Oblast, for example, the Russian population was less than 50%, and that Russian colonisation must therefore be intensified at all costs in order to improve the ethnographic 'physiognomy' of Central Asia, to strengthen the ethnic predominance of the Russians. The Russian Government supported several studies to determine how best to send the 'Russian element' there. In 1905, Semirechye was chosen as the main place of settlement for Russian settlers. An imperial inspector called the local colonising officials "fanatics", who often did not get along with the local authorities and who "had the intention of settling emigrants in this region". A military-statistical description of the Semirechye district, published in 1910, recommended taking hostages from rebel families in the event of an uprising by the local population and separating the "moderates" from the "incorrigibles". The remaining "gangs" of restive elements were to be either exterminated or driven across the border.⁷⁷ Such riots did happen.

In 1916, a spontaneous uprising for national liberation broke out across Turkestan. In early June during the Muslim fast, a decree was issued, circumventing existing legislation, to mobilise foreigners aged

⁷⁵ *PSRS vēsture. II sējums* [History of the USSR. Volume II], p. 445.

⁷⁶ Ronald Grigor Suny. *Imperia kak takovaya: Imperskaya Rossiya, «natsionalnaya» identichnost i teorija imperii. Gosudarstvo natsii: Imperiya i natsionalnoe stroitelstvo v epohu Lenina i Stalina* [Empire as such: Imperial Russia, "national" identity and the theory of empire. A State of Nations: Empire and Nation-making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin], p.50.

⁷⁷ Peter Holquist. *Vychislit, izyat i istrebit: Statistika i politika naselenija v poslednie gody carskoj imperii i v Sovetskoj Rossii. Gosudarstvo natsiy: Imperiya i nacionalnoe stroitelstvo v epohu Lenina i Stalina* [Calculate, Seize and Exterminate: Statistics and Population Policies in the Last Years of the Tsarist Empire and in Soviet Russia. The State of Nations: Empire and nation-building in the era of Lenin and Stalin], p.151.

19-43 who had not previously been conscripted for work behind the front. The families of those mobilised were effectively subjected to starvation. In response to the announcement of such mobilisation, the local population began to dismantle railway lines, burn railway stations, and kill those who kept records of those to be mobilised. The violent riots turned into a widespread anti-Russian revolt. It was mainly driven by Russian peasants who had moved to Central Asia from the European parts of the empire.

A colonial official wrote: "The Russian peasants who come here are made up of the low-lives of Inner Russia. They have a predatory farming system, and until the war they were very poor. ... Contempt for the Kirghiz (at that time the Kazakhs were also known as Kirghiz – J.R.) cannot win the trust of the Muslims by constant cheating and exploitation of Kirghiz labour."⁷⁸ The locals declared that "the Russian peasants have declared themselves to be rebels to justify their atrocious murders and seize their lands."

To put down the rebellion, Russian commanders formed punitive units from "Russian elements" who had gathered. The military governor of Semirechye Oblast, General Feldbaum, ordered his subordinates to exterminate every rebel, burn down the nomad settlements, and drive away the cattle. Many Russian volunteer units were also ordered to drive the Kirghiz into the mountains and exterminate them there.⁷⁹ The Assistant to the Governor-General of Turkestan reported that the punitive units "methodically and systematically exterminated women and children".⁸⁰

Large-scale uprisings took place in many parts of Turkestan. In Tashkent, the police headquarters was vandalised. The unrest quickly spread to Uzbek towns and councils. In Krasnovodsk district, Turkmens

⁷⁸ Vladimir Buldakov. *Krasnaya smuta. Priroda i posledstviya revoliucionnogo nasiliya*. [The Red Troubles. The nature and consequences of revolutionary violence] – Moscow, 2000, p. 69.

⁷⁹ Peter Holquist. *Vychislit, izyat i istrebit: Statistika i politika naselenija v poslednie gody carskoj imperii i v Sovetskoj Rossii. Gosudarstvo natsiy: Imperiya i nacionalnoe stroitelstvo v epohu Lenina i Stalina* [Calculate, Seize and Exterminate: Statistics and Population Policies in the Last Years of the Tsarist Empire and in Soviet Russia. The State of Nations: Empire and nation-building in the era of Lenin and Stalin], p.152.

⁸⁰ *Ibid* p. 174.

revolted. The rebellious Kirghiz besieged the towns of Prezhevalsk and Tokman. Severe rebellions also broke out in Turgai. Punitive expeditions were carried out on all the participants in the uprising.

Although the Russian authorities later blamed the violence on the punitive expeditionary troops, it was evident that the situation was also being exploited by settlers from the European part of Russia and local Cossacks who intended to "drive out the Horde" and seize local land. To create districts with a homogeneous Russian population, the military governor of Turkestan had prepared a plan to evict the local population from some districts of Semirechye and to resettle Russians on their land. This plan was interrupted by the collapse of the Tsarist regime in 1917.

1.2. Colonisation and Russification of Latvian settlements

The Latvian territories were annexed to Russia in the 18th century. After the Great Northern War, Vidzeme was annexed in 1721 and Latgale in 1772. Courland was the last of the Latvian regions to be annexed. Russian Tsar Peter I created the Vidzeme Governorate, which also included part of Estonia. Riga was the residence of the Russian governor, and a military garrison was stationed there. The Duchy of Courland and Semigallia also came under Russian control. Latgale was first annexed to the Pskov Governorate, but in 1778 it was incorporated into the Polotsk Governorate and in 1796 into the Vitebsk Governorate.

Until the 19th century, the Tsarist government interfered little in the internal life of the Baltic Governates, giving wide autonomy to the German nobility. The situation changed in the second half of the century when the idea of a united Russia became the *leitmotif* of domestic politics. Russification began in the Baltics.

Imperial interests dictated the course of events. In June 1867, tsar Alexander II addressed the governors of the Baltic Governates and invited them to "become an integral part of the Russian family". At that time, St Petersburg decided to change its attitude towards the Baltic Governates and begin implementing a policy of gradual Russification through administrative methods based on the basic principles of state unity. Direct pressure was exerted to this end. For example, the right to

buy estates in Lithuania was granted only to persons of Russian origin. At the same time, the Russian government tried to spread Orthodoxy by persecuting people who had converted from Orthodoxy to Lutheranism. Pressure from the authorities increased: in 1890 Russian was declared the language of instruction in Baltic schools and at the University of Tartu. The Russian government finally listened to its extremists. One such extremist, Yuri Samarin, preached: "In the Baltic region it is necessary that all the local intelligentsia, so to speak, be re-educated in relation to Russia ..., legislative and police measures are not enough for this." Samarin exclaimed: "No one has thought of giving the Russians living in the Baltic region and those attached to it the rights that, by law, those living in the inner governates of the empire have. I believe that we have the right to demand that the Baltic regional judicial authorities complete all paperwork in Russian." Disagreeing with the Baltic Germans about colonisation, Samarin wrote: "Vidzeme belongs to us, and we obviously have some reason, in any case, together with our fellow citizens who belong to other tribes, to believe that we were at home and not visiting somebody when we came here."⁸¹

Russification of the entire Baltic region soon began and was widely implemented.

Latvian politician, statistician, and publicist Mārgers Skujenieks summed up Russification in 1920:

The dark, all-consuming era of Russification was dawning. Already in 1869, the government opened purely Russian-based Alexander Gymnasium. In 1884, the former county schools were converted into Russian city schools. In 1887, even national schools were Russified, and soon Latvian children had to learn in Russian, which they did not understand, from the first day of school. The courts were also Russified, and the judges could only talk to the accused and witnesses with the help of interpreters. In Latgale, even interpreters were not allowed, and trials were held even though the judges did not know what the complainant had said. When Senator Manesin audited the Baltic institutions between 1883 and 1885, most Latvians expected favourable changes from this audit. But instead, the most ruthless policy of Russification took hold and continued. The local population

⁸¹ Y. Samarin. *Otvēt g.g. Bokku i Shirenu po povodu «Okrainy Rossii»* [Response to Messrs. Boccu and Shiren on "The Russian Outskirts"]. – Berlin, 1870, p. 43.

was pushed even further from participation in administration of the land and replaced by an all-dominating Russian official, who was a stranger to local life and needs and who was guided only by the Central Government's levelling and uniform orders And once again the Latvian people were sentenced to death – they were condemned to be Russified.⁸²

At the time, diplomat, teacher, and journalist Jānis Seskis noted:

... But the Russian government was not content with the spiritual oppression of the Latvian people; it acted with more tangible means. The Russian Land Bank bought up the Latvian estates, which were divided up and sold for good terms or given away for nothing to Russian peasants. Many Russian settlers were specifically introduced into Latgale, which had to withstand the strongest Russification. Shortly before the war, Krivoshein, a member of the Ministry of Agriculture, drew up a plan to resettle 300,000 Russian peasants on the crown estates of Courland. Such a project would have turned Courland into a land of mixed nationalities and threatened the Latvian people with complete displacement from their homeland. The government was not thinking of the landless Latvians and the welfare of the workers, but of the spread of Russian national power and the destruction of the national Latvian people.⁸³

Initially, Russification was particularly pronounced in Latgale where, after the Polish uprising of 1863, crown land was deliberately sold almost exclusively to settlers from Russia: in a relatively short time the Russian population there increased almost sevenfold. In the middle of the 19th century, about 20,000 Russians lived in the Latvian-populated districts of Vitebsk Governorate, some of whom were Old Believers who had arrived long before, but the 1897 census indicated 144,324 settlers. Similar plans were made for Courland, providing for substantial land allowances for newcomers from Russia, simultaneously distributing materials among Latvians about the possibilities of buying cheap land in Siberia or in various other Russian governorates. In both

⁸² Skujenieks M. *Latvija: Zeme un iedzīvotāji* [Latvija: Land and its People], pp 370, 371.

⁸³ Seskis J. *Latvijas valsts izcelšanās un viņas izredzes* [The origin of the Latvian state and its prospects], pp. 17, 18.

cases, the low price of land was ensured by the Peasants' Land Bank, clearly showing that the tsarist state was pursuing political aims.⁸⁴

After the defeat in the 1905-1907 Revolution, when many Latvians were killed or deported, the colonisation policy was intensified. In his memoirs, former Russian Prime Minister S. Witte described Russian national policy of that time:

[Remote areas] began to take revenge for all the many years of oppression and the absolutely correct measures which, however, were not seen in a favourable light by the conquered foreigners. The mistake of all our many decades of politics is that we have not yet realised that since Peter the Great and Catherine the Great there is no Russia, but there is the Russian empire. When about 35% of the population are foreigners, and Russians are divided into Great Russians, Little Russians, and Russian Balts, it is impossible to pursue a policy in the 19th and 20th centuries which ignores the national characteristics of the other nationalities which have entered the Russian empire – their religion, their language and other. The motto of such an empire cannot be "I will turn everyone into a Russian". Such an ideal cannot create a shared ideal of all the subjects of the Russian Emperor, unite all the inhabitants, create one political soul.⁸⁵

But his views did not become popular.

It was difficult for the Tsarist government to determine the actual number of Russians in the Baltics as the 1897 census did not ask about nationality but about people's mother tongue. There were many mixed marriages. Nor could the information on affiliation with the Orthodox Church be used as there were many Old Believers and Orthodox among Latvians. Therefore, to determine the number of Russians in the Baltics, the government requested information from the governors of Vidzeme,

⁸⁴ M. Baltiņš. *Migrācija un valoda – attiecību vēsture Latvijā. Dažas vēsturiskas paralēles ar XX gs. Sākumu. // Migrācijas ietekme uz valodas vidi Latvijā* [Migration and language - a history of relations in Latvia. Some historical parallels with the 20th century. The beginning of the 20th century. The impact of migration on the language environment in Latvia], p. 40.

⁸⁵ Ronald Grigor Suny. *Imperia kak takovaya: Imperskaya Rossiya, «natsionalnaya» identichnost i teorija imperii. Gosudarstvo natsii: Imperiya i natsionalnoe stroitelstvo v epohu Lenina i Stalina* [Empire as such: Imperial Russia, "national" identity and the theory of empire. A State of Nations: Empire and Nation-making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin], pp.74, 75.

Courland, and Estonia in June 1906. Privy Councillor P. Koshkin prepared an extensive report on the Russian population in the Baltic region:

The consolidation of Russian statehood in the Baltic region must take place on the one hand, by consolidating the welfare of the peasantry of the Baltic region and on the other hand, by transferring Russians from the inner provinces of the empire In conclusion, it cannot be overlooked that the question of strengthening the Russian element in the Baltic region must not only consider the struggle with the German population. The striving, sometimes even instinctive, for self-determination of one's own people" is quite strong among the main local groups of people, i.e., the Latvians and Estonians. The power of the Russian state, together with the strengthening of the Russian element, must be directed towards binding Latvians and Estonians to Russian culture and Russian statehood. In these measures, a consistent effort should be made to replace local positions of special influence with Russians who are aware of the important national task of their service in the Baltic region.⁸⁶

Based on his report, the Provisional Governor-General of the Baltics Meller-Zakomelsky reported on 30 October 1908 on the situation in the Baltic Governorates to the Chairman of the Russian CoM P. Stolypin:

Adding particulars of the Russian population in the Baltic district, on the points raised in letter No. 4470 of 4 October, I report to Your Serenity that these particulars, partly collected by the Privy Councillor Koshkin and partly taken from the files of my administration, are incomplete, but that much more detailed (information) is not available either to the Governor or to the other authorities of the district government.

From this information it is evident that the cultural development of the Russian population is rather weak, as can be seen from the large number of illiterates, which exceeds that of all other peoples in the region.

⁸⁶ *Imperskaya politika Rossii v Pribaltike v nachale XX veka. Sbornik dokumentov i materialov* [Russian imperial policy in the Baltics at the beginning of the twentieth century. Collection of documents and materials]. – Tartu, 2000, pp. 330, 332.

The social influence of the Russian population must be acknowledged to be close to zero. The recent laws on freedom of conscience and on the opening of schools with instruction in local languages certainly do not contribute to the consolidation of Russian statehood and culture. Instruction in local languages should be permitted only in the first year of schooling and only where the pupils are of one nationality only, but in a mixed composition, Russian should be compulsory, except only for the teaching of other faiths, church singing, and the language of each of those nations as a subject of instruction.

For this reason, it is necessary to open as many Russian elementary schools as possible in the region because even in Riga there are not enough of them and many Russian children, because of the lack of places in Russian schools, remain illiterate.

In the recent past, many Latvians and Estonians converted from Orthodoxy to Lutheranism, breaking their last ties with the Russians. The reasons for this sad phenomenon are the weak composition of the Russian clergy, especially in the countryside, their inactivity, laziness, and lack of spiritual development, some of them even indulging in a harmful and reprehensible life, thus driving many of their members away from Orthodoxy.

It is hard to fight pastors who are much more developed with better resources with those who also lack dedication. For example, the Archbishop of Riga himself does not visit the diocese, except in Mitava.

Germans, Latvians, and Estonians are equally hostile to Russians, and Latvians and Estonians are either nationalists or social revolutionaries.

The whole region is looking forward to more reforms soon, especially the zemstvos and churches.

The Russians (wherever they are present in sufficient numbers) should be given the right to elect deputies to zemstvos and cities, independently of general elections with other nationalities. ...

Finally, it is best to give land to all Russians in the region, relative to the natives, to create a layer of Russian landlords, instead of foreign servants and landless workers. For this purpose, the land acquired by the Crown and the Land Bank should be placed in a special fund. It is necessary to organise the transfer of people from the inner governates to such land and to create permanent farms with sufficient supplies, it is

necessary to give each family no less than 15-20 dessiatins of land. As for the landless Latvians and Estonians, they could be given land in the northern Russian provinces, Siberia, and the Polish lands.

There is no doubt that it is important for every Russian that their nationality is truly dominant in the region.

It is necessary that all these measures do not remain mere proposals. It is therefore necessary both to work out the details of these initiations in this respect, with precise instructions to the local authorities concerned as to how they are to be carried out, and to allocate substantial sums of money from the state treasury to the local authorities for the purpose of carrying out the measures to provide Russian peasants with land.

I consider it my duty to add that the question raised in the letter to Your Serenity about the cultural and economic uplifting of the Russian population in the region is too broad, and therefore requires more detailed local research to be properly resolved.⁸⁷

This was the programme for the colonisation of the Baltic region. But by then, much had already been done.

After the Baltic region was incorporated into the Russian empire, its leading politicians and economists began to pay attention to its favourable geographical position. It was the closest the Russian empire came to industrially developed Western Europe. However, the low level of manufacturing did not allow for economic development of this territory. One of the negative factors was a shortage of workforce. Already in the middle of the 19th century, Riga was experiencing a constant shortage of workers caused by the forced system of wage labourers and agricultural monopoly and the lack of a workforce in the Baltic governates in general. This situation ended with the passport law of 1863 when workers were allowed to move freely between industries and territories.

Industry developed rapidly and transport links with the Russian inner governates were established, and Latvia attracted and provided employment for Western and Central Russian peasants who left their homesteads and moved to the cities where living and working conditions were better than in the countryside.

⁸⁷ *Imperskaya politika Rossii v Pribaltike v nachale XX veka*. [Russian imperial policy in the Baltics at the beginning of the twentieth century], pp. 313, 314.

Riga became a major industrial centre. By the end of the 1870s, Riga was the third largest industrial city in Russia after St Petersburg and Moscow. The development of the manufacturing sector in Latvia required a new influx of workforce.

From 1863 to 1913 the total population of Latvia increased by 1,000,287 thousand people of which the natural increase was 983,000 and immigration 304,000, i.e., 76 % and 24 % respectively. The highest immigration growth was in the most industrialised part of Latvia, Vidzeme and Riga. Between 1897 and 1913, incoming population of Vidzeme (Latvian part) outnumbered outgoing population by 248,000 people.⁸⁸

In 1913, the largest factory in Riga and Latvia was the *Provodnik* rubber factory with about 14,000 workers, the Russian-Baltic wagon factory in Riga employed about 4000, and the Phoenix wagon factory – 3500 workers. The permanent population of Latvia did not need large-scale industry. This large industry was based not only on Latvia's long-term permanent residents, but also on workers who had come from other areas of the Russian empire. Statistician Alfred Ceichner wrote:

In 1913, a total of 173,000 Russians, Poles, and Lithuanians lived in Riga, but in 1930 only 58,000, which is 115,000 less, only a third. Most of these people who worked mainly as labourers in Riga's industries were not natives at all, but they were immigrants from Russia, Poland, and Lithuania (then parts of the Russian state) arriving in the final years before 1914–1918 and finding work in Riga's rapidly growing industries. When Riga's industries almost came to a standstill during and after the war, these people and their families returned to their homelands. The permanent population of Latvia did not need such a large pre-war (i.e., before 1914) industry and it was necessary to look outside Latvia for workforce.⁸⁹

In the second half of the 19th century, the voices of the oppressed and formerly silent peoples began to be heard. Latvians, Estonians, Georgians, Poles, Crimean and Kazan Tatars, and many others increasingly declared their right to autonomy. As a rule, at that time,

⁸⁸ B.Mežgailis, P.Zvidriņš. *Padomju Latvijas iedzīvotāji* [The inhabitants of Soviet Latvia], pp. 14, 34, 35, 36.

⁸⁹ Alfreds Ceichners. *Latvijas boļševizācija 1940–1941* [The Bolshevization of Latvia 1940-1941]. Riga, 1944, p. 324.

not even all the formerly convinced nationalists wanted to secede from Russia, but they all wanted autonomy: the right to attend schools in their own language, file official documents in the national language, and participate in decision-making, but neither the tsarist government nor the educated classes of the empire wanted to see this gradual, soft, but obvious collapse of the empire.

On 23 February 1917, widespread strikes and worker demonstrations began in Petrograd. Angry crowds demanded bread and sang 1905 revolution songs. Police were unable to disperse these powerful street demonstrations. The next day, riots broke out in Petrograd. Mikhail Rodzianko, Speaker of the State Duma, called a meeting of the leaders of the liberal deputies and civil factions of the State Duma. It set up a Provisional Executive Committee of the State Duma of which M. Rodzianko was appointed chairman, and instructed him, without any communication with the Tsar or the court, to form and declare a new Russian government, responsible only to the State Duma. Petrograd garrison soldiers also began to defect *en masse* to the rebel side. Russia was in the midst of the February Revolution.

Tsar Nicholas II, then in the Supreme Commander's headquarters in Mogilev, went to army headquarters in Pskov from where he decided to send his most trusted troops to Petrograd to crush the revolution and to liquidate the new Provisional Government. But by then, all of Russia demanded the Tsar's resignation from the throne. The vast majority sought the Tsar's abdication specifically, even the right wing. For them, Tsar Nicholas II had become the main culprit of the revolution because he had shown complete inability to do anything to save the empire. The last straw was the army commanders' telegram. The commanders-in-chief of the fronts and fleets, seeing the disaster that had overtaken the Russian army, demanded the Tsar's abdication. The Russian State Duma also demanded the Tsar's abdication. On 2 (15) March 1917, the Tsar stepped down and with that, the 300-year rule of the Romanov dynasty came to an end. A Provisional Government was established. Russia became a republic, although it was not officially proclaimed until 14 September 1917.

The most striking thing about the February Revolution of 1917 was that no one defended the autocracy or the emperor. One of the Bolsheviks' most prominent leaders, Leonid Trotsky, later wrote: "There was no one among the commanding officers of the army who would stand up for his Tsar. All tried to board the Revolution ship with

the strict calculation of finding more comfortable quarters there. The generals and admirals took off their Tsarist insignia and tied red ribbons. Everyone saved himself as best he could."⁹⁰ It is true that during the Russian Civil War, many of them again became adherents and defenders of "United, Indivisible Russia" and its colonial policy. Kissinger writes:

In the second half of the nineteenth century, as Russia added new territories in Central Asia, it developed methods of conquest that later became the standard. The victims were usually so far from the centres of international relations that Westerners had no idea what was going on. So, they stuck to their prejudices that the Tsar was in fact still only good and belligerent to his subjects. Distance and ambiguity thus became the tools of Russian diplomacy. ... Sergei Witte, a close advisor to Tsar Nicholas II, promised him that 'from the shores of the Pacific to the heights of the Himalayas, Russia will rule not only over Asia, but also over Europe.'⁹¹

1.3. Theory of the "lesser evil" – justification for Tsarist colonial policies

After the Bolshevik coup of 1917, criticism of the Tsar's foreign and colonial policies became a mainstay of Soviet historical scholarship for a long time. For example, in 1924 Stalin stated:

Tsarist Russia was the hotbed of all sorts of pressure – capitalist, colonial, military – and in the most inhumane, most barbarous form. Who does not know that in Russia the omnipotence of capital merged with the despotism of Tsarism, the national aggressiveness of the Russians with the policy of the Tsarist executioners towards non-Russian peoples, and the exploitation of whole regions – Turkey, Persia, China – with the seizure of these regions by the Tsarists and with wars in the name of annexation?

Lenin was right when he said that tsarism is "military-feudal imperialism". Tsarism was the centre of the most negative and pronounced characteristics of imperialism.⁹²

⁹⁰ Pyotr Multatuli. *Nikolay II. Doroga na Golgofu* [Nicholas II. The road to Golgotha]. – M.: 2010, p. 51.

⁹¹ Henry Kissinger. *Diplomacy*, pp. 156, 185.

⁹² J. Stalin. *Leninist Questions* - Riga, 1945, p.7.

The situation changed drastically in the mid-1930s when the Politburo of the Central Committee of the AC(b)P began aggressive glorification of Russia as the leading nation. It was also then that the theory of the "lesser evil" of colonisation was invented and widely spread. This theory, first put forward in 1936 by Zhdanov, Secretary of the Central Committee of the AC(b)P, justified the incorporation of Georgia and Ukraine into the Russian empire. He argued that the geographically unviable countries preferred the lesser evil of integration into the Russian empire, as opposed to Polish or Ottoman rule. Later, this theory was further developed to justify the subjugation of Central Asia and other non-Russian regions. It was opposed by the historian Pankratova, under whose leadership the History of the Kazakh SSR from the Earliest Times to the Present Day was prepared and published in 1943, and by some other well-known Russian historians. They rejected the thesis that the Tsar's colonisers should be portrayed as "carriers of progress and freedom".⁹³ However, preachers of blatant Russian chauvinism prevailed. In a series of lectures delivered in Moscow, Leningrad, and Saratov, historian Y. Tarle recommended revision of "Notes" written in 1934 by Stalin, Zhdanov and Kirov in which they had called tsarist Russia "the gendarme of Europe". He believed that the territorial expansion of the tsarist period had greatly increased the ability of the USSR to defend its population against German threat. Tarle's view of Russia's positive territorial expansion was supported at the highest level, even though it contradicted long-standing condemnation of tsarist colonialism by the Bolsheviks.⁹⁴

The Soviet history books of the time said almost nothing about the history of any republic, as if they had no state structure, no history,

⁹³ D.L. Brandenberger. *«Vydvinut na pervy plan motiv russkogo nacionalizma». Spory v stalinskikh ideologicheskikh krugah, 1941-1945 g.g.* ["To bring the motive of Russian nationalism to the fore". Controversy in Stalinist ideological circles, 1941-1945.], *Gosudarstvo natsiii: Imperiya i nacionalnoe stroitelstvo v epohu Lenina i Stalina* [The State of the Nation: Empire and National Construction in the Age of Lenin and Stalin], p. 345.

⁹⁴ D.L. Brandenberger. *«Vydvinut na pervy plan motiv russkogo nacionalizma». Spory v stalinskikh ideologicheskikh krugah, 1941-1945 g.g.* ["To bring the motive of Russian nationalism to the fore". Controversy in Stalinist ideological circles, 1941-1945.], *Gosudarstvo natsiii: Imperiya i nacionalnoe stroitelstvo v epohu Lenina i Stalina* [The State of the Nation: Empire and National Construction in the Age of Lenin and Stalin], pp. 344, 345.

no distinctive national culture. But neither Armenia, nor Georgia, nor Lithuania, nor many other countries were poorer than Russia in their historical development, sometimes even surpassing it. Statehood in Armenia was 25 centuries old and Central Asian philosopher Avicenna lived seven centuries before M. Lomonosov and the University of Tartu is much older than the University of Moscow.

On colonial policy, Seskis wrote:

... Everything that reminded the Latvian people of their distinctive spirit and culture was eradicated from Latvian schools. Pupils were not taught anything about the history of the Latvian people, their spirit, literature, or art. The rights and ideals of the Latvian people, their spirit, and aspirations were never discussed in school. The alienated youth had to be Russified at school: to think in and speak Russian and to be enthusiastic about and strive for the welfare and ideals of the great enslaving nation. The Russians killed the Latvian spirit of the children and replaced it with Russian national spirit.⁹⁵

This policy of colonisation and Russification continued after the occupation of Latvia in 1940.

⁹⁵ Seskis J. *Latvijas valsts izcelšanās un viņas izredzes* [The origin of the Latvian state and its prospects], pp. 14, 15.

CHAPTER 2

Colonial policy of the Soviet Union

2.1. Creation of the New Empire. The dictate of the Centre

In the early 20th century, the Russian empire was home to 140 nationalities, all of which differed from each other in language, lifestyle, customs, and level of development. Russians accounted for about 45% of the total population. Apart from the small tribes of the north, Siberia, and Dagestan, Russia was populated by Baltic, Finno-Ugric, Slavic, Germanic, Turkic, Manchu-Tungusic, Chinese, Mongolian, and other linguistic groups.

They were from different religious groups: Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, Muslim, Buddhist. The Balts, Poles, Germans, and Finns considered themselves Europeans. Russians and Ukrainians saw themselves as "special Europe", heirs of Byzantium. Of the Muslims, perhaps only the upper classes of the Kazan and Crimean Tatars considered themselves Europeans. Most of them leaned towards other Muslims who lived beyond Russia's borders. Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, and Siberian Tatars aspired to Central Asia and Buryats to Buddhist Mongolia.⁹⁶

As Russia's central power weakened, national movements became more active on the periphery. The Finnish parliament and Poland demanded independence, the Ukrainian Rada and the Cossacks of Kuban and the Don demanded autonomy sought autonomy, and Siberia and Transcaucasia demanded constituent assemblies for themselves. The North Caucasus, which had been "pacified" only half a century earlier, began to revolt. The Highland peoples immediately remembered all the empire's insults and offences.⁹⁷

The widespread separatism was not worrisome at the time. The Provisional Government declared: "The aim of free Russia is not domination over other peoples, nor the deprivation of their national property, nor the violent seizure of foreign territories, but the

⁹⁶ M. Weller, A. Burovsky. *Grazhdanskaya istoriya bezumnoy voyny* [A civil history of insane war]. – Moscow, 2007, p. 142.

⁹⁷ Valery Shambarv. *Belogvardeysshina* [The White Guard]. – M., 2004, p. 29.

establishment of a stable peace on the basis of the self-determination of peoples."⁹⁸ The public in Petrograd gave a rousing welcome to the internationalist demonstrations of the peoples of Russia, from Poles and Jews to Muslims. Everywhere there was a conviction that this revolution would easily solve intra-national problems. This could be done quickly and surely. But it was not. The Provisional Government postponed the national question until the Constituent Assembly, which was due to convene in December 1917, but at the end of 1917, the Bolshevik coup succeeded and the Constituent Assembly convened in January 1918 was dissolved.

The Bolshevik Party's basic national policy principles were proclaimed in the "Declaration of the Rights of the Peoples of Russia", approved by the Russian Council of People's Commissars (*Sovnarkom*) on 16 November 1917:

- equality and sovereignty of peoples,
- right of the peoples of Russia to self-determination up to and including the right to secede and establish independent states,
- abolition of all and any national and national-religious privileges and restrictions,
- free development of national minorities and ethnic groups.⁹⁹

Initially, it may have seemed that these just and widely proclaimed principles would be respected and implemented: on 31 December 1917, the new Russian government recognised the establishment of the Ukrainian Republic and the Finnish Republic. In 1918, the establishment of the Soviet Republics of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania was recognised. In January 1918, the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR) was established. The principles of the new federation were voluntary accession and equality of nations. The autonomous republics that were part of the RSFSR had their own legal system, constitution, armed forces, transport system, equality in diplomatic relations, and the right to issue money.

But the Bolshevik "Declaration of the Rights of the Peoples of Russia" turned out to be fiction – a "sovereignty game". Already in 1920,

⁹⁸ *Vestnik Vremennogo pravitelstva* [Bulletin of the Provisional Government], 1917, 28 March (10 April).

⁹⁹ *Obrazovanie Soyuza Sovetskikh Socialisticheskikh Respublik. Sbornik dokumentov* [Formation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Collection of documents]. – Moscow, 1972, pp. 23-24.

the functions of the autonomous republics were taken over by the All-Russian-Central authorities. The rights of the united republics were also restricted in various ways.

The Bolsheviks did not see the collapse of Russia as a great evil. They hoped for world revolution. For them, the Soviet Republic itself was only the first step towards establishment of the World Soviet Republic, a kind of testing ground for the end result. But the Bolsheviks failed to move westwards: they were forced to sign peace treaties with Finland, Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia and to build their empire on the spot.

After winning the Civil War, the CPSU occupied 92% of the future Soviet Union, with around 70% of its population. The remainder was Azerbaijan, Georgia, Armenia, the Far Eastern Republic, and the two Central Asian people's republics of Bukhara and Khwarazm.

Soviet national policy principle which led to the establishment of the USSR in 1922 were formulated as early as 1919 by one of the leaders of AC(b)P, G. Zinoviev: "We cannot manage without the oil of Azerbaijan or without the cotton of Turkestan. We take the percentage we need, but not as the old exploiters did, but as elder brothers who carry the torch of civilisation."¹⁰⁰

In September 1920, the RSFSR and Azerbaijan signed a treaty which became the model for all future treaties between Moscow and the other "independent republics": they agreed to close military, financial and economic cooperation, which meant a *de facto* surrender of sovereignty to the centre.¹⁰¹

As the USSR formed, Stalin believed that the independent Soviet republics of Ukraine, Belarus, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia should formally join the RSFSR, and that the composition of Russian power and administration should be based on the analogous structures of these republics.¹⁰² According to Stalin's project, all decisions of the RSFSR All-Russian (All-Union) Central Executive Committee, the Sovnarkom

¹⁰⁰Victor Döninghaus. *V teni «Bolshogo Brata». Zapadnye nacionalnye menshinstva v SSSR 1917 1938 g.g.* [In the shadow of "Big Brother". Western National Minorities in the USSR 1917 1938], p.50.

¹⁰¹ Ibid, pp. 47, 48.

¹⁰² *Proekt rezolyutsii o vzaimootnosheniyah RSFSR s nezavisimimi respublikami, predlozhenyy I.V.Stalinyam* [Draft resolution on relations between the RSFSR and the independent republics, proposed by Stalin]. *Izvestiya CK KPSS* [Proceedings of the CPSU Central Committee]. 1989. No 9, pp.192, 193.

and the Council of Labour and Defence were to be binding on the national republics. In a letter to Lenin in September 1922, he recommended that "the game of independence of the Soviet republics should be stopped and a final choice made: ... either true independence and then non-interference by the centre ... or the true unification of the Soviet republics into one economic whole ..., that is, the replacement of fictitious independence by true internal autonomy of the republics."

"During the four years of the civil war", added Stalin, "when we were forced to demonstrate Moscow liberalism on the national question, we managed to breed true and consistent social independents among the Communists, against their will. ... The new generation of communists on the fringes, as it turns out, refuses to see the game of independence as a game, persisting in accepting the words of independence as pure coin, and just as persistently demanding of us to put into practice the constitution of the independent republics."¹⁰³ Lenin categorically rejected Stalin's "autonomisation" project and put forward his own idea of a Eurasian Union. The more "national liberalism", the more centralism – so thought Lenin who understood well that centralism would be implemented not by Sovnarkom but by the Communist (Bolshevik) Party of Russia.¹⁰⁴

The dictates of the centre of the new empire, founded in December 1922, were reinforced by the Constitution of the USSR, adopted in 1924. When the USSR was founded, the Bolshevik Party declared that the highest organs of state power should:

a) ensure equality of rights and obligations for the individual republics, both in their relations with each other and with the centre of the Union,

b) create within the supreme organs of state power of the Union a special organ for the representation of the national republics and national regions based on equality,

¹⁰³ *Pismo I.V.Stalina V.I.Leninu, 22 sentjabrya 1922 g* [Letter from I. V. Stalin to V. I. Lenin, 22 September 1922]. *Izvestiya CK KPSS* [Proceedings of the CPSU Central Committee].1989. No 9, pp. 198, 199.

¹⁰⁴ Victor Döninghaus. *V teni «Bolshogo Brata». Zapadnye nacionalnye menshinstva v SSSR 1917 1938 g.g.* [In the shadow of "Big Brother". Western National Minorities in the USSR 1917 1938], p. 50. See more on this matter: Yury Zhukov. *Pervoe porazhenie Stalina. 1917 1922 gody. Ot Rossiyskoj imperii – k SSSR* [Stalin's first defeat. 1917 1922. From the Russian Empire to the USSR]. – Moscow, 2011.

c) the executive organs for the government of the Union should be constructed in such a way as to ensure the real participation of the representatives of all the republics and the satisfaction of the needs of the peoples of the Union.¹⁰⁵

In practice, things were very different. Russian historian and publicist Sergey Kara-Murza points out:

In the practice of state-building, the Leninist faction managed to achieve, often with great difficulty, the concentration of real power in the centre with such a predominance that until the 1970s, the power of the ethnic elites was much weaker than that of the centre. This included the formation of an unofficial party power system subordinated to the centre, the invention of a system of nomenclature which guaranteed control of cadres, the complete subordination of the prosecutorial and penal organs to the centre, the creation of a unitary system of military power which "divided" the national territory into non-national war zones, and policies in the form of language and education.¹⁰⁶

Throughout their existence, the unionised republics, like the autonomous republics, were subject to the centre and blatant arbitrariness of the All-Union ministries. Soviet government decisions and ministerial orders and required building of enterprises beholden to the All-Union for which both raw materials and workforce were imported from elsewhere. English researcher W. Kolarz pointed out: "Practice shows that every new factory, every new coal shaft, every new oil well in the non-Russian territories of the Soviet Union is made, not for the good of the territory, but for the Great Russians."¹⁰⁷ This was due to poor planning and political and ideological considerations to Russify the subjected peoples. It was the logical consequence of the notorious idea of the death of nations and the formation of a devalued "Soviet man" with no national characteristics.

This arbitrariness and permissiveness of the All-Union ministries was recognised by Mikhail Gorbachev, General Secretary of the

¹⁰⁵ *PSKP kongresu, konferenču un CK plēnumu rezolūcijās un lēmumos*. [Resolutions and decisions of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union congresses, conferences and Central Committee plenums]. Part 1. R. - 1954, pp. 626, 627.

¹⁰⁶ Sergey Kara-Murza. *Demontazh Naroda* [Dismantling of the people]. – Moscow, 2007, p. 418.

¹⁰⁷ W.Kolarz. *Russia and her Colonies*. London, 1967, p.58.

Central Committee of the Communist Party. At a meeting of the Politburo of the Central Committee on 28 April 1988, he stated:

Minister Kolesnikov again recommends the construction of electronics production plants. The last reserves ... are being sucked out of the villages. You say that agriculture will not suffer. That's what we thought all along – it won't. After Lenin, we always justified everything with that. But what did we get? From Gorky to Novgorod, all over the Golden Circle, the villages are emptied, they have died out. Everyone has gone, not even to Gorky and Novgorod, but to the Baltics and Leningrad.

... The departments go crazy, they don't even consider the Councils of Ministers of the Republics, they build as much as they want and take people there. In Estonia, the Estonian share of the population has fallen from 80% to 60%. The governments of the republics cannot even hammer a nail in Moscow without asking.... It is unacceptable to do this to the members of our federation.¹⁰⁸

Nursultan Nazarbayev, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Kazakhstan, described the lawless state of the republic at a meeting of the Soviet Federation Council on 12 June 1990: "Ninety million square kilometres are landfills, kolkhozes and sovkhoses have been expelled from there. What sovereignty can we have if 50% of industry is under the Union? And how much is under the union republic control? ... Ministries are gritting their teeth to hold on to their property. What are we – the Union of Ministries or the Union of Republics? The Union Republics must be subjects of international law."¹⁰⁹

It was this fictitious "Federation" and the unbridled arbitrariness of the Centre that became one of the main reasons for the collapse of the USSR. At the Plenary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, convened on 25 December 1989 and which mainly criticised the "Declaration on the Independence of the Communist Party of Lithuania" adopted by the XX Congress of the Lithuanian Communist Party, Gorbachev was forced to admit:

¹⁰⁸ *Soyuz možno bylo sohranit. Belaja kniga. Dokumenty i fakty o politike M.S.Gorbacheva po reformirovaniju i sohraneniju mnogonacionalnogo gosudarstva.* [The Union could have been saved. White Paper. Documents and facts about Gorbachev's policy of reforming and preserving the multinational state], p. 32.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 158.

The national self-confidence of the Lithuanian people is greatly pressed by the difficult history of its relations with the united country. We cannot, we have no right to walk away from the recognition of the indisputable truth that decades of Stalinist arbitrariness, the gross distortion of the very meaning and essence of socialism in our land, the strong imposition of a centralised state under the mask of federation had the most severe effect on the relations between the peoples and nationalities of the Soviet Union, on their sentiments. As a result, the very idea of federation was compromised. The seeds of distrust and prejudice against the central power, against the "heavy hand of Moscow", have been sown in large sections of the population, especially in the Union Republics.¹¹⁰

Understandably, this recognition of Moscow's heavy hand came much too late. In fact, during the 70 years of unrestricted dictatorship by the centre, the Republics had been turned into semi-colonies of the Soviet Union. By the end of the 1980s, none of them wanted to accept this situation any longer. The collapse of the empire established in 1922 was inevitable.

2.2. Expanding the empire. Changing borders

The addition of new territories to the Soviet Union took place during the early years of World War II. It was directly linked to the Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact of 23 August 1939, its hasty ratification by the Soviet Union on 31 August 1939, and the outbreak of World War II on 1 September 1939. The agreement between the USSR and Germany on spheres of influence and the outbreak of war resulted in extensive territorial changes for the USSR.

The German invasion of Poland began on 1 September 1939 and by 17 September had reached Otovets, Belostok, Brest, Vladimir and Lvov. The Soviet Union occupied eastern Poland up to the same line from 17-22 September 1939. The partition of Poland had been agreed upon earlier. The territories of Volhynia, Drogobych, Lvov, Rovno, Stanislaw and Ternopil were annexed to Ukraine, and the lands of the Baranovichi, Belostok, Brest, Vilna and Pinsk were annexed to the

¹¹⁰ *Soyuz možhno bylo sohranit.* [The Union could have been saved], p. 111.

Byelorussian SSR. This decision was adopted by the Supreme Soviet session on 5 December 1939.

In autumn 1939, the Soviet government forced the Baltic states to sign agreements to establish Soviet military bases on their territory.

In June 1940, the USSR occupied Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia.

A similar scenario was planned for Finland. On 12 October 1939, the USSR demanded Finland sign a mutual non-aggression pact and that Soviets establish military bases in Finland, but the Finnish government refused. In response, on 26 November 1939, the USSR issued an ultimatum threatening to invade Karelian Isthmus, part of Finland. On 28 November 1939, the USSR attacked Finland. On 1 December 1939, the Democratic Republic of Finland was proclaimed and on the following day, the Soviet-Finnish Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation was signed. The Winter War ended on 13 March 1940, when a peace treaty was signed in Moscow. As a result of this war, the Karelian Isthmus with Viborg, Viborg Bay and its islands, towns on the western and northern shores of Lake Ladoga, some islands in the Gulf of Finland, and other territories were annexed to the Soviet Union.

In an attempt to regain Bessarabia, the USSR issued an ultimatum to Romania on 26 June 1940, claiming Northern Bukovina. Two days later, Red Army units marched through the area. On 2 July 1940, Chisinau and the districts of Belsk, Bendery, Chisinau, Kaluga, Ordzeyevo, and Soroca were incorporated into the Moldovan SSR, and the districts of North Bukovina, Hotin, Aperman, and Izmailovo into the Ukrainian SSR.

Shortly before World War II on 17 January 1939, a census was conducted in the Soviet Union, counting 170.6 million people. With the annexation of new territories in 1939-1940, the population had increased to 196.7 million by 22 June 1941 (an increase of 15.3%): 73% of them were Slavic (Russians 51.8%, Ukrainians 17.6%, Belarusians 3.6%).¹¹¹

The USSR continued to expand its territory after World War II. Following agreements with its allies, the USSR restored its totalitarian regime in the Baltics, Western Ukraine and Western Belarus, Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina, and parts of Prussia (Konigsberg and surrounding areas became RSFSR Kaliningrad and Kaliningrad

¹¹¹ Alexander Vdovin. *Podlinnaya istoriya russkikh. XX vek* [The true history of the Russians. The twentieth century], p. 163.

Oblast). After the armistice with Finland, the USSR expanded its territory at the expense of the Petsamo Oblast (now Murmansk Oblast, Pechenga District). The Transcarpathian region was incorporated after the border treaties with Czechoslovakia and Poland and to the east, South Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands became part of the USSR. In October 1944, Tuva was incorporated into the RSFSR as an autonomous oblast, and in 1961 became an autonomous republic.¹¹²

Gaidar comments on the expansion:

The elite of the tsarist period considered their country an empire. That is what they called it. The leaders of the Soviet empire did not say so but expanded it far beyond the official borders of the USSR. The attitude of Soviet leadership towards its Eastern European satellites is illustrated by the fact that during the negotiations that followed the invasion of Czechoslovakia by Soviet troops in August 1968, Brezhnev accused the arrested First Secretary of the Czechoslovak Communist Party (Central Committee), Dubček, of not having submitted his draft political reports to Moscow. According to the Czech authorities, some 30% of the Czechoslovak Interior Ministry worked for the KGB.¹¹³

The Soviet Union also changed the borders of the Republics. In 1924, the Vitebsk and Gomel governates and the Smolensk governate districts, where the majority of the population was Belarusian, were annexed to Belarus from Russia. Latvia and Estonia also suffered territorial losses at the end of World War II. Part of Latvia's Abrene County and Estonia's Petseri (Pechor) County were incorporated into the Pskov Oblast of the RSFSR. On 12 August 1944, while still in Moscow, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the LSSR CoM adopted "On the annexation of the townships of Vishgorod, Kachanova, and Tolkova to the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic", stating that this was done on the request of the majority Russian population of these townships and in accordance with their wishes.¹¹⁴

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Yegor Gaidar. *Gibel imperii. Uroki dlya sovremennoi Rossii*. [Collapse of an Empire: Lessons for Modern Russia], pp. 5, 6.

¹¹⁴ NAL, 290. f., 2. desc., 88. file, p 1. The names of the municipalities mentioned in the documents are those used during the Russian tsar's autocratic regime, which do not correspond to the names of the 1940 administrative-territorial division of the Republic of Latvia. In fact, the RSFSR added to the Pskov Oblast the townships of Katseny, Gauri, Augspil, Linava, Upmala, and Purvmala and the town of Abrene, which was named Pytalovo.

The Presidium of the Supreme Soviet decree of 23 August 1944 "On the creation of the Pskov Oblast within the RSFSR" noted:

1. To approve the petition of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic on the creation of the Pskov Oblast within the RSFSR, centred in the city of Pskov....

2. With regard to the repeated requests of the inhabitants of the predominantly Russian townships of Ushgorod, Kachanova, and Tolkova in the Latvian SSR and acting in accordance with their wishes, and having regard to the request ... of the Supreme Soviet of the Latvian SSR to incorporate the said townships into the RSFSR, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics hereby decides:

To approve the application of ... the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic and the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic and to include in the Pskov Region ... the municipalities of Vishgorod, Kachanova, and Tolkova, separating them from the Latvian SSR."¹¹⁵

Latvia lost 1202 km² of its territory. In his 29 May 1946 submission to G. Malenkov, Secretary of the Central Committee of the AC(b)P, on developments in the six townships of Abrene District of the LSSR CoM after their annexation to the Pskov Oblast of the RSFSR, D. Kaupužs, editorial associate of the newspaper *Latgolas Taisneība* wrote:

After their incorporation into the Pskov oblast, the leading Soviet and party officials of the districts were sent from the old districts of the Pskov oblast (Dedovichi, Shashkina), while all the local leading officials either went to work in the Latvian SSR or were later expelled. Currently, not only all district cadres, but also the chairmen of village councils and economic organisations are almost exclusively immigrants from other districts. This has led to a situation where the heads of the village councils in the districts do not know the specific conditions and people of these districts. In addition, the local officials were mostly replaced by people from districts from which the secretaries of the district committees and the chairmen of the executive committees were

¹¹⁵ *Okupācijas varu politika Latvijā. 1939-1991* [The politics of the occupying powers in Latvia. 1939-1991] Rīga, 1999, p. 242.

appointed. ... The locals are generally called "Latvians", but sometimes simply "fascists".¹¹⁶

When republics changed their borders, the decision to give up part of their territory initially had to be taken by the Union Republics themselves. It was then approved by the highest organs of state power. In 1963, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Kazakh SSR decided to cede a fairly large area of Chimkent and Kyzylorda oblast arable and pasture to the Uzbek SSR "...in the interests of the whole country, in order to eliminate the isolation of the lands of the Eurasian Steppe, to develop them more rapidly economically and to use them more rationally to increase the production of cotton and other agricultural products."¹¹⁷ Even before that, also "in the country's economic interests", Uzbekistan "voluntarily" ceded some districts to Kazakhstan. In 1959, for the "successful absorption" of the Eurasian Steppe, Uzbekistan gave some land to Tajikistan.

D. Kunaev, former member of the Politburo and First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Kazakhstan, commented on these border changes:

I worked under Khrushchev for almost 10 years. ... One of our first clashes took place when he suggested that I hand over several cotton-growing areas to Uzbekistan. I was strictly against this. ... Despite my objections, Khrushchev instructed me to transfer, under the rule of the Party, Zhetisaisk, Kirovsk, and Pahtaaralsk districts of the Uzbek SSR. Later, all of them were just returned. ... Our views on the future of Mangyshlak did not coincide either. On one occasion, Khrushchev said: 'Mangyshlak is a peninsula with enormous riches. Only the Turkmens can exploit the oil there. It should be given to them.' He overheard my counterarguments, so I asked him to talk to the Minister for Geology, Sidorenko. He supported me and Khrushchev was forced to leave Mangyshlak to Kazakhstan.¹¹⁸

In January 1954, Crimea and Sevastopol were returned to Ukraine. In 1957, the Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Republic was

¹¹⁶ *Okupācijas varu politika Latvijā. 1939-1991. Dokumentu krājums* [The policy of the occupying powers in Latvia. 1939-1991.] Rīga, 1999, p. 242.

¹¹⁷ *Kazahstanskaya Pravda* [Kazakhstanskaya Pravda], 1963, 29 January.

¹¹⁸ Kunayev D.A. *Trudno ugovorit v sani* [It's hard to persuade into the sleigh.]. *Sovershenno sekretno* [Top Secret]. 1991. No 2, p. 11.

restored, including three Russian districts. Territories were similarly divided in other regions. This arbitrary and capricious shifting of territories and borders in the context of the collapse led to bitter ethnic conflicts and often bloody armed clashes.

2.3. Organised migration – a means of colonising the periphery

From its earliest days, the Soviet Union encouraged and facilitated the migration of Russians to the "brother republics" on its periphery to consolidate its regime. The reasons for this were many. One of them was the search for better living conditions and the chance to get housing and employment. Sometimes such migration took place spontaneously but often, mass migration was organised. Farm planning practices, passport regimes, and the strict bureaucracy made it possible to move large contingents of the population. The plan was to create large industrial centres in the republics, staffed mainly by Russian workers but where local proletariat groups would also be represented, and which would serve as "the link between the Russian proletariat and the working masses of these republics". In addition, to rebuild the shattered industry after the Civil War, it was necessary to attract as many skilled workers as possible. The specialists most needed for industries were mainly trained by Russian workers. The state party and Soviet organs ensured that people of different nationalities were moved to Central Asia, Transcaucasia, and the Far East to establish industrial and agricultural bases. This resettlement considerably changed the national composition of several republics and created the conditions for their Sovietisation.¹¹⁹

Since the mid-1920s, state authorities sought to organise migratory flows. It was recognised that the European part of the USSR was agriculturally overpopulated and that it was necessary to increase the number of workers in the economically important peripheral areas at the expense of these people. This included part of the North Caucasus and the Black Sea and Terek regions were declared to be areas of All-Union importance, to which a significant number of organised migrants

¹¹⁹ Victor Kotov, Vadim Trepalov. *Russkiy narod v XX veke: paradoksy istoricheskoy sudby* [Russian people in the twentieth century: the paradoxes of historical destiny], pp. 50, 51.

were to be relocated. They included Assyrians, Armenians, Jews, Georgians, and others, but the main organised migrants were Russians. In the 1920s and 1930s, large flows of Russian migrants from central Russia were sent to the Caucasus, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan.

At first, the central authorities in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan were reluctant to accept the huge influx of migrants and even sanctioned a measure of decolonisation: the expulsion of the Slavic migrants. The mass expulsion of Slavic migrants and Cossacks in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan was most widespread during the land reforms of 1921-1922. Initially, the local authorities tried to expel Russian settlers who had arrived after the suppression of the 1916 uprising. To a certain extent, this measure was successful. Between 1920 and 1922, the Russian population in Kazakhstan fell from 2.7 million to 2.2 million (about 20%).¹²⁰ But soon the economic and political interests of the All-Union once again took precedence over local national needs and all restrictions on migration were lifted, leading to the colonisation and Russification of many non-Russian republics. In April 1928, Kazakhstan also agreed to open its territory to migrants. Russians began to take revenge on the Kazakhs. In many places, Kazakhs were beaten, and their property confiscated. More than 17,000 Kazakh families suffered during the riots and many Kazakhs began to flee to China.

In Kazakhstan and Central Asia, the Bolsheviks relied almost exclusively on Russian settlers and railway workers. Consequently, widespread ethnic conflicts took place at first mainly in the countryside, but later also in the cities – in factories, labour exchanges, worker hostels, and elsewhere. One Russian worker, after a meeting with local Kazakhs in Semipalatinsk, declared: "Why are we holding such meetings with the Kyrgyz! If I had any say, I would gladly meet them in another place, I would raise my revolver and meet them so that they could then be taken to the Brethren Cemetery, and there I would erect a monument with the inscription: 'Memorial of the Ryder factories.'"¹²¹

¹²⁰ Terry Martin. *Imperiya «polozhitelnoy deyatelnosti». Natsii i natsionalizm v SSSR, 1923 1939* [The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the USSR, 1923–1939], p. 88.

¹²¹ Terry Martin. *Imperiya «polozhitelnoy deyatelnosti». Natsii i natsionalizm v SSSR, 1923 1939* [The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the USSR, 1923–1939], p.98.

In the late 1920s, the Turkestan-Siberian Railway (Turksiba) began construction. Initially, the USSR People's Commissariat for Roads and Transport planned to import 75% of the workers from the European part of Russia for the work. If a Kazakh did get a job building the Turksib, he lived under the constant threat of ethnic hatred. Chauvinism was widespread. Russian workers were openly contemptuous and hostile towards Kazakhs: mocking their religion, Russian workers deliberately smeared Kazakh workers' bread with lard.

On 31 December 1928, a pogrom broke out in Sergiopol, the northernmost point of the Turksib construction. Around 400 Russian workers brutally beat local Kazakhs. Such pogroms also took place elsewhere. Russian workers were also used to fight local "bandits" (partisans). A former Turksib construction worker wrote: "The Communists decided to form a unit to fight the bandits. From March to May 1930, I was its political leader. We spent day and night in the saddle chasing the fleeing Basmachi¹²² and finally caught up with them at a station in the Lepsi and Matja area. The battle was short and brutal. This is where my skill with the machine gun came in handy. The gang was destroyed, and we returned to building."¹²³

During this period, construction of new factories in the national regions increased and so did the organised relocation of increasing numbers of Russians. The active and massive resettlement of Russians was in fact a continuation of the Slavic colonisation that had begun in previous centuries. By increasing the Russian population in the national republics, the authorities sought to increase the influence of the centre on their social lives. This influx of foreigners did the local peoples no good. It also destroyed their traditional ways of farming and lifestyle.

As a result of organised migration, the number of Russians living outside the RSFSR almost doubled from 1926 to 1939 (see Table 1). The most rapid increase was recorded in the five Central Asian republics where the Russian population had more than doubled (from

¹²² Basmachi - Muslim partisans who fought to overthrow the Soviet system.

¹²³ Мэт Пейн. «Kuznitsa» kazahskogo proletariata? *Turksib, nativizatsiya i industrializatsiya v gody Stalinskogo Pervogo pjatiletnego plana Gosudarstvo natsiy: Imperiya i nacionalnoe stroitelstvo v epohu Lenina i Stalina* [The "smithy" of the Kazakh proletariat? Turksib, Nativisation and Industrialisation during Stalin's First Five Year Plan The State of Nations: Empire and nation-building in the era of Lenin and Stalin], p. 279.

1,721,000 to 3,862,000 people) in absolute terms and their share of the total Central Asian population rose from 11.2 to 23.2%.

Table 1

Number of Russians living outside the RSFSR, 1926-1939

Republic	1926		1939		
	Total population	Russians (%)	Total population	Russians (%)	Increase (%)
Armenian SSR	21,000	2,3	51,000	4,0	73,9
Azerbaijan SSR	220,000	9,5	528,000	16,5	73,7
Belarusian SSR	485,000	5,9	536,000	6,0	1,7
Georgian SSR	96000	3,6	309,000	8,7	141,7
Kazakh SSR	1,280000	20,6	2,447,000	40,2	95,1
Kyrgyz SSR	116,000	11,7	303,000	20,8	77,8
Tajik SSR	6,000	0,7	135,000	9,1	1300,0
Turkmen SSR	75,000	7,7	23,300,018,6	18,6	141,6
Ukrainian SSR	2,707,000	7,3	4,886,000	11,8	61,6
Uzbek SSR	244,000	4,5	744,000	11,7	160,0
Total	5,250,000	8,0	10,121,000	13,5124	68,8

Russian migration to Central Asia and Kazakhstan reached its peak in the 1950s.

Table 2

Share of the population of main ethnic groups in 1959 compared to 1939

	Kazakhstan	Uzbekistan	Tajikistan	Kyrgyzstan	Turkmenistan
1939	38,2	64,4	59,6	51,7	59,2
1959	30,0	62,1	53,1	40,5	60,9

¹²⁴ Terry Martin. *Imperiya «polozhitelnoy deyatelnosti». Natsii i natsionalizm v SSSR, 1923 1939* [The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the USSR, 1923–1939], p. 628.

Organised migration was carried out on a very large scale after World War II, especially from the countryside. In 1949, of 768,600 able-bodied collective farm workers who moved to the city for permanent work, 620,000 (~80%) were registered in organised recruitment institutions and only 146,700 (~20%) left the countryside on their own.¹²⁵ The passport system introduced in the early 1930s did not apply to collective farm workers (only Soviet farm workers were entitled to passports), but if they moved to districts where passports had been issued to all, they could finally obtain the long-awaited document with which they could then move to the city or somewhere else.

Another advantage for the migrants was relocation money paid to settle in their new homes. In many cases, these organised migrants arrived at their new locations with everything ready. Alfred Mirek writes:

The new towns and villages of Western Ukraine, Western Belarus and the Baltic states were also barbarically overrun and settled by Russians. (An acquaintance told me: 'Echelons upon echelons came from Siberia. They came to Rovno, Lida, Ružany, Grodno. ... We came in one from Omsk. A member of the Kommandatura guided us through the houses and showed us which vacated room we could occupy. When we went in, we were amazed at what we saw: the large, well-furnished room looked as if the owner had gone out for a walk.' But not for a walk. Hundreds of thousands of locals and their families had been sent to the camps or shot.)¹²⁶

V. Kolosov and P. Polyan describe the legal situation of organised workforce migrants:

In legal terms, the groups of forcibly mobilised workers were subject to appropriate administrative regimes. The status of workforce migrants recruited in an organised manner had an obvious tendency to attach and place them in a state-determined 'new place of resettlement'. Their nominal freedom of movement was restricted both by the registration regime and by the terms of

¹²⁵ *Naselenie Rossii v XX veke. Istoricheskie ocherki* [The Population of Russia in the Twentieth Century. Historical sketches]. – Moscow, 2001, p. 285.

¹²⁶ Alfred Mirek. *Krasnyy mirazh. Palachi velikoy Rossii* [Red Mirage. Executioners of the Great Russia], p. 213.

the contract with the State, which tended to attach the workforce as closely as possible to the companies.¹²⁷

In the 1950s, organised migration was largely linked to the conquest of virgin lands in Kazakhstan, Siberia, the Urals, the Volga region, and the North Caucasus. Huge numbers of people were moved to these areas from the European part. This was carried out both by the General Administration of Resettlement of the RSFSR CoM and by the All-Union Leninist Young Communist League (Komsomol), with road signs, public signs, and organised recruitment. Movements were also organised to Kaliningrad, Leningrad, Astrakhan, Perm, and the Far East. In many areas, the rural exodus reached crisis proportions. For example, the rural population declined between 1939 and 1959: Orla region by 37 %, Ryazan and Yaroslavl by more than 40%, Bryansk, Vladimir, and Ivanovo by 30%, and Voronezh, Gorny, Kursk, Penza, and Tambov by 26-29 %.¹²⁸

It was mainly Slavs who left their national territory, especially those whose missionary role was particularly emphasised. In Politburo discussions on 14 July 1989 "on the ways of harmonisation of intra-national relations in the USSR", E. Shevardnadze stated: "It is necessary to speak much more carefully about deformation in the deployment of the manufacturing forces. The consequences can be very serious. We are, after all, relying on the working class, on the Russian working class, as the stabilising force of the Union."¹²⁹

Under the pretext of integration, new enterprises were built, and Russians were settled in the Republics. L. Kravchuk, former First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Ukrainian Communist Party, later described the devastating consequences of this colonisation:

... During the years of Soviet rule, large masses of people were constantly moved across the vastness of the empire – some were sent to rapid construction sites, others were sent to sit on the side

¹²⁷ *Ogranichenie territorialnoy mobilnosti i konstruirovaniye prostranstva ot stalinskoj epohi do nashih dney*. [Limiting territorial mobility and the construction of space from the Stalin era to the present day.] *Rezhimnye liudi v SSSR* [Regime people in the USSR]. – Moscow, 2009, pp. 27, 28.

¹²⁸ *Naselenie Rossii v XX veke. Istoricheskie ocherki* [The Population of Russia in the Twentieth Century. Historical sketches], pp. 288, 289.

¹²⁹ *Soyuz mozžno bylo sohranit*. [The Union could have been saved], p. 79.

lines. Why am I telling this? The fact is that today, one in five people lives in a republic of a nationality other than their own. One in five! ... Here in Ukraine there are 11 million Russians. Note, not one, but eleven. ... And if you remember the census results, 17 or 18 million people in Ukraine named Russian as their mother tongue. So, there are many Ukrainians who have not considered themselves Ukrainians for a long time.¹³⁰

A song with romantic international, cosmopolitan lyrics – *My address is neither a house nor a street, my address is the Soviet Union* – was very popular at that time. Norwegian researcher Paul Koste, referring to surveys of the early 1970s and 1980s, points out that at a time when 80% of citizens of other nationalities associated their homeland with a national republic, 70% of Russians declared that their homeland was the Soviet Union.¹³¹ Russian scholar V. Solovey writes:

A fundamentally new phenomenon was the identification of Russians with the entire Soviet space, the sense of responsibility for the Soviet Union, which Russians began to regard as their homeland. Among Russians, the All-Union identification was considerably higher than the republic one: a sociological survey conducted in Moscow in autumn 1987 showed that a large majority (almost 70%) considered the entire Soviet Union as their homeland, but not the RSFSR, with which only 14% of respondents identified themselves. Overall, among Russians the level of identification with the All-Union was even higher than in the Soviet capital, at almost 80%.¹³²

The Politburo and the CCCP were made up mainly of Slavs. They believed that every Soviet citizen should feel at home throughout the USSR. People and groups of people who lived beyond the borders of their national territories had all the rights of but no obligations towards their "little homeland". This scheme was beneficial to a large

¹³⁰ Ibid, p 503

¹³¹ E. N. Danilova. *Rossiyanе i polyaki v zerkale etnicheskikh i grazhdanskikh identifikatsii*. [Russians and Poles in the Mirror of Ethnic and Civil Identities.]. *Vostochnoevropeyskie isledovaniya* [East European Studies], 2005, No 1.

¹³² V.D.Solovey. *Russkaya istoriya: novoe prochtenie* [Russian history: a new interpretation]. – Moscow, 2005, p. 161.

national group, in this case the Russians. In Western Europe at that time, a different order existed: sovereign states remained, each of which could take countermeasures if the principle of free movement of workforce began to threaten national identity. The European nation-state model is long-standing. There, the principle of the self-determination of the nation, above all its protective function, is first and foremost. For this reason, laws are passed there on language, migration, etc.

Although the flow of Russian citizens to the periphery was supported and encouraged in many ways, freedom of movement of citizens was not recorded in official documents. In 1977, when discussing the new draft Constitution, N. Podgorny, Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, commented on the freedom of movement and choice of residence of USSR citizens:

I fully agree that the draft Constitution take all the issues into account and could be supported. I have my doubts about Article 55. It states that citizens of the USSR are guaranteed freedom of movement and choice of residence in accordance with the law. If we now support this article and put it to the whole nation for discussion, it will cause a lot of difficulties. Everyone knows that now there are many letters and requests from the Tatars who were deported from Crimea and from the Germans from Volga area who have been resettled in other republics, asking to be resettled in their old homes. I would therefore propose that this article be deleted from the draft Constitution.

L. Brezhnev agreed: "Obviously, this article should be deleted."¹³³ Organised migration was not affected in any way by the absence of such an article.

2.4. The Russian people – first among equals and the elder brother

To justify and implement colonialism, the thesis of the Russian people as first among equals and as the elder brother was invented and widely propagated in the mid-1930s.

¹³³ Shubin A. V. *Zolotaya osen, ili Period zastoya. SSSR v 1975 1985 g.g.* [Golden Autumn, or the Period of Stagnation. USSR in 1975 1985.] – M., 2008, p. 144.

In the first phase of their regime, established in 1917, the Bolsheviks had to face a powerful rise in the self-confidence of non-Russian peoples. But the Bolshevik leaders believed that the nationalism of non-Russians was merely a reaction to oppression by the tsarist regime. To a certain extent, this was true. But the course of events showed that Bolshevik chauvinism, cultivated for many years by the Tsarists, had not disappeared under the "dictatorship of the proletariat" either. On the contrary, both the Bolshevik leaders and the Russians who left for the periphery often treated the local population in a blatantly chauvinistic manner. Initially, the Bolsheviks, when explaining the difference between "offensive" Bolshevik chauvinism and "defensive" local nationalism, were forced to admit that Bolshevik chauvinism was more dangerous than local nationalism. But this did not last long. Soon the willingness of the workers in the national republics to observe and practice the proclaimed principles of national policy was recognised as "national deviation". Stalin played a decisive role in framing the deviations in the national question, which appeared in the thesis "On the Party's Current Tasks in the National Question" prepared for the X Congress of the Communist (Bolshevik) Party of Russia". It spoke of two deviations "from communism": on the one hand, the big-power, colonialist, big-Russian deviation and, on the other, bourgeois-democratic nationalism. The former was attributed to the fact that the Bolshevik communists working on the outskirts of the country had limited or no regard for national interests in the Party's work, disregarded the cultural and everyday life traditions of local peoples, and belief that local communists exaggerated national issues in the Party's work. The national deviation label was applied to many leaders of Belarus, Georgia, and Ukraine and to the leaders of the autonomous republics who insisted that the "centre" should respect the distinctiveness of national republics in personnel, language, and other matters. In a telegram sent in 1933 to L. Mirzoyev, First Secretary of the AC(b)P Committee of the Kazakh region, Stalin wrote: "The actual task of the Kazakh Bolsheviks is that of concentrating the fire against Kazakh nationalism and deviations against it by fighting against Bolshevik chauvinism. Otherwise, it is impossible to safeguard Leninist internationalism in Kazakhstan. ... The struggle against local nationalism must be intensified in every way to create the conditions for the introduction of Leninist internationalism among the workers of

the nationalities of Kazakhstan."¹³⁴ Henceforth, Kremlin authorities sought to resolve the contradictions of the national question mainly by violent means. During the Great Terror of 1937/1938, many Armenians, Belarusians, Georgians, Kazakhs, Kirghiz, Turkmens, Ukrainians, and other nationalities were repressed. Along with them, large numbers of local Party and Soviet workers, national intellectuals, ordinary workers, and peasants who were also accused of supporting the "National Revolutionaries" and of belonging to "counter-revolutionary" and "nationalist" organisations were exterminated.

During the first 10 to 15 years after the October Revolution, the Bolsheviks prided themselves on their internationalism and tried to eliminate national problems, especially with regard to national minorities, who were considered to be the most oppressed by tsarism, but the situation changed dramatically in the early 1930s. The new national-state doctrine emerged, based on the idea of building socialism in one country and replacing the earlier propaganda of proletarian internationalism. It was based on the "elder brother" theory, on the idea that the Russians, who dominated in numbers the territories they occupied, had to fulfil the mission of "leading the Soviet Union". Historian V. Malakhov notes:

The official doctrine of the Bolsheviks was proletarian internationalism. True, by the mid-1930s, talk of a 'world revolution' had become purely decorative. Internationalist rhetoric was completely superseded by the military-political. Nationalism, not just great-power nationalism, but also ethnic nationalism (such as Russian nationalism) is beginning to play an increasingly important role. The appeal to the symbols of Russian statehood (Alexander Nevsky, Don Dmitry, Ivan the Terrible) and imperial military power (A. Suvorov, M. Kutuzov, A. Nakhimov, V. Ushakov), seclusion, and spy mania left no doubt about the orientation of the "first workers' and peasants' state in the world".¹³⁵

¹³⁴ *O tak nazyvaemom «national-uklonizme»*. [On so-called "national-deviationism".] *Izvestiya CK KPSS* [Proceedings of the CPSU Central Committee]. No 9, 1990, p. 79. See also: V. T. Chebotareva. *I.V.Stalin i partiyno – sovetskie natsionalnye kadry*. [I. V. Stalin and the Party and Soviet national cadres.] *Voprosy istorii* [Issues of History]. No 7, 2008, pp. 3-25.

¹³⁵ V. S. Malakhov. *Natsionalizm kak politicheskaya ideologiya*. [Nationalism as a political ideology.] – M. – 2005, p. 212.

American professor Neimark comments on this sharp turn towards the glorification of the superiority of the great Russian people: "After 1937, Soviet propaganda for the first time began to speak of the superiority of the 'great Russian people' over all others. The Russians now appeared to be 'first among equals', and these 'equals' were looked upon by other nations with deep respect and sacred feelings of 'friendship, love and gratitude'. At about the same time, many small ethnic groups and sub-groups were destroyed as reactionary and unnecessary."¹³⁶

In fact, the glorification of the Russian people started much earlier. In February 1930, Stalin criticised poet Demyan Bedny's review: "The revolutionary workers of all countries applaud the Soviet, working class, and above all the **Russian** [original emphasis] working class, the vanguard of the Soviet workers, as their acknowledged leader, who is pursuing the most revolutionary and active policy which the proletarians of other countries have ever dreamed of pursuing."¹³⁷ Stalin often used the term "Soviet people" to mean "Russian people". For example, on 6 July 1933, at a lunch in his summer house with artists I. Brodsky, A. Gerasimov, and Katsman, Stalin toasted the Russian people: "Let us sing about the Soviet people, about the Soviet nation itself, about the people who made the revolution earlier than others. I am a specialist in national affairs. These days I have read something. I once said to Lenin: the best nation is the Russian nation, the most Soviet nation. ... Let's hear about the Soviet nation, about the wonderful Russian nation."¹³⁸

In August 1934, Stalin, A. Zhdanov, and S. Kirov decided to support the writing of new history textbooks. They prepared *Notes* on the outlines of the textbooks *History of the USSR* and *New History*. *Notes* was immediately endorsed by the Politburo and communicated to the historians who had participated in the preparation of these

¹³⁶ Norman M. Neimark. *Plamya nenavisti: etnicheskie chistki v Evrope XX veka*. [Flames of Hate: Ethnic Cleansing in Twentieth Century Europe.] – Moscow – S.-Petersburg, 2005, p.140.

¹³⁷ Terry Martin. *Imperiya «polozhitelnoy deyatelnosti». Natsii i natsionalizm v SSSR, 1923 1939* [The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the USSR, 1923–1939], p. 174.

¹³⁸ Alexander Vdovin. *Podlinnaya istoriya russkikh. XX vek* [The true history of the Russians. The twentieth century], p.103.

textbooks. From 1930 to 1934, the course was set for turning the USSR into the homeland of Soviet patriots. The Russian people were recognised as the force called upon to bring other peoples together in a new way. According to Stalinist futurology, Russians were to become the cement of a "zonal group" of peoples and turn it into one of the forms of transition into a nationless humanity.

Stalin's letter to the editor of the magazine *Proletarian Revolution*, "On Some Questions of the History of Bolshevism", published at the end of October 1931, can be viewed as an application for strengthening the role of Russians in the international movement. Russian Bolsheviks were presented as the standard for communists of other countries: it was they who "put the fundamental questions of the Russian revolution in the foreground", it was their internationalism which "is a model of proletarian internationalism for the workers of all countries". The letter also claimed that "the Russian proletariat is the vanguard of the international proletariat".¹³⁹

The new concept of history was closely linked to a new interpretation of the place and role of the Russian people in the history of the USSR and the world.

The working people of all the nations of the Soviet Union know what enormous help the great Russian people have given them... Our great people, who have given such great examples to the world in the struggle for the liberation of mankind ... occupy a place of honour in the fraternal family of the workers of all countries.... With its richest history, many generations of fighters for world communism will be educated. Similar statements are being made daily. For example, the newspaper *Pravda* wrote: 'With all its might, the RSFSR is contributing to the rapid growth of the other fraternal Soviet republics. And whereas in the past the word 'Russian' was often associated with the idea of the yoke of tsarism for the other peoples who inhabited Russia, now all nations freed from capitalist slavery feel the deepest feelings of love and strongest friendship for their Russian brothers ... Russian culture enriches the culture of other peoples. Russian has

¹³⁹ Alexander Vdovin. *Podlinnaya istoriya russkikh. XX vek* [The true history of the Russians. The twentieth century], p. 49.

become the language of the world revolution. Lenin wrote in Russian, Stalin wrote in Russian. Russian culture has become international because it is the most progressive, the most human, the most humane.¹⁴⁰

In fact, the privileged status of Russian culture was announced in the editorial "RSFSR" in *Pravda* on 1 February 1936, which explicitly expressed the view of Russian superiority: "All the (Soviet) nations, the great participants in the socialist construction, can be proud of the results of their activity. All of them, from the smallest to the largest, are Soviet patriots in one sense. But first among equals are the Russian people, the Russian workers, the Russian working people, who have carried the utmost importance throughout the Great Proletarian Revolution, from the first victories to the present brilliant period of its development."

After this article was published, the expression "first among equals" became a cliché for the Russian people. Additionally, the Russian people and Russian culture were now constantly referred to only as "great". Speaking on the 21st anniversary of the Bolshevik takeover, Stalin explicitly recommended the use of this expression: "Old Russia has now been transformed into the USSR where all peoples are equal. The country is powerful and strong with its army, its industry, and its collectivised agriculture. Among the equal nations of the Soviet state and land, the Russian nation is the most Soviet and the most revolutionary."¹⁴¹

At the end of 1937, a new propaganda concept was invented that explained the place of the Russian people in the family of Soviet peoples. To the previous titles of the Russian people, great and first among equals, a new one was added – "elder brother". On the next-to-last day of the year, the newspaper *Leningrad Pravda* published an article by Sadovsky entitled "The eldest among equals":

When the Russian nation rose to its full height, freedom-loving, talented, manly, just, like any nation that carries freedom on its

¹⁴⁰ *Pravda*, 1937, 16 January.

¹⁴¹ Terry Martin. *Imperiya «polozhitelnoy deyatelnosti»*. *Natsii i natsionalizm v SSSR, 1923–1939* [The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the USSR, 1923–1939], p. 619.

banners, it was recognised by the other peoples of the USSR as the first. So, brothers, in an equally friendly family, give the first place to the eldest. The concept of the "Russian nation as the elder brother" was vividly expressed in B. Volin's pamphlet "The Great Russian Nation", published in August 1938: "The peoples of the USSR are proud of their elder brother, the first in the fraternal family of similar peoples – the Russian people."¹⁴²

On this proclamation of the Russian people as first among equals and as the elder brother, Salye writes:

... But the most terrible thing, in my opinion, in this binding of the people to the abuses of the rulers is that, from 1917 onwards, the Russian people were continuously brainwashed on the idea of their messianic task in realising the ideas of socialism, in building paradise (communism) on earth, not in heaven. In the person of Marxism, a new "god" appeared, his "apostles", his "clergy" who preached not some abstract state but a "real" communist state on a sinful earth. The Russian people were chosen as the messiah to create it. The seeds of the sermon of the chosen nation, the martyr of the people, fell on fertile soil, because "the ideas of national messianism, of the great vocation of Russia, of duty to humanity and to the whole world, have always been inherent in the Russian self-consciousness."¹⁴³

The glorification of the Russian people and its role among the other peoples of the USSR was particularly important on the eve of the upcoming war. In a conversation with A. Kollontai in 1939 on the rearmament of the army and the role of the home front in the war, Stalin said:

All this will fall on the shoulders of the Russian people. Because the Russian people are the great people. The Russian people are

¹⁴² Alexander Vdovin. *Podlinnaya istoriya russkih. XX vek* [The true history of the Russians. The twentieth century], p. 104.

¹⁴³ Marina Salye. *Pochemu demokraticeskoe dvizhenie «stesnyaetsya» nacionalnoj idei?* [Why is the democratic movement "ashamed" of the national idea?] Raduga. No 5, 1990, p. 31.

the good people. The Russian people, among other peoples, have the greatest patience. The Russian people have a clear mind. It is as if it was born to help other nations. The Russian people have great courage. It has a strong character. It is a nation of dreamers. It has a purpose. That is why its path is more difficult than for other nations. It can be relied upon in any adversity. The Russian people are inexhaustible.¹⁴⁴

The outbreak of war with Germany in 1941 led to a new escalation of Russian ethnic rhetoric. The appeal to Soviet patriotism was almost always limited to Russian themes. Four months after the outbreak of the war, *Pravda* once again described the great Russian people as *primus inter pares* – first among equals. In a speech on 7 November 1941 (24th anniversary of the October Revolution), Stalin proclaimed "Let the manly image of our great predecessors inspire us in this war" and named a long list of pre-revolutionary heroes, exclusively Russian. Chief ideologist of the Central Committee of the AC(b)P, Shcherbakov, wrote in his article "The Bolsheviks – Continuers of the Best Patriotic Traditions of the Russian People", published in the 27 November 1941 issue of *Pravda*: "The Russian people – first in the family of similar peoples of the USSR – bears the brunt of the struggle with the German invaders." Other Soviet ideologues also called for an emphasis on Russia's pre-revolutionary military superiority, which meant Russian superiority. There could be no question of other nationalities. Historian A. Yakovlev, discussing the history curriculum for schools in 1944, said:

It seems to me necessary to bring the motive of Russian nationalism to the foreground. We have great respect for the nationalities which have entered our Union, we treat them with love. And it seems to me that any textbook on Russia should be built on such a guideline – which, from this point of view, is essential for understanding the success of the Russian people in terms of the suffering it has undergone and its overall path. ... To connect with this its interest in the 100 nationalities that have

¹⁴⁴ Alexander Vdovin. *Podlinnaya istoriya russkikh. XX vek* [The true history of the Russians. The twentieth century], p. 107.

entered our country seems to me to be wrong. ... There is a common idea: we, Russians, want a history of the Russian people, a history of Russian institutions under Russian conditions. And to rejoice that in their time the Kirghiz defeated the Russians, that Shamil was able to resist Nicholas, seems to me to be out of place in a textbook."

Similar comments were also made by historians P. Smirnov, Tarle, and others.

Sometimes, non-Russian heroes of the past were allowed to be celebrated, but only at a local level. Calls on Russian-language publishing houses to cover non-Russian heroes were mostly ignored. The reproaches of Belarusian Communists, who in 1944 condemned historian V. Pichet for having downplayed and ignored prominent Belarusian heroes in his work *The Heroic Past of the Belarusian People*, were ignored.¹⁴⁵ During this period, official ideology returned to the uncompromising version that had taken shape after 1937: the ethnic superiority of the Russian people in Soviet society. Immediately after the end of the war, it received Stalin's support again. This was confirmed by Stalin's notorious toast at a reception in honour of the Red Army in May 1945:

I want to toast the health of our Soviet people, first of all the Russian people. I drink first of all to the health of the Russian people because it is the most outstanding nation of all the nations that are entering the Soviet Union.

I toast the health of the Russian people because it has earned recognition in this war as the leading force of the Soviet Union among all the peoples of our land.

I toast the Russian people, not only because they are the leading people, but also because they have a clear mind, a strong character, and patience.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁵ Ibid, p 357

¹⁴⁶ Stalin I.V. *Vystuplenie I.V.Stalina na priyeme v Kremle v chest komanduyushhih voyskami Krasnoy armii, 24 maya 1945 goda O Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyne Sovetskogo Soyuz.* [Stalin's speech at the reception in the Kremlin in honour of the Red Army commanders, 24 May 1945 On the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union.] – M. – 1947, p. 197.

Some viewed Stalin's speech as a clear expression of Russian nationalism since he had singled out only one great nation among the others. Propagandists tried to deny this:

Party organisations must widely propagandise the wonderful traditions of the great Russian people, the most outstanding people of all those entering the USSR. The Party organisations must explain how Stalin's assessment of the Russian people as a great nation and as the leading force of the Soviet Union among all others in our land is a generalisation of the historical path which the Russian people have followed. It should also have been explained that 'the history of the Russian peoples is the overcoming of hatred and their gradual unification around the Russian people', but that the mission of the liberation of the Russian people, its leading role, is only to help all the other peoples of our land to stand by their elder brother, the Russian people.¹⁴⁷

The image of the elder brother became indispensable in post-war propaganda, which was also carried out through cinema, popular press, and literature. If in the 1930s Soviet historians abandoned their unquestioning condemnation of Tsarist policies in the Caucasus and Central Asia, after the Second World War during the period of "high Stalinism" they began unabashedly praising the Russian people who had brought "culture and civilisation" to the lower-class peoples of Russia. Soviet international relations also changed when the neo-Islamist element, revived during the war, took centre stage. The USSR's Eastern European allies were advised to support the development of Slavic self-consciousness and to use it in their internal and external policies. But, as in 19th century Pan-Slavism, Russia was once again the elder brother, the main one in the family of Slavic peoples. The others – Czechs, Slovaks, Bulgarians, Serbs, and others – had to support Russia's policy and contribute to its goals. In this context, the new Soviet man had to resemble a Russian (Belarusian, Ukrainian), speak Russian, and, if not actually be a Russian (Slav), then unquestioningly recognise the superiority of the Russian people in the historical

¹⁴⁷ Alexander Vdovin. *Podlinnaya istoriya russkikh. XX vek* [The true history of the Russians. The twentieth century], p. 202.

development of the territory in which he was born and in current politics.¹⁴⁸

The experiment of "educating the new man" was put forth for the first time in Russian history after the October 1917 coup d'état in 1923, when Lenin proclaimed his concept of the "Cultural Revolution". It laid the foundations for a programme of lasting transformation of the spiritual life of the USSR, which was to lead to a "comprehensively developed, genuine communist". New Soviet officials had to be free from both the "bourgeois class position" and "incorrect" ideological convictions. The reality of this policy did not take long to set in. By the end of the decade, the Russian people were ready to accept the "personality cult", astonishing for the 20th century, and to endure widespread repression in silence and to adore their murderers.

As early as 1931, M. Kalinin, Chairman of the Central Executive Committee, noted that in our Soviet Union "not even a Russian man is essentially being formed, but a new type of man – a citizen of the Soviet Union" with a patriotism that is unique to him.¹⁴⁹ In the mid-20th c., Soviet leaders believed that this task was complete. The CCCP thesis adopted in July 1967 on the 50th anniversary of the Bolshevik coup stated: "Economic and political transformations have brought about profound changes in the consciousness of society, the ideological unity of Soviet society has been strengthened. ... Generations of people have grown up in the Soviet country who have been raised in endless devotion to communist ideals and are convinced of the rightness of our great ideals. The character of the Soviet man – fighter, revolutionary and conscientious worker – has hardened."¹⁵⁰ In his 1971 book *Soviet Man*, historian G. Smirnov divided the Soviet population into five generations. About the third he writes:

The third generation includes those people whose conscious life began under Soviet rule (born around 1910-1926). They are united by events connected first with the Great Patriotic War and

¹⁴⁸ Norman M. Neumark. *Plamya nenavisti: etnicheskie chistki v Evrope XX veka.* [Flames of Hate: Ethnic Cleansing in Twentieth Century Europe.], p. 145.

¹⁴⁹ Alexander Vdovin. *Podlinnaya istoriya russkih. XX vek* [The true history of the Russians. The twentieth century], p. 71.

¹⁵⁰ *Lielās Oktobra sociālistiskās revolūcijas 50 gadi. PSKP CK tēzes.* [50 years of the Great October Socialist Revolution. Theses of the CPSU Central Committee] – Rīga, 1967, p.17.

the reconstruction of the devastated economy after the war. This generation includes those called October contemporaries, who grew up and were educated under the new power. This generation entered life educated, ideologically convinced, morally upstanding and, together with their fathers, has shown so much unprecedented heroism, so much greatness of spirit that the world bows its head before the land of socialism. In this generation, for the first time, those characteristics common to the Soviet people are so widely manifested, which so vividly and convincingly prove that a new type of socialist personality has emerged.¹⁵¹

In the spring of 1971, the XXIV Congress of the CPSU proclaimed a new truth: "During the years of socialist construction, a new human community has emerged in our country – the Soviet people." One would have thought that this idea, like hundreds of others like it, would remain only on paper and would soon be forgotten. But this time it was different. The idea stuck and became a dogma of the Soviet humanities. The mantle of the Soviet people was put on all the peoples of the empire. National traits were recognised only to the extent of the contribution of that nation to the formation of the new man.

It is safe to say that over many years, a human being was deliberately and purposefully being shaped who was not an end but a means – cheap labour, a mere human factor. In the face of the frenzied ideologisation of all social life, the moral education of man turned into the violent imposition of moral values on command from above. Virtue was replaced by unquestioning obedience to instructions and spirituality by political education. Thus, a special socio-political type of man was formed – *Homo Sovieticus*.

One of the most important features of *Homo Sovieticus* was the loss of nationality. This loss was partly due to the Stalinist practice of national relations imposed for many years – the doctrine of the "fusion of nations through prosperity". It was in the context of the denial of human national characteristics that a new nation was formed – the nation of *Homo sovieticus*. While classical Stalinism pursued the issue of fusion in a radical and brutal way – by exiling, deporting or

¹⁵¹ G. Smirnov. *Padomju cilvēks* [Soviet Man]. - Riga, 1973, pp. 261, 262.

physically destroying disobedient peoples – later this policy was directed towards the suppression of national self-confidence and national cultures. In Latvia, this tendency manifested itself in the denial of the history of the Latvian people, the banning of the national flag, anthem, and heraldry, and the separation of Latvian culture from the culture of the Republic of Latvia and the culture of Latvian exile. The slogan of bilingualism promoted the forcible imposition of the Russian language.

It was also on *Homo Sovieticus* that the entire colonisation policy of the Soviet Union was based. But the formation of *Homo Sovieticus* failed. Russian historian V. Buldakov writes: "The ethnic stage of the systemic crisis of the late 20th century began under Khrushchev when the naive *Homo Sovieticus* was, as if deliberately, led to the door of the communist paradise, to explain to him in popular terms that entry was possible only with the passes of the nomenklatura. From that moment on, the crisis of the "red empire" became almost irreversible."¹⁵²

During the Soviet Union's existence, top leadership was always predominantly Russian. From 1917 to 1989, the C(b)PR, CP(b)P, CPSU Politburo, Orgburo, and Secretariat were composed of 132 Russians, 17 Jews, six Belarusians, seven Latvians, five Georgians, two each – Armenians, Ukrainians, Uzbeks, Azerbaijanis, Germans, Poles, one Kazakh, one Tatar, and one Finn. In the final years, among the top commanders of the Soviet army there were no Latvians, Lithuanians, Estonians, Georgians, Azerbaijanis, or Central Asians.

Russian domination spread further down the power vertical. This was established in the early years of the Soviet Union when revolutionary rearrangements demanded the unquestioning implementation of the Central Committee's directives, which, moreover, were disseminated in Russian. Subsequent campaigns (e.g., collectivisation) were also more successful when Slavs were in power.

Over time, the Soviet Union had developed several strict personnel policies that reserved top positions for Russians in the republics. First, a Russian was the second secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the republic, and, as a rule, sent from Moscow. He was the "local governor", the real policymaker, with

¹⁵² Vladimir Buldakov. *Krasnaya smuta. Priroda i posledstviya revoliucionnogo nasiliya*. [The Red Troubles. The nature and consequences of revolutionary violence], p. 695.

responsibility for staff and control of the nomenklatura. Sometimes, though rarely, Russians also became first secretaries of the Central Committee of the Communist Parties of the republics (N. Khrushchev in Ukraine, F. Goloschokin in Kazakhstan, L. Brezhnev in Moldavia and Kazakhstan).

Replacement of first secretaries by a Russian counterpart went further up the hierarchical ladder of the Party and Soviet apparatus to the Party's district committees and executive committees. In all places, their functions included supervision and control of their immediate superiors. The other party secretaries were local representatives, but each had an analogous "supervisor". The commander of the armed forces stationed in the republics was also usually a Russian. The special services were in a similar position.

In general, the presence of Slavs in the central organs of the republics continued until the mid-1980s. However, the status of these Moscow representatives remained unchanged even though the independence and influence of local national governments grew. With the initiation of Gorbachev's *perestroika*, the institution of Moscow's local governments began to turn into an anachronism, an element of administration, and local elites were ready to be rid of them.¹⁵³

M. Salje describes these Moscow "viceroys": "The power of these procurators was practically unlimited until the very last moment and, unlike Pontius Pilate, it did not occur to them to 'wash their hands' of the 'shedding of innocent blood' of the peoples over whom they effectively ruled. I wonder if they will be canonised by any church."¹⁵⁴

This could also be applied to a large extent to all those first among equals, the elder brothers who, having left their homeland voluntarily or sent by the Party and impregnated with chauvinism, came to the periphery of the empire to force its inhabitants to renounce their history, culture, customs, national self-confidence, and to make them admire only the greatness of one great Russian nation, its past, and current success.

¹⁵³ Victor Kotov, Vadim Trepalov. *Russkiy narod v XX veke: paradoksy istoricheskoy sudby* [Russian people in the twentieth century: the paradoxes of historical destiny], No 3, 2007, p. 54.

¹⁵⁴ Marina Salje. *Pochemu demokraticeskoe dvizhenie «stesnyaetsya» nacionalnoj idei?* [Why is the democratic movement "ashamed" of the national idea?] Raduga. No 5, 1990, p.31.

CHAPTER 3

Colonisation of Latvia, 1940-1941

3.1. Occupation of Latvia

On 11 August 1920, Latvia and Russia signed a peace treaty; Article II stipulated:

Based on the right of all peoples to free self-determination proclaimed by the Socialist Soviet Republic of Russia, without excluding even the complete secession from the state they are a part of, and in accordance with the clearly expressed will of the Latvian people for an independent state, Russia unreservedly recognises the independence of the Latvian State, the independence and sovereignty of Latvia and voluntarily and forever renounces all sovereign rights which Russia possessed in respect of the people and land of Latvia both on the basis of the former state-legal system and on the basis of international treaties, which in the sense herein expressed shall cease to have effect for all time to come. The people and land of Latvia shall not carry any obligations in respect of Russia based on their former membership of Russia.¹⁵⁵

But only a few decades later, Latvia was once again threatened by its big eastern neighbour with the loss of independence.

On 23 August 1939, the heads of the Soviet and German foreign ministries signed a non-aggression treaty in Moscow, the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. The attached secret protocol defined the division of territories, spheres of interest in Eastern Europe: Latvia fell within the Soviet sphere of interest. Soon afterwards, Stalin also began to deal with the "Baltic problem", i.e., to prepare for the incorporation of the

¹⁵⁵ *Dokumenti stāsta. Latvijas buržuāzijas nākšana pie varas* [The Stories of Documents. The coming to power of the Latvian bourgeoisie] - Riga, 1988, p. 260. For more on the conclusion of this treaty, see Aivars Stranga. *Latvijas – Padomju Krievijas miera līgums 1920. gada 11.augustā. Latvijas – padomju Krievijas attiecības 1919.–1925.gadā.* [Latvian-Soviet Russian Peace Treaty of 11 August 1920. Latvian-Soviet Russian relations 1919-1925] - Riga, 2000.

independent Baltic states. Law professor Dietrich André Loeber comments: "The so-called Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact gave the Soviet Union a free hand to deal with Latvia as it saw fit. ... Soon after the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact was signed, the Soviet Union forced Latvia to set up Soviet military bases on its territory. Latvia signed the treaty (the so-called Pact of Assistance) on 5 October 1939 in Moscow."¹⁵⁶

H. Kissinger points out: "Stalin did not hesitate to collect his share of the secret protocol. The war with Poland was still in full force when the Soviet Union offered a military alliance to the three small Baltic states, complete with the right to establish military bases on their territory. Left without Western support, these republics had no choice but to take this first step towards losing their independence."¹⁵⁷

The real alternative to these treaties could have been an immediate military occupation of the Baltic states, so signing these treaties was viewed by the Baltic governments as the lesser evil at the time. Article III of the "Pact of Mutual Assistance between Latvia and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics", signed on 5 October 1939, stipulated:

To ensure the security of the Soviet Union and to strengthen its own independence, the Republic of Latvia, grants the Soviet Union the right to maintain naval bases and certain aerodromes for aviation in the cities of Liepāja and Ventspils on a lease basis at a negotiable price. The designated sites for the bases and aerodromes shall be designated and their boundaries determined by mutual agreement.

To guard the Irbe Strait, the Soviet Union is granted the right to establish a coastal artillery base on the seaside between Ventspils and Pitragi on the same terms.

For the defence of naval bases, airfields and coastal artillery bases, the Soviet Union shall have the right to maintain in the districts assigned to these bases and airfields, at its own expense, a strictly limited number of Soviet land and air forces, the maximum numerical strength of which shall be determined by a separate agreement.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁶ D. A. Loeber. *Latvijas valsts bojāeja 1940.gadā // Latvijas valsts atjaunošana* [The destruction of the Latvian state in 1940 – Latvian State Restoration.] 1986. 1993 - Rīga, 1998, p. 9.

¹⁵⁷ Henry Kissinger. *Diplomacy*, p. 357.

¹⁵⁸ *Latvian Herald*. – 1939. – Oct 10.

This article allowed a contingent of 25,000 Soviet troops to be brought into Latvia. On 23 October 1939, the cruiser *Kirov* arrived in Liepāja, escorted by minesweepers *Smelivij* and *Stremitelnij*. On 29 October, the first Soviet troops arrived at Zilupe station. In accordance with the agreement, 2nd Separate Rifle Corps and the 18th Aviation Brigade troops arrived in Latvia, totalling 21,559 people.¹⁵⁹

At first, Soviet leaders denied any suggestion of occupation or Sovietisation of the Baltic states. In a conversation with G. Dimitrov, Secretary of the Executive Committee of the Communist International (Comintern) on 25 October 1939, Stalin said: 'We think that in the mutual assistance pacts (Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania) we have found the form that will enable us to include several countries in the Soviet Union's orbit of influence. But to do that we need to persevere – to respect their internal regimes and their independence. We will not seek their Sovietisation. The time will come when they will do that themselves.'¹⁶⁰ On 31 October 1939, Chairman of the USSR Sovnarkom V. Molotov, speaking at a session of the USSR Supreme Soviet, stated. "The special character of the above-mentioned mutual assistance agreements does not mean any interference by the Soviet Union in the affairs of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, as some organs of the foreign press try to show. On the contrary, all these mutual assistance pacts firmly establish the sovereignty of the countries which have signed them and non-interference in the affairs of another country. We declare that the chatter about the 'Sovietisation' of the Baltic states is beneficial only for our common enemies and all kinds of anti-Soviet provocateurs."¹⁶¹

At first, the words of the top Soviet leaders may have seemed genuine and the USSR would be content with the military bases it had acquired and the deployment of its military garrisons in the Baltic

¹⁵⁹ N.I. Meltyukhov. *Narashhivanie sovetskogo voennogo prisutstviya v Pribaltike v 1939 1941 godah* [Building up the Soviet military presence in the Baltics in 1939-1941.]. *Otechestvennaya istoriya* [National History]. 1999, No 4, p. 53.

¹⁶⁰ Narinsky M.M. *Kreml i Komintern. 1939 1941 g.g.* [The Kremlin and the Comintern. 1939 1941]. *Svobodnaya mysl*. 1995. No 2, pp. 16-17.

¹⁶¹ *Polpredy soobshhayut ... Sbornik dokumentov ob otnosheniyah SSSR s Latviej, Litvoy i Estoniej* [The ambassadors report ... A collection of documents on Soviet relations with Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia]. August 1939 – August 1940. – Moscow, 1990, p. 158.

states. But things proved very different. Due to the rapid German conquest of many European countries, Soviet leaders decided to occupy and sovietise the Baltic states. The pretext for this was Soviet fabrications about violations of the mutual assistance pacts concluded in autumn 1939. The head of the Soviet Union's telegraph agency, J. Havinson, sent a letter to Molotov in which he advised to "pay the most serious attention to the activities of the so-called Baltic Entente", which was supposedly oriented towards England and France. Havinson claimed (on the basis of rumours) that Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania were establishing a tripartite military alliance and trying to achieve economic and national unification: "For what other purpose, if not for anti-Soviet agitation, does the Baltic Entente now exist? ... There can be no doubt that the Baltic Entente is a legal form of Anglo-French influence in the Baltics, that the Baltic Entente is at present occupied with behind-the-scenes anti-Soviet movements. It is possible that, in the light of the changes in the international situation, the Baltic Entente may seek (perhaps is already seeking) to "reorient" itself towards Germany." Having noted the existence of a special magazine "Revue Baltique" and the disloyal attitude of the Baltic press towards the USSR, Havinson asked "whether the time has not come on our side to take real measures to liquidate the Baltic Entente."¹⁶²

These "facts" mentioned by J. Havinson were used by Molotov in a circular sent on 14 June 1940 to the Soviet plenipotentiaries in Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and Finland:

After Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania signed mutual assistance pacts with the USSR, the Baltic Entente, whose members, Latvia and Estonia, had already been involved in a military alliance against the USSR, was not only not dissolved, but intensified its hostile activities against the USSR, bringing Lithuania into the military alliance as well. ...

In general, from December 1939 the Entente was very active, unprecedentedly so, and in every possible direction – military, political, economic, cultural, press, tourism, etc. All these activities, both major and various, were and are in fact anti-Soviet by nature.

¹⁶² Ibid, pp 338, 339.

In the Baltic Entente, concerted military measures were intensified in recent months, secretly from the USSR. ... Estonia appointed a military attaché in Lithuania, and Lithuania in Estonia. In November-December 1939, mutual trips of the Lithuanian and Latvian Chiefs of Staff took place. From February 1940, the Baltic Entente's press "Revue Baltique" was published in Tallinn in English, French and German.¹⁶³

Like many issues, the question of the occupation of the Baltic States was decided by Stalin in discussions with his closest associates. This is also confirmed by entries in People's Commissar for Internal Affairs of the USSR Lavrentiy Beria's diary. On 15 March 1940 he wrote:

Koba (as Stalin was called only by his closest associates – J.R.) said that we should involve intelligence in the political probing operation. The age of imperialist conflicts is now beginning again, he says, and all contradictions must be used to our advantage. You see, they are already at war with each other, in a weak fashion so far, but let it drag on. And we will get stronger. Then let us see. They say that the reason we failed with the Finns is that the Finns lived under Swedish rule for a long time and learned national unity. That is why they failed to sovietise Finland in the revolution, and why they are failing now. Lenin agreed to recognise Finnish independence, but in the Baltics, independence was secured by the Germans under the threat of bayonet. Now they (meaning the Baltic governments – J.R.) are puppets there. They are smiling at us, gritting their teeth. They are closer to the Germans and the English. Or the Americans. Then they say: "We need to think about Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania. It's easier with them. We already have troops there. We don't need to touch them yet, but we need to keep our finger on the pulse." He says: "Lavrentiy, this falls under your competence. We need to know what they are thinking and where they are looking. We must not miss the moment when we need to act decisively." He sighs and says: "Look, Ilyich (Lenin – J.R.)

¹⁶³ Lavrentiy Beria. *Lichniy dnevnik 1937 1941. «Stalin slezam ne verit»* [Personal diary 1937 1941. "Stalin doesn't believe in tears"]. – Moscow, 2011, p. 180.

was a master. He chose the exact moment and then struck. But for us it is science."

I reminded them what they were whispering to each other. The Lithuanians went to Berlin. Their military persons are consulting. He says: "I remember. That's why I say to you, keep an eye on them. So that we have an accurate picture."

I sit, thinking. I need to orient Vsevolod (Merkulov, Head of the Main Department of State Security of the USSR People's Commissariat for the Interior – J.R.), Pavel (apparently Sudoplatov, Deputy Head of the Main Department of State Security of the USSR People's Commissariat for the Interior – J.R.) and Fitin (P. Fitin, Head of the 5th (Intelligence) Department of the Main Department of State Security of the USSR People's Commissariat for the Interior – J.R.).¹⁶⁴

On 31 May 1940, Beria made the following entry in his diary:

I was with Koba. ... I reported on Lithuania, asking: "But is Comrade Molotov up to date?" I said that he had been in the picture for a long time. Vyacheslav confirmed it. Zhdanov said that the situation in the Baltic had to be resolved while the Germans were busy in the West. The Estonians, too, were said to have revived, hoping for something.

[Stalin] said that he agreed with Zhdanov. All the news is that they all think that the Germans will now be a force in Europe and are counting on them. They are holding consultations. Koba said that we would discuss this.¹⁶⁵

L. Beria's diary entry of 15 June 1940 confirms that Stalin decided on the occupation of the Baltic States that very day:

Koba made the final decision on Lithuania and on the Baltics. He said, like it or not, we need to sovietise. He said nobody thought the Germans were that strong. Poland was defeated, now France

¹⁶⁴ Lavrenty Beria. *Lichnyy dnevnik 1937 1941*. «Stalin slezam ne verit» [Personal diary 1937 1941. "Stalin doesn't believe in tears"], pp. 165, 166.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid, pp 165, 176.* Limitrophe (Latin – border-adjacent area) – collective term for the *cordon sanitaire*, i.e., Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Poland, and Finland.

is defeated, the English are defeated, and the situation has changed. When they needed us, the Germans made concessions on the issue of the limitrophe, but now they can be invigorated, and we can lose the Baltics. But now we have treaties, we have troops there, we have good popular support, it's not Finland. Vyacheslav [Molotov] did a lot of preparation, the Lithuanians lost their nerve and so did the others. So everything has to go well. It will help us a lot.

I have a lot of work to do again, especially in Latvia and Estonia, where there are a lot of Baltic Guards and a lot of local scoundrels. You can't leave, you have to move. But it has to be done carefully, not immediately. There is no strong underground like UNO (Ukrainian Nationalist Organisation). UNO also worked with the Poles, there is a lot of experience there. But there [the Baltics] nationalists sit in the government; they are not prepared for the underground. So, let's study first, then decide.¹⁶⁶

On 16 June 1940, the Soviet government submitted a note to the Latvian government:

... The Government of the USSR considers the following to be necessary and urgent:

1) to form immediately in Latvia a government capable and ready to ensure the fair implementation of the Soviet-Latvian mutual assistance pact,

2) to ensure without delay the free admission of Soviet troops into the territory of Latvia, to place them in the most important centres of Latvia in such numbers as will be sufficient to ensure the realisation of the Soviet-Latvian Mutual Assistance Pact and to prevent possible provocative acts against the Soviet garrisons in Latvia.

The Soviet Government regards the fulfilment of these requirements as an elementary condition without which the fair and loyal execution of the Soviet-Latvian mutual assistance pact cannot be achieved.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁶ Lavrenty Beria. *Lichniy dnevnik 1937 1941*. «Stalin slezam ne verit» [Personal diary 1937 1941. "Stalin doesn't believe in tears"], pp. 177, 178.

¹⁶⁷ Latvian Herald. - 1940, 17 June.

The last paragraph of this note was not included in this published communication: "The Soviet Government will await the reply of the Government of Latvia by 11 p.m. (Moscow time) on 16 June. Failure of the Latvian Government to reply by this date will be regarded as a refusal to comply with the above demands of the Soviet Union."¹⁶⁸

Lawyer and political scientist Egils Levits describes the occupation of Latvia:

Given the military superiority of the Soviet Union, the Latvian government decided to accept an ultimatum the deadline of which was only eight hours away. On 17 June 1940, Latvia was completely occupied. ... From that moment on, any expression of the autonomous will of the Latvian government was virtually no longer possible. Thus, on 17 June 1940, Latvia lost its capacity for state action for fifty years. All further manifestations of state power in Latvia derived from Soviet state power.¹⁶⁹

Preparations for a Soviet military invasion of the Baltic States began in early June 1940. As of 3 June 1940,¹⁷⁰ the Soviet troops stationed in the Baltic States were excluded from the Leningrad and Kaliningrad Military Districts and the Belorussian Special Military District and placed under the direct command of the People's Commissar for the Defence. On the same day, a Supreme Soviet decree delayed demobilisation of Red Army soldiers in their third year of service until 1 January 1941. On 4-7 June 1940, a combat alert was declared in the Leningrad, Kaliningrad, and Belorussia war areas and their troops were concentrated on the borders of the Baltic states. Simultaneously, a combat alert was declared at the Soviet military bases in the Baltic states. Soviet troop concentrations were completed at

¹⁶⁸ D. A. Lēbers. *Latvijas valsts bojāeja 1940.gadā // Latvijas valsts atjaunošana. 1986-1993* [The destruction of the Latvian state in 1940 – Latvian State Restoration. 1986-1993], p.10.

¹⁶⁹ E. Levits. *Latvija padomju varā // Latvijas valsts atjaunošana. 1986-1993* [Latvia under Soviet rule – Latvian State Restoration. 1986-1993], p.43. For more on the occupation of Latvia see Ilga Gore, Aivars Stranga. *Latvija: neatkarības mijkrēslis. Okupācija. 1939. gada septembris – 1940. gada jūnijs* [Latvia: the twilight of independence. Occupation. September 1939 - June 1940]. - Riga, 1992.

¹⁷⁰ Order No. 0028 of the People's Commissar for the Defence of the USSR, S. Timoshenko

the Lithuanian border on 15 June and at the Latvian and Estonian borders on 16 June.

Total Soviet troop strength at the Baltic borders (including Soviet troops in Soviet military bases) was 435,000 troops, up to 8000 guns and mortars, over 3000 tanks, and 2601 aircraft, including 3 long-range bombers, 5 heavy bombers, 3 light bombers, over 500 medium bombers, 2 strike aircraft, and 16 fighter aviation regiments.¹⁷¹ Soviet leadership did not rule out a full-scale war, so orders were given to deploy an extensive network of hospitals, rear units, and institutions that were necessary to ensure combat operations of the troops. The NKVD were ordered to prepare camps for the deployment of 50,700 prisoners of war. NKVD border guard troops were ordered to prepare shock and fighter groups to prepare for Red Army troops to cross the border and to destroy enemy border guard headquarters and sub-units, communications assets, obstacles, minefields, etc. at the beginning of combat.

To ensure political work during the occupation operation, the Political Administration of the Red Army issued a special directive justifying the necessity of this military operation. It pointed out that the Baltic states had not fulfilled their treaty obligations, that provocations had been organised against Soviet military bases, that a staging ground was being prepared in the Baltics for war against the USSR, and that the Red Army would help the working people to free themselves from the gangs of capitalist and landlord exploiters.¹⁷² Preparations for the attack were made both on land and by sea.

On 9 June 1940, Soviet Defence Commissar S. Timoshenko wrote (Directive No. 02622) to the Commander of the United Baltic Fleet Vice-Admiral V. Tributs, the People's Commissar of the Navy

¹⁷¹ E. Levits. *Latvija padomju varā // Latvijas valsts atjaunošana. 1986-1993* [Latvia under Soviet rule Latvian State Restoration. 1986-1993], p.43. For more on the occupation of Latvia see Ilga Gore, Aivars Stranga. *Latvija: neatkarības mijkrēslis. Okupācija. 1939. gada septembris – 1940. gada jūnijs* [Latvia: the twilight of independence. Occupation. September 1939 - June 1940] - Riga, 1992.

¹⁷² M.I. Meltyukhov. *Narashhivanie sovetskogo voennogo prisutstviya v Pribaltike v 1939 1941 godah* [The build-up of the Soviet military presence in the Baltics in 1939-1941], pp. 59, 60, 61. On the military operation of the Latvian occupation, see also Aivars Pētersons. *1940. gada jūnijā bija dots uzdevums: ieņemt Baltiju! // Neatkarīgā Cīņa* [In June 1940, a task was given: to take the Baltics! Independent Fight], 1991, 1 June.

Admiral N. Kuznetsov, and the Commander of the Leningrad Military District K. Meretskov:

I hereby order:

1. To come under the operational command of the Commander of the LMD (Leningrad Military District) at 05.00 on 10 June this year (for the Red Banner Baltic Fleet) and to be ready on 12 June to carry out combat tasks as directed:
 - a) to ensure the readiness of the NWB (naval war bases) and of the naval vessels in the ports of Tallinn, Paldiski and Liepāja;
 - b) to seize naval vessels based in Estonia and Latvia at the direction of the commander of the LMD;
 - c) to take over the merchant fleet and floating transport;
 - d) to prepare and organise a landing in Paldiski and Tallinn, to take Tallinn harbour and the (shore) batteries;
 - e) to close the Gulf of Riga;
 - f) to organise a permanent and safe watch in the Gulf of Finland from the Finnish side, in the Baltic Sea from the Swedish side and to the south;
 - g) in close cooperation with ground troops, to assist the LMD units in the attack on Rakvere;
 - h) to prevent the flight of Estonian and Latvian aircrafts to Finland and Sweden by fighter aircraft.
2. The exact time of the commencement of military operations will be determined by the Commander-in-Chief of the LMD.
3. to develop the Red Banner Baltic Fleet's Combat Action Plan in the light of this Directive and to submit it for approval on 11 June this year.¹⁷³

On 17 June 1940, when Soviet troops had already begun occupying of the Baltic States, Timoshenko sent a top secret service report to Stalin and Molotov:

¹⁷³ Heinrihs Strods. *Sarkanarmijas haotiska atkāpšanās no Latvijas (1941. gada 22.jūnijs – 5.jūlijs)*. [The chaotic retreat of the Red Army from Latvia (22 June - 5 July 1941).] Yearbook of the Latvian Occupation Museum. 2001. A Nation in Captivity. - Riga, 2002, p.44.

To ensure the earliest possible preparation of the Baltic TW [theatre of war], I consider it necessary to start immediately the following measures on the territory of the occupied republics:

1. The border with East Prussia and the Baltic coast to be immediately occupied by our border troops to prevent espionage and diversionary activities by our Western neighbour.

2. To bring in (as a first step) one regiment of the People's Commissariat for the Interior troops into each of the captured republics to ensure internal order.

3. To resolve as soon as possible the question of the "governments" of the conquered republics.

4. To start disarming and disbanding the armies of the captured republics. Disarm the population, the police, and existing militarised organisations.

5. To entrust the guarding, protecting, and garrisoning of objects to our troops.

6. To begin the sovietisation of the conquered republics in the prescribed manner.

7. To establish a Baltic Military District with headquarters in Riga on the territory of the conquered republics.

Colonel-General Apanasenko, Commander of the Central Asian Military District, is hereby appointed Commander of the troops of the District.

To form the District Headquarters from the of the 8th Army Headquarters.

8. To undertake works to prepare the area as a theatre of war (construction of fortifications, conversion of railways, construction of roads and motorways, creation of a warehouse, etc.).

I will also submit a preparation plan for the Theatre of war.¹⁷⁴

These proposals were implemented. The only exception was that Colonel-General A. Loktionov was appointed commander of the Baltic Special Military Region, which was formed before the Baltic states were "admitted" into the USSR. Early in the morning of 17 June 1940, Red Army units crossed the Latvian border from the east and south and

¹⁷⁴ M.I. Meltyukhov. *Narashhivanie sovetskogo voennogo prisutstviya v Pribaltike v 1939 1941 godah* [The build-up of the Soviet military presence in the Baltics in 1939-1941], p. 65.

entered Riga from Pārdaugava around 1 p.m. The military occupation of Latvia was a *fait accompli*.

On 21 June 1940, the “People's Government”, amenable to the occupiers, began work with professor Augusts Kirhenšteins at its head, but the real rulers were Vyshinsky, plenipotentiary representative of the Soviet government and the Soviet embassy, and the Red Army. The LCP was legalised and became the sole political party as other parties were not allowed. The new government obediently followed the orders of Moscow, read the documents drawn up in Moscow (or by Moscow representatives) and signed new laws and government decrees drawn up in Moscow. Everything in Latvia was done only on Moscow's orders. To legitimise the occupying power, the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the LCP decided on 2 June 1940 to hold Saeima elections. The government decided on 4 July 1940 to hold parliamentary elections on 14-15 July 1940. The elections were organised in extreme haste with the Working People's Bloc as the only party, consisting of people obedient and loyal to the occupying power. The alternative list submitted by the public employee group was rejected on a formal pretext, and those who submitted the list and most of the candidates were soon repressed. On 21 July 1940, the newly elected People's Saeima proclaimed Soviet rule in Latvia and decided to join the USSR, a flagrant violation of the Latvian Constitution that required issues of state sovereignty, system, and territorial changes to be decided only by referendum.¹⁷⁵

In August 1940, the VII session of the Supreme Soviet decided to incorporate Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia into the USSR with the rights of a Union republic. Molotov, one of the main participants in the settlement of the Baltic Question, spoke at this session and did not hide his satisfaction: "The incorporation of the Baltic States into the USSR means that the Soviet Union has grown by 2,800,000 in Lithuania, 1,950,000 in Latvia, and 1,120,000 in Estonia. Together with the population of Northern Bukovina, Western Ukraine and Western Belarus, which were incorporated into the USSR, the population of the USSR increased by 23 million people...It should be noted that 9/20 of the entire population of these countries used to be part of the USSR, but they were forcefully torn away from the USSR by the Western powers

¹⁷⁵ *Okupācijas varu politika Latvijā. 1939-1991* [The politics of the occupying powers in Latvia. 1939-1991], pp. 62, 63.

at the moment of its military weakness. Now this population is united with the Soviet Union." Molotov did not forget to mention the military-strategic factor, which was particularly relevant in the context of the war in Europe: "The fact that the borders of the Soviet Union will now be transferred to the Baltic Sea coast is of paramount importance for the country. Our country will thus gain the ice-free ports on the Baltic Sea which the Soviet Union so badly needed. The success of our foreign policy is all the more remarkable because we have achieved all this peacefully."¹⁷⁶

Thus, it was not the anti-Soviet activities of the Baltic Entente, the existence of which could not be proven, and the non-existent violations of the mutual assistance pacts, but the military-strategic interests of the empire that were the determining factor for the occupation of the Baltic states. Ceichners notes: "An important fact is that a large part of the population of Latvia, 25%, was non-Latvian. In 1935 there were 1,473,000 Latvians and 478,000 members of minority nationalities." ... Of the total population of 1,951,000, 75.5% were Latvian.

Table 3

Other nationalities in Latvia, 1935

Great Russians	Jews	Germans	Poles	Byelorussians	Lithuanians	Estonians	other	Total
206,000	93,000	62,000	49,000	27,000	23,000	7,000	10,100	478,000
10,6 %	4,8 %	3,2 %	2,5 %	1,4 %	1,2 %	0,4 %	0,5 %	24,5 %

"A large part of Russians felt the destruction of the Latvian state and the entry of the Red Army into Latvia not as a victory of the Bolsheviks, but as a triumph of the great Russian state and the Russian people. Apparently, the old times were back again, as 20 years ago, when the ruling nationality in Latvia was not the Latvians, but Russians. Such a sudden change boosted the national pride of many Latvian Russians."¹⁷⁷ The military occupation of Latvia in 1940 ensured all the sovietisation and colonisation measures that were carried out in the months and years of occupation that followed.

¹⁷⁶ "Government Herald" - 1940, 2 Aug.

¹⁷⁷ Alfreds Ceichners. *Latvijas boļševizācija 1940-1941* [The Bolshevization of Latvia. 1940-1941], pp. 143, 144.

3.2. Not an equal republic, but a metropolitan colony

Levits writes about the initial sovietisation of Latvia:

Latvia's integration into the Soviet Union was followed by a rapid assimilation of all spheres of life to the Soviet model (Sovietization). The new Constitution of the Latvian SSR, adopted in August 1940, provided the formal legal basis for the sovietisation of the political system. It was almost verbatim with the constitutions of the other Soviet republics; minor deviations were of no practical significance.

On 6 October 1940, the Supreme Soviet decreed that the most important laws of Soviet Russia – the Criminal Code of 1922, the Code of Criminal Procedure of 1923, the Civil Code of 1922, the Code of Civil Procedure of 1923, the Code of Labour Laws of 1922, and the Code of Family Laws – would enter into force (retroactively) in the Baltic republics.

In the first months after Latvia's integration into the Soviet Union, the entire state apparatus taken over from independent Latvia was transformed as per the Soviet mould. The "People's Parliament" was transformed into a Supreme Soviet, the "People's Government" became a Council of People's Commissars, the People's Commissariats (ministries) were re-organised. The existing local governments were abolished and replaced by temporary executive committees (whose members were not elected but appointed). The former civil servants of the independent Latvian state were replaced by those loyal to the Soviet government. The Latvian army was incorporated into the Soviet armed forces as a "Territorial Rifle Regiment". ... On 6 October 1940, by a decision of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the AC(b)P, the previously formally independent LCP was incorporated as a local organisation into the common Communist Party of the Soviet Union.¹⁷⁸

All public life, including the press, culture, and education, was consistently modelled on the Soviet model. Political parties other than

¹⁷⁸ E. Levits. *Latvija padomju varā. // Latvijas valsts atjaunošana. 1986 – 1993* [Latvia under Soviet Rule. Restoration of the State of Latvia. 1986 – 1993], pp. 46, 47.

the Communist Party were banned. Almost all the various associations and societies were either officially banned or had to cease their activities. The press was unified and subjected to strict censorship.

Throughout the years of occupation, it was constantly claimed that the LSSR was a "sovereign Soviet state" which had "only transferred some of its responsibilities to the USSR". This "equal republic" should have submitted to the highest authorities of the All-Union in the first place and not pursued an economic, social, and cultural policy that defended the interests of the Latvian people and preserved them as a nation. Under the 1936 Constitution, the Soviet Union had undivided responsibility for foreign relations (diplomatic and economic) and national defence. Article 14 of the Constitution defined the following responsibilities of the USSR:

- 1) represent the USSR in international relations, and conclude and ratify treaties with foreign countries,
- 2) matters of war and peace,
- 3) organisation of the defence of the USSR and the command of the armed forces;
- 4) foreign trade, which was based on a state monopoly,
- 5) defence of national security.

The Soviet Union was responsible for socialist economic matters: all means of production were state-owned and there was a socialist planned economic system and was responsible for:

- 1) determining the economic plans of the people of the USSR,
- 2) approval of the State budget and the determination of the taxes and revenues to be raised for the implementation of the Union, republic, and local budgets,
- 3) establishment of banking, industrial and agricultural institutions, and enterprises,
- 4) management of All-Union commercial enterprises,
- 5) management of the monetary and credit system,
- 6) organisation of national insurance,
- 7) granting and concluding loans,
- 8) issuing basic regulations on the use of land, land wealth, forests, and bodies of water,
- 9) organising the economic accounting system.

The USSR exercised total rule over roads, communications, water transport, heavy industry and defence, engineering and

procurement. The management of these sectors was in the hands of the All-Union People's Commissariats, either directly or through bodies appointed by them. The sectors in which responsibilities were shared between Moscow and the republics included food, light and forest industries, agriculture, grain and livestock sovkhozes, finance, and trade. By managing these sectors through the respective People's Commissariats of the Republics, Moscow gave the republics a degree of autonomy. These People's Commissariats, which were subordinate to the Supreme Soviets of the republics, worked according to directives and tasks set by the respective People's Commissariats, and the Union People's Commissariats based their work on that of the respective People's Commissariats of the republics. The Soviet Union People's Commissariats exercised direct management over enterprises in their sector only in exceptional cases.

In education and health matters, Moscow retained the right to lay down "basic principles", but in health matters, the centre exercised direct management of health affairs through the People's Commissariats for Health of the republics. In labour matters, the centre reserved the right to lay down "legislative bases". Legislation on the judiciary and judicial procedure and the criminal and civil codes also remained the responsibility of Moscow.

When the LSSR state administration was created, under the terms of the Constitution, several of its most important components came under total control of the centre. For example, on 14 August 1940, the Latvian Cabinet of Ministers adopted the following: "By the decision of the Seventh Session of the Supreme Council of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics of 5 August 1940 on the admission of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Latvia into the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics shall exercise the functions of foreign representation of the Republic of Latvia.

In this context, the Cabinet decided that:

- 1) the entry of foreigners into the territory of the Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic without a visa of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics shall cease.

Exceptions shall be made only for foreigners holding transit visas issued by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics or transit visas issued before 7 August this year by diplomatic

representatives of the former Republic of Latvia.¹⁷⁹ In August 1940, the Cabinet of Ministers of the Latvian SSR instructed the Minister of Finance to liquidate the Foreign Trade Department of the Ministry of Finance, transferring the activities and archives of this Department to the representative of the People's Commissariat for Trade of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics of the Government of the Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic.

- 2) The Customs Department of the Ministry of Finance, the customs offices and all other customs supervision organs with all their property (warehouses, loading and unloading and transport facilities, service buildings, etc.) are under the authority of the General Customs Administration of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Trade of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.¹⁸⁰

On 27 August 1940, the LSSR Council of People's Commissars decided: "To instruct B. Jablonski to dissolve the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, retaining the chancellery necessary for the conduct of current affairs, which would operate out of the present building of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs."¹⁸¹ The Cabinet of Ministers' decision of 19 August 1940 terminated the activities of foreign correspondents of LSSR newspapers and those of foreign correspondents in the LSSR: "For foreign information in the LSSR, use only TASS (Russian News Agency – J.R.)."¹⁸² The decision of the USSR Sovnarkom of 28 November 1940 "On the regulation of the control of foreign literature entering Lithuanian, Latvian, and Estonian SSR" stipulated:

1. Extend to the Union Republics of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia the control of foreign literature existing in the USSR.
2. Instruct the People's Commissariat for Communications to send all foreign literature arriving in the Union Republics of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia to Moscow for censorship inspection.

¹⁷⁹ NAL, 270.f., 1.desc., 2. file, p 154

¹⁸⁰ Government Herald – 6 August 1940

¹⁸¹ NAL, 270.f., 1.desc., 4. file, p

¹⁸² NAL, 270.f., 1.desc., 2. file, p 159

3. Instruct B. Savchikov, Commissar for the Protection of Military Secrets of the CPSU, that all incoming literature in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia be checked.
4. Publication of all foreign literature in the Lithuanian, Latvian, and Estonian SSRs shall be carried out by the All-Union Association "International Book."¹⁸³

Documents show that the international isolation of occupied Latvia was one of the most important tasks of the Soviet government. In a top-secret report to V. Lācis, Chairman of the LSSR Council of People's Commissars, on 12 April 1941 "On the extension of radio broadcasts of radio stations broadcasting in the Latvian SSR", Captain Shustin, People's Commissar for State Security of the LSSR, wrote:

Since Radiophone, when compiling its radio broadcasts, is guided by the close of business at 12 am, local listeners who have low power receivers are forced at times to tune in to foreign radio broadcasts, which, as you are aware, do not always provide programmes loyal to the USSR.

Considering the need to prevent listeners from looking for "exciting" programmes on air after 12:00 am, I would recommend extending [transmission by] the Riga, Kuldīga, and Madona radio stations until 2-3 am, especially on pre-holiday days and public holidays.

The programme during these extra hours could be calculated to include folk songs, music by Soviet composers, literary broadcasts by Soviet writers and poets, and light dance music.

Based on this report, Lācis replied: "I agree in principle with the proposal of Comrade Shustin. Coordinate with the chairman of the radio committee Comrade Lemani on the realization of this matter."¹⁸⁴

On 27 August 1940, the LSSR Council of People's Commissars decided to transform the Latvian Army:

Considering that according to Articles 14, 132 and 133 of the Constitution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (Basic Law), the defence organisation and the entire leadership of the

¹⁸³ NAL, 270.f., 1.s.desc., 2. file, p 54

¹⁸⁴ NAL, 270.f., 1.s.desc., 59. file, p 141

armed forces are subject to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in the person of its supreme organs of power and state administration and according to the Constitution and the Constitution of the Latvian SSR the general service in the army shall be statutory mandatory and the defence of the Fatherland is the sacred duty of every citizen, the Council of People's Commissars of the Latvian SSR decides:

1. to transform the Latvian National Army into a territorial rifle corps of the Red Army, transferring it to the Baltic separate war area,

2. to transfer the naval forces of the Latvian National Army, including the coastal artillery and hydro-aviation, to the Worker-Peasant Navy,

3. to reorganise the existing military training establishments of the Latvian National Army into a normal infantry school of the Red Army,

4. to carry out the identification of those subject to conscription and to settle the question of compulsory military service for citizens of the Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic, to transform the local organs of military administration into military commissariats, subordinating them to the Baltic separate military district,

5. to retain the existing Latvian Army uniform in the Rifle Corps, removing the shoulder pads and introducing the insignia of the Red Army commanding staff,

6. to order all personnel of the Corps, the Military School, and the Navy to take the war oath within two months in accordance with the order of the Supreme Soviet of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics of 3 January 1939,

7. to transfer all the equipment and property, buildings, structures, etc. and files and archives of the former Ministry of War of the Latvian SSR, the Latvian National Army and its servicing institutions to the Baltic Separate Military District,

8. to transfer all naval, coastal defence and hydro-aviation armaments, property, buildings and structures to the Red Banner Baltic Fleet.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁵ NAL, 270.f., 1.desc., 4. file, pp 2., 2.a

In the autumn of 1940, the Latvian National Army was reorganised as the 24th Territorial Corps. Commanding staff was drawn from the officers of the Latvian National Army and political staff from Red Army political functionaries. Russian language courses were organised in all units. As early as 10 October 1940, 36 deputy commanders of battalions, divisions, batteries, and several dozen new, "more correct" political commanders arrived, replacing almost all the political commanders. The new commanders and political leaders, 300 in total, were united in 28 Communist primary organisations in the corps.¹⁸⁶

On 14 August 1940, the USSR Sovnarkom decided to incorporate Latvian railways into the Soviet railway network in the LSSR. This was followed by a corresponding order from the People's Commissariat for Roads, and as of 1 September, Latvian railways with all their inventory were transferred to the People's Commissariat for Roads. The representative of the People's Commissariat of Communications to the LSSR Council of People's Commissars, who had arrived in Latvia in August 1940, took over management of postal, telegraph, telephone, and radio affairs.

Water transport issues in Latvia came under the responsibility of two People's Commissariats of the USSR. The core of the former Marine Department became the State Marine Department of the People's Commissariat of the USSR Navy in Latvia, which was subordinated to the Riga, Liepāja, and Ventspils port boards, ship repair factories, and the Kr. Valdemars Marine School. The People's Commissariat of the River Fleet established the Daugava River Shipping Board and organised river shipping stations. All this was decided by the Soviet government. The USSR Sovnarkom 14 August 1940 decision ordered the LSSR Council of People's Commissars to transfer the Liepāja factory *Tosmare* to the People's Commissariat of the Navy¹⁸⁷, and the USSR Sovnarkom 13 August 1940 decision transferred the Bolderāja shipyard *Vairogs* to the People's Commissariat of the Navy.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁶ Savchenko V. *24.strēlnieku korpusa liktenis // Padomju Latvijas Komunisti* [The fate of the 24th Rifle Corps Soviet Latvian Communist], 1989. No.2, p.67.

¹⁸⁷ NAL, 270.f., 1.s.desc., 4. file, p 4

¹⁸⁸ NAL, 270.f., 1.s.desc., 4. file, p 8

Several important Latvian industrial enterprises came under the direct control of the USSR. The USSR People's Commissariat for the Electric Industry took over the State Electrotechnical Factory (VEF). The People's Commissariat for Medium Machine-Building took over the Riga Carriage Factory and *Sarkanais metalurģs*. The All-Union Association *Zagotlen* of the People's Commissariat for Textile Industry acquired three LSSR factories, and one industrial enterprise was placed under the jurisdiction of the People's Commissariat for the Petroleum Industry.

On 10 October 1940, the Latvian Republic Office of the State Bank of the USSR officially began to operate in Latvia with the Riga City Office and 24 branches in the provinces. The Latvian Republic Office of the USSR Agricultural Bank was established to replace the former Land Bank of Latvia with corresponding branches. The Latvian Republic Office of the USSR Bank of Industry was also established.

Later, a whole series of institutions and enterprises directly subordinated to the central authorities of the USSR were established by the LSSR CoM. For example, the USSR People's Commissariat for Trade organised the All-Union enterprises *Spectorg*, *Juveļirtorg*, *Vojentorg*, *Vojenflottorg*, and others. The People's Commissariat for Light Industry established its own organisations for buying raw materials and selling products, *Soyuzutil* and *Soyuzluegsbit*. The USSR People's Commissariat for Sourcing established Latvian republic offices for the All-Union associations *Zagotživsirjo* and *Centrozagotzerno*. The Head Office for Coal Supply of the People's Commissariat for Coal Industry opened its Riga office. The Sovkhoz Trust, subordinate to the People's Commissariat for Sovkhoz, also established a branch. The sales office of the People's Commissariat of Ferrous Metallurgy, *Glavtorgcvetmet*, and the People's Commissariat of Nonferrous Metallurgy, *Glavtorgcvetmet*, also opened offices in Latvia. The People's Commissariat for Forest Industry established the All-Union *Eksporthye* LSSR office.

Other institutions were also directly subordinated to central authorities: LSSR Administration of the Hydrometeorological Service, Representative Administration Committee for Weights and Measures under the LSSR Council of the People's Commissars, which took over the former Latvian Weights Administration in November 1940 and the Provisional Inspection under the Precious Metals Administration of the

People's Commissariat of Finance. The Commissioner of the USSR State Planning Commission for Latvia was in the LSSR. The Latvian Statistical Office was subordinated to the USSR State Planning Commission CSO. In March 1941, the Latvian Republic Administration of the USSR Main Administration of Labour Reserves was established.

Even before the adoption of the LSSR Constitution, the State Insurance Administration was established under the Ministry of Finance on 16 August 1940, merging the State Insurance Company, the Central Union of Mutual Insurance, the insurance company *Drošība*, and all mutual insurance associations. Later, this administration was transferred to the People's Commissariat of Finance. The Latvian Republic Administration of State Workers' Savings Banks and State Credit was also placed under the responsibility of this Commissariat.

In the LSSR, there were also small, but in some ways quite important, institutions directly subordinate to Soviet authorities: LSSR Main Literature Administration, State Film Enterprise under the USSR Committee for Cinematographic Affairs, Latvian Republic Office of *Glavkinoprokat*, Baltic Civil Air Fleet Administration, and the LSSR *Osoviakhim* Central Administration.

On 26 November 1940, RSFSR laws, including the criminal code, came into force in Latvia.¹⁸⁹ The USSR remained responsible for the judicial system and procedure legislation. All prosecution by the LSSR CoM was under the direct authority of the USSR. In 1941, the entire state apparatus operating in the LSSR, which was not subordinate to the higher organs of state power and executive organs created by the LSSR CoM itself, employed (excluding military departments and the Latvian railway) more than 32,000 workers and staff. These facts show that Latvia, after its incorporation into the USSR, was not sovereign, nor even an equal republic, but a colony.

3.3. First echelon colonists

After the occupation of Latvia, one of the most important tasks of the Soviet leadership was the creation of institutions and structures that

¹⁸⁹ *LPSR Augstākās padomes Prezidija Ziņotājs* [Herald of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the LSSR] – 26 Nov 1940.

would ensure colonisation and sovietisation of the region. This could only be done if the "personnel question" was successfully resolved, but this could not be done with local personnel. On 23 June 1940, the new Minister of the Interior of the "people's government" Lācis stated: "The most important task to be carried out by the Ministry of the Interior is to cleanse the state apparatus completely and decisively of reactionary elements."¹⁹⁰ On 17 December 1940 at the IX Congress of the Communist (Bolshevik) Party of Latvia (C(b)PL), as Chairman of Sovnarkom of the LSSR, he declared: "When the workers took over power with the help of the heroic Workers' and Peasants' Red Army, we had to think about consolidating new power. One of the first promises of the new democratic people's government to the people was that it would set about purging the state apparatus of reactionary elements."¹⁹¹

The "purged reactionary elements" had to be replaced by new, "reliable" ones, but there were few among the local population. On 22 June 1940, Vyshinsky, Vice-Chairman of the USSR Sovnarkom who had been given a mandate from the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet "to negotiate with the President of the Republic of Latvia on issues related to the ultimatum of the USSR government" and the Soviet Embassy in Riga, requested that Moscow send 10-15 individuals who could aid the new ministers. On the same day, Vishinsky and Soviet envoy to Latvia Derevyansky reported to Moscow that they were recruiting staff for Latvian state institutions and editorial offices. In the summer of 1940, 31 "persons-in-charge" were sent from the USSR to Latvia.¹⁹² The People's Commissar of Transport Kaganovich wrote to Kalnbērziņš:

"The People's Commissariat of Transport asks to accept the Chief of the Latvian Railways, c. (comrade – J.R.) Vorobjov, appointed by the Soviet Government, and to give him your instructions on how to organise the Latvian Railways and assist him in the selection of leading staff."¹⁹³ On 20 July 1940, the AC(b)P Politburo recommended that the State Bank appoint Gerashchenko as its representative to the Central

¹⁹⁰ Latvian Herald. – 25 June 1940

¹⁹¹ NAL, PA-101.f., 1.desc., 2. file, p 6

¹⁹² D. A. Loeber. *Latvijas valsts bojāeja 1940.gadā. // Latvijas valsts atjaunošana. 1986-1993* [The destruction of the Latvian state in 1940. Latvian State Restoration. 1986-1993], p.22.

¹⁹³ NAL, PA-101.f., 1.desc., 37. file, p 9

Bank of Latvia. The task of the representative was to "see to it that the decision on the nationalisation of the banks and the rules laid down for monetary operations were properly implemented in accordance with the instructions of the Soviet government."¹⁹⁴ In the 25 December 1940 telegram to Lācis and Kalnbērziņš, Molotov stated: "Bikov, Representative of the USSR State Planning Commission, has been appointed to your Republic. Help him select proven staff, and allocate official premises and an apartment."¹⁹⁵ On 27 January 1941, Burnstein, a member of the Permanent Representation of the LSSR Council of People's Commissars, reported from Moscow to Lācis and Kalnbērziņš:

... c. Korhin of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist (Bolshevik) Party reports that members posted to the Latvian SSR should be assigned to such work (in Sovnarkom – J.R.):

1. Head of the Mobilization Department – c. Sharapovs.
2. Head of the Land Department – c. Muravjovs.
3. Head of the Organisational and Instructor Work Department – c. Ķīsis.
4. Deputy Head of the Administration of Affairs – c. Usachovs.
5. Assistant to the Deputy Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars – c. Klochkovs.¹⁹⁶

In his 28 April 1941 report to Malenkov, Kalnbērziņš asked for "specialists and persons in charge in various fields – 153 individuals",¹⁹⁷ and in a telegram to the Personnel Department of the Central Committee of the AC(b)P he asked for "twelve members chosen by the Leningrad Party organisation to be sent to our disposal."¹⁹⁸ Makhanko was sent to the Central Committee of the C(b)PL as assistant secretary; Matlahov and Litvinov as department heads; Zvyagin, Solovyov, Kondratiev as sector heads; and Ulyanov, Yelizarov, Ryabov, Sobolev as instructors. Many other positions of

¹⁹⁴ Hilda Sabbo. *Võimatu vaikida (Не возможно молчать)*, Part 1 - Tallin, 1996, p. 656.

¹⁹⁵ NAL, PA-101.f., 2.desc., 91. file, p 5

¹⁹⁶ NAL, PA-101.f., 2.desc., 52. file, p 5

¹⁹⁷ NAL, PA-101.f., 2.desc., 92. file, pp 33, 34

¹⁹⁸ NAL, PA-101.f., 1.desc., 43. file, p 44

responsibility in the Central Committee of the C(b)PL were also filled by trusted personnel sent from Moscow.¹⁹⁹ The people's commissariats, various institutions and organisations also began to be staffed mainly by sent members.

On 22 August 1940, the AC(b)P Politburo approved Kirhenšteins as Chairman of the Presidium of the LSSR Supreme Soviet, Vilis Lācis as Chairman of Sovnarkom, Fricis Deglavs as his First Deputy, Kārlis Karlsons as People's Commissar of Local Industry, Kārlis Šics as People's Commissar of Light Industry, Jānis Gustons as People's Commissar of Forestry, Arnolds Tabaks as People's Commissar of Finance, Jānis Vanags as People's Commissar for Agriculture, Jānis Pupurs as People's Commissar for Trade, Andrejs Jablonskis as People's Commissar for Justice, Jūlija Lāce as People's Commissar for Education, Jānis Jagars as People's Commissar for Communal Economy, Kārlis Nurža as People's Commissar for Social Security, and Bronislavs Trubiņš as People's Commissar for State Control.²⁰⁰ On 18 September 1940, the AC(b)P Politburo also approved the offices of the Central Committees of the Communist Parties of Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia. Each office consisted of seven people. Kalnbērziņš was confirmed as First Secretary of the Central Committee of the C(b)PL. Zubkova points out: "The first offices of the Central Committee of the Baltic Communist Parties had one characteristic feature: they consisted exclusively of representatives of the titular nationalities, with the exception of Jablonskis in the Latvian office and Shupikov in the Lithuanian office."²⁰¹ Later, this situation changed greatly.

In early 1941, the LCP had 2798 members, Lithuania 2486, and Estonia 2036. Zubkova writes: "These figures were achieved largely at the expense of the 'army factor', i.e., at the expense of the number of Communists who were in Red Army subunits and the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs."²⁰²

Regarding the personnel policy of the time, it should be noted that the decisive role was played neither by the Central Committee of

¹⁹⁹ NAL, PA-101.f., 2.desc., 115. file, p 25.

²⁰⁰ Hilda Sabbo. Vāimatu vaikida (Не возможно молчать), 1.daļa, p 663

²⁰¹ Yelena Zubkova. *Pribaltika i Kreml. 1940-1953* [The Baltics and the Kremlin. 1940-1953]. p. 107.

²⁰² Ibid.

the C(b)PL nor by Sovnarkom of the LSSR, but by Derevyansky, representative of the Central Committee of the AC(b)P, and the USSR Council of People's Commissars in Latvia. At the IX Congress of the C(b)PL in December 1940, he included in his biography: "... In 1937, the USSR government appointed me USSR representative in Finland. After the end of the so-called Finnish conflict, I was again assigned to Finland, but the Finnish government did not want to accept me. I was then sent as a representative to Latvia, where I worked until the last events. In August 1940 I was confirmed as the representative of the Central Committee of the AC(b)P and of the Council of People's Commissars in the Republic of Latvia."²⁰³

Up until the German attack on the USSR on 22 June 1941, he sent several extensive reports on a wide range of issues to the Central Committee of the AC(b)P and Sovnarkom. In one, sent in March 1941 to Andreev, Secretary of the Central Committee of the AC(b)P, and Mikoyan, Deputy Chairman of the USSR Sovnarkom, Derevyansky wrote:

To ensure the publication of Marxist-Leninist classics in Latvian and edit the more than 20 works of Lenin and Stalin already translated into Latvian, it is necessary to mobilise 10 highly qualified political editors who speak Latvian for permanent, or even temporary, work in Riga. To entrench Marxist-Leninist propaganda and the widespread political work of the masses, we ask the following:

- a) to mobilise for permanent work in Latvia a group of 10-15 lecturers of the Central Committee of the Communist (Bolshevik) Party of Latvia on the fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism,
- b) 15 press workers, 10 of them editors of regional newspapers,
- c) 25 political education workers: library managers, club workers, physical culture workers, organisers of political education work in the countryside.

... Since the apparatus of the Communist (Bolshevik) Party of Latvia and the great majority of the Party's regional and town

²⁰³ NAL, PA-101.f., 1.desc., 1. file, p 342

committees are not staffed with leading workers, we ask you to send 25 Party workers to work permanently in the apparatus of the Central Committee, the Party's regional committees and town committees.²⁰⁴

As early as June 1940, the Central Committee of the AC(b)P sent to Latvia many communists of Latvian descent who had survived the Great Purge of 1937-1938. However, when speaking of strengthening occupied Latvia with ethnic personnel, it should be remembered that on 21 June 1936, the Secretariat of the Comintern Executive Committee decided to dissolve the LCP, in fact to liquidate it.²⁰⁵ Documents on the liquidation of the LCP stated that many Latvian communists had been denounced as "enemies of the people". Many of them were shot or imprisoned for years in prisons or penal camps. It should also be remembered that during the "Latvian Operation", organised by the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs (NKVD) and which lasted from November 1937 to November 1938, some 25,000 Latvians were arrested. Of these, 16,573 (74%) were sentenced to death.²⁰⁶ They included Communist Party functionaries, military personnel, and economists, scientists, writers, and artists. Latvians living in the Soviet Union at that time were considered a potential "fifth column" of enemies of the USSR, and their Latvian identity was the basis for their persecution. Of the surviving "Little Latvians", only a few managed to return to Latvia. Soviet leaders and repressive services had no intention of letting in those who had survived all the horrors and other abuses of the Great Purge and who, of course, felt no sympathy for the totalitarian regime into the new "fraternal republics", which still had to be cleansed of all kinds of "enemies", "adherents of the old regime", and other "socially alien elements". Therefore, the Central Committee of the AC(b)P and the USSR Sovnarkom' decision "On the State and Economic Construction of the Lithuanian SSR, the Latvian SSR, and the Estonian

²⁰⁴ NAL, PA-101.f., 1.desc., 52. file, pp 115, 117

²⁰⁵ NAL, PA-101.f., 26.desc., 52.a. file, p 493

²⁰⁶ Jānis Riekstiņš. *PSRS Iekšlietu tautas komisariāta „Latviešu operācija” (1937-1938)* ["Latvian Operation" of the USSR People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs (1937-1938)] - Riga, 2012, p. 107; See also - J. Riekstiņš. *Represijas pret latviešiem PSRS. 1937-1938. Dokumenti* [Repressions against Latvians in the USSR. 1937-1938. Documents] - Riga, 2009.

SSR", paragraph IX "On Border Guards on the Borders of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia with the RSFSR and the BSSR", adopted on 14 August 1940, stipulated: "To leave the border guards temporarily in their present form", but paragraph X of the decision "On the return of Lithuanians, Latvians and Estonians living in the territory of the USSR – outside Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia – to Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia" stated: "To consider it expedient to carry this out in a planned manner."²⁰⁷ This meant that no simple, spontaneous, individual transfers to the ancestral homeland would be allowed and that everything would be determined by the Central Committee of the AC(b)P and the USSR NKVD. That is indeed what happened. For example, Ignats Vasaraudzis, who lived in Mazie Aizpurieši, Līvāni Township, Daugavpils District, requested a return permit for his mother, Sofija Romanova, who lived in Talovo district, Tomsk oblast, but the Central Committee of the C(b)PL replied: "In reply to your letter of 29 September this year (1940 – J.R.), the Central Committee declares that your mother must herself apply to the appropriate authorities for permission to enter Latvia."²⁰⁸ In this way, many other Latvians' requests to return to their homeland were effectively rejected. Only the trusted, vetted, and specially selected Latvians were allowed to come to Latvia.

Secret instructions were sent by the LSSR Police Administration on 30 December 1940 to all LSSR police department chiefs of districts and towns to the inhabitants of other republics indicating entry procedures:

Cases have been observed in which certain bodies of the W-P [Workers – Peasants] police of the Latvian SSR, when registering citizens coming from the USSR to the Latvian SSR for permanent residence or work for a certain period, do not request a pass for entry into the Latvian SSR issued by the W-P police bodies according to the citizen's previous place of residence.

Such conduct shall not be tolerated in the future, wherefore I instruct:

When registering citizens entering the Latvian SSR from the USSR and from Lithuania and Estonia, it is obligatory to

²⁰⁷ Hilda Sabbo. Võimatu vaikida (Не возможно молчать), Part 1, p 659

²⁰⁸ NAL, PA-101.f., 2.desc., 117. file, p

apply for a pass for entry to the Latvian SSR together with a passport. This pass must be registered with the local W-P police administration, and outside Riga with the city or district branch or department of the W-P police. No entry shall be done without the (afore)mentioned registration.

If a citizen-migrant stays permanently in the Latvian SSR, his pass shall be collected from him after registration, and if he stays in Riga, it shall be sent to the W-P police administration of the Latvian SSR, while the passes of citizens living outside Riga shall be left at the W-P police city department or division.

The heads of the city and district divisions or departments of the W-P police shall keep an appropriate register of these passes and arrange for their safekeeping, and for every citizen who remains permanently in the Latvian SSR, the body which issued the pass shall be notified. The report shall indicate, by noting the pass No and the date of issue on which the citizen concerned has arrived and remained permanently.²⁰⁹

In his 1941 order on the observance registration, the head of the Abrene district police, Tūcs, wrote:

I instruct the township boards not to register any citizen coming from the USSR and from Lithuania and Estonia, until he has registered his pass with the clerk of the department under my authority. No registration shall be affected without the said registration. At registration, the pass shall be compared with the entries in the passport. Citizens should be informed that failure to register their pass in time with the relevant section of the WPPA (Workers and Peasants Police Administration) is punishable by a fine.

The said passes of previously registered citizens who have remained permanently shall be kept in the registry office, subject to reporting to the issuing authority in accordance with the Order.²¹⁰

With border security and a strict pass system, spontaneous migration to Latvia was severely restricted. The main group of settlers

²⁰⁹ NAL, 995.f., 1.desc., 21. file, p 14

²¹⁰ NAL, 995.f., 1.desc., 21. file, p 14

consisted of personnel in charge sent to Latvia along with their numerous family members. As the purge of untrustworthy elements from the ranks of local authorities became more widespread, the need for "genuine Soviet personnel" grew. For example, on 15 January 1941, after listening to the report by Auguste, head of the Personnel Division of the Central Committee of the C(b)PL, "On the inspection of the People's Commissariat for State Control of the Latvian SSR", the Central Committee of the C(b)PL concluded that it was heavily contaminated with foreign elements (Mensheviks, guards, Kolchak officers, Denikins, kulaks, etc. – 120 people in total). In addition, the Board was composed of seven Mensheviks, four guards, one Kolchak officer, one private landlord, and one nobleman. The apparatus of the People's Commissariat needed to expel foreign elements and reorganise it in accordance with the USSR Sovnarkom Statute on State Control:

1. Dismiss the current Board, as unsuitable for work in the organs of the national control bodies.
2. Instruct c. Lācis, the Chairman of the LSSR Council of People's Commissars, together with c. Čulītis (People's Commissar of State Control of the LSSR – J.R.) and the personnel of the Central Committee of the Communist (Bolshevik) Party of Latvia, select and recommend to the Central Committee of the Communist (Bolshevik) Party of Latvia for approval, no later than 1 February, the new composition of the Board of the People's Commissariat of State Control.
3. Recommend to c. Čulītis that the apparatus of the People's Commissariat be completely purged of extraneous elements, replacing them with verified employees, and that the candidates for the chief and senior controllers of the People's Commissariat be recommended to the Central Committee of the Communist (Bolshevik) Party of Latvia for approval by 1 February.²¹¹

On 8 April 1941, Plēsums, Secretary for Transport of the Central Committee of the C(b)PL, in a submission to the Personnel Office of the Central Committee of the AC(b)P, wrote:

²¹¹ NAL, PA-101.f., 1.desc., 12. file, pp 61, 62

To strengthen the staff of the Latvian State Navy, the Central Committee of the Latvian C(b)P requests the following members to be sent for permanent employment in the system of the People's Commissariat of the Navy:

1. Head accountant
2. Harbour Master
3. Chief of the Naval War Office
4. Chiefs of the Planning Departments of the Ports of Riga, Liepāja and Ventspils
5. Heads of the labour and wages departments of those ports
6. Economists-financiers of the Naval Shipping
7. Three engineer mechanics for shipping and ports
8. Three rate-keepers for loading and unloading operations
9. Director of the Riga Ship Repair Plant
10. Head of the Industrial Plans and Production Department
11. Two calculation officers – rate-keepers for the factory
12. Chief of Shipping Procurement and Supply.²¹²

Similar arrangements were made for many other officials in charge to be sent to Latvia. Before they left on their mission of the sovietisation of Latvia, they were thoroughly vetted, not only by the personnel bodies of the Central Committee of the AC(b)P but also by the People's Commissariat for State Security (NKGB). Often such persons, especially those of Latvian nationality, were also checked by Latvian NKGB after they had been sent to Latvia. Loeber writes: "The Soviet Union interfered in the sphere of national security in the most brutal and inhuman way. Soon after the troops arrived, the Soviet authorities set up a powerful security apparatus, dominated by personnel from the USSR. They took over Latvia's political administration and began surveillance, arrests, and deportations."²¹³

²¹² NAL, PA-101.f., 1.desc., 43. file, p 38

²¹³ D.A. Loeber. *Latvijas valsts bojāeja 1940.gadā // Latvijas valsts atjaunošana. 1986-1993* [The destruction of the Latvian state in 1940 Latvian State Restoration. 1986-1993], p. 23.

In Latvia, the NKGB was modelled on that of the USSR. Order No 001072 of 30 August 1940 of the People's Commissar of Internal Affairs, led by Beria, established the LSSR NKVD and appointed Alfons Noviks as People's Commissar of Internal Affairs (KGB) of the LSSR. As early as September 1940, a system of state security institutions of the LSSR corresponding to the Soviet Union was established and officials of these repressive institutions were appointed. Employees sent from Moscow, who had no previous links with Latvia, were appointed as deputies and sub-division heads, and senior specialists and specialists. Noviks' 7 September 1940 order appointed Senior Lieutenant Šipačovs as Deputy Head of the Personnel Department of the NKVD, State Security Lieutenant Gavrilovs as Senior Inspector, and Pankratjevs as Inspector. In the Second Division of the State Security Administration of the NKVD, State Security Sergeant N.Mutins was appointed as the operational officer of Division 1 and G.Borisovs as the senior operational officer of Division 4. The people from Moscow also held many other positions of responsibility in the KGB.²¹⁴ In September and October 1940, prison staff were also replaced, and in November and December, a mass replacement of police officers began.

In the autumn of 1940, the NKGB headquarters and prison was built in the former Interior Ministry building at 12 Stabu Street (now 61 Brīvības Street – J.R.) in Riga. The first head was State Security Sergeant Levin, operational officer in charge of the Prison Department of the NKVD. On 26 November 1940, Noviks appointed Jevstratovs as the assistant on-duty warden, and Aleksejevs, Karpačovs, Horoševskis, Rogačovs, Čerepanovs, Redihins, Toropigins, Lukoņins, Popovs, Kočetkovs, Savčenko, Kočergins, Zainetdinovs, and Radionovs as security guards; Anufrijevs was appointed records manager, and Kirilova as the servant.²¹⁵ Other prisons and structures of the NKVD were similarly staffed with newcomers. In the spring of 1941, Bakaļeiņiks was employed as the head of the LSSR NKVD secretariat, Ivanovs as the head of the Mobilisation Inspection, and Sadovskis as

²¹⁴ Archives of the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Latvia, 12.f., 1.desc., 1. file, p 16.

²¹⁵ Archives of the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Latvia, 12.f., 1.desc., 1. file, pp 8., 8.a

the head of the Correctional Labour Colony Department. From 8 March 1941, Tuļķe was appointed Deputy People's Commissar of Internal Affairs of the LSSR.²¹⁶

Between March 4 and the beginning of June 1941, the USSR NKVD sent 30 workers, including Tkachenko from Kursk Oblast, Sokolov from Tula Oblast, Momaev from Moscow, Gnylin from Yaroslavl, and Samodranov from Oryol Oblast.²¹⁷ There was only one Latvian, V. Daube, among them.

The Presidium of the Supreme Soviet decreed on 3 February 1941 to divide the NKVD into two bodies – the NKVD and the NKGB. In Latvia, Noviks was retained as People's Commissar for Internal Affairs (NKVD), and Shustin, who had already been sent to Latvia in June 1940, was appointed to serve as the People's Commissar for State Security (NKGB). At the IX Congress of the C(b)PL in December 1940 he was nominated as a candidate for the Central Committee of the C(b)PL, but in the elections out of 152 voters 75 voted against him.²¹⁸ The Commissariat headed by Shustin was also mainly staffed by newcomers.

No one in Latvia had any say in the sending of repressive personnel, nor in the sending of huge numbers of military personnel. However, the Central Committee of the C(b)PL had to do a lot of work to arrange entry permits for the many family members of officials in charge sent to Latvia. For example, on 11 February 1941 the Central Committee of the C(b)PL asked Malenkov to permit the entry into Latvia of the family members of employees sent to Latvia:

1. wife of comrade Ulyanov, Valentina Ulyanov, sons Alexander, Boris, daughters Nina and Valentina,
2. Valentina Bogdanov, wife of comrade Akishin, and son Yuri,
3. comrade Levin's wife Alexandra and son Viktor,
4. comrade Thomson's wife Maria, daughter Zinaida and mother Anna Osiko.²¹⁹

²¹⁶ Archives of the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Latvia, 12.f., 1.desc., 1. file, p 15

²¹⁷ Archives of the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Latvia, 12.f., 1.desc., 2. file, pp 3, 4

²¹⁸ NAL, PA-101.f., 1.a.pr., 1. file, p 376

²¹⁹ NAL, PA-101.f., 1.desc., 42. file, pp 4., 4.a

On 12 February 1941, entry permits were requested for members of the Krilov, Onopko, and Baranov families and on 13 February for Chuvikin, Furashev, Raneyev and other family members.²²⁰ Similar requests were sent later.

Entry permits were processed as follows. First, the official in charge applied to the Central Committee of the C(b)PL. The latter drew up a list and sent it to Malenkov. On 16 and 17 April 1941, such applications were made by S. Antonov, N. Butilkin, B. Bikov and Semyonov, employees of the Central Committee of the AC(b)P and by S. Antonov, N. Butilkin, B. Bikov and Semyonov, the staff of the apparatus of the USSR Sovnarkom representative in Latvia, V. Derevyansky.²²¹ However, the procedure for issuing permits for entry to the occupied Baltic states changed.

In a top-secret letter dated 17 April 1941 to Kalnbērziņš, head of the Personnel Department of the Central Committee of the AC(b)P, Siliņš, wrote:

We inform you of an extract from the decision of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist (Bolshevik) Party on Departure Abroad of 16 April 1941 on the procedure for issuing permits for departure to the Union Soviet Republics of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia to family members of people's commissariats and ministries on permanent assignment and on applications from Soviet citizens.

1. To authorise the Main Administration of the Workers' and Peasants' Police of the USSR NKVD to accept and consider private applications from USSR citizens for permission to enter the Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian SSR.
2. To instruct the Main Administration of the Workers' and Peasants' Police of the USSR People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs to execute and issue passes:
 - a) to the families of workers who, by decisions of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist (Bolshevik) Party and the Commission of the All-Union

²²⁰ NAL, PA-101.f., 1.desc., 42. file, pp 5., 6., 7

²²¹ NAL, PA-101.f., 2.desc., 119. file, pp 1., 4., 6., 27

- Communist (Bolshevik) Party Central Committee, have departed for the people's commissariats and departments abroad in Lithuanian, Latvian and the Estonian SSR and to the families of command staff and Red Army soldiers who, after demobilisation from units of the Red Army of the Baltic Special Military District, have remained in permanent employment in these republics;
- b) citizens of the USSR on their private applications in cases where it is necessary for them to go to their close relatives after an urgent call (death, illness), for permanent residence (pensioners, invalids, elderly people) and for the duration of a regular vacation (Lithuanians, Latvians, Estonians).
3. To forward to the Personnel Department of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist (Bolshevik) Party the applications received from USSR citizens for permission to leave for Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian SSR for consideration by the Main Administration of the Workers' and Peasants' Police of the USSR People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs.²²²

The fact that such a system of issuing permits soon became operational is confirmed by the 16 May 1941 request by the Central Committee of the C(b)PL to the Workers' and Peasants' Police Administration of the LSSR CoM to issue entry permits to family of members of the Central Committee of the AC(b)P and members of the apparatus of Sovnarkom of the USSR in Latvia, J. Romanov, Afonin, B. Bikov, N. Butulkin, S. Antonov and the family of C(b)PL lecturer Mironova-Shpakovskaya.²²³ Documents show that the Commission for Departures Abroad of the Central Committee of the AC(b)P was also involved in issuing permits to persons posted to Latvia by people's commissariats, departments, and other institutions at this time. It examined and approved lists of reliable staff submitted by the Central Committee of the C(b)PL. However, it should also be pointed out that

²²² NAL, PA-101.f., 1.desc., 42. file, p 101

²²³ NAL, PA-101.f., 2.desc., 119. file, p 33

these lists of necessary staff were often drawn up based on applications from the heads of various local authorities. The editor of the newspaper *Proletarskaya Pravda*, Rapoport, asked the Personnel Department of the Central Committee of the C(b)PL to settle the question of sending "comrade Fedorchuk, who is at the disposal of the Chernigovo Regional Committee of the UC(b)P" to the editorial office of the newspaper.²²⁴ On 2 June 1941, in a petition to the Central Committee of the C(b)PL, the head of the LSSR Office of Art Affairs, Līkums, asked the Central Committee of the AC(b)P to deal with sending Professor Renzin of the Leningrad Conservatory to Latvia to act as deputy director of the Conservatory. Līkums further wrote:

Considering the extreme scarcity of highly qualified directors in the theatres of the LSSR and the acute need to strengthen their artistic leadership – the LSSR Opera and Ballet, the Daile Theatre, and the Youth Theatre – please ask the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist (Bolshevik) Party to approve the secondments:

- chief director of the LSSR Opera and Ballet Theatre – the meritorious artist of the USSR, c. Staphenovich,
- artistic director of the Dailes Theatre – the meritorious art worker c. Glazunovs,
- artistic director of the Youth Theatre, c. Leimanis.

Comrades Glazunovs (Osvalds Glāznieks – J.R.) and Leimanis are Latvian, Renzins and Staphenovich are Russian.²²⁵

Addressing the colonisation of Latvia in 1940-1941, historian L. Zīle writes:

In the archives there are long lists of surnames; J. Kalnbērziņš sent these lists to Moscow with a request to place those listed in the lists in various fields of work The archive even contains a "secret" folder with applications "as per their own wish to enter Latvia". These documents prove that people did come to occupied Latvia from all parts of the Soviet Union; this was the beginning of a marked increase in the inflow of Russians into

²²⁴ NAL, PA-101.f., 2.desc., 95. file, p 54

²²⁵ NAL, PA-101.f., 2.desc., 95. file, p 64

Latvia in the first place. The Latvians in Latvia thus lost their independence, the freedom of their country and the possibility of genuine development of their culture.²²⁶

On 7 September 1940, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet issued a decree "On the Procedure for Citizens of the Soviet Socialist Republics of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia to Acquire USSR Citizenship", the first article of which stipulated: "In accordance with Article 1 of the Law on Citizenship of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics of 19 August 1938 – to establish that the citizens of the Soviet Socialist Republics of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia are citizens of the USSR from the date of their accession to the USSR."²²⁷ But they were not considered "real citizens of the USSR": they needed special passes to enter the "vast homeland". As already indicated, security at the border was maintained. For this reason, head of the Workers and Peasants Police Administration of the LSSR, Piesis, instructed all people's commissariats on 28 November 1940:

In recent times, commissariats very often send their staff to the Soviet Socialist Republics. For these workers to enter these republics, they need a special pass. In this connection, the Workers and Peasants Police Administration announces the binding rules to be observed when applying for passes for travel to the Soviet Socialist Republics.

- 1) Five days before the intended mission, a letter signed by the Commissioner or by an official authorised by him shall be submitted to the Passport-Registration Department of the Workers and Peasants Police Administration, requesting the issue of a pass for the staff member concerned to travel to a certain republic of the Soviet Union. The letter must also state the period for which the staff member is being posted and the post he holds.

²²⁶ Ļubova Zīle. *Rusifikācija Latvijā 1940.–1941.gadā. // Latvijas Vēsture.*

[Russification in Latvia in 1940-1941. History of Latvia], 1992 Nr.3(6), p.44.

²²⁷ *Okupācijas varu politika Latvijā. 1939-1991* [The politics of the occupying powers in Latvia. 1939-1991], p 95

- 2) The passport of the staff member on mission and 1 facial photo must be attached to the letter.
- 3) If several employees are to be posted at the same time at a given place, the permission of the collective must be sought in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 1, except that facial photos shall not be attached.

The Workers and Peasants Police Administration warns that if these rules are not observed, it will not be possible to arrange in time for the issue of passes for Commissariat staff for trips to the republics of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.²²⁸

In his 18 January 1941 report to Lācis, Kirhenšteins, Kalnbērziņš, and all the People's Commissars of the Latvian Republic, NKGB Senior Major Noviks wrote:

The People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs of the Latvian SSR hereby informs you that for all persons travelling abroad, whether alone or in groups – on tours, scientific missions, sports competitions, etc. – it is necessary to submit lists of such persons to the Passport Department of the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs of the Latvian SSR with full personal data not later than 10 days before the mission.

These provisions shall not apply to members of the Government, members of the Central Committee, People's Commissars of the Republic in respect of whom no lists need be submitted and who pass through the barrier zone with their identity cards.²²⁹

On 5 May 1941, Saks, Manager of Affairs of Sovnarkom of the LSSR CoM, notified the Secretariat of the LSSR NKGB "that the instruction on missions to other republics of the USSR and Moscow did not apply to the employees of the Latvian SSR People's Commissariat for State Security."²³⁰

²²⁸ NAL, 327.f., 1.desc., 2. file, p 7

²²⁹ NAL, 270.f., 1.s.desc., 59. file, p 139

²³⁰ NAL, 270.f., 1.s.desc., 59. file, p 139

However, this strict departure system did not seem to work very well. On 10 June 1941, O. Auguste, the head of the Personnel Department of the LSSR Council of People's Commissars, wrote Shustin:

It has been noticed that in the last months of this year a large number of requests for travel permits for Commissariat employees to other Soviet republics have come from the People's Commissar of Local Industry, Karlsons, in the name of the Chairman of Council of People's Commissars, c. Lācis. A striking phenomenon is that the overwhelming majority of the requests are for travel to strategic cities close to the border – Leningrad, Minsk, Paldiski.

Given that the People's Commissariat for Local Industry is heavily contaminated with people alien to the Soviet authorities, it is feared that, despite the refusal of some people, some people may still use the mission trips for espionage purposes and to make contacts with counter-revolutionary organisations. For this reason, it is recommended that the matter be investigated and that the measures taken be reported to the Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars, c. Lācis.²³¹

At this time, the first major deportations were already being prepared and many "untrustworthy elements" found themselves on deportation lists. Ceichners describes this crime:

On 14 June 1941, the Bolsheviks arrested and deported **14,693** persons, **8436** men and **6257** women, including:

- agricultural workers – **3,838** persons (**3,662** farmers with wives and adult family members, **27** agronomists and **149** others). Many farmhouses remained empty as entire families were taken away.
- **1037** deportees were engaged in industry and crafts (**196** business owners, **780** workers and other wage earners, **61** engineers),
- In trade – **549** (**271** of them business owners).
- Other professions: **150** railwaymen, **20** sailors, **11** drivers, **353** former police officers, **538** former officers, **91** soldiers and

²³¹ NAL, 270.f., 1.s.sdesc., 59. file, p 201

instructors, **650** civil servants, **544** municipal workers, **46** former judges, **350** teachers, **23** clergymen, **56** lawyers, **70** doctors (including dentists and veterinarians), **8** midwives, **44** chemists and pharmacists, many professors, writers, journalists, etc. People who were undesirable to the Bolshevik government, harmful to it, were found in all occupations and in all social groups –

- The number of "non-workers" is **5439** (**112** building owners, **84** pensioners, **125** students, **1977** schoolchildren, **1188** children under **6** and **1953** housewives).
- Occupation of **482** deportees is unknown.²³²

According to data updated by the State Archives of Latvia, the list of deportees on 14 June 1941 included 15,443 people.²³³ The search for and arrest of enemies of the people and other alien class elements began in the first months of the occupation: in June 1940, 20 people were arrested, 141 in July and 300 in August.²³⁴ It should be noted that 71 people were arrested after 15 June 1941, and especially after 22 June – the start of the war between Germany and the USSR.²³⁵

Trusted staff sent by Moscow and their families were evacuated from Latvia in the first days of the German attack on the Soviet Union. Many of them returned to Latvia in 1944-1945 after reoccupation.

²³² Alfreds Ceichners. *Latvijas boļševizācija 1940–1941* [The Bolshevization of Latvia 1940-1941], p. 456.

²³³ *Aizvestie. 1941. gada 14.jūnijs. Otrais papildinātais izdevums* [Deported People. 14 June 1941. Second updated edition] - Rīga, 2007, p. 806.

²³⁴ *No NKVD līdz KGB. Politiskās prāvas Latvijā. 1940-1986. Noziegumos pret padomju valsti apsūdzēto Latvijas iedzīvotāju rādītājs* [From the NKVD to the KGB. Political trials in Latvia. 1940-1986. Index of the Latvian population accused of crimes against the Soviet state]. - Rīga, 1999..

²³⁵ Spridzāns B. *Tā sākās Latvijas iedzīvotāju masveida represijas. // Represēto saraksts* [Thus began the mass repression of the Latvian population. List of the Repressed] 1941-1996 - No.1, p.2.

CHAPTER 4

Colonisation of Latvia. 1944-1990

4.1. Spontaneous migration

„The USSR leadership purposefully poured hundreds of thousands of migrants into Latvia and tried to destroy the identity of the Latvian people. As a result of this policy, the percentage of Latvians as the core nation fell from 77 per cent to 52 per cent.”

"Declaration on the Occupation of Latvia" by the Saeima of the Republic of Latvia of 22 August 1996.
Latvijas Vēstnesis. – 1996. 27.08.

Migration is as old as the world. The United States is made up almost entirely of migrants, but Norway has a tiny number. So, we must look at what is behind the phenomenon of this particular case.

Immigration (lat. *immigratio*) is the entry of citizens into another country to live permanently for various (economic, military, political, religious) reasons. In Latvia, this process was associated with a whole range of different problems – economic and social and transnational.

The first major flow of spontaneous migrants to Latvia is linked to the end of World War II. The Red Army crossed the Latvian border in July 1944 and Riga was captured on 13 October 1944. Kurzeme, on the other hand, remained unconquered until the end of the war and fell into Russian hands because of Germany's general surrender. This strategic situation led to the influx of many Russian troops who belonged either directly to the army or to various auxiliary units of the army. When the war ended on 8 May 1945, Soviet authorities suddenly had a huge number of people available after demobilisation. Many of them decided to stay in Latvia in search of a better life. Arturs Landsmanis writes:

... there is no reason to conclude that all or a large part of those who were brought to the shores of the Baltic Sea by the events of the war remained there, forced, against their will. One can

understand that for many it was the best way out. Many of the family ties that would have drawn them back to their homeland were severed during the war years. Compared to many parts of Inner Russia, however, the Baltic was less affected by the war. Even before the war, the standard of living here was higher than in Russia, and traces of this could be seen even through the devastation of war. Several hundred thousand Balts had fled their homes and headed west as refugees. Their apartments were well suited for Russian resettlement. The rooms belonging to the Jewish population, exterminated by Hitler's occupying power, were also vacant. In addition, the Russian NKGB, both in major actions and in ongoing purges, arrested and deported large numbers of locals, making room for newcomers. If necessary, the local population could be ordered to pack up because in the Baltics, people did not live as closely together as they did in Russia.²³⁶

In the past, people usually returned to their homeland and tried to rebuild after a devastating enemy attack or natural disaster, even if they didn't have much left. They felt ties to the homeland – the country – and to their home area. But what no enemy could achieve, Stalin's national Soviet policy did. By forming a mechanism out of "screws", he achieved almost complete alienation. Peasants found themselves disconnected from their land and property, which used to bind them to their region and country. Not only work, but also housing no longer belonged to people. A homeowner could not dispose of his or her home without the consent of various superiors. Gradually, links with the homeland were lost. Later in Russia, many homesteads and entire districts were declared "unpromising". This was followed by countless calls to go to the rapid construction sites, newly conquered lands, other regions, and republics.

Russians, Belarusians, and other nationalities migrated to Latvia mainly to improve their living conditions (to get an apartment), but also

²³⁶ Arturs Landsmanis. *Pastāvēt vai iznīkt. Baltijas tautu dekonstrukcija Padomju Savienībā* [Existing or Perishing. The Destruction of the Baltic Peoples in the Soviet Union], p 13

because Latvia was better supplied with consumer goods compared to other regions. Belarusian Osipov wrote:

My younger brother was, again, where the war ended. He got a job in the commercial port of Liepāja, but when I demobilised, he sent me a message. ... In Liepāja, you could always get bread and not very expensive. Smoked cod was sold in bulk in the market. We were aware that back home, people were poor, but here, life was quite good. At that time, more and more of our brothers were pouring into the city. They called for their relatives to join them. ... And although at first glance there was no sign of hatred between the locals and the newcomers, something was festering in everyone's heart.²³⁷

There were many reasons for this tension. Most often, it was the migrants' blatant disrespect for the country they had come to – its people, culture, language, and customs. Russian scholar Repin, who left Moscow for Estonia in 1988, wrote: "From the very beginning, during my first trips to Estonia, I was struck by a completely unnatural and rather strange situation, both linguistically and on a purely human level. The republic is divided into two parts, and in one country there are completely different populations – Estonians and non-Estonians – with no normal contact between them. As a linguist, I was surprised that the non-Estonians do not know the local language and do not seem to be bothered by it, and even seem to be proud of their ignorance."²³⁸

The same situation, of course, also existed in Latvia. Its population was becoming more and more socially heterogeneous, and soon it was no longer the migrants who had to adapt to local values, but quite the opposite, the titular nation – Latvians – had to adopt the manners of the newcomers and their values, as dictated by official authorities. Aivars Ruņģis described this situation in the 1980s:

Latvians in Latvia today also find themselves among 'other peoples'. ... They, the indigenous inhabitants of the land, are

²³⁷ Aina Buriņa. *Kad karš bija beidzies, un sākās „jaunā kārtība”*. [When the war was over and the "new order" began]. Latvian Herald - 20 January 2000.

²³⁸ A.Repin. *Uvazhat narod i ego zemlyu!* [Respect the people and their land!] – Vechery Tallin. – 1988, 5 September.

confronted with foreign nationalities, mainly Russian newcomers, in such proportions that they are in danger of becoming a minority nationality in their own land. This may turn out to be the most important "achievement" of the so-called Soviet system in Latvia in the very near future. Foreigners are not in Latvian land because Latvians would have liked the thin slice of bread (in the broadest sense of the word) to become even thinner and queuing for the necessities of life to become a chronic, non-negotiable part of life. Foreigners are not in Latvia legally, legitimately. They are against the interests and wishes of Latvia and the Latvian people.²³⁹

On 19 October 1975, Ingeborga Levita testified before the Sakharov International Commission of Inquiry:

The most important element in the Soviet policy of destruction against the Baltic peoples is now the resettlement of Russians. The number of migrants from the Soviet Union averages around 15,000-18,000 per year in Latvia and 7,000-10,000 per year in Estonia. These numbers may seem small to the large Western nations, but to the small Baltic nations they are very significant. Their weight was amplified by the following circumstances:

- a) entry has been continuous for the 30 years since the end of the war,
- b) in parallel, the number of Latvians and Estonians has been reduced by deportations and the recruitment of labour for the colonisation of Asian territories,
- c) the birth rate of Latvians and Estonians is at a low level because of the harmful Soviet demographic policy.²⁴⁰

²³⁹ Aivars Ruņģis “... iet latvieši caur gadu simtiem”. *Vērojumi, pārdomas, secinājumi par latvieti, latviskumu un latvisko izglītību Ņujorka* [“... Latvians through the centuries”. Observations, reflections, conclusions about Latvians, Latvianness and Latvian education]. New York. 1982, p. 190.

²⁴⁰ G.Kurlovičs, A.Tomašūns. *Latvijas vēsture. Okupācijas gadi. Eksperimentāls mācību līdzeklis [History of Latvia. Years of Occupation. Experimental teaching tool]* - Rīga, 1998, p. 277.

Changes in the share of ethnic minorities and Russians, 1939-1959

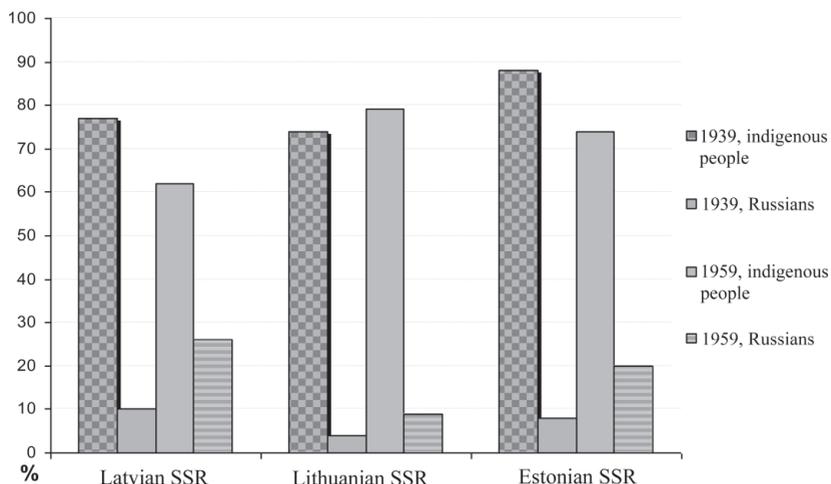


Figure 1. Changes in the share of ethnic minorities and Russians, 1939-1959

Documents indisputably confirm that one of the main reasons that led the Latvian people to such a poor state was precisely unrestricted migration of foreigners and implementation of the Leninist national policy of the CPSU. Ilga Apine, PhD, notes: "About 4 million people migrated through Latvia, with a direct increase of about 900,000. Migration can be economically justified, with subsequent adaptation. But this migration was a massive, aggressive attack with the subsequent colonisation and militarisation of the republic. A stunning demographic change – the decline of Latvians from 4/5 to half the population – took place within one generation."²⁴¹

The national composition of the population changed the most in Latvia's largest cities. Riga became the only capital city in Europe in which the native population was less than 40% of the total: Latvians fell from 63% in 1935 to 36.5% in 1989.²⁴² While issuing passports to Rigans from 10 December 1944 to 20 March 1945, it was discovered

²⁴¹ Ilga Apine. *Nacionalnoe samosoznanie i mezhnacionalnye otnosheniya* [National identity and inter-ethnic relations.]. Daugava. No 1, 1994, p. 125.

²⁴² *Etnosituācija Latvijā. Fakti un komentāri* [Ethnic situation in Latvia. Facts and comments]. - Riga, 1994, p.5; Mežs I. *Latvieši Latvijā* [Latvians in Latvia]. - Riga, 1994, p.16.

that 150,609 people lived permanently in Riga until 1941; 2500 people arrived during the German occupation, and 1708 people after 13 October 1944 (when the Red Army re-entered Riga).

Table 4

Changes in the number and structure of the population of Riga

Nationalities	1944 ²⁴³	1959 ²⁴⁴	1970 ²⁴⁵	1970 / 1944 (increase)
Latvians	112,111	270,055	299,072	2,66
Russians	29,134	238,572	312,857	10,75
Jews	387	30,287	30,581	79,02
Belarusians	1,009	19,377	30,114	29,85
Ukrainians	180	16,984	25,283	140,46
Polish	10,090	16,676	17,324	1,72
Lithuanians	1,043	5,767	6,696	6,42
Estonians	750	1,412	1,500	2,00
Tatars	29	1,031		x
Armenians	13	758		x
Germans	5	534	8,404	x
Gypsies	28	358		x
others	98	2,861		48,58
Total	154,877	604,682	731,821	4,73
Percentage of Latvians %	72,4	44,7	40,9	x

As migrants settled mainly in cities where jobs were available, the number of Russians grew particularly rapidly in the largest Latvian cities, most of all in Riga. In both Liepāja and Jelgava, the proportion of Russians in 1943 was very small, 3%, but by 1959 it had reached 34% and 30%, respectively. The proportion of Latvians fell just as sharply, from 85% and 89% to 52% and 60% with absolute numbers dropping as well. This same sharp decline was observed in Ventspils – 96% to 60% – as the port developed. In Daugavpils, where Latvians accounted for only 35%, their share fell to 13%. Similar processes were taking place in other cities, especially Gulbene, Alūksne, Valka, Cēsis, and Jēkabpils and in the countryside around Riga and Jelgava.²⁴⁶

²⁴³ NAL, 270.f., 1.s.desc., 124. file, pp 143.-145

²⁴⁴ NAL, 277.f., 17.desc., 23. file, p 1

²⁴⁵ NAL, 277.f., 35.desc., 98. file, p 115

²⁴⁶ Pārsla Eglīte, Ilmārs Mežs. *Latvijas kolonizācija un etniskā sastāva izmaiņu cēloņi 1944-1990.gadā. // Latvijas Vēsturnieku komisijas raksti. 7.sējums. Okupācijas režīmi Latvijā 1940-1956.gadā* [Colonisation of Latvia and the causes of changes in the ethnic composition in 1944-1990. Articles of the Latvian Historical Commission. Volume 7. Occupation regimes in Latvia 1940-1956]., pp. 430-432.

Mass migration began at the end of the Second World War after the restoration of railway traffic. In 1947, 98,664 adults and 2207 children arrived, but 49,439 adults and 8582 children left.²⁴⁷ The numbers increased every year. In 1949, 35,918 migrants arrived: 2800 from Leningrad, 1800 from Moscow, 1500 from Kaliningrad Oblast, 1200 from Velikiye Luki Oblast, 900 from Pskov Oblast, 800 from Kaliningrad Oblast – 23,900 from Russia in total – and 3300 from Ukraine, 2200 from Belarus, 1900 from Lithuania, and 600 from Estonia. In the countryside, 5240 people arrived.²⁴⁸ In absolute numbers and percentages, Russia contributed the most.

Table 5

Number of migrants in Latvia in 1951

Place of origin	Number of people	% of all migrants
RFSFR	25,468	60,29
Leningrad	2,836	6,71
Moscow	1,989	4,71
Kaliningrad	2,122	5,02
Velikiye Luki Oblast	1,698	4,20
Pskov Oblast	1,241	2,94
Kalinin Oblast	904	2,14
Smolensk Oblast	892	2,11
Ukrainian SSR	3,432	8,12
Belarusian SSR	2,942	6,96
Lithuanian SSR	1,896	4,49
Estonian SSR	1,093	2,59
Uzbek SSR	417	0,99
Georgian SSR	316	0,75
Abroad	461	1,09 ²⁴⁹
Total imigrants	36,025	100,00

In 1952, 59,514 people arrived from other regions. Of course, every year there was also a movement in the opposite direction. In 1952, 39,742 people left the cities of Latvia, and 15,110 people left the countryside. In total, the mechanical growth of Latvia's population in 1952 was 5890 people (1951 – 5444).

²⁴⁷ NAL, 277.f., 14.desc., 12. file, p 18

²⁴⁸ NAL, 277.f., 14.desc., 28. file, pp 91.-93

²⁴⁹ NAL, 277.f., 14.desc., 47. file, pp 95., 96

Table 6

Increase in the number of migrants in cities in 1952 ²⁵⁰

Rīga	Liepāja	Daugavpils	Jelgava	Venstspils	Other cities	Total
12066	1905	914	668	1693	2371	19,617

The number of migrants remained high in following years: in 1953, 55,978 migrants arrived and in 1954 – 54,246.²⁵¹ In 1956, 51,963 migrants came to Latvian cities and 32,746 to the countryside.²⁵² During this period, Latvians deported in 1941 and 1949 also began to return.

In the post-war years, the repatriation campaign – return of citizens who had fled the Soviet invasion to Germany during World War II – was widespread throughout the USSR. Not only Latvians returned, but also many who had never lived here before: Moskalenko, a citizen of Uruguay where he had lived for more than 20 years, arrived in 1955. Ovchinikov, Mrubin, Bushuyev, Yakovlev, and many others also came to Latvia although they had never lived here before. Many repatriates initially returned to their homes in different Soviet regions and cities, but later arrived in Riga and, as repatriates from abroad, applied for an apartment, circumventing the line. Many migrants came to Latvia from China where the Soviet military bases were being dismantled at the time.²⁵³

Censuses reveal the true extent of migration and the threat to the Latvian people. The first census in the post-war years was held in January 1959. Data show that on 15 January 1959 there were 2,094,000 people living in Latvia, including military personnel. Compared to 1939, the population of Latvia had increased by 209,000 people. The urban population in 1939 was 663,000 but by 1959 it had risen to 1,173,000, an increase of 77%.²⁵⁴ Migrants were most concentrated in Latvian cities.

²⁵⁰ NAL, 270.f., 2.desc., 3534. file, pp 1.-6

²⁵¹ NAL, 277.f., 14.desc., 73. file, p 85

²⁵² NAL, 277.f., 14.desc., 91. file, pp 72.-7

²⁵³ NAL, 270.f., 1.s.desc., 1101. file, pp 91-94

²⁵⁴ NAL, 277.f., 17.desc., 20. file, 99., p 100

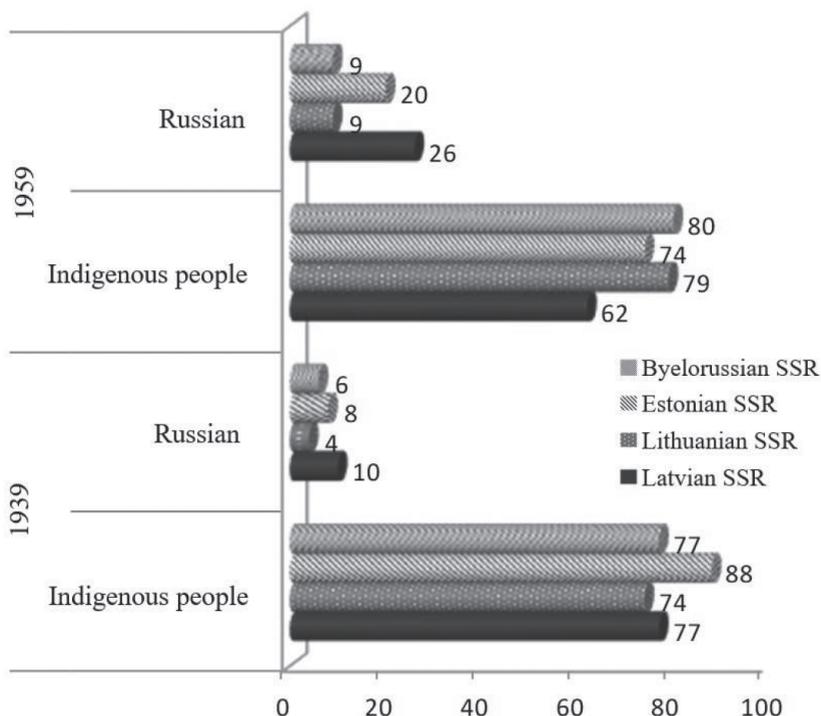


Figure 2. Changes in population of main ethnic groups in Latvia, comparison with other republics (%)

At that time, the highest indigenous population in the USSR was in Armenia – 88% and the lowest in Kazakhstan – 30%. In following years, the influx of migrants grew every year: in 1960, 49,287 Russians, 9,579 Belarusians, 5145 Ukrainians, and many other nationalities arrived in Latvia.²⁵⁵ According to the All-Union Census, from 1959 to 1970, the number of Latvians in the LSSR increased by 43,924 people, Russians by 148,151, Belarusians by 33,311, and Ukrainians by 24,021. Figure 2 indicates that the increase in the proportion of Latvians during these 11 years was the smallest – only 3%.

²⁵⁵ NAL, 277.f., 17.desc., 110. file, p 109

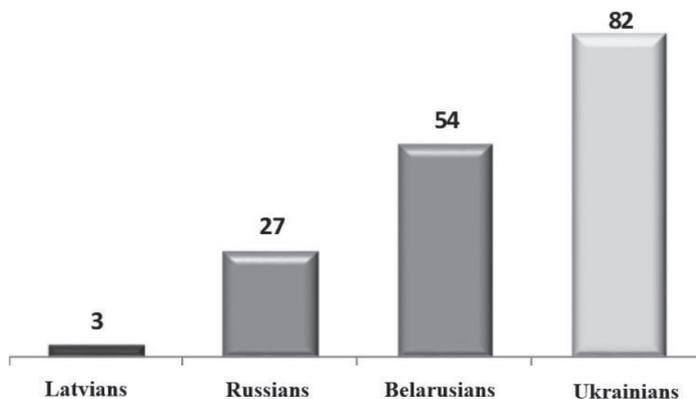


Figure 3. Population growth in Latvia by nationality (%) 1959-1970

In 1970, 1,341,805 Latvians (57%) lived in Latvia, and 1,429,844 Latvians lived in the entire USSR – as 88,039 (6%) Latvians lived in other republics.²⁵⁶ The main population flow to Latvia remained the same as in previous years. The most frequent migrants to Latvia were residents of the Bryansk, Kaliningrad, and Pskov oblasts of the RSFSR. In 1975, the population of Latvia increased by 14,400 due to migration²⁵⁷ and in 1977 by 14,100.²⁵⁸ As in previous years, more than half of the migrants came from the RSFSR, almost a quarter from the Belarusian SSR, and a fifth from the Ukrainian SSR. Although it was clear that unrestricted migration was a real threat to the existence of the Latvian nation, the flow of newcomers to Latvia was not impeded in any way. Most migrants were Slavs whose numbers in Latvia were steadily increasing: in 1979, there were 821,464 Russians, 111,505 Belarusians, and 66,703 Ukrainians living in Latvia.²⁵⁹

Decision No 626 (30 December 1985) of the LSSR CoM and Decision No 122 (16 April 1988) required the Latvian State Statistical Service conduct the All-Union Census in January 1989. The estimated number of the Latvian population present at the time of the census –

²⁵⁶ NAL, 277.f., 35.desc., 98. file, p 7

²⁵⁷ NAL, 277.f., 35.desc., 158. file, p 13

²⁵⁸ NAL, 277.f., 35.desc., 187. file, p 13

²⁵⁹ NAL, 277.f., 35.desc., 215. file, p 84

12 January 1989 – was 2,680,000 (2,667,000 permanent residents). Compared with 1979, the population had increased by 159,500 or by 6 %. According to this census, there were 1,459,000 Latvians living in the entire Soviet Union. In 10 years, the number of Latvians had increased by 20,000 (1.4%): 1,388,000 lived in Latvia, 95% of the total number of Latvians living in the USSR. The percentage of Latvians in Latvia had fallen from 53.7% in 1979 to 52.0% in 1989 due to migration and the lower natural population growth rate Latvians had compared to other nationalities living in the republic because of an unfavourable age structure and higher mortality rate.

Table 7

Changes in number and share of Latvia's main nationalities

	Persons, thousands		1989 % vs 1979	Total population, %	
	1979	1989		1979	1989
All residents	2,503	2,607	106,5	100	100
Latvians	1,344	1,388	103,2	53,7	52,0
Russians	821	906	110,2	32,8	34,0
Belarusians	112	120	107,4	4,5	4,5
Ukrainians	67	82	138,1	2,7	3,5
Poles	63	60	96,14	2,5	2,3
Lithuanians	38	35	91,6	1,5	1,3
Jews	28	23	80,9	4,4	0,9
Gypsies	6,1	7,0	114,8	0,2	0,3
Tatars	3,8	4,8	128,3	0,2	0,2
Germans	3,3,	3,8	114,7	0,1	0,1
Estonians	3,7	3,3	99,0	0,1	0,1
Other nationalities	13	24	184,8	0,6	0,8

In 1989, the percentage of Latvians in urban areas was 44% and 71.5% in rural areas: 332,000 Latvians lived in Riga – their share had fallen to 36.5% of the total population (38.3% in 1979).²⁶⁰

One of the most important points of the 1989 census, which aroused the greatest interest of the state authorities, scientists, and the

²⁶⁰ NAL, 277.f., 17.desc., 445. file, pp 1., 2., 3., 7., 8., 10

public, was the question of the national composition of the Latvian population. At that time, Latvia was home to more than 130 nationalities and ethnic groups. Latvia's population increased by 6.5% between the last two censuses to 2,666,600. Between 1959 and 1989, Latvians migrated to other regions at a cost of more than 300,000 people. As a result, the number of Russians increased 1.6 times, Belarusians 1.9 times, Ukrainians 3.1 times, and the titular nation, Latvians, only 1.07 times (by 7%). The number of Azerbaijanis, Kazakhs, Moldovans, Turkmens, and Uzbeks increased rapidly. There were significant differences in the territorial distribution of nationalities in Latvia. For example, the percentage of Latvians by district varied from 90% in Talsi to 36% in Daugavpils. In the northern part of Latvia, the percentage of Latvians exceeded 80%, but in the eastern and central part it was below 50%. Those who came to Latvia from other regions settled mostly in cities, so the urban population was more ethnically diverse: 72% of the rural population was Latvian and 44% of the urban population was Latvian, and 18% and 41% (respectively) were Russian. Daugavpils had the lowest number of Latvians, 13% of the total population, and Jelgava the highest – 49.7%.

The multinational composition of Latvia's population also contributed to intermarriage. Latvia had the highest number of transnational families. In urban areas, the figure was 27 %, but in rural areas – 18%, which could be explained by the greater homogeneity of the countryside. The two largest nationalities, Latvians and Russians, had homogeneous marriages, 80% and 62% respectively.²⁶¹

Zubkova noted: “Migrants from other regions of the USSR arrived in the Baltics through various channels: controlled (e.g., through organized recruitment) and spontaneous (in the first instance, to buy products and manufactured goods). It is rather difficult to establish the relationship between these migrant flows, as spontaneous migration was practically not counted. ... spontaneous migration exceeded organised migration by several times.”²⁶² This statement can only be partially accepted. Of course, migrants who came to Latvia to buy products and industrial goods were

²⁶¹ NAL, 277.f., 17.desc., 445. file, pp 18.-23

²⁶² Yelena Zubkova. *Pribaltika i Kremli. 1940-1953* [The Baltics and the Kremlin. 1940-1953], p. 156.

not registered with any authorities. However, those who came with the intention of staying permanently were recorded by the passport sections of the police and by statistical authorities.²⁶³

Eglīte and Mežs note:

In general, throughout the years of Soviet rule, the ethnic composition of Latvia's population was drastically changed, with the number of Russians and the majority of Russians from other nationalities, being increased to the maximum, while the percentage of Latvians fell to a catastrophic low of 52%. The consequences will be felt for generations to come. The Soviet policy of Russification was most pronounced in the cities. In the eight largest cities of the republic, especially the capital, and in many smaller towns, the percentage of Latvians declined markedly. Significant Russian communities were established. In the countryside, the percentage of Latvians also declined, especially in central Latvia and Latgale, creating vast new areas with a distinctly mixed ethnic composition. Consequently, the Latvian language lost its dominant role and began to play an increasingly marginal role in society, which would inevitably have led to increased Latvian assimilation within the next few generations.²⁶⁴

For the absolute majority of migrants who had settled in Latvia, the country remained in many ways "terra incognita", because it is impossible to understand another nation if you do not know its language, culture, history, national character, traditions, and customs. Many were unwilling and unable to integrate into a way of life that was unfamiliar to them.

²⁶³ On the migration process and the number of migrants, see Jānis Riekstiņš. *Migranti Latvijā. 1944-1989. Dokumenti* [Migrants in Latvia. 1944-1989. Documents]. - Rīga. 2004.

²⁶⁴ Pārsla Eglīte, Ilmārs Mežs. *Latvijas kolonizācija un etniskā sastāva izmaiņu cēloņi 1944-1990. // Latvijas Vēsturnieku komisijas raksti, 7.sējums. Okupācijas režīmi Latvijā 1940.-1956.gadā* [Colonisation of Latvia and the causes of changes in the ethnic composition 1944-1990. Articles of the Latvian Historical Commission, Volume 7. Occupation Regimes in Latvia 1940-1956], p. 438.

4.2. Organised migration

Soviet demographic policy was to reduce the number of Latvians in Latvia, including through deportations, and to increase the percentage of Russians in this country through the distribution of the so-called "manufacturing forces" on the territory of the USSR. Industry was developed here, which already determined the presence of Russians in these factories.

Yury Afanasyev, Russian historian, academician.
Lauku avīze, 22 November 2001

The expansion and construction of large industrial enterprises under Soviet control in well-populated and relatively well-established Latvia became the main reason for unrestricted migration processes and colonisation. Lack of labour resources allowed central ministries and departments to import workforce from other regions. This is not so much a question of ill-considered economic planning, which was always subject to political and ideological considerations, but rather purposeful action by Soviet political leadership to displace peoples, to deliberately colonise the peripheries. In any case, it stemmed from the notorious idea of the death of nations and the formation of a dehumanised Soviet man with no national characteristics.

V. Poriņa describes the colonisation process: "After World War II, the country was deliberately flooded with people of different ethnic backgrounds, not only Russians, but also Eurasians, which was uncharacteristic of Latvia's previous ethnic situation in the inter-war period. During the Soviet period, the impression was created that people from all Soviet republics were willing to move to Latvia, even though the core of planned de-ethnicisation was Russians."²⁶⁵ M. Baltiņš points out: "Conceptually, it is possible to distinguish between voluntary migration, which occurs mainly in search of better living

²⁶⁵ Vineta Poriņa. *Valsts valoda daudznacionālajā sabiedrībā: individuālais un sociālais lingvisms Latvijā* [State language in a multinational society: individual and social linguism in Latvia] - Rīga. 2009, p. 67.

conditions, but in some cases, it can also occur as a way to escape religious and political pressure and forced migration, which is caused by targeted policies that in various ways facilitate the entry of some groups of people into a particular area, while others leave. These processes can be spontaneous or planned and guided (in which case we can speak of the planning and deployment of labour resources as well as of colonisation and the deliberate and willful alteration of ethnic composition).²⁶⁶ The organised nature of migration is also recognised by Russian researchers. Russian historians V. Kotov and V. Trepavlov conclude: "As a result of the more organised and less spontaneous population movements, huge numbers of Russian migrants converged in the national republics. They were traditionally regarded as the guarantors of statehood."²⁶⁷

Organised migration was most closely linked to the industrialisation of Latvia. Šneidere notes:

Industrialisation in itself is a phenomenon of normal economic development, but in the Latvian SSR, "socialist industrialisation" was being pushed forward. This meant, first of all, that the development of heavy industry – mechanical engineering, metalworking – as well as the radioelectronic and chemical industries, which were necessary for the production of military equipment, was stimulated in Latvia, as in the Soviet Union overall. ... Secondly, industry in the Soviet Union developed extensively and irrationally. Industry was in constant need of additional labour, which was imported from other regions of the USSR in an organised manner, and also flowed into Latvia spontaneously.²⁶⁸

²⁶⁶ M. Baltiņš. *Migrācija un valoda – attiecību vēsture Latvijā. Dažas vēsturiskas paralēles ar XX gadsimta sākumu. // Migrācijas ietekme uz valodas vidi Latvijā.* [Migration and language - a history of relations in Latvia. Some historical parallels with the beginning of the 20th century. The impact of migration on the language environment in Latvia] - Rīga. 2009, p.35.

²⁶⁷ V. M. Kotov, V. V. Trepavlov. *Russkiy narod v HH veke: paradoksy istoricheskoy sudby* [Russian people in XX century: paradoxes of historical destiny. Otechestvennaya istoriya [Russian national history], 2007. No 3. p. 54.

²⁶⁸ Irēne Šneidere. *Ievads // Latvija padomju režīma varā. 1945-1986. Dokumentu krājums* [Introduction Latvia under the Soviet Regime. 1945-1986. Collection of documents]. – p 17.

O. Krēgere describes the destructive policies of "socialist industrialisation":

One of the key elements is the economically unjustified expansion of heavy industry, which was carried out arbitrarily, by subjective methods, ignoring natural and human resources. This was dictated and implemented by the 'leading' and 'guiding' force of society – the Communist Party, dogmatically adhering to the absurd theory of the necessity of socialist industrialisation for the building of socialism. The second element in this connection is the infusion of foreign workforce by the occupying power. It was important for the Soviet occupation centre to have a population in Latvia on which it could rely. This was achieved through the excessive emphasis on heavy industry. Latvia thus became a testing ground for the policy of national fusion, or Russification of the most ordinary kind. Historians have so far found no arguments to the contrary. Thirdly, the location of all economic power outside Latvia. There was a centralised system of industrial management and a concentration of economic power in the hands of Moscow. Consequently, the Latvian economy was subject to the political development and fluctuations of the totalitarian Soviet regime.²⁶⁹

Šneidere concludes: "Thus the bureaucratic centralism of the administration of the national economy that regulated the activities of all enterprises and the methods of commanding the socio-economic processes, which had developed under the Stalin personality cult, led to the fact that the leading enterprises of practically all branches of industry in Soviet Latvia ... came under the control of the People's Commissariats (ministries) and departments of the Union. ... The opinion of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Latvia and the republic government on questions of management schemes was completely ignored."²⁷⁰

²⁶⁹ O. Krēgere. *Industrializācijas destruktīvā politika Latvijā. // Komunistiskā totalitārisma un genocīda prakse Latvijā. Konferences materiāli.* [The destructive politics of industrialisation in Latvia. The practice of communist totalitarianism and genocide in Latvia. Conference Materials]. - Riga. 1992. p. 135.

²⁷⁰ I. R. Schneider. *Socialisticheskaya industrializatsiya v Latvii. Hod, itogi, problemi* [Socialist industrialisation in Latvia. Progress, results, problems], p. 78.

As early as 1940, the Central Committee of the C(b)PL and the LSSR Council of People's Commissars set the task of transforming Latvia from an agrarian society into a highly developed industrial-agrarian republic. After World War II, in accordance with the tasks set by the local authorities and with the interests of the All-Union, new branches of production had to be created and new factories had to be built. The large number of skilled workers, their production experience, and the generally well-preserved housing stock was supposedly able to ensure that these tasks could be carried out. However, it was clear even then that socialist industrialisation could not be achieved with local workers alone. In his explanation of the labour balance of the LSSR for 1945, Deputy Commissioner for Latvia of the State Planning Commission of the USSR Sovnarkom, Nekhotny stated: "... the workforce shortage to be covered by other republics is 35,404 people, 15,804 in urban areas and 19,600 in rural areas."²⁷¹ The LSSR People's Commissariats stated that the additional labour force needed in 1945 would be 194,418 people.²⁷² The workforce was expected to be supplemented by 121,956 urban dwellers and 37,058 people from the countryside who would be involved in industrial production. The rest were to be recruited from other regions of the Soviet Union. The number of recruits increased as many Latvians were mobilised into the Red Army or arrested and deported for anti-state activities. So, the development of Latvian industry was already largely planned and implemented requiring recruited migrants, and this policy, devastating for Latvia's native population, continued throughout Soviet occupation. Before the needed migrants were recruited, the shortage of labour was largely made up by German prisoners of war: 20,700 German prisoners of war were assigned to Latvian industrial enterprises and construction work.²⁷³ In 1946, a total of 51,900 German prisoners of war were working in Latvia; they remained in Latvia until 1948 when they were gradually released home or sent to other regions.²⁷⁴

²⁷¹ NAL, 283.f., 1.desc., 113. file, p 186

²⁷² NAL, 283.f., 2.desc., 113. file, p 185

²⁷³ Decision No 8921-s of the USSR State Defence Committee of 4 June 1945

²⁷⁴ NAL, 270.f., 1.s.desc., 205. file, p 86.; Riekstiņš J. *Vācu karagūstekņi Latvijā // Latvijas Arhīvi* [German prisoners of war in Latvia Latvian Archives]. 1995, No.2, pp 62., 72.

However, migrant employment in Latvian industry, transport, and construction also increased during this period. The Soviet government instructed the USSR People's Commissariat for Defence to send 500 people from troops in Latvia who were unfit for regular service but could be used in manual labour to the Riga superphosphate plant.²⁷⁵ In autumn 1945, the USSR brought 3000 recruited free contract workers to naval construction sites – 500 each in Liepāja and Riga.²⁷⁶ In the first quarter of 1946, 500 demobilised soldiers were destined for enterprises of the People's Commissariat for the Navy in Riga, and 800 demobilised soldiers for enterprises of the People's Commissariat for Road Traffic. In the second quarter of 1946, 650 demobilised servicemen were to be sent to various enterprises of the USSR Armed Forces, 100 to the Riga Ship Repair Plant, and a total of 1080 to various enterprises in Riga.²⁷⁷ In February 1946, the Soviet government authorised the People's Commissariat of the USSR Navy to recruit 15,000 workers from repatriated USSR citizens to work in Latvia.²⁷⁸

Documents show that many workers, engineers, and technicians arrived in Latvia on the direct instructions of All-Union ministries and departments. However, the CCCP and the LSSR government also asked the Soviet government more than once to recruit workers and various economic specialists for Latvia. In August 1945, the LSSR government asked the USSR CPSU Committee for University Affairs to send 21 young specialists, 15 engineers, and 25 technicians to work in the Latvian textile industry at *Sarkanais metalurģis*. In 1946, the LSSR government requested the Ministry of Chemical Industry of the USSR to send specialists for permanent employment in the sulphuric acid and superphosphate workshops of the Riga superphosphate plant. At the same request, the USSR Sovnarkom sent 800 construction specialists to rebuild energy facilities in Riga and 20 engineering technologists, mechanics, power engineers, and mining specialists to rebuild and operate Brocēni cement and slate factory. The LSSR government requested 1000 skilled workers and 25 engineers for light industries and

²⁷⁵ NAL, 270.f., 2.desc., 4159. file, p 7

²⁷⁶ NAL, 270.f., 1.s.desc., 139. file, p 38

²⁷⁷ NAL, 270.f., 1.s.desc., 139. file, pp 38., 39

²⁷⁸ NAL, 270.f., 1.s.desc., 212. file, p 7

40 technicians and 20 engineers and 30 technicians for work in the building materials industry. By 1950, about 10,000 engineers, technicians, and other specialists had arrived from other regions of the USSR.²⁷⁹ These requests were large because the industrial, construction and transport enterprises were subject to large and mandatory overhaul plans set by the Soviet central authorities, but the number of specialists and workers was insufficient.

The increase in the number of migrant workers in Latvia was also due to high turnover of workers in industry. At the beginning of 1945, 1720 workers left the VEF factory, in the second half of the year – 1,072, and in December alone – 146 people. For every 100 workers who left, 106 were hired,²⁸⁰ so the new workers recruited in 1945 were barely replacing those who had left. Many Latvia's industrial enterprises carried out their production plan only because of increasing numbers of workers: in 1946 alone, five factories planned to increase the number of workers by 315 % (+ 4,364) by 1950:

- Riga Ship Repair Plant from 386 to 1500,
- USSR Civil Air Fleet Headquarters Plant No 85 from 300 to 1500,
- Riga Shipbuilding Plant from 262 to 1200,
- Milk Factory from 488 to 1000,
- 29th Repair Plant – from 600 to 1200 workers.²⁸¹

Many other industrial companies planned similar increases. Such an impressive increase in the number of workers could only have been realised with migrants, as in fact happened. A letter date 5 August 1946 from VEF factory director Gaile to Lācis and Kalnbērziņš describes how workers were obtained: "The five-year plan for the VEF factory provides for an increase in the number of workers to 10,000, the main sources of which will be as follows:

- graduates of young workers from factory-training schools and vocational schools,
- recruitment of workers from the repatriate population,
- recruitment of workers from the countryside,

²⁷⁹ Zīle Ļ. *Strādnieku šķiras izaugsme padomju Latvijā* [The Growth of the Working Class in Soviet Latvia] - Riga, 1967, p. 50.

²⁸⁰ NAL, 283.f., 2.desc., 74. file, pp 63

²⁸¹ NAL, 270.f., 1.s.desc., 206. file, pp 11.-15

- recruitment of workers from the special contingent (prisoners of war – former legionnaires),
- workers sent by the Ministry from Moscow, mainly engineering workers.²⁸²

Many workers recruited from other regions came to Latvia but did not want to work in industry. In Liepāja's *Sarkanais metalurģis*, 150 people were recruited in 1948, but 29 left by April 1949. In *Liepājas koks*, from 38 people recruited, 11 decided not to work.²⁸³

In the first post-war years, technical reconstruction under the 4th Five-Year Plan was concentrated on heavy industry. The Riga Wagon Factory, *Sarkanais Metalurģis*, Daugavpils Locomotive Repair Plant, Riga Superphosphate Plant, VEF and Radiotehnika plants, and others were rebuilt and expanded. Reconstruction of light industry also began. Textile factories *Boļševička*, *Zasulauka manufaktūra*, *Rīgas manufaktūra*, the Jelgava flax spinning mill, and others were renovated and reconstructed. In five years, 63 large companies had been renovated, reconstructed, and built. Among the new factories were the Riga Automatic Electric Apparatus Factory, Riga Experimental Hydrometeorological Apparatus Factory, the Penicillin Factory, and Riga Electro-Mechanical Engineering Factory, which was built on the premises of the former *Provodnik* factory. During the 5th Five-Year Plan (1951-1955), Riga Diesel Plant, Riga Electric Lamp Plant, Bolderāja Silicate Brick Plant, Jelgava Mechanical Engineering Plant, Daugavpils Power Tool Plant, Daugavpils Power Chain Plant, Seda Peat Factory, and other enterprises were rebuilt. In total, 30 large enterprises and 73 factories and plants were rebuilt, renovated, or reconstructed in the 5th Five-Year Plan.

The following years were also marked by markedly extensive development of industry and creation of large-scale agricultural production unsuitable for Latvia. Large industrial enterprises were built and expanded, employing mainly recruits from other regions. The largest were Ogre knitwear factory, Liepāja haberdashery factory *Lauma*, Valmiera fibreglass factory, Jelgava RAF, Olaine chemical factories, Daugavpils chemical fibreglass and drive chain factory, Rezekne milking equipment and electrical construction tool factories,

²⁸² NAL, 270.f., 2.desc., 207. file, p 109

²⁸³ NAL, 270.f., 1.s.desc., 439. file, pp 98., 101., 112

and Līvāni glass factory. The Pļaviņas HES, built in the 1960s, reduced the percentage of Latvians in the newly built town of Stučka (now Aizkraukle) by more than half, and the Riga HES significantly reduced the percentage of Latvians in Salaspils.

Many old industrial enterprises were repeatedly expanded, especially in Riga and *Sarkanais metalurģis*, thus creating the need for additional workers. Some enterprises were also set up further away from the major industrial centres, in particular building materials and peat extraction enterprises. The towns of Seda and Zilaiskalns in Vidzeme were established for the peat extraction plant; the percentage of Latvians was very small (11 % and 28 %, respectively).

Similarly, the share of Latvians in the construction materials industry was significantly reduced in Kuprava in Balvi district (down to 25%), Lode in Cēsis district (down to 45%) and Ugale in Ventspils district (from 98% to 67%). A reinforced concrete construction plant was built in Vangaži in Riga district and the number of migrants reduced the Latvian population in Vangaži to 28%. The expansion of the Cement and Slate Plant in Brocēni, Saldus district, was responsible for the decline in Latvians to 61%. In Kalnciems, Jelgava district, where a construction materials plant was located, the share of Latvians was 39%, and the construction ceramics plant *Spartaks* significantly changed the ethnic composition of Cenu township. The same can be said about Saurieši construction materials plant and Saulaine in Riga district. The ceramics factory in Nīcgale, Daugavpils district, also required several hundred workers, thus reducing the proportion of Latvians to two-thirds.²⁸⁴ Krēgere writes about the devastating consequences of this widespread colonisation:

The leaders of the economy, who were alien to the Latvian people, did not take into account economic considerations and the welfare of the population. When planning industrialisation, they also envisaged increased migration as a prerequisite for the implementation of their directive economic plans. In 1966-1970, 43.2% and in 1971-1980, 39.8% of the workers needed for industry were to be obtained by migration. As a result of this

²⁸⁴ Pārsla Eglīte, Ilmārs Mežs. *Latvijas kolonizācija un etniskā sastāva izmaiņu cēloņi 1944.–1990.gadā.* // *Latvijas Vēsturnieku komisijas raksti. 7.sējums* [Colonisation of Latvia and causes of changes in ethnic composition in 1944-1990. Articles of the Latvian Historical Commission. Vol. 7], pp. 431, 432.

policy, in 1950-1987 the share of foreigners among industrial workers rose from 41.1 to 63.7 %, and in enterprises under the Union to 70.3 %. In 1987, only 30.6% of the enterprises in Riga were Latvian.

The analysis of the data from the enterprises clearly showed that Russian workers made up the largest share of the factory workforce, in many cases more than half of the total contingent. Thus, 38.0% of Russians and 32.3% of Latvians worked at VEF (1989), 51.4% and 32.5% at RVR (1984), 52.7% and 21.8% at Red Square (1989), 54.5% and 35.6% at Rezekne Milk Cannery, 49.8% and 24.5% at Lauma (1987).²⁸⁵

In the first post-war years, the mobilisation of workers for industrial work was handled by the LSSR Bureau of Workforce Registration and Distribution. The workforce was mobilised mainly from the urban and rural population of Latvia, but this method was soon abandoned in favour of organised recruitment. The Main Office for Organised Recruitment and Transfer of Workers of the LSSR CoM was set up to recruit workers and conclude contracts. In later years, the Ministry of Labour Reserves was responsible for recruiting. In 30 June 1952, the Kaluga and Polocka recruitment offices of the Ministry of Labour Reserves were instructed to recruit workers for the construction of the Riga Thermal Power Plant.²⁸⁶ Organised recruitment of workers was also carried out by various ministries, administrations, and organisations.²⁸⁷ Large numbers of workers, engineers, and other specialists were sent to Latvia on the direct instructions of All-Union ministries and departments. This was an increasing manifestation of the USSR's imperial aspirations and efforts to turn Latvia into a colony. Landsmanis describes this process:

²⁸⁵ O.Krēgere. *Industrializācijas destruktīvā politika Latvijā. // Komunistiskā totalitārisma un genocīda prakse Latvijā* [The destructive politics of industrialisation in Latvia. The practice of communist totalitarianism and genocide in Latvia], p. 140.

²⁸⁶ NAL, 270.f., 2.desc., 1067. file, p 82

²⁸⁷ See: Jānis Riekstiņš. *PSRS migrantu sūknis uz Latviju (arhīva dokumentu publikācija). // Latvijas Vēstnesis* [The USSR migrant pump to Latvia (publication of archival documents). Latvian Herald] - 1999, 19 January; Jānis Riekstiņš. *Iepļānotie migranti (arhīva dokumentu publikācija). // Latvijas Vēstnesis* [Planned Migrants (publication of archive documents). Latvian Herald]. – 15 April 199

The first condition for entry to take place is that the migrant finds a job. The policy of the Soviet government has always been not merely to provide jobs for the local population – in which case it would only have fulfilled the duty expected of any modern government – but to create new jobs far beyond the number that the local population can fill. To this end, many large factories are being set up, each employing several thousand or even ten thousand workers. These new factories are located in former villages and towns, which are growing into real cities. Of course, the workforce must then be supplied from outside. This creates the preconditions for Russian immigration. Since all industry belongs to the state, and new buildings and capital investments are decided by the party and the government, the whole process of immigration must be seen as a deliberate policy of the government.²⁸⁸

Professor Rein Tagepera of University of California, Irvine describes the industrialisation in the Baltic republics: "It was an industry invested in by Russians, staffed by Russians, run by Russians to suit their own purposes, with raw materials mainly imported from Russia and most of the production exported back to Russia. The whole show is called 'Baltic' industrial development because the Soviets decided to stage this farce on Baltic territory."²⁸⁹

Concerned about the rapid colonisation of Latvia, K. Reimanis, contributor to the newspaper *Soviet Youth*, sent a lengthy letter to the editors of *Pravda* on 16 March 1957:

... Some features of Latvia's industrialisation are also puzzling. We have a whole range of large companies for which literally everything is imported from Russia: machinery, engineers, workers, raw materials. The products are also shipped back there. The question arises: what is the point of creating such factories in

²⁸⁸ Artutrs Landsmanis. *Pastāvēt vai iznīkt. Baltijas tautu destrukcija Padomju Savienībā* [Existing or Perishing. The Destruction of the Baltic Peoples in the Soviet Union], p.19.

²⁸⁹ Romualdas J. Misiunas and Rein Tagepera. 1983. *The Baltic States: Years of Dependence 1940-1983*. Berkeley and Los Angeles; University of California Press, p. 107.

a national republic, except for one thing: to increase the Russian population, get them to form a majority, and then one fine day, on the basis of that majority, declare the national Union Republic dissolved and ask the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR to admit a new autonomous republic into Russia. ... In the example of the Karelian-Finnish republic, many Latvians see the sad prospect of their own fate.²⁹⁰

As is known, the Karelian ASSR was established in 1923, transformed into the Karelian-Finnish SSR in March 1940, and again into an autonomous republic within the RSFSR in June 1956.

While the flow of migrants increased year after year, workforce shortages in many sectors were striking. One of these was in construction, which delayed the commissioning of important economic facilities. In 1984, there was a shortage of about 3000 people for construction assembly work, 5% of the plan, and as a result, construction and assembly plans for about 35 million roubles could not be fulfilled, of which more than 18 million roubles were in the organisations of the Latvian Ministry of Construction. The continuation of construction of the Riga wool production association *Rīgas Tekstils*, agricultural machinery factory in Liepāja, drain pipe factory *Lode*, several brick and other building material production enterprises, metal-casting mechanical factory in Jekabpils, radio telephone transmitter station in Riga, industrial hub *Zilaiskalns*, a robot factory, and other large project were planned in 1985. To facilitate this, the LSSR CoM Chairman, J. Rubenis, wrote the USSR State Planning Committee Chairman N. Baibakov: “... I would very much appreciate your instruction to send all the persons sentenced and released on parole in 1985, including 2400 people, to work only in the Republic, without taking them out of the Latvian SSR.”²⁹¹

In the 1980s, a well-founded fear grew in Latvian society that Latvians might soon become a minority in their homeland under the Soviet regime as the All-Union ministries were already planning new, grandiose economic projects for Latvia. The design for a nuclear power plant was launched, expansion of the Skaistkalne gypsum quarry was

²⁹⁰ NAL, PA-101.f., 20.desc., 96. file, p 34

²⁹¹ NAL, 693f., 1.s.desc., 956. file, pp 3., 4

planned, the Moscow institute *Hidroprojekt* promoted building the Jekabpils HES instead of the rejected Daugavpils HES, and others. Egļīte, head of the Labour Resources Department of the Institute of Economics of the Academy of Sciences of the LSSR CoM, admitted that these concerns were justified at the extended Plenary of the Writers' Union in June 1988 with the participation of other creative unions: "By the turn of the century, Latvians are expected to make up less than half of Latvia's population."²⁹² At that time, people were suspicious of any large-scale economic projects, whether it was the construction of a hydroelectric power plant near Daugavpils or the Riga metro project. In the 1988 campaign against the metro, "The most important issue was that of labour because there were fears that workers brought from Belarus and other Soviet republics ... would not go back home after finishing their work, but would stay in Latvia, thus adding a few thousand more to the army of migrants."²⁹³ Jundzis describes the devastating effects of "socialist industrialisation":

Latvia – more than any other Baltic country – was home to large industrial enterprises that produced products of importance to the Soviet Union, including large quantities for the military. These enterprises received their raw materials mainly from other republics and sent almost all of their production back to the Soviet Union. Under the then-established system, these companies, called All-Union Enterprises, reported directly to the respective USSR ministries, and their directors were also appointed by Moscow. In addition, these companies employed a total of more than 100,000 workers, most of whom were migrants from the Soviet Union and whose loyalty to the idea of Latvian independence was questionable.²⁹⁴

²⁹² Valdis Blūzma. *Atmodas laiks un nevardarbīgā pretošanās (1986.–1990.g.4.maijs)*. // *Nevardarbīgā pretošanās: Latvijas neatkarības atgūšanas ceļš 1945-1991*. [The Time of Awakening and Nonviolent Resistance (1986-1990, 4 May). Nonviolent Resistance: Latvia's Path to Independence 1945-1991], p. 236.

²⁹³ Lapsa L., Metuzāls S., Jančevska K. *Mūsu vēsture, 1985-2006* [Our History, 1985-2006] - Rīga, 2008, p. 68.

²⁹⁴ Tālavš Jundzis. *Nevardarbīgās pretošanās loma faktiskās neatkarības atgūšanā (1990.g.4.maijs – 1991.g.21.augusts)*. // *Nevardarbīgā pretošanās: Latvijas neatkarības atgūšanas ceļš 1945-1991* [The role of non-violent resistance in the restoration of de facto independence (4 May 1990 - 21 August 1991). Nonviolent Resistance: Latvia's Path to Independence 1945-1991], p. 436.

Latvia had the highest rate of mechanical population growth of all the republics. It was particularly high in Riga where more than one-third of Latvia's population lived. The high growth rate overburdened the social infrastructure, complicated provision of housing and food, education, health and cultural institutions, and hindered medical, communal, household, trade, and transport services to the population. The All-Union's sectoral monopolies were concerned only with their own narrow objectives, completely ignoring Latvia's interests. As a result, the economy of the LSSR as a whole was in deep crisis, the ecological situation was catastrophic, and the level of well-being of the people living in Latvia fell. Additionally, the demographic situation posed a real threat to the existence of the nation for the first time in the thousand-year history of the republic's founding people.

In order to make rational use of existing labour resources and put an end to the unjustified population growth and regulate migration processes – as expressed by the majority of the Latvian population and the delegates of the Latvian Popular Front – the LSSR CoM and the Latvian Republic Trade Union Council adopted Decision No 46 of 14 February 1989 "On measures to stop the unjustified mechanical growth of the population and regulate migration processes in the Soviet Socialist Republic of Latvia". Paragraph 2 of this Decision states:

In order to put an end to the unjustified mechanical growth of the population in the Soviet Socialist Republic of Latvia, to introduce for the ministries, state committees, departments, associations, enterprises, institutions and organisations (including cooperative and public organisations) of the Republic, irrespective of their departmental affiliation, a compulsory differentiated contribution of 15 to 25 thousand roubles to the extra-budgetary account of the Executive Committees of the Soviets of People's Deputies of districts or cities (cities subordinated to the Republic) for each newly recruited employee, for each new recruit coming from outside the Republic and for each member of his family, and in Riga, Jūrmala and the Riga district also for recruits coming from other districts and towns of the Republic and for members of their families.²⁹⁵

²⁹⁵ NAL, 270.f., 7.desc., 1614. file, pp 79.-92

With this decision, organised migration from other republics to Latvia effectively ceased. However, several industrial enterprises (a diesel construction plant, a shipbuilding plant, the Daugavpils chemical fibre plant, several light industry enterprises, and others) hired temporary workers and used other methods to recruit migrants from other regions.

Table 8

**Inter-republic migration of population
in the first nine months of 1989**

	Arrived from	Went to	Increase (decrease) in migration
Total	13,702	18,454	-4752
RSFSR	8423	9221	-798
Ukrainian SSR	1845	3956	-2111
Belarusian SSR	1066	2292	-1226
Uzbek SSR	203	198	5
Kazakh SSR	380	387	-7
Georgian SSR	106	95	11
Azerbaijan SSR	162	273	-111
Lithuanian SSR	777	1003	-226
Moldavian SSR	149	295	-146
Kyrgyz SSR	76	81	-5
Tajik SSR	57	55	2
Armenian SSR	70	94	-24
Turkmen SSR	57	55	2
Estonian SSR	322	453	-131 ²⁹⁶

Russian scholar I. Kudryavtsev described the problem organised migration – colonisation – was creating for Latvia in 1983:

As more and more companies open up, ministries prefer to bring in labour from outside the country. And now, in Latvia, about 50% of the population is non-Latvian. Their (migrants' – J.R.) share in industrial enterprises is up to 90% Of course, Moscow's ministries are not at all concerned about what comes out of their factories' chimeneas and what they release into the far-away Baltic Sea. ... One problem leads to another. The flow of new arrivals is lowering the level of social security in the

²⁹⁶ NAL, 270.f., 7.desc., 720. file, p 248

republic. Further, a national – economic – cultural imbalance arises between the predominantly Russian-speaking staff of industrial enterprises and the Latvians working in agriculture and domestic services. The division of labour further antagonises the nations.

The arrivals themselves are often casual people. In any case, they do not form cohesive communities. ... Until now, a Russian who has come to the Baltics has tried his best to ignore the differences between himself and the locals.

A Russian behaved like a "caring visitor", who told his host in a completely honest and friendly way (without any intrigues), "Make yourself at home!" ... Therefore, when Latvians respond to Russians with aggression, it causes complete incomprehension in them. And the response. ... If Russians understand such reactions, it is more difficult for Latvians to understand. ... They simply see that everything is going to wash away and their nation will cease to exist. They cannot understand how and why this is happening and, not seeing the source of the danger but sensing it, they become aggressive towards the Russians, because all their misfortunes began with their appearance.

Indeed, Latvians were for a long time under the domination of the Germans, who were less friendly to the "core nations" than the Russians. And yet, at that time, the nation managed to preserve itself. Now the thing is that the nation will disappear in a few decades.²⁹⁷

Only the collapse of the USSR and Latvia's regained independence prevented this from coming true.

4.3. Deliberate influx of retired military personnel into Latvia

One of the largest, most active, and most militant group of migrants in Latvia were demobilised officers from the USSR Armed Forces and their numerous family members. Their influx began on a

²⁹⁷ Kudryavtsev I. *Latyshi, russkie, narodniy front i pravovoe gosudarstvo* [Russians, People's Front and the Rule of Law]. Obshina [Community]. No 25 (1989), pp. 14-16.

large scale in the summer of 1945 when the first major demobilisation of Red Army troops was announced but continued throughout occupation. By 25 August 1945, a total of 3081 demobilised officers had arrived in Latvia – 116 in Riga District, 149 in Daugavpils, 110 in Jelgava, 75 in Liepāja, and 1730 in Riga.²⁹⁸

Even then, the demobilised officers desire to settle in Riga at any cost was clearly visible. At a meeting on 12 October 1945, convened in connection with the decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet "On the demobilisation of the Red Army personnel of the 2nd round" and issues of the care of the demobilised, K. Celovs, Deputy Chairman of the LSSR Council of People's Commissars asked: "How many demobilised of the 2nd round are to be cared for?" Vorobjovs, the Riga City Military Commissioner, replied: "When the first round was demobilised, we thought we would have 500 people, but 2,700 people turned up. Now the local corps [130th Latvian Rifle Corps] will give us about 900 people, and this is not really accurate. We thought that the majority would be locals. Now just Latvians come, but also from Kalinin, Novgorod. There are two battalions in Latvia that have left the division. They are fit for out-of-order service. So, the number has to be trebled – there will be about 10,000 people."²⁹⁹

By 12 November 1945, 5575 military personnel had arrived in Riga of whom 3525 had never lived in Latvia.³⁰⁰ In Daugavpils, 836 demobilised troops arrived in the same period.³⁰¹ The numbers were increasing. By 15 December 1945, 8031 demobilised troops had arrived in Riga, 447 in Liepāja, 697 – Daugavpils, 424 – Jelgava, 126 – Ventspils, 719 – Abrene District, 73 – Aizpute District, 497 – Bauska District, 613 – Valka District, 801 – Valmiera District, 41 – Ventspils District, Daugavpils District – 1,587, Jēkabpils District – 678, Jelgava District – 1,136, Ilukste District – 493, Kuldīga District – 229, Liepāja District – 371, Ludza District – 1,119, Madona District – 576, Rezekne District – 1,272, Talsi District – 120, Tukums District – 133, Riga District – 884, and Cēsis District – 490: a total of 21,558. By the end of 1946, 44,040 had arrived in Latvia of whom 19,463 had never

²⁹⁸ NAL, 270.f., 1.s.desc., 113. file, p 35

²⁹⁹ NAL, 270.f., 1.s.desc., 6187. file, p 31

³⁰⁰ NAL, 270.f., 1.s.desc., 113. file, p 4

³⁰¹ NAL, 270.f., 1.s.desc., 113. file, p 44

previously lived in Latvia.³⁰² The situation remained similar in the following years. By 1 April 1947, 58,640 demobilised troops had arrived in Latvia, including 8346 officers and 50294 soldiers and sergeants, of whom 27,624 had never lived in Latvia, including 7427 officers and 20,197 soldiers and sergeants.³⁰³

After arriving in Latvia, many demobilised officers avoided work in an institution or company. For example, reserve captain J. Ulj, reserve lieutenant K. Santik, reserve senior lieutenant L. Mikulenko, reserve justice captain Tinduk, reserve senior lieutenant G. Pivovarov, and many others did not work in Riga. Reserve Captain V. Gricenko, a zootechnician by profession, refused to work in the countryside as did Captain P. Rozhkov of the reserve medical service and reserve second lieutenant S. Matsyuta and many others. Many did not want to work at all. They lived off their officer's pension, relatives' savings, or income from odd jobs.³⁰⁴ From 1945 until the restoration of Latvia's independence, demobilised officers were cared for by the Baltic Military District (BMD) Command, the LSSR Military Commissariat, and the Military Commissariats of cities and counties (districts). There they were registered on arrival in Latvia and began to process paperwork for obtaining an apartment and other privileges.

By 1 January 1948, demobilised military personnel who had not previously lived in Latvia had arrived in the districts of Valmiera – 297, Kuldīga – 307, Valka – 287, Tukums – 205, Rezekne – 380, Liepāja – 2,191, Riga – 19,455, and Ventspils – 671.³⁰⁵ As in previous years, the number was particularly high in Riga: by 1 July 1948, 6,646 demobilised officers and 13,315 soldiers and sergeants who had not previously lived in Latvia had arrived in Riga.³⁰⁶

The next major wave of demobilised military personnel began to arrive in Latvia in the early 1950s when the Soviet government began to reduce its huge army. In September 1953, the USSR CoM adopted several decisions that gave demobilised officers even greater freedom to choose their future place of residence. Many of them took advantage

³⁰² NAL, 270.f., 1.s.desc., 234. file, p 22

³⁰³ NAL, 270.f., 1.s.desc., 304. file, p 98

³⁰⁴ NAL, 270.f., 1.s.desc., 295. file, p 11

³⁰⁵ NAL, 270.f., 1.s.desc., 377. file, pp 4., 7., 9., 12., 19., 25., 39

³⁰⁶ NAL, 270.f., 1.s.desc., 377. file, p 109

of this opportunity. On 27 February 1954, Major General V. Dambergs, LSSR Military Commissar, reported to V. Krūmiņš, Secretary of the LCP Central Committee, that after 14 April 1953, 1,347 retired officers had been registered in the Latvian Military Commissariats. Of these, 1,026 had been recruited, but of those not recruited, 248 were entitled to a pension and did not wish to be recruited.³⁰⁷ By 1 January 1955, 1,926 demobilised officers who had arrived in Riga in the last few months had been registered for recruitment.³⁰⁸ From 1 September to 20 December 1955, 850 officers arrived in Latvia, of whom 650 (76.40%), arrived in Riga, and from 1 April 1953 to 31 December 1955, 4,528 officers arrived of whom 1,724 received pensions.³⁰⁹

The demobilised officers came to Latvia from various regions and from abroad: in 1956, 97 officers came from various regions of the RSFSR, 22 from Ukraine, 11 – Lithuania, 9 – Belarus, 9 – Estonia, 6 – Azerbaijan, and 19 – abroad.³¹⁰ Between 1953 and 1 July 1956, 3,848 retired officers had already been registered in Riga; by 1 August – 3,972.³¹¹ By 1 October 1956, 5,540 demobilised officers had already arrived in Latvia of whom 4,863 settled in Riga. In early 1956, an average of 60 officers a month arrived in Riga; between May and October the number reached 90 a month. Between 1 September and 20 December 1956, 650 demobilised officers arrived in Riga, 76.40% of the total number of arrivals in Latvia.³¹²

It should be noted that only demobilised officers who had once lived in Moscow, Leningrad, and Minsk before serving in the USSR Armed Forces were allowed to settle there. Despite requests from the Latvian authorities, the Soviet government did not apply this rule to Riga because it was interested in increasing the number of settlers in Latvia, especially those most trusted by the Soviet regime, which were undoubtedly retired military officers. On 21 April 1958, Vice-Admiral V. Kotov, acting Commander-in-Chief of the Baltic Fleet, reported to Lācis that in the second quarter of 1958, about 197 officers would demobilise

³⁰⁷ NAL, PA-101.f., 17.desc., 100. file, p 13

³⁰⁸ NAL, 270.f., 1.s.desc., 1000. file, p 1

³⁰⁹ NAL, 270.f., 1.s.desc., 1121. file, p 2

³¹⁰ NAL, PA-101.f., 19.desc., 76. file, pp 38., 39

³¹¹ NAL, PA-101.f., 19.desc., 76. file, pp 83., 94

³¹² NAL, PA-101.f., 19.desc., 76. file, pp 116., 127

from units in Riga, Liepāja, and Ventspils – 108 had decided to remain in Latvia.³¹³ Between 1953 and March 1959, a total of 5,587 demobilised officers had already arrived in Riga with their family members.³¹⁴

After the adoption of the law "On the New, Significant Reduction of the Armed Forces of the USSR" by the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet on 15 January 1960, the flow of demobilised settlers to Latvia became virtually unstoppable. This is confirmed by Major General I. Čaša's, Military Commissar of the LSSR CoM, report to M. Gribkovs, Secretary of the LCP Central Committee, V. Krūmiņš, Deputy Chairman of the LSSR CoM, and Colonel V. Žigadlo, Chief of the BMD Personnel Department, on the progress of the implementation of the law of 15 January 1960 by the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, dated 31 March 1961. This very extensive describes the influx of retired military personnel in Latvia: ... b) Arrival, registration, and deployment of retired officers in the territory of the Republic: after 15 January 1960, 2,874 people were registered, of whom:

- 1st quarter of 1960 – 113 individuals
- 2nd quarter of 1960 – 214 individuals
- 3rd quarter of 1960 – 1,196 individuals
- 4th quarter of 1960 – 722 individuals
- 1st quarter of 1961 – 629 individuals

Table 9

Data on the arrival of retired soldiers

City and district	Total	From BWA or RBBF	Of which	
			incl. from local garrisons	incl. from other war zones
Ventspils	20	20	15	4
Daugavpils	116	89	55	27
Jelgava	66	57	14	9
Liepāja	170	161	143	9
Rezekne	18	11	1	7□
Jurmala	45	36	34	9
Total cities	439	374	262	65
Other districts	68	39	14	29
Riga	2,367	1,792	1,470	575
Total:	2,874	2,205	1,746	669

³¹³ NAL, 270.f., 1.s.desc., 1220. file, p 16

³¹⁴ NAL, 270.f., 1.s.desc., 1267. file, p 8

RBF – Red Banner Baltic Fleet

Thus, the mass of retired soldiers chose Riga for their permanent place of residence – 2,367 people (about 83%). In addition, of the 507 people who arrived from other districts, 439 chose cities and only 68 chose rural districts as their permanent place of residence, while they usually lived in district centres.

It should be noted that 394 reserve officers from other cities arrived in Riga, who had residential quarters in their former place of service – they transferred them when they changed their place of residence Retired officers who transferred their living quarters at their former place of duty come to Riga not only from remote places, but also from large cities of the Soviet Union, for example:

- Lieutenant Colonel O. Grutsky, his wife and children have arrived from Klaipēda;
- Lieutenant Colonel S. Prokhorov arrived in Riga alone, without his family, from Jeiska in the Rostov region, where he had a well-furnished three-room apartment. ...;
- Senior Lieutenant Medvedkin with his wife and two children came from Tashkent;
- Captain V. Belashev with his wife and two children came from Chernyakhovsk in the Kaliningrad region. He was entitled to register on preferential terms in Tbilisi, where his parents live;
- Senior Lieutenant N. Malutin, his wife and two children arrived from Krivoy Rog, Dnipropetrovsk Region. His wife's relatives live in Kraslava, Latvian SSR;
- Colonel L. Kharchenko came from Tashkent, where he had a well-furnished apartment. The family currently lives in Cherkasy district.

It is very difficult for retired soldiers who have arrived in Riga and have no relatives or accommodation of their own in the city to find accommodation that meets the existing sanitary standards. However, they refuse the City Commission's offers to go to the districts of the Republic where there are apartments and where it is possible to find work, and they try by all means to register and obtain accommodation in Riga. There are also occasional frauds, such as:

- Captain of rank 3 G. Khairulin arrived from Ventspils and checked in at a private building at 5 Alises Street, apt 26. He submitted a certificate issued by the military unit No.27120

for the transfer of the living area to the district DzED [apartment operation department – J.R.]. Subsequently, it was established that he owns a personal house in Ventspils, where his 20-year-old son lives. ...

- Lieutenant L. Zheltok and his wife came from Šiauliai, registered, and queued for accommodation. At the beginning of 1961, he was given a small apartment by the Moscow District Military Commissariat, which Lieutenant Zheltok refused. On 22 March 1961, the mother of Lieutenant Zheltok came to a reception with the Deputy Chairman of the City Executive Committee and submitted a petition in which she asked for her son to be influenced because he was hiding from his mother. The mother is a Group 2 disabled person and has her own house in Mogilev. The son does not help his mother financially and does not want to go home. The mother asks her son to help her finish building the house. ...
- Major I. Stanetsky arrived from Baranovichi, Belarusian SSR. Letters from service members have arrived at the Military Commissariat of the Latvian SSR and the Executive Committee of the town, stating that citizen I. Stanetski has a personal house and an apartment in Frunze, in the town of Stanislav.³¹⁵

The flow of military occupiers to Latvia continued in the following years. All requests by Latvian institutions and public organisations to Soviet political and military structures to restrict the flow of demobilised military personnel were rejected. For example, Colonel V. Yakovlev, Acting Military Commissar of the LSSR, wrote in a report to the LSSR CoM: “In order to restrict the arrival of retired military personnel in Riga and the Latvian SSR, it would be appropriate to send a request to the Council of Ministers of the USSR for it to take the appropriate decision.”³¹⁶ Major General J. Dūda, LSSR Military Commissar, stated that the Politburo and the USSR Ministry of Defence were competent to decide on such issues. Understandably, these high bodies of the Soviet empire were concerned not with reducing the

³¹⁵ NAL, PA-101.f., 24.desc., 96. file, 53.-66.lp.; Jānis Riekstiņš. *Dienests. Demobilizācija. Palikšana. (dokumentu publikācija)* [Service. Demobilisation. Staying. (document publication)] - Latvian Herald, 27 October 1995

³¹⁶ NAL, 270.f., 7.desc., 1631. file, p 453

number of retired servicemen on the periphery, but, on the contrary, with increasing their numbers. In all the post-war years, more than 55,000 retired officers, or about 180,000 people with family members, who had no social or economic ties with Latvia, settled – mainly in Riga.³¹⁷

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, when Latvians began the struggle to restore Latvia's sovereignty, this group of colonisers were the most aggressive opponents of Latvian independence. United and organised in various war veteran councils, including *Interfront* (Workers' International Front), they held noisy rallies and street marches, adopted resolutions against Latvian independence, wrote complaints to the Soviet government and to leaders of the CPSU, demanding that the nationalists be restrained, and even threatened to use armed force if their privileges were taken away. The open letter of 4 November 1988 to the "Members and Candidates of the Central Committee of the LCP, Members of the Supreme Soviet of the LSSR, Citizens of Soviet Latvia", adopted by the Council of Reservists and Veterans of the Armed Forces of the BMD, stated: "... The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Latvia, the Supreme Soviet of the Latvian SSR, and all citizens of Soviet Latvia can firmly rely on the veterans of the Armed Forces and the reserve officers of the Baltic Military District in all matters of democratisation and reconstruction of society, in uniting all the peoples of the republic on the basis of the great ideas of Lenin."³¹⁸

Many other retired military personnel organisations adopted similar resolutions. All based their anti-Latvian activities on the BMD Command and on the numerous troops of the USSR Armed Forces stationed in Latvia. Jundzis writes:

The USSR troops and their commanders, officers and cadets were not neutral. They systematically interfered in Latvia's political life and engaged in activities against Latvia's independence. One such event took place on 14 and 15 May 1990 in front of the Supreme Council of the Republic of Latvia in Riga. It was attended in large numbers by officers of the USSR Armed Forces, students of military schools and persons demobilised from the Soviet army. During the action, an aggressive crowd, protesting against the

³¹⁷ NAL, 270.f., 9.desc., 262. file, p 81

³¹⁸ NAL, 290.f., 8.desc., 137. file, pp 52., 53., 54

declaration of independence of Latvia, tried to break into the building of the Supreme Soviet at the time when the regular plenary session was taking place there.

In the autumn and winter of 1990, the activities of the military in Latvia intensified became more brazen and cynical. In the already heated political atmosphere, columns of armoured personnel carriers and army vehicles were moving more and more frequently through the central streets of the capital, and it was not uncommon to see low-flying military helicopters and hear their rumbling.

The armed forces did not limit themselves to the show of force, but sometimes used it directly to interfere in the functioning of state power, administrative or judicial institutions. For example, in the autumn of 1990, marines of the Navy with weapons in their hands prevented the execution of a court order to move the Jūrmala branch of the Communist Party to other premises. In Liepāja, on the other hand, for several months the navy guarded the Lenin monument in the city centre, even using armoured personnel carriers, to prevent the execution of the decision of the city municipality to demolish it.³¹⁹

It should be noted that the number of military colonisers in Latvia also increased significantly after the agreements on the withdrawal of the USSR Armed Forces from the territory of Latvia were signed on 30 April 1994. Lawyer Edmunds Stankevičs describes the reaction of the Latvian population to these treaties:

The treaty evoked negative emotions in the majority of Latvians. ... The main cause of discontent among nationalist parties and citizens was precisely the agreement to leave and not expel from Latvia Russian army servicemen who had retired before 28 January 1992, the date on which Russia took over the obligations as the legal heir of the USSR. The same condition also applied to the family members of these retired servicemen. These people were entitled to reside permanently in Latvia even after the withdrawal of the army.

³¹⁹ T.Jundzis. *Konfrontācija ar Latvijas neatkarības pretiniekiem. // Latvijas valsts atjaunošana* [Confrontation with opponents of Latvian independence. Restoration of the Latvian State] 1986-1993, pp. 278, 279.

... An interesting opinion on this treaty and its protocol was expressed by Professor, Dr. iur. J. Bojārs: "The colonisation of the countries of the Ancient Roman Empire was carried out by demobilising the legionaries there and giving them land. I agree that the word "occupier" should not be thrown around. However, I cannot agree with the words of President [V.] Zatlers in *Latvijas Avīze* that "the occupation of Latvia has ended with the departure of the last representative of the Soviet troops". Firstly, it was not 'Soviet' troops who left Latvia, since the USSR no longer existed at that time, but Russian troops; however, not all of them left, since some of them were demobilised in Latvia. According to the "Agreement between Latvia and Russia on Social Protection of Demobilized Military Personnel of the Russian Federation and their Family Members Residing in Latvia" and the Protocol on Social Protection of Military Pensioners of the Russian Federation and their Family Members signed by then Prime Minister of the Republic of Latvia [V.] Birkavs on 30 April 1994, only 22,320 pensioners remained officially in Latvia (i.e. only a few thousand less than when the USSR brought its 30,000 troops to Latvia under Article III of the "Mutual Assistance Pact" signed by Ulmanis with the USSR on 5 October 1939). ... If we assume that these 22,320 had wives and no more than one child and no grandfathers or grandmothers came to visit them, and if no more children were born to these families, then today there are at least 66,960 adults and, depending on naturalisation, a corresponding number of votes in the elections, not counting other immigrants.³²⁰

4.4. Passport regime in Latvia under colonisation

The passport system that existed in the Russian empire was abolished in 1917 after the overthrow of the Tsar. In the new Soviet empire, the identity of citizens was initially confirmed by documents issued by various authorities. On 27 December 1932, the Central

³²⁰ E.Stankevičs. *Okupācija – tiesiskais un starptautiskais skatījums. // Latvija padomju militāristu varā. 1939-1999* [Occupation - legal and international perspectives. Latvia under Soviet Military Rule, 1939-1999], pp. 274-275.

Executive Committee and Sovnarkom adopted the decision "On the establishment of a unified passport system in the USSR Union and on the compulsory registration of passports". On 14 January 1933, the USSR Sovnarkom approved the instruction on the issue of passports. The passport was to replace all other identity cards issued so far. According to the decisions, passports were issued only to urban residents. The aim of the widely launched passport regime was "...to purge Moscow, Leningrad, and other large Soviet cities of migrants unconnected with production or administrative work, and to purge the cities of criminal kulaks and anti-socialist elements lurking in the cities."³²¹ The new passport system was also supposed to prevent the migration of urban peasants, who were left in large numbers without both jobs and livelihoods after the forced, violent collectivisation. The passport system was closely linked to registration, i.e., being attached to a specific place of residence. Towns where free registration was not allowed were called "closed" or "special regime" towns. These were very different from the "open" places of residence where passport control was much more flexible. The passport system introduced in the early 1930s (lasted until 1977) did not apply to the most numerous of the Soviet population – the "kolkhoz peasant class". Passport restrictions were also imposed by the Central Executive Committee and Sovnarkom. At first, they applied to persons who were not connected with production and were not engaged in socially useful work – fugitive kulaks, criminals, and other hostile elements – but later also to those serving sentences in prisons and detention centres.³²² When passports were issued or exchanged, passport restrictions were recorded on them, preventing people from returning to their former homes or from settling in large industrial centres where people with passport restrictions were not hired. Article 38(d) of the Passport Regulations, approved by the USSR Sovnarkom on 10 September 1940, prohibited residence in Moscow and in the capitals of the republics for persons who had not been engaged in socially useful work for more than three months.

³²¹ Source. 1997. No 5, p.104.

³²² See: N. Moin. *Vnutrisoyuznye granitsy grazhdanstvennosti: territorialnoe vyrazhenie diskriminatsii v Sovetskom Soyuze cherez pasportnyuyu sistemu*. [Intra-union boundaries of citizenship: Territorial expression of discrimination in the Soviet Union through the passport system.] *Rezhimnye lyudi v SSSR* [Regime people in the USSR]. – Moscow, 2009, pp. 257-274.

The decision of the USSR Sovnarkom of 10 September 1940 imposed restrictions that prevented the free flow of population into the cities:

- presentation of a passport, provided that it had been issued in a legal manner,
- registration if the newcomer had the sanitary standard of an apartment in the town,
- if there was a check-out from the previous place of residence.³²³

The following liability was imposed for violation of the "Regulation on Passports", which was reaffirmed by the decision of the USSR CoM of 21 October 1953:

33. Forgery of a passport, living with a foreign passport, as well as the use of a forged or foreign passport shall incur criminal liability under Article 72 of the Criminal Code of the RSFSR and the corresponding articles of the Criminal Codes of other Union Republics (imprisonment for up to three years or corrective labour for up to one year, or a fine of up to 100 roubles).

34. Officials of institutions, enterprises and organisations are liable to administrative fines of up to 100 roubles for employing citizens without passports and with unregistered passports.

35. Building managers, commandants, owners of buildings and other persons responsible for registration shall be subject to an administrative fine of up to 100 roubles for allowing citizens to live without signing in, without passports or with extended passports, as well as tenants of apartments for committing these offences, and up to 200 roubles in the city of Moscow. ...

Note: Officials of institutions, organisations and enterprises are not liable under Articles 34 and 36 of this Statute [Article 36 provided for liability for repeated recruitment without passports or extended passports – J.R.] for recruitment without passports (with other documents) in cases where the recruits do not have passports.³²⁴

³²³ Lavrenty Beria. 1953. *Stenogramma iyulskogo plenuma CK KPSS i drugie dokumenty* [1953. Transcript of the July plenum of the CPSU Central Committee and other documents]. – Moscow. 1999, pp. 43, 44.

³²⁴ NAL, 270.f., 1.s.desc., 1254. file, pp 218., 219., 220

According to Paragraph 1 of the Regulation, those without passports were military personnel and rural residents, except those living in the Latvian, Lithuanian, and Estonian SSRs, Moscow Oblast, ten districts of Leningrad Oblast, all within the restricted border zone and the border protection zone, those who were engaged in temporary sowing, harvesting and other work, timber preparation, peat extraction within the boundaries of this oblast, region, republic which had no oblast division, with village council certificates issued at their permanent places of residence. Passports were issued by the police at the citizens' homes. At that time, passports were issued indefinitely or for a period of ten or five years. Those who left the countryside for seasonal work, temporary industrial contract work, or other temporary work outside the region, district, or republic which had no regional division, were issued temporary passports for the duration of the contract that could be exchanged for temporary passports only if they re-signed the contract. Permanent and temporary registration was established. Permanent registration was allowed for those with indefinite, ten-year, or five-year passports. Building managers, building and dormitory commandants, the administration of hotels, sanatoriums, rest homes, hospitals, persons specially authorised to do so by village (hamlet) councils, building owners and other persons in charge of residential buildings and premises were responsible for signing in and out. The police was charged with the task of monitoring the implementation of the passport regulations by officials and citizens.³²⁵

Despite the strict rules, there were many violators of the passport regime. In 1948-1952 alone, 5,591,000 passport violators were found in Soviet cities, 127,000 of whom were prosecuted; 4,365,000 were punished with fines of 217,786,000 roubles.³²⁶ To clear the regime's towns and other "no-go areas" of passport violators and other "socially alien elements", frequent checks were carried of people's documents, known as "population dossiers". In Riga, these were carried out in 1944-1945.

On the recommendation of the LSSR Police Administration, the 1944 joint meeting of the LSSR Council of People's Commissars and C(b)PL's Central Committee decided on the documentation of the population of Riga, which was to be completed by March 1945. Issuing of passports began on 10 December 1944 simultaneously in 12 police

³²⁵ NAL, 270.f., 1.s.desc., 1254. file, pp 211., 212., 213., 214

³²⁶ Lavrenty Beria. 1953. *Stenogramma iyul'skogo plenuma CK KPSS i drugie dokumenty* [1953. Transcript of the July plenum of the CPSU Central Committee and other documents], p. 44.

departments in Riga and was completed on 20 March 1945. According to the plan, a total of 161,856 people were to be documented in Riga. Between 10 December 1944 and 20 March 1945, the following were issued:

- passport booklets – 141,772,
- temporary certificates – 4,854,
- special permits – 8,251.

This brought the total number of documented people to 154,877, which was 6,979 fewer than planned. This was due to the conscription into the Red Army and mobilisation for fuel supply work outside Riga. At the same time as passports were issued, conscription took place. In addition, from the very beginning of documentation until its completion, a gap developed between the number of passports issued and their registration: out of the total number of passport documents issued to the inhabitants of Riga (154,877), 141,517 documents were registered by 1 April 1945, i.e., 13,360 fewer documents than had been issued. This situation arose because passport documents were recorded at a later stage than when they were issued to citizens. One of the objectives of this documentation campaign was to expose “criminal and hostile elements”:

- a) policemen, legionnaires, guards, and other "accomplices of the German fascist command" – 133;
- b) persons of German nationality – 1,968;
- c) members of families who voluntarily left with the Germans – 820;
- d) deserters from the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army – 7;
- e) Persons subject to restrictions of Articles 38 and 39 of the "Passport Regulations" – 3;
- f) Stateless persons – 279.

In addition, during the initial population census in October and November 1944, guards, legionnaires, policemen, etc. were found – a total of 5,562 people. Of the "criminal elements" found during “passportisation”, nine people were arrested, and 81 people were prosecuted and referred to the NKGB and the NKVD; 406 people were deported from Riga, and deportation files were opened for 1,562 people.³²⁷

³²⁷ On the verbal instruction of V.Merkulov, People's Commissar of State Security of the USSR, 286 German families (511 people) and 85 stateless families (145 people) were deported from Riga and Jūrmala on 5-6 February 1945 as "socially dangerous elements" - "Deported. 25 March 1949" - Riga, 2007, pp. 741, 742.

To check the passport regime in Riga, in the second half of March 1944, the Passport Division of the Police Administration of the LSSR NKVD and city garrison troops organised and carried out eight mass inspections, covering all properties located the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 9th, and 12th Police Division territories of Riga. This resulted in the inspection of hotels, open houses, institutions, and tenement properties – a total of 6,860 buildings and 62,615 people – and found:

- (a) living without passports – 839;
- (b) living without registration – 2,852;
- (c) living with corrected passports – 2;
- (d) deserters – 12;
- (e) violators of the rules of war records – 47.

Total: 3,752 people.

Of the passport violators found, three were arrested, 1,147 were given administrative fines, 21 were sent to the military commander, and four were expelled from Riga. After the completion of the campaign, Colonel Koshelev, Deputy People's Commissar of Internal Affairs of the LSSR, pointed out that further measures of the Police Administration of the LSSR NKVD would be aimed at reinforcement of the passport regime in the city of Riga and preventing persons subject to passport restrictions to enter the city of Riga.³²⁸

According to the Regulations on Passports, the registration of newly-arrived citizens in Category 1 regime cities, such as Riga, was permitted only if the citizens arrived in an organised manner at the request of organisations, higher and secondary education institutions, the USSR Ministry of Labour Reserves, or with the permission of the Councils of Ministers of the Republics.³²⁹ However, these rules were not respected. For this reason, as early as 21 December 1944, the Riga City Executive Committee issued an order to the heads of the offices and departments of the enterprises and institutions which were within the system of the Riga City Executive Committee and to all persons who were responsible for the recruitment and dismissal of the workforce, to stop recruiting workers and servants without passports as from 1 January 1945.³³⁰ This order was also not followed. In many

³²⁸ NAL, 270.f., 1.s.desc., 124. file, pp 142.-150

³²⁹ NAL, 270.f., 1.s.desc., 349. file, p 24

³³⁰ NAL, 1400.f., 1.a.desc., 10. file, p 132

cases, company managements recruited the labour they needed at train stations, markets and other places, and demanded that they be registered. Despite repeated warnings, the managers of many companies and organisations continued to recruit people without passports or any identity documents at all. For this reason, on 31 October 1945, the Chairman of the Riga City Executive Committee Deglavs, again instructed the heads of enterprises and institutions to take immediate steps to ensure that all the requirements of the "Regulation on Passports" were met when hiring people and to check the existence and registration of passport documents in the city of Riga by 10 November 1945.³³¹ This also did not change the situation.

Due to the fact that the number of migrant settlers in Riga and its surrounding districts was constantly increasing, the Central Committee of the C(b)PL and the LSSR Council of People's Commissars were forced to adopt the decision on 3 January 1946 prohibiting the employment of persons who were not registered in Riga or its surrounding districts.³³² In his secret report to Kalnbērziņš on 26 September 1946, Košeļevs, Deputy Minister of the Interior of the LSSR, described ways of integrating settlers:

Due to the construction of industrial enterprises and the expansion of existing enterprises in Riga, a large amount of labour is being imported from other parts of the Soviet Union by organised recruitment.

At the same time, the leaders of industrial enterprises and construction organisations, in spite of the existing laws and the decision of the Central Committee of the LCP on the organised recruitment of labour, widely practise the recruitment of labourers from among those who arrive in Riga as a spontaneous flow and bringing into Riga those recruited by contract, without the necessary documents being drawn up. For example, the construction organisations of the Baltic Naval Construction Administration (Riga Port Construction, Naval Construction No 5, Military Assembly Office No 6, Military Electrical Assembly Office No 2, Military Construction Office No 21, etc.) receive

³³¹ NAL, 1400.f., 1.a.desc., 10. file, p 132

³³² NAL, 270.f., 3.desc., 8035. file, p 117

workers from their contra-agent, the Rostov Regional Office "Soyuzorgnabor", among whom the passport department of the Riga City Police Administration has discovered persons who are subject to passport restrictions and have no right to live in Riga and persons suspected of desertion from other enterprises, i.e. who have passport stamps indicating employment with various enterprises and have not been discharged from their previous places of residence. In addition, a large number of contracts, which are concluded with each individual recruit as required by law, have not been certified either by the kolhoz boards or by the local executive committee councils.

Some managers, without taking into account the passport regime and despite exhaustive written explanations on recruitment and hiring sent by the Police Administration to all ministries of the LSSR CoM, hire persons who have come to Riga illegally and are not registered with the police bodies.

In August 1946, Lieutenant-Colonel Smolar, chief of the 222nd stationary tank repair base, employed as free contract workers more than 50 people from among the citizens who had come to Riga illegally. Lieutenant-Colonel Smolar placed them in dormitories at 11 Hamburg Street and 3 Szczecin Street, where they lived without registration. These dormitories do not have basic facilities, not even beds and sheds. Workers sleep on dirty floors with small children.

Captain Gartsev, the head of the personnel department of the Riga Artillery Arsenal, recruited 30 people from among the citizens who had spontaneously arrived in Riga from various parts of the Soviet Union, and placed them in the dormitories of the Artillery Arsenal without registration.

The management of the Scientific Research Institute, Field Post No 53122, recruited 14 people who were not registered with the police. The personnel department of the "Spars" factory recruited 10 people without registration. The head of the personnel department of the "Komēta" match factory brought 15 people from the Polotsk region without the management's permission to recruit workforce outside the LSSR. The personnel department of the Bridge Construction Trust No. 5 recruited 6 people without registering with the police bodies, of whom

Lavrov, Vasenko and others have no certificates of release from their former jobs. The office of the "Union for the Recruitment of Organised Transport Workers", located in Riga, Merkela Street (head of the office Petrenko), according to the decision of the USSR Council of Ministers No 1980-650s of 6 June 1946, is to recruit organised labour for railway transport in the Baltic, Leningrad and Velikiye Luki regions. However, the great majority of recruitment is carried out in Riga, from among persons who have come here by chance and offered their services to the office.

Some managers of industrial enterprises, in an attempt to circumvent the passport law, fabricate and issue documents to citizens who have arrived in Riga as a result of spontaneous emigration, certifying that these citizens have been allegedly summoned from other cities of the Soviet Union by the enterprises as necessary specialists. For example, on 4 September 1946, Fadeyev, the commandant of the Latvenergo repair-mechanical plant, with the knowledge of the plant's director, Deičs, issued a number of documents to the citizen Tarasov, showing that Tarasov had arrived at the factory's call to work as an electrician's foreman. When Tarasov was registered, the police found out that Tarasov, after serving a sentence for anti-Soviet activities, had joined the Koitash Construction Trust in Samarkand. After taking the regular leave, Tarasov came to Riga, where he offered his services to the managers of the said factory, who, as stated above, not only gave Tarasov a fictitious summons, but also fabricated for him an extract from a non-existent workbook stating that Tarasov had been dismissed from his job at the Koitash Construction Trust of his own free will. Thus, only by chance, was an anti-Soviet element and production deserter prevented from becoming the plant foreman of one of the most important enterprises in Riga.

An analogous situation with the recruitment of labour is also found in Liepāja and Ventspils, where various institutions, especially those engaged in the construction of seaports, submit daily requests to the local militia to enrol workers in violation of the law on passports.

This system of recruiting and accepting workforce contradicts the existing rules on enrolment in Category 1 cities such as Riga, Liepāja and Ventspils, so that there is unnecessary correspondence between police organs and managers of industrial enterprises on the question of enrolment of workforce, while at the same time the cities are being polluted with violators of the passport law, among whom lurk industrial deserters and other criminals.

Between July and September this year, the Riga, Ventspils and Liepāja Police held more than 100 people administratively responsible for recruiting workers and servants, including:

Tkachenko, the Head of the Special Department of the Latvian Railway Administration, Davens, Director of "Zasulauka manufaktūra" Factory, Treja, Inspector of the Personnel Department of the "Kaija" Factory, Sergejev, Inspector of the Personnel Department of the Naval Mechanisation (Administration), Korkrun, Director of the Radio Broadcasting Network, Zvjagintsev, Director of the Sanatorium of the Ministry of Aviation Industry, Andreyev, Head of the Personnel Department of the Ceramics Factory, Sekisov, Head of the Personnel Department of "Latvijas konservi" Factory. ...

The application of criminal penalties to repeat offenders of the passport regime among those responsible for recruiting workers and servants is made more difficult by the fact that, on the one hand, there is a high turnover among the heads of personnel departments and, on the other, by the discovery of persons who have arrived at companies without passports, without certificates of release from previous jobs, without passports or with passport restrictions, the personnel department staff refer to their counteragents for the supply of workers – the Rostov regional office "Sojuzorgnabor", the Baltic office "Sojuztransorgnabor" and other organisations, which actually send workers to Riga without the necessary documents. In order to bring about the necessary order in the recruitment of labour and the strengthening of the passport regime, I consider it necessary: to require the managers of industrial enterprises, construction and other organisations, including the management of the Baltic Office "Sojuzorgnabor", to recruit workers only if

there are assignments from the Ministry of Labour Reserves or orders from the LSSR Council of Ministers and only in those places which are mentioned in the assignments and Government Orders. Instruct the heads of industrial enterprises, construction and other establishments to instruct those responsible for recruiting workers that all recruits must have valid passport documents with exit notes from their previous places of residence, and those workers must have exit documents from their previous places of employment. The lists of recruits and the individual contracts concluded with each worker separately, must be registered at the recruiting stations of the executive committee of the workers' deputies' councils."³³³

Kalnērziņš sent this report to I. Trinkler, LSSR CoM Deputy Chairman, stating: "Please submit this matter to the CoM and decide what to do about the recruitment of workers."³³⁴ On 9 October 1946, the LSSR CoM instructed Deputy Minister of the Interior of the LSSR Koshelev to stop registration in Riga of persons sent to work in enterprises and construction if they were not provided with living standards accepted by the State Sanitary Inspectorate and to deport those persons who did not have documents confirming their right to live in Riga.³³⁵

In the first post-war years, registration of migrants was entrusted to the inspectors of the districts (regions) and cities of the CSO of the State Planning Commission and the registration and discharge of newcomers to the LSSR Police Administration. At the beginning of each month, the address offices of the police units were to submit to inspectors of the Statistical Office the tear-off vouchers for the registration and departure of incoming and outgoing population.

It may seem that such a strict system of control could have prevented settlers from converging on Latvia. In fact, this was not the case. Despite decisions taken by the LSSR government and other authorities, the number of settlers increased year by year. Many migrants avoided registering with the police and lived for long periods

³³³ NAL, 270.f., 1.s.desc., 203. file, pp 168.-174

³³⁴ NAL, 270.f., 1.s.desc., 203. file, p 168

³³⁵ NAL, 270.f., 2.desc., 219. file, p 72

without registering. Sometimes, they could be found, but usually only in “regime” towns, where police authorities controlled registration quite strictly. In his 11 February 1947 report to Lacis, Koshelev, Deputy Minister of the Interior, described the situation in Liepāja:

The Liepāja City Police has done a remarkable job in cleansing the city of criminal elements and persons who are not engaged in socially useful work.

In carrying out these measures, the City Police has found that the vast majority of managers of enterprises, institutions and organisations correctly understand their tasks in respect of the passport regime, conscientiously fulfil the requirements imposed on them for the maintenance of the passport regime and thereby provide assistance in the fight against passport offenders.

For example, on 4 January 1947, the City Police ... found 71 people in the buildings belonging to the naval garrison and 63 people in the buildings belonging to the ground troops living without registration, most of whom had been recruited and provided with living quarters until registration with the police bodies was completed.

The same check found 21 people (in both garrisons of the Military Town) from whom the police bodies took a signature to leave the town within 24 hours, because they had arrived illegally, had no living quarters and no workplace.

Koshelev described the ways and means by which these colonists tried to enter Latvia:

Among those who were found without registering:

a) Vera Murzina was recruited to the clerk's office of Hospital No. 5 on 6 December 1946, from whom the police took a 24-hour departure signature as early as 28 November 1946. An examination of Murzina's documents revealed blank forms of the Naval Hospital, two blank leave forms of Hospital No 5 with the seal and coat-of-arms stamp, 22 blank forms with the corner stamp and seals of various naval organisations, which had been prepared for the purpose of forging documents. Murzina has been detained and prosecuted;

b) Marja Vladimirova, recruited at Naval Hospital No 5. M.Vladimirova used to live in Liepāja under the surname of Ivanova, recruited to work in Naval Hospital No. 5 without registration and without documents. On 21 October 1946, the City Police, because Ivanova had no passport or other documents, took from her a signature to leave the city within 24 hours. A second signature was taken from her on 2 November 1946. Ivanova then left for her former place of residence, where she stole a temporary certificate in the name of Marja Vladimirova and returned to Liepāja, to hospital No 5, where she continued to work without registration until her detention;

c) On 28 December 1946, the City Police refused to register Marja Tikhonova and Marja Gusakova because they arrived in the city without proper documents and were not working anywhere. Later it turned out that Tikhonova and Gusakova were acquaintances of Captain Evgeny Kireyev of the military unit – post box No 10461 – and Captain Grushutkin of the medical service of the same military unit, who hid Tikhonova and Gusakova from the Police bodies until 10 January 1947. On 10 January 1947, Captains Kireyev and Grushutkin arrived drunk at the police unit of the town and, at gunpoint, demanded that Tikhonova and Gusakova be registered, and they behaved very tactlessly, insulting the police with obscenities in the presence of the visitors. As a result of the scandal caused by Captain Kireyev and Grushutkin in the police unit, the reception of visitors was disrupted....

In addition, I report that the unacceptable phenomena referred to – recruitment without registration and without documents and living in garrison houses – are taking place in circumstances where the City Police has repeatedly warned the commanders of the troop units.³³⁶

As violations of the passport regime in Liepāja garrison continued, on 19 October 1947, M. Plūdonis LSSR COM Deputy Chairman, requested the Chief of the Liepāja naval base "to oblige the commanders of the troops of the campus to forbid civilians to live in

³³⁶ NAL, 270.f., 1.s.desc., 270. file, pp 104., 105

the territory of the campus without the permission of the relevant police bodies and to expel all civilians not registered by the police immediately from their homes in the base".³³⁷

Needless to say, the USSR military took little or no account of such requests from the local authorities. Moreover, the LSSR government and other responsible officials were rather inconsistent, and in many cases even strongly antagonistic, in the provision of passports. On 15 November 1948, in an application to Lācis, the Administration of Armoured Tanks and Mechanised Troops of the BMD asked for permission to register workers and specialists called up from Factory No. 49 and Workshop No. 77 in Riga and to instruct the Chief of the Riga City Police to issue registration permits to the workers of these enterprises. Lācis wrote: "I will allow registration if the identity of each person to be registered is checked individually."³³⁸ On 29 September 1949, the head of military unit 64328, Lieutenant colonel N. Yenisov, wrote in a submission to the LSSR CoM war group:

Due to the secrecy of the work, recruiting workers in Riga and Latvia is very difficult and production is currently experiencing serious difficulties due to workforce shortages. At the same time, we already have the possibility of recruiting workers from the Russian Soviet Socialist Republic ... if they are allowed to register in Riga. I request your order for the enrolment of 50 men in the 64328th unit. All these persons will be provided with accommodation and checked by the Ministry of State Security. We received a refusal to our repeated requests to the Chief of the Riga City Police Administration on the question of registration.

The following resolution was written on this application was written the following resolution: "On 6.10.1949, told by telephone to go to the Riga City Executive Committee".³³⁹

In 1948, the Riga City Police Administration repeatedly refused to register migrants with the 2nd Construction Trust of the Main Maritime Construction Administration because the Trust's management recruited labour from undocumented migrants. The management of the

³³⁷ NAL, 270.f., 1.s.desc., 270. file, pp 104., 106

³³⁸ NAL, 270.f., 1.s.desc., 373. file, p 260

³³⁹ NAL, 270.f., 1.s.desc., 457. file, p 203

trust asked LSSR CoM Deputy Chairman, N. Ponomoryov, to register the migrants in Riga. Permission was granted and 38 migrants were registered in the Trust's dormitories.³⁴⁰ In April 1949, the Chief of the Port of Riga, Rank 3 General Director, Sivtsov, requested the LSSR CoM to register the 50 security riflemen recruited in Riga from other regions³⁴¹, Arsenal No 7 requested the registration of 150-200 migrants.³⁴² Most often, such requests were granted. Thus, quite deliberately and purposefully, a situation was achieved in which the majority of industrial enterprises, both their management and their staff, were composed not of indigenous Latvian people, but of recruited migrants – colonists.

According to the "Rules for the Registration of Citizens in the City of Riga" adopted by the Riga City Executive Committee on 31 August 1949, permanent registration was allowed "due to transfer, recruitment or at the personal invitation of a company or institution, if the newcomer had living quarters according to the established sanitary standard."³⁴³ During this period, not only officials, but C(b)PL functionaries supported the passport regime and the colonisation of Latvia. In 1950, Baldone health resort staff – director Lobanov, senior accountant N. Lobanova, chief doctor G. Gazulov, accountant V. Kudrjajtsev, doctor S. Marecka, dentist J. Moiseeva, doctor V. Malomed, laboratory technician Gazulova, and head of the health resort, R. Segedija – were not registered. They were issued administrative tickets and fined by Baldone district police. On 18 March 1950, Laizāns, second secretary of the Baldone district committee of the C(b)PL, summoned the head of the police, Miķelsons, and ordered the fines be withdrawn. When Miķelsons refused, he was summoned by the first secretary of the Baldone district committee of the C(b)PL, P. Dergačs, and again ordered to remove the fine under threat of being fired.³⁴⁴ In many cases, the Latvian authorities were not even informed by the All-Union subordinate authorities of the number of employed staff and the number of new recruits. For example, Lieutenant-Colonel Vasiliev, Deputy Minister of the Interior of the

³⁴⁰ NAL, 270.f., 1.s.desc., 349. file, pp 24., 24.a

³⁴¹ NAL, 270.f., 1.s.desc., 457. file, p 54

³⁴² NAL, 270.f., 1.s.desc., 457. file, p 214

³⁴³ NAL, 270.f., 2.desc., 51. file, p 387

³⁴⁴ NAL, PA-101.f., 13.desc., 79. file, pp 68., 69

LSSR, reported on 13 May 1949 to Sitchihin, Vice-Chairman of the LSSR State Planning Commission: "I hereby inform you that, in accordance with the instructions of the Personnel Department of the Ministry of the Interior, information on the number of specialists in the system of the Ministry of the Interior is submitted centrally only to the Administrative Department of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist (Bolshevik) Party. The five-year engineering staffing plan for the Ministry of the Interior is also submitted centrally. For this reason, the Ministry of the Interior of the LSSR cannot provide the information you have requested."³⁴⁵ The colonisation of Latvia, which began in the first post-war years, continued in the later years. The first and essentially only attempt to put an end to it was made by Latvian national communists in the mid-1950s.

During the "Khrushchev thaw", a strong national-communist opposition emerged in Latvia, led by Berklavs, Deputy Chairman of the CoM (First Secretary of the LCP Riga City Committee, 1956-1958). He was actively supported by Kārlis Ozoliņš, Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet; Indriķis Pinksis, Chairman of the Trade Union Council; Vilis Krūmiņš, Second Secretary of the LCP Central Committee; Nikolajs Bisenieks, Secretary of the LCP Central Committee; and Pavel Pizāns, editor-in-chief of the party newspaper *Cīņa*, Aleksandrs Ņikonovs, Minister of Agriculture; Voldemārs Kalpiņš, Minister of Culture; Edgars Mūkins, Deputy Chairman of the State Planning Committee; Pauls Dzērve, Director of the Institute of Economics of the Academy of Sciences, Vladislavs Ruskulis, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Latvian Komsomol; and other high-ranking officials. Among the supporters of the National Communists were also Communist Party, Soviet and economic workers, and the intelligentsia of the republic. This resistance to Moscow's policies and dictates was supported by local rank-and-file Latvian communists and the Latvian people. The activities of the Latvian national communist group were primarily aimed at stopping the colonisation of Latvia so that Latvia would not become and even more peripheral province.

On 17 May 1957, the Riga City Executive Committee adopted a special decision "On strengthening the passport regime in Riga" that

³⁴⁵ NAL, 693.f., 1.s.desc., 66. file, p 67

significantly restricted the influx of foreigners into the Latvian capital. Before the adoption of this decision, on average, over 15,000 people per month were registered in Riga; after the adoption – a tenfold reduction in this figure was soon achieved. On 12 July 1957, the Bureau of the Riga Committee of the LCP instructed the Riga City Police Administration to "strictly control and prevent citizens from living in Riga without registering, prevent the illegal registration of newcomers, and prevent the employment of persons without a Riga registration."³⁴⁶ Using their influence, the national communists also got the LSSR CoM on 30 July 1958 to adopt the decision "On restricting the registration of citizens arriving in Riga from other places":

1. Temporarily ban the permanent registration in Riga of persons arriving from other places.

1. To prohibit the People's Economic Council of the Latvian SSR, ministries and departments of the Latvian SSR and heads of enterprises and organisations from rehiring persons who are not registered in the city of Riga. Exceptionally, with the consent of the Executive Committees of the Riga City District Councils of Workers' Deputies, to allow the recruitment of persons who are registered in the Riga, Baldone, Tukums, Jelgava, Ogre and Sigulda districts, permanently reside in those districts and have living quarters there, without the right to register in the city of Riga.

2. To stipulate that the People's Economic Council of the Latvian SSR, ministries and departments may, exceptionally, invite to work in the enterprises and institutions under their authority only qualified specialists in highly scarce professions, provided that they are provided with living quarters and with the consent of the Executive Committee of the Riga City Workers' Deputies.

3. To instruct the Executive Committee of the Riga City Council of Workers' Deputies and the Ministry of the Interior of the Latvian SSR:

- a) establish systematic control over the implementation of this Decision,

³⁴⁶ NAL, PA-101.f., 15.desc., 14. file, pp 25.-27

- b) to ensure the identification and expulsion from the city of Riga of all persons who are not engaged in socially useful work for more than three months.³⁴⁷

However, this decision, like all others previously taken to respect the passport regime and reduce the influx of settlers, was reluctantly, inconsistently, or even openly ignored by many officials. So, on 20 August 1958, the Riga City Executive Committee adopted the decision "On Measures to Strengthen the Passport Regime and the Citizen Registration Procedure in Riga City". It was pointed out that the heads of industrial, construction and transport enterprises and institutions were recruiting citizens without a Riga passport and then demanding that they be registered in the city. The Riga City Executive Committee tightened up the procedure for registering citizens and approved "Measures to Strengthen the Passport Regime in Riga City".³⁴⁸ However, even after that, many Riga companies, such as Varonis, VEF, *Sarkanais Metalurģs*, *Juglas Manufaktūra*, etc., continued to accept migrant workers without registration and other necessary documents.

The efforts of Latvian national communists to stop the colonisation of Latvia were bitterly opposed by functionaries of the CCCP and the LCP Central Committee and many other supporters of Soviet colonial, imperial policy. In an effort to "expose" and "crush" the Latvian national communists, expel them from all leading positions, and ensure the free and unimpeded entry of settlers into Latvia, an extraordinary plenary of the LCP Central Committee was convened in early July 1959 on the instructions of the CCCP. In a speech denouncing the national communists, Kalnbērziņš stated, among other things:

Serious mistakes were made in limiting registrations in Riga. The Council of Ministers of the Latvian SSR and the Riga City Executive Committee, informing the Central Committee, citing the need to strictly observe the passport regime in Riga, prevented people, especially non-Latvians, from registering in any way. ... All kinds of obstacles were created in the way of the

³⁴⁷ NAL, 270.f., 1.s.desc., 1200. file, pp 220., 221

³⁴⁸ NAL, 1400.f., 4.desc., 795. file, pp 234.-237

registration of family members of soldiers and of specialists sent to Riga for work. It would seem that registration would be a purely technical matter, but as a result of incorrect implementation it has become a purely political issue and has taken on a nationalistic tinge.

Currently, according to incomplete data, more than 20,000 people live in Riga without registration. The police impose fines and constantly warn people not registered to leave Riga.....³⁴⁹

Kalnbērziņš' pro-Russian chauvinist views were also supported by many other high-ranking officials at this gathering of LCP functionaries. Chairman of the LSSR State Planning Commission, Čulītis, said:

Look what has happened. Nobody gets in. In the spring, at a meeting of the chairmen of the district executive committees, comrade Berklavs announced that the gates of the cities under the republic should be closed to newcomers. So, Riga – the capital – is not available. To the most important cities of the republic – not allowed, but recently the Central Committee Bureau adopted the decision ..., in which the district committees were charged with the duty to check, together with the police bodies, whether there were any persons living and registered in the districts in violation of the passport regime and to take measures to return them to their former places of residence. ... Something akin to a general check is made as to whether non-natives are living legally in the republic. There is only one step left: to declare visa entry and close the border. In my opinion, this is completely over the line and needs to be corrected.³⁵⁰

Even the rather moderate Plūdonis had no objections to the arrival of migrants in Latvia, i.e., to the colonisation of Latvia: "... As per Berklavs, official statistics show that the population of the republic has increased by 450,000 in recent years based on mechanical growth. Listening to him, at first I do not understand how he thinks this is good

³⁴⁹ NAL, PA-101.f., 22.desc., 15. file, pp 11., 12

³⁵⁰ NAL, PA-101.f., 22.desc., 15. file, pp 78., 79

or bad. I think it is good. But then I realised that he thinks it is bad. But why can't Latvia have 3 million people if it helps to develop industry, the national economy."³⁵¹

The main defendant of the Communist Party functionaries, Berklavs, stated at this peculiar trial:

... I am accused that I, with the intention to discriminate, to disadvantage the non-Latvian part of the population, allegedly invented and demanded to limit the registration of citizens in Riga.

First of all, I didn't make it up. Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev and several other cities had such restrictions much earlier than Riga, but now they have been introduced in all or almost all our big cities. If we are not allowed to restrict registration, then obviously we must prohibit such restrictions for everyone. Secondly, we received a written decision from the USSR Council of Ministers, which gave us the right to impose this restriction. And thirdly, let us see whether it is really the case that in recent years we have not registered anyone who has come from elsewhere, and who are those whom we have registered. Let's take a look at the official facts concerning those registered in recent years. In all the post-war years, almost 700,000 people arrived in Riga, and the increase in the city's population as a result of motorised travel in those years amounts to 310,600 people. In 1958 alone, we recorded 28,000 people in Riga, of whom 10,500 were Latvians and 17,500 others. In the first 5 months of this year, almost 8,500 people have been registered in Riga, of whom almost 3,000 are Latvians. In the first 5 months of last year, 514 soldiers were registered in communal and privately owned apartments in Riga alone, while in the first 5 months of 1959, 140 more.

Please think about what the state of our Riga utilities and municipal services would be today if we had registered all 200,000 citizens who applied for registration with the police bodies in Riga in 1958 and 1959.³⁵²

³⁵¹ NAL, PA-101.f., 22.desc., 15. file, pp 6.-8

³⁵² NAL, PA-101.f., 22.desc., 15. file, pp 32.-34

Due to his "mistakes", Berklavs was dismissed as Deputy Chairman of the CoM and soon afterwards exiled to Vladimir. Gradually, all other national communists who had opposed the colonisation of Latvia were also removed from their posts. All earlier decisions on restrictions on the registration of colonists were revoked. The decision of the LSSR CoM of 15 July 1959 "On the correction of mistakes in the matter of registration of citizens in the city of Riga" stated:

By Decision No 376-41s of 30 July 1958, the CoM of the Latvian SSR, in violation of the "Regulation on Passports" approved by Decision No 2006-11424s of the CoM of 21 October 1953, wrongly prohibited the permanent registration of citizens arriving in Riga from other places. The apparatus of the CoM of the Latvian SSR did not verify in time the legality of the decisions of the Executive Committee of the Riga City Council of Workers' Deputies on the application of the "Regulations on Passports", as a result of which the Riga City Executive Committee, in its decision No 260 of 20 June 1956; decision No 54 of 30 January 1957; decision No 490 of 20 August 1958 and decision No 225 of 8 April 1959, committed gross errors in the registration of citizens and violations of socialist legislation on labour.

The above-mentioned decisions of the Riga City Executive Committee prohibit, in the Jūrmala district of Riga City, the registration of persons in dwellings owned by citizens on the basis of personal property rights, while in other districts of the city citizens living as sub-tenants are allowed only temporary registration. It is forbidden to recruit persons with a temporary appointment. It is forbidden to allocate plots of land for individual construction and to employ workers and servants who live in other districts of Riga in the construction of apartments using the vernacular construction method. In the case of exchange of flats, inscription was allowed only in cases where there was not less than 9m² of living space per person. It was forbidden to employ in Riga City enterprises and institutions citizens from suburban districts who had lived in these districts for less than 3 years.

The Riga City Executive Committee, contrary to the legislation on the procedure for appointing and dismissing managers of enterprises and organisations, instructed the executive committees of the district councils of workers' deputies to severely punish these managers, up to and including removing them from their jobs for violating the decisions of the City Executive Committee on passport regimes.

To improve the mistakes made in the matter of registration of citizens and to ensure the firm implementation of the "Regulation on Passports", the LSSR CoM decides as follows:

1. To annul as incorrect and contrary to the "Passport Regulations":
 - Paragraph 1 of Decision No 1187 of the CoM of the Latvian SSR of 18 November 1953 "On measures to register citizens in towns and settlements of the Latvian SSR";
 - Decision of the CoM of the Latvian SSR of 30 July 1958 "On restricting the registration of citizens arriving in Riga from other places".
2. To instruct the Executive Committee of the Riga City Council of Workers' Deputies to review and annul the above decisions of the Executive Committee within ten days as unlawful.
3. To instruct the ministries and departments of the Latvian SSR, the executive committees of the workers' deputies' councils of towns (towns of republic subordination) and districts, when employing workers and servants and registering citizens, to comply strictly with the "Passport Regulations" and the Instruction on the procedure for applying the Passport Regulations, approved by Order No 0240 of 24 April 1954 of the Minister of the Interior of the USSR."

Berklavs made the following note on the document: "I am in favour of breaking the law and condemning our decisions, I am in favour of changing paragraph 1 of the Council of Ministers' decision,

but I am against lifting any restrictions that will be caused by this decision."³⁵³

Subsequent events have shown that Berklavs was absolutely right. In the following years, the most flagrant violations of the passport regime were detected in Riga, Liepāja, Daugavpils, Jelgava and in Riga, Bauska, Cesis and several other districts. Many managers of companies and institutions continued to employ migrants without Latvian registration. This were the case at the Riga Electronic Equipment Plant, Riga Building Construction Plant, Jelgava Territorial Construction and Assembly Administration (*Himstroj*), Olaine village, Olaine peat factory, and Talsi district kolkhozes *Blāzma* and *Uzvara*. Dormitories often did not abide by the passport regime. In Riga alone, more than 100 dormitories were not registered. The situation was similar in Daugavpils, Jelgava and Liepāja. To remedy the situation, the LSSR CoM was forced to adopt the decision in November 1965 "On the elimination of shortcomings in the observance of the passport regime in the Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic", which, inter alia, stipulated:

To oblige ministries, departments, companies, institutions and organisations with dormitories:

- a) register all dormitories in the prescribed manner within three months;
- b) not to allow individuals to live in dormitories in violation of the Regulations on the Procedure for the Allocation of Dormitories and the Rules for Their Use, approved by the Decision of the Council of Ministers of the LSSR of 28 August 1964.³⁵⁴

However, this, like all other decisions to reducing the concentration of colonisers in Latvia, was not implemented. The

³⁵³ NAL, 270.f., 1.s.desc., 1253. file, pp 121., 122., 123; for more on Latvian national-communist efforts to stop the registration of migrants in Riga, see Jānis Riekstiņš. *Kad mēģinājums pievērt Rīgas vārtus laimes meklētājiem cieta neveiksmi (dokumentu publikācijas) – Latvijas Vēstnesis* [When the attempt to close the gates of Riga to fortune seekers failed (document publications) - Latvian Herald], 2002, 11, 12, 17, 25 April.

³⁵⁴ NAL, 270.f., 3.desc., 2411. file, 227., p 228.

situation worsened year by year. The availability of dormitory accommodation enabled the managers of enterprises and institutions and organisations to recruit huge numbers of migrants from the most diverse Soviet regions. In 1965, there were more than 100 unregistered dormitories in Riga, but by 1969 there were already 157, housing 3528 people. Some ministries, departments, and organisations not only failed to abolish dormitories that did not meet requirements, but even expanded them. Baltic Transport Construction Trust arbitrarily, and without permission, built barracks on the land of kolkhoz *Mārupe* in the village of Mārupe in Riga district to house about 100 unregistered workers.³⁵⁵ In January 1983, Riga had 386 dormitories for workers of various ministries and departments with 27,794 beds and 4875 rooms, where, as a rule, families with children and single mothers lived. The dormitories also contained 27 small-family buildings with 1903 apartments and six ordinary-type buildings with 593 apartments. In 1984, there were a total of 753 dormitories for workers and support staff in Latvia.³⁵⁶ At that time, there were a total of 152 hostels for All-Union companies and organisations and 421 for All-Union republic ministries and departments. For example, on 12 January 1984, the production association *Alfa* asked the Riga City Executive Committee Planning Committee to allow 100 people to register in the production association's dormitories.³⁵⁷

Many colonists were signed on board ships during this period. According to the specifics of the job, which were related to the requirements of the USSR Ministry of Defence and the USSR Border Guard Navy, only citizens registered in Riga were allowed to work on Riga trawler and refrigerator base ships. In view of the special requirements for recruiting seamen for overseas voyages, it was not possible to staff the fleet exclusively with locals from Riga. For this reason, in 1956, registration with the Personnel Section of the fleet was allowed, i.e., registration without accommodation. Over time, such passport irregularities became more widespread. E. Baumanis, Chairman of the Riga City Executive Committee, in his submission of 18 November 1958 to Lācis and Bude, stated:

³⁵⁵ NAL, 270.f., 3.desc., 4058. file, pp 47., 48., 49., 52

³⁵⁶ NAL, 270.f., 3.desc., 1014. file, pp 115., 200

³⁵⁷ NAL, 1400.f., 13.desc., 1075. file, p 1

The Fish Industry Administration of the People's Economic Council of the Latvian SSR systematically addresses the Riga City Executive Committee on the issue of signing up citizens on expedition fishing vessels. The City Executive Committee was forced to decide positively on most of the requests for registration. Thus, as of 1 November this year, the Riga City Executive Committee had, exceptionally, allowed 461 people to sign up for the ships.

Since this phenomenon has become widespread, the City Executive Committee requests the Council of Ministers of the Latvian SSR to decide in principle on the procedure for further registration of this category of persons, since the practice of registration of such persons on board ships is contrary to the existing decision of the Council of Ministers of the Latvian SSR.³⁵⁸

Although Lācis instructed Berklavs and Plūdonis, along with the Riga City Executive Committee and Bude, to "clarify the matter and prepare a decision", the existing practice of registering the "most trustworthy" migrants on ships could not be stopped.

Violations of the passport regime and the influx of colonisers in Latvia continued after the decision of 14 February 1989 "On measures to stop the unjustified mechanical growth of the population and to regulate migration processes in the Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic". Many companies and organisations continued to recruit newcomers and provide them with dormitories. In the first six months of 1989, 25 migrants were recruited and registered in dormitories at the Riga Commercial Sea Port, 24 at the Liepāja factory *Sarkanais metalurģis*, 14 each at the Riga Ship Repair Plant of the Ministry of the Navy of the USSR and at Rēzekne Electric Construction Instruments, and 16 at the *F. Dzierżyński* kolkhoz in Preiļi district. Many companies continued to recruit newcomers without registration in violation of the restrictions. Daugavpils City Executive Committee granted temporary registration to T. Astahov from Gomel, N. Serebryakova from Braslav in the Vitebsk region, and many other newcomers. The Executive Committee of Liepāja allowed Ponomarenko and V. Zheleznyak from Tallinn to

³⁵⁸ NAL, 270.f., 2.desc., 4206. file, p 130

register with the fishing fleet; Istra village council in Kraslava district registered O. Rudenko from Moldova, and Skeltova village council registered S. Levitski from Zhytomyr region. Violations of the passport regime also took place in Aluksne and Bauska districts. The Riga City Council allowed A. and L. Kravetsky who had come from Narofominsk, Moscow Region to register. The LSSR Ministry of Internal Affairs inspected 638 passport offences, 368 of them for living without registering, and issued administrative reports to officials.³⁵⁹

A total of 5000 unregistered people lived and worked in Latvia at that time – 2000 of them in Riga; 240 in kolkhozes and sovkhoses in Bauska, Liepāja, Limbazi, Kraslava, Riga, and Saldus districts; and more than 4600 in enterprises and organisations, most of them in Riga. In light industry, more than 200: Riga electric light bulb factory – 123, *Rigapromstroj* – 102, *Alfa* – 72, Riga wagon building factory – 15, etc. More than 500 people lived in dormitories with temporary registration. Many unregistered people lived in troop unit territories in Dobele, Liepāja, and Riga districts. Many foreigners motivated their arrival in Latvia with "family circumstances": in the first quarter of 1989 there were 598 such instances, in the second and third quarters – 1,802.³⁶⁰

Although the Latvian, and especially the Riga police did a great job in securing the passport regime, it was not in their power to prevent either spontaneous or organised convergence migration. The desire of foreigners to "have a better life" in Latvia and the efforts of managers of companies, institutions, and organisations to secure labour with migrants were too great.

4.5. Cleansing of personnel and Russification of officers. The unresolved national question

World War II, especially direct military offences, caused extensive damage to Latvia. In addition to damage to industry and agriculture, Latvia lost many thousands of its own people as casualties, deportees, and refugees. The personnel problem was extremely acute in the re-colonisation and sovietisation of the occupied country. Zubkova writes:

³⁵⁹ NAL, 270.f., 7.desc., 1720. file, pp 83-90

³⁶⁰ NAL, 270.f., 7.desc., 1720. file, pp 233-246

In any case, the need for administrative staff to support the new power in the Baltic area was greater than the "limit" originally set by Moscow as the number of national staff communists living outside the region. This shows that Moscow, while underestimating the national situation, did not see the nationalisation of the administrative apparatus as the main way to consolidate its influence in the region. At first, the emphasis was on the "internationalisation" of the well-known Baltic republics as a process that should block separatist tendencies. In addition, the "expatriate" individuals, who had been trained by the Soviet party and economic work, were seen by Moscow as the most reliable agents of influence. Another thing is that the central government, whether willingly or not, had to reckon with strong anti-Russian and anti-Soviet sentiments in the region, which made it necessary to find an optimal balance between the nationalisation and internationalisation policies of the administrative apparatus. The establishment and maintenance of such a balance depended not only on the intentions of the Centre, but also on the local capacity to fill the personnel vacuum that had occurred. Moreover, it was not only a question of finding professional national staff (a task which the republic powers could have managed successfully), but also of (finding) staff loyal to the Soviet regime, which made it very difficult to solve the personnel problem.³⁶¹

Estonian historian Tõnu Tannberg describes the sovietisation of the Baltic republics and Moscow's control:

In the autumn of 1944, the question of the most rapid Sovietisation of the three Baltic republics was on the Kremlin's agenda. In October and late November 1944, the Organisational Bureau of the Central Committee of the AC(b)P discussed the "Baltic question" and adopted a resolution on the mistakes and shortcomings in the work of the Party organisations of the Union Republics: the first task of all was the struggle against bourgeois

³⁶¹ Yelena Zubkova. *Pribaltika i Kreml. 1940-1953* [The Baltics and the Kremlin. 1940-1953], p. 147.

nationalism. These decisions were of great importance for shaping the political situation in the following years in all the Baltic republics. For the republic leaders, they became direct instructions for action, and more broadly, the basic documents of the sovietisation of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. At the same time, a broader programme of measures was developed aimed at successful sovietisation and, more importantly, at putting Moscow's control mechanisms into practice.

... Moscow's control and assistance to the three Baltic republics was as follows:

- the creation of special institutes – the Latvian, Lithuanian and Estonian offices of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist (Bolshevik) Party,
- dispatching "advisers" of the Centre (second secretaries of the Central Committee, All-Union plenipotentiaries, etc.) to the republics,
- introduction of nomenclature for control functions,
- taking the relevant decisions for the republics,
- presence of the Soviet army,
- operation of security bodies,
- subsequent reports (i.e., constant self-analysis, e.g., annual reports of the Central Committee of the Union Republics),
- processing and use of incoming information (complaints) from so-called prepared citizens.³⁶²

The role of the Second Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the republic, who was always sent from Moscow, was particularly important. His task was to control the activities of the local leadership and keep Moscow informed about what was happening in the republic, keep track of the personnel policy in the republic, and to interpret of Moscow's directives.

On 2 November 1944, Kalnbērziņš wrote to Malenkov, who was responsible for the personnel of the republics, that it would be

³⁶² Tõnu Tannberg. *Politika Moskvyy v respublikah Baltii v poslevoennyye gody (1944-1956)*. [Moscow's policy in the Baltic republics in the post-war years (1944-1956).] *Issledovaniya i dokumenty*. [Studies and documents], p. 14.

impossible to carry out sovietisation independently and that help was necessary. The Organisational Bureau of the Central Committee of the AC(b)P decided on 3 November 1944 to establish the Latvian Bureau of the Central Committee of the AC(b)P, consisting of N. Shatalin (Chairman), F. Butov (Deputy), Babkin, Kalnbērziņš, and Lācis.³⁶³ Later, this office was headed by V. Ryazanov, Chairman of the Latvian Bureau of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist (Bolshevik) Party. After his return from a trip to Moscow, Kalnbērziņš announced on 3 November 1944 that the Bureau of the Central Committee of the AC(b)P had been created to help the Latvian leadership turn Latvia into a Union republic based on the model of other Soviet republics adding, "If we don't do it ourselves, they will find people with less shaky hands."³⁶⁴

This authority was in existence for three years. By the decision of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the AC(b)P of 24 March 1947, the offices of the Central Committees of the AC(b)P in Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia were closed. The decision of the Organisational Bureau of the Central Committee of the AC(b)P of 5 November 1944 "On measures to help the Latvian SSR to improve the educational work of the masses – political and cultural" stated:

To assist the Central Committee of the Communist (Bolshevik) Party of Latvia in carrying out the Party's political work:

- a) to instruct the Propaganda Administration and the Personnel Administration of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist (Bolshevik) Party to send 15 qualified propagandists and newspaper workers to the Latvian SSR for permanent employment by 1 December this year;
- b) to instruct the Personnel Administration of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist (Bolshevik) Party to send to the Central Committee of the Communist (Bolshevik) Party of Latvia by 15 December

³⁶³ Yelena Zubkova. *Pribaltika i Kreml. 1940-1953* [The Baltics and the Kremlin. 1940-1953], p. 142.

³⁶⁴ Tõnu Tannberg. *Politika Moskvj v respublikah Baltii v poslevoennye gody (1944-1956)*. [Moscow's policy in the Baltic republics in the post-war years (1944-1956).] *Issledovaniya i dokumenty*. [Studies and documents], p. 26.

- this year: first secretaries of county committees and district committees – 5 persons; heads of departments of county committees and district committees – 30 persons; instructors of the Central Committee of the Communist (Bolshevik) Party of Latvia – 10 persons; deputy chairmen of city executive committees – 3 persons; deputy chairmen of county executive committees – 5 persons; heads of accounting sectors of county committees and city committees – 15 persons;
- c) to instruct the Propaganda and Agitation Administration of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist (Bolshevik) Party to send a group of propagandists to the Propaganda Administration of the Latvian SSR for a period of two months by 15 November this year.
 2. To instruct the Central Committee of the Communist (Bolshevik) Party of Latvia, together with the Propaganda Administration and the Personnel Administration, to select and send a group of members of the All-Union Communist (Bolshevik) Party to the Higher Party School of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist (Bolshevik) Party for training.
 3. To train the staff of the county, city and parish committees of the Communist (Bolshevik) Party of Latvia, to authorise the Central Committee of the Communist (Bolshevik) Party of Latvia to organise, from 1 January 1945, a new recruitment for the Higher School of Party Organisers, with a contingent of 25 persons.
 6. To instruct the Representative for the Protection of War Secrets in Mass Media of the USSR Council of People's Commissars (c. Sadchikov) to send a group of qualified censors (3-4 persons) to the Latvian SSR to assist the Main Administration of Literature of the Republic in purging the libraries of bourgeois-nationalist literature....
 9. To instruct the RSFSR People's Commissariat of Education (c. Potjomkin) to allocate and the RSFSR State Publishing Committee (c. Garin) to send 13,000 copies of textbooks to

the Russian schools of the Latvian SSR by 15 November, in addition to the 35,000 copies allocated and sent earlier...³⁶⁵

The world view of the trusted personnel sent by Moscow was completely shaped by Soviet totalitarian ideology. People raised this way thought that Latvia was "captive to the ideas of bourgeois nationalism", and the local C(b)PL functionaries were supporters of maintaining and strengthening this situation. Ryazanov described the situation in Latvia and reported to Moscow: "In the Republic, some Party and Soviet workers are keen to denounce bourgeois nationalists and hostile elements of the kulaks in words and reports, but they themselves are very reluctant to fight against the concrete facts of bourgeois nationalist and kulak activity. ... The security bodies have detained more than 300 members of the bourgeois-nationalist underground, but until recently the Party organisation of the Republic has not denounced a single bourgeois-nationalist before the people."³⁶⁶

But to accuse the leaders of the C(b)PL of liberalism against "purges" and other forms of political repression would be mistaken. With direct support in 1944-1945, the employees of the Special Department of the NKGB, the People's Commissariat for State Security (MGB), the Main Counterintelligence Department SMERSH ("Death to Spies") of the People's Commissariat of Defence, and the security authorities of the LSSR carried out extensive purges, during which several thousand "supporters of German rule" and other "hostile elements" were arrested.³⁶⁷ Addressing those county leaders who criticised the arbitrariness of the Soviet special services, Kalnbērziņš

³⁶⁵ Tõnu Tannberg. *Politika Moskvā v respublikāh Baltiā v poslevoennye gody (1944-1956)*. [Moscow's policy in the Baltic republics in the post-war years (1944-1956).] *Issledovaniya i dokumenty*. [Studies and documents], pp. 213., 214., 215.

³⁶⁶ Yelena Zubkova. *Pribaltika i Kreml. 1940-1953* [The Baltics and the Kremlin. 1940-1953], p. 162.

³⁶⁷ See: Jānis Riekstiņš. *Varas un pārvaldes institūciju politika un mehānismi politisko represiju īstenošanā pret Latvijas iedzīvotājiem. 1944.–1945.gads. // Latvijas Vēsturnieku komisijas raksti. 27.sējums. Otrās pasaules karš un Latvija: notikumi un sekas. 20.gadsimta 40.–60.gadi*. [Policy and Mechanisms of Power and Administrative Institutions in the Implementation of Political Repression against the Population of Latvia. 1944-1945. Articles of the Latvian Historical Commission. Vol. 27. World War II and Latvia: events and consequences. 1940s-1960s] - Rīga. 2011, pp. 148-169.

pointed out: “We still have several elusive bandits and hidden nationalist underground organisations that will be difficult to deal with without the active help of our Chekists. Unfortunately, the secretaries of the Party's county committees and the chairmen of the county executive committees do not give any real help to the Chekists. During difficult and trying operations, they make the fight against bandits and other enemies of Soviet power more difficult by their personal protection and efforts to free certain people arrested by the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs.”³⁶⁸

To ensure the smooth functioning of the totalitarian regime, unconditional implementation of the centre's various directives, and increase the flow of settlers to Latvia, the first post-war years were characterised by a constant purge of personnel. The Stalinist regime always felt that the personnel of all institutions, enterprises, and organisations were "contaminated with class-hostile elements" and that this was the reason sovietisation of Latvia was so modest. Strict adherence to Stalin's thesis – "personnel decides everything" – ensured that everything was done to drive out "hostile personnel" from their jobs and often to repress them. On 12 October 1945, the LSSR Council of People's Commissars and Central Committee of the C(b)PL adopted the decision "On the examination of the leading personnel of the lower Soviet bodies of the Latvian SSR". Special commissions were set up, consisting of the First Secretary of the Communist Party's District Committee, Secretary of the District Committee of Personnel, Chairman of the District Executive Committee, Head of the District Department of the NKVD, and Head of the Department of the NKGB. The Central Committee of the C(b)PL instructed the secretaries of the Party's county committees and the chairmen of the county executive committees "to check the composition of the county executive committees and to strengthen them with reliable, politically prepared people who could lead the local reconstruction of the people's economy." In a short period of time, 356 chairmen of township councils were replaced, 79 of them for political reasons. In Riga district alone, 26 township elders were replaced, half of whom were immediately imprisoned. By February 1946, 1533 local workers had been reviewed: 312 were dismissed, including 169 for political reasons. By 1 April

³⁶⁸ NAL, PA-101.f., 7.desc., 7. file, p 14

1946, 2746 people were checked: 522 were dismissed, 255 for political reasons. By April 1948, 1100 local workers had been dismissed from their jobs in the countryside, mainly for political reasons.

The most zealous inspirer and leader of the personnel purge campaigns was A. Pelše, the ideology secretary of the Central Committee of the C(b)PL, who voiced active and frequent calls for purging the new kolkhozes of kulaks and other hostile elements. In 1948, more than 200 kulak families were expelled from kolkhozes and 50 kolkhoz chairmen were dismissed for political reasons. By March 1950, 610 kolkhoz chairmen, 506 board members and 405 audit commission members had been re-elected. In the Ministry of Agriculture, 43 out of 190 employees were found to be "suspicious and strange people", and a large group of Ministry employees were arrested. Of the 890 agronomists from the pre-war period, only 20% were recruited and the rest were dismissed for political reasons.³⁶⁹ The staff purge had by this time taken on a truly global character. In the 21 September 1948 top-secret report to Kalnbērziņš "on measures to liquidate the remnants of hostile counter-revolutionary elements", LSSR prosecutor Mišutins wrote:

Facts show that even to this day the LSSR Council of Ministers has not yet been rid of hostile, counter-revolutionary elements. According to the information of 15 September 1948, there are 10,127 kulaks and 5,000 legalised bandits in the republic

According to the Police Administration of the LSSR Ministry of Internal Affairs, during the documentation and registration of the rural population of the LSSR CoM, 14,206 people were found with compromising materials, including: persons tried under Article 38 of the Passport Regulations – 195 individuals; under Article 39 of the Passport Regulations – 158 individuals; persons tried under the criminal code – 829 individuals; persons who served in police during the German occupation – 673 individuals; families of policemen – 941 individuals, SS troops – 3,754 individuals, families of SS troops – 1,976 individuals, former members of the military-fascist

³⁶⁹ Jānis Riekstiņš. "*Kadru tīrīšana*" pēckara gadu Latvijas laukos. // *Latvijas vēstnesis* ["Purge of staff" in the Latvian countryside in the post-war years. *Latvian Herald*], 4 November 1998.

protection organisation – 1,815 individuals, members of bandit formations – 1,179 individuals, members of the German army – 1,681 individuals, others – 1,005 individuals...

To eliminate definitively the remnants of hostile counter-revolutionary elements in the Latvian SSR, I ask you to discuss the advisability of taking the following measures:

1) with the assistance of the Ministry of State Security of the Latvian SSR, to list all hostile counter-revolutionary elements from among the former guards, watchkeeping servicemen, policemen, guards, prominent workers of the Ulmanis fascist regime, large merchants, industrialists and landlords, legionaries, former members of terrorist gangs, active supporters of the German fascist occupiers.

2) to take measures, with the help of the ministries and special units of the republic authorities, to purge the state apparatus of class-hostile elements, both at the centre and in the field (in subordinate enterprises, institutions, and organisations).

3) to instruct the Commission, under the chairmanship of a Secretary of the Central Committee of the C(b)PL, to work out and prepare for submission to the appropriate bodies the question of the deportation to the interior of the country of the most hostile and class alien elements living in the Latvian SSR.³⁷⁰

This application from the Prosecutor of the LSSR, which can be considered one of the most important preparatory documents for the deportation of 25 March 1949, was forwarded by Kalnbērziņš to two Kremlin emissaries – Ivan Lebedev, Second Secretary of the Central Committee of the C(b)PL, and Fyodor Titov, Staff Secretary of the Central Committee of the C(b)PL. Lebedev worked mainly on industrial issues in Latvia most zealously: "With Bolshevik zeal and determination he fights for the unity of our Party, for its general line, against all its enemies."³⁷¹

The most important role in the staff purge and, therefore, in making room for the Moscow emissaries was played by Titov. On 25 June 1950 Kalnbērziņš signed the following description of him:

³⁷⁰ NAL, PA-101.f., 11.desc., 70. file, pp 88., 89., 95., 96., 98., 105., 106

³⁷¹ NAL, PA-15500.f., 2.desc., 2080. file, pp 3., 8., 9

Comrade Titov Fyodor Egorovich was born in 1910, Russian, member of All-Union Communist (Bolshevik) Party since 1930, with higher education, graduated from Kostroma Textile Institute. Comrade Titov has been in leading Party and Komsomol work for 20 years. He was sent to the Latvian Party organisation from the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist (Bolshevik) Party. From 1944 to 1949 Comrade Titov worked as a staff secretary of the C(b)PL's Central Committee, and currently he works as the second secretary of the Central Committee of the C(b)PL.

Working as the organiser-in-charge of the Personnel Administration of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist (Bolshevik) Party in Latvia and as the Personnel Secretary of the Central Committee of the C(b)PL, c. Titov did a great job in selecting and educating leading staff in the republic. Under his direct leadership, the whole apparatus of the republican, regional and district organisations was formed. Comrade Titov paid special attention to the establishment of educational institutions and courses for the training of leading cadres and specialists of the national economy, to the nomination and upbringing of local national staff. Comrade Titov did a great deal of work to purge the Soviet and economic bodies of kulak, bourgeois-nationalist and other hostile elements.... Comrade Titov has a great authority in the republic party organisation and among the people of the republic; he was elected a deputy to the Supreme Soviet and the LSSR CoM, a member of the Central Committee Bureau and the Riga City Party Committee. Comrade Titov has government awards: the Order of the Red Banner of Labour and three medals.³⁷²

On 26 August 1952, Titov was relieved of his duties as Second Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist (Bolshevik) Party of Latvia "due to his recall to the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist (Bolshevik) Party".³⁷³

³⁷² NAL, PA-15500.f., 2.desc., 5683. file, p 10

³⁷³ NAL, PA-101.f., 15.desc., 27. file, p 101

The legacy of this "grey cardinal" of Moscow in Latvia was very heavy. His constant personnel purge campaigns led to the mass expulsion of local, i.e., untrustworthy employees from various institutions and organisations and their replacement with newcomers, thereby increasing the number of migrant managers in both urban and rural areas. In the summer of 1953:

- of the 107 heads of the political departments of the machine and tractor stations (MTS), only 23 were Latvians,
- of 31 directors of sovkhoses, five were Latvian,
- of 31 deputy directors of sovkhoses, six were Latvian,
- only five% of the senior staff of the Ministry of the Interior of the LSSR CoM were Latvian,
- only four (7%) of the 56 heads of district internal affairs departments were Latvian,
- 31% of the police staff were Latvian,
- only 17% of Latvians were employed in management roles,
- in the central apparatus of the LSSR Ministry of State Security, 17% were Latvian,
- only four of the Ministry's 58 city and district chiefs were Latvian.
- The majority of kolkhoz chairmen were also migrants who did not speak Latvian and were not familiar with local conditions.³⁷⁴
- out of the 60 directors of large industrial companies, only eight were Latvian,
- out of the 47 MTS directors, six were Latvian,
- Latvians accounted for 20% of the branch managers of the State Bank,
- among district and city prosecutors, Latvians accounted for 37%.
- in the Republic and district level organisations (party, soviet, economic) Latvians accounted for slightly more than 46%,
- 39% of the party apparatus staff was Latvian,
- but even fewer – 31% – among the secretaries of the party's primary organisations,
- among the responsible staff of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Latvia, 42% were Latvians,

³⁷⁴ NAL, PA-101.f., 16.desc., 9. file, pp 61., 65., 70., 71

- 47% among secretaries of the Party's town and district committees,
- there were no Latvians among the heads of the Riga City Party Committee,
- out of 31 instructors of the Party city committees, two were Latvians,
- among the secretaries of the Riga City Party primary organisations, Latvians accounted for only 17%.
- In the Ludza District Party Committee there were no Latvians among the secretaries, unit leaders and instructors.
- Jelgava District Party Committee also had no Latvians among the unit leaders and only one Latvian among the instructors,
- Among the deputy chairmen and responsible staff of the LSSR CoM, 47% were Latvian,
- 41 out of 74 ministers and their deputies were Latvian,
- 59% of the chairmen of executive committees, their deputies and heads of departments were Latvian,
- Among the responsible staff of the Republic trade unions, 46.5% were Latvian,
- Among the secretaries of the Komsomol Central Committee, town, and district committees, 65.5% were Latvian;
- Among factory directors and chief engineers, only 22.5% were Latvian.³⁷⁵

These facts were revealed at the plenary of the LCP Central Committee on 22-23 June 1953, which was convened in connection with the efforts of Beria, Deputy Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers and USSR Minister of the Interior, to shift the emphasis of the priorities of personnel policy in the national republics (where the national question was particularly sharp) in favour of the indigenous peoples. Beria proposed the CCCP draw the attention of the Communist Party leadership in Ukraine, Belarus, Lithuania, and Latvia to the distortion of "Leninist-Stalinist national policy", such as the poor training and nomination of national personnel, the practice of appointing people mainly from other republics to leading positions, and the suppression and ignoring of national languages. He understood that

³⁷⁵ NAL, PA-101.f., 16.desc., 10. file, pp 7., 9

in the power struggle after Stalin's death on 5 March 1953, the maintenance of existing Stalinist national policy in Soviet western republics could initiate imperial destabilisation. But it was not his ambition to become leader of the USSR.³⁷⁶

At the Plenary of the C(b)PL, many functionaries who had allowed and supported the colonisation and Russification of Latvia admitted their mistakes and firmly promised to make amends, including Kalnbērziņš:

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Latvia, the Council of Ministers seriously violate the principles of national policy councils in the selection and nomination of personnel. Extremely few Latvians are nominated to the leading posts of the Party, the Soviets and economic bodies. Many Party, Soviet and economic leaders, citing false vigilance, often expressing a general distrust of local personnel and pointing to their lack of experience, have mainly nominated non-locals for leading positions. The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Latvi and the Council of Ministers reconcile with this state of affairs. This was a gross mistake, as a result of which, despite the fact that many years had passed since the liberation of Latvia from German occupation, the party organisation was unable to provide the republic and local cadres with Latvian national staff. A situation arose in which many Party, Soviet and economic organs are staffed by a majority of cadres who do not know the Latvian language, local conditions, everyday life, culture and traditions of the local population.

I am one of the main culprits who did not know how to implement the Soviet national policy in our republic correctly and, therefore, without any doubt, I have caused great harm to our system, to our Party. I am now trying to make amends by my work. I have been thinking about this question for 3-4 weeks

³⁷⁶ Lavrenty Beria. 1953. *Stenogramma iyul'skogo plenuma CK KPSS i drugie dokumenty* [Transcript of the July Plenum of the CPSU Central Committee and other documents], pp. 56-52, 61-62; «Noviy kurs» L. P. Berii. *Istoricheskiy arhiv* ["The New Course" by L. P. Beria. Historical Archive.] No 4, 1994, pp. 132-164; Yelena Zubkova. *Pribaltika i Kreml. 1940-1953* [The Baltics and the Kremlin. 1940-1953], pp. 320-337.

now, I have been thinking about it from one side as well as the other, why I have not been up to the task on this occasion. I have promised the Presidium of the CCCP that I will try to correct the mistakes I have made and I promise the same to you, the plenary participants.³⁷⁷

Lācis added:

I would like to say a few words about our current problem with the deployment of staff in general. First of all, I would like to speak about the excessive fear of the so-called "tails", of the shadows of the past, that prevails among a considerable part of our responsible Party, Soviet and economic workers, which leads to excessive timidity and insecurity in the placement of Latvian national staff in particular and severely narrows the contingent of staff to be used. Something like the cult of the questionnaire has been introduced here. We have staff who continue to live and work based on questionnaires that are fifteen, twenty or more years old, completely ignoring the activities and nature of the Soviet citizens concerned during the Soviet period. Guardian, Mazpulcēns, Hawk, Scout, Corpsman, Legionnaire, and the like have become bogymen that prevent many of us from seeing the living person, his face, his suitability for one job or another, his loyalty to Soviet power.....³⁷⁸

Considering the question of the LSSR CoM, on 12 June 1953, the Presidium of the CCCP adopted the decision, which Kalnbērziņš presented to the plenary participants:

1. To instruct the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Latvia and the Council of Ministers of the Latvian SSR to correct the situation in the republic in a fundamental way, to put an end to the distortions of Soviet nationalist policy, to eliminate the hostile nationalist underground, to carry out a definite struggle against Soviet violations of legality, administration, and arbitrariness against the population.

³⁷⁷ NAL, PA-101.f., 16.desc., 10. file, p 8; PA-101.f., 16.desc., 9. file, p 201

³⁷⁸ NAL, PA-101.f., 16.desc., 8. file, p 99

2. To consider the main task of the Latvian Party organisation in the near future to be the training, education and broad promotion of Latvian staff in the leading Party, Soviet and economic spheres. To abolish the practice of nominating second secretaries of party committees and deputy chairmen of executive committees of workers' councils from non-Latvian national staff. To appoint Latvian workers as directors of sovkhozes, MTS and industrial enterprises, as a rule; to recall to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Soviet Union the workers who are dismissed because they do not speak Latvian.

3. To abolish the conduct of business in all non-Latvian language party, state, and public organisations of the Latvian SSR. To hold meetings of the Council of Ministers, the Bureau and Plenaries of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Latvia and meetings of the executive committees of the Party's town and district committees and workers' deputies' councils in the Latvian language.³⁷⁹

The Central Committee of the LCP and the CoM of the Latvian SSR were instructed to discuss this decision at a plenary meeting of the Central Committee and to prepare and submit to the CCCP and the CoM concrete measures for improving the situation in the republic and improving the work of the Latvian Party and Soviet bodies within a month. Paragraph 3 of the decision of the Plenary of the Central Committee of the LCP "On shortcomings in political work and in the management of economic and cultural construction" stated: "To consider the main task of the Latvian Party organisation in the near future to be to train, educate, and widely promote Latvian national staff in leading Party, Soviet, and economic work. To put an end to the practice of nominating non-Latvian cadres as second secretaries of district party committees and as deputy chairmen of executive committees of workers' councils. To make it compulsory to appoint Latvian workers as directors of Soviet farms, MTS, and industrial enterprises."³⁸⁰

Speaking about the decision adopted by the Plenary, Lācis solemnly announced: "This decision is a programme for our future

³⁷⁹ NAL, PA-101.f., 16.desc., 9. file, pp 5., 6

³⁸⁰ NAL, PA-101.f., 16.desc., 8. file, pp 18., 19

work. There has never been a case when the Soviet Government and the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Soviet Union have had to repeat the decision concerning our republic and that we have not fully complied with a directive. Therefore, there is not the slightest doubt that the decision of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Soviet Union of 12 June this year will be honourably carried out."³⁸¹ But it turned out that the declarations of Lācis, Kalnbērziņš, and all the other participants of the plenary to stop the colonisation of Latvia and the Russification of the staff were just empty promises. In the power struggle of the CCCP, Beria lost. On 26 June 1953, he was arrested. Immediately afterwards, on 2-7 July 1953, a Plenary of the CCCP was held in Moscow, which heard and considered the report of the CCCP read by Malenkov on the "anti-party and anti-government activities" of Beria. On 13 July 1953, the joint plenary meeting of the CCCP and the Party's Riga City Committee discussed the plenary decision "On Beria's criminal anti-party and anti-state activities", adopted on 7 July 1953. Now Kalnbērziņš declared:

By various malicious means, Beria tried to undermine the friendship of the peoples of the USSR – the foundations of the multinational socialist state and the condition for the success of all the fraternal Soviet republics, to sow discord among the Soviet peoples, to activate bourgeois-nationalist elements in the Union republics.

Beria also used these cunning methods in the LSSR CoM, trying to achieve a situation where Russian members were excluded from working in the national republics, with the aim of sowing national discord between the working people of Russian and Latvian nationalities. ... I think I will express the opinion of our Plenary, of the Republic Party organisation and of the whole Latvian people that the enemies of the Party have not succeeded and will never succeed in undermining the great friendship of the Latvian people with the great Russian people.³⁸²

Lācis eagerly joined in: "In response to the malicious intention of the traitor Beria to destroy the unity of our Party, Government and

³⁸¹ NAL, PA-101.f., 16.desc., 8. file, p 103

³⁸² NAL, PA-101.f., 16.desc., 11. file, p 20

Soviet people, Soviet Latvia, side by side with all the brotherly peoples of the Soviet Union, will rally even more closely around the Leninist-Stalinist Central Committee of the Soviet Union and the Soviet Government, and will confidently and firmly continue its way forward to the bright future of Communism."³⁸³ The Plenary decision stated: "... The Plenary obliges the Office of the Central Committee of the Latvian Communist Party to take vigorous action to eliminate the consequences of Beria's harmful actions in the field of national relations, which have recently been observed in the republic. The Plenary obliges the office of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Latvia, the town and district committees to explain the Stalinist-Stalinist national policy to the working people and to systematically publish articles in the press on this matter."³⁸⁴

The ability of Kalnbērziņš, Lācis, and other senior Latvian functionaries to adapt in time to the "general line of thinking of the party" helped them to keep their posts for several more years. After Beria's arrest and execution on 23 December 1953 and having overcome a "mild fright" during Beria's "new course", the Bolshevik chauvinists set about implementing with renewed vigour the "Leninist-Stalinist" national policy in Latvia, an important part of which was the influx of an increasing number of "loyal staff" on the other hand. In his 1957 letter to the editor of *Pravda*, K. Reimanis wrote:

... Reliable people with completely "clean" staff questionnaires were mostly imported from Russia – along with machine tools and tractors. Thus, under the pretext of political vigilance, Latvians were discriminated against at home. It has to be said that this situation has still not been rectified. Strange as it may seem, the numerically quite small Latvian bourgeoisie was able to successfully manage all sectors of its class state. By contrast, the Latvian working class, peasantry and labour intelligentsia, which form the overwhelming majority of the people, now appear unable to cope with the railways (Comrade Krasnobayev, Chief), the finances of the Republic (Comrade Manoilo, Minister of Finance), agriculture (Comrade Skobkin, Deputy Chairman of

³⁸³ NAL, PA-101.f., 16.desc., 11. file, p 9

³⁸⁴ NAL, PA-101.f., 16.desc., 11. file, p 204

the Council of Ministers for Agriculture), the police and prosecution. In the first post-war years there was indeed a great shortage of qualified personnel in our republic and the help of the Russian people was very valuable. But now the circumstances have changed drastically. Russians, sitting in positions of responsibility, are obstructing the nomination of national staff. Lacking knowledge of local conditions and the peculiarities of the Latvian nationality, they are often able to do much less satisfactory or simply poor work.³⁸⁵

In his 20 April 1960 report "On the causes of the aggravation of national relations in Latvia" to the First Secretary of the CCCP, Nikita Khrushchev, J. Dīmanis described the existing personnel policy:

Among the part of the Russian population which went to Latvia after the war and was provided with jobs in industry and agriculture, there was a large group of people who had come to "lead".

Helping with the top staff in the new Soviet republics is the rule of our Soviet development. All our republics have passed through this stage in their development. But if a process is natural, objectively inevitable, that does not mean that it has to happen spontaneously. There is a measure for everything, and this measure is determined by a rational thinking person.

But what happened here in Latvia? To provide political and organisational assistance to the Republic, some of these leading figures were carefully selected by the higher organisations and came to the Republic with the travel passes of these higher organisations.

But the vast majority of these candidates for the top job in the republic came here without being selected by anyone, privately, at their own risk, dragged here by their friends and acquaintances. By the time they got to Latvia, they had travelled to many other regions and republics in search of managerial jobs.

But what made all these "individuals" work in our apparatus? Least resistance!

³⁸⁵ NAL, PA-101.f., 20.desc., 96. file, pp 31., 32

You have to imagine the state of the personnel departments during those years. You need to staff the apparatus, but there are hardly any locals; you search until you find many people who are not suitable. If later it turns out that this person has been unsuccessfully nominated, who will be asked? Well, the employee of the personnel department, of course! But there, waiting in the reception room, are fully formed managers with great formal credentials. No trouble, no risk for the personnel department!

From time to time, somewhere, subconsciously, an idea would pop up:

“But the republic is a national formation, should avoid over-saturation...”

But he tried to get rid of such thoughts and calm his awakened conscience:

"But do I have any directives in this respect? No, there are not! And, for that matter, do I have to be smarter than those who sit in Riga? If they do not sweat over this issue there, why should I? But upstairs, those "who sit in Riga" thought exactly the same: "It would indeed be necessary to direct the HR staff towards the "national moment" in the choice of staff, but the matter is still very delicate – they will start suspecting nationalism. Therefore, whatever happens, happens!"³⁸⁶

Even though in 1953 a very important decision was taken to change the personnel policy in Latvia, in the following years the number of Russians in leading positions increased. In 1959, of 552 directors of the People's Economic Council enterprises, only 202 were Latvians and only 100 Latvians were chief engineers, i.e., a little more than one quarter. Of 36 chiefs of the motor fleet of the Ministry of Road Transport, 11 were Latvian; of 46 heads and head engineers of construction administrations and trusts, 19 were Latvian; of 16 company directors and chief engineers, only two were Latvian; of 44 chief physicians of the republic's medical institutions, 18 were Latvian, but of the 53 chief physicians of medical institutions in Riga, 19 were Latvian. There were 20,057 employees in the Ministry of Trade system throughout Latvia of whom only 361 were Latvian.³⁸⁷ The percentage

³⁸⁶ NAL, PA-20160.f., 21.desc., 487. file, pp 136., 137

³⁸⁷ NAL, PA-101.f., 22.desc., 15. file, pp 32.-34

of foreigners in the LCP, especially in its leading institutions, was particularly high. Most of them were Russians and other Slavic peoples.

The 7-8 July 1959 decision of the Plenary of the Central Committee of the LCP, which was convened to "expose" and "destroy" the Latvian national communists, stated: "To annul the decision of the Plenary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Latvia of 23 June 1953 'On shortcomings in political work and the management of economic and cultural construction in the republic' as politically incorrect and forced by Beria, an enemy of the Party and Soviet state."³⁸⁸ Thus, there were no more obstacles to the Russification of personnel in Latvia.

Not only the personnel departments of party committees, enterprises, institutions, and organisations, but also the special services and the higher bodies of the CPSU were actively engaged in personnel purges and Russification. On 22 June 1951, Bude reported to Lācis that the Ministry of State Security of the LSSR had deprived the following captains and mechanics of their permits to fish in the Baltic Sea: Jurijs Ādams, Kārlis Arājs, Egons Tomsons, Oskars Rozītis, Leonīds Saulītis, Viktors Fjodorovs, Mihails Andersons, Voldemārs Birkāns, and Herberts Asaris. Bude asked the LSSR CoM to instruct Noviks "to review and decide on the possibility of allowing the above-mentioned specialists to go out to catch fish in the Baltic Sea".

Lācis instructed his deputy Plūdonis to discuss this issue with J. Vēvers, Deputy Minister of the MGB of the LSSR.³⁸⁹ On 29 June 1951, the document was prepared and signed by Lācis and Titov and sent to Mikoyan:

The Ministry of Fish Industry of the Latvian SSR is experiencing great difficulties due to the lack of a sufficient number of qualified captains and mechanics in the fish industry fleet.

At the same time, the bodies of the Ministry of State Security have not allowed some of the captains and mechanics working on the ships of the Ministry of Fish Industry of the Latvian SSR to enter the Baltic Sea. They are allowed to sail only in the Gulf of Riga. The Council of Ministers of the Latvian SSR and the Central Committee of the C(b)PL are not aware of

³⁸⁸ NAL, PA-101.f., 22.desc., 15. file, p 30

³⁸⁹ NAL, 270.f., 1.s.desc., 706. file, p 3

the reasons why some captains and mechanics are not allowed to sail in the Baltic Sea.

The Council of Ministers of the Latvian SSR and the Central Committee of the C(b)PL request that the Ministry of State Security of the USSR be instructed to submit materials on all persons who have been refused permission to sail in the Baltic Sea, indicating the reasons and motives for the refusal, to the existing Commission of the Central Committee of the C(b)PL which issues foreign travel permits to personnel of vessels of the Ministry of the Navy of the USSR and to grant this Commission the right to decide the question of permission to personnel of the fishing fleet of the Ministry of Fish Industry of the USSR to sail in the Baltic Sea.³⁹⁰

The MGB strictly controlled not only the captains and mechanics of the Latvian fishing fleet, but also all other specialists. In September 1951, Korotkovs was expelled from the radio operator course, which trained specialists for the Latvian fishing fleet. After a background check, the SSM staff stated that Korotkov's continued presence at the radio operator course was not useful.³⁹¹ At that time, the state security bodies also rigorously checked the personnel of all other institutions and organisations.

The CCCP decided on all matters concerning the nomination and approval of senior staff. At the meeting of the Bureau of the CCCP on 20 June 1959, Lācis stated: "... we had a plenary meeting of the Central Committee on staff (October 1958 – J.R.). Representatives of the CCCP took part in the drafting and preparation of the decision and helped us to formulate it. The plenary ended, and there were no speeches at the plenary challenging the correctness of the decision. We were not told afterwards that it was wrong, that it was the wrong national policy, the wrong moment."³⁹² Historian I. Apine describes the Plenary:

... Half a year before the infamous Plenary of July 1959, a Plenary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union was held about work with staff. The speaker, Vilis Krūmiņš (with the efforts of Latvian national-communists in the

³⁹⁰ NAL, 270.f., 1.s.desc., 706. file, p 4

³⁹¹ NAL, 270.f., 1.s.desc., 706. file, p 2

³⁹² NAL, PA-101.f., 22.desc., 489. file, p 122

spring of 1958, Moscow stooge Fyodor Kashnikov was voted out and Krūmiņš was elected second secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union – CCCP – J.R.) revealed a stunning picture. At a time when there were thousands of professionally educated specialists among Latvians, there was inertia of distrust and important positions were occupied by unprofessional but politically trustworthy people. In the railway transport system, a third of engineering positions were filled by people without special education. In trade, 75% of managers had a primary school education, and only 70 of 314 company directors were Latvian. The director of the Motors factory had a fifth-grade education, etc.

The party's district committee chiefs from Valmiera, Jelgava, Saldus, Ilūkste and other places strongly condemned the policy of "import" of staff, which did not allow them to put their own people forward. The direct perpetrators of such administration in the Central Committee of the LCP were named. ... Typically, the old leadership of the LCP and its chauvinist part were silent and there seemed to be no open opponents of this new course. They waited for a more opportune moment, waited for it, and half a year later attacked the National Communists all the more furiously."³⁹³

After the July 1959 plenary of the CCCP, party meetings were convened everywhere and party activists and other types of gatherings were organised at which the Latvian "nationalists" were loudly and noisily "denounced", and their expulsion from all positions of responsibility was demanded. Numerous complaints were written and sent to Moscow about the persecution of Russian staff by "Latvian nationalists". Voicehs Kārklīņš described the situation in his report 3 September 1959 to Kirichenko, Secretary of the CCCP:

... If we have decided to touch on the national question of the Latvian SSR, then we must make some comparisons with other brotherly republics: with Estonia, Lithuania, Armenia, and

³⁹³ Ilga Apine. *Latviešu nacionālkomunistu politiskās sagrāves sociālpsiholoģiskie aspekti. // Latvijas Zinātņu akadēmijas vēstis* [Social-psychological aspects of the political defeat of the Latvian national communists. Herald of the Latvian Academy of Science], 2000, Issue 1/2, p.70.s.

Georgia, and ask the complainants: what percentage of the leading posts of these republics are occupied by persons of Russian nationality? I may be slightly wrong if I say 00.1%, but in Latvia, at the same time, 65% of the members of Russian nationality are in leading posts. Apart from Russians, there are also Armenians, Georgians, Jews, Tatars, and representatives of all the other peoples of the Soviet Union. Where is this national policy then ... Nowhere else, in other republics, have members of Russian nationality lived and live as freely as they do in the Latvian SSR, which explains their great desire to live in the Latvian SSR. Look at the number of Latvians in leading positions. You can count them on your fingers. The vast majority of Latvians, for better or worse, speak Russian and give a comprehensive answer to any question, which you will not hear in Tallinn, Yerevan, Tbilisi.

Some mistakes are made by small and big people, Latvians and Russians and all nationalities, but the national question should not be prejudiced because the Latvian people are listening attentively.

Nobody thinks or asks, but who are these people who float around the Soviet Union from one place to another for fifteen post-war years, unable to find a berth, tossing from republic to republic, poisoning the atmosphere around them, looking for weaknesses to make national insults and pass themselves off as heroes?

Every honest Soviet man has long since found his place and is working for his Motherland, but the drones continue to fly, chasing the big rouble....³⁹⁴

It is understandable that neither the reports sent to Moscow by Reimanis, Dīmanis, Kārklīņš, or many other Latvians about the oppression of the Latvian people and ignoring of national traditions, language, and Russification of staff made any impression on the political leadership. A group of Russian Latvian functionaries was great support for the Moscow emissaries in the implementation of the Latvian colonisation policy, which Levits describes:

³⁹⁴ NAL, PA-101.f., 20.desc., 112. file, pp 171., 172

After the defeat of the Latvian national communists in 1959, a purge of the staff began, which lasted until 1961. This affected about 2000 Latvian Communists. Unlike the Stalinist purges, they were not liquidated but only removed from office or demoted. In the autumn of 1959, Kalnbērziņš and Lācis also lost their posts in the wave of purges. Pelše was appointed the new First Secretary of the Central Committee of the LCP, and Jānis Peivie the new Chairman of the CoM. Both of them were Russian Latvians, and Peive did not speak Latvian at all. In 1966, Pelše was admitted to the Politburo, the highest body of the Soviet state. Concurrently, he became Chairman of the Party Control Commission of the CCCP.

In 1966, Augusts Voss succeeded Pelše as First Secretary of the CCCP. Like Pelše, he was a Latvian-Russian. When Voss was appointed Chairman of the Council of Nationalities of the Supreme Soviet in 1984, his successor was Pugo, Chairman of the LSSR KGB, a Russian Latvian who, like Voss, spoke hardly any Latvian.

Pelše and Voss relied on Russian functionaries of the party apparatus and on the small group of Latvian communist functionaries in Russia, whose representatives were Russified and mostly did not speak Latvian and were opposed to Latvian independence aspirations. Local Latvian Party members, especially in positions of responsibility, were in the minority. In its most important political body in Latvia – the office of the Central Committee of the LCP – at the end of 1985, among its ten members, five were Russian Latvians, three were Russians and only two were local Latvians. From 1940 to 1988, all five party leaders in Latvia were Russian-Latvians, and of the four chairmen of the Council of Ministers, three were Russian-Latvians and one was Russian.³⁹⁵

In 1961, the Third Program of the CPSU, the "Program for the Building the Communist Society", adopted by the XXII Congress, declared the following on the national question: "... The growing scale of communist construction makes a constant exchange of staff between

³⁹⁵ E. Levits. *Latvija padomju varā. // Latvijas valsts atjaunošana. 1986-1993* [Latvia under Soviet rule. Restoration of the Latvian State. 1986-1993], p.56.

nations necessary. There must be no manifestations of national seclusion in the training and employment of workers of different nationalities in the Soviet republics. The elimination of manifestations of nationalism is in the interests of all the nations and nationalities of the USSR. Each Soviet republic can only further flourish and consolidate itself within the great family of fraternal socialist nations of the USSR.”³⁹⁶

For many years, especially in times of socio-political stagnation, the official view was that inter-national relations were good enough and that there were no serious problems that needed urgent solutions. Instead of a realistic analysis of the processes in the national sphere and a corresponding reform of the Soviet national-state system, authorities were once again enthusiastic about the utopian project of a final solution to the national question, linking it to the forced break-up of national frontiers, erasure of national differences, and assimilation of nations into Soviet society. It was officially declared that the national question no longer existed in the Soviet Union.

In fact, the thesis of the solution of the national question in the Soviet Union had existed since the late 1930s. In a speech at a session of the Central Executive Committee of the Tatar ASSR in June 1935, Politburo member Andreev, declared: “We have the right to say that in our Soviet country, the national question can be considered solved. We have not only solved it for ourselves, but we have also set an example of the solution of the national question for the workers of other countries in the forthcoming World Proletarian Revolution.”³⁹⁷ This false thesis was repeated many times by the leaders of both the CPSU and the LCP; for example, by Pelše at a meeting of the CCCP Bureau on 20 June 1959: “I would put the question this way: has the national question been solved in the republic? Yes, it has been solved, although some comrades thought that it had not been solved, such as Comrade Berkļavs, who is internally convinced that it has not been solved, attributing it to the comrades coming to the territory of the republic.”³⁹⁸

At this meeting, which discussed the conclusions of the special Moscow commission on the widespread “local nationalism” and

³⁹⁶ Programme of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Adopted by the XXII Congress of the CPSU - Riga, 1961, p.103.

³⁹⁷ *Izvestiya*, 1935, 6 June.

³⁹⁸ NAL, PA-101.f., 22.desc., 489. file, p 149

"mistakes" in personnel policy in Latvia, participant N. Saleev dared to point out the frequent chauvinism of Russians in Latvia:

You cannot think that there is only bourgeois nationalism, that some members have limited Russian personnel, that there are no shortcomings on the part of the Russians, that they are all agents. That is wrong. Many Russian members, many of our workers, do not respect Latvian culture, they are tactless. We know that the national question is a delicate one, where clean hands are needed so as not to bring infection into the assessment, for fear of being accused of nationalism. We do not give these phenomena a political evaluation. Bourgeois nationalism and big-power chauvinism need to be countered in a certain way. Only when we take a principled stand will no one accuse us. That is why I believe that this question is important, that when the plenary (plenary of the Central Committee of the CPSU on 7-8 July 1959 – J.R.) comes, we should bring it to the plenary. Otherwise, it may turn out that someone said – "We used to beat the Russians, now let's beat the Latvians."³⁹⁹

Understandably, nobody took any notice of these words. The July 1959 Plenary of the CCCP was all about "beating" Latvians, but there was not a single word to condemn Bolshevik chauvinism. However, the thesis of the final solution of the national question continued to be heard for several decades. At the scientific and practical conference held in Riga on 28-29 June 1982, "The Development of National Relations under Mature Socialism. Experience and Problems of Patriotic and International Education", B. Ponomoryov, Secretary of the CCCP, stated: "... the national question, as it was inherited from the past, has been completely and definitively settled." He was joined in his report by Voss: "... The fact that the national question – one of the most painful, most dramatic questions in human history – has been solved in our country is an achievement that can rightly be compared with the victories in the construction of a new society in the Soviet Union, such as industrialisation, collectivisation, and the cultural revolution."⁴⁰⁰ The usual slogans of "harmonious national relations" were repeated by

³⁹⁹ NAL, PA-101.f., 22.desc., 489. file, p 200

⁴⁰⁰ Fight, 29 June 1982

Soviet leader Gorbachev at the beginning of his proclaimed *perestroika*: "If the national question had not been solved in principle in our country, the Soviet Union would not exist as it does today in its social, cultural, economic, and defence spheres."⁴⁰¹

It was a grave political mistake, a case where the leader of the USSR trusted official propaganda and did not want to understand reality. He could have remembered that the mass rallies held in Georgia on 4-9 March 1956 were the first post-war expression of open political protest, which took place almost immediately after the liberalisation under Khrushchev began in which some 30,000 people took part. On 9 March, troops used guns: 13 people were killed and eight of the 63 wounded died. On the same day, further clashes between demonstrators and troops took place, also resulting in deaths and injuries. One of the demands of the protest was: "Russians, get out of Georgia!"⁴⁰²

At the end of October 1956, in connection with the events in Poland and Hungary, slogans and leaflets appeared at Vilnius University with the headlines "Long Live the Revolution in Hungary, Let's Follow its Example!" and "Lithuania for Lithuanians! Russian occupiers, get out!" In early November 1956, large Catholic demonstrations took place in Kaunas and Vilnius. Participants sang the Lithuanian anthem, folk songs, and shouted slogans such – "Let's follow Hungary's example!" and "Russians, get out of Lithuania!" National songs were also sung in Tallinn, and in Tartu, leaflets appeared with slogans – "Down with the Russian leaders!" and "Russians out of Estonia!" At the end of August 1958, clashes broke out between Russians on Grozny and the Chechen and Ingush population. In the 1960s, national resistance was observed in Belarus and Moldova. In 1965, the widespread "Ukrainisation" of Ukraine was a source of great dissatisfaction in the Politburo Central Committee. In 1972, P. Shelest was dismissed as First Secretary of the CCCP for

⁴⁰¹ M. Gorbachev. *Pārķārtošanās un jaunā domāšana. Mūsu valstij un visai pasaulei* [Re-shifting and new thinking. For our country and the world], p.103.

⁴⁰² *Prezidium CK KPS. 1954-1964. Chernovye protokolnye zapisi zasedaniy. Stenogrammy. Postanovleniya. t.1.* [Presidium of the CPSU Central Committee. 1954-1964. Draft minutes of the meetings. Transcripts. Resolutions. vol.1.] – Moscow. 2004. pp.929, 930; V. A. Kozlov. *Politicheskie volneniya v Gruzii posle XX s'ezda KPSS* [Political unrest in Georgia after the 20th Congress of the CPSU]. *Otechestvennaya istoriya* [Russian national history]. 1997, No 3. pp. 33-51.

implementing Ukrainisation. On 27 September 1969, after a football match between the Tashkent team *Pahtokar* and the Kuibyshev team *Krylya Sovetov*, large-scale clashes broke out between Uzbek and Russian youth. The negative attitude of the local population towards Russians was due to the negative character traits (drinking, hooliganism, theft, prostitution) brought by Russians who had moved to Uzbekistan from the Volga region, especially Samara, in the 1920s. The derogatory nickname "Samaritans" remained since those times and was applied to all Russians. During the football match, specially prepared posters were put up in 20 places in the stadium – "Samaritans, go home!" Large-scale clashes broke out and more than 1000 people were arrested.⁴⁰³

Weakening dictates from the centre and protests of the party leaders of the core republics against these dictates were expressed in demands for further expansion of the rights of the regions, increased investment, reduction of the influx of Russian migrants, and tendencies of Russification of native languages. Moscow reacted aggressively. As early as 1958-1961, senior party leaders in Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan were accused of nationalism and dismissed from their posts. The respective plenaries of the Communist Party Central Committee condemned violations of "national policy". These changes in staff provoked protests among the local intelligentsia and nomenklatura who saw this as manifestations of the imperial nature of Russian speakers. The risk of inter-ethnic conflicts in a multi-ethnic country with a totalitarian regime began to emerge with the first signs of liberalisation and was clearly demonstrated in Almaat in 1986.

A plenary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Kazakhstan was convened on 16 December 1986 at which the Russian G. Kolbin, who had previously served as second secretary of the Central Committee of the Georgian Communist Party and then as first secretary of the Ulyanovsk Regional Committee of the CPSU, was appointed first secretary of the Central Committee instead of Kazakh D. Kunayev. This decision was announced on the radio at 3:00 p.m. On that same evening, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the KGB of the Republic began to receive reports that many Kazakhs were dissatisfied. The next morning,

⁴⁰³ Alexander Vdovin. *Podlinnaya istoriya russkikh. XX vek* [The true history of the Russians. The twentieth century]. pp. 229, 239, 268.

large protest demonstrations began in Almaat, followed by clashes in the evening. Initially, local police and trainees from the Border Guard School of the Almaat KGB tried to break them up. The commander of the Central Asian Military District, V. Lobov, refused to involve soldiers in the liquidation of the unrest. The USSR Ministry of Defence, however, forced him to send cadets from the Almaat Higher Military School, who were guarding the building of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Kazakhstan, to the areas of unrest, but they did not take part in the clashes. Operational Administration headquarters was entrusted to the Minister of Internal Affairs of the Kazakh SSR, G. Knyazev. The square in front of the Central Committee building, where the protesters had gathered, was surrounded. The chairman of the Kazakh SSR KGB, V. Miroshnikov, and KGB operative and investigative staff also arrived. Photographs and video footage was taken. By 10 a.m. on the second day, the number of demonstrators had reached 1000 and soon increased to 5000. The demonstrators marched through the streets of the city and then returned to the square. Members of the CCCP, MVD, MGB, and the Prosecutor's Office were present in Almaat. Clashes broke out in the streets of the capital. Dispersal of the demonstrators was assumed by M. Solomentsov, Politburo member. In the evening, Y. Razumov, Deputy Head of the Orgburo of the CCCP; Yelisov, First Deputy Minister of the Interior; Soroka, Deputy Prosecutor; and F. Bobkov, Deputy Chairman of the KGB, also arrived. Yelisov took over operational leadership. Clashes continued for several days. Using sapper shovels, fire extinguishers, and dogs, the people were forced into cars, taken to the steppe, and set loose. Many were arrested. In clashes with the police and troops, two people were killed and more than 1000 people sought medical attention, 235 were hospitalised. The MVD detained 2336 people, the KGB detained 2212, and the Prosecutor's Office detained 2401 for participating in the riots. In addition, 5324 people were questioned by the prosecutor's office and 850 people by the KGB. The KGB staff registered those who had sought medical assistance. Of the 99 cases, 82 people were convicted, including 23 women and five minors. Kazakh KGB officers took photo stills from television materials and used them to search for "criminals" throughout the republic for a long time afterwards.⁴⁰⁴ For the first time

⁴⁰⁴ Shevyakin A.P. *17 tajn Lubyanki. Izd. 2-e, utochn., dopol., i pererab.* [17 Secrets of the Lubyanka. Edition 2, revised, supplemented and revised.] – Moscow, 2010, pp. 343, 344, 345.

since the beginning of *perestroika*, troops were used against demonstrators in Almaat.

Even though the youth riots in Almaat were brutally suppressed, Moscow showed the first signs of weakness: the decision to appoint G. Kolbin was rescinded and Kazakh N. Nazarbayev was appointed First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Kazakhstan.⁴⁰⁵ At the CCCP plenary on 27 January 1987, Gorbachev admitted: "The events in Alma-Ata and what preceded them require serious analysis, a principled assessment. All this will have to be thoroughly clarified. ... The delicacy of the national aspects of this or that problem, the way of life, the psychology and the behaviour of the people must not be overlooked. And this must be considered in the most careful way."⁴⁰⁶

But the collapse of the USSR had already begun. By the summer of 1988, strong nationalist movements had taken shape in Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Armenia, and Georgia. This wave quickly spread throughout the Soviet Union. Strong national political personnel had grown up in the depths of the Party. Together with the intelligentsia, they formed an influential layer in the republics and were increasingly constrained by the rigid framework of the centralised state system, which had turned federalism into a fiction. The unitary form of the state had become a brake on further development of nations. During *perestroika*, these problems broke out as openness expanded, leading to the collapse of the Soviet Union and the emergence of many independent states. The leading force in this historic process was, of course, national social organisations supported by the broad masses of the people.

⁴⁰⁵ Alma-Ata. December 1986. – 1991, p. 8.

⁴⁰⁶ *Soyuz možno bylo sohranit*. [The Union could have been saved], p. 12.

CHAPTER 5

Migrant and colonist privileges

One of the reasons for large-scale migration and colonisation to Latvia was the desire and opportunity to find comfortable and well-equipped apartments quickly. Riga was especially attractive because it had suffered relatively little during World War II, and the departure of Baltic Germans in the autumn of 1939 left many vacant apartments. At the end of WWII, many Latvians fled to the West for fear of new reprisals, and many of their apartments were also given to the newcomers. This also happened with the apartments of those who were deported to "life camps" in Siberia on 14 June 1941 and 25 March 1949. Privileged allocation of apartments for migrants was ensured by the decisions and directives of the CCCP, USSR CoM, USSR Ministry of Defence, and other central authorities' decisions and directives. It should be noted that Čiekurkalns, Grīziņkalns, the Moscow suburb, and other outlying districts of Riga had developed as neighbourhoods for workers from which it was extremely difficult (even impossible) to move since newly built apartments were given mainly to the migrants.

5.1. Establishment and consolidation of migrant and settler privileges 1940-1941

From the first day of occupation on 17 June 1940, Soviet official propaganda tried in every possible way to present Latvia as a "land of misery and poverty", liberated from the "yoke of plutocrats", "capitalist slavery", and "deprivation" by the "invincible Red Army", yet there were already efforts by many Soviet citizens to resettle in Latvia, mainly in Riga.

In the economy, too, "socialist rearrangements" were carried out so that the greatest privileges in allocation of apartments were given to leading personnel and other migrants from the USSR who were posted to Riga. As early as the summer of 1940, a special Housing Supply Commission of the Ministry of the Interior was set up to register all existing flats, review applicant requests, and redistribute the flats on the basis of class. At its meeting on 7 August 1940, the Riga City Housing

Supply Commission authorised its chairman "... in certain important matters of housing supply ... to satisfy applicants for apartments from the housing stock at the disposal of the Commission."⁴⁰⁷ The practice was established that the chairmen of the housing commission and Communist Party functionaries, chairmen of executive committees, and other members of the ruling regime could independently decide on the allocation of apartments. To find apartments for migrants, especially for the Soviet military, the "narrowing" of living space, compaction of the local population, and sanitary standards were imposed.

In the summer of 1940, one of the most important tasks of the Housing Supply Commission was to provide apartments for the commanders of the occupying Soviet army, members of the Interior Ministry, Prosecutor's Office, and other repressive institutions who were mainly sent from the USSR. In many cases, owners of apartments intended for newcomers were evicted in a few days. A family or person occupying an apartment with more rooms than permitted had to accept a corresponding number of co-occupants within a time limit set by the People's Commissariat for Communal Economy. If this was not done, a co-occupant, usually a Soviet migrant, was placed in the "surplus" area.

The Housing Commission of the People's Commissariat for Communal Economy was established on 30 September 1940. Its task was to discuss and decide the most important questions on the provision of premises and housing management that could not be decided by the local communal authorities and city housing commissions. At its first meeting on 7 October 1940, the Deputy People's Commissar for Communal Economy, Priedītis, formulated its tasks: "We must put the needs of the Red Army first and also provide premises for institutions and organisations."⁴⁰⁸ In its February 1941 report, the Housing Commission decided:

The needs of the NKVD (People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs), Sovnarkom (Council of People's Commissars) and the Red Army were also met. ... Working in a centralised way, the staff of the Housing Commission was so overburdened that, sitting even 24 hours without an interruption, they could not

⁴⁰⁷ NAL, 824.f., 1.desc., 144. file, p 272

⁴⁰⁸ NAL, 824.f., 1.desc., 144. file, p 212

examine all the requests, which is why, from 9 January, the Housing Commission was divided into 12 districts, which decided within their district on the allocation of apartments, leaving the centre to allocate apartments to the staff-in-charge, the NKVD, Sovnarkom, the Prosecutor's Office, the Red Army, and others. From 1 January to 10 February 1941, the Housing Commission allocated 161 flats for the Red Army, 72 for the leading staff, and 31 for the staff-in-charge when transferring non-working people. In addition, 200 flats were allocated to the staff in charge.⁴⁰⁹

The Housing Commission also described how these "employees-in-charge" – most often Soviet migrants – found apartments:

Flats have been vacated by moving only the non-working elements to vacant peripheral flats, i.e., the former most visible workers of the old regime, capitalists, merchants, etc. 104 citizens were thus relocated, with the dual benefit of giving flats to citizens who needed them, and secondly, of compacting the flats, making it possible to meet the demands, since all those relocated did not take the flats given to them but moved to the countryside or to their relatives and acquaintances. ... Out of a total of 545 applicants, only 281 requests for 2-7 room flats remained unsatisfied. The requests of these unsatisfied applicants were distributed among the district executive committees for the housing commission, i. e. for the allocation of the necessary apartments." During this period, more than 30 buildings were handed over for the accommodation of commanders of the Soviet occupation army in the city of Riga.⁴¹⁰

For example, residents were evicted from Martas Street 1 and 3 in Riga to allocate flats for NKVD employees, Sovnarkom, the Prosecutor's Office, and the Riga City Provisional Executive Committee. R. Lusiš' apartment (Martas Street 1-5) was allocated to Morozov, an employee of the Internal Affairs Committee, and apartment 21 to Pohvalov, the

⁴⁰⁹ NAL, 824.f., 1.desc., 147. file, p 11

⁴¹⁰ NAL, 824.f., 1.desc., 147. file, p 11

prosecutor of the Baltic Special War Area.⁴¹¹ On 2 January 1941, the Riga City Housing Commission notified former Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Latvia, M. Nukss that he had 14 days to vacate his apartment. It was given to a man, Hotjko, a Soviet migrant. At its 3 February 1941 meeting, the Housing Commission urgently ordered apartments to be found for Golubov and Baravkov, employees of the People's Commissariat for Agriculture; Zhukov, Shalimgarev, Khromov, and Vasiliev – employees of the State Planning Commission; Protopopov, an employee of the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs; and others.⁴¹²

Many employees for prisons and correctional labour colonies, established by the NKGB in February 1941, and many other institutions of the occupation regime also came to Latvia from the USSR, and all of them were allocated apartments quickly. Many did not even think to pay rent, such as P. Orlov, an Soviet army officer who moved into Ernestines Street 35, apartment 15; I. Grigoriev into Dzirnavu Street 39, apartment 3; Mileshevich at Lermontova Street 4, apartment 12, and many others.⁴¹³ In his 8 April 1941 report, V. Reiznieks, assistant head of Sector 2 of the Stalin District of Riga City, pointed out that the Red Army commanders did not give details of who lived in the buildings and apartments in question, did not disclose their names, or how much their salaries were.⁴¹⁴ The 9 April 1941 decision of the LSSR Council of People's Commissars and the 19 May 1941 meeting of the Riga City Executive Committee instructed Veidins, head of the Housing Department, to allocate 500 more apartments to Red Army commanders.⁴¹⁵

The privileges of the newcomers was also determined by the Riga City Housing Management Department order to the Kirov District Executive Committee: “Immediately – within 2 days – allocate a one-room apartment to Shlapatkova, a newcomer from the USSR” and the “Report on the implementation to the Housing Management Department.”⁴¹⁶ In 1941, the construction of 18 new military airfields,

⁴¹¹ NAL, 824.f., 1.desc., 147. file, p 143

⁴¹² NAL, 824.f., 1.desc., 144. file, p 1., 2

⁴¹³ NAL, 824.f., 1.desc., 155. file, p 597

⁴¹⁴ NAL, 824.f., 1.desc., 125. file, p 113

⁴¹⁵ NAL, 824.f., 1.desc., 132. file, 12

⁴¹⁶ NAL, 824.f., 1.desc., 170. file, p 38

the 464th aviation industry, and many other military facilities began in Latvia. Many specialists were sent from the USSR to Latvia and were allocated apartments in Riga and other towns without delay. At that time, the system of privileges was established and strengthened in Latvia, which later also enabled migrants to obtain apartments quickly and without unnecessary problems – in any case, incomparably faster and easier than was possible for the native Latvian population.

5.2. Migrant privileges in the post-war years

WWII caused considerable damage to Latvia's housing stock: 452 buildings in Daugavpils were destroyed or badly damaged, 21 in Cēsis, 324 in Liepāja, and 98 in Valmiera.⁴¹⁷ Other cities also suffered similar damage. In Riga, of 8697 buildings with a total area of 3,836,000 m², 140 with a living area of 155,000 m² were destroyed, 993 with a living area of 135,000 m² were badly damaged and needed renovation or major repairs, and 3697 buildings needed routine repairs.⁴¹⁸

Reconstruction of the housing stock destroyed was very slow, but the construction of new housing was almost non-existent. Most construction was temporary – barracks – although they were often inhabited for several decades. In existing flats, the inhabitants were crammed in with large flats converted into communal flats. In communal flats, one family usually occupied one room, less frequently two rooms. Workers were housed in dormitories in which several people lived in one room, sometimes even families with unmarried adults. The head of the Statistical Office of the LSSR CoM, Drjucins noted "On the housing and communal conditions of the families of workers surveyed" prepared in 1956:

These data lead to the following conclusions:

1. Housing conditions in the Republic are deteriorating year by year. The housing is particularly inadequate for the working families of Riga, whose average per capita housing is considerably lower than the average for the entire population of Riga.

⁴¹⁷ NAL, 432.f., 7.desc., 1. file, p 61., 64., 66., 67., 69

⁴¹⁸ NAL, 1400.f., 1.a.desc., 10. file, p 92

2. As a result of housing insecurity, 45.8 per cent of the surveyed workers' families have an average living space of 4.4 m² per family member, while 7.6 per cent of workers' families are forced to rent as sub-tenants, which significantly increases their housing costs.
3. The apartments occupied by working-class families are completely inadequately equipped with certain types of amenities. 24 per cent of the apartments of working-class families are not equipped with piped water, 32.5 per cent with sewerage, 86.5 per cent with gas and 81 per cent with centralised heating.
6. Despite the inadequate provision of housing for the population of Riga, especially for working-class families, the plan for the construction of apartments is being unsatisfactorily implemented, the funds allocated for the construction of apartments are not being utilised year after year, with the result that the increase in the population of the republic, especially of Riga, far exceeds the increase in the area to be put into operation.⁴¹⁹

The situation improved only after the transition to standard apartment construction in the second half of the 1950s. Many families were able to move into their own apartment, even if it was small and poorly built. In the late 1950s, cooperative housing developed quite widely in Latvia, which made it possible to get an apartment more quickly, but people had to pay for its construction. However, it was not available to everyone, and people on the housing waiting list were eligible for a cooperative apartment. Even though people had paid for the co-operative flat, they did not get legal rights to it, they could not inherit it from people who were not registered in it, and they could not officially sell it. There were also various forms of apartment construction: many companies built them and prospective tenants had to work a certain number of hours building them.⁴²⁰

On 23 December 1983, the LSSR CoM and the Republic Council of Trade Unions of the LSSR CoM approved the regulation on the

⁴¹⁹ NAL, 277.f., 11.desc., 97. file, pp 88., 89

⁴²⁰ *Latvija padomju režīma varā. 1945-1986. Dokumentu krājums* [Latvia under the Soviet regime. 1945-1986. Collection of documents], p. 385.

procedure for registering citizens in need of improvement of housing conditions and allocating living quarters. This affected citizens who had less than six square metres of living space per family member and less than five square metres in cities under the authority of the Republic; citizens who lived in dormitories, except for temporary and fixed-term workers and students; citizens who lived in a building (living quarters) that did not meet established sanitary and technical requirements; and other groups of persons. Paragraphs 9 and 11 of the Regulation stipulated that those in need of improved housing conditions included those who "have distinguished themselves in production and public activity, have worked continuously in an enterprise, institution, or organisation for not less than 20 years, provided that they have lived in an unfurnished flat for not less than 20 years."⁴²¹

This indicates that the housing issue was extremely complex. It was made even more difficult by the need to provide housing for the many migrants and settlers from other Soviet regions. Between 1 November and 17 November 1944 alone, 376 migrants had already received housing in the Kirov district of Riga⁴²² and between 15 December 1944 and 1 January 1945, another 121 had been granted housing.⁴²³ Arbitrary occupation of apartments without permits or warrants was common. For this reason, the Riga City Executive Committee was forced to adopt the decision on 7 March 1945 "On the procedure for the division of residential premises", which temporarily suspended the issue of warrants for residential premises, provided for the re-registration of all previously issued warrants, and exchange of old warrants for new warrants.⁴²⁴ To distribute living quarters in a more correct way, the Riga City Executive Committee decided on 11 June 1945 to establish Apartment Departments in the Riga City Executive Committee and the Executive Committees in the city's districts.⁴²⁵

This shows that the City of Riga indeed tried to determine both the city's housing stock and its distribution during this period. However, the situation did not change for the better. By 30 May 1945, 2,800 applications had not been dealt with by the Riga City Housing

⁴²¹ NAL, 425.f., 7.desc., 746. file, pp 96.-102

⁴²² NAL, 992.f., 1.desc., 6. file, p 42

⁴²³ NAL, 992.f., 1.desc., 6. file, p 43

⁴²⁴ NAL, 992.f., 2.desc., p 293

⁴²⁵ NAL, 1400.f., 2.desc., 4. file, p 122

Department, and many had been lost or registered several times. Meanwhile, the influx of migrants into Riga was increasing. The decision of the Riga City Committee of the C(b)PL and the Riga City Executive Committee "On the Accounting and Distribution of the Apartment Fund in the City of Riga", which established a special reserve fund for the provision of apartments for senior staff, was significant in providing them with housing; warrants could be issued only by a decision of the district executive committee, and in the city executive committee by a decision of its chairman or his deputy. The Riga City Committee of the C(b)PL and the Riga City Executive Committee also asked the C(b)PL Central Committee and the LSSR CoM to allow the population to be compacted so as to leave nine square metres of living space per person and to ask the USSR Sovnarkom to reduce the notice period for eviction from three months to two weeks.⁴²⁶ At that time, the Prosecutor's Office of the USSR rejected this proposal, but the decision of the Central Executive Committee and Sovnarkom of 10 October 1937 stipulated that the local council could use surplus space only if the tenant did not use it at his own discretion within three months after receiving a notice.⁴²⁷

With the renovation and expansion of various industrial enterprises, the demand for apartments grew rapidly in Riga and other major cities. A special commission was set up by the Riga City Executive Committee on 25 May 1945 to provide apartments for the workers of factory No 4 who had come from Leningrad: "The Commission is authorised to place the workers immediately in the designated flats; the warrants are to be drawn up later. The deadline for the placement of all the workers who have arrived shall be 1 June of this year."⁴²⁸

The Riga City Executive Committee of 27 June 1945 decision allowed conversion of vacant apartments (Brīvības Avenue 4 – 300 m², Brivibas Street 113 – 250 m², Ludza Street 52 – 400 m², Pionieru Street 9 – 150 m², Barona Street 129 – 100 m²) into workers' dormitories to accommodate VEF workers who had arrived from Leningrad.⁴²⁹ The decision of the Central Committee of the C(b)PL and the LSSR Council

⁴²⁶ NAL, 1400.f., 1.a.desc., 10. file, p 152

⁴²⁷ NAL, 432.f., 5.desc., 1. file, p 6

⁴²⁸ NAL, 1400.f., 2.desc., 5. file, p 96

⁴²⁹ NAL, 1400.f., 2.desc., 5. file, p 309

of People's Commissars on 18 June 1945 allocated five residential buildings with a total area of 4,000 m² to the workers of the Riga Wagon Factory, and 30 apartments were allocated to the factory specialists who had arrived from the USSR. In addition, residential buildings with a total area of 8,000 m², 10 summer houses in Jūrmala (Riga), buildings and barracks at Starta Street 5 and other premises were allocated to workers of the wagon factory.⁴³⁰ On 29 August 1945, the Riga City Executive Committee instructed the city district executive committee chairmen to allocate 4-6-room apartments to the City Housing Department for the provision of senior staff in the Kirov district – 15, Stalin district – 15, Proletarian district – 10, Moscow district – five, Red Army district – five, and Lenin district – five apartments.⁴³¹ In October 1945, 30 more apartments were allocated to those Riga wagon industry specialists who had come from other regions.⁴³²

It can be concluded that in 1944-1945, the migrants who were most quickly and efficiently provided with apartments were those who were appointed to managerial positions, various specialists, and workers in large industrial enterprises. This practice continued in the following decades. On 29 April 1946, the Riga City Executive Committee instructed district executive committees to hand over 18 apartments and 132 rooms to the city's Housing Department for apartments for responsible staff. Until this order was carried out, the issue of warrants to other persons was prohibited.⁴³³ The transfer of housing to various factories and companies also continued: in March 1946, *Sevzapelektromontaž* factory 12 was given a building at Āgenskalna Street 7; Bridge Construction No.5 Repair – Rental Base was given a building at Liksnas Street 12; and *Red Star* factory was given buildings at Dancigas Street 6, Visbijas prospekts 4, and Mazpulku Street 16.⁴³⁴

During this period, the practice of allocating apartments to the staff-in-charge by orders of the Chairman of the Riga City Executive Committee or his deputy became more and more entrenched. On 16 May 1946, Deglavs instructed the Chairman of the Stalin District

⁴³⁰ NAL, 1400.f., 2.desc., 10. file, p 59

⁴³¹ NAL, 1400.f., 2.desc., 6. file, pp 310., 311

⁴³² NAL, 1400.f., 2.desc., 8. file, p 45

⁴³³ NAL, 1400.f., 2.desc., 2. file, p 89

⁴³⁴ NAL, 1400.f., 2.desc., 12. file, p 169., 183

Executive Committee, K. Pinnis, to allocate two houses in the Mežaparks district within ten days to the leading employees of the Autoelectric Accessories Factory, and by order of the Deputy Chairman of the City Executive Committee, P. Smirnovs on 25 May 1946, two extra rooms were allocated to the correspondent Nikitin from the newspaper *Socialist farmland*.⁴³⁵ In an order of 9 December 1947, Deglavs wrote to Panovs, the head of the city's Housing Department: "Requesting you to take personal responsibility, I recommend that within three days you allocate a living space to comrade Safonov at Zaubes 10 Street. I warn you that failure to comply with this order will result in severe penalties being applied to you. You are to report to me no later than 12 December of this year." On 16 December 1947 Deglavs instructed K. Rekke, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Proletarian District, "to provide Comrade Nozhenko with living quarters within 5 days"; on 19 December 1947 he advised R. Rinkis, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Lenin District, "to immediately issue a warrant to citizen Savenkov for 4 rooms at Auces Street 5, apt 5. Report to me on the execution within 5 days."⁴³⁶

In December 1948, Lebedev ordered that an apartment be given to S. Korehov.⁴³⁷ Out of turn, apartments were also given to Sinitsyn, a hero of the Soviet Union and a deputy of the Murmansk Regional Executive Committee⁴³⁸; Sokolov, Deputy Prosecutor of the LSSR; S. Roshchin, Deputy Secretary of the Riga City Committee of the C(b)PL; N. Kovalevsky, Director of the LSSR Institute of Economics; N. Perlins, chief engineer of the bread factory; B. Voskobnikov, Director of the Fruit Water Factory; Veshnyakov, military prosecutor of the LSSR Ministry of the Interior; and many others.⁴³⁹ In October 1949, a four-room apartment was given to Martincevs, head of the Latvian Navy, and a comfortable apartment was given to Chernyshchv, the representative of the kolhkoz of the USSR CoM. In February 1950, a three-room apartment was given to the family of I. Kuzmins, director of Riga Elevator; a two-room apartment was given to N. Bujanovs, director of the War Trade Company; and a three-room apartment to

⁴³⁵ NAL, 1400.f., 2.desc., 2. file, pp 74., 82

⁴³⁶ NAL, 1400.f., 2.desc., 34. file, pp 205., 209., 213

⁴³⁷ NAL, 1400.f., 2.desc., 35. file, pp 390

⁴³⁸ NAL, 1400.f., 2.desc., 44. file, p 24

⁴³⁹ NAL, 1400.f., 2.desc., 42. file, p 220

K. Celihs, director of the Diesel Factory. In a 20 June 1950 order to the chairmen of the district executive committees, J. Pupurs, vice-chairman of the Riga City Executive Committee, wrote:

I recommend that the chairmen of the executive committees of the workers' councils of deputies be granted housing within 3 months:

1. Kirov District:
 - a) Chief Engineer of VEF, Comrade Hubaev,
 - b) Master of Sports Vinogradov,
 - c) Riga City Prosecutor, Comrade Romanovski.
2. Stalin District:
 - a) Comrade Abramyan, head of the production department of the VEF factory,
 - b) Comrade Reinhold, Master of Sports.
3. Proletarian District:
 - a) Kuks, Chief Technologist of VEF,
 - b) Master of Sport, footballer Karichev.
4. one apartment for a VEF factory worker in the Molotov District.
5. one apartment for a VEF factory employee in the Lenin District.⁴⁴⁰

Many of the inhabitants' apartments were divided up and converted to provide housing for the newcomers. Tenants were squeezed together and co-residents moved in. This was quite common at the time. For Latvians and people of other nationalities who were not in positions of power, it was futile to hope for an apartment or improvement in their living conditions. This hopeless situation is also illustrated by the case of M. Makarova.

Makarova was Latvian by nationality. During WWI, she emigrated from Latvia to Russia where she married and later lived in Frunze, the capital of Kyrgyzstan. Her husband died and both her sons were killed in WWII. Alone and a pensioner, Makarova returned to Riga in 1955. Her sister Dzene lived on Laboratorijas Street where one room was occupied by seven people. Because of these circumstances,

⁴⁴⁰ NAL, 1400.f., 2.desc., 62. file, p 251

Dzene could not accommodate her sister, and Makarova moved into a shared 15.04 m² room in the same house with a pensioner, Zarina. The two old women did not get along very well as each wanted her own corner of the room. Makarova's situation became hopeless. Twice, her request to be included in the housing register was rejected because she had come to Riga "of her own free will" and was therefore not entitled to an apartment. In the end, the Riga City Executive Committee took pity on her and granted her a room of 5.13 m².⁴⁴¹

J. Rozenbergs, who was transferred from Riga to Moscow by the Ministry of Trade, was unable to find an apartment for a long time. Despite all the necessary official documents, the head of the Moscow Apartment Exchange Office stated that on 23 March 1956, the decision had been taken to ban him from registering in Moscow, but there were enough "workers" like Rozenbergs in Moscow, and he should go back to Riga.⁴⁴² Unfortunately, neither the Latvian government nor other authorities sent the migrants back to Moscow, Leningrad, Pskov, or any other city or settlement in the USSR; on the contrary, they did everything to register them and provide them with housing quickly. Until 1989, when decisions were finally taken to restrict migration, privileges in the allocation of apartments remained and were most widely enjoyed by newcomers.

5.3. Privileges of the military

The most privileged in the allocation of apartments were generals, admirals, and officers of the USSR Armed Forces in Latvia. As early as 1944, Red Army troops and their commanders arbitrarily occupied many residences, outbuildings, schools, cultural institutions, and other premises, which were often converted into apartments or barracks. In many cases, the military evicted existing tenants from their chosen apartments within minutes. Red Army generals and officers often posted armed guards outside the arbitrarily occupied apartments and buildings, who refused entry to the actual owners of the apartment or local authorities. Similarly, employees of the MVD and NKGB helped themselves to large living quarters. At a time when many local

⁴⁴¹ NAL, 1432.f., 2.desc., 121. file, p 420

⁴⁴² NAL, 1400.f., 4.desc., 707. file, p 205

residents were forced to live in extremely crowded conditions or were almost on the street, MVD employees lived in an average of 20 square metres per person and NKGB employees in 30 square metres in the Stalin district of Riga City.⁴⁴³ Many Red Army generals and senior officers lived in separate mansions or in particularly good apartments.

The USSR military seized apartments arbitrarily, but they were also provided with them through official channels. In March 1945, all the residents of the buildings at Skolas Street 36a and Barona Street 36 in Riga were evicted, and the vacated apartments were given to the officers of the Military Political School and their family members.⁴⁴⁴ In order to provide flats for 15th Air Army officers and their families, 50 flats had to be found in each district of Riga.⁴⁴⁵ The rational use of the housing stock in Riga was particularly affected by the location of BMD Headquarters and its various administrations and institutions in Riga in the summer of 1945. The buildings at Brīvības Street 34/36 and 93, Antonijas Street 12, Raiņa Boulevard 15 and 27, Kirova Street 19, 23, 31a, Skolas Street 23, and several others were also confiscated;⁴⁴⁶ 30 apartments were to be allocated for the accommodation of headquarter officers and their families in the Stalin district, 120 in the Kirov district; and 50 in the Proletarian district.⁴⁴⁷

In the summer of 1945, a total of 125,566 m² of living space had been occupied by Soviet troops in Riga.⁴⁴⁸ Although the war was over, the number of army units and military training institutions in Riga and throughout Latvia did not decrease, but rather increased. In the summer of 1945, Nahimov Military School officers in Riga and their families had to be urgently provided with apartments.⁴⁴⁹ Naval Coast Defence School officers requested 11 flats, and 100 flats were to be given to the families of submarine brigade officers at the expense of the civilian population.⁴⁵⁰ In the autumn of the same year, troops had occupied 532 buildings with 387,559 m² of living space and individual apartments

⁴⁴³ NAL, 270.f., 1.s.desc., 170. file, p 3

⁴⁴⁴ NAL, 1400.f., 2.desc., 3. file, p 340

⁴⁴⁵ NAL, 1400.f., 2.desc., 5. file, p 273

⁴⁴⁶ NAL, PA-101.f., 8.desc., 11. file, p 10

⁴⁴⁷ NAL, 1400.f., 2.desc., 10. file, p 87

⁴⁴⁸ NAL, PA-101.f., 8.desc., 11. file, p 18

⁴⁴⁹ NAL, 1400.f., 2.desc., 10. file, p 77

⁴⁵⁰ NAL, 1400.f., 2.desc., 10. file, 93., p 98

with a total area of 285,532 m² in Riga, a total of 673,191 m² (21.70%) of the total city housing stock. In addition, in Jūrmala, troops occupied 28,340 m² (90 buildings). In the Latvian capital, the situation was completely abnormal: in the Stalin District, troops occupied 38.20% of the housing stock; in the Lenin district, 38.80%; in the Red Army District, 41%; in the Kirov District, 15.10%; in the Proletarian District, 17.50%; and in the Moscow District, 13.60% of the housing stock.⁴⁵¹ At the same time, 915 families of workers and servants were desperately waiting for apartments in the Kirov District, 412 in the Stalin district, and 400 in the Proletarian district.⁴⁵²

The situation was similar in other Latvian cities. In Liepāja, Red Army generals and officers occupied 3600 m² of living space, in Ventspils – 1,800, in Daugavpils – 3,600, in Vainode – 900, in Priekule – 360, in Rzekne – 1,800, in Krustpils – 540, in Gulbene – 540, in Sloka – 2,700 m².⁴⁵³ In the following years, many apartments, and houses of the local population were also allocated to the military.

The generals and officers of the occupation army felt and behaved in Latvia as in a conquered land in which they were allowed to do anything. In a report to Lācis, the military prosecutor of the Latvian Basin, Lieutenant Colonel Maksimenko, stated: "... It has been established that in Liepāja, there are still facts of arbitrariness on the part of both representatives of the troops and garrison officers, manifested in the illegal occupation of dwellings and apartments without any knowledge of the city authorities."⁴⁵⁴ In connection with the unsatisfactory maintenance of the occupied premises, Lācis wrote in his 24 November 1945 report to I. Bagramyan, Commander of the Troops of the BMD: "At the time when the Baltic Military District handed over the unused premises at Strēlnieku Street 9 to the Navy for coastal defence refresher courses, it was found that baths, gas appliances, gas cookers, gas and electricity meters, door handles and keys had been removed from the building, the house was fouled and left unguarded. In the building at Parka Street 2 ... which had been given to the Baltic Military District for temporary use, many window frames and glass had been removed, the floors and kitchen furnaces had been

⁴⁵¹ NAL, PA-101.f., 8.desc., 11. file, pp 38., 39

⁴⁵² NAL, PA-101.f., 8.desc., 11. file, p 39

⁴⁵³ NAL, 270.f., 1.s.desc., 139. file, p 8

⁴⁵⁴ NAL, 270.f., 1.s.desc., 170. file, p 173

removed, some of the clay tile fireplaces and doors had been damaged, some rooms flooded, there was a lot of rubbish and dirt ...”⁴⁵⁵

Many officers used the flats they received quite unfairly. For example, Lieutenant Colonel Lobanov received an apartment at Miera Street 9, apt. 14 (Riga). Soon after, he left for his new service post in Klaipėda where he got a four-room apartment. He did not de-register himself or his family from his five-room apartment in Riga, which had an area of 94.67 m², but signed in two more people. Only Lobanov's parents actually lived in the Miera Street flat, and the two of them occupied the entire five-room flat.⁴⁵⁶ There were many cases when the housing area, which had been handed over to the Garrison Housing Operation Unit, was reformed or occupied by persons who had no connection with the military. The Riga City District Executive Committees did not have accurate records of the living space occupied by military personnel. The building managers did not de-register the military personnel who left Riga from the building log. In many cases, servicemen registered their relatives, friends, and acquaintances in their living quarters. Many of them had surplus living space, but it was not subject to any “compaction”. On 21 August 1950, the USSR CoM adopted the decision "On Improving the Living Conditions of Soviet Army and Navy Officers". It instructed all localities where garrisons are located to allocate 10% of the commissionable living space in all newly built buildings and in buildings under construction for the accommodation of generals, admirals, and officers. The Ministry of War and the Ministry of the Navy were placed in charge of all living space occupied by generals, admirals, officers and their families.⁴⁵⁷ This decision was actively used for a long time by the BMD and the Baltic Naval Command to obtain an increasing number of apartments for generals, admirals, and officers. In a secret letter dated 5 February 1957, P., Deputy Chairman of the LSSR CoM, pointed out to Lācis that the procedure laid down in the 1950 decision of the USSR CoM on providing privileges in the allocation of apartments to generals, admirals and officers of the USSR Armed Forces should continue to be strictly complied with.⁴⁵⁸

⁴⁵⁵ NAL, 270.f., 1.s.desc., 131. file, p 97

⁴⁵⁶ NAL, 270.f., 1.s.desc., 349. file, p 18

⁴⁵⁷ NAL, 270.f., 1.s.desc., 550. file, pp 95., 96

⁴⁵⁸ NAL, 270.f., 1.s.desc., 1117. file, p 4

It was quite common for civilians to be evicted from buildings that had been handed over to the military authorities. For example, at Komjaunatnes Street 26/28, Riga, military personnel of a military construction battalion were placed, while the families living there were moved elsewhere. The same happened in a building at Raiņa Boulevard 4 in Riga, where the LSSR Military Commissariat was located. In June 1953, the Military Commissar, Major General V. Dambergs, requested the LSSR CoM to support the relocation of H. Raciņa, G. Rancāne, J. Gerste, Kikute and S. Šapovalove. The 75320th Troop Detachment requested that civilians be relocated from the house at Ludzas Street 26.⁴⁵⁹ Needless to say, these and all the other demands of the military were unfortunately met in time.

Such arbitrariness of the military was also common in the small towns of Latvia. In the request of 29 May 1956 to the USSR Minister of Defence G. Zhukov to redeploy troop unit No. 17965 from Pļaviņas, the Secretary of the Pļaviņas District Committee of the LCP, Vorobjovs, and Chairman of the District Executive Committee, Luste, wrote:

The Pļaviņas District Committee of the Communist Party of Latvia and the Executive Committee of the District Council of Workers' Deputies address you with this appeal and ask you to pay attention to the following conditions which have now arisen in the Pļaviņas District.

The schools in the centre of the district – the 1st Latvian and the 2nd Russian Secondary Schools – are located in completely unsuitable classrooms due to a lack of adequate space. For example, at Secondary School 2 classes are held in 4 unsuitable residential buildings and in the premises of Secondary School 1. Working in such cramped conditions, this school has been forced to eliminate all classrooms without exception – physics, chemistry and practical classrooms, gym, pioneer room, library, etc.

Moreover, both schools work in two shifts, with a third shift for the comprehensive evening school.

⁴⁵⁹ NAL, 270.f., 1.s.desc., 631. file, p 228.; 996. file, p 20.; 823. file, p 225

This deprives the schools of the opportunity to hold practical classes in physics, chemistry, science and other subjects, and there is no polytechnic training, as there are no classrooms or workshops adapted for this purpose.

This means that we cannot comply with the curriculum, we do not give the pupils what they have to learn at school and what they need for further studies and practical work, that is, we do not comply with the directives of the 20th Congress of the CPSU on the education of the people.

It should also be noted that of the 18 schools in the district, only three are secondary schools and two are located in the centre of the district; these should receive the majority of pupils from the periphery's seven-year and primary schools. There must be sufficient boarding places to accommodate pupils from the periphery and their own neighbourhoods.

What is the situation with boarding schools in Pļaviņas?

In the 1955/1956 academic year, out of 177 pupils living more than 5 km from the school who had to be admitted to boarding school, only 67 were admitted, while the remaining 110 were forced to walk home 5 or more kilometres every day or to seek shelter with individuals or acquaintances on cold winter and rainy days.

One cannot help mentioning the situation of the teachers' flats; 11 of them have no flats at all, they stay in hotels and with friends, hoping to get a flat. Most of the other teachers live in private flats or, like the principals of the two secondary schools, in boarding schools. The specialist teachers sent here do not work because of the lack of flats, and are replaced by non-specialist teachers, thus reducing the quality of teaching and academic results.

As can be seen from the above, 1955/1956 academic year presented a completely intolerable situation.

What are the prospects for the 1956/1957 school year?

The outlook has not improved, it has worsened.

The contingent of pupils is increasing this school year, which means that additional space is needed to organise parallel classes and boarding places, but there is no possibility of allocating additional space in the town of Pļaviņas.

One may ask: what has the district party committee and the district executive committee done to eliminate these abnormalities?

The District Party Committee and the District Executive Committee took all possible measures to place the schools, but how they were placed and under what conditions they worked can be seen from the above.

At the beginning of the 1955/1956 academic year, the Party District Committee was packed up and the Komsomol District Committee building was handed over to the 2nd Secondary Boarding School. The former District Executive Committee building was transferred to the boarding school of Secondary School No. 1.

In addition, 2 houses are rented from private individuals, which, it should be noted, must not be occupied by children under any circumstances. A number of other measures were taken to improve teaching and educational work in schools.

To get out of the predicament, a series of republic and district commissions of various kinds were set up to go around the city, checking, studying, measuring and calculating, but finding no way out.

The LSSR CoM Minister of Education, c. Samsons, recommended not to enrol children in the upper grades and to send them to other districts. We believe, and you will probably agree, that this is an apolitical and wrong way out, which contradicts the Party's and the Government's instructions on the implementation of the law on general education and the transition to general secondary education in the sixth five-year period.

We are recommended to close the district's cultural centre and relocate the schools there. We believe that this is also not a way out, but a complete extreme, because the district must not be left without its last island of culture; we think you will agree with this.

It should be noted that this is the situation in the centre of the district, not only with the schools, but also with other organisations, not only with the teachers, but also with other citizens of Pļaviņas.

Today, 53 more families are registered in the housing queue and teachers, 16 of them have been sent to work in Pļaviņas district – these are doctors, Soviet and party workers and other specialists. In the town, 18 families live in emergency houses, their lives are in danger, and they need to be allocated housing immediately.

Commercial organisations are not in the best condition either, as they do not deliver the goods demanded by the population due to a lack of warehouses, not to mention the institutions and organisations located in the residential buildings.

To solve all the problems, the party and the government should soon allocate huge funds for building schools, housing, commercial premises and warehouses. This is understandably impossible, as our Party and Government have far more important facilities that require immediate capital investment – where the fate of our entire homeland is at stake.

In order to solve an almost insoluble problem in our conditions, to make conditions more or less normal for the children of the two schools, to open additional classes, to arrange practical classrooms, pioneer rooms, libraries, a gymnasium, to enlarge the boarding house, to create normal living conditions for the teachers and to solve a number of other pressing questions, we consider it possible to redeploy Troop No. 17965, which is currently stationed in Pļaviņas and occupies 6,569 m² or 35% of the 18,300 m² of the town's total communal stock, including 5,216 m² of housing and 1,353 m² of commercial and warehouse stock, which includes stables, warehouses and catering establishments.

We consider this possible because the decision of the Party and the Government to reduce the USSR armed forces makes it possible to deploy these units in better conditions, with much less inconvenience for local organisations, at the expense of the liberation of the premises of the demobilised units not only within our republic but also beyond its borders. It should be borne in mind that the troops in question live in Pļaviņas only in winter, but outside the republic they work in various regions, and the occupied premises stand empty for most of the year losing their quality. It should also be borne in mind that such a small

town of 3,500 inhabitants has another troop unit, No 41756, which also occupies a certain amount of living space and other premises. It is clear that for a town as small as Pļaviņas, maintaining two troop units is too heavy a burden.

Despite our repeated requests, the issue has not been resolved to date, but there is now every opportunity to resolve it. To overcome the great and, for us, essentially insurmountable difficulties. We are asking you, Georgy Konstantinovich, to help us in this matter.

We hope that you will not reject this great plea of ours.⁴⁶⁰

As large areas of housing were given to active-duty military personnel, the housing crisis in Riga and throughout Latvia became more pressing. Moreover, it should be noted that the military quickly called to Latvia many family members and relatives from all over the USSR, who soon afterwards demanded housing for themselves. Thousands of migrants were living in the many garrisons and closed towns of the occupying army and were employed in providing services to the various troop units. When the military command decided it no longer needed these services, they were expelled from the garrisons and military towns after which the local authorities had to provide them with apartments.

On 20 November 1984, the USSR CoM adopted an official decision on the transfer of persons who had lost contact with the USSR Armed Forces and USSR KGB in the closed and isolated military towns. In his submission 30 April 1988 to J. Rubenis, Chairman of the LSSR CoM, Colonel General V. Grishin, Commander of the BMD, recommended: "To speed up the transfer of those who have lost contact with the Ministry of Defence of the USSR from the closed and isolated military towns to housing of the local councils and to ensure that 100% of the housing from the local councils is allocated for the needs of military personnel."⁴⁶¹

A total of 633 families had to be relocated in Latvia by 1 January 1987, and 769 families by 1 January 1988. Such relocations were carried out from buildings of the apartment allotment section of Riga

⁴⁶⁰ NAL, 270.f., 1.s.desc., 1123. file, pp 56.-6

⁴⁶¹ NAL, 270.f., 9.desc., 150. file, p 76

Garrison, Jelgava Garrison, Liepāja Garrison, Jēkabpils Garrison, and Daugavpils Garrison⁴⁶² where, for example, 110 families who lost ties with the USSR Ministry of Defence had to be relocated from the 372nd Fighter Bomber Regiment based at the Daugavpils airfield. The 26 January 1988 decision of the CCCP and the USSR CoM "On measures to strengthen the USSR air defence system" required that 84 families be moved from the closed and isolated military towns of the air defence garrisons in Riga district, 3 from Venstpils and Ventspils District, 102 from Liepāja and Liepāja District, 13 from Tukums and Tukums District, 5 from Dobele District and 5 in Daugavpils and Daugavpils District.⁴⁶³ Providing apartments for these resettled families was a very difficult and complex issue for the Latvian local authorities.

5.4. Privileges of demobilised military personnel

The most privileged position in the process of distribution of apartments was held by demobilised armed forces officers and retired military personnel. The first major downsizing of the Red Army and demobilisation of senior soldiers after WWII took place in the summer of 1945. The Central Committee of the AC(b)P and the USSR Sovnarkom required that in all demobilised personnel be provided with work, housing, and other forms of material assistance at the place they arrived.

On 4 July 1945, the Riga City Executive Committee adopted a broad decision on care of the demobilised and instructed district executive committees to establish housing stocks by 10 July to provide the demobilised with housing.⁴⁶⁴ The LSSR Council of People's Commissars and the Central Committee of the C(b)PL, in its decision of 5 July 1945 "On measures in connection with the demobilisation of the senior personnel of the Active Army", instructed the People's Commissariat for Communal Economy and the chairmen of county executive committees to establish housing stocks for the demobilised and premises (dormitories and hotels) for their accommodation by 12 July 1945.⁴⁶⁵ By the decision of the USSR Sovnarkom of 21 September 1945 "On measures to provide assistance to demobilised persons, families of

⁴⁶² NAL, 270.f., 9.desc., 150. file, pp 78., 79

⁴⁶³ NAL, 270.f., 9.desc., 150. file, p 95

⁴⁶⁴ NAL, 1400.f., 2.desc., 5. file, p 343

⁴⁶⁵ NAL, 270.f., 1.s.desc., 113. file, pp 1., 2

fallen soldiers, invalids of the Patriotic War and families of servicemen", the people's commissariats and departments were obliged to place 10% of the living space in all newly built and renovated buildings at the disposal of the executive committees of the local soviets. Only demobilised persons, families of military personnel, invalids of the Patriotic War and families of fallen soldiers were allowed to live in the specified area.⁴⁶⁶ By the end of 1945, 4,482 apartments had been allocated to demobilised people in Riga⁴⁶⁷, and 400 apartments in other Latvian cities.⁴⁶⁸

Those demobilised who did not have permanent housing were first registered according to their temporary place of residence, but once entered into the temporary or permanent housing register, they were entitled to claim housing for themselves and family members. This was done mostly at the expense of compaction of the permanent population. Some demobilised officers were provided with housing based on personal orders from the authorities such as Deglavs' 2 February 1947 recommendation to Rekke: "Within five days to provide the family of Khaleyev, demobilised from the Red Army, consisting of 3 people, with living quarters".⁴⁶⁹ On 12 July 1947, Deputy Chairman of the Riga City Executive Committee, Desmitnieks, instructed the Chairman of the Red Army District Executive Committee: "Colonel Comrade N. Zharov, who has been demobilised from the ranks of the Soviet army due to his service, to take over the housing supply register in your district. Instruct the housing sector to this effect."⁴⁷⁰ On 5 October 1956, Admiral Golovko, Commander of the Baltic Fleet, secretly wrote to Kalnbērziņš: "Rear-Admiral S. Kiselev is taking leave from the Navy due to ill health. He has served in the Navy for more than 32 years. He has chosen Riga as his place of residence. I appeal to you to support him in getting an apartment in Riga." On 10 October 1956, Kalnbērziņš wrote a resolution about this application: "The request of the Fleet Commander must be granted. Invite Comrade Kiselev to decide together – where."⁴⁷¹

⁴⁶⁶ NAL, 270.f., 2.desc., 11. file, p 8

⁴⁶⁷ NAL, 270.f., 1.s.desc., 139. file, p 90

⁴⁶⁸ NAL, 432.f., 5.desc., 1. file, p 18

⁴⁶⁹ NAL, 1400.f., 2.desc., 34. file, p 32

⁴⁷⁰ NAL, 1400.f., 2.desc., 34. file, p 132

⁴⁷¹ NAL, PA-101.f., 19.desc., 76. file, p 81

The USSR CoM 8 October 1953 decision again firmly stated that retired officers should be provided with housing "first and foremost". In the 24 September 1953 decision "On measures to provide financially for officers of the Soviet Army and Navy who are retired or placed in reserve", the USSR CoM instructed the executive committees of local Soviets of Workers' Deputies to provide retired or reserve officers with living quarters from the 10 % of the housing stock provided by local councils in accordance with the decision of the USSR Sovnarkom of 21 September 1945. The executive committees of towns and districts, together with commissions set up for this purpose, managed housing for retired and reserve officers and their families. This decision also applied to those generals, admirals, and officers who had been demobilised after 14 April 1953.⁴⁷² On 13 October 1953, the LSSR CoM adopted a similar decision.⁴⁷³ Litvinov ordered the chairmen of executive committees of towns and districts on 23 March 1954: "The Council of Ministers of the Latvian SSR instructs you ... to adopt measures to provide retired officers in the reserve with housing."⁴⁷⁴

The Riga City Executive Committee's 23 September 1955 decision instructed: "...provide retired reserve officers with living quarters. Prepare and approve in the Executive Committees concrete measures to provide retired officers in reserve with apartments, providing for the expropriation of surplus living space occupied by organisations and institutions, the compaction of those who have living space, the deprivation of living space from those who have left for permanent work in the districts of the Republic or beyond the borders of the Republic."⁴⁷⁵

During this period, the Leningrad and Moscow Executive Committees imposed strict restrictions on the admission of demobilised officers to the housing register. One of the main reasons for this refusal was that these officers had not been conscripted into the USSR Armed Forces from the town in which they had arrived after being decommissioned. Unfortunately, no such restrictions were imposed in Riga or in other Latvian cities. In a letter to the commander of the

⁴⁷² NAL, 270.f., 2.desc., 1850. file, pp 263., 264

⁴⁷³ NAL, 270.f., 2.desc., 1904. file, p 193

⁴⁷⁴ NAL, 270.f., 1.s.desc., 997. file, p 128

⁴⁷⁵ NAL, 270.f., 1.s.desc., 1060. file, p 9

61808th troop unit, J. Kacens, the LSSR CoM Affairs Officer, explained, "On behalf of the Council of Ministers of the Latvian SSR, I declare that demobilised persons who entered the military service records of the Riga city military commissariats and were retired from the Soviet Army with an assignment to a place of residence in Riga may enlist in the city of Riga."⁴⁷⁶

The case of demobilised Major N. Popov illustrates this situation. He and his family of five settled in Riga, and on 4 February 1956 he was registered as a military serviceman at Lenina Street 120, apt. 4. After demobilisation, he went to Leningrad, where he wanted to join the housing queue. However, the Executive Committee of the October District of Leningrad refused to do so, because the Leningrad City Executive Committee had decided that only citizens who had lived in Leningrad for at least five years before WWII and who had living quarters in Leningrad were admitted to the register. Popov returned to his family in Riga at 120 Lenina Street, apt. 4. The tenant of this apartment, Korpachev, left Riga and checked out of the building register. On 10 June 1957 the Executive Committee of the Kirov District of Riga decided: "To issue a warrant to the reserve officer Major N. Popov and his family of 5 persons for the vacated living quarters at 120 Lenina Street, apt 4, consisting of two walk-through rooms with an area of 30.37 m2 and a shared kitchen."⁴⁷⁷

On 16 August 1955, after the Soviet government decided to reduce the number of troops in Austria, the CCCP Bureau decided: "... 2. To instruct the Executive Committees of the Soviets of Workers' Deputies of towns and districts to provide those military officers and servants who are retired in accordance with the Government decision with living accommodation, paying particular attention to the living and working arrangements of officers retired in reserve, applying to them the easements provided for in Decision No 2364 of the Council of Ministers of 8 September 1953."⁴⁷⁸

Based on the USSR CoM 1 June 1962 decision, the USSR Minister of Defence, R. Malinovskyi, issued the order "On the provision of material supplies to subdivisions, units and detachments of

⁴⁷⁶ NAL, 270.f., 1.s.desc., 1179. file, p 32

⁴⁷⁷ NAL, 1432.f., 2.desc., 121. file, p 354

⁴⁷⁸ NAL, PA-101.f., 18.desc., 143. file, p 19

the missile troops and to the military officers of the atomic submarine service”: “... The commanders of military units, sub-units, detachments and ships, when retiring from active service military personnel who have served more than 15 years, including not less than 5 years on nuclear submarines, to notify the relevant regional, district or area people's deputies' councils, in private, that the said military personnel, in accordance with Decision No 562-230 of 1 June 1962 of the USSR Council of Ministers, is entitled to receive living quarters no later than three months after his arrival at his place of residence.”⁴⁷⁹ Taking advantage of these decisions, retired military commander Yemelyanov arrived in Riga and requested an apartment. In 1985, retired midshipman V. Abrosimov was sent from the Pacific Fleet to Riga. The Commander of the 45th Submarine Division of the Pacific Fleet, Rear-Admiral I. Goreleyev, informed the Riga City Council of People's Deputies that “... in accordance with the decision of the USSR CoM of June 1962, Midshipman V. Abrosimov has the right to receive housing no later than three months after his arrival at his place of residence.”⁴⁸⁰

Many Latvian permanent residents in the register received housing after a long wait or not at all: 23% of families received housing after waiting in a queue for eight or more years. This was also because retired military personnel were granted undeserved privileges in obtaining housing. The practical arrangements for allocation of apartments to retired military personnel is noted in an extract from the minutes of the meeting of the Commission for the Recruitment of Military Personnel Retired from the Armed Forces and for the Arrangement of Apartment and Housing Issues No 1 of 27 January 1989:

1. Request from the Cooperative Department of the Riga City Executive Committee for the provision of living accommodation for the 1st quarter of 1989 to retired Captain 1st Rank Oleg Ivanov, who has been on the housing register since 28 November 1986, has a family of 2 (he, his wife) and works as an engineer for the Riga City Executive Committee.

Decided: to authorise the allocation in 1989. ...

4. Request from the Military Commissariat of the Lenin District of the City of Riga for the provision of residential

⁴⁷⁹ NAL, 1400.f., 13.desc., 1074. file, p 8

⁴⁸⁰ NAL, 1400.f., 13.desc., 1074. file, p 8

accommodation to reserve sub-colonel Vladimir Sidorenko, a family of 4 ..., who has been on the housing register since 26 June 1987 and has been working in the Military Commissariat of the Lenin District since 1 June 1987. ...

Decided: to provide housing in 1989. ...

15. Application by Reserve Captain Vadim Portman, family of 6 ..., on the housing register since 28 January 1986, for housing for his large family. The request of Reserve Captain Portman is supported by the Chairman of the City Executive Committee.

Decided: to provide housing in 1989. ...⁴⁸¹”

The "Regulations on the Procedure for the Distribution of Residential Space in the Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic" approved on 30 December 1974 by the LSSR CoM and the Latvian Republic Council of Trade Unions prioritised the following for living space:

- a) invalids of the Great Patriotic War, invalids among soldiers who have become invalids as a result of injury, contusion or mutilation sustained in the defence of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics or in the performance of other military duties, or as a result of illness in connection with their stay at the front, and family members of soldiers and partisans who have fallen at the front or have been missing in the defence of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics or in the performance of other military duties,
- b) Heroes of the Soviet Union, Heroes of Socialist Labour and persons decorated with the Orders of Glory of the First, Second and Third Degrees, the Orders of Service to the Fatherland in the Armed Forces of the USSR of the First, Second, and Third Degrees, and the Orders of Labour of the First, Second and Third Degrees,
- c) generals, admirals, officers and warrant officers, midshipmen and servicemen who have served at least 20 calendar years in the Armed Forces of the USSR and the troops and institutions of the State Security Committee, the internal service of the Ministry of the Interior, the military and internal security and

⁴⁸¹ NAL, 1400.f., 13.desc., 308. file, p 1.-5

convoy guards who were retired from military service in accordance with the Law of 15 January 1960 on the new, substantial reduction of the Armed Forces of the USSR, and were retired from military service as from 1 January 1963 on account of ill-health, age or reduction in numbers,

- d) Specialists invited from other towns and localities by ministries, departments, enterprises, institutions, and organisations which do not keep records of citizens in need of housing, after consultation with the executive committee of the relevant local council of workers' deputies, and specialists invited by ministries, departments, enterprises, institutions and organisations which keep such records, after consultation with the local committee of the trade union, factory, plant. Professionals who have arrived with passes from higher and secondary education establishments after completing their studies or postgraduate studies and who are working in companies, establishments on secondment.⁴⁸²

Several decisions were taken to preserve, extend, and safeguard the privileges of retired military personnel in the future: as late as 7 September 1989, the CoM adopted the decision "On measures to be taken to provide living quarters for retired officers, warrant officers, midshipmen and servicemen in reserve". The "legal rights" of retired servicemen to housing were strictly guarded by the BMD Command and the LSSR Military Commissariat and by the Central Committee of the LCP, the LSSR CoM, the LSSR Prosecutor's Office, and local authorities.

One of the most widespread demands of the Latvian people during the Third Awakening was to abolish the decades-long, grossly unjust privileges of distributing apartments to retired military personnel. In 1989, allocation of additional living space to the leader of Interfront (Workers' International Front), retired officer I. Lopatin, was widely condemned among the population. The workers of the Fishermen's Consumers' Association of the Jūrmala Interdistrict requested the Executive Committee of the Riga City Council of People's Deputies to reconsider granting a large living area to I. Lopatin and annul this

⁴⁸² NAL, 270.f., 3.desc., 5849. file, pp 217., 218., 219., 221., 227

decision.⁴⁸³ In response, V. Petkevich, the head of the Riga City Council of People's Deputies' Office for Housing Inventory and Distribution, wrote on 23 February 1989:

We hereby inform you that on 26 July 1988, citizen Igor Lopatin, born in 1934, with a family of 3 (he, his wife Raisa Romashkina, born in 1941, his mother Yefrosinia Gubareva, born in 1910), was registered in a three-bedroom apartment in the Zolitudes housing area at A. Lejiņa Street 5-13, apartment area 39.6 m² (order No 144051, issued on 25 July 1988 by the Executive Committee of the Lenin District on the basis of Decision 5/7 of the Riga District Garrison Apartment Operation District of 21 July 1988). Lopatin came to Riga from Ulanude in 1986. Y. Gubareva, born in Rostov-on-Don Region, arrived in Riga on the day of receipt of the warrant, 25 July 1988. According to the application, he was discharged from the three-room apartment in question on 28 September 1988 because he had moved back to Rostov-on-Don.

In view of repeated applications of citizens with requests for illegal receipt of an apartment by citizen I. Lopatin and in view of the fact that the decisions of the Garrison Apartment Operation Department are not controlled by the District Executive Committees, on 15 February 1989 the City Executive Committee sent the materials to the Riga Garrison Military Prosecutor's Office in order to decide on the legality of granting an apartment to I. Lopatin.⁴⁸⁴

The draft decision "On Suspension of Certain Decisions of the Government of the USSR on the Territory of the Latvian SSR Adopted on the Issues of Extension of Easements to Certain Categories of Persons in Their Provision with Housing" prepared by the Supreme Soviet of the LSSR in January 1990 was widely supported by the Latvian public. In an appeal to the Supreme Soviet of the LSSR and the LSSR CoM on 29 January 1990, members of the Latvian People's Front branch *Jauniela* wrote: "... The Supreme Soviet of the Latvian SSR

⁴⁸³ NAL, 1400.f., 13.desc., 1091. file, pp 2., 3., 4

⁴⁸⁴ NAL, 1400.f., 13.desc., 1091. file, p 5

must immediately draw up strict laws to protect our country ... from the flood of demobilised officers.⁴⁸⁵

Members of the Riga Teachers' Veterans Club supported the decision to remove privileges for retired officers: "We fully support the position of the People's Deputies V. Artmane, G. Asars, Kramiņš, D. Īvāns, and others against granting privileges to retired Soviet army officers and other Soviet army-related personnel and to those who have only just begun their service in the territory of Latvia, as their tendency to move to the Baltic republics to secure a permanent place of residence after demobilisation and to relatives living in other regions of the Union, is well-known. This migration chain is well known. First one family, then parents, parents-in-law, children with parents, etc."⁴⁸⁶

At this time, similar letters were sent by the thousands to the Supreme Soviet, the Popular Front, and the editorial offices of Latvian newspapers. But there was also no shortage of protests from the military. In a message to Gorbunov, Chairman of the Presidium of the LSSR Supreme Soviet, Colonel General F. Kuzmin, Commander of the Troops of the BMD, wrote on 24 January 1990:

I have carefully read the draft decision of the Supreme Soviet of the Latvian SSR on the suspension of certain decisions of the CCCP and the Government of the USSR in the territory of the Republic about easements for military personnel, which you have sent me, prepared by the CoM of the Latvian SSR.

In the context of the downsizing of the USSR Armed Forces, the decision is inhuman, will unjustly affect the fate of many officers, warrant officers and their families, and will aggravate the already tense situation between the people of the republic and the military.

I believe that such an idea is incompatible with existing legislation and is contrary to the Constitution of the USSR.

Thereby I submit the only proposal on the current draft decision: not to allow this issue to be discussed in the Supreme Soviet of the LSSR, let alone the adoption of unconstitutional acts.⁴⁸⁷

⁴⁸⁵ NAL, 290.f., 2.desc., 1084. file, p 3

⁴⁸⁶ NAL, 290.f., 2.desc., 1084. file, p 146

⁴⁸⁷ NAL, 290.f., 2.desc., 1806. file, pp 1., 2

On 13 January 1990, 120 people attended a meeting of veterans of the Armed Forces of the USSR and adopted and sent to the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet and the CCCP the broad "Statement on Violation of the Right of Veterans of the Armed Forces to Housing", demanding:

- 1) To bring Decision No 46 of the Council of Ministers of the Latvian SSR of 14 February 1989 and Decision No 254 of 6 December 1989, in so far as they relate to the granting of benefits to retired servicemen, into full conformity with All-Union legislation and to instruct republic institutions and local authorities to comply with that legislation,
- 2) To provide, in 1990, improved housing accommodation for all persons placed on reserve or retired on grounds of ill-health or redundancy and admitted to the housing register before 1 January 1990,
- 3) The Military Commissar of the Latvian SSR and the Military Commissars of the districts must ensure that all authorities strictly enforce the laws on the allocation of housing primarily to veterans of the Armed Forces who have been retired from military service.⁴⁸⁸

Many troops, various war veterans' assemblies, and officers' wives protested against the planned reduction and abolition of military privileges. Many "protests" sent to the Supreme Soviet of the LSSR were veiled threats. The resolution adopted by the meeting of officers and midshipmen of the military unit 31185 on 12 February 1990 stated: "We call on the members of the Supreme Soviet of the Latvian SSR to be reasonable. If discriminatory decisions are taken, we will be forced to defend our rights."⁴⁸⁹

Despite these protests and threats, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the LSSR stipulated on 1 February 1990: "To accept the draft decision of the Supreme Soviet of the Latvian SSR, submitted by the Council of Ministers of the Republic, on the partial suspension of the implementation of certain decisions of the Government of the USSR in the territory of the Latvian SSR, adopted on the extension of easements

⁴⁸⁸ NAL, 290.f., 2.desc., 1806. file, pp 5., 6.,

⁴⁸⁹ NAL, 290.f., 10.desc., 2785. file, p 21

to certain categories of persons in their provision with housing, taking into account the proposals and comments made by the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Latvian SSR at its meeting."⁴⁹⁰ The 1 March 1990 decision of the Supreme Soviet of the LSSR stated:

1. To provide that the facilities for the provision of living accommodation in the Soviet Socialist Republic of Latvia in the cases specified in the attached decisions of the Government of the USSR shall apply only to those servicemen who are in the reserve or on leave and are not provided with living accommodation and to persons who have worked in the districts of the Extreme North, who, before their recruitment or departure for work, lived and were registered in the Latvian SSR or have relations of kinship as defined by the legislation of the Latvian SSR. Soldiers listed in the reserve or retired from the reserve who were registered before 1 March 1990 shall be provided with living quarters in accordance with the rules in force before the adoption of this Decision.
2. The Council of Ministers of the Latvian SSR, before 1 June 1990, with the participation of representatives of the Ministry of Defence of the USSR, the Ministry of the Interior of the Latvian SSR and the State Security Committee of the Latvian SSR, shall determine the procedure for the construction and use of the housing stock in the territory of the Latvian SSR in order to reconcile the interests of soldiers and local residents.⁴⁹¹

Although gradually the discriminatory privileges of retired military were reduced, they were not abolished completely and in fact were preserved forever. Article 4 of the "Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Latvia and the Government of the Russian Federation on the Social Protection of Military Pensioners of the Russian Federation and Members of Their Families Residing in the Territory of the Republic of Latvia", signed in Moscow on 30 April 1994, provided:

⁴⁹⁰ NAL, 290.f., 10.desc., 2785. file, p 21

⁴⁹¹ Herald of the Supreme Soviet and Government of the Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic - 15 March 1990, No 11, pp 637, 638.

1. Latvia shall guarantee to military pensioners and members of their families the use of living quarters in State and departmental housing stock buildings and confirm their property rights, including property rights to dwellings, apartments, garages, buildings in collective gardens, summer houses and other types of immovable property, and the right of possession thereof.

If appropriate legislation is adopted in the Republic of Latvia, military pensioners and members of their families may privatise the housing in which they live.

If the respective Latvian services are unable to provide communal, commercial and transport services to residential towns where military pensioners and members of their families have remained after the withdrawal of the troops, Latvia shall, at the request of the military pensioners, provide them with equivalent living accommodation from the housing stock vacated by the troops, except for the housing stock in Riga and Liepāja.

2. These individuals may sell or otherwise transfer property belonging to them by right of ownership.

Article 5 of the Agreement stated: “Military pensioners and members of their families who do not have a place to live or whose housing conditions need to be improved shall be provided with a well-furnished place to live in the same manner as other inhabitants of the Republic of Latvia, allocating housing also from living quarters vacated by troops withdrawn from the Republic of Latvia. In such a case, they shall be subject to the provisions of Article 4.”⁴⁹²

Understandably, this undeserved arrangement of maintaining privileges for retired military personnel caused discontent and indignation among the local population of Latvia.

⁴⁹² Ilgonis Upmalis, Ēriks Tilgass, Jānis Dinevičs, Anatolijs Gorbunovs. *Latvijas – PSRS karabāze. 1939.–1998: materiāli un dokumenti par Padomju armijas atrašanos Latvijā un tās izvešanu* [Latvian - USSR military base. 1939-1998: materials and documents on the presence of the Soviet Army in Latvia and its withdrawal], pp. 303, 304.

Afterword

The post-World War II period led to the decline of Western empires. But it took many more decades for the Soviet Union to destabilise and collapse. A wide variety of hypotheses have been put forward about the collapse of the USSR. One of the reasons for the was undoubtedly the failure to resolve the national question. By launching the democratisation process, Gorbachev also paved the way for the development of broad national movements aimed at regaining independence and withdrawing from the USSR. By 1990, the process of national liberation had already covered the vast territory of the USSR. It was significant that on 12 June 1990, the First Congress of People's Deputies of the RSFSR adopted the "Declaration on the State Sovereignty of the Russian Soviet Socialist Republic".

In general, the sovereignty process in the Soviet Union took place as follows: Estonia declared its state sovereignty on 16 November 1988, Lithuania – 18 May 1989, Azerbaijan – 23 September 1989, Latvia – 4 May 1990, Russia – 12 June 1990, Uzbekistan – 2 June 1990, Moldova – 23 June 1990, Ukraine – 16 July 1990, Belarus – 27 July 1990, Turkmenistan – 22 August 1990, Armenia – 23 August 1990, Tajikistan – 24 August 1990, Kazakhstan – 25 October 1990, Georgia – 14 November 1990, and Kyrgyzstan – 15 December 1990.⁴⁹³

The next step in the destruction of the USSR was the declaration of independence of the former Soviet republics. Latvia declared its independence on 21 August 1991⁴⁹⁴, Estonia – 21 August 1991, Ukraine – 24 August 1991, Belarus – 25 August 1991, Moldova – 27 August 1991, Azerbaijan – 30 August 1991, and Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan – 31 August 1991.⁴⁹⁵ Lithuania had already taken such a decision on

⁴⁹³ *K soyuzu suverennykh narodov. Sbornik dokumentov KPSS, zakonodatelnykh aktov, deklaratsiy, obrashheniy i prezidentskikh ukazov, posvyashhennykh probleme nacionalno-gosudarstvennogo suvereniteta* [Towards a Union of Sovereign Peoples. Collection of CPSU documents, legislative acts, declarations, appeals and presidential decrees, devoted to the problem of national state sovereignty]. – M., 1991. pp. 155-236.

⁴⁹⁴ Herald of the Supreme Council and Government of the Republic of Latvia. No.42. 1991, paragraph 446.

⁴⁹⁵ *Soyuz mozhno bylo sohranit.* [The Union could have been saved], pp. 303, 310, 315, 317.

11 April 1991⁴⁹⁶ and Georgia on 9 April 1991⁴⁹⁷. By the end of October 1991, only two republics remained in the former empire – Kazakhstan and Russia.

On 11 December 1991, in Belovezhskaya Pushcha, Belarus, the leaders of Belarus, Russia, and Ukraine signed the "Agreement on the Establishment of the Commonwealth of Independent States", which stated that "the USSR Union as a subject of international law and as a geopolitical reality ceases to exist"⁴⁹⁸. On 21 December 1991, the leaders of 11 Soviet republics (the Baltic republics and Georgia were not represented) met in Alma-Ata and dissolved the USSR and created the Union of Independent States. On 25 December 1991, following Gorbachev's abdication of power, the independence of the former republics became not only a political but also a legal fact.

The colonial policy of the Soviet Union inflicted enormous losses on the Latvian people. As a result of widespread migration and colonisation, by 1989 Latvians made up only 52% of the population in their homeland. The existence of the Latvian nation was in real danger.

The impact of migration on Latvia has been determined by several factors. First, it was a deliberate Soviet policy to tie Latvia closely to the Soviet Union, particularly because the Baltic republics were the USSR's outpost against the West in military strategic terms. Latvian loyalty was questioned, but migrants from the "old" republics were seen as the foundation for the regime. The most important method of colonisation Latvia was the recruitment of workers for the economically unjustified industry. Latvia suffered the most from these migrants who, in many cases, were simply fortune seekers, who destroyed Latvia's economy and culture. Alongside military occupation, organised colonisation and unrestricted migration imposed living conditions that posed a real threat to Latvians, their way of life, culture, and language. Historian Daina Bleiere notes: "As regards the consequences of the occupation, it is important to stress that it was carried out by a communist regime that sought to subjugate all political, economic, and other spheres. Thus, the consequences that follow any

⁴⁹⁶ A. V. Ostrovsky. *Glupost ili izmena. Rassledovanie gibeli SSSR*. [Foolishness or Treason. Investigating the demise of the USSR]. – M. 2011, p. 447.

⁴⁹⁷ *Soyuz možno bylo sohranit*. [The Union could have been saved], p. 224.

⁴⁹⁸ *Soyuz možno bylo sohranit*. [The Union could have been saved], p. 451.

occupation and subsequent annexation or colonisation, such as the infiltration of the military and civil servants of the occupying power and of the population, the economic exploitation of the occupied territory, the imposition of ideology and culture, merged organically with the introduction and imposition of the Soviet version of communist totalitarianism in all spheres of life.”⁴⁹⁹

The colonial policies of the Soviet Union were designed and implemented under the leadership of the "leading and driving force" of Soviet society – the Communist Party. Leonid Kravchuk, former Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine, writes about the long-lasting dictatorship of the Communist Party:

The USSR was a totalitarian empire, and an empire of the highest degree of cruelty. It needed a core to hold everything together – politics, the economy, the army, education, and all the other sectors that make a society viable. And that core was the CPSU. Well, you can take my word for it – I know better than anyone what magnetism in our great country was attached to the Communist Party! Everything revolved around it. The KGB (State Security Committee) itself did not determine anything there. 16 million communists, shoulder to shoulder, everywhere, from Brigadier to General Secretary. And the most ruthless principle of democratic centralism. Everyone, everywhere, was subject to this very scheme. Remember what the Party was holding on to? On obedient and unquestioning implementation of decisions. It did not matter what kind of decisions. They were all verbs – instruct, determine, recommend, reinforce, expedite, find, ensure, and so on. Command verbs – that's how I would describe them. All was based on them. Open any congress, any plenary decision, and you will find a kind of chronicle of the verbs thanks to which communism was planned. Funny? Laughter through tears. But the most paradoxical thing is that this set of verbs turned out to be universal.”⁵⁰⁰

⁴⁹⁹ Daina Bleiere. *Okupācijas sekas. // Baltijas brīvības ceļš* [Consequences of the occupation. Baltic Freedom Road]. – Riga, 2005, p.31.

⁵⁰⁰ *Soyuz mozhno bylo sohranit.* [The Union could have been saved], p. 500.

Many of Latvia's problems, including demographic changes that did not benefit the indigenous population, were also due to the LCP Central Committee workers, the government, and a whole series of republic ministries and departments who obeyed the orders of the CCCP and the centre, betraying the interests of their own people. Eva Tomsone concludes:

In general, Russians were willing to accept national elites because they accepted the loss of their cultural identity and Russification. ... Unlike Asian and African intellectuals, who were aware that their Western colonial masters looked down on them, Central and Eastern Europeans in Russia were welcomed with open arms if they accepted Russian linguistic and cultural identity. One cannot deny the kindness with which the Russians welcomed the abandonment of the German, Polish, Ukrainian, Lithuanian, or Estonian nation in favour of their own (nation). These defectors were not only accepted as Russians, ... but accepted with gratitude.⁵⁰¹

The processes of colonisation of Latvia are most closely associated with the names of the long-time leaders of the LCP – Kalnbērziņš, Pelše, and Voss. It was these "defectors" who were the most active and ardent supporters of the "great Russian nation" and its "fraternal aid" and promoters of the colonisation of Latvia. This was particularly evident after the defeat of the Latvian national communists in 1959 when the influx of migrants into Latvia increased rapidly once more. In his article "Manifesto of Great Friendship", Pelše thanked Moscow for the project of Russification of the Latvian people and fervently promised to promote its implementation. He described Russian as "the second mother tongue of the workers of the Latvian SSR" and declared that all manifestations of nationalism would be destroyed in Latvia because they would not disappear of their own accord.⁵⁰²

⁵⁰¹ Eva Tomsone. *Imperskoe znanie: russkaya literatura i kolonializm*. [Imperial Knowledge: Russian Literature and Colonialism]. *Perekrestki* [Crossroads]. No 1-2, 2007, p. 40.

⁵⁰² Pravda – 30 August 1961

In justifying unrestricted migration and the colonisation of Latvia, Voss proudly stated, "In our republic, most of the work collectives are multinational collectives, and the students at general schools, vocational-technical secondary schools, and universities are usually multinational. Millions of people change their place of residence every year, often crossing the borders of the united and autonomous republics."⁵⁰³

During this period, many books were written and published throughout the Soviet Union and also in Latvia, which, like the frequent conferences, gave the appearance of the prosperity and success of Leninist national policy, of the solution of the national question. In reality, the gap between science, politics and life was growing ever wider and more ominous. Many social scientists preferred to write laudatory treatises rather than serious studies of national relations that was beyond all analysis and serious criticism. Negative phenomena, accumulated over many decades, were ignored and driven down deep. The self-preservation tendencies of small nations were also completely ignored.

The results of decades of colonisation can be seen from the fact that after the collapse of the Soviet Union, 25,289,500 Russians (17.4% of the total population in 1989) and 4,961,000 (18.5% of the total population) other indigenous peoples of the Russian Federation lived outside the borders of the Russian Federation.⁵⁰⁴ The Russian population in the republics of the former USSR had become the most denationalised, less aware of their national roots than others. But they were also not part of the life of the national republics. The least integrated were the marginalised – low-skilled and poorly settled workers who roamed all over the country and retired military and former nomenklatura workers who had enjoyed a privileged position. After the collapse of the USSR and the creation of many new independent states, many Russians did not even think of returning to their homes but stayed where they had been sent or where they had come. In 1992, 14-15% of Russians were thinking about leaving Latvia, but 68% wanted to stay.⁵⁰⁵

⁵⁰³ Cīņa – 29 June 1982

⁵⁰⁴ Alexander Vdovin. *Podlinnaya istoriya russkikh. XX vek* [The true history of the Russians. The twentieth century], p.400.

⁵⁰⁵ Diena – 19 July 2013

Sergey Kara-Murza described the attitude of current Russian authorities in 2007 towards Russians living abroad: “Politicians and even state bodies in the RF (Russian Federation) are concerned about the rights of Russians across the border, such as the right of schoolchildren to learn in Russian in Latvia. This is addressed as defending the rights of compatriots, even though this is obviously at odds with reality. For more than 15 years, Latvia has been another country, the Russians there have been fighting not to return to Russia, but to obtain Latvian citizenship, and there is no reason to call them compatriots (the outdated word "tribesmen" would be more appropriate here).⁵⁰⁶

Russian President Vladimir Putin and other Russian statesmen have repeatedly called on Russians from the former Soviet republics (including Latvia) to return to Russia to help solve its current demographic and economic problems. It would be important for Russia to recover the millions of Russians who have been scattered all over the world, otherwise they will gradually be replaced by foreigners, which has already happened to a large extent in recent years. Līga Fjodorova writes about the return of these "compatriots" to their homeland: “The call of the President and Prime Minister of Russia to their compatriots to return to their ethnic homeland – Russia – is a reasonable solution for diplomatic talks between Latvia and Russia, because anyone who associates their ethnicity with Russia rather than their loyalty to the Latvian state has the opportunity to obey the call of their compatriots and exercise their right under Article 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to return to their country.”⁵⁰⁷

Unfortunately, this call has never been heard or heeded. Consequently, the consequences of Soviet colonial policy and the colonisation of Latvia have not yet been eliminated.

⁵⁰⁶ Sergey Kara-Murza. *Demontazh Naroda* [Dismantling of the people]. – Moscow, 2007, p. 17.

⁵⁰⁷ *Nevienam mēs Latviju nedodam* [We are not giving Latvia to anyone], p.236-237.

ABBREVIATIONS

UN – United Nations
SC – Supreme Council
BMD – Baltic Military District
CSO – Central Statistical Office
NKVD – People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs
RF – Russian Federation
C(b)PR – Communist (Bolshevik) Party of Russia
RSFSR – Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic
LCP – Latvian Communist Party
C(b)PL – Communist (Bolshevik) Party of Latvia
LSSR – Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic
LSDSP – Latvian Social Democratic Workers' Party
MTS – Machinery and Tractor Station
CPSU – Communist Party of the Soviet Union
CCCP – Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union
USSR – Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
Sovnarkom – Council of People's Commissars
KGB – State Security Committee
MGB/NKGB – People's Commissariat for State Security
SEF – State Electrotechnical Factory
AC(b)P – All-Union Communist (Bolshevik) Party

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