

# The Three Occupations of Latvia 1940–1991

SOVIET AND NAZI TAKE-OVERS AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES



# THE PERFIDIOUS HANDSHAKE

Translation

## Secret Additional Protocol.

**On the cover: German Fuehrer Hitler's emissary, Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop, and Soviet Dictator Joseph Stalin shake hands on concluding the Soviet–German Non-Aggression Treaty, known as the Hitler–Stalin Pact, in Moscow on 23 August 1939.**

**The Treaty allowed Hitler to invade Poland on 1 September 1939 unleashing World War II.**

**For 22 months two totalitarian powers, the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany, were allies in this crime against peace.**

In connection with the signing of the Non-Aggression Treaty between the German Reich and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the plenipotentiary signatories of both parts have considered in strictly secret discussions the question of delineating their mutual spheres of interest in Eastern Europe. These discussions have led to the following result:

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

2. In the event of a territorial and political rearrangement of the areas belonging to the Polish state, the spheres of influence of Germany and the U.S.S.R. shall be bounded approximately by the line of the rivers Narev, Vistula and San.

The question of whether the interests of both parties make desirable the maintenance of an independent Polish State and how such a state should be bounded can only be definitely determined in the course of further political developments.

In any event both Governments will resolve this question by means of a friendly agreement.

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

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

Moscow, August 23, 1939.

For the Government  
of the German Reich v. Ribbentrop

Plenipotentiary of the Government  
of the U.S.S.R. V. Molotov

# THE PERFIDIOUS AGREEMENT

The Hitler–Stalin Pact included a Secret Protocol that provided for a division of Poland and established “Spheres of Influence” between Germany and the Soviet Union in Eastern Europe.

Thus, through secret collaboration between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, Latvia became the defenceless object of aggressive Soviet designs and pressures that led to its occupation and annexation in 1940. The Soviet Union denied the existence of the agreement and declared it a falsification until 1989.

## Geheimes Zusatzprotokoll.

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

1. Für den Fall einer territorial-politischen Umgestaltung in den zu den baltischen Staaten (Estland, Lettland, Litauen) gehörenden Gebieten bildet die südliche Grenze Litauens zugleich die Grenze der Interessensphären Deutschlands und der UdSSR. Hierbei wird der Grenzverlauf Litauens am Nilensky Gebiet beiderseits nachtragen.

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

Die Frage, ob die beiderseitigen Interessen die Wahrung eines unabhängigen polnischen Staates erwünscht erscheinen lassen und wie dieser Staat abgegrenzt wäre, kann endgültig erst im Laufe der weiteren politischen Entwicklung geklärt werden.

In jedem Falle werden bei Regierungen diese Frage in Wege einer freundschaftlichen-Vereinbarung lösen.

3) Hinsichtlich des Südostens Europas wird von sowjetischer Seite das Interesse an Bessarabien betont. Von deutscher Seite wird das völlige politische Desinteresse an diesen Gebieten erklärt.

4) Dieses Protokoll wird von beiden Seiten streng geheim behandelt werden.

Moskau, den 23. August 1939.

Für die  
Deutsche Reichsregierung:

Für Vollmacht  
der Regierung der  
UdSSR:

*W. Ribbentrop* *M. Molotow*

## **The Three Occupations of Latvia 1940–1991**

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# The Three Occupations of Latvia

## **1940–1991**

SOVIET AND NAZI TAKE-OVERS  
AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES

OCCUPATION MUSEUM FOUNDATION  
RIGA 2005

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# INTRODUCTION: THREE OCCUPATIONS AND CONSEQUENCES

**Occupation ... 7. the seizure and control of an area by military forces, esp. foreign territory. 8. the term of control of a territory by foreign military forces.**

The Random House Dictionary of the English Language

**Territory is considered occupied when it is actually placed under the authority of the hostile army.**

Laws and Customs of War on Land (Hague IV).  
Article 42. 18 October 1907

**Beginning of the occupation: Soviet tanks in Riga around noon on 17 June 1940.**



Military occupation is both an act of aggression and an extended period of military presence and control by a hostile army of a territory not its own. In the early 1940s, Latvia was invaded three times:

**June 1940** by the military forces of the Soviet Union  
**June–July 1941** by the military forces of Nazi Germany  
**July 1944–May 1945** by the military forces of the Soviet Union

**Military presence and control by the occupying forces lasted from 1940 to 1991, when Latvia regained its independence.**

The military presence both of Soviet and Nazi troops was the single most important factor in subduing the Latvian nation and preventing it from exercising its sovereign rights. Although both occupying powers installed collaborative quasi-governments or administrations, **effective control of the country and intimidation and suppression of the population were assured by the presence of foreign troops.** The Russian Army, the successor of the Soviet Army, left Latvia only in 1994, three years after independence was restored.

**The first Soviet occupation in 1940 sealed the fate of the sovereign state of Latvia and its neighbours, Estonia and Lithuania, for the next 51 years.** It was an unprovoked occupation, take-over and annexation of a small neighbouring state by a major power breaching international treaties and agreements. The Latvian government of 1940 had to decide between a hopeless, bloody resistance and acquiescence to an ultimatum under the threat of overwhelming military force. It chose the latter. The regime change was directed from Moscow under the guise of legality. Latvia as a sovereign state ceased to exist de facto, but continued to exist de jure because many nations refused to recognise the Soviet take-over.

**The second and the third occupations were wartime occupations of Latvian territory. The people of Latvia exercised no sovereign power – power passed from occupier to occupier.** While the German military invasion was accomplished within a couple of weeks and met little Soviet resistance, the second Soviet occupation took close to a year to be completed. The battles devastated much of the country. At the end of World War II in Latvia, about 1/3 of its pre-war population was no longer present: killed in war, executed, murdered in the Holocaust, allowed to die by deprivation in prison camps, deported to the Soviet Union and Germany, scattered in prisoner-of-war and refugee camps.

**These three successive foreign occupations had a cumulative effect on the people and their psyche.** The psychological and actual terror of two totalitarian regimes exacted a heavy human toll – destroyed lives, destroyed relationships, destroyed trust. Social and ethnic structures were

mercilessly torn apart. The Soviets practised class warfare; the Nazis – racial cleansing. Under the second Soviet occupation, terror to force people into submission continued in its most cruel forms until the death of Stalin, but repressions did not end until Latvia regained its independence in 1991.

This brief story of the three occupations of Latvia begins with the conspiracy between the two totalitarian powers, Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, that led to the destruction of independent Latvia. The 1940–41 Soviet occupation with its brutal realpolitik is featured at length as representative of what followed. It is a story of cynical disregard for international laws and agreements. It is a story of betrayal and cruelty. It is a story of crimes against humanity. It is the story that presages the other two occupations, both as acts of aggression and as acts of oppression. The other two occupations are characterised by their cynical exploitation of the “liberation” theme and the intimidation, manipulation and exploitation of a society reeling under the effects of both occupations and war.

Although few in the world disagree with the interpretation of occupation provided here, Russia, the successor state of the Soviet Union, still clings to the myth created, put forth and propagandised by Communist ideology. It disregards or distorts facts to claim that there was no occupation, but a “socialist revolution” in Latvia and the other Baltic states. The Sovietisation of the states and their incorporation into the Soviet Union are presented as a logical – and legitimate – expression of popular will.

**Adherence to this Communist myth and refusal to accept and condemn the illegality of the occupation in 1940 and its consequences by the Russian Federation, the successor state of the Soviet Union, are dangerous signs not only for developing mutual relationships between Russia and the Baltic states but for the future role of Russia in the field of international relations in general.** Is Russia ready to foreswear its past ideology and practice, or must its neighbours and the world fear recurrences and relapses for years to come?

# INDEPENDENT LATVIA 1918–1940 AND ITS INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Latvia became an independent state after World War I. From 1915 on, the war between the Russian and German empires was fought on Latvian soil. The war caused the exodus of hundreds of thousands of Latvians to Russia and left large areas of the country devastated. Units of Latvian Riflemen fought against the invading Germans and for two years helped to stem their advance. In 1917, the Russian Empire, which had been sovereign over Latvian lands since the eighteenth century, collapsed and was torn asunder by Lenin's Communist revolution. **Latvia declared its independence on 18 November 1918** and was immediately threatened by the advancing Red Army that tried to take over as the German army was leaving. The Latvian provisional government had at first only a few hundred poorly equipped soldiers at its disposal and had to rely on recruited German troops and support of Western Allies to survive. As it built

## Declaration of Latvia's independence on 18 November 1918.



up trust among the population, the Latvian Army evolved into a capable military force that successfully fended off renegade Germans and by 1920 freed the country from the Red Army.

Soviet Russia (the predecessor of the Soviet Union) recognised Latvia's independence in a **Peace Treaty signed on 11 August 1920**. In its Article 2 Soviet Russia stated that it "unreservedly recognises the independence and sovereignty of the Latvian State and voluntarily and forever renounces all sovereign rights ... to Latvian people and territory." **A Non-Aggression Treaty with the Soviet Union was signed on 5 February 1932**, based on the 11 August 1920 Peace Treaty, whose agreements, it said, "inalterably and for all time form the firm basis" of the relationship of the two states.

The independence of Latvia was recognised de jure by the Allied Supreme Council (France, Great Britain, Italy, Japan, Belgium) on **26 January 1921**. Other states followed suit. On **22 September 1921** Latvia was admitted to membership in the League of Nations and remained a member until the League's dissolution in 1946.

Latvia had to rebuild its political, social and economic life on the ruins of World War I. A popular and successful agrarian reform divided up large baronial estates and provided the basis of existence for the farming population. By the end of the 1930s, Latvia was successfully competing in world markets with its agricultural products and had also built up a successful industry that produced food products, textiles and electronics. The country excelled in education and culture and had made a good start at consolidating its multi-faceted society. Like some other new European countries at that time, it had difficulties maintaining a democratic political basis and in 1934 came under the rule of an authoritarian dictatorship. Though democratic political activities were suspended, society still enjoyed most of its civil rights.

**When Nazi Germany attacked Poland on 1 September 1939, Latvia immediately declared its neutrality. Latvia never was a belligerent country in World War II, but it became one of its major victims.**

#### **Some Notable Achievements during Independence.**

Number of university students per 10,000 inhabitants This placed Latvia in second place in Europe behind Estonia (37.7). The percentage of women students placed Latvia in the first place in Europe (39%).	30
Number of books (titles) published per 100,000 inhabitants Latvia was second behind Denmark (86) in Europe. Between 1919 and 1936 a total of 22,868 books were published, with 56,000,000 copies printed, or 30 per inhabitant, children included.	82

# SOVIET–NAZI COLLABORATION 1939–1941

**For almost two years the Soviet Union aided and abetted Hitler's aggression in Europe.** Its treaties with Nazi Germany allowed Hitler to start a war of annihilation against Poland and to take country after country without fear of a second front in the east. Hitler had to pay a price, but not at Germany's expense: secret agreements gave Stalin not only a part of Poland, but also a free hand in the three Baltic States, Finland, Bessarabia and Bukovina.

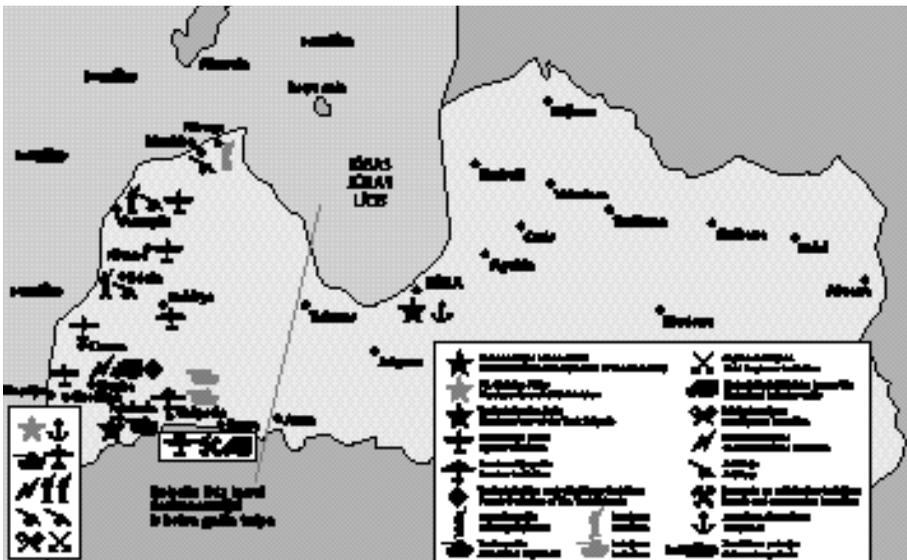
Although these secret documents speak clearly, even now the official Russian position does not recognise them for what they are – a license to expand territories at the expense of sovereign states and to subjugate populations in violation of their inalienable rights. Before the Nazi attack on 22 June 1941, the Soviet Union was in effect an undeclared ally of Nazi Germany.

**The Hitler–Stalin Pact.** The fate of Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania for the next 50 years was sealed by treaties and secret agreements between the Communistic Union of Socialistic Soviet Republics (USSR) and National Socialistic Germany in August and September 1939.

On 23 August, the foreign ministers of both totalitarian empires signed a treaty of non-aggression, known as the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact or as the Hitler–Stalin Pact. In a secret protocol attached to the document, both powers agreed to divide Poland between themselves and to designate the northern border of Lithuania as the dividing line between German and Soviet “spheres of influence.” Thus Latvia, Estonia and Finland were recognised as belonging to the Soviet “sphere of influence.”

The pact allowed Hitler to invade Poland on 1 September without fearing Soviet interference. This led to the beginning of World War II, when on 3 September Great Britain and France, which had guaranteed Polish borders against German intervention, declared war on Germany.

On 17 September, USSR invaded Poland from the East. On 28 September, Germany and USSR agreed to a precise division of Poland. Further secret protocols added Lithuania to the Soviet “sphere of influence.”



The Red Army in Latvia in 1939. The 25,000 Soviet troop contingent deployed was larger than the Latvian army.

**Soviet Military Bases in the Baltic.** The Soviet Union did not hesitate to establish its hegemony in its “sphere of influence.” It forced the Baltic States to sign treaties, which made them military and political dependents of the USSR.

Already on 27 September 1939, Stalin informed Ribbentrop about his plans in Estonia and Latvia, in accord with the agreement of 23 August, to begin a “slow penetration.”

Using the escape of an interned Polish submarine from the harbour of Tallinn as a pretext, the Soviet army concentrated its troops on the Estonian border and blockaded its harbours. On 27 September, the Estonian Foreign Minister was summoned to Moscow to sign a treaty of “mutual assistance,” which allowed establishment of Soviet military bases on Estonian territory. Latvia and Lithuania had to sign similar treaties on 5 and 10 October, respectively.

Under the terms of the Treaty signed on 5 October 1939, Latvia agreed to allow the establishment of military bases, airfields and naval ports in Western Latvia, stationing of up to 25,000 Soviet troops in the country.

Finland refused to accept Soviet terms, and on 30 November 1939 the Red Army invaded. Despite its heroic defence efforts, Finland had to sign an armistice treaty with the USSR on 13 March 1940. It lost a part of its territory but retained its independence.

# ANATOMY OF THE SOVIET OCCUPATION 1940–1941

“2 SOVIET INVASIONS. Red Army Marches into Latvia and Estonia as They Bow to Claims.”

Headline in the New York Times 17 June 1940

“During these past few days the devious processes whereunder the political independence and territorial integrity of the three small Baltic republics – Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania – were to be deliberately annihilated by one of their more powerful neighbors, have been rapidly drawing to their conclusion.”

Statement of the United States  
Undersecretary of State Sumner Welles on 23 July 1940

By the summer of 1940, a revolutionary situation had developed in Latvia ... Under the leadership of the Communist Party of Latvia, a Socialist Revolution took place ... Confronted by the demands of the working class, the bourgeois government stepped down ... Democratic elections took place, and the new Saeima, heeding the demands of the working class, established the Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic ...

The events of June and July 1940 in Latvia  
as narrated in Soviet history textbooks

“There was an occupation in 1940.”

Soviet-era journalist Mavriks Vulfsons addressing the  
Latvian Writers' Union Congress 1 and 2 June 1988,  
an early harbinger of the “singing revolution” 1988–1991

**The Soviet occupation in 1940 ended Latvia's sovereignty and began a 51-year period of foreign rule.** Soviet authorities had nothing to fear from the Nazis, because the Nazis had secretly assured the Soviet Union a free hand in Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania. Of the countries that had helped Latvia gain independence none could help. France was defeated. Great Britain had been pushed out of the continent. The United States were still standing aside. The Baltic countries had no friends, and **for 51 years their only hope was**

**the steadfast refusal by many of the Western states to recognise the legality of the Soviet occupation and annexation.**

**Soviet historiography had every reason to hide the truth and create myths about the occupation of Latvia in 1940. It also had to hide the truth about the secret collaboration with Nazi Germany.** The Soviets successfully blocked the use of the Hitler–Stalin Pact as evidence at the Nuremberg War Crimes Trial in 1945. In the Soviet Union the secret protocols were officially denounced as falsifications. Only in 1989 were the “long-lost” secret documents found and acknowledged by Soviet authorities.

Here is what really happened in the summer of 1940 and the entire year of the first Soviet occupation in Latvia.

**Soviet Attack, Ultimatum and Invasion of Latvia.** The Soviet occupation of Latvia was an unprovoked brutal act of aggression by a superpower against a numerically small sovereign neighbour.

On the morning of 15 June 1940, Soviet NKVD troops attacked three border posts in Eastern Latvia, killing three border guards and the wife and son of one of the guards. The troops captured 10 border guards and 27 civilians, and took them to the USSR.

On 16 June 1940, a Sunday, the Latvian government received an ultimatum from the USSR, which was to be answered in six hours. Using unfounded accusations, the USSR charged Latvia with violating the mutual assistance pact of 1939 and **demanding that Latvia immediately form a new government, as well as allow an unlimited number of Soviet troops to enter the country.**

Taking into consideration the size of the Soviet army at its borders, the Soviet occupation of Lithuania on the previous day, the presence of its military bases in Latvia and the ruthlessness of the attack on the border, as well as the fate of Poland, the government conceded. In fear of further violence, the government ordered its troops to cooperate with Soviet forces. On 17 June 1940 the Red Army occupied Latvia and Estonia.

**Body of a border guard's wife murdered by Soviet invaders on 15 June 1940.**





**Andrei Vyshinsky on the balcony of the Soviet embassy in Riga 21 June 1940.**

**Moscow Orchestrates the Take-Over.** The goal of the Soviet occupiers was to undermine Latvia's sovereignty and annex the country to the USSR by force, simultaneously creating the impression that it was the will of the working people of Latvia.

Andrei Y. Vyshinsky, Deputy Chairman of the Council of the People's Commissars of the USSR and prosecutor of Stalin's purge trials, came from Moscow to supervise the establishment of Soviet occupation rule. On 19 June 1940, Vyshinsky submitted the Moscow-approved new Cabinet to President Kārlis Ulmanis. The list named mainly non-Communists, led by biology Professor Augusts Kīrchenšteins, and Ulmanis accepted it. At that time, the Communist Party in Latvia was small, with a membership of about 400, and its influence in the country was negligible. There is no mention of Vyshinsky in Soviet textbooks, but the small and ineffective local Communist Party is described as being the vanguard of change.

**Creating a "Revolutionary Situation."** Along with the Soviet Red Army, thousands of communist provocateurs arrived in Latvia from the USSR. They organised demonstrations to demand that Ulmanis be removed as President and that the Constitution, which he had suspended, be reinstated.



**Mass demonstrations in Riga were led by organisers who had come with the Red Army. Portraits of Stalin, Molotov and other Soviet leaders are carried here.**

Prisoners were released. These were mostly convicted criminals, but also some convicted for illegal political activities. Mass rallies were carefully planned and strictly supervised. The occupation power organised militia units of armed trustworthy citizens, who partly took over police functions. The Red Army was visibly present to “deprive the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie of any chance to unleash a civil war,” admit Soviet history books.

**Communist-Style Single Slate “Elections.”** Under the guise of restoring democracy and seemingly responding to “people’s demands,” the occupation power announced elections of the Saeima (parliament), totally ignoring fundamental principles of free democratic elections and the Latvian Election Law.

The list of candidates of the Latvian Working People’s Block, approved by the occupation power, was declared as the only one “conforming to all requirements of the law.” Efforts to present alternate lists were suppressed and their leaders jailed. The election of the Saeima took place on 14 and 15 July, under strict control of the occupation authorities and the Red Army. Moscow announced that 97.6% had voted for the only possible list.

**Unanimous “Request” to Join the Soviet Union.** The new Saeima, compliant with the occupation power, held its first meeting on 21 July 1940, where it unanimously and illegally declared Latvia as a “soviet socialist” republic, and voted to petition the Supreme Council of the USSR for admission of Latvia into the Soviet Union.

This action of the Saeima was illegal because it did not comply with the Constitution of the Republic of Latvia, adopted in 1922. The Constitution states that Latvia is an independent, democratic republic (Article 1), that Latvia’s sovereign power belongs to its people (Article 2) and that these clauses can be amended only by a nationwide plebiscite (Article 77).

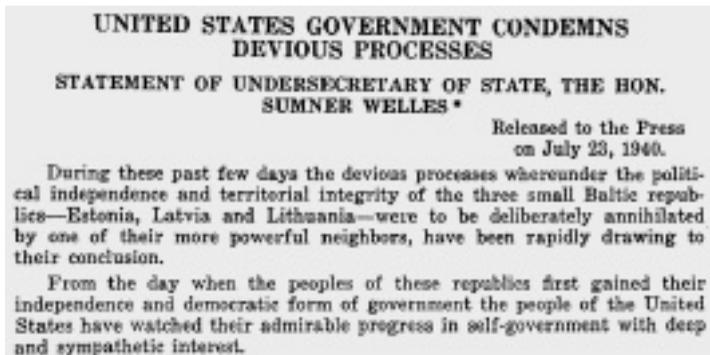
**Annexation as Incorporation.** The forceful annexation of Latvia was disguised as incorporation. It was the final act of power politics that denied the small nation any remnants of sovereignty and completely subjected it to the ideological and political dictates of Communism.

On 5 August, the Supreme Council of the USSR unanimously admitted Latvia as the 15th Republic of the Soviet Union. On 3 August, the Supreme Council

**Pravda reports on 6 August 1940 about Latvia joining the USSR. On the rostrum Soviet Latvia’s President Augusts Kirhenšteins; on the left the Politburo with Stalin.**



Excerpt from  
the 23 July  
1940 protest  
note of US  
Undersecretary  
of State  
Sumner Welles.



had already accepted Lithuania as the 14<sup>th</sup> Republic, and on 6 August, Estonia was admitted as the 16<sup>th</sup> Republic.

The government of the Latvian SSR became the executor of Moscow's decrees and orders without the authority to act on its own.

**Latvia Continues to Exist in International Law.** Although Latvia had lost its sovereignty on its own territory, many nations did not acknowledge its annexation, even up until Latvia regained its independence in 1991. Diplomatic representation of independent Latvia continued in Washington, London and elsewhere during the entire period of occupation.

Fearing the worst, the Latvian government had granted emergency powers in May 1940 to its Envoy in Great Britain Kārlis Zariņš. Should the government in Rīga not be able to carry out its duties, he would have to represent independent Latvia's interests in the free world.

On 23 July 1940, Zariņš protested Latvia's coming incorporation into the USSR, describing it as an unconstitutional act. The same day, US Undersecretary of State Sumner Welles condemned the "devious processes" that had "deliberately annihilated" the independence of the Baltic States and had integrated their territories into the Soviet Union.

**Destruction of Latvia's Armed Forces.** The Red Army's massive presence allowed the occupation power to neutralise any possible armed resistance and assume control over all Latvian military and paramilitary organisations and units.

In the first week, the occupation government ordered the disarmament of the Home Guard (Aizsargi). The Guard had existed since 1919 as a voluntary patriotic, paramilitary organisation. On 10 July, President Kārlis Ulmanis was forced to sign the order to abolish the Home Guard.



**Political indoctrination of Latvian army soldiers by Soviet political officers.**

A new high command was appointed for the Latvian Army. By 8 July, the army was placed under the ideological control of Red Army political commissars. On 11 July, when Latvia was still ostensibly independent, the People's Defence Commissar of the USSR, Marshal Semion Timoshenko, ordered formation of the Baltic Military District of the USSR. The Latvian Army was first renamed the People's Army and later incorporated into the Red Army as the 24<sup>th</sup> Territorial Corps.

Latvian officers were replaced by commanders from the Red Army. The most senior Latvian officers were ordered to report for "special courses" in Moscow, where they were either shot or deported to GULAG camps. In the spring of 1941, units of the 24<sup>th</sup> Territorial Corps were sent for summer training to the former Latvian Army base at Litene in north-eastern Latvia. On 14 June 1941, the remaining officers, while on an alleged training mission, were disarmed, arrested and deported to Norilsk, north of the Arctic Circle in Siberia, where they were sentenced to death or long-term imprisonment.

### **Nationalisation of Property and Collectivisation of Farms.**

Two integral components of communist ideology were put into effect quickly: the nationalisation of private property and the collectivisation of farming. National economy was subjected to central planning in Moscow and serving the needs of the USSR.

Already on 26 July, before the admission of Latvia into the USSR, the occupation authorities declared all land as “property of the people,” allowing farmers to keep only up to 30 hectares (75 acres) and promising to divide the remainder among those with very little or no land.

Disregarding the pre-election promise that private property would not be nationalised, the Latvian SSR government started to confiscate it within the first days of annexation. Factories and banks were nationalised first, then large properties such as buildings, private stores and other businesses. Latvian currency was devalued and later replaced by the rouble; large bank deposits were confiscated.

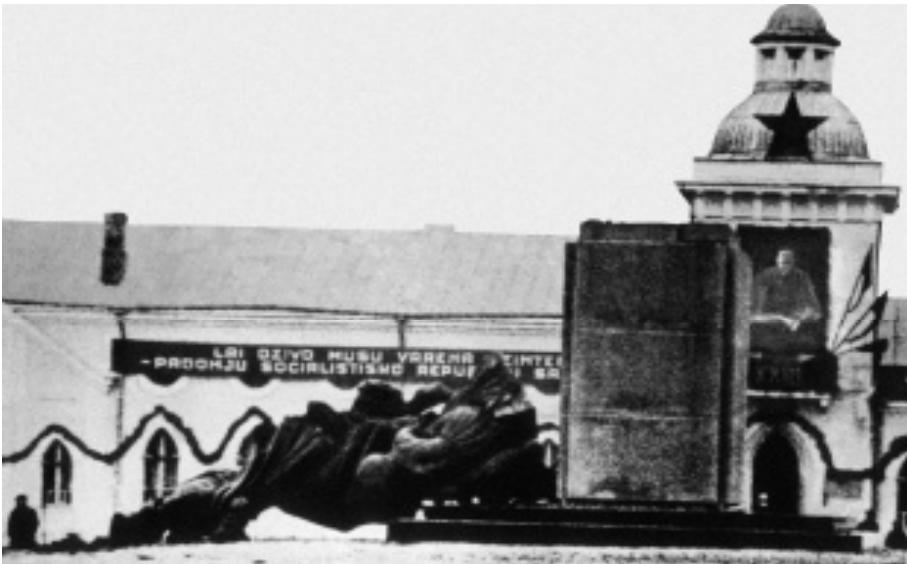
## **Repression of Religion and Persecution of Churches.**

Religion and churches, synagogues and other places of worship were immediately subjected to repression, as potential centres of spiritual resistance.

The observance of religious holidays and teaching of religion in schools was forbidden. Atheist propaganda replaced religion. At the University of Latvia, the Lutheran Faculty of Theology and its Roman Catholic counterpart were eliminated, as was the Department of Orthodox Christian Theological Studies.

The clergy was not allowed to perform its civic responsibilities, such as legally recognised weddings and the registration of births and deaths.

### **Destroyed monument dedicated to the liberation of Eastern Latvia from Soviet forces in 1920 and Communist “decorations” on a Russian Orthodox church.**



## **Subjugation of Social and Cultural Life to Communism.**

The policy of Sovietisation manifested itself by subordinating all social and cultural activities to Communist ideology and the control of the Communist Party.

Already in the first week of occupation, the new government began to shut down and liquidate independent social and fraternal organisations.

“Creative unions” were formed for writers, musicians and artists. They had to control creative work in accordance with Communist ideology, produce works that glorified the system, support those faithful to the ideology, while “re-educating” the defiant.

The state took over and controlled printing and distribution of all books. Books that did not correspond to the official Communist ideology were removed from stores and libraries.

All forms of news media came immediately under the control of the occupiers, and all publications were subjected to censorship. The press had to reflect the official views of the Communist Party and its ideology.

**Communist Education of Youth.** Bringing up the youth in the Communist spirit was one of the fundamentals of Sovietisation. The teachings

**Schoolchildren saluting in Soviet Pioneer style during a mass demonstration.**



of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin were interwoven in the educational curricula from pre-school to university. Marxism-Leninism became a mandatory subject, and schoolchildren and students were forced to participate in Communist demonstrations.

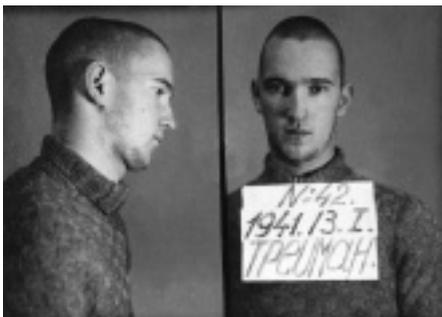
Youth organisations that had existed in independent Latvia, such as the Girl Guides, Boy Scouts, YMCA, YWCA and student fraternal organisations, were all abolished. Young Pioneer and Communist Youth organisations based on USSR models were formed.

**National Resistance.** In the short 22-year period of independence, the people of Latvia had developed a sense of loyalty towards their young country. They had accepted the fundamentals of a civil society, and the forced imposition of Communist ideology was not acceptable for the majority of the people.

One of the best-organised resistance groups was called the Officers Union. It set as its task the interpretation of current events and the maintenance of patriotic self-confidence. Secondary school students, supported by patriotic teachers, were also active in the resistance movement.

The secret services intensively combated all resistance groups, rounding up, sentencing, imprisoning or executing many of the participants.

**Voldemārs Treimanis, an 11<sup>th</sup> grade student, before and after his arrest on 13 January 1941. He was one of 13 members of a student patriotic group "Free Latvia" arrested and sentenced to GULAG hard labour camps and the only one who survived.**

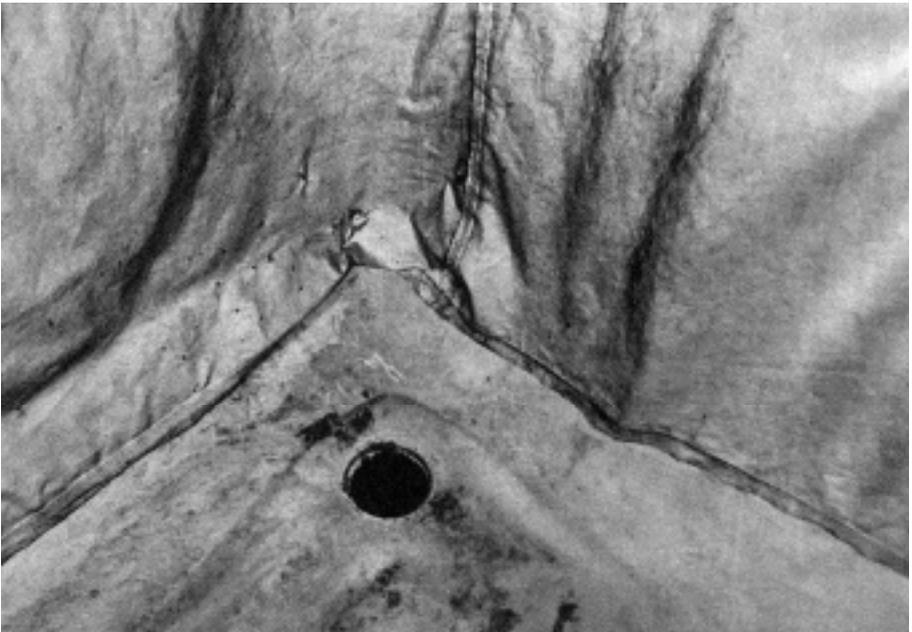


**The Repressive Terror Mechanisms and Article 58.** Soviet repressions were carried out by the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs (NKVD) and the People's Commissariat for State Security (NKGB), which was created in early 1941. These repressive institutions are still called in Latvia by the name of their first embodiment Cheka (All-Russian Extraordinary Commission), founded in December 1917 and known in the West by its most recent abbreviation KGB (State Security Committee).

Cheka was to "render harmless" those deemed "anti-Soviet elements." It used a wide web of informants. According to Article 58 of the 1926 Criminal Code of Soviet Russia, anyone could be accused of "anti-Soviet activities," "counterrevolutionary" crimes or of being "disloyal to the Soviet regime." Article 58 was applied retroactively to include "crimes" committed before Soviet rule was established.

The Latvian SSR's People's Commissar, Minister for State Security Semion Shustin and People's Commissar for Internal Affairs Alfons Noviks had unlimited, arbitrary power to enforce decisions of the Communist Party. The signature of either was sufficient for a death sentence.

**Corner with drain in the execution chamber in the Cheka headquarters in Riga 1941.**



The cellars of the Cheka headquarters in Riga served as torture and execution chambers. In order to obtain false confessions from innocent people, interrogation and torture could last for weeks, a method legal in the USSR. Common sentences were death or long prison terms under inhumane conditions in special GULAG camps.

**Mass Deportations to Distant Regions of the USSR: Prison Camps and Forced Resettlement.** Mass deportations to far parts of the USSR were one of the Cheka's most dreaded instruments of terror. While waves of mass deportations had swept across the USSR during collectivisation and terror campaigns of the 1930s, the first large-scale deportation in Latvia occurred on 14 June 1941.

In the night from 13 to 14 June, about 15,500 Latvian residents (0.8% of the population) – among them 2400 children under ten – were arrested without a court order. Targeted were mainly families who had members in leading positions in state and local governments, economy and culture.

**Deportees in a barred freight car guarded by Cheka troops 14 June 1941.**





**Deportees in a crowded freight car 1941. A drawing by Aina Roze.**

The people were awakened in the night and given less than one hour to prepare for the journey. They could take with them only what they could carry, and everything left behind was confiscated by the state. They were herded into cattle or freight railroad cars. Many died on the way, especially infants, the sick and the elderly. Men, about 8300, were separated from their families, arrested, and sent to hard labour camps. Women and children were taken to so-called “administrative settlements” in destitute Siberian areas with harsh climatic conditions.

Conditions in the hard labour prison camps were inhumane. The inmates became numbers and were terrorised by guards and criminal prisoners. Food rations did not replace the calories expended through work. People grew weak and were crippled by diarrhoea, scurvy and other illnesses. Winters were unbearably cold, and many did not survive the first one. Only a few of those deported in 1941 and sent to hard labour camps later returned to Latvia.

**Deportation and Execution of Political Prisoners.** On 22 June 1941, National Socialist Germany attacked the USSR. The Cheka immediately organised the deportation of political prisoners to prisons and labour camps in the USSR, to continue interrogation, torture and sentencing. From

Latvia, about 3600 prisoners were assembled in special trains that departed by 26 June. Less than 1% of the prisoners were able to return to Latvia.

Those who remained or were arrested later were shot and buried in mass graves. After the Red Army retreated, hastily covered graves were found at the Rīga Central Prison, Baltezers, Rēzekne, Ulbroka and other locations.

**Searching for victims of Soviet executions in Riga Central Prison July 1941.**



**Mass burial of 113 victims of Soviet executions at Baltezers.**



## OCCUPATIONS AS «LIBERATIONS»

The second and the third occupations were called “liberations” by the occupiers. The Nazis “liberated” the country from Communist tyranny. The Soviets “liberated” it from Nazi tyranny. There was a grain of truth in both – indeed relief was felt after one year of Soviet totalitarian rule, and indeed the second Soviet occupation stopped Nazi totalitarian rule and averted Nazi plans to colonise and Germanise the Baltic States. But neither “liberation” brought freedom to the Baltic States and their peoples.

In its first year of occupation, 1940–41, the Soviet Communist regime had laid the groundwork for what was resumed during the second occupation – the complete subjugation and Sovietisation of the Latvian people and colonisation of the country. But the brutality of Soviet rule had also inadvertently laid the groundwork for the Nazi occupation by making possible the type of co-operation that the Nazis at first received from the relieved local population. This co-operation later provided the Soviet authorities with tools of intimidation and oppression.



**Nazi propaganda poster:  
Hitler the Liberator.**



**As German troops enter Riga, Latvians gather at the Freedom Monument in Riga on 1 July 1941. Men on the left wear Latvian Army and Home Guard Uniforms.**

## THE NAZI GERMAN OCCUPATION 1941–1944/45

It is most unlikely that German troops would have received a warm welcome if they had come as the occupiers of independent Latvia. For centuries, Latvians viewed their German barons as oppressors. Latvian Riflemen fought alongside Russian soldiers in World War I, for two years keeping the Wehrmacht out of Riga. And yet after one year of Soviet terror most of the population felt relief when the German army drove the Red Army out of Latvia and there was hope that independence would be restored.

The Nazis used these sentiments to their advantage. They wanted to be perceived as liberators. They wanted Latvians to co-operate and collaborate with them – out of gratitude. Of course, they did not mention that the Soviet occupation had been made possible by their secret collusion with the Soviet Union. Because the Latvians feared the return of Soviet rule, the Nazis could afford to equivocate about independence to the very end. Thus Latvians were initially willing to volunteer, to co-operate, even collaborate, because the Germans' enemy was their enemy.

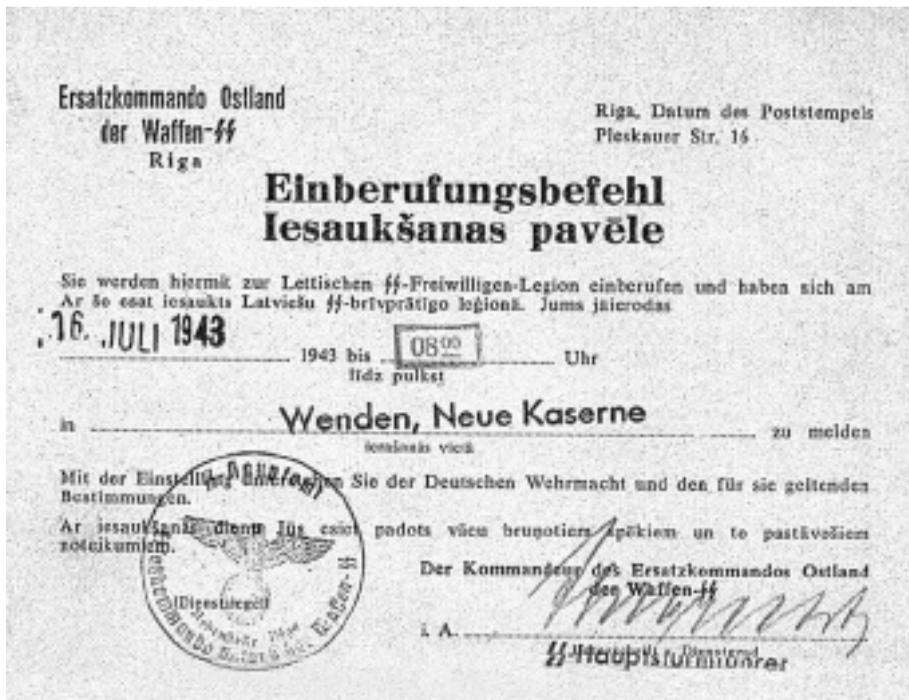
**The Holocaust in Occupied Latvia.** Nazi manipulation of Latvian sentiments of relief had a more sinister purpose. The German plans for the attack on the Soviet Union included plans for the mass annihilation of Jews in the conquered territories. It had to look like a spontaneous outburst of the local population's rage against the Jews. However, there was no such rage, as was later admitted by Walter Stahlecker, the German Sicherheitsdienst (SD) General, who came to Latvia with the Operative Group A to supervise the annihilation.

There was no tradition of Jewish ghettos or anti-Jewish pogroms in Latvia. But there was rage against Communists, and this was redirected to include Jews by remaking them into Jews–Bolsheviks and holding them responsible for Soviet victims whose graves were being unearthed and bodies placed on display in gruesome detail. Even this did not bring about the desired effect. The population did not spontaneously turn against their fellow citizens, and the Nazis had to find collaborators among Latvians and involve them in the systematic murder of Latvia's Jews. By the end of 1941 most of Latvia's Jews, about 65–70 000, had been killed – a month before the infamous "final solution" was announced at Wannsee.

What worked as well was the deliberate attempt to make it look like a Latvian operation, although most of the time the Germans supplied the firing squads and were always the ones issuing the orders. The most recent research clearly reveals the insidious nature of the operation, but lingering doubts about Latvian anti-Semitism persist even now, fed by deliberate Nazi and later Soviet disinformation and distortions.

**Jewish women before execution in the dunes of Šķēde near Liepāja December 1941.**





A draft notice: «You are hereby conscripted into the Latvian SS Volunteer Legion and must report ...»

**Conscription as “Volunteering.”** At first the Germans wanted to win the war without any help. They used Latvians as willing auxiliaries only to perform police and paramilitary duties in the rear. But by the end of 1941 their initial war fortunes received severe setbacks, and they needed real help. Latvian willingness to volunteer, however, had worn off as the German policies became more and more coercive and it became clear that co-operation meant simply following German orders.

By 1942, patriotic propaganda and financial enticements were used to recruit Latvians into so-called “police battalions,” most of which became front-line units, but some were used at times for suppressive operations behind the lines. By 1943, after the debacle at Stalingrad, Germans desperately needed even more help, and by Hitler’s order of 10 February 1943, a “Latvian SS Volunteer Legion” was created as one of a number of such foreign legions, among which the largest was the Russian contingent. It was neither real “SS” nor “volunteer.” Hitler’s SS of elite guards and executors, adjudged as a criminal

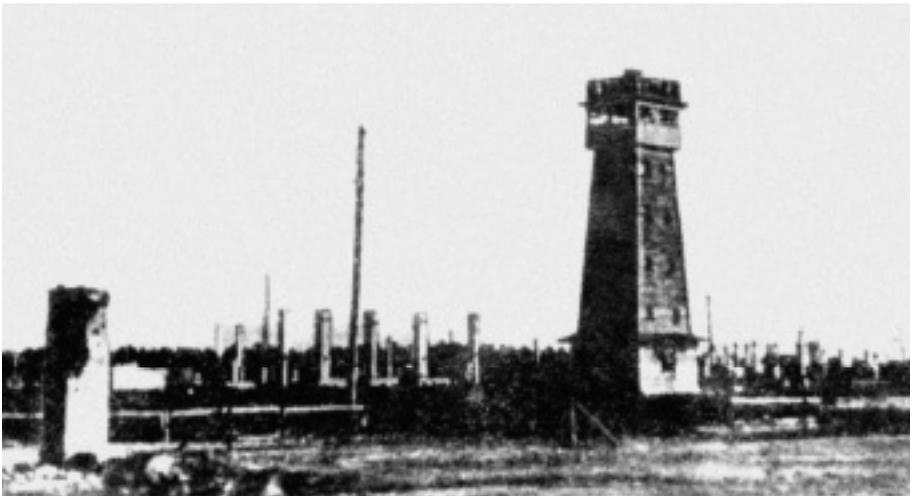
organisation in Nuremberg, was reserved for Germans only. The word “volunteer” was used as a devious device to avoid transgressing the 1907 Hague Convention’s rules against conscripting people of occupied countries.

Conscripts received notices that they were “drafted into the Latvian SS Volunteer Legion.” The term “Legion,” on the other hand, helped to create the false impression of a national force envisioned by some Latvian leaders. The Germans would have none of that: the Legion’s units were placed under higher German command and fought in various parts of the Eastern front. About 115,000 Latvian men were enlisted in various German military formations; only about 15% of them as true volunteers.

The Legion was engaged only in military operations against Soviet armed forces. After the war, the Western Allies recognised that the Legion was in no way connected to war crimes, but even today both ignorance and deliberate disinformation about the Latvian Legion abounds, especially as still spread by the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

**German Oppression and National Resistance.** Even though to many Latvians the Nazi occupation seemed more benign than the Soviet one, it was no less cruel and exploitative, affecting various population groups. There were Latvians in German concentration camps – several thousand are known to have died there, and there were close to 20,000 Latvian forced labourers in Germany.

**Retreating Germans burned down their concentration camp at Salaspils in 1944. It served as a hard labour prison and transit camp. Inmates died of disease, malnutrition, disciplinary executions and other causes.**



Resistance to German occupation by various patriotic groups began immediately; it grew in size and importance as it became clear that the Third Reich was nearing its end. Even the Nazis knew that most Latvians placed their trust in the Western Allies and their principles set forth in the Atlantic charter and the United Nations Declaration, both co-signed by the Soviet Union. The Central Council of Latvia, consisting of representatives of Latvian political parties became the leading resistance organisation. It channelled information about the situation in Latvia to Western intelligence services through its contacts in Sweden. The only anti-Nazi resistance recognised by the Soviets was Communist-led activities whose aim was to re-establish the "dictatorship of the proletariat."

When the Red Army reoccupied Latvia in 1944, refugees preceded its advance – people fled westward and several thousand braved the Baltic Sea in small fishing boats to Sweden. Most, however, the Germans evacuated by ship to Germany. Many, especially members of the cultural, political and economic elite, left Latvia fearing the repeat of 1940/41. Few thought that they were leaving for longer than a few months, hoping for a post-war settlement which would restore independence to the Baltic States in the spirit of the Atlantic Charter and the United Nations Declaration. That was not to be. After the end of the war, some 130,000 Latvians remained in the West much longer than they had originally expected.

#### **A refugee boat on the way to Sweden in winter 1944.**





The Soviet Army marches in a May Day parade in Riga.

## THE SECOND SOVIET OCCUPATION 1944/45–1991

The second Soviet occupation returned with major battles that devastated much of Latvia and lasted, in Western Latvia, until the last day of the war on 8 May 1945. Men who had escaped or dodged German conscription or had deserted were drafted into the Red Army. More than 60,000 were sent into war, often-times against Latvian units on the German side. **It is estimated that close to 200,000 Latvians were involved in this foreign “total war,” in which their country was not a belligerent. Up to a half were killed in action.**

It was now the Soviets’ turn to play the part of “liberator.” As such they were greeted by Communist sympathisers. Parts of the population that had indeed suffered under the German occupation were relieved.

However for most “liberation” meant the return of the terror of 1940/41. Now the returning Communists used the Nazi occupation as a tool of intimidation and suppression. The term “fascist” was indiscriminately applied to all who were not Communists or fellow travellers, especially the “bourgeois nationalists” who adhered to the ideas of a national state. Soviet operative groups

ferreted out and “filtered” all suspected and actual Nazi collaborators, including people who had been coerced into performing services for the Germans. Prisoners of war and arrested persons were sent to prison camps in distant parts of the Soviet Union.

**Latvia Becomes a Military Camp.** The Soviet military forces did not leave after the war ended. Riga became the headquarters of the Baltic Military District, and large areas of Latvia were taken over for military purposes: army camps, nuclear rocket bases, bombing and artillery ranges, ammunition dumps, airfields, naval installations. Much of the coastal area was turned into a forbidden zone.

Although ostensibly to protect the Soviet Union against attack, especially as the Cold War intensified, the military presence also served to intimidate, suppress and control the local population. The Soviet Army was involved in carrying out various suppressive actions, including mass deportations. Decommissioned officers could stay in Latvia and became in effect a civilian occupation force. It is significant that the Russian Army, successor of the Soviet Army, left Latvia only reluctantly three years after the restoration of independence, in 1994, and that some 20,000 retired army personnel remain as residents in the country whose occupation they had guaranteed.

#### **Soviet tanks on parade in Riga.**





**A group of partisans in Kurzeme photographed by a KGB infiltrator.**

**The National Partisan War.** That the Soviet return was not “liberation” for large parts of the population is attested by the little known fact that, hoping for Western intervention, a major partisan war erupted in 1945. It was strongest until 1949, but in sporadic fashion it continued until 1956. About 20,000 participated in the guerrilla warfare and they had some 80,000 active supporters among the population. The Soviets engaged major military and paramilitary forces and secret services in battling the “bandits,” as they called them.

**The Mass Deportation of 1949.** It took a huge second deportation to the vast reaches of Siberia to break the back of armed resistance. That was one stated aim of the deportation. The other aim was to eliminate the “kulaks,” the owners of larger independent farms who resisted collectivisation. Actually both aims were interrelated – armed resistance relied on the support of the rural population. In March 1949, about 43,000 people (2.4% of the total population), mainly farmers and overwhelmingly ethnic Latvians, were deported to Siberia to be resettled for life. This action not only deprived the partisans of their infrastructure but also resulted in the destruction of Latvia’s agriculture – the backbone of Latvian economy before the war.

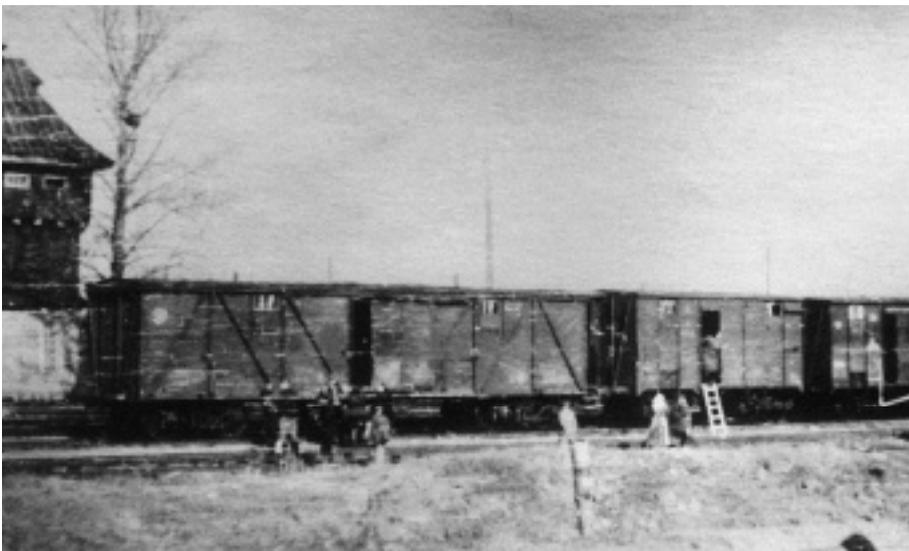
After Stalin’s death in 1953, many of the surviving deportees were eventually allowed to return to Latvia. By that time, however, most of them no longer

had homes, and they returned to an alienated society that had been dramatically “re-engineered.” The traditional social order and culture of the Latvian countryside had been irreversibly destroyed.

**Ethnic Engineering of the Population.** Partly because of huge population losses – estimated at up to 1/3 of the pre-war population of 2,000,000 – but also because the remaining ethnic Latvians had to be subdued and controlled and because Communist ideology foresaw the creation of a new classless, homogenised Russian-speaking society, immigration and settlement of migrants from other areas of the Soviet Union became the policy until the very end of Soviet rule. Latvia’s Russian minority, which before the war had been about 10% of the population, grew into a majority in the largest Latvian cities and reached 34% of total population, while ethnic Latvians by 1989 decreased from 75% to 52%.

The Soviet immigration policy became an issue already in the 1950s, when the so-called Latvian National Communists tried to oppose the unbridled settlement of military personnel and the Russification of the country. They were quickly purged and their efforts denounced. Latvia had to remain a province without its own leadership. The Communist Party of Latvia stayed beholden to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. It was heavily financed from Moscow, and its membership had only a minority of ethnic Latvians.

**One of the 31 deportee trains that took 43,000 to Siberia in 1949.**



**The Colonisation of Latvia.** The second Soviet occupation is best characterised as colonisation, a term that includes both Sovietisation and Russification. The country was governed from Moscow, with the local Communist Party and state apparatus dutifully fulfilling administrative functions.

Latvia was completely isolated from the outside world and its sphere of influence. The once flourishing cultural, social, political and economic contacts with the West were cut off, and the country was forcibly oriented toward the East.

Latvia's economy served the needs of the greater Soviet Union. Heavy industry was built up, raw materials were imported and production exported. Workers were recruited from outside Latvia. Much of Latvia's research and production served the needs of the Soviet military complex.

The bureaucratic, managerial and Communist Party apparatus was overwhelmingly Russian, and all official business was conducted in Russian. The Latvian language became a minority language in its own country, since few Russian immigrants chose to learn it – but all Latvians had to master Russian.

**Opposition against Soviet Russification policies developed in the Communist Party of Latvia in the late 1950s. Although banished from their posts, the "national Communists" persisted and smuggled a protest letter to Western Communist parties in 1972.**

## The New York Times.

### PROTEST ON SOVIET LAID TO LATVIANS

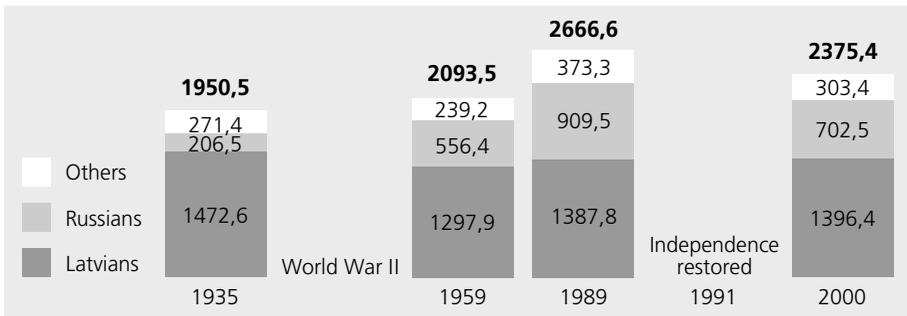
Letter Circulated in Europe  
Charges 'Russification'

By **BERNARD GWERTZMAN**

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Feb. 26—A letter attributed to 17 Latvian Communists, complaining about what they say are efforts by Moscow to "Russify" their Baltic republic, has been sent to several foreign Communist parties.

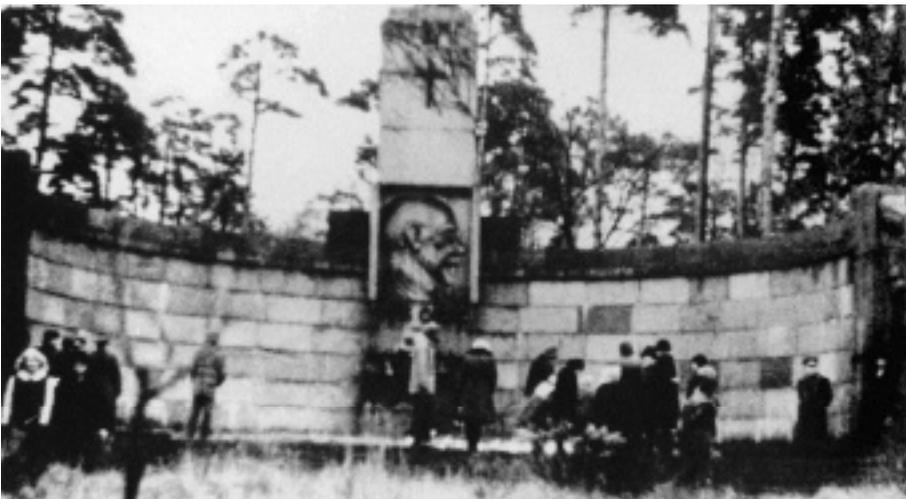
A copy of the letter, which has been published in Western Europe, was made available recently to The New York Times by Latvian émigrés here. United States Government analysts who have studied it say they believe



**Selected census data in Latvia 1935–2000 (in thousands) showing the demographic effects of immigration during the occupation.**

**Resistance and Dissidence.** Though armed resistance was crushed and the indigenous society subdued, resistance continued through other means. Organised resistance groups, such as the “Independence Movement of Latvia,” were relatively small, however unorganised and individual resistance, disobedience and dissidence encompassed large numbers of the population. Its visible part involved writers, artists and musicians in Soviet-style creative unions, who used every opportunity to push back the limits imposed by the ideological dictates of the Communist Party and enforced by censorship. Informal folklore, environmental and rock music groups emerged in the late 1970s and early 80s.

**Gravesite memorial to the first president of Latvia, Jānis Čakste (1859–1927), became the site of pilgrimage even under the watchful eyes of a Soviet militiaman (right).**





**Celebrating the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Latvian independence at the Freedom Monument in Riga on 18 November 1988.**

## THE «SINGING REVOLUTION» 1987–1991

The wide extent of opposition and dissidence became clear in the second half of the 1980s when, in the spirit of Mikhail Gorbachev's glasnost, the regime relaxed its control over society and censorship of the media. The Baltic liberation movements formed the vanguard in the Soviet Union and became known as the "Singing Revolution."

**Mass Demonstrations.** Among the first informal and "illegal" social organisations founded in Latvia was the human rights group "Helsinki '86."

It organised the first large demonstration in 1987 to commemorate the mass deportation on 14 June 1941. Such commemorative events gained momentum. On the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Latvian Independence Day in 1988, a large assembly around the Freedom Monument in Riga demonstrated with Latvian flags under the watchful eyes of riot militia. On the 50th anniversary of the Hitler–Stalin Pact in 1989, some 2,000,000 singing Balts joined hands in a chain across the Baltic from Tallinn through Riga to Vilnius, the Baltic capital cities. On Independence Day, 18 November 1989, about 500,000 demonstrated in Riga.

**A mass rally of ca. 500,000 on the banks of Daugava in Riga 18 November 1989.**





**The Baltic Way – Tallinn–Riga–Vilnius 23 August 1989.**

**Political Demands.** Human rights demands became political ones. The “Latvian National Independence Movement” (LNNK) was a harbinger in 1988. The “Latvian Popular Front” (LTF), founded with the support of nationally inclined members of the Latvian Communist Party, became a mass movement that involved large segments of the population. Although there were attempts to establish an electorate on the basis of Latvian citizens only, the 1990 elections of a “Supreme Council of the Latvian SSR” were held under Soviet election law, which allowed participation of all residents, including ethnic Russians and other immigrants. These, however, were the first democratic elections under the Soviet regime, and the LTF gained absolute majority.

**The Way to Independence.** On 4 May 1990, the Supreme Council followed Lithuania and Estonia by passing a law renewing the Republic of Latvia and reinstating its constitution. The USSR tried to suppress the independence movements through threats, decrees and economic boycotts. Bloodshed erupted on 13 January 1991, when Soviet troops attacked important government objects in Vilnius, Lithuania. Expecting the worst, some 100,000 Latvians erected barricades in Riga to protect major government buildings. The Soviet government called off the troops but kept up the pressure. Finally, when a coup in Moscow attempted to re-establish a Communist dictatorship, **the Supreme Council of Latvia voted to declare full and complete independence and sovereignty on 21 August 1991.**



Barricades surrounding the Supreme Council building in Riga 1991.

**Latvia Rejoins the Free World.** Latvia was soon recognised as a sovereign state by most countries of the world, including the Soviet Union. **It was accepted as a member of the United Nations on 18 September 1991, the World Bank on 10 November 1992, Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on 31 January 1995 and the World Trade Organisation in 1999. Latvia became a member of NATO on 29 March 2004 and the European Union on 1 May 2004.**

What Latvians had wanted all along was independence and freedom. They have it at last.

The New York Times 7 September 1991.



# CONSEQUENCES OF THE OCCUPATIONS

If the events preceding the renewal of independence are not expression enough of the popular will of Latvia and a clear enough rejection of the three occupations and their regimes, no proof will suffice. But Latvian historians are unearthing long-hidden secret documents that reveal the conspiracies and lies of both the Communist regime of the Soviet Union and the National Socialist regime of Germany. These conspiracies led to Latvia's loss of independence and the subjection of its people to years of intimidation, oppression and terror. The lies kept proclaiming that the victims were happy fellow travellers to a Nazi "New Europe" or a Communist utopia. Nothing was further from the truth.

**Latvia was occupied three times by military force. It was kept occupied and oppressed for fifty-one years by two foreign totalitarian powers, which did not desire the country to be independent and its people to be free. The consequences of the occupation are still present and keep the country from fully realising its new-found independence and freedom.**

## Consequences in the human and social realm include:

- **Damaging demographic changes.** Ethnic Latvians, who constituted more than 75% in pre-occupation Latvia, now constitute only about 58%. The traditional German minority has disappeared from Latvia. The Jewish minority has become minuscule. The traditional Russian minority before the war constituted about 10% of the population and was located mostly in Eastern Latvia. Now ethnic Russians constitute 29%, most of them Soviet-era immigrants living in the major cities. Integration into a Latvian-speaking society is reluctant and slow. Belarussian and Ukrainian settlers have considerably increased the percentages of their ethnic groups. **The presence of a large contingent of ethnic Russian immigrants and the loss of historical minorities has disrupted the traditional social structure of the country.**
- **Presence of potentially disruptive or disloyal immigrant groups.** Among the many settlers from other parts of the former Soviet Union are considerable numbers of retired former Soviet military personnel, former members of the ruling Communist nomenklatura and managerial infrastructure who still profess allegiance to their former country. **Some of these groups demand a return to the status**

**quo of the occupation, including automatic citizenship without naturalisation for all Soviet-era immigrants, and giving official status to the Russian language.**

- **Slow recovery of education and research** from Soviet-oriented approaches and subject matter. The long isolation from the rest of the world and its main languages has left many branches, especially the humanities and social sciences, behind current developments elsewhere. **The Soviet two-track Latvian and Russian school system still in existence is not conducive to social integration, and its reform has become an ideological battleground.**
- **Russification of the Latvian language** and its relegation to a limited secondary status. These effects are considerable and persistent. The Latvian language is only slowly regaining its primacy, overcoming the effects of its long subjection to Soviet language politics and isolation from other world languages. **Acquisition of Latvian, not necessary during the occupation, is still being resisted by many immigrants, who demand recognition of Russian as a second official language.**
- **Mental and moral damage among the indigenous population.** Those who suffered directly from Soviet persecution never completely regained their status and place in society. They were officially and unofficially treated as second-class persons. The totalitarian control over society, the pervasive and ubiquitous Soviet propaganda, the Soviet system of promotion by co-optation through the Communist Party, the persistent advancement of Russian interests and the relegation of the indigenous population to second-class social status have left a lasting imprint on the social psyche. **Lack of initiative, inability to function effectively in a free democratic society, over-dependence on the state as the provider are some of the after-effects of the Soviet command society.**

## **Economic and physical consequences include:**

- **Slow recovery of Latvian economy from Soviet policies**, which had transformed the country's economy into an appendage of the Soviet Union and particularly its military needs. The Soviet era left behind many useless and mostly outdated factories, labour-intensive manufacturing practices and Soviet-style managerial skills – useless in a modern economy.

- **Lingering effects of extended years of farm collectivisation and proletarianisation**, which destroyed traditional farming as such, deprived farmers of their property and farming know-how and disrupted normal economic development of the countryside.
- **Lingering effects of Soviet military presence** include pollution, discarded live ammunition, decaying infrastructure and abandoned rocket silos. It will require decades of effort to eliminate the damage. Areas heavily militarised and placed under special restrictions along the Western coast, including the city of Liepāja, were hampered in their economic development and are only now making a delayed recovery.

The cumulative social, psychological and financial damage inflicted on Latvia by the three successive occupations is inestimable. Latvia's accession to NATO and the European Union are seen as guarantees of its future, but this does not make up for past crimes against humanity and past iniquities committed during fifty-one years of foreign rule.

**Of the original two conspirators against international law, who conspired to deprive Latvia of its independence and subject its people to lawlessness, one was defeated in World War II, and its successor state, the Federal Republic of Germany, has gone a long way to make amends to those against whom Nazi Germany committed grievous crimes. The successor state of the other conspirator, Russia, has failed to do so. Furthermore, it continues to adhere to Soviet myths and distortions**

- by refusing to acknowledge the present Republic of Latvia as the continuation of the Republic that declared its independence on 18 November 1918;
- by refusing to acknowledge the Peace Treaty and its provisions of 11 August 1920 between Soviet Russia and Latvia;
- by refusing to acknowledge the true nature of the 1939 agreements between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union;
- by refusing to acknowledge the fact of Latvia's occupation on 17 June 1940;
- by refusing to acknowledge crimes against humanity committed by the Soviet Union on Latvian soil and against the Latvian people.

These refusals are an important part of present Russian foreign policy. Only thus can Russia continue accusing Latvia in international institutions of violating human rights of a Soviet immigrant population that has no basic claim to the status of a historical minority because it came to Latvia in contravention of Article 49 (Section III) of the 1949 Geneva Convention (IV) to ensure Soviet rule

over Latvia. Only thus can Russia continue supporting disloyal Russian immigrant groups in Latvia that make unreasonable demands on the Latvian state. And only thus can Russia continue branding victims of occupation as perpetrators.

**The least that Latvia can expect from the successor state of the Soviet Union is acknowledgment of Soviet occupation, of the crimes committed against humanity and the damages inflicted during the occupation. This should also be the expectation of the international community and its institutions. International justice and moral integrity demand no less.**

**Communism's end in Riga on 25 August 1991.**



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## MUSEUM OF THE OCCUPATION OF LATVIA

The Museum of the Occupation of Latvia was established in Riga in 1993 by the Occupation Museum Foundation (OMF) to

- **show** what happened to Latvia, its land and people under two occupying totalitarian regimes from 1940 to 1991;
- **remind** the world of the crimes committed by foreign powers against the state and people of Latvia;
- **remember** the victims of the occupation: those who perished, were persecuted, forcefully deported or fled the terror of the occupation regimes.

The Museum exhibits introduce visitors to the 51 years of occupation: the first Soviet occupation (1940–1941), the National Socialist German Occupation (1941–1944/45), the second Soviet occupation (1944/45–1991). Historical documents, artefacts and pictures testify to oppression and persecution, but also to defiance and resistance; to inhuman conditions in prisons and Siberian exile, but also to the strength of the human spirit in extreme adversity. Museum texts and explanations are provided in Latvian, English, German and Russian. Of the more than 100,000 annual visitors, most come from abroad.

Museum Archives and Collections gather and preserve artefacts of the occupation period. The Audio-Visual Programme prepares video recordings of eye-witness accounts. The Education Programme presents teacher seminars, conducts student activities in the Museum, develops teaching materials and organises a touring Museum exhibit for schools. The Research Programme prepares the Museum's scholarly Yearbook. The Museum's travelling exhibitions have been shown in many cities of Europe, as well as in North America and Australia.

The Museum is maintained and administered by the Occupation Museum Foundation, a public non-profit organization. It is supported largely by donations from Latvians abroad and museum visitors. The Latvian government provides some support for the upkeep of the building and special projects.

### **The Museum of the Occupation of Latvia**

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"УТВЕРЖДЕНО"  
 Постановлением Совета Министров  
 Латвийской ССР

В \_\_\_\_\_ от " \_\_\_\_\_ " марта 1949 г.

УПРАВЛЕНИЕ ДЕЛАМИ СОВЕТА МИНИСТРОВ ЛОСР  
 /М. БАСИШ/

С П И С О К

кулацких семейств по Дамбажскому уезду Латв.ССР, под-  
 ленных ввозили в отдаленные места Советского Союза  
 на спецпоселение.

№ пп	Волость, хутор	Фамилия, имя, отчество членов семьи	год рожд.	степень родства
1	2	3	4	5
	Лимбажская вол. хут. "Крустини"	ЗВАЙГЭНЕ Алма Карловна ЗВАЙГЭНЕ Илра Яновна ЗВАЙГЭНЕ Рута Яновна ЗВАЙГЭНЕ Янис Янович	1899 1932 1932 1940	- дочь дочь сын
	Лимбажская вол. хут. "Рамаяс"	РЕЙНИШЕ Ирья Петровна РЕЙНИШЕ Адам Адамович РЕЙНИШЕ Врунис Адамович	1923 1947 1948	- сын сын
	Котварская вол. хут. "Крени"	АБРАМО Янис Карлович АБРАМО Павлина Евазовна	1897 1899	- жена
	Степес вол. хут. "Гарас"	ТРАУМАНИС Вера Карловна АУСМАНИС Эмилия Карловна	1897 1908	- сестра
	Салдская вол. хут. "Цепаумгас"	ЦАПСЕ Эвжиля Карловна ЦАПСЕ Валдемарс Янович КАРСИШЕ Анна Адамовна ГРАСИС Лиса Адамовна	1907 1941 1872 1899	- сын мать сестра
	Пале вол. хут. "Сариджи"	ГОГЕНБЕРГС Инна Вронцова ПЕТЕРСОНС Мирда Яновна	1886 1931	- приемн. дочь
	Падмежская вол. хут. "Саулитер"	ПАЛЛО Эмма Карловна ПАЛЛО Анна Евазовна ПАЛЛО Ивара Евазовна	1901 1930 1933	- дочь дочь
	Палес вол. хут. "Сални"	ФРАНШИС Марии Ансоина ХРАПАШ-ПРЕДИЦАЯ Эмиля Янов- на	1892 1928	- приемн. дочь
	Палес вол. хут. "Эностади"	ПРОМБЕРТС Ида Яновна	1894	-

Mass deportations of entire families to distant regions of the Soviet Union was a dreaded tool of suppression. The 25 March 1949 deportation of 43,000 was carried out with military precision and with military participation. File No. 17, listing deportees from the Limbaži District, was started on 14 March and completed on 24 March 1949. It consists of 47 pages listing farmsteads, family members to be deported, year of their birth and relationship to the head of the household.

# Дело № 17

СПИСОК

Кулаковича

Семесев

Милбачи

Начато „14“ авг 1949 г.

Кончено „28“ авг 1949 г.

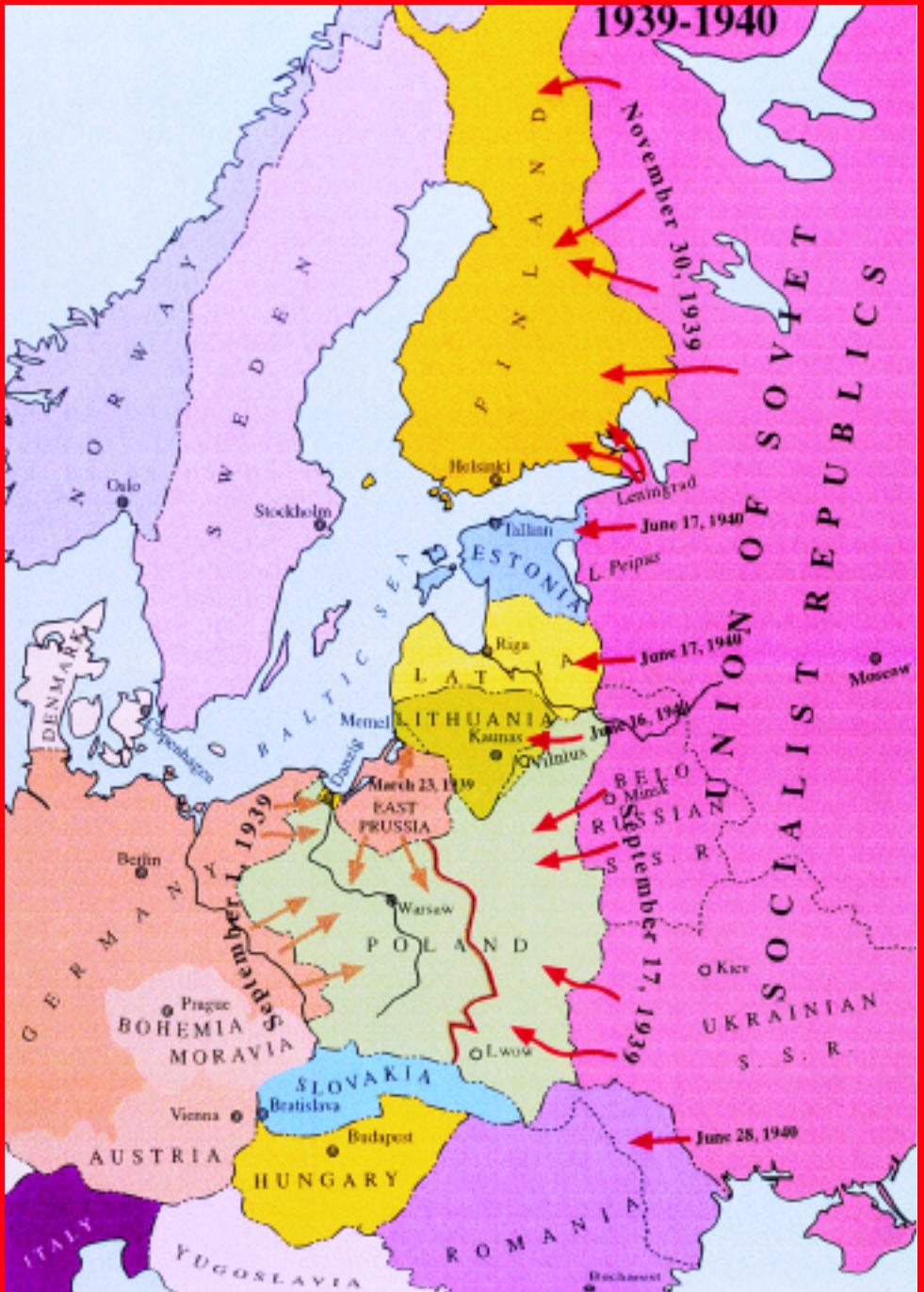
На 47 листах

Опись №

Порядковый №

Срок хранения 100 лет





The aggressions and occupations by Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union as a direct result of the Hitler-Stalin agreements on 23 August and 28 September 1939.