

Project: Attitudes of Major Soviet Nationalities

LATVIA AND THE LATVIANS

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PART A

General Information

I. Territory

The Latvian SSR is one of the youngest union republics of the USSR. It was incorporated into the Union, together with its neighbors, Estonia and Lithuania, on August 5, 1940. In the struggle for the control of the important trade route, the eastern shore of the Baltic Sea--of which Latvia and its capital Riga occupy the central position--has been attacked and conquered at one time or another by all of the major nations of the Baltic region. Riga itself was founded by the German Teutonic Order in 1201 A.D.¹ For the past 800 years the Latvians have been less participants than prizes of war. Although they have at times fought ably, there have always been too few of them to stem the tide of conquest. Only in 1918, amid the chaos of the Russian Civil War, were the Latvians able to found their own independent state. However, they were only able to maintain it for twenty years.

Located between 55°40' and 58°5' north latitude², the territory of the Latvian SSR coincides with that of the independent Republic of Latvia, with the exception of an area of 464 square miles on the northeastern border which was annexed to the RSFSR in 1945, and of cessions to the RSFSR and Estonia, totaling about 308 square miles, made between 1953 and 1957.³ Its total area of 24,595 square miles, roughly equal to that of West Virginia, makes it the fourth smallest union republic. The 1,171 mile-long border of Latvia touches upon Estonia, the RSFSR, Belorussia, and Lithuania, and includes 307 miles of seacoast along the Baltic and the Gulf of Riga.⁴

Latvia's climate is relatively mild and moist, reflecting the influence of the Baltic Sea and the Atlantic Ocean. Its growing season extends roughly between April 15 and October 15, averaging 183 days per year.⁵ Annual rainfall averages 21.6 to 31.5 inches in, different parts of the country.⁶ The large majority of the land of the republic is a gentle, rolling plain. Uplands, with a maximum elevating of 1,017 feet, are located in the east-central part of the country and in

¹ Spekke, 1951: 135.

² Rutkis, 1967: 14.

³ King, 1965: 10; BSE, 1953: XXIV: 318; BSE Yezhegodnik 1957: 147.

⁴ Rutkis, 1967: 155.

⁵ Rutkis, 1967: 109

⁶ LME, 1969: IIL 280

the west.⁷ Sixty percent of the territory is used for agriculture, and 27% of it is in forests.⁸ Latvia is rich in lakes and rivers. The chief among the latter are the Daugava (222 miles in Latvia; in Belorussia, it is known as the Western Dvina), the Gauja, Lielupe, and the Venta. The republic is, however, poorly supplied with mineral deposits. The primary mining products are sand and sandstone, gypsum, dolomite, limestone and clay.⁹

⁷ Rutkis, 1967: 109.

⁸ King, 1965: 11, 13.

⁹ Rutkis, 1967: 23-24.

II. Economy

Latvia entered a period of swift industrial growth and economic development in the second half of the nineteenth century, when it was a part of Tsarist Russia. The Baltic coast soon became one of the most developed parts of the empire. It was the only area to have achieved general literacy by 1897.¹⁰ The port of Riga carried a significant portion of Russia's European trade. This tie, together with the influence of the German baronial class and Latvia's trade partnership with Europe between the two world wars has left a lasting Western imprint on the population. Economic growth was seriously impaired by World War I. Much of Latvia's industrial plant was destroyed or evacuated to Russia. The loss of its source of raw materials and of its markets, due to its subsequent separation from the Soviet Union and the autarchic policies of the latter, led the Latvian government to concentrate on the development of the country as a source of high-quality agricultural products for the urban Western markets (on the model of Denmark). Since 1940, the Soviet government has concentrated on re-developing the republic's industrial significance, due in part to its relatively skilled labor force, its well-developed rail and highway network, and its proximity to major population centers.¹¹

Nearly 38% of the Latvian labor force is employed in industry, making it the most heavily industrialized of the Soviet Union republics.¹² The most important branches of industry are machine building and metalworking, which alone employed 31% of the industrial labor force in 1971. Light industry employed 23%, the lumber, cellulose and paper industries, 13%, and the food industry, 13%.¹³ With less than 1% of the USSR's population, Latvia produces over half of the motorcycles, almost half of the telephones, one-third of the trolley cars, more than one-fourth of the railroad passenger cars, about one-fourth of the radios and radio-phonographs, 19% of the refrigeration plants, 12% of the washing machines, and 4.3% of the

¹⁰ Soviet Union 50 Years, 1969: 278.

¹¹ Maciuka, 1972: 19-20. In 1938, approximately 6% of the Latvian population was employed in industry, including 1% in metalworking, vs. 17% and 5%, respectively, in 1966. Percentages computed from King (p. 44) on the basis of 1935 population (Rutkis, 1967: 292), and from LME (II: 282) and LTS (1968: 307), on the basis of 1966 population (Rutkis, 1967: 296). King (1965: 69) notes that in 1950 the production of the machine-building and metalworking, industry was already 1157% of that for 1940.

¹² Nar. khoz. Latvii 1971: 38.

¹³ Nar. khoz. Latvii 1971: 76.

agricultural machines made in the USSR.¹⁴

The Latvian peasant has traditionally lived on his own farmstead, with his house located in the middle of his fields, rather than in a village as was the pattern in central and southern Russia. When collectivization on the Russian model was forcibly accomplished between 1947 and 1950, losses and disruption were very great.¹⁵ Thousands of "kulaks" were deported to Siberia. Grain production in 1950 was roughly half of what it had been in 1940. Meat production was down 35%; milk, 40%.¹⁶

Approximately 20% of the working population in Latvia are employed in agriculture.¹⁷ This figure includes some 163,000 collective farmers and 14,000 workers and employees, primarily occupied in sovkhos work. Just as during the period of independence, animal husbandry remains the most important branch of agriculture. In 1970, 77% of the monetary income of Latvian kolkhozy was obtained from the sale of animals and animal products (i.e., milk and eggs).¹⁸ Cattle and hogs are the most important types of livestock. Crops grown include rye, barley, oats, wheat, flax, sugarbeets, potatoes, and fodder grasses.¹⁹

The Latvian ports of Riga, Ventspils [Vindau] and Liepaja [Libau] handle more than 40% of the Soviet foreign trade that travels via the Baltic. Riga's share in Baltic shipping is second only to that of Leningrad.²⁰ However, winter routes can usually be maintained in Riga with the help of ice-breakers, and the ports of Liepaja and Ventspils are essentially ice-free.²¹

In both level of productivity and standard of living, Latvia is among the leading Soviet republics. The per capita produced national income in 1970 was 1,574 rubles, second only to

¹⁴ Nar. khoz. 1970: 70-79. Nar. khoz. Latvii 1971: 34-35.

¹⁵ See Rutkis, 1967: 344-356. Isolated farm-houses have not disappeared entirely, although the authorities have continually pushed for the re-settlement of farmers into villages.

¹⁶ Widmer, 1969: 392-393.

¹⁷ Nar. khoz. Latvii 1971: 264-265.

¹⁸ LTS, 1970: 220.

¹⁹ Ibid.: 171; LME: II: 284.

²⁰ Rutkis, 1967: 473.

²¹ King, 1965: 17.

Estonia's and one-third higher than the corresponding figure for the USSR as a whole.²² The diet of the average Latvian includes considerably more protein and less cereal than that of the average Soviet citizen.

Of all 15 union republics, Latvia ranks first in the amount of useful living space for urban residents, first in hospital beds per 10,000 residents, second in doctors per 10,000 (at 36.2, one of the highest ratios in the world),²³ first in the number of radios, TV's and radio loudspeakers per capita,²⁴ second in per capita trade turnover and in the proportion of the population having a savings account, and fourth in the amount of money saved per capita.²⁵ Their consistently high showing in all these indices demonstrates that in a general sense Latvia and its neighbor Estonia are among the most developed and economically favored parts of the Soviet Union.

²² Nar. khoz. Latvii 1971: 56. Soviet calculation of national incomes excludes services and is thus not really comparable to Western figures. See R. Campbell, et al., "Methodological Problems Comparing the US and the USSR Economies" in Soviet Economic Prospects For the Seventies (Washington: U.S. Govt. Printing Office, 1973): 122-146.

²³ See Nar. khoz. 1970: 561; LTS, 1968: 350.

²⁴ Latvia had a considerable number of radio receivers during the period of independence. The proportion of wave receivers (allowing a choice of channels) to loudspeakers (wire transmissions, 110 choice of channels) in the Baltic republics was roughly double that for the USSR as a whole as late as 1959 (F. Gayle Durham, Radio and Television in the Soviet Union, Research Program on Problems of International Communication and Security, Center for International Studies, M.I.T., 1965: 96), and is still significantly higher than the all-union average. See Nar. khoz. Latvii 1972: 240.

²⁵ Nar. khoz. 1970: 546, 563-564, 579; Soviet Union 50 Years, 1969: 312-340; Figures for hospital beds are for 1966; others for 1970 and 1971.

III. History

Baltic tribes entered the territory of modern Latvia sometime during the last two millennia B.C. Over the course of centuries they pushed out or absorbed the indigenous Finno-Ugric tribes of Estonians and Livs. The Latvian tribes of Sels, Latgallians, Semigallians, and Cours developed agriculture and metals, traded with the Romans in amber, and gained a reputation as sea pirates. By the latter part of the first millennium A.D., they had developed a system of fortresses to protect their lands from constant incursions by Vikings and Slavs. Eastern portions of the country may well have been under tribute to Novogorod and Pskov at various times, but at others--as in a major battle between the Semigallians and the Princes of Polotsk in 1106--the Balts successfully repulsed the Slavs.²⁶

At the turn of the 13th century a new threat appeared which proved too much for the Latvian tribes. German ecclesiastics followed their merchants into the area. Bishop Albert founded the city of Riga in 1201 and the Order of the Brethren of the Sword the following year, which began to bring the Latvians the way of the cross in a very literal sense. The Semigallians and Cours fought back fiercely. In 1236, they united with Lithuanian forces to defeat the Order at the Battle of Saule [Siauliai].²⁷ The Germans reorganized themselves into the Livonian Order of Teutonic Knights, which continued the struggle until the conquest of Latvia was completed in 1290. A decentralized state, the Livonian Confederation, was organized, and the Latvians were reduced to peasants and bound to the land in an early form of serfdom. The land-owning and governing class of German barons, created during this time, survived the later Polish, Swedish, and Russian conquests and remained in power until the Revolution of 1917-1918.

The Livonian Confederation endured through internal dissension, peasant revolts and the incursions of the growing Russian and Polish-Lithuanian states until 1561, when weakened by strife growing out of the Reformation (Lutheranism was especially active in the towns of Riga and Reval [Tallinn]) and by the long Livonian War of Ivan IV, it was dissolved. Lithuania-Poland occupied eastern Latvia and defended it against the Russians. The Duchy of Courland was organized in the west. It recognized the suzerainty of the Polish crown but in fact was

²⁶ See Latvia, 1968: 15; Spekke, 1951: 112; Rutkis, 1967: 6; Istoriya LSSR, 1955: 30-32.

virtually autonomous.²⁸

Throughout the 16th and 17th centuries Latvia was exposed to the intellectual currents of the Reformation and Counter-reformation and to the influences of three different western cultures--Swedish, Polish, and German. Livonia and Courland remained predominantly Lutheran. Latgale, in the east, was held by Poland until the first partition of that country in 1772 and was re-converted to Catholicism. Religious works were printed in the local language; German and Swedish scholars began to discover Latvian folksongs, customs, and traditions. The life of the peasant became increasingly harsh, however, as the rights of the barons and the requirements of statutory labor were extended, culminating in full serfdom after the Russian take-over.²⁹ Until that time, Riga served as a city of refuge for peasants fleeing the control of harsh landlords and the devastation of war. During this period, the cities, while still predominantly German in character, had gained in native population.

Sweden's control over Riga and Livonia was consolidated early in the 17th century. It was not broken until Peter I's victory in the Great Northern War, which once again devastated the countryside. This victory brought the province under the Russian crown in 1721. Peter welcomed the German barons into the service of the Russian state and allowed them to retain their privileges. The widow of the Duke of Courland became the Empress Anna Ivanovna in 1730, and a later Duke, Ernst Biron, exercised great power in Russia as a favorite of the empress.³⁰ Formal Russian control over Courland did not come until the Third Partition of Poland in 1795, but Russian influence had grown continuously throughout the century.

The end of the eighteenth century saw the rest of Latvia come under Russian control via the partitions of Poland and marked the end of three centuries of intermittent warfare and strife. Latvia did not again become a major battlefield until World War I. Soviet historians stress the great positive benefit of the peace, unity, and opportunity for economic development which

²⁷ *Istoriya LSSR*, 1955: 35-36. Even Stalinist history does not claim Russian participation in the battle, although it does claim that the defenders were "inspired" by a Russian victory at Yuriev two years earlier.

²⁸ Rutkis, 1967: 217.

²⁹ Spekke, 1951: 188; *Istoriya LSSR*, 1955: 95.

³⁰ Spekke, 1951: 255-256.

the unification with Russia afforded the people of Latvia.³¹ Some credence must be granted this assertion, although the picture was by no means rosy. Serfdom prevailed, mitigated somewhat by the reforms of Alexander I in 1804 and 1816-1819.³² Famines and peasant revolts occurred. The oppressions of the autocracy hindered, but did not stop, the development of media, literature, and learning in the Latvian language.

The Russians governed Latvia in three separate units: the gubernii of Livonia (which also included part of Estonia) and Courland contained most of the country, but Latgale was administered as a part of the Vitebsk guberniya and did not enjoy the same limited degree of autonomy as did the other two provinces.³³ This autonomy, exercised by the local nobility, contributed to the maintenance of a non-Russian culture in the region, but it became increasingly restricted in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Alexander III essentially abolished it, but by that time the Latvian National Awakening was in full swing.

The personal freedom (without land) granted to Latvian peasants in 1816-1819 allowed considerable movement to the cities and the growth of manufacturing and trade.³⁴ Riga began to become a Latvian city rather than German.³⁵ The first Latvian-language newspaper was published in 1822 in Jelgava. Latvian-literature began to move away from its clerical and religious origins and to establish more secular concerns. The small but growing Latvian intelligentsia included men such as P. Balodis (1839-1918), who had been educated in St. Petersburg and who had established ties with the growing radical movement in Russia.

In 1854, a group of Latvian students at the University of Tartu, in Estonia, founded a

³¹ Istoriya LSSR, 1955: 114. There was some fighting in Latvia during the Napoleonic invasion; see Ibid.: 124.

³² The decree of 1804 provided that peasants in Livland, Estland, and Courland could not be sold without selling the land also; the laws of 1816-1819 granted the peasants personal freedom requiring that their relations with the landlords be regulated by "free contracts." The peasants received no land, which led to the reference to their new rights as "the freedom of the bird." This differed from the 1861 abolition of serfdom in Russia, when the state purchased land for the peasants and saddled them with a heavy repayment burden. See Spekke, 1951: 290 and Istoriya LSSR, 1955: 128.

³³ Rutkis, 1967: 216-217.

³⁴ Soviet historians note that Riga had 54 capitalist manufacturing enterprises in either 1820 or 1830, depending on which source is consulted. See Istoriya LSSR, 1955: 142 and Vesture, 1967: 121. Neither book notes the date as an error, and neither gives a reference source.

³⁵ Rutkis, 1967: 181.

small intellectual circle which grew into the movement known as the Young Latvians [Mladolatyshi] and became a major force in the growth of Latvian culture and national consciousness. Unable to publish in Latvia, these men founded a Latvian newspaper in St. Petersburg in 1862. Although it existed for only three years, the Petersburgas Avize was uncompromising in its call for national rights. It gained a significant readership in Latvia.³⁶ Among the leaders of the Young Latvians were such national heroes as Krisjanis Barons, who devoted his later life to a massive compilation of Latvian folksongs; Juris Alunans, poet and journalist; Krisjanis Valdemars and Atis Kronvalds, who worked as publicists and public speakers and assisted in the formation of the Latvian Society of Riga. This society sponsored the first national gathering of the Latvians, a song festival in 1873.

In 1897, Riga had 48,000 industrial workers in a total population of 282,000.³⁷ The wealth of the country was increasing rapidly, and Latvians were sharing in it to a greater and greater extent. Many of the large landed estates of the German nobility were divided up and sold to the peasants. The growth of a successful entrepreneurial class drained much of the militancy from the Young Latvian movement. This created a vacuum which was soon filled by a new generation of young intellectuals who became even more deeply influenced by socialist thought and teaching. These men came to be known as the "New Current" (Jaunā Strava, Novotechentsy), and were among the leaders of the growing revolutionary movement. One of them, Peteris Stuchka, later founded the Communist Party of Latvia. Another, the great poet Janis Rainis, is acclaimed and claimed by both Communist and nationalist Latvians.

Social Democratic organizations were founded throughout Latvia in 1901 and 1902, at first primarily by Russians, but Latvians quickly began to take on leading roles. In 1904, representatives of many of these groups, with a total membership of perhaps 4000, met in Riga and organized the Latvian Social Democratic Workers' Party. They worked closely with the Russian SD's but insisted on a national principle of federation, rather than a territorial one as the Leninists wanted.³⁸ By late 1905, in the midst of the revolution, the Party claimed 14,000

³⁶ See Spekke, 1951: 307; Istoriya LSSR, 1955: 211; Latvia, 1968: 18.

³⁷ Spekke, 1951: 308 and Rutkis, 1967: 292. Spekke's actual figure of 148,000 must be an error, as this represents some 51% of Riga's total population at that time. Rutkis, 1967: 316, gives a figure of 61,000 industrial workers in Riga in 1935.

³⁸ Istoriya LSSR, 1955: 262-268.

members. Lenin is said to have remarked that during the 1905 Revolution the workers and SD's of Latvia "occupied one of the first, most important places in the struggle against autocracy."³⁹ Indeed, Soviet statistics indicate that Latvia was the most revolutionary part of the empire in terms of the ratio of strikers to the total number of workers.⁴⁰

Nationalist and socialist currents remained strong in Latvia after the suppression of the 1905 Revolution. They exploded under the impact of the devastation caused by World War I, which was fought for three years on Latvian territory (the battle lines divided the country in half for much of the time), and the anarchy that followed Russia's February Revolution.

In 1917, provisional governmental and semi-governmental councils proliferated among Latvian Rifle Regiments in the Russian Army (formed in 1915) and among Latvian refugees scattered throughout Russia. Several of these cooperated to form the Latvian Provisional National Council on November 18, 1917. After the October Revolution, pro-Bolshevik groups proclaimed the establishment of Soviet power in unoccupied eastern Latvia, but left the country in the van of the German advance in the spring of 1918, in which all of Latvia was occupied. Enjoying limited recognition from the German occupation authorities, the Provisional Council and leaders from Courland, previously isolated from the rest of the country by the battle lines, united to form a pre-parliament, the Latvian People's Council, and to elect a provisional government under Kārlis Ulmanis in November of 1918.

In 1919, following the collapse of Imperial Germany, Soviet troops, including major elements of the Latvian Rifles Regiments, returned to Latvia. They pressed hard against Latvian national forces from the east, as did freebooting German forces in the west. But with some assistance in the form of money and supplies from the Allies and military support from Estonia, the Latvians succeeded in driving both Soviet and German forces out of the country by early 1920. A peace treaty with Soviet Russia, in which the young Bolshevik government renounced all claims to Latvian territory, was signed in August of that year.

A great many Latvians remained in Russia after the creation of the Latvian Republic. They played a disproportionately large role in the creation of the Soviet Union. The Red Latvian

³⁹ *Ibid.*: 281.

⁴⁰ *Istoriya LSSR*, 1955: 281-282.

Rifles were one of the most reliable units available to the Bolsheviks. In the Civil War battles, from the Ukraine to Siberia, they played a significant role. Latvian Communists such as Roberts Eiche, Roberts Eidemanis, and Jānis Rudzutaks, were widely influential, the last named as a member of the Politburo. However, Latvian Communists in the Soviet Union were virtually annihilated during Stalin's purges. Soviet historiography has consistently downplayed their significance.⁴¹

The Republic of Latvia carried out an extensive land reform during the 1920s. The degree of equality of access to land thus obtained is still in dispute between Soviet and Western authors.⁴² The parliamentary system established in Latvia provided extensive cultural autonomy, including schools and press, for the ethnic minorities. Political parties proliferated. Twenty-five of them were represented in the 100-member Saeima [Parliament] in 1928.⁴³ The development of a stable government proved impossible, and in May, 1934, Prime Minister Ulmanis dissolved the Saeima and established an authoritarian regime, corporate and national in character but not clearly fascist. Political parties were banned, a few leaders of extremist parties on both the left and the right were interred and/or prosecuted, and some restrictions were placed on the press, but there was no secret police, and the courts remained relatively independent.⁴⁴ This regime remained in power until the Soviet occupation.

In 1939, after the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact with Germany, the Soviet Union forced the Baltic states to sign Mutual Assistance Pacts which allowed the stationing of Soviet troops on their soil but guaranteed non-interference in internal affairs. Nine months later, in June of 1940, under threat of imminent Soviet attack, the government of Latvia was forced to resign in favor of one more "friendly" to the Soviet Union (and in fact, hand-picked by Andrei Vyshinsky, the special Soviet emissary to Latvia) and to allow the entry of Soviet forces in unlimited numbers.

⁴¹ See Gērmanis, 1970: 6-12.

⁴² For a statistical assessment, see Rein Taagepera, "Inequality Indices for Baltic Farm Size Distribution, 1929-1940," Journal of Baltic Studies (Spring), 1972: III: 1: 26-34.

⁴³ Spekke, 1951: 375.

⁴⁴ Ibid.: 376; Von Rauch, 1970: 132-133; Rutkis, 1967: 242; Bilmanis, 1947: 154. Dependent upon agricultural exports, Latvia was significantly affected by the Great Depression. This factor apparently hastened the end of democratic government there. The Ulmanis regime kept a balanced budget, but was apparently successful in encouraging recovery and further developing the road network and supply of

New elections were proclaimed, in which only the Communist-backed list of candidates was allowed to stand. After a campaign in which the Communists consistently denied any desire to Sovietize Latvia, the new parliament immediately requested incorporation into the Soviet Union.⁴⁵

The new Soviet regime proclaimed the nationalization of property, dismantled much of the existing social system, but had little time to organize Soviet style institutions before the Nazi invasion of June 1941. There was, however, time to plan and carry out deportations (on the night of June 14, 1941, more than 15,000 Latvians of all ages and in all walks of life were taken) and the execution of many more.⁴⁶ All major political leaders, including President Ulmanis and the Commander of Latvian forces, J. Balodis, disappeared. Most estimates agree that some 34,000 Latvians died or disappeared in 1940-1941. Additional deportations followed the expulsion of Nazi troops from Latvia, in connection with the re-establishment of Soviet control, the elimination of nationalist guerrillas who actively fought the Soviets until at least 1948, and the collectivization drive. There is no accurate way to calculate the losses inflicted on the Latvian nation by the war and the imposition of the Soviet system. They may easily have been in the neighborhood of 290,000 dead from military action, executions, or deportation. In addition to those killed or imprisoned, many more sought refuge in Western nations, from Sweden to Australia.⁴⁷

electric power. Latvia's economic situation improved considerably in 1936-1937. See Bilmanis, 1947: 306, 333-337.

⁴⁵ Tarulis, 1959: 253; Berzins, 1963: 90.

⁴⁶ Rutkis, 1967: 253, 774.

⁴⁷ See Rutkis, 1967: 292-327; Latvia, 1968: 53-54; King, 1965: 86.

IV. Demography

The population of Latvia, according to the 1970 census, was 2,364,127, an increase of 13% from 1959.⁴⁸ This rate of growth was about average for European peoples of the USSR. Much of that growth, however (58% according to data from one Soviet source⁴⁹) was achieved through immigration, mostly of non-Latvians, from other parts of the Union. Ethnic Latvians represented 62.0% of the republic's population in 1959, but only 56.8% in 1970. Russians increased from 26.6% to 29.8% of the population, and other Slavic peoples (Belorussians, Poles, and Ukrainians) from 7.2% to 9.0%. In 1935, ethnic Latvians had constituted over three-quarters of the population of the republic.⁵⁰

The steady erosion of the ethnic nature of their country is apparently of great concern to many Latvians, both at home and among emigrants. De-nationalization is strongest in the cities, where the Russian population tends to concentrate. Latvians constituted only 41% of the 1970 population of Riga, down from 45% in 1959.⁵¹ Nearly 94% of all Latvians living in the USSR already live in their republic, so that the Latvian portion of the republic population is not likely to be significantly reinforced by further concentration of the nationality in its homeland. That concentration is already one of the highest in the Soviet Union. It is exceeded only by that of the Georgians and the Lithuanians.

With the urban population making up almost two-thirds (62%) of the total republic population Latvia is one of the most highly urbanized parts of the Soviet Union. Riga, the capital, with over 700,000 inhabitants, is second only to Leningrad as the largest city on the Soviet Baltic coast. The population is also one of the most highly educated in the Soviet Union. Only Estonia has a higher proportion of specialists with higher or specialized secondary education.⁵²

⁴⁸ CDSP, 1971: XXIII: 16: 14.

⁴⁹ Sovetskaya Latvija (June 23), 1971. Translated in JPRS #53732, "Translations on USSR Political and Sociological Affairs," series (August 2), 1971: 166: 73.

⁵⁰ Rutkis, 1967: 292, 302. The absolute number of Latvians in Latvia in 1970 was smaller than in 1935!

⁵¹ Russians, Belorussians and Ukrainians constituted over 50% of the population of Riga in 1970. Itogi 1970: IV: 283.

⁵² Nar. khoz. 1970: 234.

A major reason that immigration presents such a considerable threat to the Latvian nation is its very low rate of natural population growth. While Latvia's birth rate of 14.5 births per 1000 population is only marginally lower than the rate for the RSFSR (14.6), the death rate, at 11.6 per thousand, is considerably higher and leaves a natural growth rate of only 3.3 per thousand, lowest in the USSR (only a little over half the rate for the RSFSR). Two factors are at work here. First, there is a large population of the aged (17.3% of Latvia's population is over 60 years old, and only 28.7% under 20, whereas the corresponding figures for the USSR as a whole are 11.8% and 38%) which is reflected in the high death rate (life expectancy in Latvia is nearly equal to that of the U.S.).⁵³ The age structure of the USSR's ethnic Latvian population is even less favorable; fully 20% are over 60 years old, and only 26% are under 20.⁵⁴ Secondly, there is a cultural preference in Latvia for smaller families, begun later in life.⁵⁵

The Communist Party of Latvia reported 127,753 members and candidate members on January 1, 1971, or roughly 5.4% of the population, compared to the CPSU's 5.9%.⁵⁶ At the time of the formation of the LSSR, the Latvian Communist Party was miniscule, comprising less than 700 members and candidates as late as 1944.⁵⁷ After the war, the ranks of the Party were filled in large part by the importation of cadres, both Latvian and non-Latvian, from other Soviet republics. But the Party remained relatively small in comparison to the population throughout the 1950s and 1960s.⁵⁸ Current data on the ethnic breakdown in the Party are not published, but Western studies have indicated a clear preponderance of Russians at all levels.⁵⁹

Certainly it is clear that non-Latvians or Latvians with long residence in Russia, considered to be "Russified" by Western writers and apparently by some native Latvian

⁵³ Nar. khoz. 1970: 50-51; LTS, -1971: 331. Statistical Abstract of U.S., 1971: 53.

⁵⁴ Itogi 1970: IV: 363.

⁵⁵ Vestnik statistiki (June), 1971: 6: 23-24. Translated in JPRS, "Translations on USSR Political and Sociological Affairs," (August 17), 1971: 170. Another complicating factor is the divorce rate, one of the highest in the world (in 1970, 45 divorces were recorded for every 100 marriages). See Nauka i tekhnika (January), 1972: 1: 4-7.

⁵⁶ From Partiinaya zhizn' (December), 1971: 24: 4 and Nar. khoz. 1970: 7. A more informative figure is CP strength as a percent of adult population: Latvia - 7.2%, USSR - 9.0%. Radio Liberty Dispatch, "Major Turnover of Leading Party Cadres in Union Republics," (April 20). 1971: 9.

⁵⁷ Ocherki, 19: 92.

⁵⁸ See Widmer, 1969: 167.

⁵⁹ See Vardys, 1964: 9-10; King, 1968: 61-62; Trapans, 1963.

Communists,⁶⁰ play a disproportionate role in the top Party leadership. Of the five secretaries of the CPL, First Secretary August Voss was raised in Russia and arrived in Latvia in 1945. Second Secretary N. Belukha, apparently in charge of cadres and Party organization, is a Ukrainian and speaks no Latvian at all. Secretary for propaganda A. Drizulis lived in Russia until he was 25, as apparently did Industry Secretary E. Petersons. Agriculture Secretary R. Verro, is an Estonian and does not speak Latvian. The Chairman of the Council of Ministers was born in Belorussia; the Chairman of the Supreme Soviet, in Moscow.⁶¹ The slow promotion of native cadres and the failure to encourage the use of the Latvian language by Party workers was one of the major concerns of a group of Latvian Communists, nominally led by Deputy Premier E. Berklavs, that was removed in a major purge of the CPL in 1959-1960.⁶² The dominance of the political system by men with few ties to the local population continues to be a major concern in Latvia.

⁶⁰ See the "Letter of 17 Latvian Communists," Brīvība (Stockholm) (January), 1972: 1: 225: 5-8, and in the Congressional Record (February 21), 1972. See also the analysis of the "Letter" and of Soviet rebuttal in Soviet Analyst (London) (March 2), 1972: I: 1: 306 and (April 13), 1972: I: 4: 4-6.

⁶¹ "Letter of 17 Latvian Communists"; see also the biographical sketches of these men in LME.

⁶² See King, 1965: 188-203; Berzins, 1963: 255-261; "Letter of 17 Latvian Communists"; Widmer, 1969: 311-317.

V. Culture

The beginnings of modern Latvian literature and culture are generally dated from the works of the poet Juris Alunans and the Young Latvian writers of the late nineteenth century. The publication of the national epic Lacplesis [Bearslayer] in 1888 was a milestone, coming only a few years after the Finnish Kalevala and the Estonian Kalevipoeg. Janis Rainis (1865-1929) is widely regarded as the greatest Latvian writer. His wife Aspazija (1868-1943) is also ranked highly in the West, although the Soviets have treated her less kindly.⁶³ Other major writers in this same period include Rudolfs Blaumanis, Augusts Deglavs and Andrievs Niedra.

In 1935, approximately 68% of the Latvian population claimed adherence to the Evangelical Lutheran Church and 26% to the Roman Catholic faith.⁶⁴ Religious feelings reflected the historical development of the country, as most of the Catholics were concentrated in Latgale, which had been under Polish rule during the Reformation and Counter-Reformation. The strength of religion in Latvia today cannot be determined with any accuracy, given Soviet pressures against such expression. However, a survey conducted by A.I. Kholmogorov, between 1964 and 1969, suggests that roughly 10% of the Latvians surveyed claimed to participate in religious holidays, as against 6.6% of the Russians and 28% of the Lithuanians resident in Latvia.⁶⁵ The implication is that religious beliefs are not held as tenaciously by the Latvians as by the neighboring Lithuanians, nor are as closely tied with national identity.⁶⁶

The traditions and culture associated with religion, especially the achievement ethic of Lutheranism, do strengthen the Western orientation of the Latvians and distinguish them from the Slavs whose culture was heavily influenced by Orthodoxy. Latvians tend to be disciplined and hardworking. Cleanliness, orderliness and making a good appearance are deeply rooted

⁶³ See Ekmanis, 1972: 44-70, passim; Rutkis, 509-510.

⁶⁴ Rutkis, 1967: 616.

⁶⁵ Kholmogorov, 1970: 74-75. The significance of the figures is not clear, and they should be interpreted with caution. As additional evidence of the maintenance of religious feelings in Latvia, Rein Taagepera has reported an interview given by the Lutheran Archbishop of Latvia in which he stated that 240 Latvian congregations own their own church buildings (Estonian Events [June] 1969: 14: 5). In 1936 there were 325 Lutheran congregations in Latvia (Rutkis, 1967: 618).

⁶⁶ Such identification has been given limited recognition by the Soviets. Newsletter from Behind the Iron Curtain, (June) 1971: 470.

cultural values.⁶⁷ The quality of Latvian and Estonian manufactures is clearly among the highest in the USSR, and is generally recognized as such. Latvian furniture and clothing products are in great demand throughout the USSR.

An old Latvian tradition, more national and folkloristic than religious, is the celebration of Midsummer Day and its eve, called St. John's eve or Jānu Naktis. This holiday was abolished by the Soviets in 1960, but its observation has continued. Since 1966 it has received limited recognition in the official press (a photograph and some traditional songs are printed on the back page of Cina, the Party's Latvian-language daily), but Latvians are not given the day off from work. In 1973, and perhaps in other years, Intourist, the Soviet Company for Travel in the USSR, sponsored an observance of the holiday for Latvian visitors from abroad. Signs of local observances were widespread in Riga.⁶⁸

The folksong is a particularly characteristic form in Latvian culture, and national songfests, now held every five years, occasionally provide settings for the demonstration of national feelings.⁶⁹ The most noted Latvian composers of both folk and classical music include Emēlis Melngailis and the brothers Jāzepe and Jānis Medins. The latter is well-received by the Soviets even though he lived in Sweden from World War II until his death in 1966.⁷⁰ Soviet Latvian writers who have been awarded prizes by the Soviet regime include Vilis Lacis (Chairman of the Council of Ministers from 1946 to 1959), Andrejs Upīts, and Jānis Sudrabkalns. However their work is generally considered poor quality in the West.⁷¹ Today young writers in Latvia apparently continue to be concerned with national or non-Soviet cultural values. There has been frequent criticism of these writers and of the organizations responsible for their work in the Party press, as well as some arrests.⁷² (For information on Latvian literary journals and press see the section on media.)

The Latvian republic is regarded as one of high culture in the USSR. Riga is a highly

⁶⁷ Andersons, 1953: 79, 148.

⁶⁸ Rutkis, 1967: 501, and personal observations of F. Harned.

⁶⁹ Ibid.: 501, 547.

⁷⁰ See Glimpses of Latvian Culture, 1971: 21-22.

⁷¹ Rutkis, 1967: 517-518.

⁷² See Ekmanis, 1972: 60; Estonian Events (February), 1968: 4: 1, and (December), 1968: 11: 1; Cina, (September 15), 1970 and (March 3), 1972.

developed and well maintained metropolis with architectural and cultural features similar to those of other large European cities. Latvia has ten theaters. Most of them are located in Riga. They include the Opera and Ballet Theater; the Rainis, a Latvian Drama Theater; the Russian Drama Theater; the Youth Theater; and the Komsomol Theater. The Riga Cinema Studio produces films in both Latvian and Russian. The Latvian Academy of Sciences (established in 1946) consists of 16 scientific institutions and a personnel of 1500 including 45 academicians. Latvia has also an Academy of Agriculture, an Art Academy, and the Stuchka Latvian State University. The Latvian Public Library holds three million volumes (1967). The Riga Museum of Fine Arts and the Museum of Latvian History are well known throughout the republic.⁷³

⁷³ Nar. obraz., 1971: 334; SSSR, 1967: 591; Nar. khoz. 1970: 660, 674.

VI. External Relations

Unlike their neighbors, the Estonians and the Lithuanians, the Latvians have no unambiguous established external race which can provide support for their national distinctness. Estonians in Tallinn can receive and understand the radio and television broadcasts of their Finnish cousins across the Gulf. The ethnic and linguistic tie reinforces their own national awareness of being non-Russian and non-Slav. The Catholic Lithuanians have the Church and can argue for religious policies on the model of those prevailing in neighboring Poland. The Latvians have no ethnic relatives except the Lithuanians and the role of Lutheranism as a national church is not clear. Although they received a great deal of German cultural influence, the memory of the Baltic Barons and of German policies during the two World Wars is still strong. Sweden is home for several thousand Latvian émigrés and serves as a center for many of their political and intellectual activities. But it is ethnically and linguistically foreign. Great Britain gave Latvia some support in the struggle for independence, but on the whole the Latvians are relatively isolated.

Their position as a small, developed, Europeanized segment in a large, mostly Slavic state is shared by their two small neighbors. There was some limited cooperation among the three Baltic states during the period of independence, but it was not carried very far. This was in part due to Lithuania's involvement in the dispute with Poland over Vilnius. The Soviets have allowed a slowly increasing amount of inter-republic cooperation among the three. For some purposes they treat the Baltic region (the three republics plus the Kaliningrad oblast) as a unit, with Riga as the principal headquarters. This practice has contributed to the flow of Russian officials into Riga, however, and under Soviet conditions could at best be of only limited support in maintaining the distinctiveness of the region.

The Latvians are one of those USSR nationalities who have a relatively large and nationally conscious emigration. Latvians in the emigration population have worked to preserve and expand their national culture and have maintained contacts and communication with their homeland. They have also tried to make world opinion aware of the node of Latvia's accession to the Soviet Union and the position of its people.

Latvian language periodicals are published in the West, and several Latvian publishing

houses are maintained by the émigrés. Latvians played a leading role in the establishment of the Baltiska Institutet in Stockholm and of the Association for the Advancement of Baltic Studies, headquartered in New York. Latvian National Associations exist in almost every city that has a Latvian community. They sponsor special schools for their children, cultural festivals, radio broadcasts, and news publications on the developments in Soviet Latvia. Judging from the reaction of the Soviet press, their influence in the homeland is not inconsiderable. The authorities of Soviet Latvia make a special effort to reach their emigrant co-nationals through special broadcasts and publications, as well as through encouraging tourism to their former homeland.⁷⁴

⁷⁴ Personal conversations with a number of such tourists in June, 1973 gave a clear impression that the effect of these programs is not necessarily favorable to the regime, either among the tourists or among their relatives and friends in Latvia.

LATVIA AND THE LATVIANS

PART B

Media

I. Language Data

The Latvian and Lithuanian languages are the only surviving members of the Baltic group of Indo-European languages. They are clearly distinct, in vocabulary, structure and morphology, from the Germanic and Slavic languages of the surrounding countries.⁷⁵ Books appeared in Latvian as early as the 17th century. The standard literary form of the language was established during the National Awakening of the second half of the 19th century and the period of independence (1918 to 1940). The current system of orthography uses the Latin alphabet, with certain diacritic marks.

In 1970 more than 95% of the Latvians in the USSR, and more than 98% of those resident in Latvia, considered Latvian their native language (see Table B.1.).⁷⁶ By comparison, 97.9% of the Lithuanians of the Soviet Union--who are only marginally more concentrated in their own republic than are the Latvians--considered Lithuanian their native tongue. Similarly, almost 96% of Estonians, fewer of whom live in Estonia, considered Estonian their first language.⁷⁷ Thus the loyalty of the Latvians to their national language would appear to be slightly less than that of their neighbors. However, it is well above that of the Ukrainians, Belorussians, or Armenians.

In 1970, more than half of the total population of Latvia (56.9%, including some 29,000 non-Latvians) claimed that Latvian was their native language. An additional 8% claimed fluency in Latvian as a second language. Approximately two-fifths of the population claimed

⁷⁵ Estonian, a Finnic language, is even more foreign. Only a few words of Finnic origin have been incorporated into Latvian.

⁷⁶ Itogi 1970: IV: 20, 280.

⁷⁷ In 1970, 94.1% of the Lithuanians in the Soviet Union lived in their own republic as did 93.8% of the Latvians and 91.9% of the Estonians in their respective republics. The figures for all three peoples represented increases over those for 1959. CDSF, XXIII: 16: 16-18.

Russian as a native language, and another one-third claimed Russian as their second language. Thus the proportions of the total population fluent in either one of the other of the two languages were quite similar--64.9% for Latvian, 67.2% for Russian.⁷⁸

⁷⁸ Itogi 1970: IV: 280. For the urban population, the figures are 55% Latvian, 70% Russian; for Riga, 51% Latvian, 81% Russian. See *Ibid.*, 281, 283.

Table B.1.
Native and Second Languages Spoken by Latvians (in thousands)

Number of Latvians residing:	1959		1970		Speaking as their Native Language				Speaking as a . Second Language ^a	
	Latvian		Russian		Percentage Point Change		Percentage Point Change		Russian	Other languages of the peoples of the USSR
	1959	1970	1959-1970	1959-1970	1959	1970	1959-1970	1970	1970	1970
in the Latvian SSR	1,298 (92.7%)	1,316 (98.1%)	1,277 (98.4%)	1,316 (98.1%)	- 0.3	19 (1.5%)	25 (1.9%)	+ 0.4	608 (45.3%)	4.4 (0.3%)
in other Soviet republics	102 (7.3%)	45 (51.1%)	54 (52.9%)	45 (51.1%)	- 1.8	45 (44.1%)	40 (45.5%)	+ 1.4	38 (43.2%)	5.6 (6.4%)
Total	1,408 (100%)	1,361 (95.2%)	1,331 (95.1%)	1,361 (95.2%)	+ 0.1	04 (4.6%)	65 (4.5%)	- 0.1	646 (45.2%)	10 (0.7%)

Sources: Itogi 1959: Tables 53-55; Itogi 1970: IV: 20, 280; Nar. khoz. 1972: 32.

^a No data are available for 1959, since no questions regarding command of a second language were asked in the 1959 census.

Data from the 1970 census regarding native language by age indicates that among all Latvians in the Soviet Union, those in their twenties and those over fifty-years-old are most likely to claim Latvian as their native language. The following table summarizes the data:

Age Structure and Native Language of Latvians in the USSR, 1970

Age Group (years)	Number of Latvians	Claiming Latvian as a Native Language	
		Number	Percentage of Age Group
0-10	215,689	207,889	96.4
11-15	94,056	90,808	96.5
16-19	64,234	62,254	96.9
20-29	179,944	176,048	97.8
30-39	202,149	197,477	97.7
40-49	170,654	166,619	97.6
50-59	133,817	131,625	98.4
60+	295,966	292,414	98.8
Total	1,429,844 ⁷⁹	1,361,414	95.2

[Numbers as originally published, totals do not sum columns. –Ed.]

⁷⁹ Data for age groups is for Latvians in the Latvian SSR and other major regions of settlement; 94.9% of the total number of Soviet Latvians is included in this listing, whereas the total given in the table is for all Soviet Latvians. Itogi 1970: IV: 360(n). 363.

II. Local Media

Latvia achieved general literacy by the beginning of the twentieth century. Its population has been plentifully supplied with reading materials by the Soviet regime. A total of 76 newspapers are published in Latvia, 49 in Latvian and the rest in Russian (see Table B.2.). Their 1971 average circulation (1,297,000) amounted to 71.8 copies of Latvian newspapers per 100 inhabitants of the republic who considered Latvian their native language, and 39.0 per 100 Russian speakers.⁸⁰ The Russian speakers have, of course, the centrally published newspapers available as well.

Of the nine all-republic newspapers, the most important are the two dailies, Cina [Struggle] (in Latvian, with a 1970 circulation of 190~000) and Sovetskaya Latviya (in Russian, circulation, 105,000), organs of the CC CP Latvia and the LSSR Council of Ministers; the Komsomol papers, Padomju Jaunatne [Soviet Youth] (circulation, 157,000) and Sovetskaya molodyozh [Soviet Youth] (circulation, 152,000); and Literatūra un Māksla [Literature and Art] (circulation, 48,000), a weekly organ of the Writer's Union as well as those of other creative artists.⁸¹ Dzimtenes Balss [Voice of the Homeland], a weekly publication for Latvians abroad, is counted among the all-republic papers.

The eleven city newspapers include Latvian and Russian language pairs for the cities of Riga (and Jūrmala), Jelgava, Liepaja, Ventspils, and Rezekne; Daugavpils is served by a Russian paper alone. The 1970 circulation of Rigas Balss [Voice of Riga] was 78,000 in Latvian and 61,000 in Russian.⁸²

Two-thirds of the 27 magazines published in Latvia are in Latvian. In 1970, they had a total per issue circulation of 1,043,000, 93% in Latvian. Thus, Latvian-language readers are far

⁸⁰ Computed from Pechat' 1971: 189 and Itogi 1970: IV: 280.

⁸¹ Preses Hronika, December 1970: 79-111. This is a monthly listing of publications in Latvia. Once a year it carries complete information on journals and newspapers.

⁸² Ibid.

Table B.2. Publications in the Latvian SSR

Language of Publication	Year	Newspapers ^a			Magazines			Books and Brochures		
		No.	Per Issue Circulation (1000)	Copies/100 in Language Group	No.	Per Issue Circulation (1000)	Copies/100 in Language Group	No. of Titles	Total Volume (1000)	Books & Brochures /100 in Language Group
Russian	1959	25	194	29.5	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	700	2,910	442.9
	1971	27	331	39.0	10	75	8.8	1,140	2,646	311.8
Latvian ^b	1959	75	632	48.4	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	1,256	9,737	746.1
	1971	49	966	71.8	17 ^b	1,019	75.8	1,169	12,625	938.9
Minority Languages	1959	0	0	0	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	0	0	0
	1971	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	56	32.8
Foreign Languages	1959	0	0	---	N.A.	N.A.	---	(21) ^c	(202)	---
	1971	0	0	---	0	0	---	(82)	(289)	---
All Languages	1959	100	826	39.5	15	474	22.6	1,977	12,849	613.8
	1971	76	1,297	54.9	27	1,094	46.3	2,394	15,616	660.5

Source:

Pechat' 1959: 58, 129, 165;Pechat' 1971: 96, 159, 189.

a 1970 figures do not include kolkhoz newspapers.

b Includes journals appearing simultaneously in Russian and Latvian.

c Book totals as given in Pechat' sometimes differ from totals in language categories. The indication is that books are published in other languages, but no data is given. Figures in parentheses are the presumed production of books in other languages based on this discrepancy.

better supplied with locally produced journals than are the Russian readers. Magazines published in Moscow are readily available in Latvia, which redresses the balance. The most important journals, with their 1970 circulation figures, are Padomju Latvijas Komunisti (16,300; also published in Russian as Kommunist Sovetskoi Latvii, circulation 5,100), the Party monthly; Zvaigzne [Star] (111,700), a popular fiction fortnightly; Karogs [Banner] (18,000), the journal of the Writers' Union; Veseliba [Health] (162,000), the Ministry of Health's journal of popular medicine; Padomju Latvijas Sieviete [Soviet Latvian Woman] (169,700), a political and literary journal for women published by the CC CP Latvia; and Dadzis [Burdock] (76,400), the official satirical journal.

In the realm of book publishing, only Estonia publishes more titles per capita, or larger editions per capita, than Latvia does. However, the proportion of Latvian-language books out of all books published in Latvia has steadily declined from a high of 81% of new titles in 1945 to slightly over 50% in 1970.⁸³ Almost all the rest are published in Russian. In volume, Latvian books have consistently outnumbered the Russian by three or four to one. In 1970, nearly one-quarter of the titles appearing in Latvian, encompassing over two-fifths of the total volume, were translations from other languages, especially Russian.⁸⁴

The Baltic republics are far better supplied with radio and television receivers than the rest of the Soviet Union. In 1971, Latvia had more TV sets per 1000 inhabitants than France had in 1969.⁸⁵ There was a radio or radio-phonograph for every third inhabitant. Wired loudspeakers constituted only 16% of the radio receiving points in Latvia, less than half of the all-union average.⁸⁶ This supply of selector receivers, coupled with Latvia's geographic position, suggests that the country has a high capacity for receiving foreign broadcasts. Radio Luxembourg, in particular, is a popular source of western music.⁸⁷

In 1968, Latvian SSR Radio broadcast four separate programmes, including one in

⁸³ LTS, 1971: 418. Latvian-language books are published in larger editions, so that four-fifths of all copies of books published in Latvia in 1970 were in Latvian. This percentage has been increasing since 1965.

⁸⁴ Pechat' 1970: 96.

⁸⁵ 202 vs. 201, or one set for every five persons. Nar. khoz. 1972: 628; UN Statistical Yearbook, 1970: 805.

⁸⁶ Computed from Nar. khoz. 1972: *passim*.

⁸⁷ Personal communication, June 1973.

stereo, for a total of 27 hours daily. Broadcasting is in Latvian and in Russian. A foreign service in Latvian and Swedish is also maintained.⁸⁸ Small local stations also exist in the cities of Jelgava and Rezekne, in 26 raions, and in many sovkhozy, kolkhozy and large industrial establishments.⁸⁹ Amateur radio is widely popular. Organized and encouraged by DOSAAF, some 30,000 amateurs, operating 300 stations, were registered in 1968.⁹⁰

Eight TV stations existed in Latvia in 1970, but none originated local programming except the one in Riga. There are two programmes available. TV Riga broadcasts approximately five and a half hours per day, roughly two-thirds of which is of local origin (in both Latvian and Russian), the rest from Moscow. Central television broadcasts about 14 hours per day. On TV Riga, programming in Latvian averages just under two hours per day, out of the total five to six hours; on Central television, all programming is in Russian.⁹¹

⁸⁸ LME, 1970: III: 119.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid.: 116.

⁹¹ See, e.g., schedules in Sovetskaya Latviya (July 23), 1972.

Table B.3.

Electronic Media and Films in the Latvian SSR

Year	Radio		Television			Movies				
	No. of Stations	No. of Wired Sets (1000)	/100 population	No. of wireless sets (1000)	/100 population	No. of Stations	No. of Stations Originating Programming	No. of sets (1000)	Seats (1000)	/100 population
1960	*	183	8.5	419	19.5	4	1	83	119	5.6
1970	*	245	10.3	787	33.0	8	1	459'	177	7.4
1971	*	263	10.9	865	35.9	8	1	487	180	7.5

* Numerical data are not available. See text.

Sources: Televēdeniye i radioveshchaniye, 1972: 12, 13; Pechat' i kulturno-prosvetitel'nye uchrezhdeniyz Latviiskoi SSR (Riga: Statistika, 1967). 24; Nar. khoz., 1972: 622, 628; Nar. khoz. Latvii 1971: 239, 358; Transport i svyaz' SSR, 1972: 296-298; and Nar. obraz., 1971: 325.

III. Educational Institutions

General education in the Latvian Republic is provided chiefly in unified eight-year schools. The abolition of Khrushchev's educational reforms in the early 1960s included a return to the Soviet standard of general seven-year education. Pressure from Baltic educators and writers, however, led to the decision to allow these three republics to resume the more traditional eight-year period.⁹² Four-year primary schools exist almost exclusively in rural areas, and their number has been halved since 1945.⁹³

Official reference sources do not distinguish among these schools by language of instruction. One Western source estimated that Russian-language general education schools enrolled about one-third of all students in 1955-1956.⁹⁴ During the 1960s this proportion may have been reduced by the marked increase in schools with classes taught in both Latvian and Russian. There were 240 of these bilingual schools in 1967, out of a total of some 1200. Almost one-third of the country's school children were enrolled in them.⁹⁵ The proportion of children of any given nationality attending the bilingual schools is not known. It may be presumed that they include many of the largest schools, especially in the cities and that the continued consolidation of rural schools has added to their number. In Latvian-language schools, Russian is a compulsory subject, beginning in the second grade.⁹⁶

Roughly two-thirds of the graduates of the eight-year schools continue their education in either general secondary or specialized secondary schools.⁹⁷ About one-third of the students in these schools have a chance to go on to one of Latvia's ten higher educational institutions or vuzy.⁹⁸ In 1971, the enrollment in Latvia's 55 specialized secondary schools was 38,600.⁹⁹

⁹² Vardys, 1967: 60-61; Bilinsky, 1968:424; Pennar, 1971:241.

⁹³ LTS, 1971: 389

⁹⁴ Rutkis, 1967: 574.

⁹⁵ Izvestia (Jan. 5), 1967: 3. See also Vardys, 1967: 60; Pennar, 1971: 241.

⁹⁶ LME, III: 160.

⁹⁷ Computed from LTS, 1971: 391, 397. Many others continue in evening schools for working and rural youth. See Ibid.: 392.

⁹⁸ Nar. khoz. 1972: 629. In the USSR, the term vuz (vyssheye ychebnoye 'zavedeniye [higher educational institutions]) refers to such institutions as universities, technical institutes, agricultural academies, etc.

The most important vuzy in Latvia include the Latvian State University named for Peteris Stucka, at Riga; the Riga Polytechnical Institute; the Latvian Agricultural Academy, and other specialized institutes for medicine, pedagogy, music, and art.¹⁰⁰ Both Latvian and Russian tend to be used for teaching at these institutes, except for the University, where many courses are available in Latvian only.¹⁰¹

Latvia is well supplied with educated manpower. With Estonia, she tops the list of Soviet republics in specialists with higher or specialized secondary education working in the economy (78 per 1000 inhabitants).¹⁰² Only 55% of these, however, are Latvian.¹⁰³ Only 47% of the students in Latvia's vuzy in 1970-1971 were Latvians, down from 64% in 1960-1961, whereas the Latvian share of the population had diminished only from 62.0% to 56.8% during the same period.¹⁰⁴ When ranked by nationality, Latvians are sixth in the ratio of specialists with higher education to population.¹⁰⁵ Their ranking in the proportion of students is lower; Latvians are eleventh among the nationalities in this study in the ratio of vuzy students to population. and tenth in students in specialized secondary education.¹⁰⁶ Complete secondary education in Latvia is more thorough than in the other republics: it entails 11 years of study instead of the ten years required elsewhere.

⁹⁹ Computed from average class size and rate of vuz matriculation. LTS, 1971: 397; Nar. obraz., 1971: 173.

¹⁰⁰ For a complete list, see Rutkis, 1967: 575-576. For enrollments, see LTS, 1971: 400.

¹⁰¹ Dreifelds, 1970: 4.

¹⁰² Computed from Nar. obraz., 1971: 234.

¹⁰³ Pennar, 1972: 249.

¹⁰⁴ Computed from Nar. obraz., 1971: 201. 88% of Latvian college students are in school in Latvia.

¹⁰⁵ The first five, in order, are: Jews, Georgians, Armenians, Estonians, Russians. From Nar. obraz., 1971: 240.

¹⁰⁶ Nar. obraz., 1971: 196. The comparatively low proportion of the Latvian population in the corresponding age brackets should be considered here.

Table B.4.

Selected Data on Education in the Latvian SSR (1971)

Population: 2,409,000

Nar. Khoz. 1972

			Per 1000 pop.	
(p. 629)	<u>All Schools</u>			
	• number of schools	• 1,137	.47	
	• number of students	• 358,000	149.6	
(p. 627)	<u>Newly Opened Elementary, Incomplete Secondary, and Secondary Schools</u>			
	• number of schools	• 11		
	• number of student places	• 6,800	2.8	
(p. 629)	<u>Secondary Special Schools</u>			
	• number of schools	• 55		
	• number of students	• 38,600	16.0	
(p. 629)	<u>Institutions of Higher Education</u>			
	• number of institutions	• 10		
	• number of students	• 41,000	17.0	
(p. 439)	<u>Universities</u>			
	• number of universitites	• 1		Percent of
	• number of students			total
	total	• 8,641	3.59	
	day students	• 3,879	1.6	44.9%
	evening students	• 1,724	0.72	20.0%
	correspondence students	• 3,038	1.26	35.1%
	• newly admitted			
	total	• 1,669	0.69	
	day students	• 894	0.37	53.6%
	evening students	• 300	0.12	18.0%
	correspondence students	• 475	0.20	28.4%
	• graduated			
	total	• 1,250	0.5	
	day students	• 767	0.32	61.4%
	evening students	• 213	0.09	17.0%
	corresponding students	• 270	0.11	21.6%

Table B.4. (continued)

Selected Data on Education in the Latvian SSR (1971)

Population: 2,409,000

			Per 1000 pop.
	<u>Graduate Students</u>		
	• total number of	• 914	0.38
	• in scientific research institutions	• 325	0.13
	• in universities	• 589	0.24
(p. 619)	<u>Number of Persons with Higher or Secondary (Complete and Incomplete) Education</u>		
	• per 1000 individuals, 10 years or older	• 517	
	• per 1000 individuals employed in national economy	• 661	
(p. 626)	<u>Number of Workers Who Are Graduates of Professional-Technical Schools</u>	• 15,400	6.39

IV. Cultural and Scientific Institutions

The Latvian Academy of Sciences was founded in 1946. As of January 1970, it encompasses 14 research institutes organized into three divisions (physics and technical science, chemistry and biology, and social sciences), plus a general library. Its presidents have all been ethnic Latvians, although K. Plaude, president since 1960, and both of the vice presidents spent the inter-war years in the Soviet Union. The Director of the Institute of History, A. Drizulis, who is also a secretary of the CC CP Latvia, was reared and educated in Russia. At the end of 1968, the Academy had 23 full members and 25 corresponding members. Twenty of the former and 19 of the latter have Latvian surnames; the rest appear to be of Slavic origin.¹⁰⁷

The 1971 production of the Riga Film Studio included 7 full-length films (six features and one documentary), and 79 shorter films, cartoons and newsreels. There are 1,172 movie houses and 129 mobile film units in Latvia. The average citizen of the republic goes to the movies 16 times per year, somewhat less than the average Soviet citizen (19 times).¹⁰⁸ Russian-language and foreign films are shown with Latvian subtitles. This substitution for the Russian language occurs only in the Baltic republics and Kazakhstan.¹⁰⁹

Except for cinematography, publishing and the electronic media, cultural affairs in Latvia are guided by the Ministry of Culture. Its guidance includes budgetary allocations as well as well as controls over the "ideological and artistic quality" of dramatic, musical, and artistic works.¹¹⁰ Museums, libraries, clubs, parks and the zoo are all under the Ministry of Culture. V. Kaupuzh, a musician reared in independent Latvia, has been Minister of Culture since 1962.⁵

Ten professional theaters were operating in Latvia at the end of 1970, including the State Opera and Ballet Theater. Seven are located in Riga, and three in other cities. Four perform only in Latvian, two only in Russian, and four perform in both languages. Amateur theater has always been very popular. The best amateur companies are awarded the title of "People's

¹⁰⁷ LME: I: 411, 677; III: 42, 606, 761-763.

¹⁰⁸ Nar. obraz., 1971: 327, 330; Nar. khoz. Latvii 1972: 358-359.

¹⁰⁹ Taagepera, Estonian Events (December), 1970: 23: 5, citing Sirp ja Vasar (September 4), 1970.

¹¹⁰ LME, 1969: II: 580.

Theaters." Eighteen of these existed in 1969, 13 Latvian, 3 Russian, and one (in Rezekne) with both Latvian and Russian companies.¹¹¹

Table B.5.

Selected Data on Scientific and Cultural Facilities and Personnel in Latvian SSR (1971)

Population: 2,409,000

Academy of Science

- number of members 51
- number of scientific institutions affiliated with the Academy 16
- total number of scientific workers in these 1,558

Museums

- number of museums 54
- attendance 2,717,000
- attendance per 1000 population 1,128

Theaters

- number of theaters 10
- attendance 2,204
- attendance per 1000 population 914

Number of persons working in education and culture

- total 81,000
- number per 1000 population 33.6

Number of persons working in science and scientific services

- total 27,000
- number per 1000 population 11.2

Number of public libraries

- number of books and magazines in public libraries 1,511
- 16,643,000

Number of clubs

1,021

Source: Nar. khoz. 1972: 106, 451, 625.

⁵ LME, 1969: II: 56.

¹¹¹ LME, 1969: II: 708-709; and 1970: III: 501; Rutkis, 1967: 552-553.

LATVIA AND THE LATVIANS

PART C

National Attitudes

I. Review of Factors Forming National Attitudes

The Latvians are a small people, ethnically distinct from their neighbors except for the Lithuanians. For centuries they have maintained their distinctiveness in spite of assimilative efforts by their German and Russian overlords. The development of an intelligentsia in the latter half of the nineteenth century coincided with a period of rapid industrial development, resulting in the formation of both nationalist and socialist-internationalist trends. During the Russian Civil War the Latvians became even more divided amongst themselves--pro-Communists against anti-Communists--than were the Estonians or Lithuanians. The establishment of the independent Latvian republic isolated most pro-Bolshevik Latvians, however, and Stalin's purges decimated those Latvians who lived in the USSR. There were few native Communists with strong local ties left by the time Latvia became part of the Soviet Union.

Oriented toward west-central Europe by their heritage of Germanic culture, religion, alphabet, and historic trade ties, the Baltic peoples are the most Westernized portion of the Soviet population and have served as a major channel for the introduction of Western ideas and fashions into the Soviet Union.¹¹² Their higher level of economic development and welfare, both at the time of incorporation into the Soviet Union and at present, combines with this background to produce an environment in which the Latvians may well feel themselves superior to the Russians and other Slavs.¹¹³

The incorporation of Latvia into the Soviet Union occurred within the lifetime of almost 60% of its present population.¹¹⁴ Despite the fact that Soviet historiography has slowly eliminated references to the significant roles played by the "changed international circumstances" (a euphemism for the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact) and by the Red Army, the Sovietization of Latvia was neither free nor voluntary. In fact, it led to the deportation of most of its political leaders and a major portion of its mobilized and educated population, as well as

¹¹² Rein Taagepera, 1972. For a Soviet viewpoint, see Vasil'i Aksenov, A Ticket To The Stars (N.Y. Signet Books, 1963), passim.

¹¹³ King, 1968: 62. For a similar sentiment among Lithuanians, see Soviet Analyst (November), 1972: I: 18: 4.

¹¹⁴ Sovetskaya Latviya (June 23), 1971.

to considerable emigration. This traumatic series of events left many Latvians with relatives in the West, a factor which has led the Soviet regime to make unceasing efforts to counter and discredit the information and political activities of the exiles.¹¹⁵

The Soviet period of Latvian history has seen a continued large immigration of Russians and other Slavs into the republic. This has significantly reduced the predominance of ethnic Balts in the population, especially in the cities. A great deal of this immigration was connected with the re-establishment of heavy industry in Latvia, and some natives have argued that a primary purpose of such industrialization was to provide for the importation of Russians.¹¹⁶ The small size and slow growth of the native contingent in the CPL have meant that political power in the republic was and continues to be exercised by Russians and by imports of Latvian origin who had long been resident in Russia and who speak Latvian imperfectly. This leadership has resisted the tendency to become "re-nationalized" and to act as a buffer between Moscow and national communists that seems to have prevailed in Estonia.¹¹⁷ They remain close to the Moscow line, perhaps influenced by the rise of one of their number, Arvids Pelshe, to the Chairmanship of the CPSU Party Control Committee. The one attempt of native communists to gain influence and to speak out for republic and national interests was crushed in 1959.¹¹⁸

The attitudes of Latvians today toward the Soviet system in general and toward the future of their nation in particular are of course difficult to determine. Most information has to be gleaned from official publications, private communications, and the reports of visitors. Latvian participation in samizdat has been relatively small, especially in comparison to the activities of Estonians, Lithuanians, and the Jewish population of Riga. The latter group has played a conspicuous role in the current Jewish awakening in the Soviet Union. Such sources do, however, provide many indications that the Latvians are concerned--perhaps increasingly so--about the preservation of their national culture.

The leadership of the Latvian CP has frequently attacked any expression of nationalist

¹¹⁵ E.G. see Cina (February 24), 1972, wherein the exiled Social Democratic leader Dr. Bruno Kalnins is accused of forging the "Letter of 17 Latvian Communists"; and Radio Liberty Dispatch, Dissidents Among the National Minorities in the USSR (August 29), 1972: 4.

¹¹⁶ See "Nationality Problems: Latvia," Soviet Analyst (March 2), 1972: I: 1: 4.

¹¹⁷ Taagepera, 1972: 7-9.

feelings and "political immaturity" thereby demonstrating the persistence of such feelings. Čina criticized the Union of Writers and Artists in September of 1970 for not giving sufficient attention to the "ideological growth" of its members. The 1972 Congress of the Latvian Komsomol also heard criticism of poor political education work among young writers.¹¹⁹ The existence of cultural nationalism and a desire on the part of young Latvian writers to reevaluate those parts of the Latvian literary heritage that have been denigrated by the Soviets has been documented by Rolfs Ekmanis of Arizona State University.¹²⁰

Augusts Voss, First Secretary of the CPL, has repeatedly castigated survivals of bourgeois nationalism among the population.¹²¹ The publication of an official rebuttal--a highly inadequate one--to the so-called "Letter of 17 Latvian Communists," is evidence of the interest created by this letter when it was re-broadcast to Latvia by Radio Liberty.¹²²

¹¹⁸ On the events of 1959 see the section on nationalism.

¹¹⁹ Čina, September 15, 1970; March 3, 1972. Sovietskaya Latvija (March 10), 1973, repeats criticism of this kind and directly connects it to nationalism. Translated in FBIS (March 19), 1973: FBIS -SOV-73-53: III: J2-J5.

¹²⁰ Ekmanis, 1972: 59-60, 66.

¹²¹ See, for example, his articles in Pravda (March 20), 1971, and in Politicheskoye samoobrazovaniye (June), 1972. The latter was quoted in Radio Liberty Dispatch (August 20), 1972: 4. Also see his speech to the XXI Congress of the CPL, Sovietskaya Latvija (February 26), 1971 (FBIS No. 55, Supp. 11, March 22, 1971, especially pages 60-61).

¹²² Soviet Analyst (April 13), 1972: Vol 1: 4: 4, (April 13, 1972). Private communications in Riga in June, 1963 indicated a belief that the "Letter" could have originated locally.

II. Basic Views of Scholars on National Attitudes

Rein Taagepera of the University of California at Irvine has written that "resistance to the regime has been sporadic, varied, and possibly slowly increasing in all Baltic republics."¹²³ He is less sanguine about the future of the Latvian nation, however, and concludes that it is in greater danger of assimilation than its neighbors. This is in large part due to the ever-increasing Russian population and the lack of support and protection from its own Party elite.

A major study of attitudes and social behavior in the area of national relations was conducted between 1964 and 1969 by a group of Soviet scholars led by A.I. Kholmogorov. His data showed a strong trend toward the growth of "international features" among the population of Latvia. but with some interesting variations. For example. although census data show that a great many use Russian at work, only 7.4% of the Latvians use Russian in the home.¹²⁴ Two-thirds of the Latvians surveyed said that they had friends from among other nationalities, a figure significantly below the 86% average for the non-Latvian residents of the republic.¹²⁵ Latvians were also noticeably less favorable to the idea of multinational work collectives than were the others, were less likely to have visited another Soviet Republic, and showed a stronger preference for their national culture.¹²⁶

Other Soviet studies. including one by the ethnographer L. Terent'eva have shown a marked increase in the frequency of mixed marriages in the city of Riga, from 30% in 1948 to 36% in 1963. Janis Vitols has reported that 38% of the marriages in Riga in 1970 were between people of different nationalities.¹²⁷ The publication of Terent'eva's results in the Latvian journal Zinatne un Tehnika in 1970 apparently caused some commotion. as that issue of the journal was almost immediately withdrawn from public circulation.¹²⁸ Kholmogorov's sample of several different parts of Latvia, however, indicated that Latvians were less prone to enter mixed marriages than were representatives of other nationalities. Only slightly over 11% of the

¹²³ Taagepera, 1972: 9.

¹²⁴ Kholmogorov, 1970: 119. 121.

¹²⁵ Ibid.: 175.

¹²⁶ Ibid.: 172. 180. 185.

¹²⁷ Nauka i tehnika (February) 1972: 32-35.

¹²⁸ The article is .translated. with a commentary. in King. 1970. See also Terenteva's article in Sovetskaya etnografya. 1969: 3: 20-30.

Latvians he surveyed had made such marriages, vs. approximately a third of the Russian population.

Under Soviet law, the children of such marriages have the opportunity to choose the nationality of either one of their parents as their own for their internal passports. In Riga, the children of Latvian-Russian marriages showed a tendency to prefer Latvian registration 57% to 43%. Children of marriages between Latvians and members of other nationalities chose Latvian with even greater frequency.¹²⁹

Such studies, though inconclusive, do tend to show that nationalist feelings and particularism have not disappeared among the Latvians. Although they have not been manifested in illegal dissent as frequently as among the other Baltic peoples, there have been other kinds of activities which will be discussed in the next section.

¹²⁹ Zinātne un tehnika (August), 1970: 8: 12.

III. Recent Manifestations of Nationalism

As Anthony Astrakhan, former Moscow correspondent for the Washington Post, wrote in 1970, "Nationalism in Estonia and neighboring Latvia is easy for a visitor to sense but hard to document. What you see with your eyes is more a wish for cultural autonomy than a plan or dream of seceding from the Soviet Union."¹³⁰ This observation seems to be more true for Latvia than for Estonia, where the Khronika [Chronicle] has reported the existence of an organized national movement. Still, a number of Latvians have been involved in illegal dissent in recent years. Teataja, an Estonian émigré journal, reported the trial of seven young Latvian writers and literary critics in May-June of 1968.¹³¹ Soviet underground channels carried reports of the arrest of ten persons who had gathered at the grave of Janis Cakste, the first President of independent Latvia, on the 1969 anniversary of their Declaration of Independence, November 18.¹³² In February 1971, three young Latvians were sentenced to prison terms for distributing anti-Soviet leaflets.¹³³

It is possible that Latvians are among the self-styled "Democrats of Russia, Ukraine, and the Baltic States" who have authored two major pieces of samizdat literature. The Memorandum of this group, published abroad in December 1970, mentions Latvians among the "hundreds" who have been imprisoned or advocating the secession of their republics from the Soviet Union.¹³⁴

The most important document to have emerged from Latvia today is the "Letter of 17 Latvian Communists," (further referred to as Letter). which appeared in the West in January, 1972. Although its authors are unknown, as are the channels by which it reached the West, this document is widely held to be authentic.¹³⁵ In the Letter, the authors identify themselves as long-time Party members, all of whom were born in Latvia. Most of them appear to have

¹³⁰ Washington Post (December 11), 1970.

¹³¹ Cited in Estonian Events (December), 1968: 11: 1.

¹³² Anthony Astrakhan, Washington Post (December 11), 1970.

¹³³ Latvian Information Bulletin (Latvian Legation, Washington, D.C.), (October), 1971: 4: 13.

¹³⁴ Myroslav Prokop, 1971; "Translations on USSR Political and Social Affairs," JPRS (December 9), 1971: 193: 4.

¹³⁵ Brīvība, (January), 1972: 1 (225): 2-4; New York Times (February 27), 1972; Duevel, 1972; Soviet Analyst (March 2), 1972: I: 1: 3-6.

formerly been Party undergrounders in bourgeois Latvia, who had become convinced that Leninism was being used consciously and deliberately as a screen for Great-Russian chauvinism. They recall that at the June, 1953 Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPL, the Russian domination of the Latvian Party and its apparatus was criticized as a distortion of the Leninist nationalities policy. The "thaw" lasted only a short time, however (it apparently reflected Beria's attempt to gain power in the Party by winning the support of the non-Russian cadres¹³⁶), and Russification was resumed "ever more obtrusively and purposefully." The Letter then describes several aspects of that policy: 1) Russian control of the Second Secretary and Cadres Secretary posts; 2) importation of both construction workers and permanent labor for large new factories; 3) location of major military bases and All-Union health resorts in Latvia; 4) Russian domination of many government departments (65% of the doctors in the city health services are said not to speak Latvian, which causes "crude errors in diagnoses and the prescription of remedies"); 5) use of Russian for two-thirds of all radio and television broadcasts; and 6) insistence on conducting meetings in Russian even if there is only one Russian in the group. The authors conclude: "Ever thing national is being eliminated. Forced assimilation is being practiced. Peoples, cultures, and traditions do not have equal rights."

As one example of attempts by natives to resist this policy (others are implied but not described), the Letter recounts the Berklavs affair in 1959, when a majority of the members of the Latvian Politburo began to support him in opposing Russification. Khrushchev himself came to Latvia and oversaw Berklavs' dismissal. In the purge that followed, CPL First Secretary, J. Kalnberzins, was kicked upstairs to be Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, and Premier V. Lacis was removed, as were two other Central Committee CPL Secretaries, the Chairman of the Republic Trade Union, the editor of Cīņa, the First Secretary and several other members of the Riga City committee, the First and Second Secretaries of the Latvian Komsomol, and numerous other Party and government officials. According to the Letter, "today only foreigners and those Latvians who have lived all their lives in Russia and appeared in Latvia only after the Second World War work in leadership positions."¹³⁷

After the Voice of America broadcast of the content of the Letter to the USSR, both the

¹³⁶ See especially Duevel, 1972.

¹³⁷ For additional references to the Berklavs affair, see the section on demography.

Russian and Latvian press organs of the CC CPL printed a rebuttal which failed to confront any of the major charges directly. Instead it concentrated on accusing émigrés of forging the letter and countered with information not related to the points raised in it.¹³⁸ The obvious inadequacy of the rebuttal points to the truth of the accusations and reveals the leadership's concern over the continued existence of nationalism in Latvia.

¹³⁸ Soviet Analyst (April 13), 1972: 1: 4: 4-6.

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