

NOTA

Aan: Hoofd ACD

Van: KA-RA

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ONDERWERP: Deportaties in Letland.



Bijgaand rapport inzake deportaties in Letland werd dzz. ontvangen
om te behouden.

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SOVIET UNION (LATVIA)

POLITICAL/ECONOMIC/MILITARY

Deportations from Soviet Latvia (Spring, 1949)

1. Time.

In Latvia, the deportations were carried out on March 25th, 26th and 27th, 1949. On a reduced scale, they went on during the following week and the first days of April, since the NKVD agents tried hard to discover persons who were not found in their homes the first time. The action followed the well-known pattern: in the afternoon of March 24th, lorries assembled at pre-arranged points. At night, i.e. between 00.00 and 02.00 hours on March 25th, task units and guides set out in the lorries to work. The action in Estonia may have commenced a few days earlier (on or around March 21st); at any rate the people in Riga were forewarned and very excited in advance,

2. Scope.

The total number of the deportees is not known: only high-ranking MVD officials dispose of exact figures. One informant calculates from the means of conveyance used that the total number was around 45,000 to 50,000 which would mean that the March deportations exceeded approximately three times those of June 13th and 14th, 1941; on the other hand another informant basing his figure on impressions of people living in Riga at the time, says the total was much smaller than in 1941. Information available with respect to individual cities and localities is also conflicting. According to the first informant, 7,000 persons were deported from Riga. (Relatively this figure is not high - 1.4 per cent of the estimated total population of the city, now over 500,000; however, Riga has the largest percentage of recently immigrated Russians and the shrinking Latvian population has been recently "purged"). The second informant states that only a few score of people were deported from Riga itself in March 1949! The victims were taken by lorry to the railway station of OGRE (30 kilometres east of Riga), where they were placed in freight cars with grated windows.

Sixty freight cars crowded with deportees (hence about 2,000-2,500 persons) were dispatched from VENTSPILS (WINDAU), though not all of them were residents of VENTSPILS (15,670 inhabitants in 1935); some were from the surrounding countryside.

From SKRUNDA (SCHRUNDEN - a rural commune of 4,900 inhabitants in the KULDIGA district, 40 truck-loads of men, women and children, some of whom were picked up in the adjacent areas.

In the ZEMGALE (SEMGALLEN) province, the greatest losses in the rural districts struck the areas of BAUSKA (BAUSKEN) and AUCE (AUTZEN, a small town in the JELGAVA district, 3,300 inhabitants).

In KURZEME (COURLAND), the principal points of assembly were reportedly DUNDAGA (DONDANGEN), the coastal district of northern KURZEME, and the STENDE railway station (the Talsi (TALSEN) area).

In VIDZEME (LIVONIA) province, the severest losses were suffered by the communes of LAUDONA (2,800 inhabitants) and KALSNAVA (KALZENAU), both in the MADONA district; the GAUJIENA commune in the VALKA (WALK) district (2,400 inhabitants) and the CESIS (WENDEN) area. There is practically no information on LATGALE (LETTGALLEN).

3. The reason for deportation was chiefly political unreliability. Any person who has given cause for suspicion, or deliberately or unwillingly given the impression of unreliability, is considered a class enemy. Chances of "correction" are slim. Certain categories of inhabitants (e.g. former governmental or communal officials of medium and higher grades) according to their former position or social status (e.g. owners of urban real estate, and farmers who previously owned more than 10 hectares), are almost automatically included among the class enemies, who, in the Communist view, must be annihilated sooner or later, but who must, before their death, be used as far as possible as manpower in the labour camps.

4. Composition of Deportees.

This time deportation affected chiefly the following categories of inhabitants:-

a) Farmers who had tried to avoid joining kolkhozes as well as persons who had opposed, however slightly, the establishment of kolkhozes or displayed their dissatisfaction with the kolkhozes, even if they were now kolkhoz members; in this respect, the Bolsheviks did not differentiate between former farmers and their hired labour;

b) Persons who had been made prisoners by the Bolsheviks during the war, but had been released subsequently (e.g. former legionaries or persons drafted by the Nazis in a compulsory manner for fortification work);

c) Other politically unreliable persons, e.g. former members of the Home Guards or the police, if not previously deported; former governmental and communal officials; former owners of urban real estate; persons suspected of giving assistance to the partisans (persons who are convicted of such assistance are deported without delay) and others.

If a family included one member of these categories, the whole family was deported.

The deportees belonged to various age groups, but the majority were between 15 and 70 years of age. A small number of young people managed to escape and have joined the partisans in the forests.

All social groups are represented among the deportees, beginning with workers and ending with former entrepreneurs.

In order of importance, the deportation affected the following categories:-

- a) Farmers and farm-hands.
- b) The professions, state and communal officials.
- c) Former soldiers and policemen.
- d) Former entrepreneurs and owners of real estate.
- e) Youth of school age.

It is known that this deportation also affected Latvians who had been repatriated from Germany since the war. It is true that persons repatriated from Western Germany or other territories outside the Bolshevik control are only deported immediately to the Soviet Union in exceptional cases, for hard labour; usually they are allowed to live in Latvia for six months or a year; they are used for propaganda, and then the following deportation wave engulfs them. Only a very few who have succeeded in gaining Bolshevik benevolence through their activities in Germany or after return to the home country, are permitted to stay in Latvia for any length of time. Many of the men who were

repatriated in 1946 and 1947 have been sent to the correctionary military units in Narva.

5. Manner in which the deportations are carried out.

Broadly speaking, the deportation was carried out more humanely than in 1941. In each farm or flat where a prospective deportee lived, 8-10 armed MVD men entered and ordered the deportees to prepare for departure within half an hour (or in some cases within an hour). The deportees were loaded in lorries, taken to the assembly places at railway stations, and entrained in freight cars with barred windows, guarded by specially reinforced guards. The transportation of the deportees to the Soviet Union was exclusively by rail. Neither age nor sickness was considered a valid reason for exemption. Janis KRAULIS, a market gardener, aged 82, was deported from VENTSPILS during 1949. The aged people or the sick who were unable to walk were thrown into the lorries and freight cars as inanimate objects.

Likewise there are known cases where parents have been deported from their homes in the morning, and a small daughter, returning from school in the afternoon found the place empty and did not know what had happened to her father and mother (in the GAUJIENA commune, VALKA district). In the same place about 200 grammar school pupils were deported leaving the school practically deserted.

When the deportees were entrained, husbands were sometimes separated from their wives and children from their parents, since the way to Golgotha was not the same for all.

The gathering of the hapless victims took place, as a rule, at night, when they were asleep and had to be awakened. Since only 30 minutes were allowed for preparations, most of the deportees were carried away with what they had on them. Cases are however also known where some families have been able to take with them larger amounts of belongings (e.g. clothing and underwear) and the MVD men did not prohibit it; but during the first stage of the travel, all belongings except the clothes which the deportees had on them, were taken away in many cases.

6. Destination and living conditions.

This time the deportees were forced by the Bolsheviks to sign a statement that they went voluntarily, to take work in the Soviet Union. It would require a great deal of naivete to believe that the Bolsheviks would release any surviving victims two years later!

The following case shows the Bolshevik conception of liberation. A family - father, mother and daughter - were deported to Siberia in 1941. Both parents died in Siberia, and the daughter, still at a tender age, was thereafter allowed to return to Latvia. But the return was granted on the condition that the child should not use public transport. This meant that the child had to come home on foot from Siberia after losing both parents. It is difficult to imagine more refined cynicism and disregard of human rights.

So far we have no precise information on the destination of deportees. The MVD guard soldiers in the trains used to say that this time the Latvians would be taken to the OMSK area. The trains were as a rule routed along the SMOLENSK-KUIBISHEV railway line. Word has been received that the Latvians have been deported to:-

- a) Islands in the Pacific Ocean between the Soviet Union and the United States,
- b) The area between SVERDLOVSK and CHELIABINSK in the Urals, and
- c) to KRASNOYARSK and elsewhere in Siberia.

The heads of families, i.e. deported men, were sent, with few exceptions, to hard labour camps. The regime in these camps is inhuman and they are guarded very rigidly; barbed wire fences, watch towers with floodlights, and patrols of MVD men with bloodhounds. Few men can endure the regime of these camps with 14-16 daily hours of work and absolutely inadequate food, for more than 2-3 years. Most of them die during this time.

Women and young people were usually placed in individual factories or kolkhozes, under Cheka supervision. Earnings are so low that in the long run it is not possible to buy sufficient food, not to speak of clothing. They all live under unhygienic conditions, and mortality is high. Local inhabitants consist chiefly of previously deported Russians who are very poor. Theft and robbery is wide-spread.

There is no information on children who have been separated from their mothers.

A number of letters have been received in Latvia from the deportees. For the time being it is difficult to say whether the deportees will be allowed to correspond regularly.

Who directed and carried out the deportations?

The action was directed by a MVD general, specially sent from Moscow, and "Prime Minister" Vilis Lacis. Special MVD militia units from the Leningrad, Moscow and other Soviet Union areas had been placed at their disposal. Assistance was also given by the local MVD men and party officials.

The registration of the deportees was commenced as early as 1946. The necessary information was supplied by Bolshevik agents, including, unfortunately, also Latvian and German prisoners of war. A law student Hans FOGEL (to judge from the name, not a Latvian; possibly a German) has reportedly been very dangerous in this respect. He had all the features needed by a real agent. Others who should be mentioned in this connection are Lieutenant WEINBERG (a non-Latvian) who accompanied one of the trains of deportees to Siberia, and a Russian Captain CIMBAL. Captain CIMBAL is said to hold a position which corresponds to general's rank, and his direct task is to fight the resistance movement and the partisans.

8. Deportations continue.

No wholesale deportations have been reported since March/April 1949, but several deportations on a minor scale are known to us.

In the SALASPILS area (in the RIGA district) about 30% of the Latvians at a kolkhoz were arrested on Easter night, driven to the SALASPILS railway station and sent in the direction of DAUGAVPILS (DUNABERG) in freight cars with barred windows and guarded by MVD agents.

In August and September the MVD troops carried a major action against the Latvian partisans in the SAUKA forest (the JAKOBSTADT district in ZEMGALE). As a result, the entire population, irrespective of their racial origin, has been deported from the two communes of SAUKA and NERETA. In RIGA, during working hours, about 100 workers and technicians from a factory were detained and taken to Soviet Russia.

The fight of the Latvian people against the oppressors goes on. In the rural districts, armed actions are only carried out by the partisans in exceptional cases, since the MVD units retaliate by deporting the inhabitants of the surrounding areas. Sabotage is fairly frequent in the cities and other densely populated areas. Thus, in Riga, in the "Forest Park", the villa of a Russian colonel was dynamited, and in SIGULDA (SEGEWOLD), an explosion also occurred in the Authors' Palace which reportedly was accommodating an agents' school. At the latter place, arrests and deportations followed the explosion.

9. The number of Russians in Soviet Latvia.

During the second Bolshevik occupation of Latvia, the loss of permanent inhabitants through deportation, casualties in partisan warfare, etc. already reaches some 300,000 persons. In the place of the deportees who constitute about 90% of these losses - the Bolsheviks import, more or less systematically large numbers of Russians from other republics of the Soviet Union. During the first years of the occupation Russian workers from industry and transport services were chiefly imported. As wholesale collectivization of farms commenced, many Russians and other nationalities (e.g. Mongolians) were also brought to the kolkhozes. The present number of Russians who have arrived from other republics of the Soviet Union can be estimated as follows:-

Working people and their families:-

| | |
|--------------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Industry | 160,000 persons |
| 2. Commerce and transportation | 80,000 " |
| 3. Agriculture | 180,000 " |
| 4. State and communal agencies | 20,000 " |
| 5. Army and MVD troops | <u>200,000 "</u> |

Total:- 640,000 persons.

The number of Russians (including Mongolians and similar races) who have come to Latvia from the Soviet Union now amounts to one third of the total number of inhabitants. The figures given above must be considered rough estimates only.