

STOCKHOLM STUDIES IN BALTIC LANGUAGES

8



Back to the Motherland

Repatriation and Latvian Émigrés 1955–1958

Lilita Zalkalns

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Front cover: Behrenstrasse 64/65 Berlin. The entrance to the former Committee for Return to the Motherland is the doorway framed in white. To the left under the balcony people are queuing for visas at the entrance to the Russian Consulate. (Photograph taken 2001 by Kārlis Kangeris)

Abbreviations

ACEN	Assembly of Captive European Nations
BPLA	<i>Brīvās pasaules latviešu apvienība</i> –Free World Latvian Association
CC	Central Committee
CP	Communist Party
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CPSU	Communist Party of the Soviet Union
DP	Displaced person
DV	<i>Daugavas Vanagi</i> –Hawks of the Daugava
<i>DzB</i>	<i>Dzimtenes Balss</i> –Voice of the Motherland
FRG	Federal Republic of Germany
GRU	<i>Glavnoye Razvedyvatelnoye Upravleniye</i> –Soviet Military Intelligence
IRO	International Refugee Organization
KGB	<i>Komitet Gosudarstvenoy Bezopasnosti</i> –Soviet security and intelligence service (1954–1991)
LCP	<i>Latviešu Centrālā padome</i> –Latvian Central Council
LCK	<i>Latviešu Centrālā komiteja</i> –Latvian Central Committee
LNAK	<i>Latviešu Nacionālā apvienība Kanādā</i> –Latvian National Federation in Canada
LNPL	<i>Latviešu Nacionālā padome Lielbritānijā</i> –Latvian National Council in Great Britain
LSC	Labor Service Company
LSDWP	Latvian Social Democratic Workers' Party
MGB	<i>Ministerstvo Gosudarstvennoi Bezopasnosti</i> –Soviet Ministry of State Security (1946–1954)
MSO	Mixed Service Organization
NCFE	National Committee for a Free Europe
NKVD	<i>Narodnyi Kommissariat Vnutrennikh Del</i> –People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs
<i>PaDz</i>	<i>Par atgriešanos Dzimtenē</i> –For Return to the Motherland

POW	Prisoner of war
RSFSR	Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic
RTMM	<i>Rakstniecības, teātra un mūzikas muzejs</i> —Museum of Writing, Theatre and Music
SHAEF	Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force
SUCEE	Socialist Union of Central-Eastern Europe
<i>TA</i>	<i>Tēvzemes Avīze</i> —Fatherland's Newspaper
UN	United Nations
UNRRA	United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration
WWI	World War I
WWII	World War II

Note on transliterations: Names are given in English transliteration, e.g., the Latvian form of the Russian name ‘Nikolajs Filipa d. Michailovs’ is transliterated as ‘Nikolai Filippovich Mikhailov’

1 Introduction

On November 6, 1946, Andrej Vyshinsky told the United Nations that his Government was demanding the return of more than 1,200,000 refugees and displaced persons. Since that date, over 5,000,000 additional persons have escaped from Iron Curtain countries.

—“Six Keys to the Soviet System” by Bertram D. Wolfe (1956)

1.1 Back to the Motherland

By 1955 the worst was over for the approximately one hundred and twenty five thousand Latvians living in Western exile. They had survived three occupations of their home country—first by the Soviet Union in 1940–1941, second by Nazi Germany in 1941–1945, and then again by the Soviet Union in 1945 (which lasted until 1991). In order to avoid the devastating experience of another “liberation” by the Soviet Army, a majority of Latvia’s intellectual, academic and professional elite had voluntarily joined the mass evacuations to Germany before the end of WWII.¹ A much smaller number, a few thousand, had escaped in fishing boats to Sweden.² The Latvian refugees kept pushing westward, trying to avoid the Soviet Army that was rolling in from the east, intent upon overtaking fleeing civilians and military persons, arresting them and forcefully returning them to the Soviet Union.³ Eventually, the refugees reached the relative safety of the displaced persons (DP) camps in the Western occupation zones of Germany and

¹ Mirdza Kate Baltais, “Baltic conscripts, labourers and refugees in Germany,” in *Unpunished crimes. Latvia under three occupations*, ed. T. Puisāns (Stockholm: Memento, 2003), pp 128–130

² For a review and discussion of the sizes and types of Baltic forced migrations during WWII see Eduard Mühle, “Resettled, expelled and displaced: The Baltic experience 1939–1951. Some observations on the current state of research,” in *Ostseeprovinzen, Baltische Staaten und das Nationale. Festschrift für Gert von Pistohlkors zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. N. Angermann, M. Garleff, and W. Lenz (Münster: Lit, 2005). Estimated Latvian population changes/movements 1939–45 can be found in Romuald J. Misiunas and Rein Taagepera, *The Baltic states. Years of dependence 1940–1990* (London: Hurst & Company, 1993), p 354 Table 352.

³ Jānis Riekstiņš, “Ar varu un viltu. Repatriantu atgriešanās Latvijā 1945.–1953. gadā [Forcibly and fraudulently. The return of repatriates to Latvia 1945–1953],” *Latvijas Arhīvi*, No 1 (1994)

Austria, and resisted once again the threatening exhortations made by Soviet repatriation officers, Allied officials and United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) workers to return home to Soviet-occupied Latvia.⁴ Beginning in 1948, the International Refugee Organization (IRO) arranged for the resettlement of these refugees to the USA (35,410), Australia (19,365), the UK (8,353) and other countries in the free world.⁵ Approximately twelve thousand Latvian refugees remained in West Germany, since they could not or did not want to resettle abroad.⁶

The Latvians in exile organized ethnic communities in their places of settlement, often in or near larger cities, for example, Chicago, Hamburg, London, Melbourne, Münster, New York, San Francisco, Stockholm, Sydney, Toronto. They integrated well into their host societies, they found jobs, eventually purchased homes and owned cars. They formed professional associations, choirs, theater troupes, folkdance groups; they founded congregations and schools, owned printing houses and published books and newspapers in the Latvian language. Latvian exile organizations cooperated with other Eastern European émigré centers and formed anti-communist pressure groups and associations to support the dispersal of the ideas of freedom to countries behind the Iron Curtain.⁷ Émigré Latvians were staunch anti-communists who persisted in their fight for the downfall of the Soviet Union and for the reinstatement of free and independent Latvia. They regarded the Soviets as their enemy, and the feeling was reciprocated by the Soviet government, which ever since the reign of Lenin had émigrés and their activities under surveillance. Schemes were prepared to put a definitive stop to the activities of these anti-Soviet WWII émigrés.⁸

Stalin had recently died, and the isolationist and closed atmosphere of the USSR was slowly opening up for new impulses from the surrounding world. Thousands of prisoners were being freed from Siberian imprisonment and banishment, and their long road home had begun. It was no longer perceived to be as dangerous for persons in Soviet Latvia to receive letters from abroad, so émigrés began writing home and sending parcels of food and

⁴ Mark Wyman, *DPs: Europe's displaced persons, 1945–1951*, 2nd ed. (Ithaca: Cornell univ. press, 1998), Chapter 3

⁵ “Latvieši emigrācijā,” in *Latvju enciklopēdija*, ed. A. Švābe (Stockholm: Apgāds Trīs Zvaigznes, 1952–1953), pp 1242–1282.

⁶ Some refugees remained in Germany in order to be physically closer to their homeland Latvia. Others wanted to resettle abroad, but were not accepted for immigration by the host countries for a variety of reasons.

⁷ Eduards Bruno Deksnis, “Arhīvos atrodamas liecības par trimdas politiskajām aktivitātēm (1945–1991) [The archival documentation of the political activities in exile (1945–1991)],” in *Latviešu trimdas loma Latvijas neatkarības idejas uzturēšanā [The role of Latvian exile in maintaining the idea of Latvian independence]* (Riga: Latvijas Zinātņu akadēmija, 2011), pp 17–25

⁸ See Chapter 2.5.2

clothing to relatives and friends.⁹ Ten years after the end of WWII, though desperately concerned about what they were getting to know about their loved ones in Soviet Latvia, the Latvian émigrés were living outwardly satisfactory lives in relative affluence.

This apparently idyllic situation was shattered in April 1955 with the appearance of a Soviet-produced repatriation newspaper *Par atgriešanos Dzimtenē* (*PaDz—For Return to the Motherland*) in émigré mailboxes in Western Europe, Northern America and Australia. The émigrés were stunned to receive a communist newspaper, with an appeal to repatriate, from the far-away Repatriation Committee based in East Berlin. They were frightened and angry that a communist publication had found its way into their mailboxes and into their homes. They wondered, how did the Soviets know of their addresses? Why did some receive the invitation to repatriate, but not others who lived in the same community? Were the recipients communists in disguise?

As it turned out, the Soviet and East German security services had jointly stolen the card index file carrying the addresses of Latvians in exile from the office of a central Latvian émigré organization in Augustdorf, Germany.¹⁰ Even though the mystery of the addresses was apparently solved, the tensions and unease within the émigré community lingered on—the émigrés realized that their greatest enemy, from which they had fled, was prepared to go to great lengths to establish their whereabouts. The feeling was that if the communists knew your address, then you no longer were safe. The address represented the émigré's private sphere, and since it had been invaded—Soviet security could identify the émigré by name, knew where he or she lived and worked, and knew about their family circumstances—then a violation of self had taken place.

The Soviet Latvian repatriation newspaper *Par atgriešanos Dzimtenē* that was sent free of charge to émigrés abroad was published by the Committee For Return to the Motherland, a “voluntary association” according to Soviet law¹¹ and a KGB front, which had been established in 1955 in East Berlin.¹² The Committee's overt purpose was to propagandize repatriation and to receive the anticipated masses of repatriating Soviet citizens—Russians, Ukrainians, Belarusians, Estonians, Lithuanians, Latvians and others—and see them off to their homelands. However, the Committee's covert purpose was to transform the anti-communist émigrés into loyal, pro-Soviet

⁹ For examples of three authentic first letters received in the West from family members in Soviet Latvia, see Arturs Pormals, *Pūķu laiks. Sēlijas [audis laiku lokos [Time of the dragon. The people of Sēlija in the warp of time]* (Riga: Pormalu ģimenes fonds, 2011), pp 229–234.

¹⁰ See Chapter 4.3.2

¹¹ W. W. Kulski, *The Soviet regime. Communism in practice* (New York: Washington Square Press, Inc., 1959), pp 146–147

¹² Imants Lešinskis, “Cultural relations or ethnic espionage: An insider's view,” *Baltic Forum* 2, No 1 (1985): p 6

“patriots”. The intention was to denature the highly politicized émigré community into a politically inactive émigré mass that willingly accepted guidance from the Soviet Union. The propaganda plan was to dislodge the émigré leadership, and thereafter direct the confused and disoriented émigré masses to the Committee, where they would follow the admonishment to repatriate to the Motherland. It was believed that the anticipated small numbers of émigré leaders remaining in the West would by then have lost the respect of Western governments, and would no longer pose a threat to the Soviet Union.

A few families and individuals, totaling about one hundred persons, returned to Soviet Latvia in response to the repatriation campaign.¹³ Of those, two were eminent cultural and social representatives from the Latvian émigré community. However, 125,000 Latvian émigrés did not repatriate, even though again and again they were promised amnesty by the Soviet government for past crimes, assured that they would not be punished, and offered housing, appropriate jobs, and the right to live where they wished.

In spite of the weak response to the repatriation campaign, the repatriation newspaper *Par atgriešanos Dzimtenē*, renamed *Dzimtenes Balsis* [*Voice of the Motherland*] in May 1958, flourished. Its frequency was raised to twice weekly, and it was mailed to ever increasing numbers of Latvian recipients abroad. The newspaper aroused contradictory feelings in the émigrés. On the one hand, it was a weekly reminder of the hated communist occupation of Latvia, but on the other hand, it evoked longing and curiosity to know more about what life was like back home. Outwardly, émigré Latvians professed to have no interest at all in what was written in the Soviet Latvian propaganda newspaper, yet the sections satirizing exile Latvian life in the West, with vulgar portrayals of prominent exile personalities, were read with surreptitious interest.¹⁴

All the while, *PaDz* gained no real respect among Latvians abroad, due to its secretiveness and duplicity. *PaDz* claimed to be produced in Berlin under the auspices of the Committee For Return to the Motherland. However, this was not wholly true, since the newspaper was merely distributed from East Berlin, after being first produced and printed in Riga, Latvia. Moreover, the overall quality of the newspaper left much to be desired. Its often vulgar and tasteless contents was reflected in the worn grayish newsprint, the smearing ink, and the blurry photographs. The newspaper purported to be a “voice from home”, announcing that it received hundreds of letters from compatriots abroad—yet, the Latvians “at home” in the Latvian SSR knew nothing about this publication, since ordinary Soviet citizens had no access to the paper. Up to 1968, the newspaper was an underground publication in

¹³ Heinrihs Strods, ed., *Yearbook / The museum of the occupation of Latvia. 2006. War after the war. 1944–1956*, vol. 8 (Riga: Latvijas Okupācijas muzeja biedrība, 2007), pp 234–246

¹⁴ Anonymous A (Unstructured interview, January 15, 2003)

its own country. It was produced in Riga in all secrecy and flown out of the country to subscribers abroad. For more than a decade and a half, the editor-in-chief and the editorial staff were concealed behind the name of “Board of Editors”, most articles were left unsigned, as were the letters to the editor. This situation changed only slightly in May 1961, when a “Latvian Section” of the Committee was officially opened in Riga, which took over the publishing functions of *Dzimtenes Bals*.¹⁵

During the period 1955–1958, the repatriation campaign transformed from an All-Union enterprise operating from Berlin’s Soviet sector into a local Soviet Latvian undertaking, centered in the capital city of Riga. At the same time, there appeared indications that repatriation, the overt objective of the campaign, was about to be supplemented by other objectives, such as cultural relations. This initial 1955–1958 phase laid the basis of the later activities of the Latvian Cultural Relations Committee with Countrymen Abroad [*sic: Latvijas kultūras sakaru komiteja ar tautiešiem ārzemēs*], which was to become the main channel for official contacts between émigrés and their Soviet Latvian homeland for the coming decades.

The establishment of the Soviet Committee for Cultural Relations with Countrymen Abroad in Moscow in 1963,¹⁶ and the founding of the Latvian Cultural Relations Committee with Countrymen Abroad in Riga a year later, along with the formation of sister organizations in the Soviet republics of Armenia, Byelorussia, Estonia, Georgia, Lithuania, Ukraine and Uzbekistan, signaled that cultural relations committees were to become the dominating organizational form through which the Soviet Union interacted with its émigrés.¹⁷ Repatriation was no longer a viable alternative, and the leading approach of the Soviet Union in its communications and interactions with Latvian émigrés would take on other forms and means under the designation of “cultural relations”.

¹⁵ ‘Nodibināta Komitejas Latvijas nodaļa Rīgā’ [Committee’s Latvian Section founded in Riga], *DzB* No 43(533), May 1961 p 1

¹⁶ On December 15, 1975 the organization was renamed Soviet Society for Cultural Relations with Countrymen Abroad—the *Rodina* Society, which is the internationally known designation for this organization, see GARF f. 9651 *opis* 1, p 14.

¹⁷ Cultural relations societies or sections were established later in Kabardino-Balkaria (1966), Kazakhstan (1976), and Dagestan (1981). Russian-speaking exiles were provided for by the parent Soviet Committee (the *Rodina* Society) in Moscow, see GARF f. 9651 *opis* 1, p 14.

1.2 Purpose, Research Questions, and Relevance

This book offers a portrayal and analysis of the Soviet Latvian repatriation campaign of 1955–1958 and of émigré Latvian press reactions, through the study of the Soviet propaganda newspaper *Par atgriešanos Dzimtenē* and the contemporaneous émigré periodicals. The campaign was run by the Committee For Return to the Motherland, a KGB front organization located in East Berlin, staffed by KGB officers and ordinary civilians.¹⁸ The main overt goal of the campaign was the voluntary repatriation of émigrés, while at the same time, the covert goal of the repatriation campaign was the “prevention of emigration”¹⁹ meaning the control and inhibition of the political development of anti-communist émigré communities, and if possible, eradicating their very existence. I intend to investigate the strategies and tactics that were used to achieve the overt and covert goals, and to analyze émigré press reactions. Among the questions that I shall attempt to answer are: How were the strategies and tactics implemented to achieve the goals? What methods were used to elicit desired behaviors from the Latvian émigrés? How did the Latvian émigrés respond to the campaign? What were the Latvian émigré press reactions?

The repatriation newspaper *Par atgriešanos Dzimtenē*, was, besides the radio, a major Soviet mass communications channel for contacts with the Latvian émigré population abroad. Whereas the general articles about the Soviet Union informed readers about the country's current affairs, the repatriation articles in *PaDz* were intended to influence the reader to repatriate. It is through the examination of the repatriation articles that I hope to uncover the strategies and tactics of the campaign. How did the *PaDz* retain and attract a growing readership? How did *PaDz* perceive its target audience—the Latvian émigré? Did the goals of the propaganda campaign change over time?

In my results, I intend to describe Soviet approaches and attitudes towards the Latvian émigré population and how they were expressed in the Soviet Latvian repatriation newspaper *Par atgriešanos Dzimtenē*. A primary result from this study will be a portrayal of how the Soviet Union formed its mass communications with Latvian exiles in the West.²⁰ As shall be shown, one of the fundamentals is the Committee For Return to the Motherland—a front organization of the KGB—which was the Soviet government's preferred

¹⁸ See Chapter 3

¹⁹ Barbara Stelzl-Marx, “Forced labourers in the Third Reich,” in *People on the move: forced population movements in Europe in the second world war and its aftermath*, ed. P. Ahonen, et al., *Occupation in Europe: the impact of national socialist and fascist rule* (Oxford: Berg, 2008), p 191

²⁰ A related study of present day Latvia, with a large ethnic Russian diaspora, is found in Nils Muižnieks, ed., *Manufacturing enemy images? Russian media portrayal of Latvia* (Academic Press of the University of Latvia, 2008).

intermediary for mass communication with its Latvian émigré community. It would be an assignment for future research to determine whether this outcome can be applied to other émigré groups of the Soviet Union with which the country upheld relationships. Another result of this study will be a description of Latvian émigré press response to the Soviet repatriation campaign. By shedding light on the relationships and attitudes between the Soviet Union and émigrés, an area largely neglected by researchers until recently, this study hopes to contribute to a broader understanding of Cold War dynamics.

The study of historical Soviet Latvian propaganda and Soviet mass communication with émigrés is not only important for interpreting Cold War phenomena, it also forms a basis for the deeper understanding of the current political, cultural and social realities in present-day Latvia and Russia. By taking into consideration the long-term effects of Soviet Latvian propaganda, it is easier to fathom why current Russian and Western media have certain preconceptions and prejudices about Latvia and Latvian émigrés. The systematic survey of the instruments and methods of Soviet communication and propaganda used against émigré Latvians provides a useful tool for studying Russian active measures against what Russia perceives to be its adversaries today: certain ethnic minorities in the Caucasus, the “disobedient” countries of Georgia and Ukraine, and the Baltic states.²¹

On a broader scale, this study is also relevant in general émigré studies. Indirectly, it explores how a totalitarian state built up official relations to its exile population, and touches upon problems such as how émigrés understand and express their individual and group identity, the meaning of language and culture in establishing and building émigré identity, and similar issues. And finally, this study, among the first of its kind, is a modest contribution to another aspect of the Cold War.

1.3 Review of the Literature

The principal topics of this study are émigrés, repatriation, and Soviet propaganda. These subjects, extensive by themselves, lie within the even larger fields of refugee studies and Soviet studies, the latter designated today under the comprehensive name of Cold War studies. The principal topics are examined from the Latvian perspective, thus narrowing down the amplitude of these major overarching subjects to a more manageable level.

²¹ Edward Lucas in *The new Cold War. Putin's Russia and the threat to the west* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008) proposes that present-day Russia continues to apply Soviet Cold War propaganda strategies against the West, especially targeting ex-Soviet countries such as the Baltic States.

1.3.1 Latvian Émigré Studies

In the vast body of literature in Soviet studies, the issues pertaining to anti-Soviet émigrés in general,²² and the Soviet Union's relations to émigrés and specifically to the Latvian émigré community, have seldom been the object of Western scholarly study.²³ During the Cold War period, the politically active émigré communities in the Free World were seen, as Williams described it in 1970, as a "lost cause", generally neglected by historians because they preferred "to explain what happened, rather than what might have been". Therefore, as Williams wrote,

Historians...have concerned themselves with many related movements of migration: economic shifts inside Europe and across the sea, the flight of persecuted religious or national minorities, literary exiles, and wartime refugee movements.²⁴

For decades, this observation proved to be true, especially concerning the history of the political emigrations whose members refused to repatriate to the Soviet Union or to the Soviet-controlled satellites after WWII. Other reasons for their general neglect among Western historians may have been that anti-communist émigrés were regarded as an embarrassment by host country governments,²⁵ and that academic studies of émigré groups were

²² In the early years of the Cold War, the US government was determined to learn all about the "Russians", their former allies, which had now turned into their adversaries. The Refugee Interview Project carried out by the Russian Research Center at Harvard University produced studies about the social system of Soviet Russia and about Soviet Russians, but neglected the other ethnic groups and the Soviet republics of the USSR. Selected materials of this project are now available online at <http://hcl.harvard.edu/collections/hpsss/about.html#about>. George Fischer, "The new Soviet emigration," *Russian Review* 8, No 1 (1949), George Fischer, *Soviet opposition to Stalin. A case study in World War II* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1952), and Boris L. Dvinov, *Politics of the Russian emigration*, (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corp, 1955) have studied the Soviet Russian emigration after WWII. Catherine Andreyev, *Vlasov and the Russian liberation movement. Soviet reality and émigré theories* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987) has analyzed how the politics of the post-WWI Russian emigration may have been an influence on the actions of General A. Vlasov.

²³ Ieva Zake, *American Latvians: politics of a refugee community* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 2010a), p ix. See also Simo Mikkonen, "Exploiting the exiles: the Soviet emigration in American Cold War strategy," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 14, No 2 (2012).

²⁴ Robert C. Williams, "European political emigrations: A lost subject," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 12, No 2 (1970): p 140

²⁵ Geir Lundestad, *The American non-policy towards Eastern Europe 1943–1947. Universalism in an area not of essential interest to the United States* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1978), p 299 writes that the US, though continuing "to maintain diplomatic relations with the independent representatives of the pre-war regimes of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania ... the State Department's recognition was unobtrusive so as not to provoke the Soviets unnecessarily". Concerning the struggles of émigré Baltic diplomats to achieve and maintain recognition abroad during the period of Soviet occupation, see McHugh *Diplomats without a*

generally not funded,²⁶ since the anti-Soviet politics they represented, especially after the Khrushchev era, were in opposition to the prevailing attempts by Western governments to establish détente with the Soviet Union.

In spite of being regarded as an oddity by mainstream media representatives and as politically cumbersome by governments in the West, the Baltic exiles nonetheless kept on producing a steady stream of informative publications that explained their views on the consequences of the secret protocol of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact—the annexation of the Baltic States by the Soviet Union—and presenting arguments for the right of self-determination for the Baltic States.²⁷ As part of the “ideological offensive against the Soviet Union”,²⁸ Baltic émigré organizations also took it upon themselves to gather information, analyze developments, and distribute reports on current affairs concerning the Soviet Baltic Republics.²⁹ From the very first days in exile, actors within the émigré community produced a torrent of self-documentation over émigré life in the national language. Most Latvian émigré publications contained contemporary analyses and discussions about émigré issues,³⁰ and because the émigrés were assiduous publishers and consumers of their own media production, their internal politics, social life, and cultural output were abundantly documented in émigré newspapers, bulletins, journals, magazines and books.³¹

country. *Baltic diplomacy, international law, and the Cold War* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2001).

²⁶ Sociologist Juris Veidemanis, “Neglected areas in the sociology of immigrants and ethnic groups in North America,” *The Sociological Quarterly* 4, No 4 (1963): p 326 notes that there is a “relative lack of interest of sociologists in immigrants and ethnic groups” due to the incorrect assumption that the “numerous studies on immigrants in this century until the end of WWII have already established a substantial and definitive body of knowledge, both descriptive and theoretical, obviating the need for further research.”

²⁷ See Morris “Émigrés, dissidents and international organisations,” in *The Baltic question during the Cold War*, ed. J. Hiden, et al. (London: Routledge, 2008), p 144. This information approach was known as the “story method”, see Ineta Didrihsone-Tomaševska, *Latvieši Austrālijā: skats no tālienes - trimdas gadi [Latvians in Australia: a view from afar - the years of exile]* (South Yarra, Vic.: Sterling Star, 2014), p 45.

²⁸ Hain Rebas, “Sverigeesternas politiska verksamhet,” in *Estländare i Sverige: historia, språk, kultur*, ed. R. Raag and H. Runblom, *Uppsala Multiethnic Papers* (Uppsala: Centre for Multiethnic Research, 1988), p 102

²⁹ Jonathan H. L'Hommedieu, “Baltic exiles and the U.S. congress: Investigations and legacies of the house select committee, 1953–1955,” *Journal of American Ethnic History* 31, No 2 (2012): p 224

³⁰ See, for example, exile Latvian social democratic news bulletin *Brīvība* [Freedom] (1948–2002), youth bulletin *ELJA Informācija* (1956–1993), literary magazine *Jaunā Gaita* [New Way] (1955–), and others.

³¹ The quantity of publications produced by Latvian émigrés between 1940 and 1991 numbers well into the tens of thousands. For example, the five volume *Bibliography of Latvian Publications Published Outside Latvia*, compiled by Benjamiņš Jēgers, lists works published

Though not in the focus of Western scholarship, the Baltic emigrants were closely followed and analyzed by Soviet observers, scholars and institutions.³² The Latvian exile population of approximately 125,000, though small compared to the USSR's population of 2,002.2 million, was of significant size and importance in relation to the 1.3 million Latvians in Soviet Latvia.³³ Moreover, the emigration was politically active and pursued anti-communist goals. Therefore Latvian émigrés and their activities were studied by sections and special appointees of the Central Committee of the Latvian Communist Party and the state security apparatus.³⁴ There existed, as Purs notes, a total obsession by the KGB with the émigrés.³⁵ Various Soviet government and Party instances prepared reviews and yearly reports, which were monitored and analyzed by KGB work groups.³⁶ The implementation and effects of the Soviet counterpropaganda on Latvian émigré groups were regularly discussed at Bureau meetings, the results of which in turn were relayed to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the USSR. These reports reviewed the accomplishments of the Soviet side, for example, the quantities of publications distributed to émigrés, film viewings arranged for émigré audiences, art exhibits organized abroad, letters answered, anti-émigré articles published as well as the number of émigré tourist groups guided in Soviet Latvia. The reports and publications also contained

1940–1991 and contains over 11,000 entries of exile Latvian books, pamphlets, serials, music, maps, programs and catalogues, including publications by non-Latvian publishers.

³² Starting 1945, the Foreign Ministry of the Latvian SSR was assigned by the Foreign Ministry of the USSR to gather information about the whereabouts of Latvian refugees and to get copies of their publications. See Daina Kļaviņa, “Trimdas dokumentārais mantojums, tā uzkrāšana, pētniecība un integrācija Latvijas vēsturē [The documentary heritage of exile: its collection, research and integration in Latvian history],” *Brīvā Latvija*, Oct 16–22, 2004.

³³ <http://data.csb.gov.lv/Dialog/Saveshow.asp> accessed 2012-02-02

³⁴ For example in 1958, I. Veselovs, head of the Latvian CP CC Section for Propaganda and Agitation, gave a comprehensive report to the Bureau meeting of the CC of the LCP concerning the number of Latvians émigrés abroad, their countries of residence, their employment, and the number and type of émigré organizations, which numbered over 700. See Heinrihs Strods, ed., *Yearbook / The museum of the occupation of Latvia. 2005. Liberators as conquerors*, vol. 7 (Riga: Latvijas 50 gadu okupācijas muzeja fonds, 2006), pp 195–197.

³⁵ Aldis Purs, *Baltic facades. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania since 1945* (London: Reaktion Books, 2012), p 60

³⁶ See, *i.a.*, Ainārs Lerhis, “Latvijas PSR Ārlietu ministrijas darbības jautājumi 1944–1950 [Work issues 1944–1950 at the Foreign Ministry of the Latvian SSR],” in *Yearbook / The museum of the occupation of Latvia. 2007. The “Latvian operation” in the USSR 1937–1938*, ed. H. Strods (Riga: Latvijas Okupācijas muzeja biedrība, 2009), pp 89, 92–95; Indulis Zālīte, “Kultūras sakari - caurums dzelzs aizkarā [Cultural relations—a hole in the iron curtain],” (1998); Indulis Zālīte, “LPSR VDK uzbūve un galvenie darba virzieni (1980.–1991.g.) [The organization of the LSSR KGB and its main areas of activity 1980–1991],” *Latvijas Vēsture* 1, No 33 (1999).

suggestions and proposals for new counterpropaganda measures and ideas that could be used against émigrés.³⁷

A legitimizing and a widening of Latvian émigré research in Soviet Latvia occurred after the establishment of the Council for Research on Foreign Ideological Trends at the Latvian SSR Academy of Sciences in the early 1970s.³⁸ The Council organized scientific meetings and conferences, and published works on émigré issues. These materials were used by the Communist Party Institute as background information with the aim of presenting counterarguments for use in Soviet propaganda.³⁹

As if heralding the coming political changes in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, a significant increase in the breadth in refugee studies in the West occurred during the 1980s. WWII political émigrés were no longer treated as objects, but became subjects of Western scholarly interest, and their role in forming Cold War security policies was recognized.⁴⁰ This was also the decade when Western academic studies on Baltic émigrés in general, including Latvian émigrés, began to appear with increasing frequency in languages other than national languages.⁴¹ Though mainly

³⁷ See Andrejs Plakans, ed., *Experiencing totalitarianism. The invasion and occupation of Latvia by the USSR and Nazi Germany 1939–1991: a documentary history* (Bloomington, Indiana: Authorhouse, 2007), pp 302–309. As an example, a semi-secret Soviet publication “Arguments” was produced for the Latvian CP CC Section for Propaganda and Agitation, which analyzed the activities of the Latvian emigration. The brochure contained articles about Radio Free Europe, Voice of America and Radio Vatican, the third visit of Pope John Paul II to Poland, and an analysis of the attempts by émigré organizations to place the Baltic issue on the international agenda. Its intended use was for oral political propaganda. It was forbidden to refer to the brochure in the press and the brochure was to be “kept at the Party Committee or ideological institution just as other secret documents”. J. Vasermanis, ed., *Arguments. Palīgmateriālu krājums partijas un ideoloģiskā aktīvā vajadzībām [The argument. A collection of materials for party and ideological workers’ needs]* (Riga: Avots, 1987), p 2.

³⁸ The council’s name in Latvian: “LPSR ZA Aizrobežu ideoloģisko strāvojumu izpētes zinātniskā padome”. See ‘Aizrobežas ideoloģisko virzienu izpēte’ [The research of foreign ideological directions], *Brīvība* No 8, 1974 p 5.

³⁹ See Valentīns Šteinbergs et al., eds., *Baltijas reakcionārā emigrācija šodien: lietuviešu, latviešu un igauņu antikomunistiskā emigrācija imperiālisma kalpībā [The Baltic reactionary emigration today: Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian anti-communist emigration in the service of imperialism]*, 2nd ed. (Riga: Zinātne, 1982); Arta Jāne, ed., *Zem sveša, prettautiska karoga [Beneath a foreign, anti-national flag]* (Riga: Avots, 1986).

⁴⁰ See, e.g., Cheryl Benard, “Politics and the refugee experience,” *Political Science Quarterly* 101, No 4 (1986); Gil Loescher and John A. Scanlan, *Calculated kindness: refugees and America’s half-open door, 1945 to the present* (New York: Free Press, 1986).

⁴¹ See, i.a., Aldis L. Putnins, *Latvians in Australia. Alienation and assimilation* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1981); Betty Birskys et al., *The Baltic peoples in Australia: Lithuanians, Latvians, Estonians* (Melbourne: AE Press, 1986); Juris Veidemanis, *Social change: major value systems of Latvians at home, as refugees, and as immigrants* (Greely, CO: Museum of Anthropology, University of Northern Colorado, 1982); Karl Aun, *The political refugees: a history of Estonians in Canada* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1985); Lars-Gunnar Eriksson, ed., *De första båtflyktningarna – en antologi om balterna i*

focusing on the processes within the occupied Baltic states, articles on émigrés could be found in periodicals committed to the subject of Baltic studies, for example, *Journal of Baltic Studies* and *Baltic Forum*, the latter of which had a special section on the Baltic exile in every issue.

Concurrently, the exile Baltic community achieved its long awaited position of political legitimacy in Western mass media that until then had been denied it. Rebas lists a number of factors that contributed to this development in Sweden: the publication of Alexander Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago in the West*;⁴² the parallel occurrences in 1980 of the Summer Olympics in Tallinn and the ESTO-80 Song Festival in Stockholm, which gathered 25,000 Estonian émigrés; the accelerating Solidarity movement in Poland; increasing manifestations of dissent in the Baltic states; the 350-year celebration of the University of Tartu in both Tartu and Uppsala in 1982; and the European Parliament's 13 January 1983 resolution supporting the Baltic cause.⁴³ International media interest in Baltic émigrés was further heightened by the 1985 Baltic Tribunal in Copenhagen⁴⁴ and the Baltic Peace and Freedom Cruise,⁴⁵ which were initiated and to a large part arranged by Baltic émigré youth organizations. These changes were also felt in the international political sphere: Latvian politician Ojārs Kalniņš noted that after 1986, Latvian lobbyists in the USA became "real spokesmen, contacts and representatives of genuine movements" of, *i.a.*, the Helsinki-86 organization, which had been established in Latvia in 1986.⁴⁶

Sverige, 1st ed., (Norrköping: Statens Invandrarverk/SH (SIV Pocket), 1986); Raimo Raag and Harald Runblom, eds., *Estländare i Sverige: historia, språk, kultur* (Uppsala: Centre for Multiethnic Research, 1988).

⁴² Other historians too have noted the influence of Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago* on contemporary history studies in the West. See, for example, Mark R. Elliott, *Pawns of Yalta: Soviet refugees and America's role in their repatriation* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982), p 4.

⁴³ Rebas (1988), pp 112–113

⁴⁴ The Baltic Tribunal against the Soviet Union took place 25–26 July 1985 in Copenhagen, Denmark. See Ingrīda Kalniņa, "Kopenhāģenas tribunāls [The Copenhagen tribunal]," in *Latvju enciklopēdija 1962–1982*, ed. E. Andersons (Rockville, MD: Amerikas Latviešu Apvienības Latviešu Institūts, 1987).

⁴⁵ The Baltic Peace and Freedom Cruise (BPFC) took place directly after the Baltic Tribunal in Copenhagen. The cruise ship *Baltic Star* departed from Stockholm, passed the coasts of Latvia and Estonia, stopped over at Helsinki, Finland, and then returned back to Stockholm. More about the BPFC can be found in Morris et al. (2008); Māris Graudiņš, "Baltijas brīvības un miera kuģis - Atmodas priekšgājējs [Baltic freedom and peace boat - the predecessor of the awakening]," in *Latviešu trimdas loma Latvijas neatkarības idejas uzturēšanā [The role of Latvian exile in maintaining the idea of Latvian independence]*, ed. T. Jundzis (Riga: Latvijas Zinātņu akadēmija, 2011); Wilma Teness and Uģis Bērziņš, "Baltijas brīvības un miera kuģis. Rietumu pasaules vērtējums [The Baltic peace and freedom boat. The evaluation of the western world]," *ibid.*

⁴⁶ Morris et al. (2008), p 148

The new policies of *glasnost* (openness) and *perestroika* (restructuring), launched by general secretary of the CPSU Mikhail Gorbachev, paved the way for national renaissances in the three Baltic republics, which ultimately lead to the reestablishment of their independence in 1991.⁴⁷ Henceforth, the conditions for researching émigré history would change dramatically. Previously inaccessible archives were opened and the subject of “political emigrations” was no longer taboo, enabling scholars to fill in the gaps (“white spots”) of recent history.⁴⁸ On the individual level, the end of communist rule allowed individuals to openly discuss, record and reassess their experiences from the era of Soviet occupation without having to fear retribution for themselves or their relatives. Memoir literature documenting experiences from within the Soviet Latvian system began to appear,⁴⁹ as well as memoir literature on the topic of émigré—Soviet Latvian relationships.⁵⁰

On the institutional level, Latvian émigré studies have become a part of mainstream academic research, as is witnessed, for example, by the expanding research in the oral history of Latvian émigrés, and by the growing research on the Latvian DP experience.⁵¹ The necessary fundamental work of documenting Latvian émigré organizations and the political, literary, cultural and social history of the Latvian emigration from the DP years to the present has shown a steady rate of production over the past two decades.⁵²

⁴⁷ Misiunas et al. (1993)

⁴⁸ Kārlis Kangeris, “Western pressure in the writing of Latvian history after 1991,” in *Inheriting the 1990s: the Baltic countries*, ed. B. Metzāle-Kangere (Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, 2010)

⁴⁹ See, i.a., Janis Liepiņš, *Es sadarbojos ar KGB un CIP dubultaģentu Imantu Lešinski [I collaborated with KGB and CIA double agent Imants Lešinskis]* (Riga: ASF “Latvietis”, 2003); Edmunds Johansons, *Čekas ģenerāļa piezīmes: atmoda un VDK [Notes of a checkist general: the awakening and the KGB]* (Riga: 1991. gada barikāžu dalībnieku biedrība, 2006); Janis Liepiņš, *Sarkano okupantu orgijas Latvijā [The orgies of the red occupiers in Latvia]* (Riga: Biedrība “Domas spēks”, 2008); Voldemārs Hermanis, *Mani talismani [My talismans]* (Riga: Jumava, 2010); Pauls Kļaviņš, *Gaismas akcija 1969–1989 [Action of light 1969–1989]* (Mārupe: Drukātava, 2012).

⁵⁰ See, e.g., Nikolajs Bulmanis, “Dardedze,” *Karogs*, No 8 (1996). For an early example of an émigré documenting his visit to Soviet Latvia in 1976 as a guest of the Latvian Committee for Cultural Relations with Countrymen Abroad, see Atis Lejins’ *Gāst hos KGB: samtal i Riga* (Stockholm: Författares bokmaskin, 1983).

⁵¹ See, i.a., Linda McDowell, *Hard labour: The forgotten voices of Latvian migrant volunteer workers* (London: UCL, 2005), Baiba Bela-Krūmiņa, ed., *Mēs nebraucām uz Zviedriju, lai kļūtu par zviedriem. Mutvārdu vēstures pētījums. Zviedrijas latviešu dzīvesstāsti. [We didn't go to Sweden to become Swedes. Oral history research. Life stories of Latvians in Sweden]* (Riga: Zinātne, 2010).

⁵² See Anita Rožkalne, *Palma vējā. Literatūrvēsturiskas piezīmes par latviešu trimdu. [A palm in the wind. Literary and historical comments about Latvian exile]* (Riga: Pētergailis, 1998), Gaida Jablovskā and Stella Līpīte, eds., *Latviešu biedrības pasaulē. Uzziņu krājums [Latvian associations in the world. Reference handbook]* (Riga: Madris, 2008), Ilgvars Veigners,

In relation to state security, the release of documents and the opening of archives dating from WWII have generated new discussions concerning the Baltic question, and a reassessment of respective refugee policies and foreign relations in the Cold War context.⁵³ A major advance in this area has been achieved by L'Hommedieu, who has investigated post-war US policy work in forming Baltic émigré collaborative committees and its attempts to steer the activities of existing Baltic émigré organizations.⁵⁴ The Baltic émigré issue in the context of national security and Swedish-Soviet relations has been investigated by Kangeris.⁵⁵ Byström has analyzed the post-war public debate in Sweden concerning foreigners, refugee policy and refugees.⁵⁶ Notini Burch has examined the issue of Baltic émigrés as a security risk during the early Cold War period and Sweden's reception of Baltic refugees.⁵⁷ Daudze has investigated and analyzed how and to what degree Latvian émigrés influenced Swedish policy on the Baltic question, Sweden's growing role in Baltic politics, the roles played by Baltic émigrés in this development, and the Soviet active measures that were taken against Latvian émigrés in Sweden.⁵⁸ Sweden's treatment of suspected war criminals

Latvieši rietumzemēs: un vēl dažās zemēs [Latvians in western countries: and in some additional countries] (Riga: Drukātava, 2009), among many others.

⁵³ Daunis Auers, ed., *Latvia and the USA: from captive nation to strategic partner* (Riga: Academic Press of the University of Latvia, 2008), John Hiden et al., eds., *The Baltic question during the Cold War* (London: Routledge, 2008)

⁵⁴ See Jonathan H. L'Hommedieu, "Exiles and constituents: Baltic refugees and American Cold War politics, 1948–1960" (University of Turku, 2011), L'Hommedieu (2012), Jonathan H. L'Hommedieu, "The Baltic freedom committees: politics and policies of an exile community," in *The Inauguration of organized political warfare. Cold War organizations sponsored by the National Committee for a Free Europe / Free Europe Committee*, ed. K. Kádár Lynn (Helena, CA: Helena History Press, 2013). For more on US political warfare and the involvement of émigrés during the Cold War, see Katalin Kádár Lynn, ed., *The inauguration of organized political warfare. Cold War organizations sponsored by the National Committee for a Free Europe/Free Europe Committee* (Saint Helena, CA: Helena History Press, LLC, 2013).

⁵⁵ Kārlis Kangeris, "Zviedrijas un PSRS attiecības un latvieši Zviedrijā 1941.–1959. gad. [The Latvian question in the context of Swedish-Soviet relations (1941–1959)]," in *The Soviet occupation regime in the Baltic states 1944–1959: Policies and their consequences. Materials of an international conference 13–14 June 2002, Riga*, ed. A. Caune, I. Feldmanis, and D. Kļaviņa, *Symposium of the Commission of the Historians of Latvia* (Riga: Institute of the History of Latvia, 2003)

⁵⁶ See Mikael Byström, *En broder, gäst och parasit. Uppfattningar och föreställningar om utlänningar, flyktingar och flyktingpolitik i svensk offentlig debatt 1942–1947* (Stockholm: Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis, 2006). See also Mikael Byström and Pär Frohnert, eds., *Reaching a state of hope. Refugees, immigrants and the Swedish welfare state, 1930–2000* (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2013) for more on Swedish refugee and labor immigration policy.

⁵⁷ Cecilia Notini Burch, *A Cold War pursuit. Soviet refugees in Sweden 1945–1954* (Stockholm: Santérus Academic Press Sweden, 2014)

⁵⁸ Argita Daudze, *Latvija Zviedrijas politikā, 1945–1991 [Latvija in Sweden's politics, 1945–1991]* (Riga: Zvaigzne ABC, 2011)

among Baltic émigrés has been studied by Deland.⁵⁹ The issue of suspected war criminals among Latvian émigrés has been treated by Ezergailis, Lumans, and Zake.⁶⁰

The issue of “cultural relations”, which for émigré Latvians mainly pertained to forming and upholding contacts between themselves and official representatives of Soviet power, such as the Committee for Cultural Relations with Countrymen Abroad, was regularly debated within the Latvian émigré community.⁶¹ Overviews and analyses pertaining to this issue have been published in émigré and Latvian press.⁶² An “insider’s view” on cultural relations was presented in the mid-1980s by double agent and former KGB officer Imants Lešinskis, who also testified in US courts to the involvement of the Soviet security services in exile Latvian-Soviet Latvia relationships.⁶³

After the reestablishment of Latvian independence, and with opening of Communist Party archives in Latvia and elsewhere, it has been possible to gain deeper insights in the workings of state security agencies and, for example, follow how the Latvian KGB structured and managed its operations in respect to émigrés. Access to private archives and declassified materials has produced studies on how Latvian literary activity was used as a Cold War weapon and how cultural contacts between Soviet Latvia and the emigration were formed. Among these has been Eglāja-Kristsons’s groundbreaking work on the thirty-year development of the cultural dialogue

⁵⁹ Mats Deland, *Purgatorium: Sverige och andra världskrigets förbrytare* (Stockholm: Atlas, 2010)

⁶⁰ See Andrew Ezergailis, *The Holocaust in Latvia, 1941–1944: the missing center* (Riga: The Historical Institute of Latvia, 1996); Valdis O. Lumans, *Latvia in World War II* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2006), pp 386–390; Ieva Zake, “‘The secret Nazi network’ and post-World War II Latvian émigrés in the United States,” *Journal of Baltic Studies* 41, No 1 (2010b).

⁶¹ “Cultural relations” as understood in this study differs from the state-to-state relationships practiced in the sphere of cultural diplomacy as, for example, described in, e.g., Fredrick C. Barghoorn, *The Soviet cultural offensive. The role of cultural diplomacy in Soviet foreign policy* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1960) or Victor Rosenberg, *Soviet-American relations, 1953–1960: diplomacy and cultural exchange during the Eisenhower presidency* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Company, 2005). The special type of cultural relations referred to in my study was characterized by contacts upheld by Soviet Latvian élites via the Cultural Relations Committee with individual Latvian émigrés in the West.

⁶² Historian Ģērmanis was a prolific writer on this subject. See, for example, Uldis Ģērmanis, *Tālu tālumā, lielā plašumā. Austrālijas piezīmes [Far and wide. Australian notes]* (New York: Grāmatu Draugs, 1977), Uldis Ģērmanis, *Zināšanai. Raksti par mūsu un padomju lietām [For your information. Essays on our and Soviet matters]*, 3rd ed. (Stockholm: Ziemeļzvaigzne/Memento, 1986), Uldis Ģērmanis, *Izvērtēšanai: par mūsu vēsturisko pieredzi [For evaluation: about our historical experience]* (Stockholm: Memento, 1993), Uldis Ģērmanis, *Jaunie laiki un pagātnes ēnas: fakti un vērtējumi 1991–1995 [New times and the shadows of the past: facts and evaluations 1991–1995]* (Stockholm: Memento, 1995).

⁶³ Lešinskis (1985)

between Soviet Latvians and émigré Latvians.⁶⁴ In the wider context of intelligence research, studies have been made on the engagement of émigrés by intelligence services for covert assignments in and outside of Soviet territory.⁶⁵

The American Latvians, who formed the largest Latvian émigré community in the postwar years, have been researched by Zake as part of the “white ethnics” discourse,⁶⁶ and she has analyzed their political activism within the context of other anti-communist refugee groups in the United States.⁶⁷ In addition, Zake has examined their interactions and reactions to the informal and formal “cultural contacts” with the Soviet Latvian homeland, which were mainly channeled through the above mentioned Latvian Committee for Cultural Relations with Countrymen Abroad.⁶⁸

In this book, the activities of the Committee For Return to the Motherland will be studied. The focus will be on the Committee’s publication, the repatriation newspaper *Par atgriešanos Dzimtenē*, and the strategies that were followed to achieve overt and covert goals among Latvian émigrés. The intent will be to demonstrate how the messages and attending strategies were implemented and adapted in order to elicit certain desired behaviors from within the Latvian émigré masses.

1.3.2 Repatriation and Soviet Latvia

Western research on the topic of repatriation shows a trend similar to that of émigré research: many years of neglect in the decades after WWII followed by increasing interest during the 1970s. As Elliott observed, “diplomatic histories of Cold War origins have given scant attention to repatriation, if

⁶⁴ Eva Eglāja-Kristsonsone, *Dzelzsgriezēji: Latvijas un Rietumu trimdas rakstnieku kontakti [Iron cutters: Contacts between Latvian and western exile writers]* (Riga: Literatūras, folkloras un mākslas institūts, 2013)

⁶⁵ See, *i.a.*, Arvydas Anušauskas, ed., *The anti-Soviet resistance in the Baltic states* (Vilnius: Genocide and Resistance Research Centre of Lithuania/DuKa, 1999); Scott Lucas, *Freedom's war. The US crusade against the Soviet Union 1945–56* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999); Peter Grose, *Operation rollback: America's secret war behind the iron curtain* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000); James H. Callanan, *Covert action in the Cold War. US policy, intelligence and CIA operations* (London: I.B. Tauris 2010).

⁶⁶ Zake (2010a)

⁶⁷ Ieva Zake, ed., *Anti-communist minorities in the U.S.: political activism of ethnic refugees* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009)

⁶⁸ Ieva Zake, “Controversies of US-USSR cultural contacts during the Cold War: the perspective of Latvian refugees,” *Journal of Historical Sociology* 21, No 1 (2008a); Ieva Zake, *Nineteenth-century nationalism and twentieth-century anti-democratic ideals: the case of Latvia, 1940s to 1980s* (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2008b); Ieva Zake, “Soviet campaigns against “capitalist ideological subversives” during the Cold War: the Latvian experience,” *Journal of Cold War Studies* 12, No 3 (2010c)

indeed they mention it at all”.⁶⁹ With the exception of the studies on forced and voluntary population movements by Kulischer⁷⁰ and Proudfoot,⁷¹ and Ginsburgs’ legal analysis of Soviet repatriation policies, which shows how changing Soviet attitudes to refugees, émigrés, and prisoners of war are motivated by ideological concerns, which in turn are reflected in Soviet laws of nationality and citizenship,⁷² the repatriation issue was generally not addressed during the decades after the end of WWII. Within émigré communities, however, the memories of the oftentimes bloody and brutal forced repatriation actions that took place in Europe during or in the immediate aftermath of WWII were kept alive in both private memory and émigré press, and circulated in émigré discourse.⁷³

Public attention in the West to the moral issue of forced repatriation was kindled by the appearance of two publications: Russian historian and writer Alexander Solzhenitsyn’s *Gulag Archipelago*, where the forceful repatriation of Soviet civilians and military persons was called “the last secret of the Second World War that had been carefully kept by the British and American governments”,⁷⁴ and American historian and journalist Julius Epstein’s *Operation Keelhaul*, which documented his efforts to uncover the story of the forceful deportations of “millions of Russian prisoners and escapees”.⁷⁵ At about the same time the release of US and British repatriation records together with additional declassification of government archives resulted in several major academic studies of the US and British forced

⁶⁹ Elliott (1982), p 3

⁷⁰ Eugene M. Kulischer, *Europe on the move. War and population changes, 1917–47* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1948)

⁷¹ Malcolm J. Proudfoot, *European refugees: 1939–52. A study in forced population movement* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1956)

⁷² George Ginsburgs, “The Soviet Union and the problem of refugees and displaced persons 1917–1956,” *American Journal of International Law* 51, No 2 (1957). See also George Ginsburgs, *Soviet citizenship law*, ed. Z. Szirmai, vol. No. 15, *Law in Eastern Europe* (Leyden: A.W. Sijthoff, 1968); George Ginsburgs, “Nationality and state succession in Soviet theory and practice—the experience of the Baltic states,” in *Res Baltica. A collection of essays in honor of the memory of Dr. Alfred Bilmanis (1887–1948)*, ed. A. Sprudz and A. Ruis (Leyden: A.W. Sijthoff, 1968); George Ginsburgs, “Soviet views on the law of state succession with regard to treaties and acquired rights—the case of the Baltic republics,” in *Res Baltica. A collection of essays in honor of the memory of Dr. Alfred Bilmanis (1887–1948)*, ed. A. Sprudz and A. Ruis (Leyden: A. W. Sijthoff, 1968).

⁷³ Gustavo Corni et al., “Forced migrations and mass movements in the memorialization processes since the second world war,” in *People on the move: forced population movements in Europe in the second world war and its aftermath*, ed. P. Ahonen, et al., (Oxford: Berg, 2008)

⁷⁴ Alexander Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag archipelago. 1918–1956. An experiment in literary investigation (I–II)*, trans. T. P. Whitney (Lodon: Harvill Press, 1974), p 85 note 45

⁷⁵ Julius Epstein, *Operation Keelhaul: the story of forced repatriation from 1944 to the present* (Old Greenwich, Conn.: Devin-Adair Company, 1973), p viii

repatriation of Russian refugees to the Soviet Union by Bethell,⁷⁶ Tolstoy⁷⁷ and Elliott.⁷⁸ While Bethell and Tolstoy focus mainly on the 1945–47 repatriations, Epstein and Elliott extend their coverage up to the early 1970s. Moreover, Epstein also treats the North Korean defections in 1953, the 1956 wave of Hungarian refugees, and the 1970 unsuccessful defection and forced repatriation of Soviet Lithuanian Simas Kudirka.

Of particular interest to my study is Elliott's book *Pawns of Yalta: Soviet Refugees and America's Role in their Repatriation*. Not only Western sources are investigated, but in a unique effort of the time, the then publicly available Soviet literature and documents on repatriation up to and including 1979 are examined. Through the study of the Soviet publications, Elliott analyzes the changing attitudes towards repatriates and also “the evolution of the party line on Soviet citizens abroad over three decades”.⁷⁹ He exposes the massively negative Soviet attitude to repatriates and émigrés during the Stalin era, when most were branded as traitors, and compares this to the changes during the Khrushchev years, when “...not only ex-POW's and former forced laborers but also those who had consciously chosen not to return home could be treated with understanding”.⁸⁰ Elliott's overview ties into one of the main research aims of my study, which is to trace the strategies and tactics of the 1955–1958 Soviet repatriation campaign with respect to Latvian émigrés, and investigate how these were implemented in order to achieve desired outcomes.

In Sweden, the repatriation issue is indelibly connected to the extradition to the Soviet Union of some 2,700 German and Baltic military refugees in 1945–1946, which took place on the request of the Soviet government. According to the Yalta agreement, German soldiers taken into custody were to be returned to their respective front at the time of capitulation, and the Balts, seen as Soviet citizens, were to be returned to the Soviet Union. However, the forced repatriation of the approximately 150 Baltic soldiers whose pleas to stay in Sweden had gained public sympathy, was politically and morally questioned, and gave rise to an unprecedented media storm in Swedish press.⁸¹ After the extradition in January 1946, public interest

⁷⁶ Nicholas Bethell, *The last secret. Forcible repatriation to Russia 1944–1947*, 2nd ed. (London: Penguin, 1995)

⁷⁷ Nikolai Tolstoy, *Victims of Yalta* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1977)

⁷⁸ Elliott (1982)

⁷⁹ *Ibid.* p 4

⁸⁰ *Ibid.* p 230

⁸¹ The German soldiers, who were more than ten times the number of the Balts, did not gain public sympathy in Sweden, and were mostly ignored by the Swedish press. It is telling that the extradition is generally known as the “Baltic Extradition” (in Swedish: *Baltutlämningen*).

subsided, and the Swedish government, similar to the UK and US governments, followed a policy of official silence over the next decades.⁸²

Interest in the repatriation issue is again brought forth by the publication in 1968 of Per Olof Enquist's documentary novel *The Legionnaires*,⁸³ and by its film adaptation *A Baltic Tragedy* in 1970.⁸⁴ In contrast to Solzhenitsyn, who blamed Western repatriation policies for the inhuman sufferings endured by returnees, Enquist defended the Swedish government's actions and professed that Latvian military internees were treated fairly upon their forced return to Soviet Latvia, a view that was echoed in the ensuing public discussion in the Swedish press.⁸⁵ This aroused the dismay of the worldwide Latvian émigré community, who, disagreeing with Enquist's arguments exonerating the actions of the Swedish government, maintained that the extradited internees were either dead or were suffering grave and unjust punishment in the Soviet Union.⁸⁶

In conjunction with the declassification of Swedish government documents in the 1980s, a definitive study by Ekholm has been carried out on the whole process of the German and Baltic extradition, starting with the arrival of the military refugees to Sweden, their internment in the camps, and their forced repatriation to the Soviet Union.⁸⁷ The conclusion reached is that "the deportation took place due to a failure to observe Sweden's obligations as a neutral country and to ignorance of what deportation would mean for those involved".⁸⁸

⁸² Anders Bojs and Leif Mårtensson, eds., *Baltutlämningens skugga: internering och utlämning av tyska militärflyktingar via lägren i Rinkaby och Gälltofta 1945–1946* (Kristianstad: Föreningen Gamla Christianstade, 2004), p 13

⁸³ Per Olov Enquist, *Legionärerna* (Stockholm: Litteraturfrämjandet, 1986)

⁸⁴ The film, called *Baltutlämningen* in Swedish, was directed by Johan Bergenstråle.

⁸⁵ According to author Per Olov Enquist, who had travelled to Soviet Latvia on invitation of the Soviet Latvian government to gather background materials and interview the Latvian military persons, about 25–30 of the 130 Latvian repatriates were punished by deportation to the Gulag, and no one was executed, see Enquist (1986), p 400. He wrote in his 1968 introduction that his goal was to "describe a Swedish dilemma" and not "build a monument over a Baltic tragedy", see *ibid.*, p 5.

⁸⁶ See Per-Olof Forslund, "Några böcker om baltutlämningen," in *Baltutlämningens skugga: internering och utlämning av tyska militärflyktingar via lägren i Rinkaby och Gälltofta 1945–1946*, ed. A. Bojs and L. Mårtensson (Kristianstad: Föreningen Gamla Christianstade, 2004) for a review of some of the main publications on the Baltic extradition.

⁸⁷ Curt Ekholm, *Balt- och tyskutlämningen 1945–1946. Omständigheter kring interneringen i läger i Sverige och utlämningen till Sovjetunionen av f d tyska krigsdeltagare. Del 1. Ankomsten och interneringen*, 2nd ed., vol. 136, *Studia Historica Upsaliensia* (Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, 1995a); Curt Ekholm, *Balt- och tyskutlämningen 1945–1946. Omständigheter kring interneringen i läger i Sverige och utlämningen till Sovjetunionen av f d tyska krigsdeltagare. Del 2. Utlämningen och efterspelet*, 2nd ed., vol. 137, *Studia Historica Upsaliensia* (Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, 1995b)

⁸⁸ Ekholm (1995b), p 408

Another case of forced repatriation from Sweden, researched by Berge,⁸⁹ concerns the nearly 4,000 Russian refugees that arrived in the country during and after WWII. This study shows that a policy of massive forced repatriation, as exercised by the USA and the UK, was never adopted by Sweden, and that about 1,750 Russian refugees were eventually granted political asylum.⁹⁰

The disintegration of the Soviet Union, the initial opening of Soviet archives, and the access to declassified documents in the West has led to a surge of new studies on war-related forced population movement and migration.⁹¹ The field of studies on repatriation within the refugee regime complex is growing,⁹² as are studies on the repatriation of DPs, POWs, and specific ethnic nationalities.⁹³ A major historical study has been done by Dyczok on the forced and voluntary repatriation of Ukrainian refugees during the first repatriation period, and on the functions of the Soviet repatriation organ, the Administration of the Plenipotentiary of the Council of People's Commissars on Repatriation Affairs.⁹⁴ Stelzl-Marx has researched the visual materials of the first Soviet repatriation campaign, the implementation and execution of repatriation propaganda among Belarusian forced laborers, and the repatriation of forced laborers from the Third Reich

⁸⁹ Anders Berge, *Flyktingpolitik i stormakts skugga. Sverige och de sovjetryska flyktingarna under andra världskriget*, vol. 26, *Uppsala Multiethnic Papers 26* (Uppsala: Centre for Multiethnic Research - Uppsala University, 1992)

⁹⁰ Ibid. p 102

⁹¹ See, *i.a.*, Pavel Polian, *Against their will: the history and geography of forced migrations in the USSR* (New York: Central European University Press, 2003); Pertti Aho et al., eds., *People on the move: Forced population movements in Europe in the second world war and its aftermath* (Oxford: Berg, 2008).

⁹² See, *i.a.*, Kim Salomon, *Refugees in the Cold War. Toward a new international refugee regime in the early postwar era* (Lund: University Press, 1991); Marjoleine Zieck, *UNHCR and voluntary repatriation of refugees. A legal analysis* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1997); Gil Loescher, *The UNHCR and world politics: a perilous path* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); K. Long, "Early repatriation policy: Russian refugee return 1922–1924," *Journal of Refugee Studies* 22, No 2 (2009).

⁹³ For a discussion on post-war DPs and their repatriation, resettlement, and their relations to diaspora, see Peter Gatrell and Nick Baron, eds., *Warlands: population resettlement and state reconstruction in the Soviet-East European Borderlands, 1945–50* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan Ltd, 2009). On the repatriation of POWs from Finland, see Lars Westerlund, ed., *POW deaths and people handed over to Germany and the Soviet Union in 1939–55* (Helsinki: Kansallisarkisto, 2008). Concerning Ingrians, see Pekka Nevalainen, "Ingermanland i andra världskriget," in *Ingermanland - om land och folk*, ed. S. Huovinen (Kulturonden för Sverige och Finland, 1993); Viktor Pajunen, "Ingermanländarna i Sverige," *ibid.* (Stockholm); Notini Burch (2014). On US repatriation policy towards Russian nationals, see Jason Kendall Moore, "Between expediency and principle: U.S. repatriation policy toward Russian nationals, 1944–1949," *Diplomatic History* 24, No 3 (2000), among others.

⁹⁴ Marta Dyczok, *The grand alliance and Ukrainian refugees* (New York: St. Martin's Press, LLC, 2000)

and their fate.⁹⁵ There is a growing literature on repatriation propaganda that focuses not only on Russian language outputs, but also on other “Soviet” languages.⁹⁶

The first Soviet Latvian repatriation campaign (1944–1953), the repatriation materials produced during this campaign, the activities of the Latvian SSR Repatriation Commission, and the fate of the returning Latvian POWs have been investigated by Riekstiņš,⁹⁷ Ekmane,⁹⁸ and Pelkaus.⁹⁹ Currently, the most comprehensive research of the second Soviet repatriation campaign (beginning 1955 and ending in the late 1950s/early 1960s) is Roberts’ and Cipko’s archival history of the Canadian government’s policies in response to the campaign and its effects on the Canadian Ukrainian community.¹⁰⁰ Of significant interest in this publication are the oral histories of Canadian Ukrainian returnees who repatriated to the USSR in the 1950s, some of whom succeeded in returning back to Canada in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. Another important contribution is Mikkonen’s investigation of the Repatriation Committee and its propaganda strategies with respect to

⁹⁵ See Barbara Stelzl-Marx, ““Die Heimat wartet auf Euch...” Zur politisch-agitatorischen Arbeit unter ehemaligen weißrussischen Zwangsarbeitern,” in *Ostarbeiter. Weißrussische Zwangsarbeiter in Österreich. Dokumente und Materialien: “Ostarbajtery”*, ed. S. Karner (Graz: Verein zur Förderung von Folgen nach Konflikten u. Kriegen, 2003a); Barbara Stelzl-Marx, ““Kommt schnellstens in die Heimat zurück!” Broschüren und Plakate für sowjetische Repatrianten,” in *Jahrbuch des italienisch-deutschen historischen Instituts in Trient* (Bologna: Società editrice il Mulino, 2003b); Stelzl-Marx (2008).

⁹⁶ Concerning the first repatriation campaign, see David Vseviov, “Repatrieerimisreetorika kui abivahend kohandumiseks tagasipõrdumisideega (1945–1953) [How repatriation rhetoric was supposed to help people adapt to the idea of returning (1945–1953)],” in *Kohandumise Märgid*, ed. V. Sarapik, M. Kalda, and R. Veidemann (Tartu: Eesti TA Underi ja Tuglase Kirjanduskeskus, 2002) for Estonian repatriation propaganda; for Latvian repatriation propaganda, see Lilita Zaļkalne, “Soviet Latvian repatriation literature 1947–1950,” in *Latvijas kara muzeja gadagrāmata*, ed. J. Ciganovs (Riga: Latvijas Kara Muzejs, 2001).

⁹⁷ Jānis Riekstiņš, “Repatriācija: Seši bāreņi un tautas sašķelšana [Repatriation: six orphans and the splitting of a nation],” *Neatkarīgā Cīņa*, August 29 1991, Riekstiņš (1994), Jānis Riekstiņš, “Sveša darba klaušās [In foreign corvée],” *Latvijas Arhīvi*, No 2 (1995), Jānis Riekstiņš, “Ērkšķainais mājupceļš. 1945. gads [The thorny road home. Year 1945],” *Latvijas Vēstnesis* 69, No 2456 (2001)

⁹⁸ Barba Ekmane, “Padomju varas iestāžu politika repatriācijas jautājumā 1944–1950 [Soviet power politics on the issue of repatriation 1944–1950],” in *Latvijas kara muzeja gadagrāmata*, ed. J. Ciganovs (Riga: Latvijas Universitātes žurnāla “Latvijas Vēsture” fonds, 2003)

⁹⁹ Elmārs Pelkaus, “Latvijas neatkarīga valstiskuma ideja bēgļu noņemtu laikā 1944.–1949. gadā [The idea of the independent statehood of Latvia during the period of refugee camps (1944–1949)],” in *Padomju okupācijas režīms Baltijā 1944.–1959. gadā: politika un tās sekas [The Soviet occupation regime in the Baltic states 1944–1959: policies and their consequences]*, ed. A. Caune, I. Feldmanis, and D. Kļaviņa, *Symposium of the Commission of the Historians of Latvia* (Riga: Latvijas vēstures institūta apgāds, 2003), pp 403–406

¹⁰⁰ Glenna Roberts and Serge Cipko, *One-way ticket. The Soviet return-to-the-homeland campaign, 1955–1960*, vol. 9 (Manotick: Penumbra Press, 2008)

Russian and Estonian émigrés.¹⁰¹ Certain initial research on the second Soviet Latvian repatriation campaign, which is the object of study in this book, has also been carried out.¹⁰² The aim of the current study is to present a portrayal and analysis of the second Soviet Latvian repatriation campaign.

1.3.3 Soviet Latvian Propaganda

In the wider field of Soviet media and foreign propaganda studies, the scholarly research carried out up to this day is vast and still burgeoning. However, it must be noted that research on Soviet media usually focuses on the central All-Union Russian language media, while lesser attention is paid to non-Russian language outputs.¹⁰³ Some scholarly works that include or mention the non-Russian press in their concept of “Soviet media” or “Communist press” are, for example, Buzek,¹⁰⁴ Kalniņš,¹⁰⁵ Remington,¹⁰⁶ and Berkhoff.¹⁰⁷ Some scholars have studied the Soviet press as a propaganda tool in the service of overt and covert Soviet domestic and foreign policy goals and political techniques. Others, see the Soviet press not only as propaganda, but also as an instrument of disinformation, and utilize models and methods developed in black propaganda and persuasion studies for analysis and explanation.¹⁰⁸ Many studies on Soviet foreign propaganda are

¹⁰¹ Simo Mikkonen, “Mass communications as a vehicle to lure Russian émigrés homeward,” *Journal of International and Global Studies* 2, No 2 (2011); Simo Mikkonen, “Not by force alone: Soviet return migration in the 1950s,” in *Coming Home? Vol. 1: Conflict and Return Migration in the Aftermath of Europe’s Twentieth-Century Civil Wars*, ed. G. Sharif, et al. ([N.p.]: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014)

¹⁰² See Lilita Zaļkalne, “No repatriācijas līdz kultūras sakariem [From repatriation to cultural relations],” *Jaunā Gaita* 224:33–38, 225:33–40. (2001); Lilita Zaļkalne, ““Kultūras sakari” - sākums un izveide (1955–1961) [“Cultural Relations” - beginnings and formation (1955–61)],” in *Konferences “Trimda, kultūra, nacionālā identitāte” referātu krājums [Proceedings of the conference “Exile, culture, national identity”]*, ed. D. Kļaviņa and M. Brancis (Riga: Nordik, 2004)

¹⁰³ The non-Russian Soviet press has been researched in the summaries, reports, and analyses made by the research organizations of, among others, the radio broadcasters Radio Liberty/Radio Free Europe and the monitoring unit of the BBC World Service.

¹⁰⁴ Antony Buzek, *How the communist press works* (London and Dunmow: Pall Mall Press, 1964)

¹⁰⁵ Bruno Kalnins, *Der sowjetische Propagandastaatsystem und die Mittel der Massenbeeinflussung in der Sowjetunionen* (Stockholm: Tidens Förlag, 1956); Bruno Kalnins, *Agit-prop. Die Propaganda in der Sowjetunion* (Wien: Europa Verlag, 1966)

¹⁰⁶ Thomas R. Remington, *The truth of authority. Ideology and communication in the Soviet Union* (Pittsburgh: The University of Pittsburgh Press, 1988)

¹⁰⁷ Karel C. Berkhoff, *Motherland in Danger: Soviet Propaganda during World War II* (Cambridge, MA, USA: Harvard University Press, 2012)

¹⁰⁸ See, e.g., Vladimir Bukovsky, *The peace movement and the Soviet Union* (London: The Coalition for Peace Through Security in association with The Committee for The Free World, 1982); Richard H. Shultz and Roy Godson, *Dezinformatsia. Active measures in Soviet strategy* (McLean, Virginia, USA: Pergamon-Brassey's International Defense Publishers,

focused towards understanding how Soviet propaganda functioned in the overall context of Soviet foreign policy with respect to a certain country, geo-political region, or organization (for example, NATO or the United Nations).¹⁰⁹ Hazan has analyzed Soviet propaganda expressed as Soviet cultural exports to countries abroad¹¹⁰, and Salminen takes up Finland's position during the propaganda wars of the Soviet era, bringing up certain references to Estonia and Baltic émigrés.¹¹¹ An increasing number of studies involving Soviet foreign propaganda now treat this issue as an aspect of the cultural and ideological warfare between the Soviet Union and the United States.¹¹² As Mikkonen's research in this area shows, the ethnic aspect is important in understanding how the cultural and ideological transfers, if any, took place.¹¹³ He also observes that the émigré world and the role of émigré organizations, which, for example, were especially prominent in the operations of the CIA-supported broadcasting stations Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty, are often missing from contemporary analyses treating the psychological and political warfare programs of the two superpowers.¹¹⁴ It is my intention in this dissertation to continue in this vein, and therefore I shall investigate Soviet Latvian propaganda from the ethnic aspect, taking into account specific Latvian cultural realities. My goal will be to analyze the Soviet Latvian repatriation campaign and examine the strategies and methods used to reach and influence the Latvian émigré audience, and to study émigré press reactions.

1984); Martin Ebon, *The Soviet propaganda machine* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1987); Clive Rose, *The Soviet propaganda network: a directory of organisations serving Soviet foreign policy* (New York: St. Martin's Press, Inc., 1988).

¹⁰⁹ Examples of older studies on Soviet foreign propaganda are Fredrick C. Barghoorn, *Soviet foreign propaganda* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1964); Gayle Durham Hollander, *Soviet political indoctrination. Developments in mass media and propaganda since Stalin* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1972). Summaries of Communist propaganda directed to worldwide audiences, ethnic and otherwise, are found in F. Bowen Evans, ed., *Worldwide communist propaganda activities* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1955); Evron M. Kirkpatrick, ed., *Target: the world. Communist propaganda activities in 1955* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1956); and Evron M. Kirkpatrick, ed., *Year of crisis. Communist propaganda activities in 1956* (New York: The Macmillan company, 1957).

¹¹⁰ Baruch Hazan, *Soviet impregnational propaganda* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Ardis, 1982)

¹¹¹ Esko Salminen, *The silenced media: the propaganda war between Russia and the west in northern Europe*, trans. J. Kokkonen (London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1999)

¹¹² See, *i.a.*, Frances Stonor Saunders, *Who paid the piper? The CIA and the cultural Cold War* (London: Granta, 1999); Lucas (1999); Tony Shaw and Denise J. Youngblood, *Cinematic Cold War: The American and Soviet struggle for hearts and minds* (Lawrence, Kan.: University Press of Kansas, 2010).

¹¹³ Mikkonen (2012). See also Simo Mikkonen, "Stealing the monopoly of knowledge? Soviet reactions to U.S. Cold War broadcasting," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Euroasian History* 11, No 4 (2010b) pp 771–805

¹¹⁴ Mikkonen (2012): p 99 Note 92

Regrettably, only a few works analyzing the Soviet Latvian media have been published, and in these, no mention is made of the newspaper *Par atgriešanos Dzimtenē*, the object of this study.¹¹⁵ A recently published book, Ezergailis' *Nazi/Soviet Disinformation about the Holocaust* analyzes Soviet Latvian disinformation and the role played by the Latvian Cultural Relations Committee, a successor to the Repatriation Committee. The book investigates the Soviet methods used to falsely incriminate Latvian émigré leadership and Latvian émigrés as perpetrators of Nazi war crimes.¹¹⁶

In my work I shall analyze the Soviet Latvian repatriation campaign and the strategies and methods used to reach and influence the Latvian émigré audience. I shall specifically look at the ethnic aspects of the design and planning of the repatriation campaign, the procedures that were followed as well as the actions taken. I shall also analyze the ethnic content of the messages and study the different overtures and angles of communication when approaching the Latvian émigré. The Soviet Latvian repatriation campaign differed in essence from Soviet Russian propaganda in that its audience was a unique ethnic group. To attain the goal of inducing Latvian émigrés to return to their ethnic homeland, strategies, methods and messages were adapted to Latvian émigré characteristics. These cultural characteristics make the Soviet Latvian repatriation campaign different from general Soviet propaganda, and it is these differences that I shall be investigating in this study.

1.4 Theory and Method

1.4.1 Propaganda

Jowett and O'Donnell define propaganda as “the deliberate, systematic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and direct behavior to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist”.¹¹⁷

The Latin word propaganda, meaning “that which is to be spread”, was first used in this sense when the Sacred Congregation de Propaganda Fide

¹¹⁵ See, e.g., K. Karulis, *Latviesu padomju prese [Soviet Latvian press]* (Riga: Liesma, 1967); Rihards Treijs, *Darbatautas prese: latv. padomju prese sākotnē 1917–1919 [The press of the working nation: the beginnings of the Latvian Soviet press 1917–1919]* (Riga: Avots, 1984); Sverrick Høyer et al., eds., *Towards a civic society. The Baltic media's long road to freedom. Perspectives on history, ethnicity and journalism* (Tartu: Nota Baltica Ltd., 1993).

¹¹⁶ Andrew Ezergailis, *Nazi/Soviet disinformation about the holocaust in nazi-occupied Latvia: Daugavas vanagi: who are they? - revisited* (Riga: Latvijas 50 gadu okupācijas muzeja fonds (OMF), 2005)

¹¹⁷ Garth S. Jowett and Victoria O'Donnell, *Propaganda and persuasion*, 4th ed. (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2006), p 7

was founded in 1622 in Rome by Pope Gregory XV with the purpose of maintaining, defending and spreading the Roman Catholic faith. Some years later Pope Urban VII established the *Collegium urbanum*, a seminary for training missionaries for the propaganda, with the object “to bring men to a voluntary acceptance of the Church's doctrines”.¹¹⁸ The missionaries—many of whom were members of the Society of Jesus, popularly known as the Jesuits—attained remarkable success in converting “infidels” to Catholicism. The methods and techniques of the successful Jesuit propaganda were studied by leaders of the radical political and social movements of the first half of the nineteenth century, who adapted them for their own needs and purposes. Qualter observes that by the middle of the nineteenth century, the word “propaganda” had already lost its neutral meaning in English, and quotes an 1842 British dictionary:

Derived from this celebrated society [i.e. the Sacred Congregation] the name propaganda is applied in modern political language as a term of reproach to secret associations for the spread of opinions and principles which are viewed by most governments with horror and aversion.¹¹⁹

The “secret associations” referred to above were clandestine groups advocating liberalism, nationalism, socialism, communism and other radical political ideologies of those times. The secret societies engaged in internal and external propaganda, resorted to undercover activity and set up front organizations in order to avoid discovery by the police. The father of Marxism, Karl Marx, and his closest collaborator Friedrich Engels, had been active in many such revolutionary groups. By 1847, when both joined the Communist League, a secret propaganda society in London, Marx was already a professional propagandist, teaching party members how to organize communist cells and advising them to “act like the Jesuits. [...] In the Party, everything that promotes progress must be supported, giving no concern to tiring moral aspects”.¹²⁰

Karl Marx reorganized the Communist League (which was operating under the front of the German Workers' Educational Association)¹²¹ into an effective propaganda machine, and together with Engels, wrote its program: *The Manifesto of the Communist Party*. This work is regarded by some as the best political propaganda ever written. Some decades later, next to the

¹¹⁸ Terence H. Qualter, *Propaganda and psychological warfare* (New York: Random House, 1962), p 4

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Quoted from a circular written by Marx to G. A. Koettgen on June 15, 1846. See Alfreds Braunfelds, *Marksistu ideologija un strategija* (New York: Amerikas Latviešu Apvienība, 1981), p 62

¹²¹ Isaiah Berlin and Alan Ryan, *Karl Marx: his life and environment*, 4th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), p 119

term “propaganda”, the term “agitation” gained in importance within European social democratic and communist circles. It was the Marxist philosopher G. V. Plekhanov who first defined the basic difference between propaganda and agitation according to the classic statement: “The propagandist conveys many ideas to only one or several persons, whereas the agitator presents only one or several ideas to a whole mass of people”.¹²² Plekhanov also stated that the

... influence on the social life of contemporary civilized countries is unthinkable without influence upon the mass, that is, without agitation. [...] Consequently, agitation is indispensable to every party that wishes to have historical significance. A sect may be content with propaganda in the narrow sense of the word. A political party never.¹²³

Communist leader Vladimir Ilyich Lenin expanded on the idea of the necessity for both propaganda and agitation. In his influential work from 1902 *What Is To Be Done?*, Lenin works out Communist Party strategy that was based on getting to know the psychology and the social conditions of people and utilizing these in order to attain political goals. He emphasizes that propaganda and agitation are to take place among all strata of the people, and that both human minds and human emotions are to be influenced by the propagandist and the agitator, respectively.¹²⁴

The Communist Party retained its leadership with respect to interpreting ideology, determining doctrine and disseminating propaganda even after the founding of the USSR. Thus, quite unlike the various National Socialist and Fascist governments in Europe at the time, there was never a Ministry of Propaganda or similar state propaganda authority in the Soviet Union.¹²⁵ It was the Agitation and Propaganda Department (Agitprop), one of the most important units of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union that led propaganda work.¹²⁶ A similar organizational structure was found in all lower levels of the party hierarchy, down to the republic, city, and district committees, which had their own local department for agitation and propaganda.¹²⁷ Following the postulations of Lenin, the goals of Agitprop were thus to influence both human minds and human emotions. The work of Agitprop continued, under various reorganizations and names,

¹²² Samuel H. Baron, *Plekhanov. The father of Russian marxism* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1963), p 151

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ V. I. Lenin, *What is to be done? Burning questions of our movement* (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1973), p 82–83

¹²⁵ Kalnins (1956), p 21

¹²⁶ The term “propaganda” will be used in this paper according to western scholarly tradition, and not according to the narrower communist division of “propaganda” and “agitation”.

¹²⁷ Alex Inkeles, *Public opinion in Soviet Russia: a study in mass persuasion* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1950), p 37

and with differing numbers of subsections (for the press, cinematography, radio broadcasting, art, science, etc.), until the dissolution of the Soviet Union.¹²⁸

The Soviet press was from the very beginning formed as an instrument to help the Communist Party build communism.¹²⁹ It stood at the top of the hierarchy of propaganda and agitation methods, and among its many purposes was to perpetuate the hegemony of the Party over civil society and to support the political aims of the Party.¹³⁰ According to the tenets of Marxism-Leninism, which communist theoreticians declared to be an objective science, the four basic functions of the press are mass propagandist, mass agitator, mass organizer, mass critic and controller.¹³¹ These functions, in turn, determined the contents of the press. As a result, Soviet press was dissimilar in almost all respects from the democratic press—in the way it treated events of everyday life, in its understanding of objectivity and truthfulness, in the methods of reporting and writing, and in physical matters of layout and form.¹³² Soviet policies on propaganda were also dissimilar from the West in that neither time nor money was a primary constraint.¹³³ As long as the campaigns or the “active measures”, as they were also called, were perceived to be an ideological necessity, the necessary resources would be allocated. The campaigns, masterminded by Party ideologists and executed by the KGB, were “conducted according to a long-term plan usually covering a period of five to seven years”, whereby the cumulative effect of the propaganda was estimated to last “over a period of several decades”.¹³⁴

1.4.2 Soviet Foreign Political Communication

As the way of examining Soviet propaganda strategies, I shall use Paul Kecskemeti’s model of Soviet foreign political communication.¹³⁵ My intention is to analyze the motivation and reasoning behind Soviet communication decisions using the framework provided by the model.

¹²⁸ Gordon M. Hahn, “The first reorganisation of the CPSU central committee apparat under perestroika,” *Europe-Asia Studies* 49, No 2 (1997): p 278

¹²⁹ Jonathan A. Becker, *Soviet and Russian press coverage of the United States. Press, politics and identity in transition* (Oxford: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1999), p 2

¹³⁰ Buzek (1964), pp 41–44

¹³¹ Ibid. p 40

¹³² Ibid. p 7

¹³³ Ithiel de Sola Pool, “Communication in totalitarian societies,” in *Handbook of Communication*, ed. I. de Sola Pool and W. Schramm (Chicago: Rand McNally College Publishing Company, 1973), p 465

¹³⁴ Ladislav Bittman, *The KGB and Soviet disinformation. An insider's view* (Washington: Pergamon-Brassey's, 1985), p 45

¹³⁵ Paul Kecskemeti, “The Soviet approach to international political communication,” *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 20, No 1 (1956)

According to the Kecschemeti model, foreign political communication in the Soviet Union and its satellites was split into two: one part concerned internal communication that took place within the Party, another part concerned external communication to those outside the Party. The internal system was a self-contained closed network for communicating within the Communist Party framework, irrespective of nationality or country boundaries. This internal network was separate from the external channels used to communicate with the non-Party world. The internal Party communication channel was additionally subdivided into sections accessed by different Party groups and hierarchies. The existence of these many closed communications networks within the Party boundaries effectively ensured total control over all information: only permitted information reached respective targets, while at the same time communications were contained within the allowed limits.¹³⁶

Next to the closed channels of internal political communication within the ranks of the Communist Party were the parallel systems of external foreign political communication that were directed across country borders to the non-Party world. According to Kecschemeti's model, these parallel systems consisted partly of regular channels of international political communication that could be used, for example, by Soviet leaders to inform the world of new policy decisions or doctrines, and partly of unconventional channels, such as the "fronts networks".¹³⁷ The use of these fronts networks, that is, of organizations that had ostensibly no connection at all with the Communist Party, the government, the security services, or other official state organizations of the Soviet Union, was a prevalent phenomenon of Soviet foreign political communication during the entire period of Soviet power. The front organizations for external political communication were just as self-contained and controllable by the Soviet center of authority as the internal Party networks. A typical front was the Committee For Return to the Motherland, an organization that initially worked for the repatriation of Soviet émigrés. It spread ideas and relayed messages that received significantly more attention and support from the West than if the information would have come from the Communist Party or the Soviet government. Thus the production of the newspaper *Par atgriešanas Dzimtenē* took place through closed state and Party-controlled channels, whereas its dissemination was accomplished through an external channel, the Committee For Return to the Motherland, a KGB front organization located in East Berlin. In this study I intend to examine the function of this front organization in

¹³⁶ Ibid. p 301. A related model, consisting of open, public channels, paralleled by closed, secret channels, which focus on a specific target, is proposed by Harold D. Lasswell, "The Strategy of Soviet Propaganda," *Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science* 24, No 2 (1951): pp 76–77.

¹³⁷ Kecschemeti (1956): p 302

relation to the repatriation campaign that had Latvian émigrés as its target audience.

The closed channels of the Kecskemeti model also illustrate the practice of non-interference that reigned between the different communist or Soviet front organizations. The Committee For Return to the Motherland and its repatriation newspapers, published in Russian, Estonian, Latvian, Lithuanian, and Ukrainian, were directed to émigrés, and as such, the range of activities and the information flows were kept strictly within this channel. The other Soviet fronts, social organizations, and information networks, such as the Friendship Societies, the Societies for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, the Cominform, etc., would thereby not deal with émigrés as explicit targets, since émigrés were not in their “channel”. This delimitation in activity range, however, did allow for the republishing of articles between different magazines and newspapers, and for other kinds of formalized external cooperation, such as sharing the same physical premises.¹³⁸

Another useful aspect of Kecskemeti’s model of Soviet foreign communication concerns audience receptivity and the desired outcome of the communication. According to the model, it was not of primary importance from the Soviet point of view to ascertain if the audience were negative or positive to the message. Instead, the foremost factor was to determine the dependence or independence of the audience—whether or not the audience was “subject to the authority of the control center represented by the Soviet communicator”.¹³⁹ If the audience was judged to be dependent, then the communication would be authoritative; if the audience was found to be independent, then the communication would be manipulative. In this context, authoritative communication is understood to be such as to exercise a “...binding force by virtue of the role played by the communicator as legislator, or hierarchical superior, or expert, which entitles him to expect deference from the recipients...”.¹⁴⁰ Manipulative communication is understood here to be the intentional misleading of an audience: in order to achieve its own ends, the Soviet propagandist does not reveal the true intent of the message.¹⁴¹ In both cases, either authoritative or manipulative, the goal of the communication was to establish the role of authority of the Soviet center and through the dissemination of authoritative or manipulative messages to subjugate and exercise control over the audience.

¹³⁸ For example, the Committee for the Promotion of Repatriation and Cultural Relations with Countrymen Abroad – Latvian Section, the Latvian Friendship and Cultural Relations Society with Countries Abroad, the Foreign Tourism Board of the Latvian SSR, and the Latvian SSR Peace Defense Committee shared the same premises, the “House of Friendship” (*Draudzības nams*) at Gorkija (now Valdemāra) ielā 11a, in the central part of Riga.

¹³⁹ Kecskemeti (1956): p 301

¹⁴⁰ Paul Kecskemeti, *Insurgency as a strategic problem*, Memorandum (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 1967), p 859

¹⁴¹ Jowett et al. (2006), p 38

Once the role of authority with respect to the audience had been established, the next step of the Soviet communicator was to exercise control by “eliciting some specific behavior” from the audience.¹⁴² Thus, according to Kecskemeti’s model, the goal of the foreign political communication was not primarily to influence thinking, or make the audience agree with the Soviet point of view, nor even to win new members for the Communist Party. Instead, the goal was to bring about certain desired behaviors. Among the desired outcomes pointed out by Kecskemeti are those that manipulate the “political behavior of people who are neither in the Party nor likely to join it as recruits” with the goal of “...winning helpers and allies against powers actually or potentially hostile to the Soviet Union”.¹⁴³

The questions that I shall attempt to answer in my investigation concern the desired outcomes of the repatriation campaign: What were the desired political behaviors? Were they achieved?

1.4.3 The *Legenda* and *Legendirovaniye*

As a way of examining the repatriation stories in *Par atgriešanos Dzimtenē*, I shall use what in the KGB is known as the legend (*legenda*). It is defined as “an apparently plausible account prepared by the intelligence or counter-intelligence service to mislead the enemy”.¹⁴⁴ The legends, once created, are then legendized (*legendirovaniye*)—they are processed for implementation by being affixed to a person or thing. This legendizing is defined by the KGB counter-intelligence lexicon as “the preparation of a legend and feeding it to the enemy”.¹⁴⁵ The ambition is to create believable legends that elicit desired responses from targets, where the targets may be émigrés, foreign governments, Western media, domestic audiences, and others.

The legends, presented as individual repatriate stories in *PaDz*, resemble what Wertsch calls “schematic narrative templates”.¹⁴⁶ The stories, told by and about repatriates, are formulaic and follow a set order.¹⁴⁷ While the details of each individual narrative differ with respect to person, family, ethnicity, war-time particulars and life experiences in the West, the overall storylines are chronologically ordered and composed around traditional story-telling narrative elements. There is a hero and villain, a setting, a

¹⁴² Kecskemeti (1956): p 304

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Vasilij Nikitich Mitrokhin, *KGB lexicon: the Soviet intelligence officer's handbook* (Oxon: Routledge, 2006), p 241

¹⁴⁵ Ibid. p 243

¹⁴⁶ James V. Wertsch, “Specific narratives and schematic narrative templates,” in *Theorizing Historical Consciousness*, ed. P. Seixas (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), p 56

¹⁴⁷ Not only the repatriate stories in *PaDz*, but also the individually written and personally signed repatriation letters sent by relatives in the Soviet homeland to recipients abroad follow a predetermined formula, see Roberts et al. (2008), p 42.

complicating action, a resolution, and a coda. Furthermore, there are several types of narratives, each created and adapted to the class or type of person being described.

The legends or narratives have also additional functions as camouflage for the overt and covert activities of Soviet institutions and agents in the West. In Soviet intelligence and counter-intelligence work, the adoption of legends was widespread, since they were used

to explain why and how they [intelligence officers and agents] come to be in the country, why they are in a particular area, why they are taking a particular course of action etc., thus concealing the fact that they are members of the intelligence service and justifying their intelligence-gathering activities.¹⁴⁸

The legends, having several parallel functions, are then disseminated to émigrés, western media, foreign governments, and other observers, through published and broadcast media. Some are used to inspire émigrés to repatriate, while at the same time they are covers for Soviet agents abroad. Others may be simply edifying stories that illustrate some action for desired émigré response. In this study, I shall attempt to identify and analyze the different legends that appear in the repatriation articles published in *Par atgriešanos Dzimtenē*. Among the questions I wish to answer are: What did the legends or narratives strive to achieve? What desired actions did the narratives attempt to elicit?

1.4.4 Propaganda Analysis

To present and interpret the results attained through the study of the *PaDz* and the émigré press, I shall apply the method of propaganda analysis as proposed by Jowett and O'Donnell. Their method identifies the following ten divisions for propaganda analysis:

1. The ideology and purpose of the propaganda campaign
2. The context in which the propaganda occurs
3. Identification of the propagandist
4. The structure of the propaganda organization
5. The target audience
6. Media utilization techniques
7. Special techniques to maximize effect
8. Audience reaction to various techniques
9. Counterpropaganda, if present
10. Effects and evaluation¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁸ Mitrokhin (2006), pp 241–242

¹⁴⁹ Jowett et al. (2006), p 270

This study will be carried out according to the above points, which takes into account the entire propaganda process and its surroundings. The first two points establish the context of the times of the propaganda and its conceptual framework. In this study, the historical background is set by the two main adversaries of the Cold War—the USA and its allies, and the USSR and its satellites. During the period under study, the mid-1950s, the confrontation between Western ideals of freedom and liberty and the ruling communist ideology of the Soviet bloc was an undeniable political reality. Wittingly and unwittingly, many émigrés were drawn into the drama of the on-going Cold War conflict, which formed a substantial part of their identity. The Latvian emigration, which was the target of the Soviet repatriation campaign, sought to establish its political and cultural identity as the anti-communist torch-bearers of a once free and independent Latvia. The conceptual framework of this investigation is characterized by the strivings of both leading adversaries—the USA and the USSR—to score on at least one aspect of the Cold War through manipulating émigrés, in this case Latvian refugees and DPs, to carry out overt and covert assignments for them.¹⁵⁰

The next two points in the model of propaganda analysis identify the propagandist and the structure of the propaganda organization. Based on open Soviet publications, Soviet archival sources and Western sources, it has been established that the initial propaganda work took place through the Committee For Return to the Motherland in East Berlin. About a year later, the center of the Latvian propaganda effort was transferred to Riga, while operations continued to be channeled through East Berlin. This change of venues brought about improved identification of the target audience, as the local Soviet Latvian authorities continued to build up information banks about émigré Latvian societies and individual émigrés abroad.

The next three points of the propaganda analysis model concern the target audience, the ways and means by which the repatriation propaganda is distributed, and the special techniques that were used in order to strengthen and add weight to the propaganda message. The final points analyze audience response, the presence and use of counterpropaganda, and evaluate how successful the campaign was in achieving its purpose. In this study, audience reaction will be investigated through émigré press reactions to the campaign.

On the basis of these theories, models and methods, I hope to be able to uncover previously unnoticed coherences and bearings, which may provide new insights in the study of communication between the Soviet government and its émigrés. As a result of this investigation, my ambition is to present a model that explains how Soviet foreign propaganda was applied on Latvian émigrés in the West, and how the émigrés responded.

¹⁵⁰ For the role of American Latvians as “Cold War instruments” see Zake (2010a), pp 62–63.

1.5 Sources

1.5.1 The Second Soviet Repatriation Campaign

The primary materials researched in this study are the 218 issues of the Soviet Latvian newspaper *Par atgriešanos Dzimtenē*, published from April 1955 to May 1958. I have focused on the articles in *PaDz* that treat the repatriation campaign or that recount the repatriation narratives of the returnees. On average, repatriation texts constitute approximately half of the content of the *PaDz*, which usually has about ten to twenty headlined articles per issue. While newspaper texts cannot replace documental collections and archival sources, the Soviet press does provide, as historian Nikita Petrov states, “a rich seam of information”.¹⁵¹ The depictions of Committee activity in the newspaper articles witness at least to the organization's overt activities, and the press releases and announcements record the official decisions and policy moves made by the Soviet government.

I have also examined the three Soviet publications about the Latvian Committee for Cultural Relations with Countrymen Abroad (published 1966, 1981 and 1984) as sources.¹⁵² They present the official Soviet view on how relationships and attitudes to the Latvian emigration develop over the years. The books establish the historical importance of the earlier repatriation campaigns, discuss the issue of cultural relations, and point to the ideological necessity for émigré cooperation with the Latvian Committee.

In addition, I have researched the Soviet Latvian publications that were issued in conjunction with the first and second repatriation campaigns. The literature of the first repatriation campaign includes the three yearbooks *Dzimtene sauc!* (*The Motherland is Calling*), published 1947, 1948, and 1949/1950, and the book *Patiesība par Padomju Latviju* (*The Truth about Soviet Latvia*), published 1951.¹⁵³ The published literature of the second repatriation campaign and the early phase of the cultural relations period includes *Tāda ir patiesība* (*That is the Truth*) published 1959, *Stāstām par Padomju Latviju* (*Stories of Soviet Latvia*) published 1960, *Mana dzimtā zeme, raugos tevī* (*My Native Country, I Gaze on Thee*) published 1961, and the hard-covered photo-book *Pie mums* (*In our Country*), published 1963.

¹⁵¹ Nikita Petrov, “The FSB has no concept of its own history,” (2010) retrieved 2012-07-07 from <http://www.agentura.ru/english/experts/npetrov/>

¹⁵² Roberts Ievkalns, *Jo divu dzimteņu nav [Because there are no two homelands]* (Riga: Liesma, 1966), J. Anerauds and H. Kreicbergs, *Latvian committee for cultural relations with countrymen abroad. 11a Gorky Street, Riga* (Riga: Avots, 1981), Jānis Anerauds, ed., *Dzimtene - īstenas vērtības mērs. Latvijas komitejai kultūras sakariem ar tautiešiem ārzemēs 20 gadi [The Motherland - the measure of true value. 20 year jubilee of the Latvian committee for cultural relations with countrymen abroad]* (Riga: Avots, 1984)

¹⁵³ More information about these publications is found in Zaļkalne (2001).

Another type of source that I have consulted are memoirs of defectors and other former inhabitants of the Soviet Union living in the West. Before the downfall of the communist bloc, memoir and travel literature used to be among the few publicly available sources that provided an alternative interpretation to the official views on social and political processes in the Eastern bloc and Soviet states. These personal accounts and evaluations of what “really happened” behind the official facades were a necessary reminder that the “truth” as propounded by the Soviet bloc governments could also have other representations and constructions. Often, these sources conveyed useful information, though as Garthoff notes “...they are of varying and often uncertain reliability”.¹⁵⁴

My most important memoir source is that of double agent Imants Lešinskis. Together with his family, Lešinskis defected to the West in 1978 and soon thereafter published his memoirs in a series of installments in the exile Latvian newspaper *Laiks*.¹⁵⁵ Unlike some other Soviet defectors, Lešinskis wrote only about what he could testify to in court, and he was clear and specific about names, dates and places. His piercing honesty irritated the Soviet side, which up to then had been parading its KGB-controlled Cultural Relations Committee as a clean-handed cultural and artistic facility. The memoirs also annoyed some émigré liberals and representatives of the Latvian émigré cultural élite, who were collaborating with the Cultural Relations Committee. Lešinskis’ perceptive recounting of his career as an undercover agent, his work during the 1950s and 1960s as editor of *Dzimtenes Balss*, and his activities as Board Chairman of the Latvian Cultural Relations Committee in the 1970s illuminates the reasoning behind the Soviet actions and decisions concerning propaganda targeting émigré recipients. Of further interest is that Imants Lešinskis, under the alias of Roberts Ievkalns, was the author of *Because There Are No Two Motherlands*, one of the three source books about the Latvian Committee mentioned above. Thus, this study in a way treats the two voices of Lešinskis: the texts written when he still was a Soviet propagandist, his later texts written in the West with a critical, anti-Soviet voice, as well his biting comments about his own earlier propaganda texts.

Comparing the Lešinskis memoirs, which were written without access to relevant documents, to the available archival documentation today, one is impressed by the detailed precision and factual correctness recorded in these revealing texts. While there are persons, especially in Latvian émigré circles, that still express distrust in Lešinskis’ legacy and assert that he was actually

¹⁵⁴ Raymond L. Garthoff, “Foreign intelligence and the historiography of the Cold War,” *Journal of Cold War Studies* 6, No 2 (2004): p 26

¹⁵⁵ Lešinskis’ memoirs ‘Kalpības gadi’ [Years of Servitude] are serialized in *Laiks* Jul 11, 1979 – Sep 24, 1980. The Latvian émigré journal *Latvija šodien* [Latvia today], republished all of ‘Kalpības gadi’ in issue No 14, 1986.

an undercover KGB agent sent abroad to wreak havoc among exiles, none have yet been able to bring up any new evidence to disprove the conclusions presented by Lešinskis.

Among other memoirs that are of direct bearing to this study are those of Jānis Mazulāns,¹⁵⁶ who defected to Stockholm in 1960, and those of Eduards Berklavs,¹⁵⁷ the architect of the national communist movement of the 1950s. Of special interest are the regrettably short articles by Ādolfs Talcis and Harald Peep, who were stationed in East Berlin in the mid-1950s and were the Latvian and Estonian editors respectively of the repatriation newspaper.¹⁵⁸ Though written under completely different circumstances—Talcis' article appeared in *The Motherland – The True Measure of Value. 20 Years of the Latvian Committee for Cultural Contacts with Countrymen Abroad*, the third book about the Latvian Committee published 1984, while Peep's article was published in freedom in 2006—both articles contribute to a further understanding of the daily functioning of the Committee and its goals.

Soviet publications that are of importance to this study are the KGB handbooks and manuals that have come to light after the collapse of the Soviet Union.¹⁵⁹ They contain definitions of émigré concepts and explanations of how anti-émigré work is ideologically motivated and how it should be operationally implemented. These publications were used in the training and education of KGB officers and they had the “legal status of regulatory acts, binding on all units of the Soviet KGB”.¹⁶⁰ This meant that the Committee For Return to the Motherland, a KGB front organization, conducted its operations according to the definitions and instructions found in this type of publication.

¹⁵⁶ Peteris Melnais, *Slepeni: par čekas darbību Rīgā 1960. gados pret latviešiem [Secret: about Cheka's work in Riga during the 1960s against Latvians]* (Riga: apg. "Junda" tipogr, 1993)

¹⁵⁷ Eduards Berklavs, *Zināt un neaizmirst [To know and forget not]* (Riga: Preses Nams, 1998)

¹⁵⁸ Ādolfs Talcis, “Par atgriešanos dzimtenē [About returning to the homeland],” in *Dzimtene - īstenas vērtības mērs. Latvijas komitejai kultūras sakariem ar tautiešiem ārzemēs 20 gadi*, ed. J. Anerauds (Riga: Avots, 1984), Harald Peep, “Ā rebours ehk kiuslikke minevikukilde,” *Looming. Eesti Kirjanike Liidu ajakiri*, No 3 (2006)

¹⁵⁹ See, *i.a.*, A.A. Fabrichnikov et al., *The possibilities of utilizing the Soviet committees for cultural relations with compatriots abroad for espionage activities* (Moscow: Committee for State Security (KGB) of the Council of Ministers of the USSR. School 101 Awarded with the Order of the Red Banner. The Section for Scientific Publication, 1968) retrieved June 9, 2012 from http://tipolog.atspace.com/count_dic/counterintell_dictionary_a.htm, no longer available; Viktor Chebrikov et al., eds., *Istoria Sovetskikh organov gosudarstvennoi bezopasnosti* (Moscow: Vysshaya Krasnoznamenennaya Shkola Komiteta Gosudarstvennoy Beznopasnotsi pri Sovete Ministrov SSSR imeni F. E. Dzerzhinskovo, 1977) at <http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~hpcws/documents.htm>; and Mitrokhin (2006).

¹⁶⁰ Mitrokhin (2006), p xxvi

The use of press materials, published documents and memoirs to trace the development of the repatriation campaign has been indispensable, since large parts of the archives of the Committee For Return to the Motherland were lost in the early 1960s. As stated in the descriptive introduction of the finding aid (*opis*) of the relevant collection from the State Archive of the Russian Federation (GARF): “A large quantity of letters and other materials disappeared or were destroyed during their transport from Berlin to Moscow.”¹⁶¹ Thereafter, it is concluded that with the exception of accounting and personnel records that were moved to a closed repository, the only materials to have been retained are the Committee’s correspondence with individual émigrés and emigrant organizations and the minutes of three Committee board meetings from 1960 and 1961. All other archival documents from this period (1955–1962) have been lost.¹⁶² Judging from the name lists in the two finding aids (*opis* 1 and *opis* 2), it seems that these hold no correspondence with Latvian émigrés or Latvian organizations. Therefore, for this study, I have only consulted the two finding aids (*opisi*) of the GARF f. 9651, not the archival documents themselves.

The situation of missing Committee archives is more or less corroborated by Roberts and Cipko, who, pointing out the connection of the Committee to the KGB, write that “...George Bolotenko, archivist for the CRCR, in the 1990s failed to find in the Russian state archives any materials relating to the origins and early days of the committee, or its first leader, Mikhailov”.¹⁶³ This conclusion is upheld by Mikkonen, who remarks that “the collection of documents produced by the Committee is either missing or kept apart from the files of those organisations that succeeded it.”¹⁶⁴

Likewise, the archives of *Par atgriešanas Dzimtenē* and that of the “initiator group”, the precursor of the Latvian Section of the Committee For Return to the Motherland are missing, or have not yet been found.¹⁶⁵ However, certain documentation concerning their activities can be found in the archive collections of the Communist Party of the Latvian SSR and in the holdings of the Literature and Music Museum in Riga. For example, the work of the *Par atgriešanas Dzimtenē* newspaper staff is documented

¹⁶¹ GARF f. 9651, *opis* 2, p 8

¹⁶² GARF f. 9651, *opis* 1, p 5

¹⁶³ Roberts et al. (2008), p 36

¹⁶⁴ Mikkonen (2014), p 186

¹⁶⁵ A discussion about lost and missing KGB archives in the Baltic republics, with emphasis on Lithuania, can be found in Romuald J. Misiunas, *The archives of the Lithuanian KGB*, vol. 1994:3, *Berichte des Bundesinstituts für ostwissenschaftliche und internationale Studien* (Köln: BIOst, 1994) and David Wolff, “The KGB reports from Lithuania,” *Acta Slavica Iaponica* 23 (2006). A discussion of the KGB archives in Latvia is found in Ainārs Bambals, *Latvijas PSR represīvo iestāžu dokumenti kā vēstures avots. 1940.–1941.; 1944.–1991. [The documents of the repressive organs of the Latvian SSR as historical sources. 1940–1941.; 1944–1991]* (PhD diss: Latvijas Universitāte, 2011).

together with Communist Party organ *Cīņa*, the operative cover for *Par atgriešanos Dzimtenē*.¹⁶⁶ Thus, while the specific collections of KGB files pertaining to the newspaper *Par atgriešanos Dzimtenē* or the initiator group have been removed or destroyed in the turbulence of the reestablishment of independent Latvia, it has been possible to follow the general developments and changes of the repatriation campaign through the minutes of meetings, reports, decisions, summaries, and other documents of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Latvian SSR. In this study, I have referred to CP documents that appear in the publications of the State Archives of Latvia, the Latvian State Historical Archives, the Museum of the Occupation of Latvia 1940–1991, the Latvian War Museum, the Commission of the Historians of Latvia, the Institute of Latvian History, the University of Latvia, and others.

1.5.2 Émigré Latvian Press

To research the émigré press reactions, I studied the ten major Latvian émigré periodicals of this period: *Austrālijas Latvietis* (*Australian Latvian*—Melbourne, Australia), *Brīvība* (*Freedom*—Stockholm, Sweden), *Jaunais Apskats* (*New Review*—Toronto, Canada), *Laiks* (*Time*—New York, USA), *Latgolas Bolss* (*The Voice of Latgola*—Munich, West Germany), *Latvija* (*Latvia*—Eutin, West Germany), *Latvija Amerikā* (*Latvia in America*—Toronto, Canada), *Latvju Vārds* (*Latvian Word*—Stockholm, Sweden), *Latvju Ziņas* (*Latvian News*—Stockholm, Sweden) and *Londonas Avīze* (*London's Newspaper*—London, United Kingdom), as well as a sampling of issues of other émigré periodicals. These were the newspapers from the main Latvian émigré settlements in North America, Europe, and Australia.¹⁶⁷ Though these newspapers were mainly circulated within their countries of publication, there was a certain readership for the papers also outside host country borders.¹⁶⁸

The émigré press was dominated by the New York-based newspaper *Laiks*, a privately owned and commercially run paper. In the mid-1950s, it had a circulation of 12,000–13,000, with Latvian subscribers in all parts of

¹⁶⁶ The *PaDz/DzB* operated in secret in Riga under the cover of *Cīņa* for five years (1956–1961).

¹⁶⁷ Unfortunately, I have not been able to access the Latvian émigré newspapers published in South America during the mid-1950s.

¹⁶⁸ Besides individual subscriptions, the out-of-country émigré newspapers and periodicals were often subscribed to by local émigré Latvian communities, parishes, or organizations and placed in local émigré book boards or libraries for home loans. For an example of an émigré book board, see ‘Jānis Zābaks (Zītars) – Pie Jāņa Zītara grāmatu galda’ [Jānis Zābaks (Zītars) – At the book board of Jānis Zītars] in Raimonds Gunārs Slaidiņš, ed., *Latvieši Sanfrancisko un tās apkārtnē* [*Latvians in San Francisco and vicinity*] (San Francisco: Ziemeļkalifornijas Latviešu biedrība Sanfrancisko, California, 2011), p 351.

the free world.¹⁶⁹ It was published twice weekly, and with its 8-page, 5-column broadsheet format, it resembled many other national newspapers of that era. A typical *Laiks* issue carried 50–60 news items and over a page of advertisements. In its political views, *Laiks* attempted to land somewhere in the conservative middle, avoiding the extreme right: founder and editor Helmārs Rudzītis declared that *Laiks* is a “non-political, national newspaper [...] intended for all Latvians, independent of all party or group interest [...] in order to] illuminate Latvian problems, as objectively as humanly possible.”¹⁷⁰ However, *Laiks* usually took the part of the central émigré organizations of the American Latvians, downplaying the divergent viewpoints of the European Latvian central émigré organizations and political groupings.

Next to *Laiks*, the other major conservative newspapers of the time were substantially smaller as measured in numbers of subscriptions and in geographical spread. These newspapers—*Latvija*, *Latvija Amerikā*, *Latvju Vārds*, *Londonas Avīze*, *Latgolas Bolss*, and *Austrālijas Latvietis*—were sponsored by local émigré organizations.¹⁷¹ As such, the papers represent and express the values and beliefs of their principals, and therefore, can be said to represent the views of their founding organizations and to some extent, that of their members: *Latvija* was the newspaper of the Latvian Central Committee, based in West Germany; *Londonas Avīze* was sponsored by a special publishing group consisting of representatives of émigré organizations and private persons in the UK; *Latvija Amerikā* was sponsored by the *Daugavas Vanagi* organization in Canada; *Latvju Vārds* drove a right-wing agenda under the editorship of the controversial Arturs Kroders;¹⁷² *Austrālijas Latvietis* was privately issued by publisher and editor Emīls Dēliņš.

The liberal democrats were represented by the bi-monthly *Latvju Ziņas* (published 1944–1955) and the irregularly issued *Jaunais Apskats* (published 1955–1956). Though they ceased publication before the end of the campaign, they carried extensive discussions on the repatriation topic and presented viewpoints in opposition to the conservative majority. *Brīvība*, the

¹⁶⁹ Edgar Anderson and M. G. Slavenas, “The Latvian and Lithuanian press,” in *The ethnic press in the United States. A historical analysis and handbook*, ed. S. M. Miller (Westport CT: Greenwood Press, 1987), p 233

¹⁷⁰ Rudzītis, H. (1984). *Manas dzīves dēkas*. Brooklyn, New York: Grāmatu draugs, cited in ‘Visu latviešu laikraksts’ [A newspaper for all Latvians], *Laiks* No 33, Aug 21, 2004 p 5

¹⁷¹ David M. Crowe Jr., “The contemporary Baltic press in the non-Soviet world,” *Lituanus* 24, No 2 (1978)

¹⁷² *Brīvība* alleged that A. Kroders was a former bolshevik that came from a family of bolsheviks—his father Jānis Kroders joined the Bolshevik Party in 1917, his younger brother Pauls Kroders was a member of the current Soviet Latvian nomenclatura, and A. Kroders himself was expelled from Latvia during WWI due to his being a bolshevik propagandist. See ‘Vecais boļševiks’ [The old bolshevik], *Brīvība* No 8, Oct 1956 p 4; ‘Tiem, kas interesējas par radu rakstiem’ [To those interested in genealogy], *Brīvība* No 7, Sep 1957 p 4.

monthly of the Latvian Social Democratic Workers' Party, stood out by having differing views on most everything, from the internal politics of exile to contemporary foreign political analysis, compared to the conservative/liberal émigré press. It was a 4-to-8 page A4 publication with a modest circulation of 500–1,000 per issue. In spite of its semblance to a bulletin more than a newspaper, *Brīvība* was a significant voice in émigré discourse and contributed widely to the diversity of views in exile.

Over 300 articles treating the repatriation topic were published in the ten major émigré newspapers during the 1955–1958 period. These articles provide the basis for an analysis of the reactions of the Latvian émigré press to the repatriation campaign and its effects. While reactions in the press should not be mistaken for audience reactions, I propose that in the case under study there is a close affinity between the two. Since all of the newspapers, except for the commercially run *Laiks*, could not exist without the financial patronage of their founding organizations, they were, to an extent, member-supported newspapers. The same was also true for *Laiks*, which chose to navigate through the middle of mainstream conservative émigré politics in order to retain its subscription base. The published articles in all the papers were aligned to the generally held beliefs and values of the founding organizations, and in this way functioned as mouthpieces of the local émigré leaders and member organizations. Though the newspapers often are tendentious in their reporting, they take a clear ideological stand, they support and reinforce their members' opinions, and they mirror the spirit of the times.

1.5.3 Research Ethics

The repatriation campaign extended across three years and engaged a large number of individuals, whose names are published in the *PaDz* and the émigré newspapers. Even though over fifty years have passed since the launch of the repatriation campaign, I have decided not to publish many of the names associated with this process. I have come to this decision due to research ethics: quite a number of the persons involved are still alive, as are their relatives and acquaintances. The individuals that will be mentioned by name, however, are those who worked for the Committee For Return to the Motherland, and those that for various reasons became public figures, for example, émigré Latvian diplomats, heads of major Latvian émigré organizations, newspaper editors and journalists, recruited agents, and others. I shall also mention by name the “American” and “Swedish” spies that were captured by Soviet security in the early 1950s.

1.6 Terms and Concepts

Émigré

In this study I will use the broad term “émigré” to designate any person who as result of war activity left his or her home territory and resided in a country outside of the Soviet Bloc. This designation will be applied to the over 125,000 ethnic Latvians and their descendants, subjects of the former Republic of Latvia, who voluntarily or by force left Latvia during WWII and later settled in countries in the Western world.

As a group, the Latvian émigrés prefer to call themselves “exiles” (*trimdinieki*). In the immediate post-war years, they were known as “refugees” or “displaced persons” (DPs), which were the legal terms for their exile status. In international law, the “refugee” is a person who a) must have left the territory of the state of which he or she was a national, and b) becomes a refugee for reasons deriving from the relations between the state and its nationals.¹⁷³ The “displaced person” (DP) includes a number of categories such as “refugees, (internally) displaced persons, stateless persons, prisoners of war, and (externally) displaced persons”.¹⁷⁴ When the refugees or displaced persons departed from their first country of refuge, which for over 95% of the Latvians was Germany, they formally became “emigrants”, as this term refers to a voluntary movement to some other state for reasons of economic nature: to improve one’s economic and social situation. Whereas émigré Latvians only infrequently used the terms “emigrant” or “being in emigration” to describe themselves or their situation, these terms were used by Soviets Latvian propagandists in order “to remove any political motivation for the exile, and to trivialize it to seem to be a voluntary change of address.”¹⁷⁵

Except where specifically required, I shall use the terms émigré, emigrant, refugee, displaced person and exile interchangeably, attaching no special emotive meaning to the terms. With the reinstatement of Latvian independence in 1991, Latvians abroad are referred to as the diaspora, a term never used by émigré Latvians about themselves during the years of Soviet occupation of the homeland. For the émigré Latvians, the preferred term was “exile” (*trimda*).

¹⁷³ Jacques Vernant, *The refugee in the post-war world* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1953), pp 4–5

¹⁷⁴ Zieck (1997), p 41

¹⁷⁵ See Juris Rozītis, *Displaced literature. Images of time and space in Latvian novels depicting the first years of the Latvian postwar exile* (Stockholm: Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis. Stockholm Studies in Baltic Languages, 2005), p 21. For a discussion of these terms according to the communist point of view, see Arta Jāne and Jānis Vējš, “Bezdzimtenes esamība [Existing without the homeland],” in *Latvija '86. Latvijas PSR starptautisko sakaru gadagrāmata [Latvija '86. Latvian SSR international contacts yearbook]*, ed. J. Anerauds (Riga: Avots, 1985), 142–147.

During the period under study, 1955–1958, over 125,000 émigré Latvians settled in the USA (35,410), Australia (19,365), UK (8,353), Federal Republic of Germany (10,000), Canada (8,093), and Sweden (4,500). A lesser number, less than 1,000 Latvian refugees per state, settled in Belgium, Brazil, France, Venezuela and other countries.¹⁷⁶ These then, are the countries referred to when I speak of Latvian émigrés in “the West”, “the free world”, “the non-communist world” or “abroad”.

There was, and still is, a sizeable group of Latvians living in Russia. According to incomplete data, over 119,000 Latvians resided in the Eastern parts of the USSR between the years of 1945 and 1953.¹⁷⁷ In 1992 over 80,000 Latvians resided in the territories of the former Soviet Union, mainly in Siberia or in the Far North.¹⁷⁸ These were persons who had emigrated voluntarily before WWI, who had been evacuated during WWI and WWII and had settled in their places of evacuation, and deportees to Siberia and the Gulag (the largest deportations having taken place in 1941 and 1949). This study will not investigate the interactions of the Soviet government with Latvians living outside Soviet Latvia on Soviet-controlled territories. The Soviet repatriation campaign under study (1955–1958) will pertain only to Latvian émigrés living in the non-communist world.

The Committee

An institution central to this study is the East Berlin-based Committee For Return to the Motherland. Over the course of years, the institution was reorganized and frequently renamed. In addition, the East Berlin mission underwent a partial relocation to Moscow. In this study, the various related organizations will be referred to simply as the “Committee”, or with an added referral to venue, e.g. the Committee in East Berlin, or the Committee in Riga.

For the sake of clarity, I shall refer to the Soviet sector of Berlin as East Berlin, following Western naming conventions. In the Soviet Latvian publications under study, the city is referred to as “Berlin”.

A table listing changes in names and venues of the Committee can be found in the Appendix.

Countrymen and Compatriots

In the 1981 book by Anerauds about the Committee and its activities, the organization is called the Latvian Committee for Cultural Relations with Countrymen Abroad (in Latvian: *Latvijas komiteja kultūras sakariem ar*

¹⁷⁶ For a list of Latvian refugee resettlement countries, according to IRO statistics of July 1, 1947–June 30, 1951, see “Latvieši emigrācijā” (1952–1953), p 1243.

¹⁷⁷ Riekstiņš (1994): p 59

¹⁷⁸ Austra Bolševica, ed., *Latvijas repatriācijas hronika. Anno 1993 [The Latvian repatriation chronicle. Anno 1993]* (Riga: Fonds "Atbalsts repatriācijai Latvijā", 1993), p 92

tautiešiem ārzemēs).¹⁷⁹ In this title, the word “countrymen” is used as a translation for the Latvian *tautieši*. I have decided to do the same in this study and therefore “countrymen” is retained in all Committee names. In the body text, however, the term “compatriots” is used when referring to Soviet texts and usage. When referring to émigré texts, I have used the terms “nationals” or “fellow citizens”.

The Amnesty Decree

According to Soviet law, “all acts of amnesty have been passed as edicts (*ukazy*)”,¹⁸⁰ including the act of September 17, 1955, that granted amnesty to all Soviet citizens who had collaborated with the enemy. In this study, however, I shall follow the accepted English language practice to call this act a decree (*postanovlenie*).

The First and Second Soviet Repatriation Campaign

In this study, the repatriation drive started by the Soviet government before the end of WWII and lasting until 1953 is called the first Soviet repatriation campaign. The second Soviet repatriation campaign refers to the Soviet government's efforts to repatriate former POWs, DPs, and refugees that began in 1955 and ended in the late 1950s/early 1960s. The pre-WWII Soviet repatriations are left aside.¹⁸¹

Soviet Center of Authority

The opening of Soviet archives, access to Communist Party documents, and a large memoir literature have brought about an increase in understanding of the lines of command and divisions of power in Soviet Latvian society, though many details have yet to be clarified. A long established and accepted fact has been that the ruling political power was the Moscow-based Communist Party of the Soviet Union, to which the Soviet Latvian Communist Party held a subordinate position.¹⁸² Moreover, it was the Politburo (Presidium) and the Secretariats of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the USSR that held the actual power to decide upon the overarching

¹⁷⁹ Anerauds et al. (1981)

¹⁸⁰ See Ferdinand Joseph Maria Feldbrugge et al., eds., *Encyclopedia of Soviet law*, 2nd revised ed. (Dordrecht: Nijhoff, 1985; reprint, 2nd rev. ed.), pp 45–46. This was true “with the exception of the act of 25 September 1956, which was merely designated as a decree”. (Ibid.)

¹⁸¹ See Long (2009) for an analysis of a post-WWI attempt at organizing the repatriation of Russian refugees to the Soviet Union.

¹⁸² The Latvian Communist Party (LCP) was a part of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union—it was not a separate or independent party in Latvia. The LCP did not have its own charter, nor did it have its own program. According to the charter of the CPSU, the LCP's rights were equal to those of the regional Communist Party organizations, such as of the Pskov or Novgorod region. Bruno Kalniņš, *Kas un kā valda šodienas Latvijā? [Who reigns how in today's Latvia?]* (Stockholm: PBLA Pasaules Brīvo Latviešu apvienība, 1978), p 18.

aspects of Soviet society and governance.¹⁸³ Yet, it is also clear that, to some extent, strong individuals could set their own agenda and influence large segments of society, as was demonstrated by the national communist movement in Soviet Latvia in the 1950s.¹⁸⁴ In the area of foreign propaganda, it can be determined that decisions were made by the Politburo in Moscow, which were then relayed to the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Latvian Communist Party, which in turn assigned the sections and ministries that were to execute the decisions. However, in the documents under study, it has not always been possible to establish exactly how and when certain decisions were taken or who stood behind the execution of specific directives. In these cases, I shall use the expressions “Soviet center of authority” or “Soviet communicator” to represent the instances that decided upon, produced and executed the decisions. These expressions are borrowed from Kecskemeti, who used them in his model of Soviet foreign political communication.¹⁸⁵

Soviet Language

The use of language, as a part of the Soviet communication system, was subservient to ideology. This meant that language usage was primarily determined according to the needs of the Party, and at times considerations such as grammar and syntax were of secondary importance.¹⁸⁶ As a result, certain Soviet-steered modifications, which differed greatly from contemporary normal usage, were introduced into the Latvian language.¹⁸⁷ I have therefore tried to retain in my English translations many of the typically Soviet expressions that can be found in the slogans, metaphors and personal invectives of the times. Where possible, the names of institutions and publications have been taken from Soviet brochures in the English language. Thus for example, in this study I use the word “motherland” instead of the neutral “homeland” to represent the country of one’s birth, since this was the preferred Soviet translation. Motherland—*Rodina* in the Russian language—was “an affectionate term that meant many things and thus something different in each citizen's imagination”.¹⁸⁸ Likewise, the repatriation news-

¹⁸³ John A. Armstrong, *Ideology, politics and government in the Soviet Union. An introduction* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1962), p 67

¹⁸⁴ See Chapter 2.3 ahead.

¹⁸⁵ See section 1.4.1 above.

¹⁸⁶ Michael G. Smith, *Language and power in the creation of the USSR, 1917–1953* (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1998), p 4

¹⁸⁷ See ‘Padvaloda kā sabiedrības spogulis’ [Soviet language as a mirror of society] in Ģērmanis (1986), pp 159–178. For examples in the Estonian language, see Virve Raag, “The Sovietisation and de-Sovietisation of Estonian,” in *Inheriting the 1990s: the Baltic countries*, ed. B. Metuzāle-Kangere (Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, 2010), p 6.

¹⁸⁸ Berkhoff (2012), p 6

paper preserves its awkward-sounding title *For Return to the Motherland*, since this was the way it was expressed in Latvian.

1.7 Scope

The purpose of this study is to research the Soviet Latvian repatriation campaign of 1955–1958, to examine how strategies and tactics were implemented in order to attain desired overt and covert goals, and to analyze the Latvian émigré response to the campaign. The period under investigation begins with April 1955, when the second Soviet repatriation campaign was launched in East Berlin by the Committee For Return to the Motherland. The study ends in May 1958, with the end of repatriation newspaper *Par atgriešanas Dzimtenē* (*For Return to the Motherland*), when its name changes to *Dzimtenes Balss* (*Voice of the Motherland*).

The Soviet Latvian repatriation campaign, and the reactions to it, are researched through the textual analysis of Soviet and Latvian émigré newspapers. The visual aspects of the newspapers—photo and headline styles, illustrations, and graphic design elements, as well as the repatriation radio broadcasts, lie outside the scope of this study. Due to the large quantities of source documents and their widespread geographical distribution, which makes it a formidable challenge for a researcher with limited resources to access them, the other written documentation concerning the repatriation campaign (private letters, official correspondence and records of émigré organizations and government agencies) have not been studied.

During the years of exile after WWII, the émigré Latvians, Estonians, and Lithuanians sought support in one another, and, among other things, often cooperated in political and social activities, commemorative meetings, and in the publishing of informative materials. Traditionally, the three nations are regarded as a unit in the West, and in the published literature, information about the three are often grouped together. However, behind these common concepts—the Baltic States, the Balts, and the émigré Balts—lay three separate states, each with its own history and language. While the émigré Balts were targeted by the same Soviet repatriation campaign during the period under study, this study will mention the Estonians and Lithuanians only superficially, and any results or conclusions achieved will refer only to Latvians, and not to Balts in general, unless specifically so designated.

1.8 Design of the Study

This study treats three main themes: Latvian émigrés, repatriation, and Soviet propaganda. The chapters are loosely arranged according to the ten divisions of propaganda analysis established by Jowett and O'Donnell. I

shall begin in Chapter 2 by reviewing the historical context and by detailing the ideology and purpose of the Soviet repatriation campaign. The target of the propaganda campaign—émigré Latvians—will be identified and described. Chapter 3 will identify and portray the propagandist, the Committee For Return to the Motherland. Chapter 4 will present an analysis of the goals, strategies and tactics—“reeducational tasks”—of the repatriation campaign. Chapter 5 will analyze the founding legend and examine the strategy of the narrative as applied in the newspaper *Par atgriešanos Dzimtenē*. The reactions to the campaign in the émigré press will be presented in Chapter 6, followed by a discussion and evaluation. Chapter 7 will present a conclusion.

2 Repatriation and Latvian Émigrés

2.1 The First Soviet Repatriation

At the end of WWII, tens of millions of Europeans were displaced from their homes, either by forcible deportation, evacuation, or by fleeing from war front activity.¹ The mass of humanity that was displaced outside of the boundaries of their own countries was generally known as “DPs”, an acronym for “displaced persons.”

While WWII was still going on, the care of DPs and prisoners of war (POWs) was accorded to the Allied military authorities—the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF). After German capitulation in May 1945, this function was gradually taken over by the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), an organization founded in the winter of 1943 by the forty-four members of the interim ‘United Nations’. The main goals of UNRRA were “to bring aid and relief to peoples and countries devastated by the war and to make preparations and arrangement for the return of prisoners and exiles to their homes”.²

The US and the British of the Western Allies initially believed that “all those displaced persons, including Jews who had survived, would return home”.³ The conclusion that DPs wished to return home, irrespective of which power had taken over political leadership in the home country, was based upon results attained from the surveys and investigations carried out by various labor organizations and government committees which had been set up during WWII in order to ascertain the postwar situation.⁴ For example, one League of Nations’ study from 1944 states: “Foreign laborers in Germany ... will certainly wish to return to their native lands following the war.”⁵ A similar conclusion is reached in a United States Department of

¹ Of them were 9.28 million foreign laborers in Germany, of which 1,850,000 were Balts and Russians, see Hans Harmsen, *Die Integration heimatloser Ausländer und nichtdeutscher Flüchtlinge in Westdeutschland* (Augsburg: Hofmann-Druck, 1958), p 13.

² Zieck (1997), p 42

³ Ibid.

⁴ Michael R. Marrus, *The unwanted. European refugees from the first world war through the Cold War [With a new foreward by Aristide R. Zolberg]*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002), p 298

⁵ This conclusion is cited from Frank Notestein’s *The Future Population of Europe and the Soviet Union, Population Projections, 1940–1980*. Geneva, 1944, in Mark R. Elliott, “The

State report, which writes that foreign workers conscripted to work in Germany have “great impatience to return [home]”.⁶

The wish to repatriate DPs and POWs was also triggered by sociological, political, and financial motives.⁷ On the one hand, as WWII came to a close, Western observers were increasingly concerned that the shifting and restless DP masses could pose major sociological problems. On the other hand, the Allied military authorities were uneasy about political problems that could arise from the huge numbers of DPs dislodged outside of their homelands. Furthermore, SHAEF was worried about the increasing financial burden of the former POWs and DPs that were in their care.⁸ As a result SHAEF initially accepted and supported the idea of repatriation as the optimal solution to the DP problem.⁹

With the intention to secure the return of Allied POWs from their captivity in the USSR, the US and British military authorities were engaged for over a year in negotiations with the USSR concerning repatriation. Finally on February 11, 1945 at the Yalta conference, a secret *Agreement Between the United States and the Soviet Union Concerning Liberated Prisoners of War and Civilians* was signed by the governments of the US and the USSR.¹⁰ A similar bilateral repatriation agreement was signed between the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the Union of South Africa and India on the one hand and the Soviet Union on the other hand.¹¹ Later, similar repatriation agreements with the Soviet Union, based on reciprocal exchanges of captured citizens, were signed with Belgium, France, Norway, Switzerland, and the Eastern European countries occupied by the Soviet Army.¹² A detailed repatriation plan, which allowed for the daily repatriation exchange of 20,000–50,000

United States and forced repatriation of Soviet citizens, 1944-47,” *Political Science Quarterly* 3 (1973): p 257.

⁶ Ibid. note 21

⁷ Kendall Moore (2000): p 404

⁸ General Dwight D. Eisenhower, being concerned about the rising number of DPs in camps and the costs involved in supporting the camps, is cited as saying: “The only complete solution to this problem from all points of view, is the early repatriation of these Russians”, see Wyman (1998), p 64.

⁹ Even before the signing of formal repatriation agreements, the British as early as 1942 had begun the small-scale forced repatriation of the Russians that had fallen into their hands. See Elliott (1973): p 267; Tolstoy (1977), p 48.

¹⁰ Major General John R. Dean was signatory for the Government of the USA and Lieutenant General Grizlov was signatory for the Government of the USSR. The agreement was drawn up in duplicate, in the English and Russian languages. The US Department of State released the document to the press on March 8, 1946, see United States. Department of State, “Foreign relations of the United States. 1945, Diplomatic papers. The conferences at Malta and Yalta 1945,” (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1955), pp 985–987.

¹¹ “Repatriation of Soviet citizens,” *International Labour Review* 52, No 5 (1945)

¹² Zieck (1997), p 43

individuals, was signed by Lieutenant General K. D. Golubev of the Soviet Army and Major General R. W. Barker of SHAEF on May 22, 1945 at Halle, Germany.¹³

The Soviet policy of forced repatriation can be placed as beginning in 1943 when the military counter-intelligence agency *Smersh* was established as an independent unit from the NKVD. Its stated mission was to “hunt for traitors and Soviet citizens who had collaborated with the enemy” among the fleeing refugees and captured POWs overtaken by the advancing Soviet Army, and send them back to the USSR.¹⁴ To secure the return of the millions of civilians who had been set to work for the German war effort outside the borders of their home countries, a Repatriation Decree was adopted on October 4, 1944, and executed through the Repatriation Directorate (Administration of the Plenipotentiary of the Council of People’s Commissars of the SSR on Repatriation Affairs (ARPA)—*Upravlenie Upolnomochenovo SNK[SovNarKom] SSR po Delam Repatriatsii*).¹⁵

However, a major problem in effectuating repatriation soon became apparent. DPs, especially the approximately four to five million Soviet citizens who had served in the German army or had been conscripted into the German work force brigades (*Ostarbeiter*), were not at all willing to leave the Western zones and return to the Soviet Union. They feared the consequences that would face them at home: according to Soviet law, anyone who allowed themselves to be captured by the enemy and/or transported to a foreign country had in essence committed treason, which was punishable by execution (by shooting).¹⁶ Even more specific with regard to members of the armed forces was Decree Number 270 of 1942 that stated: “a prisoner captured alive by the enemy (is) *ipso facto* a traitor.”¹⁷

To counter the well-grounded fears of the POWs, DPs, refugees and former *Ostarbeiter* that they would be punished or possibly shot upon their

¹³ See Proudfoot (1956), p 210. Golubev was the Assistant Representative of the Council of People's Commissars of the Soviet Union for Repatriation Affairs.

¹⁴ Christopher Andrew and Vasili Mitrokhin, *The Mitrokhin archive. The KGB in Europe and the west* (London: Penguin Books, 2000), p 177

¹⁵ The repatriation apparatus was dissolved by decree of the USSR Council of Ministers on December 29, 1952. The ARPA was dismantled on March 1, 1953. See Dyczok (2000), p 169.

¹⁶ Article 58–1a of the RSFSR Criminal Code states: “Actions of treason carried out by citizens of the USSR, [...] such as [...] defection to the side of the enemy, fleeing or flight abroad, are to be punished—with the maximum criminal penalty—by shooting, with confiscation of all property, but in the case of mitigating circumstances, are to be punished by the deprivation of liberty for 10 years, with confiscation of all property”, see Rudīte Vīksne and Kārlis Kangeris, eds., *No NKVD līdz KGB. Politiskas prāvas Latvijā. 1940–1986. Noziegumos pret padomju valsti apsudzēto Latvijas iedzīvotāju rādītājs [From NKVD to KGB. Political trials in Latvia. 1940–1986. Index of citizens of Latvia accused of criminal activities against Soviet power]* (Riga: Latvijas vēstures institūta apgāds, 1999), p 959.

¹⁷ Elliott (1982), p 168

return to Soviet-ruled territories, the government of the Soviet Union launched a major repatriation campaign with the aim of securing the return of all whom it regarded as its citizens. All forms of persuasion, from traditional propaganda—broadcasts, brochures, films, posters—to bullying and outright coercion were implemented, in order to bring about the return of the refugees.¹⁸ By September 1945, SHAEF together with UNRRA had repatriated (both voluntarily and by force) about seven million refugees to the East, including about two thousand Balts (479 Estonians, 1,329 Latvians and 241 Lithuanians) from the SHAEF area of Germany and Austria, as well as France and Italy.¹⁹ From May to December 1945 some 3,600 Latvian POWs were repatriated, but over the following six months only about fifty more Latvian POWs repatriated.²⁰ UNRRA repatriated an additional one million people to the East between October 1945 and June 1947. The largest repatriated groups by nationality were Russians and Poles, totaling approximately five million and one million persons respectively.²¹

There were several grounds for why Latvians resisted repatriation. Firstly, most had war-time contacts with the German occupation power: they had been conscripted into Germany military service,²² or had worked as forced laborers for the German war effort, or had been evacuated by the Germans with the retreating front. They feared that for these reasons they would be charged with collaboration with the enemy and persecuted upon return. Secondly, Latvians resisted repatriation because of their social class and membership in cultural and political organizations during the period of Latvian statehood. Civil servants, policemen, members of the Latvian Army, members of *Aizsargi* (homeland defense) and other organizations, home and farmstead owners, entrepreneurs, and other élites, could expect to be sentenced to prison terms in the Gulag or to banishment in Siberia, and some could even expect to be sentenced to death. This had happened during the first Soviet occupation of 1940 to 1941, a period of continual arrests that ended with the June 14, 1941 mass deportation. During this year of the Soviet regime, it had been shown that the pre-war political, social and economic activities of a Latvian citizen were sufficient grounds for being labeled as a “socially alien element”, for which one risked incrimination and

¹⁸ Wyman (1998), pp 61–85

¹⁹ Harmsen (1958), p 15

²⁰ Kārlis Kangeris, “Pārskats par latviešu karavīru gūstu rietumos [Latvian POWs in the west - summary],” in *Archīvs. Raksti par latviskām problēmām [Archives. Essays on Latvian problems]*, ed. E. Dunsdorfs (Melbourne, Australia: Pasaules brīvo latviešu apvienība un Kārļa Zariņa fonds, 1985), p 164

²¹ The nationality designation of “Russian” also included Ukrainians, since at the time, they were not given recognition as a national group by UNRRA, see Dyczok (2000), p 75.

²² For figures and analysis of Latvians in German military service, see Baltais (2003).

persecution.²³ Therefore Latvian refugees and POWs refused repatriation, since they would be held criminally accountable for activities that under democratic regimes were the normal activities of a conscientious citizenry: belonging to an organization, being an employer, owning property. Thirdly, they had lived in a territory under German occupation, and therefore were suspected of disloyalty, for which they would be discriminated against in their Soviet-occupied homeland.²⁴ Hence, for these three main reasons, 1) war-time contacts with the German occupation powers, and 2) pre-war social and political activity, and 3) living in a territory under German occupation—Latvians who had ended up in the Western sectors refused repatriation.

Before the end of WWII, Baltic organizations at the DP camps petitioned SHAEF, pointing out that legally Balts could not be regarded as Soviet nationals, and therefore should not be sent back to the Soviet-occupied Baltic states. As a result, on October 30, 1945 SHAEF in Frankfurt issued a revision to its Administrative Memorandum No. 39, whereby according to paragraph 333, Baltic nationals were not to be repatriated by force, since their countries were not a part of the Soviet Union on September 2, 1939.²⁵ This legal principle of determining Soviet citizenship was later followed in British law, which defined a Soviet citizen as “a person born or resident within the pre-1 September 1939 boundaries of Russia”.²⁶

As a consequence of refusing to return East, about one million unre-patriable persons were still in the SHAEF area camps when UNRRA operations were nearing an end in 1946. Among them were Armenians, Azerbaijanis, Balts, Belarusians, Caucasian mountaineers, Georgians, and natives of Czechoslovakia, Poland, Yugoslavia, the Polish and Soviet Ukraine, as well as Jews. They declared that they were neither Soviet citizens nor were they to be included in the category of repatriable DPs for reasons of “changes wrought to the pre-war boundaries, the introduction of communist rule in the countries of origin, to memories of persecution and fear of persecution”.²⁷

Discussions in the United Nations about what to do with the “last million”, as this group of non-returnees was called, continued throughout

²³ Benedikts Spridzāns, “Tā sākās Latvijas iedzīvotāju masveida represijas [This is the way the massive repressions of the Latvian population began],” *Latvijas Arhīvi. Pielikums “Represēto saraksts 1941. 1.”* 1 (1995)

²⁴ The Soviet regime was “highly suspicious” of anyone who had not retreated with the Soviet Army and who had survived the German occupation. To stay on, to remain alive, and to not have participated in a pro-Soviet partisan movement was tantamount to treason. See Berkhoff (2012), pp 278–279.

²⁵ Andrew Ezergailis, ed., *The Latvian legion. Heroes, nazis, or victims? A collection of documents from OSS war-crimes investigation files 1945–1950* (Riga: The Historical Institute of Latvia, 1997), p 63

²⁶ Tolstoy (1977), p 249

²⁷ Zieck (1997), p 46

1946. At last, the draft text of the Constitution of the International Refugee Organization (IRO) was passed on December 15, 1946, establishing the IRO as a specialized agency under the auspices of the UN. As a concession to the East, the IRO's primary goal was declared to be the repatriation of DPs, with resettlement as its secondary task. However, since the IRO Constitution defended only voluntary repatriation, the Eastern European states (the USSR, Ukrainian SSR, Belorussian SSR, Poland and Yugoslavia) voted against it, and never joined the IRO.²⁸ The split between East and West, which eventually led to the Cold War between the two, was herewith apparent in the IRO debates, and one "could see in this confrontation the delineation of two power blocs, led by the American and the Soviet Union."²⁹

While discussions were proceeding about the structure and goals of the IRO, the Soviet repatriation campaign continued. To administer and promote the return of exile Latvians, a Repatriation Section of the Latvian SSR Council of Ministers was established in 1947. Among its propaganda assignments were to prepare special repatriation broadcasts and publications directed to exile Latvians, inviting them to return home. The section's main propaganda activity took place over the next two years, petering out in the early 1950s. The section was dissolved in accordance with a decree issued by the Latvian SSR Council of Ministers on January 6, 1953.³⁰ In response to this first repatriation campaign, an estimated 2,000–3,000 Latvians, at most, from a possible 125,000, repatriated to Soviet Latvia from the West during the late 1940s.³¹ The propaganda costs attributable to the repatriation of Latvians from the free world had totaled over 88 million rubles³²—a tremendous waste of resources considering the meager results.

At the same time, during the IRO period from July 1, 1947 to December 31, 1951, over one million refugees and DPs were resettled in the West. The USA received the most refugees—328,851, followed by Australia (182,159),

²⁸ A Preparatory Commission of the IRO started operations on July 1, 1947. The IRO Constitution officially came into force on Aug 20, 1948 with 15 member states contributing to costs. The IRO was officially liquidated in February, 1952, see *ibid.*, p 59.

²⁹ Marrus (2002), p 340

³⁰ Riekstiņš (1994): p 55–59

³¹ According to IRO statistics, 1,909 Latvians repatriated to the Latvian SSR from the Western sectors between July 1, 1947 and December 31, 1951, see Proudfoot (1956), p 416. According to the Latvian Central Council, 2,242 Latvians had chosen to repatriate up to October 1, 1949, see J. Rašmanis, *Latviešu trimdinieki Vācijā. Pārskats par latviešu trimdinieku gaitām Vācijā 2. pasaules karā un pēc tā [Latvian exiles in Germany. Survey of exile fate in Germany during the second world war and afterwards]* (Unpublished manuscript.: 1949), p 307. According to Soviet statistics, 77,368 Latvian civilians had been repatriated 1945–1952. This figure is considerably higher than the Western figures, because it includes the repatriation of Latvians from areas under Soviet control, i.e. refugees who had been overtaken by the westward advance of the Soviet Armed Forces, see Riekstiņš (1994): p 58.

³² *Ibid.* p 59

Israel (132,109) and Canada (123,479). These countries together accounted for almost 75% of the total number resettled.³³

The insistence on following through with the costly repatriation campaign in the face of post-war ruin reflected “Stalin’s manic desire to lead all Soviet citizens back into the homeland...without any exceptions”.³⁴ The movement thus embraced the most complete as possible repatriation of Soviet citizens to the USSR. The motivation for total repatriation was based on Stalin’s attitudes to émigrés and emigration, and can be explained in “vindicative...psychological, economic, demographic, propagandistic, and strategic” terms.³⁵ The Soviet Union had won the war and wanted to vindicate itself by punishing those that had collaborated with the enemy, a collaboration that was defined as either having surrendered to the Germans or having left the country, voluntarily or by force, irrespective of the circumstances and reasons for the individual actions. There was a psychological need for the Soviet Union “to have its own way” on the DP question, and there was a demographic need for young able-bodied men to equalize the gender population imbalances caused by the war, to replenish the nation’s workforce and to engage in rebuilding the country. Furthermore, Stalin felt that every émigré was a potential troublemaker abroad, and that the political anti-communist emigrations were to be stopped before they could pose a threat to the national security of the USSR.³⁶

The first Soviet repatriation drive was successful in so far as over five million civilians were repatriated to the USSR during the months immediately after the end of WWII.³⁷ However, in the case of the “last million”, where the repatriation of refugees could not be carried out by force or coercion, the campaign failed. Nonetheless, the non-returnees, scattered throughout the West, were not forgotten by the Soviet government. They were still regarded as “Soviet citizens”, since once, before the war, they had resided in the Soviet Union or in areas now annexed to the USSR. It was to these “Soviet citizens abroad” that an upcoming repatriation campaign was being prepared, with the goal of getting the émigrés back home. This campaign was part of a larger repatriation movement sweeping over the Soviet bloc countries,³⁸ and a continuation of the same policy of repatriation that began during the Second World War.

³³ Proudfoot (1956), pp 416, 425

³⁴ Stelzl-Marx (2008), p 183

³⁵ Elliott (1982), p 133

³⁶ Ibid. pp 133–137

³⁷ Dyczok (2000), p 166

³⁸ Voluntary repatriation campaigns were conducted with greater or lesser intensity throughout the postwar years up to the late 1950s. In November 1953, the Bulgarian government invited Bulgarian émigrés to return home, in 1954, the Czechoslovak and Polish governments commenced repatriation activities among refugees in Western Germany and France, and in

2.2 The Political Refugees

The 1946 discussions in the United Nations, preceding the founding of the IRO, circulated around the issue of the political refugee. The question concerned the legitimacy of the category of “political refugee”, which was ideologically accepted by the West, but vehemently disavowed by the East. The Soviet Union lobbied for mandatory DP repatriation, accusing non-returnees of being “quislings, traitors and war criminals” hiding behind the mask of “political dissent”.³⁹ The West, which had “totally different conceptions of the relationship of the individual to the State”,⁴⁰ defended the ideological concept of political refugee, and would not accept repatriation as the one and only solution. Indeed, it promoted the idea of resettlement to countries where refugees and DPs—a reserve of manual and semi-skilled labor—could be relocated. Therefore the IRO, when it began operations in 1947, had both repatriation and resettlement as its goals. To the consternation of the Soviet Union, the overwhelming majority of the “last million” refugees, over 95%, chose resettlement, not repatriation. A mere 51,932 refugees repatriated to the East, while the rest moved on to the USA, Canada, Australia, Israel, and other Western countries.⁴¹ As mentioned above, this was among the first manifestations of the East-West split that was to eventually become the Cold War.

In their own internal discourse and in communication with host country society and governments, Latvian émigrés regarded themselves as political refugees and their exile as a political emigration from the very first days abroad.⁴² Latvian émigrés saw themselves as victims of political persecution, and used the term “political refugee” as a formal designation for their legal status. The Soviet Union, on the other hand, defined “political refugees” as delinquents in need of ablution from crimes that they supposedly had committed.⁴³ The position of the émigrés was complicated even further in that they themselves regarded that it was both the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany, who by signing the Treaty of Non-Aggression and its secret

1955, the Hungarian and Romanian repatriation campaigns were initiated. See Vernant (1953), pp 69, 77–78, 80.

³⁹ A. J. Višinskis, “Par starptautisko organizāciju bēgļu lietās. A. J. Višinska runa ģenerālās asamblejas 3. komitejas 1946. g. 6. novembra sēdē [About the international organization of refugee matters. A. J. Vishinsky's speech at the 3rd committee meeting of the general assembly in New York on November 6, 1946],” in *Par bēgļiem un pārvietotām personām. [About refugees and displaced persons]*, ed. S. Balode (Riga: Latvijas Valsts Izdevniecība, 1947), p 9

⁴⁰ Zieck (1997), p 50

⁴¹ Proudfoot (1956), pp 415–416

⁴² J. Grīns, ‘Mēs emigranti’ [We—the emigrants], *Latvju ziņas*, No 3, Dec 1944, p 12

⁴³ ‘Padomju Savienības pārstāvja apmeklējums’ [Visit of representative of the Soviet Union], *Latvju ziņas*, No 2, Dec 1944, p 9

protocol, who were the base offenders.⁴⁴ These two powers, Germany and the Soviet Union, had been the cause of millions of deaths and countless suffering by dividing Europe among themselves, and had left a legacy of destruction and devastation. Justice had been attained with the dissolution of Nazi Germany, but the Soviet Union, which among other things had carried out the military occupation and illegal annexation of the Baltic States, had survived unpunished.⁴⁵

Latvian émigrés regarded the West's outwardly friendly relationships to the Soviet Union with suspicion, and in order to vindicate their continued presence in the West, exile organizations repeatedly brought up the question of the illegal occupation of the Baltic States in host country political discussions.⁴⁶ Latvian émigrés, along with other émigrés among the "last million" from communist-occupied countries, regarded themselves as political refugees, as the conscience of the Western world and the voice of silenced and oppressed Eastern Europe.⁴⁷

The Latvian émigré standpoint, which was supported in principle by Western governments during the discussions preceding the formation of the IRO, clashed with the views of the Soviet Union, which led an unceasing fight against the concept of "political refugee". The Soviet government would not accept the term "political refugee" as a legitimate legal category pertaining to persons who had fled from communism. As was explained in an interview in 1956 by Chairman N. Mikhailov of the Committee For Return to the Motherland:

Major Western powers, some political circles of the Federal Republic of Germany and emigrant ringleaders of anti-Soviet organizations attempt to regard all displaced Soviet citizens as political refugees. In reality, these displaced persons were transported abroad in 1941–1945 during war activity, because they were either taken prisoner or they were forcefully deported to Germany and other countries. It is not clear why these Soviet citizens should be regarded as "political refugees".⁴⁸

⁴⁴ Ainārs Lerhis, "Latvijas Valsts oficiālā nostāja 1940.–1991. gada Latvijas valsts juridiskā statusa un neatkarības atgūšanas jautājumos - ieskats Latvijas Ārlietu dienesta dokumentos [The official standpoint of Latvia on the state's judicial status and on issues concerning the reinstatement of independence 1940–1991]," in *Latviešu trimdas loma Latvijas neatkarības idejas uzturēšanā [The role of Latvian exile in maintaining the idea of Latvian independence]*, ed. T. Jundzis (Riga: Latvijas Zinātņu akadēmija, 2011), p 63

⁴⁵ Tālav Jundzis, "Priekšvārds [Preface]," *ibid.*, p 5

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ Dmytro Andriewsky, "Soviets and the emigration," *The Ukrainian Quarterly* XI, No 2 (1955): p 133

⁴⁸ 'Komitejas «Par atgriešanos Dzimtenē» priekšsēdētāja b. Michailova atbildes žurnāla *Der Spiegel* korespondentam Grose kungam' [Chairman of the Committee «For Return to the Motherland», Comrade Mikhailov's answers to Mr. Grose, correspondent of the magazine *Der Spiegel*], *PaDz* 8(24) Feb 1956 p 3 (ref: Answers to *Der Spiegel*)

Despite Soviet foreign policy efforts, the Soviet government did not succeed in changing the standpoint of the Western governments on this issue, who in compliance with their constitutions continued to extend political asylum to foreign citizens, if they expressed such a wish and if they qualified.⁴⁹ Over the following years, Soviet propaganda attacks on political refugees continued, and took on a new twist when the Soviet center of authority attempted to forge a link between émigré elites and their alleged criminal past under the Nazis.⁵⁰ Starting with the early 1960s and up to the final years before the downfall of the Soviet Union, this turned into one of the major propaganda themes in Soviet Latvian publications, which were specially prepared for the emigration and for a Western audience in general.⁵¹

2.3 The Latvian Emigration

Of the “last million” of unrepatriable refugees that refused to voluntarily return to their homelands in the East, over 400,000 were former citizens of the Soviet Union, according to an estimate by Soviet Minister of Internal Affairs Sergei Kruglov.⁵² Western estimates placed these non-returners at 529,000, of which 100,000 were Latvians.⁵³ Latvian émigrés, however, estimated their own numbers to be 125,000.⁵⁴ Contemporary research continues to show variances in the estimated numbers of Latvian émigrés in the West.⁵⁵

Under the IRO resettlement program of 1947–1951, approximately 100,000 Latvian DPs dispersed to the USA and Canada (over 50,000), Australia (25,000), the United Kingdom (12,000), and elsewhere, whereas 10,000–12,000 remained in Western Germany.⁵⁶ They opposed the Soviet occupation of their country, were largely conservative in political outlook, and were socially homogenous in having arisen from the middle and upper-class pre-war Latvian society. Due to their high level of education, their

⁴⁹ In the case of the US, this specifically meant refugees from communism, see Gil Loescher, “The Cold War Origins of the UNHCR Under Gerrit Jan van Heuven Goedhart,” in *The UNHCR and World Politics*, ed. G. Loescher (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p 54.

⁵⁰ For more on this subject, see S. Paul Zumbakis, *Soviet evidence in North American courts. An analysis of problems and concerns with reliance on communist source evidence in alleged war criminal trials* (Chicago: Americans for Due Process, 1986); Dyczok (2000); Deland (2010).

⁵¹ An early example of this type of propaganda is the 1962 Soviet Latvian pamphlet *Daugavas Vanagi: Who are They?*, see Ezergailis (2005).

⁵² Stelzl-Marx (2008), p 191

⁵³ Based on an estimate compiled by Eugene M. Kulischer in Elliott (1982), p 174.

⁵⁴ Arveds Švābe, “DP,” in *Latvju enciklopēdija*, ed. A. Švābe (Stockholm: Apgāds Trīs Zvaigznes, 1950–1951), p 507

⁵⁵ Mühle (2005)

⁵⁶ Maruta Kārklis et al., *The Latvians in America, 1640–1973. A chronology & fact book* (Dobbs Ferry, New York: Oceana Publications, Inc, 1974), pp 32–33

industriousness and purposefulness, the Latvian émigrés adapted well to new conditions and settled relatively quickly in their new home countries.⁵⁷ Many settled in and around larger cities, forming large ethnic communities in, for example, Bradford, Chicago, Montreal, New York, London, Los Angeles, Melbourne, Stockholm, Sydney, Toronto. The growing affluence of the émigrés allowed for free time to devote to social and political pursuits. They established political and professional associations, congregations, weekend schools, fraternities, sororities, choirs, music, dance, and theatre ensembles, sports groups, and other clubs and associations. The social and cultural spectrum of Latvian emigration was further diversified by the establishment of the Latgallian Cultural Center in Munich, West Germany, which supported a publishing house and a cultural foundation.⁵⁸ The culturally and politically active Latvian émigré communities cooperated with other ethnic émigré organizations in their new homelands forming anti-communist pressure groups and associations to support the dispersal of the ideas of freedom to countries behind the Iron Curtain, and to advocate for the freedom of their former homelands.⁵⁹

There was, however, yet another group of Latvians in the West, mainly living in the USA, consisting of those that had emigrated before WWII.⁶⁰ This group, known as the “Old Latvians”, numbered 38,091 in the 1930 US census, but by the mid-1950s, through natural causes and assimilation, had significantly diminished in size.⁶¹ It is difficult to estimate the number of “Old Latvians” that still spoke and understood Latvian when the *PaDz* began to be published in 1955, though it is clear that their community activities were decidedly smaller in scope than that of the post-WWII wave of Latvian refugees.⁶²

While the *PaDz* can be seen to have been directed mainly towards the large wave of post-WWII refugees from Latvia, nevertheless contacts with the Old Latvians were sought. It seems, however, that it was not primarily

⁵⁷ Veidemanis (1963): pp 331–333

⁵⁸ Jānis Liepiņš, ed., *40 gadi Latvieši Bavārijā - dokumentācija [40 years of Latvians in Bavaria - a documentation]* (München: Lettische Volksgemeinschaft in Bayern, 1986), pp 22–30. The Latgallians, stemming from the region of Latgale in southwest Latvia, speak a language or dialect of Latvian called Latgalian.

⁵⁹ Deksnis (2011), pp 17–25

⁶⁰ Larger pre-WWII emigration waves from Latvia took place, for example, to avoid persecution from the tsarist regime in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, as a result of the upheavals of World War I and the Civil War in the 1920s, or to build new religious communities, see “Latvieši emigrācijā” (1952–1953), pp 1242–1243.

⁶¹ Kārkliņš et al. (1974), p 23

⁶² In 1963, the largest “progressive” (pro-Soviet) Latvian organization in the USA, the “American Latvian Workers’ Union” with sections in Boston, New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, and Vancouver, had 183 members from among the “Old Latvians”, see Heinrihs Strods, ed., *Yearbook of the occupation museum of Latvia. 1999. Policies and practices of genocide*, vol. 1 (Riga: Latvijas 50 gadu okupācijas muzeja fonds, 2000), p 222

through *PaDz*, but via the successor newspaper *Dzimtenes Balss* that relationships were upheld with the pro-Soviet groupings among the Old Latvians. They were utilized by Soviet counterintelligence “with an explicit purpose to use them for propaganda and intelligence gathering tasks during the cold war”.⁶³

From the very first days in exile and throughout the following decades, the Latvian community abroad was seldom a united entity. This is true of both the Old Latvians and new post-WWII arrivals. Different political factions existed among the exiles, with both elected and self-proclaimed leaders who attempted to recruit followers for their pet issues and who campaigned for leadership positions. In general, the post-WWII émigré Latvian community can be described as consisting of a conservative majority and a much smaller democratic minority. A leading characteristic of the conservatives, joined by “non-political neutrals” and many former Latvian POWs, was their tolerance of former Nazi collaborators in émigré leadership positions.⁶⁴ The democratic minority, also known as the “parliamentarians”, was a continuation of Latvia’s Central Council, a democratic wartime resistance movement established 1943. It pledged allegiance to the 1922 Constitution of the Republic of Latvia, and represented the ethnic Latvian political parties that had resumed activities abroad.⁶⁵ The parliamentarians wished to see a “complete and radical break and denunciation of German collaborationists”.⁶⁶ However, this was not forthcoming, since the leadership representing the conservative majority refused to sign such a declaration.⁶⁷ Over the years, the unity among the anti-collaborationists weakened and meaningful party activity subsided, leaving the Latvian Social Democratic Workers’ Party (LSDWP) as the main representatives of the democratic minority.⁶⁸ The LSDWP is the only Latvian émigré political party that

⁶³ Zake (2010a), p 27

⁶⁴ See Leonīds Siliņš, *Zviedru-Latviešu palīdzības komitejas darbība (1943. gada 15. oktobris — 1945. gada 15. jūlijs) [The Swedish-Latvian refugee aid committee (Oct 15, 1943 – July 15, 1945)]* (Rīga: Latvijas Universitātes žurnāla "Latvijas Vēsture" fonds, 2011), pp 79–80; Aldis Purs, “How those brothers in foreign lands are dividing the fatherland”: Latvian national politics in displaced persons camps after the second world war,” in *Warlands: population resettlement and state reconstruction in the Soviet-East European Borderlands, 1945–50*, ed. P. Gatrell and N. Baron (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan Ltd, 2009), p 62.

⁶⁵ Siliņš (2011), pp 79–83

⁶⁶ See Purs (2009), p 60. Several activists spoke out against former collaborationists, among them Žanis Unāms, who wrote “a whole series of treatises critical of the Latvian leadership during the German occupation”. Other publicists along the same line were, *i.a.*, Alfrēds Blāķis, Miķelis Valters, and A. Berķis. See Ezergailis (1996), p 28 note 32.

⁶⁷ Purs (2009), p 62

⁶⁸ In the late 1950s, five political parties were still formally active: the LSDWP, the Latvian Liberal Union, the Farmers’ Union Party, the Latvian New Farmers’ and Small Landowners’ Agrarian Party, and the Christian Farmers’ and Catholic Party. See Osvalds Freivalds,

existed throughout the years of exile until the reinstatement of independent Latvia in 1991. Centered in Stockholm, Sweden, though numerically small, it was by far the most politically important and active of all Latvian emigrant parties. The LSDWP played a pivotal role in émigré politics, due to its brotherly ties with social democratic governments in Europe and its strong contacts with international socialist organizations. Moreover, the LSDWP also had its own press organ *Brīvība* [*Freedom*], which was published as a yearbook from 1948 to 1950 and then as a monthly from 1954 to 1991.

The émigré conservative majority and the democratic minority, represented by the LSDWP, were for many years in conflict with each other, which was understandable considering their diametrically opposite views concerning, among others, the contemporary political situation, the future of Latvian emigration, how Latvia's independence was to be achieved, and Latvia's future form of government. For example, in the early 1950s, the conservative émigré leadership believed that a military attack by the Soviet Union against the West was near at hand.⁶⁹ There was also the widely held belief that the USA and the United Kingdom would before long enter into a Third World War against the Soviet Union.⁷⁰ Thereby it was assumed that the West would win this war, and the unrealistic dream of imminent return to independent Latvia was nurtured. In contrast, the LSDWP proclaimed that a free and democratic Latvia could be reinstated only by going in step with the major world democracies and through the support of the European Socialist movement.⁷¹ Furthermore, according to the LSDWP, a long, extended period of exile was to be expected.⁷² Finally, the LSDWP urged émigrés to refrain from panic due to the fear of communism and not to succumb to war psychosis, which in the late 1940s had gained a foothold, especially among Latvians and Estonians in Sweden.⁷³ The LSDWP also believed that when Latvia was free once again, only a small percentage of émigrés would return to the country.⁷⁴ All in all, the disagreements in exile between the émigré conservative majority and the social democrats were a continuation of the conflicts between the followers of right wing and left wing politics that had existed in pre-war Latvia.

Latviešu politiskās partijas 60 gados [60 years of Latvian political parties] (Copenhagen: Imanta, 1961), p 160.

⁶⁹ 'Aukstais kašs', *Brīvība* No 3, 1950 p 19

⁷⁰ Andrew Ezergailis, ed., *Stockholm documents. The German occupation of Latvia. 1941–1945. What did America know?*, vol. 5, Symposium of the Commission of the Historians of Latvia (Riga: Publishers of the Historical Institute of Latvia, 2002), p 475

⁷¹ K. Dziļleja, 'Cīņai par brīvību ziedoti gadi' [Years given to the fight for freedom], *Brīvība* No 2, 1949 p 37

⁷² 'Izceļošana' [Emigration], *Brīvība* No 2, 1949 p 38

⁷³ Ibid. pp 39–40

⁷⁴ Ibid. p 38

This said, there were also disagreements and conflicts within the majority conservative bloc, where certain right-wing factions maintained that the period of democracy in Latvia (1918–1934) was a failed experiment and lauded the dictatorship years 1934–1940.⁷⁵ Some went so far as to assert that an authoritarian form of government, similar to the Ulmanis dictatorship of 1934–1940, would be acceptable in a reinstated Latvia.⁷⁶ Not all emigrants supported such extreme views, and over time, the younger generation's rebellion (those born in the late 1920s and 1930s) against the reigning domination of the older generation of the Latvian émigré society, resulted, among other things, in the start-up of their own periodical *Jaunā Gaita* [*The New Way*] in 1955.⁷⁷ Thus the political spectrum of the Latvian emigration ranged from the far right, represented by the anti-democratic Valdmanites and Ulmanites,⁷⁸ to the social democratic left, which many émigrés incorrectly believed to be tantamount to communists.⁷⁹ The middle represented various shades of conservative traditionalism, liberalism, and youthful protest, and of course many who did not care about exile politics at all, but pursued their specific Latvian interests in social clubs and other associations irrespective of the political surroundings.

Additional factors defining émigré belonging and identity were the professional, educational, and cultural organizations that were established in exile. There were the spiritual communities, of which the largest confessions in exile were the Evangelical Lutheran, Catholic and Orthodox Churches, as well as the academic fraternities and sororities, which aligned themselves with the conservatives.⁸⁰ By far the largest special interest organization among the émigrés was the Latvian Welfare Association *Daugavas Vanagi* (DV—Hawks of the Daugava), an organization established December 1945 in the Belgium POW camp of Zedelgem by members of the former Latvian Legion for mutual social and financial support. All Latvians who supported

⁷⁵ Bruno Kalniņš, 'Nacionālās diktatūras glorifikācija' [The glorification of national dictatorship], *Brīvība* No 1, August 1948 p 16

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Valters Nollendorfs, 'Trimdas jaunās paaudzes uznāciens: ideoloģijas kritika un politisko paradigmu maiņa. [The entry of the new exile generation: critique of ideology and a new political paradigm]. Paper read at the Symposium of the Association of the Latvian Museum of Occupation 2013-07-11.

⁷⁸ The Ulmanites, arising from the ranks of the Farmers' Union, advocated the continuation of a Ulmanis-type of authoritarian dictatorship in a reinstated free Latvia. The members of the Valdmanite "Latvian National Center Party" were followers of the controversial Alfred Valdmanis, a former minister of the Ulmanis' regime and a high-level Nazi collaborator during the German occupation. He was found guilty in 1954 of defrauding the Canadian provincial government. 'A. Valdmaņa gals' [The end of A. Valdmanis], *Brīvība* No 9, 1954 p 3

⁷⁹ 'Bailes no simboliem' [Frightened of symbols], *Brīvība* No 3, 1950 p 21

⁸⁰ See Hieronims Tichovskis, ed., *Latviešu trimdas desmit gadi. Rakstu krājums* [Ten years of Latvian emigration. Collected works] (USA: Astras apgāds, 1954), pp 28–49; a.t., 'Tīrīšanas korporācijās!' [Clean-up in the fraternities!], *Brīvība* No 6, 1983 p 3.

the aims of the DV could become members, and eventually Women's and Youth sections were established.⁸¹ By 1950, the DV had more than 9,000 organized members, with 189 chapters in Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Great Britain, Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden, US, and West Germany. It was headed by General Vilis Janums, a top WWII military commander of the 15th Waffen-SS Grenadier Division of the Latvian Legion. In the British and American sectors of Germany, almost all Latvians working for the Mixed Service Organizations and the Labor Service Companies were members of the DV, though not all. In August 1955, the *Latviešu Kara Invalīda Apvienība* (LKIA—Latvian War Invalid Association) was founded in Hamburg, West Germany, in opposition, as it was said, to the dominance of V. Janums, who was board chairman of both the DV central organization and the Latvian Central Committee in West Germany.⁸² This indicated that not all émigré Latvian veterans regarded the DV as being the sole organization to meet their needs or to be their representative.

A number of factors kept Latvian exile communities active as a political force and helped them remain relatively firm against assimilation. First, the exiles nurtured a sense of mission to fight for a free and independent Latvia and struggle against communism.⁸³ They were united in their view on the Soviet Union (and Russia), which to them was “the enemy of Latvia and the Latvian people”, whereby the Soviet occupation, reflecting the “developing international ideas of crimes against humanity,” became “a project of genocide”.⁸⁴ The June 14, 1941 deportation of over 14,000 persons, and the March 25, 1949 deportation of over 42,000 persons to the Gulag and to Siberian banishment had resulted in deaths and wreckage of thousands of families.⁸⁵ This Soviet aggression would forever torment and trouble the émigrés, and band them together against the Soviet Union. Second, Latvia's diplomatic representation was retained in exile, which after post-war political maneuvering was decided to be infused in Envoy and General Consul Kārlis Zariņš of the Latvian Legation in London, as the holder of extraordinary powers granted to him by the Latvian Cabinet of Ministers on May 17, 1940. Referring to these extraordinary powers, K. Zariņš elected consular representatives of the free Republic of Latvia in the US, Canada,

⁸¹ The aims of the DV are, among others, to protect Latvia's independence and freedom, and to honor those military persons that have fought for Latvia's independence and freedom. 'Par mums' [About us], (March 15, 2011) retrieved 2014-01-24 from www.daugavasvanagi.us/Par_mums

⁸² 'Dienas atspīdumi' [Day's reflections], *Laiks* No 64, Aug 8, 1955 p 6

⁸³ Ojars Celle, “The Latvian exile community and US-Latvia relations,” in *Latvia and the USA: From captive nation to strategic partner*, ed. D. Auers (Riga: Academic Press of the University of Latvia, 2008), p 62

⁸⁴ Pūrs (2009), p 63

⁸⁵ See Spridzāns (1995): p 3; Strods, ed., (2000), p 178.

Australia, and elsewhere. These representations kept up diplomatic relations with host-country governments throughout the entire period of Soviet occupation.⁸⁶ Fourth, the exile Latvian worldwide communication network formed an important base for an uninterrupted social, cultural, and political interchange. This informal network was based on a well-functioning news publishing system, where the national newspapers covered events pertaining to local, national and overseas Latvian émigré centers and organizations. Through personal and professional ties, Latvians in the USA, Canada, Australia, Europe and South America were kept up to date with each other, they had a reasonable knowledge about each other's élites, and they were informed about the activities going on in each others' communities.

On September 14, 1955, the exile communication network was formalized when the Free World Latvian Association (BPLA) was established at a meeting of exile organization heads in London, England.⁸⁷ Giving impetus to a new sense of world-wide political unity of the Latvian exile, this overarching organization eventually included the American Latvian Association (ALA), the Latvian Central Organization in Western Europe (LAK-EC), the Latvian National Association in Canada (LNAK), the Latvian Association in Australia and New Zealand (LAAJ), and the Latvian Association in Brazil.⁸⁸ These territorial umbrella organizations were active in exile politics and in host-country politics, for example, by endorsing anti-communist host-country politicians. Due to these durable and robust networking connections, it was possible for the exile Latvian community to arrange major political congresses and yearly cultural events in Europe, North America, and Australia, and later in South America. For example, the regularly recurring Song Festivals could gather thousands of Latvian émigré participants from all reaches of the western world.

Other Eastern European emigrant groups in exile had also organized, a fact which led to the formation of joint anti-communist organizations such as the nation-wide Mutual Cooperation League in Canada, composed of fourteen organizations,⁸⁹ or, in contrast, the local League of Baltic Nations,

⁸⁶ The existence of the representations was based upon the *de iure* principle about the continuation of the Republic of Latvia, an argument being, for example, that the annexation of the Baltic States by the Soviet Union was a flagrant breach of the provisions of international law, such as the Covenant of the League of Nations, and the Kellogg-Briand Pact of 1928. See Leonīds Siliņš, ed., *Latvijas centrālā padome—LCP. Latviešu nacionālā pretestības kustība 1943–1945 [Latvian central council—LCP. Latvian national resistance movement 1943–1945]* (Uppsala: LCP, 1994), p 495; also McHugh et al. (2001).

⁸⁷ The organization was renamed the World Federation of Free Latvians (PBLA) in 1981. See Celle (2008), p 63.

⁸⁸ The Latvian Association in Brazil was later replaced by the Latvian South American Latvian Association (DALA), see *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ These organizations were the National Committee for Free Albania, the Bulgarian National Front, the Belorussian National Association, the Cossack National Liberation Movement, United Croatians of Canada, the Estonian National Committee, the Canadian Hungarian

uniting the organizations of the Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians in Cleveland, Ohio,⁹⁰ and many more such organizations. An organization uniting trans-national central émigré representatives was the Assembly of Captive European Nations (ACEN) established 1954, and whose first president was the Latvian émigré Dr. Vilis Māsēns (1954–1958).⁹¹ It represented nine nations in Central and Eastern Europe under Soviet domination: Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Romania. Affiliated to the ACEN were, among others, the Socialist Union of Central-Eastern Europe (SUCEE) and the Christian Democratic Union of Central and Eastern Europe. Captive Nations Week, which was signed into law in 1959 by the United States, was a yearly summer event which gathered many émigré organizations and individuals to demonstrate in the streets of major US towns against communism and the Soviet occupation of their home countries.⁹² Corresponding “captive nations” events were organized by the ethnic communities in Australia and the UK.

By the mid-1950’s, the major Latvian exile organizations, though continuing with their political bickering, had succeeded in uniting themselves under the BPLA. Centered in the US, it was a global umbrella organization for Latvians abroad, whose aim was to “strengthen Latvian political activity in exile.”⁹³ The BPLA placed itself politically in the middle, defended conservative values, and actively worked against communism. The main organizations of the BPLA worked at maintaining a dialogue between the right-wing and left-wing factions of the emigration, and in contributing to the common goal of a free and independent Latvia. At the same time, it seems that a silent agreement had been collectively made by the mainstream majority to avoid discussing the fate of the Jews in Latvia, and to accept and overlook former Nazi collaboration among the élites.⁹⁴ Next to targeted individuals, it was against these Latvian émigré organizations that the propaganda attacks of the second Soviet repatriation campaign were directed.

Association, the Latvian National Federation, the Canadian Lithuanian Federation, Macedonian Organization “Victory”, the Canadian Polish Congress, the Rumanian National Association, the Slovenia National Federation, and the Ukrainian Canadian Committee. Roberts et al. (2008), pp 54–55

⁹⁰ ‘Klīvlendas Chronika’ [Cleveland Chronicle], *Laiks* No 100 Dec 3, 1955 p 2

⁹¹ See section 2.4.

⁹² Ojars Kalnins, “Latvians and Americans,” in *Latvia and the USA: from captive nation to strategic partner*, ed. D. Auers (Riga: Academic Press of the University of Latvia, 2008), pp 137–138

⁹³ “PBLA vēstures un darbības kopsavilkums” [Summary of PBLA history and activities], retrieved 2014-05-25 from <http://www.pbla.lv/par-pbla/vesture/>

⁹⁴ Ezergailis (1996), pp 11–12

2.4 Émigrés as Cold War Instruments and Enemies of the Soviet State

As Cold War tensions sharpened, the US Truman administration spawned secret plans to fight communism by destabilizing communist regimes in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. This was to be done by providing clandestine support to various overt and covert activities, among others, by financing émigré insurgents.⁹⁵

In 1948 a new, top secret agency responsible for covert operations against communist governments was created. The agency, known as the Office of Policy Coordination carried out psychological and political warfare, along with subversion against hostile states, and by assisting underground resistance movements and refugee liberation groups. From their inception, the secret plans, backed by top US government and state officials, foresaw the involvement of émigrés. One clandestine activity lasting from the late 1940s to the early 1950s, for example, engaged Baltic émigrés for subversive intelligence assignments in the Soviet occupied Baltic States.⁹⁶ The security services of the USA, the United Kingdom and Sweden collaborated in secretly training and deploying Baltic émigré combatants into the Baltic territories by sea and by air.⁹⁷ They were to establish contacts with the anti-Soviet partisans, the “forest brothers,” in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, who were waging a guerilla war against Soviet rule, and their instructions were to gather information about military movements and positions in the Baltic region and relay it back to the West. However, Soviet security had its infiltrators in these operations from the start, and the Western security operations failed.⁹⁸

On October 10, 1951, a bill was passed by US Congress, which allocated \$100 million dollars “to aid the anti-Red underground and establish military units from Iron Curtain refugees.”⁹⁹ The bill, known as the Kersten Amendment, aroused negative reactions from the Soviet government and its satellites, which lodged formal complaints to the United Nations, accusing the US of meddling in their internal affairs. In 1953, congressman Charles Kersten attempted to gain an additional \$500 million from Congress to “expand psychological warfare against communist Russia”, for a program that would support the:

⁹⁵ Grose (2000), p 94

⁹⁶ Callanan (2010), pp 57–58

⁹⁷ Cooperation extended also to the French and Finnish intelligence, see Thede Palm, *Några studier till T-kontorets historia [Utgivna genom Evabritta Wallberg]* (Stockholm: Kungl. Samfundet för utgivande av handskrifter rörande Skandinaviens historia, 1999), p 15, 89; Juozas Lukša, *Skogsbröder*, trans. J. Öhman (Stockholm: Bäckströms Förlag, 2005), p 325.

⁹⁸ See Anušauskas, ed., (1999), pp 242–271; Grose (2000), pp 35–37.

⁹⁹ ‘Sentner, David: Ideological warfare. Asks \$ 1/2 billion to aid anti-red underground,’ *Milwaukee Sentinel*, Feb 9, 1953, part 1, p 1

1. Formation of military units composed of anti-Red escapees from behind the Iron Curtain to be attached to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization armed forces.
2. Encouragement of defections from the Soviet or satellite armies to build up such a fighting "Freedom Legion".¹⁰⁰

These program points were never implemented, even though another American senator, Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr., supported a secret proposal to set up a "Volunteer Freedom Corps," (VFC) consisting of Europe's stateless—refugees, DPs, escapees, expatriates, émigrés. The VFC was to be stationed in Germany and Austria under US command and mobilized to defend Western Europe in the case of war and serve as a "bulwark against Communism".¹⁰¹ It was foreseen that "qualified individuals would receive training as specialists in 'anti-communist underground and in political offensive work,' and would be smuggled back into their home countries for clandestine service there."¹⁰² Though funds to pay for the corps were to be taken from the appropriations of the Kersten Amendment,¹⁰³ the VFC was never overtly implemented, due to objections from Western European governments, who did not want "armed stateless groups in the heart of Europe".¹⁰⁴

At the same time, the US government, via the Office of Policy Coordination, which later became a part of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), was clandestinely supporting émigré organizations and émigré broadcasting under the cover of the National Committee for a Free Europe (NCFE).¹⁰⁵ The broadcast activities, which were deliberately anti-communist and anti-Soviet, eventually became Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberation, and their parent companies, financed by the CIA, were the Free Europe Committee and the American Committee for Liberation from Bolshevism.¹⁰⁶ The NCFE also financed the previously mentioned ACEN organization.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ James Jay Carafano, "Mobilizing Europe's stateless. America's plan for a Cold War army," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 1, No 2 (1999): p 64

¹⁰² H.W. Brands Jr., "A Cold War foreign legion? The Eisenhower administration and the Volunteer Freedom Corps," *Military Affairs* 52, No 1 (1988): p 7

¹⁰³ Carafano (1999): p 79, note 47

¹⁰⁴ Ibid. p 84

¹⁰⁵ L'Hommedieu, "Exiles and constituents: Baltic refugees and American Cold War politics, 1948–1960", pp 92–103

¹⁰⁶ Simo Mikkonen, "Radio liberty - the enemy within? The dissemination of western values through U.S. Cold War broadcasts," in *Europe-Evropa. Cross-cultural dialogues between the west, Russia, and southeastern Europe*, ed. M. Könönen and J. Nuorluoto, *Studia Multiethnica Upsaliensis / [Centre for Multiethnic Research, Uppsala University]* (Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, 2010a), pp 772–773

¹⁰⁷ Anna Mazurkiewicz, "The relationship between the Assembly of Captive European Nations and the Free Europe Committee in the context of U.S. foreign policy, 1950–1960," in *The inauguration of organized political warfare. Cold war organizations sponsored by the*

It is to be realized that US and other Western security service endeavors to support émigré organizations and to engage émigrés in subversive activities were a well-kept secret. Neither the wider American public nor the Latvian émigré society at large had any knowledge of this.¹⁰⁸ While it was publically admitted that the Committee for Free Latvia (*Komiteja Latvijas brīvībai*), an umbrella organization unifying all Latvian emigrant groups against communist oppression, being a part of the NCFE received “American organization funds,” it was never clearly stated outright, for example, that the financing actually originated from the CIA.¹⁰⁹

Nevertheless, Soviet intelligence realized that émigré leaders, exile publications and exile events were receiving CIA funding, and they also knew that émigré organizations and individuals cooperated with Western security services in subversive activities.¹¹⁰ This was because Soviet security services had monitored and infiltrated émigré groups abroad ever since the beginnings of Soviet statehood, and the post-war period was no exception. Already in 1921, Lenin proposed that émigrés were not just “mere refugees”, but, according to the Marxist theory of class struggle, a class-conscious bourgeoisie intent to destroy Communism.¹¹¹ According to Lenin, émigrés participated in political movements that were bent on the destruction of Soviet Russia and on eradicating Bolshevism, and therefore they were to be treated as enemies of the Soviet workers’ and peasant’s state.¹¹² For this reason, the Soviets implemented policies whose goals were to neutralize and undermine émigré anti-Soviet activities, to discredit émigré politics in the eyes of the host country governments, and to dupe foreign intelligence.¹¹³

National committee for a free Europe / Free Europe committee, ed. K. Kádár Lynn (Saint Helena, CA: Helena History Press, LLC, 2013), p 397

¹⁰⁸ More research is necessary to determine what was known, and what was rumored about CIA involvement, financial and otherwise, in Latvian émigré affairs.

¹⁰⁹ Bruno Albats and Visvaldis V. Klīve, *ALA. Amerikas latviešu apvienība 1951–1986* (Rockville, MD: Amerikas latviešu apvienība, 1986), p 9

¹¹⁰ Information about US government refugee and émigré policies apparently came from the Soviet agents who worked “in virtually every major American government agency of military or diplomatic importance”, see John Earl Haynes and Harvey Klehr, *Venona: decoding Soviet espionage in America* (Yale University Press, 1999), p 9.

¹¹¹ Vladimir Ilich Lenin, *Collected Works*, trans. Y. Sdobnikov, vol. 32 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1965), p 483

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ Many successful operations, among them the code-named “Trest” and “Sindikāt”, were launched during the inter-war years against émigrés by the foreign departments of the Soviet security services (the Cheka and its successors, the GPU and OGPU). See Andrew et al. (2000), pp 41–46.

Actions against émigrés continued under Stalin,¹¹⁴ and émigré espionage remained a part of Soviet émigré policy under Stalin's successors.¹¹⁵

During the years following WWII, Soviet observers could note that Lenin's theoretical formulations about émigrés were still valid. The Latvians abroad, along with other émigrés from the Soviet sphere, were in the eyes of the Soviet Union acting the part of the classic "enemy of the Soviet workers' and peasants' state": they were defending their bourgeois interests by propagandizing anti-communism and advocating the overthrow of Soviet rule. Though only numbering 125,000 persons, the Latvian émigré community was well organized and it cooperated with other exile groups and organizations in anti-Bolshevik ventures. Moreover, some of its members were collaborating with Western intelligence by engaging in guerilla operations on Soviet territory, working for host-country anti-communist radio broadcasts services, and participating in a wide variety of anti-Soviet information operations.

As Minister of Internal Affairs Sergei Kruglov noted in 1953, "indoc-trination in the anti-Soviet spirit" was taking place among émigrés, and what is more, they were being prepared by Western countries as "agents in the forthcoming war against the USSR".¹¹⁶ This situation, in the eyes of the Soviet government, called for heightened vigilance by Soviet intelligence and it was therefore decided to once again resurrect the idea of repatriation in order to counter the perceived émigré threat. It seemed to the Soviets that a total roundup of émigrés back to Soviet soil was the best way of stopping the formation of émigré anti-Soviet combat units, breaking up the political emigration and thereby inhibiting émigré anti-Soviet information activities.

¹¹⁴ One well-known incident is the murder of the émigré Leon Trotsky in Mexico, which under Stalin's orders was carried out by NKVD agent Ramon Mercader in 1940. Ibid. p 114–116

¹¹⁵ The unit concerned with émigré espionage in countries outside the USSR was attached to different security structures. In 1947, a department of the Committee of Information (KI), formed from the Foreign Directorate of the MGB and the GRU, was assigned to carry out "EM" work ("...the investigation of the activities of Russian émigrés and émigré associations; the tracing of émigrés whom for one reason or another the Soviet regards as traitors; the penetration of émigré associations by Soviet agents; and the recruitment and use of émigrés as Soviet agents.") At the end of 1948, "EM" work was detached from the KI and transferred over as a function of the First Directorate of the MGB. In March 1954, the foreign intelligence unit was transferred to the newly organized KGB, where it retained this name and structure throughout the remainder of the Soviet era. See W. F. L. Owen et al., "Report of the Royal commission on espionage," (Sydney: Commonwealth of Australia, 1955), pp 431–432, Andrew et al. (2000), p 116.

¹¹⁶ Stelzl-Marx (2008), p 191

2.5 De-Stalinization and New Soviet Attitudes

Following the death of Stalin in March 1953, a liberalization of Soviet internal and external life began. This “new course” in Soviet foreign policy was characterized by improvements in East-West relations, an ease up of Cold War tensions and radical changes in the ideology of Soviet international relations. The idea that “limited collaboration was possible even with non-communists”¹¹⁷ was launched in Soviet foreign politics under the slogan of “peaceful co-existence”, with the intent to diminish risks of imminent atomic war.¹¹⁸ The shift in foreign tactics led to the resumption of contacts with capitalist countries and with communists abroad. Trade and cultural agreements were signed by the Soviet Union and the West, and foreign tourism was allowed to develop. Even Soviet leaders began traveling abroad—in contrast to Stalin, who never left the USSR save for the 1943 Teheran Conference during WWII. The new open atmosphere meant that Western citizens could once again visit the USSR and some Soviet citizens, albeit with severe restrictions, were allowed to travel abroad.¹¹⁹ All these measures were important in breaking the physical and spiritual isolation of the Soviet Union and its subordinate republics.

In the Soviet Union, domestic reforms and a relaxation of terror led to the process of liberalization that culminated with CP First Secretary Nikita S. Khrushchev's secret speech on February 25, 1956 at the Twentieth CPSU Congress denouncing the Stalin cult. Many hundreds of thousands of victims of Stalin's repressions were granted amnesty and rehabilitated and allowed to return home from the Gulag and from Siberian banishment.¹²⁰

The policy of de-Stalinization and the ensuing cultural thaw peaked in 1956–1957, when previously forbidden themes such as deportations, the Gulag, the questioning of Soviet bureaucracy and doubting the stereotype of the ideal life under Communism were discussed in the press and in literature.¹²¹ In attempts to free themselves from Moscow's central control, union republics passed measures promoting economic and cultural autonomy. Local, non-Russian communists were appointed to leading positions in the republican-level apparatus, and “National Communism” flourished. With regard to Soviet Latvia, the 1953–1959 period is known as the “Berkļavs era”, named after Eduards Berkļavs, the deputy chairman of

¹¹⁷ Alexander Dallin, “Recent Soviet historiography,” in *Russia under Khrushchev. An anthology from "Problems of communism"*, ed. A. Brumberg (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1962), p 471

¹¹⁸ Bruno Kalnins, *Rysslands historia och statskick* (Stockholm: Kronos/Tidens förlag, 1962), p 92

¹¹⁹ J. N. Westwood, *Russia 1917–1964* (London: B. T. Batsford Ltd., 1966), p 177

¹²⁰ Polian (2003), pp 183–185

¹²¹ Rolfs Ekmanis, *Latvian literature under the Soviets, 1940–1975* (Belmont, Mass.: Nordland, 1978), pp 185–215

the Latvian SSR Council of Ministers. He headed a group of ethnic Latvian communists who actively worked towards gaining autonomy from Moscow.¹²²

In the Soviet satellite states, the loosened political reigns paved the way for the so-called “revisionists”, who among other things demanded internal freedom of belief within the Communist Party and a transfer from Soviet state capitalism to real socialism.¹²³ The undercurrent of social protest gained in momentum, exploding in worker unrests in Poland and the Hungarian revolution in 1956, which was ruthlessly suppressed by the Soviet armed forces.

In the meantime, a prolonged power struggle was taking place among Stalin’s successors, and eventually Khrushchev emerged as victor when in June 1957 he defeated the other contestants for the position as leader of the CPSU and the Soviet government.¹²⁴ Khrushchev’s first steps after taking power were to tighten political controls: a propaganda campaign against revisionists was carried out in 1957–1961, and in late 1959 a purge of all national communists took place in the fourteen non-Russian union republics.¹²⁵ The internal political situation also intensified following new foreign conflicts between the East and the West concerning Berlin in 1960–1961 and the Cuban crisis in 1962. The Khrushchev era ended in October 1964, when growing dissatisfaction among members of the Party Presidium of the Central Committee (CC) led to his disposal and replacement by L. Brezhnev as First Secretary and A. Kosygin as Premier.¹²⁶

2.5.1 The Amnesty Decree of September 17, 1955

But all these transformations were still to come. With the start of the process of de-Stalinization in 1953, an important change in Soviet government attitudes took place with respect to deportees in Siberia and to the first wave repatriates and former war prisoners, who had been interned in the Gulag labor camps. Through a number of amnesties issued between March 1953 and May 1956, these persons were decriminalized and amnestied, and tens of thousands could return home to their native Baltic republics.¹²⁷ The same was also about to apply to the approximately one half million Soviet citizens

¹²² William D. Prigge, “Power, popular opinion, and the Latvian national communists,” *Journal of Baltic Studies* 45, No 3 (2013)

¹²³ Kalnins (1962), p 94

¹²⁴ Westwood (1966), pp 168–169

¹²⁵ Kalnins (1962), p 95 presents the traditional view of the purging of national communists in Latvia. A different view is proposed by William Prigge, “The Latvian purges of 1959: A revision study,” *Journal of Baltic Studies* 35, No 3 (2004).

¹²⁶ Westwood (1966), pp 176–177, 194–195

¹²⁷ Amir Weiner, “The empires pay a visit: Gulag returnees, East European rebellions, and Soviet frontier politics,” *The Journal of Modern History* 78, No 2 (2006): p 337

abroad, who had refused to repatriate to the Soviet Union after the war. In a bid to counter émigré fears of persecution upon returning, KGB Chairman Ivan Serov recommended in December 1954, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet to adopt an amnesty for wartime collaborators with Nazi Germany.¹²⁸ As Serov noted, these “former war prisoners and *Ostarbeiters* who were in the West could be used as troops in a future war against the USSR.”¹²⁹ The amnesty, as Serov believed, would be the convincing factor to get these émigrés back on Soviet soil, and a potential threat to the Soviet state would be removed.¹³⁰ In addition, by augmenting the definition of repatriation from “the return of emigrants to their country of origin” to also include an all-important juridical aspect: “with the restoration of their legal citizenship”,¹³¹ the Soviet government would demonstrate a “less vindictive attitude towards repatriates” and advocate the position that “returnees no longer were to be regarded as pariahs”.¹³²

The legal mainspring that confirmed this change in attitude to wartime collaborators (as defined by the Soviet penal code) was the adoption of the Amnesty Decree of September 17, 1955—the first political amnesty in thirty-one years.¹³³ The decree, proclaimed by the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR and signed by Chairman K. Voroshilov and Secretary N. Pegov, extended amnesty to all Soviet citizens who “during the Great Patriotic War of 1941–1945 had collaborated with the occupants due to cowardice or ignorance”, with the exception of persons “sentenced for the murder and torture of Soviet citizens”. It provided for the immediate release from imprisonment of Soviet citizens sentenced and/or exiled for serving in the German army, German police or special German units, and their rehabilitation, as well as for the end of all on-going court proceedings for persons being tried under paragraphs 58.-1, 58.-3, 58.-4, 58.-6, 58.-10, and 58.-12 of the Russian Criminal Code. The decree specifically stated that amnesty on these grounds was also extended to Soviet citizens abroad. Moreover, the Amnesty Decree specified that Soviet citizens abroad were to

¹²⁸ Mikkonen (2014), p 188

¹²⁹ Alexander N. Yakovlev, *A century of violence in Soviet Russia* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), p 178

¹³⁰ Mikkonen (2014), p 188

¹³¹ Elliott (1982), p 220

¹³² Ibid. Yakovlev (2002) holds another view. He writes that the problem of former war prisoners and repatriates was not at all solved during the Soviet period, and that “the full restoration of the legal rights of Russian citizens captured in battle in defence of the motherland became possible only after Decree No 63 of the president of the Russian Federation, passed on 24 January 1995 on the recommendation of the Commission on the Rehabilitation of Victims of Political Repression” (p. 180).

¹³³ Previous decrees (seven in all), granting political amnesty to opponents of the Soviet regime, were issued by the central authorities of the RSFSR and the USSR between the end of 1918 and the beginning of 1924, see O. Yurchenko, “The latest Soviet amnesty,” *Bulletin of the Institute for the Study of the History and Culture of the USSR II*, No 9 (1955): p 26.

be released from liability if they had participated in anti-Soviet organizations after the war and publicly repented this fact. Finally, the decree empowered the Council of Ministers to carry out measures that would assist the entry into the Soviet Union of Soviet citizens from abroad, as well as that of their family members, regardless of their citizenship, and to help them find employment in the Soviet Union.

The basis for the decree was declared as being “the end of the state of war between the USSR and Germany”, whereby amnesty could be given to those Soviet citizens that collaborated with the occupiers in the time of the Great Patriotic War.¹³⁴ The events referred to were the declaration made by the Soviet Union on January 25, 1955 that Germany was no longer an enemy, and more specifically, the meeting between the two government delegations, headed by Premier Nikolai A. Bulganin and Chancellor Kurt Adenauer, that took place in Moscow on September 9–13, 1955.¹³⁵ The talks resulted in the establishment of diplomatic relations between the USSR and the Federal Republic of Germany, i.e., an expression of normalization of relationships between the two countries.¹³⁶ Moreover, Adenauer secured the release of 9,000–10,000 German prisoners of war and the return of about 20,000 civilians from the Soviet Union to Germany.¹³⁷

It has been proposed that the September 17, 1955 Amnesty Decree was issued by the Soviet Union in response to Adenauer’s negotiations for the return of its prisoners of war: the favorable impression secured by Adenauer for the release of the Germans was to be off-set and “accompanied by a similar action in regard to Soviet citizens serving sentences for collaboration with the Germans...for the effect [that] it would produce abroad”.¹³⁸ The timing of the decree's release seems to suggest that this may very well have been so—especially when considering the expected domestic reactions.

The September 17, 1955 Amnesty Decree was given widespread attention in the Soviet press. Copies of the decree were distributed to refugees in their native languages and information about the decree was circulated among the DP settlements in Western Europe.¹³⁹ Over the years, reference was repeatedly made to the decree in the columns of *Par atgriešanos Dzimtenē*.

¹³⁴ ‘Varenās Padomju lielvalsts augstsirdība’ [The magnanimity of the great Soviet world power], *PaDz* No 11, 1955 p 1

¹³⁵ ‘Diktatoren von heute’, *Der Spiegel* No 38, Sep 14, 1955, retrieved 2011-12-23 from <http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-31971178.html>

¹³⁶ ‘PSRS Augstākās Padomes Prezidijs...’ [The Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR...], *PaDz* No 12 Oct 1955 p 2

¹³⁷ William Glenn Gray, *Germany's Cold War: the global campaign to isolate East Germany, 1949–1969* (University of North Carolina Press, 2003), pp 34–37

¹³⁸ Yurchenko (1955): p 28. Elliott (1982), p 221 takes up a similar argument.

¹³⁹ See also among others, Yurchenko (1955); B.K., ‘Starp Maskavu un Ženevu’ [Between Moscow and Geneva], *Brīvība* No 8 (63) Oct 1955 p 1; ‘Amnestija Latvijā’ [Amnesty in Latvia], *Brīvība* No 9 (64) Nov 1955 p 3

Detailed explanations of who could receive amnesty were provided in newspaper articles, and assurances were given that returnees would not be punished. It was emphasized that repatriating Soviet citizens would be given Soviet passports, and their family members, if they were foreigners, would be given entry visas, whereby they could then apply for Soviet citizenship in their new places of residence.¹⁴⁰

In view of all the advantages and benefits provided by the political amnesty, Soviet authorities expected that all remaining émigré doubts about their safety and security after returning to the Motherland would be dispelled.¹⁴¹ After all, throughout the months before the amnesty was announced, reassurances were invariably given that the Motherland “would understand each of its children and forgive them”.¹⁴²

In the spirit of this new humanitarian attitude, returnees from abroad would no longer be indiscriminately treated as class enemies, socially alien and dangerous elements, or punished as wartime collaborators and traitors, as had been the case under Stalin. Therefore it was believed by Soviet policymakers that this time émigrés would return home on their own volition. In the end, previous repatriations had a history of success. The first repatriation drive ten years earlier had resulted in the voluntary and forcible return of over five million persons to Soviet territory, and the Armenian repatriation campaign of 1946–1947, involving no coercion at all, resulted in the return of 60,000 to 80,000 Armenians from the diaspora.¹⁴³ It was hoped that this second repatriation campaign would succeed with the return of one half million Soviet citizens.

2.5.2 New Émigré Theory

As a result of the new humanitarian attitude to émigrés, a shift in Soviet perception of émigrés took place. After WWII and up to Stalin’s death, the émigré was regarded as a collaborator, criminal, a likely foreign spy, a socially dangerous element, who could expect to be sentenced to twenty-five

¹⁴⁰ The possibility for a Soviet citizen to return with his or her foreign spouse was of significance, since under Stalin, marriage to foreigners had been banned. See ‘Atbildam uz jautājumiem’ [We answer your questions], *PaDz* No 13 Oct 1955 p 1.

¹⁴¹ ‘Varenās Padomju lielvalsts augstsirdība’ [The magnanimity of the great Soviet world power], *PaDz* No 11, 1955 p 1; ‘Atbildam uz jautājumiem’ [We answer your questions], *PaDz* No 13 Oct 1955 p 1

¹⁴² ‘Komitejas «Par atgriešanos Dzimtenē» aicinājums’ [Appeal of the Committee «For Return to the Motherland»], *PaDz* No 1 Apr 1955 p 1, (ref: *Appeal*).

¹⁴³ See Reuben Darbinian, “The proposed second repatriation by the government of Soviet Armenia,” *The Armenian Review* 15 (1962): p 6. The Armenian relocation to Soviet Armenia cannot be regarded as a true repatriation, since most of the returnees were not former Russian or Soviet nationals but were foreign-born Armenians who were moving to a country where they had never lived before, see Ginsburgs (1957): p 347.

years in the Gulag upon return to the Soviet Union.¹⁴⁴ However, with the passing of decrees that restored legal citizenship for returnees, émigrés could no longer be indiscriminately treated as criminals. A new émigré theory had to be developed that could justify their return as Soviet citizens, but still allow for the possibility to punish them if necessary.

It was therefore decided to divide émigrés into two classes, “the ordinary rank-and-file émigrés” and the ironically ascribed “so-called political refugees”.¹⁴⁵ This new émigré theory stated that the “rank-and-file émigrés”, which according to the Soviet point of view constituted an overwhelming majority, were those that had ended up abroad because of their own stupidity or foolishness. It was proclaimed that they had either been tricked into staying abroad, or had not been able to return after the war because of repatriation obstruction by the Western authorities. This class of émigrés, consisting of ordinary people, would be received with open arms by the Soviet Union: their citizenship would be restored and they would be provided with employment and housing.

The second class of émigrés, the “so-called political refugees”, consisted of the émigré leadership. They were individuals who, because of their pre-war social class or based upon their actions during the war, were “non-repentant bourgeois, proven fascists or war criminals”. These persons, if they were to return, were to be punished according to Soviet law.¹⁴⁶

It was anticipated that as a result of this humanitarian approach to repatriates, the émigré leaders, in other words the “so-called political refugees”—the incorrigible bourgeois, fascists and war criminals, assessed to be at most a few thousand—would remain abroad, but that all the other hundreds of thousands of refugees, émigrés and DPs would return to their homelands in the Soviet Union.¹⁴⁷ The Soviet authorities were convinced that most of the hundreds of thousands rank-and-file émigrés—those that had ended up abroad because of their own stupidity or foolishness and had been “tricked” into remaining abroad—would repatriate.¹⁴⁸

An overwhelming majority of the 125,000 Latvian refugees and DPs that were in the Western occupation zones of Germany and Austria resisted the repatriation overtures of the UNRRA. Due to the fear of persecution and to objections of a political nature, they chose the resettlement option of the

¹⁴⁴ Spridzāns (1995)

¹⁴⁵ Ievkalns (1966), pp 10–11, 70

¹⁴⁶ Ibid. p 10.

¹⁴⁷ Lešinskis (1985): pp 5–6

¹⁴⁸ Imants Lešinskis, “Kalpības gadi [Years of servitude],” *Latvija šodien*, December 1986, p 6. The two émigré classes were also known as the “leaders” and the “confused crowd”, see ‘Kommunistisk offensiv mot baltiska flyktingar’, *Dagens Nyheter* Nov 8, 1960.

IRO, dispersing to the USA, Canada, Australia, the UK, and elsewhere in the free world. In their new host countries, the émigrés organized anti-communist ethnic communities with the political agenda to work for the reinstatement of an independent Latvia. As noted by concerned Soviet observers, the émigrés enjoyed inordinate political support from host country governments for their anti-Soviet activities. Considering the ongoing Western covert security operations in the Baltics involving émigré combatants, the clandestine US support to anti-communist émigré organizations, and the plans for an émigré Volunteer Freedom Corps to be deployed against the Soviet Union in a future WWII, the Soviet government decided that an attempt must be made to put a stop to the anti-Soviet emigration. A new repatriation campaign would be launched, inviting the émigrés to return home. To ensure a maximum number of returnees, and to allay their fears of persecution, the September 17, 1955 Amnesty Decree was passed, which extended amnesty to all Soviet citizens who had collaborated with the enemy, served in the German military forces, or participated in anti-Soviet organizations after the war. It was expected that the émigré masses would return in the tens, if not hundreds of thousands. It was also anticipated that the only emigrants not returning home would be the “so-called political refugees”—the small number that in the view of the Soviets were bona fide war criminals hiding in the West.

In the next chapter the structure and organization of the Committee For Return to the Motherland will be examined.

3 The Committee For Return to the Motherland

3.1 The Founding of the Committee

The organization that was to become the operative center of the second Soviet repatriation campaign was the Committee For Return to the Motherland, set up in early 1955 in East Berlin. It presented itself as a voluntary organization of former POWs and repatriates, and acted the part of an intermediary between the ethnic exile communities and the Soviet homeland. The Committee represented the Soviet government on repatriation policy issues and it was the center from which official Soviet government communiqués concerning repatriation were released. The Committee was the end result of a number of actions that had been initiated years earlier by the center of authority in Moscow in preparation for the launch of the second Soviet repatriation campaign.

3.2 The Origins of the Committee

Since relevant source documents concerning the origins of the Committee For Return to the Motherland cannot be accessed or have been lost,¹ the process leading up to the founding of the Committee, its operations in East Berlin, its reorganization, decentralization of functions, and relocation to Moscow cannot be reconstructed in detail. However, with the help of public Soviet sources, contemporary press reports including the Committee's own newspaper *Par atgriešanos Dzimtenē*, memoir literature, KGB handbooks and instruction manuals, as well as documents of the Communist Party of the Latvian SSR in the Latvian State Archives, it is possible to approximately recreate the visible and some non-visible aspects of Committee activities and its functions in promoting the repatriation campaign.

The earliest currently known archival evidence concerning the Committee For Return to the Motherland is from November 10, 1953, when Minister of Internal Affairs Sergei Kruglov proposed the establishment of an agency in

¹ See Chapter 1.5.

East Berlin from which a forthcoming repatriation campaign would be managed. Kruglov planned for

...the installation of a 'propaganda organ' in the Soviet sector of Berlin, which should bear the name 'Union for the Return to the Homeland' and be staffed with 'trustworthy agents of the MVD [i.e., the Ministry of Internal Affairs], who are themselves repatriates or returning emigrants'.²

In the same letter, Kruglov declared that the goals of the propaganda organ were to be "the prevention of emigration and the furthering of the struggle against anti-Soviet propaganda."³

Another document closely related to the functions of the Committee is KGB Chairman Ivan Serov's recommendation in December 1954⁴ to adopt the September 17, 1955 Amnesty Decree. Considering the conviction that the West was secretly training troops consisting of "former war prisoners and *Ostarbeiters*" to fight in a future war against the USSR,⁵ Serov found it necessary that such an amnesty be passed, since, as he saw it, the "émigrés' fear of persecution" was stopping their return.⁶

One more piece of archival evidence concerning the founding of the Committee is from a document of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Latvian SSR, stating that the (undated) decision to establish the Committee For Return to the Motherland was passed by the Central Committee of the CPSU and the Council of Ministers of the USSR.⁷ The first public news about the organization appeared on March 9, 1955 in the German newspaper *Tägliche Rundschau*, which announced that a newly established Committee For Return to the Motherland had started operations in East Berlin.⁸ A month later, the first issue (April) of the repatriation newspaper *PaDz* was published and distributed among DP and refugee settlements and émigré communities around the world.

Years later, when the Committee For Return to the Motherland had morphed into the Soviet Committee For Cultural Relations with Countrymen Abroad, its covert goals were laid out in more detail in a Soviet Intelligence Officer's Handbook, which stated that the "First Chief Directorate is

² Letter of Minister of Internal Affairs dated 10 Nov 1953, N 1673/K, in Archive of the President of the Russian Federation, Moscow (AP RF), F. 3, op. 50, d. 509, pp 27–31, as cited in Stelzl-Marx (2008), p 191.

³ Ibid. The change in the nomenclature from MVD to KGB took place in March 1954.

⁴ "I. A. Serov's (KGB) statement to the Central Committee of the Communist Party, 14 December 1954, in *Istoricheskii arkhiv*, no. 2, (1995):110–12" as cited from note 16 in Mikkonen (2014), p 198.

⁵ Yakovlev (2002), p 178

⁶ Mikkonen (2014), p 188

⁷ LVA PA 101.f., 19.apr., 55.l., 276.–279.lp

⁸ See Andriewsky (1955): p 127. The *Tägliche Rundschau* was a newspaper of the Soviet High Commission published in East Berlin from May 15, 1945 to the end of June 1955.

responsible for directing the activities” of the Committee, and that the KGB exploits the potential of the organization in order

...to identify and study émigrés and their contacts which may be of interest to Soviet intelligence; to identify enemy agents infiltrated in progressive patriotic émigré groups; to expose and compromise anti-Soviet émigré centres and capitalist intelligence services; to spread disinformation materials abroad helpful to the USSR, to disseminate information and rumours through progressive émigré organisations, newspapers, periodicals and other channels; to track down traitors and others guilty of crimes against the state and return them to the USSR; to expose war criminals among the émigré community in the eyes of public opinion in capitalist countries; to study compatriots visiting the USSR.⁹

Thus in its visible form, according to the founding legend,¹⁰ the Committee was established by repatriates and former POWs with the purpose of helping compatriots abroad return to their Soviet homeland. In its non-visible form, the Committee was a subsection of the First Chief Directorate of the KGB with the covert assignment to destroy the anti-Soviet emigration abroad. The Committee provided a cover for the activities of intelligence officers and agents assigned to East Berlin in their struggle against anti-Soviet propaganda, and it was a front for their engagement in émigré espionage and similar covert tasks.

3.2.1 The Committee Chairman

The biography of the Committee’s most prominent person—Chairman Nikolai Mikhailov, its founder—was presented as that of a POW and resistance leader who returned to the Motherland. According to *PaDz*, Mikhailov was taken prisoner at Charkov in May 1942 and then incarcerated in the Dachau concentration camp. Though suffering from tuberculosis, he participated in the organization of the underground movement “National Anti-Fascist Committee”, which made it possible for camp inmates to secretly listen to Soviet radio broadcasts. He also united propaganda workers that were active in the underground in “the battle against the lies of the

⁹ Mitrokhin (2006), p 376. See also Fabrichnikov et al. (1968), and Andrew et al. (2000), p 650. The Latvian KGB's 1st Intelligence Division (responsible for foreign intelligence) was subordinate to the USSR KGB First Chief Directorate (PGU), and organized its work according to the PGU's work plan. The latter had a special section, the 19th Department, responsible for Soviet Emigration (Targeting and Recruitment), see Zālīte (1999): p 112. According to Andrew et al. (2000), p 650, the 19th Department, *i.a.*, operated via the Soviet Committee for Cultural Relations in order to mount actions and take measures against emigrants. For more information about the structure and organization of the Riga-based Latvian Committee for Cultural Relations with Countrymen Abroad, see Zālīte (1999) and Daudze (2011), p 68.

¹⁰ See Chapter 5.1.

enemy”.¹¹ In a subsequent article, Mikhailov’s patriotic biography improves: he is presented as being not only the leader of the previously mentioned “National Anti-Fascist Committee” in Dachau, but also as the head of the post-war Dachau Camp International Committee, working for the repatriation of all citizens to their homelands, including those of the USSR, France, Italy and Belgium.¹² After returning to Moscow, Mikhailov is demobilized in 1947 due to weak health. Nevertheless, it is noted, he could not forget the fate of compatriots abroad, and as a result of these concerns, the Committee is established.



Fig. 3.1: Committee Chairman Major General Nikolai Filippovich Mikhailov. Photograph from PaDz No 1, April 1955.

In Western press, however, another picture of Mikhailov’s actions during and after German captivity emerges. Historians Roberts and Cipko refer to an article in the *New York Times* and to Walter Duschnyck of the *National Review*, both of which describe Mikhailov as a turncoat and a man hated by his anti-communist fellow citizens: he had first sided with fellow anti-communists while in captivity, later to betray them upon the arrival of the liberating Soviet forces.¹³ An émigré Russian source states that Mikhailov, in his capacity as general, did nothing to stop the shootings, mass beatings, and verbal abuse of Russian POWs that were carried out by the “Cheka’s army units” at the former POW camp in Görlitz.¹⁴

3.2.2 The Committee Members

According to the *Appeal* published in the first issue of *Par atgriešanos Dzimtenē*, the Committee had seventeen members:¹⁵

1. Nikolai Filippovich Mikhailov (Major General of the Soviet Army)

¹¹ A. Dubovikovs, ‘Dzimtenes mīlestībai nav nekādu šķēršļu’ [The love of the Motherland has no barriers], *PaDz* No 1 Apr 1955 p 2

¹² ‘N. F. Michailovam 60 gadu’ [N. F. Mikhailov turns 60], *PaDz* No 38(128) May 1957 p 2

¹³ Roberts et al. (2008), p 25

¹⁴ T., ‘Michailova īstā seja’ [The real face of Mikhailov], *Laiks* No 70 Aug 31, 1955 p 5

¹⁵ *Appeal*.

2. Aleksej Nikolajevich Dubovikov (Senior scientific co-worker at the Gorky World Literature Institute of the USSR Academy of Sciences)
3. Igor Leontiyevich Muratov (Writer, laureate of the Stalin prize)
4. Nikolai Ivanovich Mitrofanov (Director of the Scientific Research Institute Department)
5. Aleksandr Fjodorovich Lebedev (Head of the editorial department of the newspaper *Medicinskij rabotnik*)
6. Valentin Aleksandrovich Rodinkov (Head of the Factory Planning and Dispatching Section of the Moscow Small-Automobile Plant)
7. Josif Pavlovich Krutij (Pensioner)
8. Nikolai Timofeyevich Panich (Senior agronomist at the *Molotov* vineyards in Kasnodar)
9. Josif Josifovich Korob (Professor at the Belocerkova Institute of Agriculture)
10. Juhan Juhanovich Kāosaar (Senior lecturer at Tartu State University)¹⁶
11. Shalva Nikolajevich Maglakelidze (Legal counsel of the city of Rustav, Georgia)
12. Nellija Ivanovna Dauguvitiene (Actress at the Lithuanian SSR Vilnius Drama Theater)
13. Nikolai Vladimirovich Dostal (Film director at the *Mosfilm* movie studio)
14. Josif Ivanovich Taraimovich (Scientific co-worker at the *Gidroprojekt* Scientific Institute)
15. Akram Aripovich Muzafarov (Director of the Invention and Rationalization Division at the Uzbek SSR Ministry of Agriculture)
16. Aleksandr Ivanovich Razgonin (Hero of the Soviet Union)
17. Alfons Pēteris d. Prūsis (Senior engineer at the Riga State Project Management Institute)

An eighteenth member on the Committee list—Lotfulla Abdulmenovich Fattachov, laureate of the Stalin prize—is included in another version of the *Appeal*, published as a separate flyer.

As their titles and names indicate, the members had various professions and ethnicity, and they came from various geographic regions of the Soviet Union. Their ethnic backgrounds—Russian, Ukrainian, Belarus, Georgian, Tatar, Uzbek, Estonian, Latvian, Lithuanian—correspond to the émigré nationalities that were targeted by the second Soviet repatriation campaign. The Committee members represented a spread of ethnic and social backgrounds, from pensioner and worker to Stalin prize laureates and a Hero of the Soviet Union. There was, however, only one woman, the Lithuanian actress N. Dauguvitiene, among the Committee members.

The Committee members shared common features in their biographies: all had been outside the borders of the Soviet Union for some period in their lives. They had been held as POWs in German captivity, or had worked as *Ostarbeiter* (forced laborers), or had been evacuees, and had returned to their Soviet homelands during or after WWII. They also attained personal and professional achievements after returning to the Motherland. For example, Dubovikov, who sat with Mikhailov as a POW in Dachau, was now working as Committee secretary;¹⁷ Mitrofanov, another former POW, was currently

¹⁶ The name variously appears as Krosārs, Keosārs, Kjaosārs, Kjavšārs in different issues and publications.

¹⁷ A. Dubovikovs, ‘Dzimtenes mīlestībai nav nekādu šķēršļu’ [The love of the Motherland has no barriers], *PaDz* No 1 Apr 1955 p 2

head of a chemical manufacturing institute;¹⁸ and Taraimovich, who was held captive abroad for over three years, was now a senior scientific researcher in the hydroelectric construction sector.¹⁹

Other biographies show similar professional successes: former POW Razgonin was awarded the medal of the “Golden Star” and received the distinction Hero of the Soviet Union;²⁰ Fattachov was appointed Director of the Tatar Autonomous SSR Artists’ Federation Art Fund and became a Stalin prize laureate in 1951;²¹ Korob returned to Ukraine after a few years abroad, and was appointed professor at the Bila Tserkva Institute of Agriculture;²² Kāosaar returned to Estonia from Finland after the war, to work as associate professor of Estonian literature at Tartu State University;²³ the repatriate Dostal participated in the production of four internationally acclaimed films;²⁴ and the returnee Muzafarov built himself a house with a loan from the state in his native Uzbekistan.²⁵ Panich, a recent repatriate from the American zone of occupied Germany, was currently working as senior agronomist of the *Molotov* sovchoz in the Kuban region.²⁶

For five Committee members, Dauguvitiene, Lebedev, Rodinkov, Krutij, and Maglakelidze, no biographical information at all was provided in *Par atgriešanos Dzimtenē*. In émigré circles, however, Krutij and Maglakelidze were well known, since information about them had appeared in Western émigré publications. The latter two were long-term émigrés, having lived abroad since the years of the Russian civil war. Krutij had begun in politics in 1902, and later sided against the Soviet takeover of the free Ukraine. He fled to the West in 1919, and had since then been an anti-communist freedom fighter for the Ukrainian cause and a member of the Central Committee of the exile Ukrainian Socialist Party. In early 1954, aged 75, Krutij returned to his Soviet homeland. Some émigré observers saw his return as being voluntary, asserting that “Krutij had been a Bolshevik agent among the Ukrainian emigration but played no important role.”²⁷ His

¹⁸ N. Mitrofanovs, ‘Atgrieztijs ir iespējams’ [It is possible to return], *PaDz* No 1 Apr 1955 p 2

¹⁹ ‘Tā dzīvo pilsoņi, kas atgriezušies Dzimtenē’ [This is how citizens who have returned to the Motherland live], *PaDz* No 2, Apr 1955 p 2

²⁰ A. Razgonin, ‘No sirds runāju’ [I speak from my heart], *PaDz* No 1 Apr 1955 p 3

²¹ ‘Tā dzīvo pilsoņi, kas atgriezušies Dzimtenē’ [This is how citizens who have returned to the Motherland live], *PaDz* No 2, Apr 1955 p 2

²² ‘Profesors’ [The Professor], *PaDz* No 3 May 1955 p 3

²³ ‘Brīvas Igaunijas brīvie pilsoņi’ [The free citizens of a free Estonia], *PaDz* No 7 Aug 1955 p 3

²⁴ ‘Kinorežisors’ [Film producer], *PaDz* No 3 May 1955 p 3

²⁵ A. Muzafarovs, ‘Dzimtajā Uzbekijā’ [In Native Uzbekistan], *PaDz* No 1 Apr 1955 p 2

²⁶ ‘Agronomis N. Paničs uzņem viesus’ [Agronomist N. Panich receives visitors], *PaDz* No 15 Nov 1955 p 3; N. Paničs, ‘Draugi, tautieši, jūs gaida mīļotā Kubaņa!’ [Friends, compatriots, the beloved Kuban is waiting for you!], *PaDz* No 2 Apr 1955 p 2

²⁷ Andriewsky (1955): p 128

repatriation was thus explained as a cover used by the Soviet Union to “call back an agent that was of no further use”.²⁸ Other exile Ukrainian sources, however, allege that Krutij was kidnapped by Soviet security agents. Krutij denies this in a magazine article, declaring that he returned to communist Ukraine “of his own free will”. In the same article, he also reveals that the exile Ukrainian movement is led and financed by the USA, and that “American imperialists” are preparing “exile Ukrainian troops” for military assignments against the Soviet Union.²⁹ In *PaDz*, he appears in a photograph which shows him conversing with Committee Chairman Mikhailov and another recent returnee.³⁰

Likewise, no biographical information appeared in *PaDz* about Shalva Maglakelidze, a noted Georgian exile politician and military commander. In the 1920s and 1930s he lived in Latvia and France, and was a leading political actor in exile Russian and Georgian circles.³¹ During WWII Maglakelidze collaborated with the Nazis and recruited Soviet Georgian POWs and émigrés to the newly established Georgian Legion in the *Wehrmacht*. After the war, he became a military advisor to Chancellor Konrad Adenauer of the Federal German Republic. In January 1954 Maglakelidze founded the Munich-based Union of Georgian Soldiers Abroad. In August 1954, he disappeared from his home and a report about his “voluntary departure to the Soviet Union” appeared in *Pravda* in December 1954.³² As it turned out, he had been abducted from West German territory by Soviet security agents, and since the circumstances of his disappearance remained unclear during his lifetime, it was speculated that Maglakelidze had been a Soviet agent all along. These suspicions were strengthened when revelations concerning émigré Ukrainian and Georgian politics and politicians, allegedly from Maglakelidze, were widely divulged in Soviet press. When Maglakelidze’s name appeared on the Committee’s member list, purportedly working as legal counsel in the city of Rustav, Georgia, his reputation and credibility in the West was more or less destroyed.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Iosef Krutij, “Deklaration av politiske flyktingen Iosef Krutij som gått över till Tyska demokratiska republiken. Anledningen till min brytning med de ukrainska nationalisterna,” *Nyheter från Sovjetunionen* [n.d.], 1955

³⁰ *PaDz* No 1, Apr 1955, p 3

³¹ V. Ščerbinskis, ‘Latvia’s Minority Groups from the South and East’, retrieved 2014-01-04 from www.conflicts.rem33.com/images/The_Baltic_States/lat_asien.htm

³² S.-V., ‘Brīdina no komūnistu infiltrācijas’ [Warning against Communist infiltration], *Latvju Ziņas* No 9 May 5, 1955 p 1

3.3 Committee Venue, Organization, and Size

The placement of the Committee For Return to the Motherland in the Soviet sector of Berlin was motivated by a number of factors. In the mid-1950s, this was the closest the Soviet Union could physically get to many of the potential repatriates in Western Europe.³³ A decade earlier, during the first repatriation campaign, the Soviet Union had repatriation missions placed throughout the Allied zones of occupation in Germany and Austria, as well as in over twenty other countries.³⁴ However, most were closed in the late 1940s, often upon the request of the host country governments, who no longer saw any reason for having separate Soviet missions to carry out functions that could just as well be done by Soviet embassies or consulates.³⁵ When preparing for the second repatriation campaign, the Soviet government was made aware that it was no longer possible to re-open such missions in the West where many of the refugees and DPs resided, since these countries would not tolerate such an invasive Soviet presence on their territory.³⁶ Therefore the Soviet sector of Berlin, with its proximity to potential repatriates in West Germany, was chosen. Moreover, the German Democratic Republic was a loyal ally of the Soviet Union, and would provide the KGB a free rein for its espionage activities. Berlin also was technologically advanced in that it had the necessary infrastructure for mass communication with émigré abroad.³⁷ The city housed printing and broadcasting facilities; for example, the transmitter at nearby Königs Wusterhausen could be used for the repatriation broadcasts prepared by the Committee For Return to the Motherland.³⁸ The city was also a major transportation hub, and it had sufficient land, railroad and air facilities for transferring potential repatriates to the Soviet Union.

The Committee was located on Behrenstrasse 64, a few hundred meters to the east of the Brandenburg Gate. A block to the north is the Unter den Linden boulevard and the Soviet Embassy, and a short walk away—the Friedrichstrasse train station, which after the erection of the Berlin Wall became an entry point into West Berlin from East Berlin.³⁹

³³ The other alternative, Vienna, Austria, became less attractive when the Soviet Union withdrew its forces in connection with the termination of Allied occupation of Austria in mid-1955.

³⁴ Soviet Repatriation Missions were set up, for example, in the USA, Iran, Egypt and French Indochina, see Dyczok (2000), p 29.

³⁵ Elliott (1982), p 145

³⁶ It was said that the missions were used more as recruiting and reconnaissance centers for Soviet spies than as repatriation centers. See Simon Wolin and Robert M. Slusser, *The Soviet secret police* (London: Methuen & Co Ltd, 1957), p 350; also Elliott (1982), p 139.

³⁷ Mikkonen (2011): p 47

³⁸ The Königs Wusterhausen transmitter was also used by Radio Wolga, which broadcast programs for the Soviet Armed Forces stationed in the German Democratic Republic.

³⁹ Lešinskis (1985): p 6



Fig. 3.2: Returnees visiting the Committee before their repatriation to the Motherland. Photograph from *PaDz* No 12, Oct 1955.

According to two West German journalists who visited Behrenstrasse 64 in 1956, the Committee's reception was located on the third floor. The Chairman had a spacious office, and visitors and repatriates were received in a large auditorium containing tables and chairs covered with information materials, posters, and books about the Soviet Union.⁴⁰

Initially, there were discussions in the Western press that the Committee had more than just its one office in East Berlin. It was alleged in newspaper *Jaunais Apskats*, for example, that the Committee had centers in the East German cities of Chemnitz, Dresden, Leipzig, Magdeburg, and Potsdam, before it was realized that these were fictitious addresses used by the Committee for propaganda mailings.⁴¹ An article in *PaDz* mentions that the Committee had a representational office in Vienna,⁴² which may have been in the Soviet Embassy, where KGB agents working as diplomats were operatively engaged in the repatriation campaign.⁴³

In January 1957 the Committee relocated to Schadowstrasse 1-B, not far from Behrenstrasse 64. The post office box address (Berlin, NW 63, Postschliessfach Nr. 6) for correspondence remained unchanged.⁴⁴ The new address was announced in *PaDz*, but no explanation was given for the move. Five years later, in early 1962, the contact address for the Committee and for

⁴⁰ K.D., 'Repatriācijas ģenerālis nekaunīgi samelojies' [Repatriation general entangled in lies], *Laiks* No 33 April 25, 1956 p 2

⁴¹ Ž. Unāms, 'Maskavas kamols ietin arī Kanadas latviešus' [Moscow's yarn entangles also Canada's Latvians], *Jaunais Apskats* No 39, Nov 11, 1955 p 6

⁴² 'Uz mājām! No Austrijas' [Homeward bound! From Austria], *PaDz* No 7 Aug 1955 p 4

⁴³ For a similar set up of KGB agents working as repatriation officers at the Soviet Embassy in Canada, see Roberts et al. (2008), p 50.

⁴⁴ *PaDz* No 7(97) Jan 1957 p 4

the newspaper changed back to its original venue—now numbered Behrenstrasse 64/65, where it remained for the coming decades.⁴⁵



Fig. 3.3: Entrance door to Behrenstrasse 64/65 in Berlin, currently housing the Russian Embassy School. (Photograph taken 2011 by author)

Concerning the size of the East Berlin Committee, the memoir literature and contemporary newspaper articles indicate a range of magnitudes and scope. Former KGB agent Imants Lešinskis notes that the East Berlin Committee For Return to the Motherland was of considerable size, with plentiful staff resources and ample office facilities and the capacity to receive thousands of repatriates. He also mentions that most of the organization’s employees were “career KGB officers and civilian employees from Belarus, Armenia, and Ukraine”.⁴⁶ This seems to agree with what is written in Latvian émigré press in late 1956, that

...about 30 persons of different nationalities work on the Mikhailov staff, whose names are known on this side of the Iron Curtain. About half of them work with translation, secretarial and various “paperwork” duties, but the other half is involved in the active recruitment of repatriates.⁴⁷

The existence of independent, external co-workers, who work on assignment of the Committee, is also mentioned:

To this should be added individual “activists”, who are usually placed near the major émigré centers, for example, the ridiculous “Viesturian organization”, which distributes repatriation flyers that defame prominent persons of our community and promise that “all is forgiven”.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ *DzB* No 3(597) Jan 1962 p 4

⁴⁶ Lešinskis (1985): p 6

⁴⁷ ‘Ko dara Michailovs?’ [What is Mikhailov doing?], *Latvija* No 45, Dec 8, 1956 p 3

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

Another impression of Committee size is presented by Harald Peep, the former Estonian representative at the East Berlin Committee, who writes in his memoirs that the Committee staff numbered about ten persons.⁴⁹ He describes them as

... writer Igor Muratov, some young women at the typewriters taking care of the mail and other administrative duties, a photographer-snoop, a male speaker for the radio broadcasts and the so-called Baltic group of three ... Simpler assignments (chauffeuring, cleaning, and writing addresses on mail items) were done by some obsequiously loyal Germans.⁵⁰

The articles about the Committee in *Par atgriešanas Dzimtenē* present yet another picture. Next to Committee Chairman Major General N. Mikhailov, six persons are mentioned as working for the Committee: Secretary A. Dubovikov, Editor-in-Chief of the repatriation newspaper I. Muratov and Committee members J. Krutij, N. Mitrofanov, A. Lebedev and V. Rodinkov.⁵¹ Together with Mikhailov, these four Russians and two Ukrainians were, among other things, the signatories of the application to the East German government, asking for permission to establish the Committee's office in East Berlin.⁵² Their assignments, as can be seen in *PaDz*, were to preside at press conferences, author articles, answer letters, and receive repatriates.

Others who worked at the Committee are the "Baltic group of three", as they are called by Peep and Talcis in their memoirs, though their names never appear in *PaDz*. The three consist of Latvian journalist and writer Ādolfs Talcis, Lithuanian journalist Rimantas Budrys, and Estonian literary scholar Harald Peep. According to Lešinskis, these three were so called clandestine civilian informers (*neglasnyi osvedomitel'*).⁵³ Peep, however, writes that before leaving for Berlin, he resisted the advances of the KGB, who made repeated attempts to recruit him. Finally, on a KGB-application form he was obliged to write in large and clear letters: "Не желаю работать в органах" [I do not wish to work for the security services].⁵⁴

Both Lešinskis and Peep mention the presence in Berlin of senior KGB officers from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.⁵⁵ The officers, stationed at Karlshorst, the seat of the Soviet Military Administration in the Soviet sector

⁴⁹ Peep (2006): p 409

⁵⁰ Ibid. p 410

⁵¹ Andriewsky (1955): p 127

⁵² 'Komitejas «Par atgriešanas Dzimtenē» vēstījums Vācijas Demokrātiskās Republikas Valdībai' [Announcement by Committee «For Return to the Motherland» to the Government of the GDR], *PaDz* No 1 Apr 1955 p 2 (ref: *Announcement*)

⁵³ Lešinskis (1985): p 6

⁵⁴ Peep (2006): p 409

⁵⁵ Lešinskis (1985): p 6; Peep (2006): p 409

of Berlin, are designated by Peep as “curators” and their assignment was to oversee the activities of the Baltic group.⁵⁶ Peep notes that this assignment soon turned into evenings spent in drinking bouts with the Estonian curator Paul Raud and the Latvian curator Aleksander Grome. During the day, Peep continues, the group was subject to daily KGB controls—it was forbidden to lock up when going home after work, nor could anything be ever thrown away, since all papers would be subsequently checked for names and contacts that could somehow be to use.⁵⁷ Another senior KGB officer from Latvia working at the East Berlin Committee was Major Ivans Pavlovičs Pavlovskis, who went under the name of Krišjānis Krūmiņš.⁵⁸ After the failure to bring about the repatriation of noted exile Latvian writer Jānis Jaunsudrabiņš, Pavlovskis (Krūmiņš) was transferred back to Soviet Latvia in the late 1950s.⁵⁹



Fig. 3.4: Committee workers Aleksej Dubovikov, Harald Peep, Ādolfs Talcis. Berlin, spring, 1956. Photograph from RTMM 334834.

When Talcis returned to Riga in the late spring of 1956, he was replaced by journalist Žanis Zakenfelds, who worked in East Berlin until 1959.⁶⁰ Peep was replaced by journalist Anatoly Mikhailov of the Estonian evening paper *Õhtuleht*, who appeared under another name while working for the Committee.⁶¹

⁵⁶ Peep (2006): p 409

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Lešinskis (1985): p 6

⁵⁹ Lešinskis (1986): pp 48–50. See also Kārlis Kangeris, “Jāņa Jaunsudrabiņa trimdas gaitas [Jānis Jaunsudrabiņš in exile],” *ELJA Informācija*, No 85 (1978): pp 49–50.

⁶⁰ After KGB officer Zakenfelds, the East Berlin position was held by radio journalist Bruno Zēbergs, 1959–1963. See Lešinskis (1985): p 6.

⁶¹ Peep (2006): p 409

From the above, it can be summarized that the Committee at Behrenstrasse 64/65 may have housed up to thirty employees, who worked with internal and external repatriation assignments. The Committee also provided support to the worldwide network of Soviet security officers that operated under the cover of the repatriation campaign.

3.4 Ādolfs Talcis, Committee Work and *PaDz*

Ādolfs Talcis, the Latvian representative of the Baltic group, arrived in Berlin in late autumn 1955. His assignment at the Committee, similar to that of the other two representatives of the Baltic group, was to engage in contacts and promote repatriation propaganda among the émigrés in exile.⁶² Talcis stayed for about half a year in Berlin and returned home to Riga in the spring of 1956 upon the expiry of his contract with the Repatriation Committee in East Berlin.⁶³

According to Lešinskis, when Talcis saw the first issues of *PaDz*, he was shocked over the low quality of the newspaper. Being a professional journalist and editor with over thirty years of experience, he realized that the subject matter of *PaDz*, which was translated literally from the Russian *Za vozvrashchenie na Rodinu*, did not reflect Latvian émigré interests, but rather those of the Soviet Russian or Ukrainian peasantry and urban working-class.⁶⁴ Talcis believed that far-reaching changes had to be carried out if *PaDz* were to be used as a vehicle of propaganda to persuade Latvian émigrés to return. He understood that a different newspaper had to be published for the Latvian exile, one that was on their intellectual and cultural level. He envisioned a newspaper with Latvian content: with informative articles, cultural reviews, and life interest stories that Latvians abroad could relate to.⁶⁵

A comment about the newspaper from a Latvian reader in West Germany reflecting views similar to Talcis' appeared in a July 25, 1956 report to the Central Committee of the Latvian Communist Party. The Latvian reader, the 'female emigrant M', is cited as saying:

For us, persons from the Baltics, the newspaper is uninteresting, monotonous, and one-sided. Primarily, we want to read about that what is happening in our native country, how are our fellow citizens living there? Yet all the time we put the newspaper away in disappointment, because it doesn't satisfy us. We would

⁶² Talcis (1984), p 55

⁶³ Ibid. p 58

⁶⁴ Lešinskis (1986): p 46

⁶⁵ Ibid.

like to find out a lot more, especially since Western newspapers do write a lot but only about the awful and sorrowful things going on in the Baltics.⁶⁶

Talcis' efforts to change *PaDz* in late 1955 and early 1956 coincided with the overall liberalization of Soviet society that was then taking place. Party controls were loosening due to ideological uncertainties, and in Soviet Latvia the "National Communism" movement under the energetic leadership of Berklavs prospered.⁶⁷ Concurrently, a wave of press reform was taking place in communist bloc and Soviet newspapers: the tradition of uniform content presentation was being questioned, layouts and contents were becoming more varied, and newspapers began to adapt to the interests of their target audience.⁶⁸ Up to then, "uniform content presentation" had been the only production method of the multi-language Soviet newspapers. Since 1921, the Central Committee of the CPSU issued directives controlling every detail of Soviet periodical production, including individual article themes, length (number of lines), and placement. This insured, for example, that everything was presented in the same manner in all Soviet publications: from all-important Soviet foreign policy matters to seemingly irrelevant details.⁶⁹ But now, many authorities and institutions in the Soviet Union, including the press, were being questioned and outright criticized for their bowing to Stalinism and their lack of flexibility. The rigid directives steering Soviet cultural life were slowly dissolving, and more importantly, the questioning of Stalinistic rules no longer led to mass imprisonment and deportations. All these actions made it possible to implement the press and media innovations that individuals like Talcis carried out in the mid-1950s.⁷⁰

As a reflection of the ongoing changes, a questionnaire was printed in *Par atgriešanos Dzimtenē* in January 1956, asking readers to reply to several

⁶⁶ Heinrihs Strods, ed., *Yearbook / The museum of the occupation of Latvia. 2003. Sphere of influence*, vol. 5 (Riga: Latvijas 50 gadu okupācijas muzeja fonds, 2004), pp 182–185

⁶⁷ See Chapter 2.3

⁶⁸ Buzek (1964), p 84

⁶⁹ Ibid. pp 80–81. Noted Latvian author Vizma Belševica, a staff member of a Soviet Latvian children's magazine in the early 1950s, recounts how carefully directions were followed from the Soviet center of authority to ensure uniform content presentation. For example, the "parent" issue of a magazine had arrived from Moscow with cover headline "All Pioneers are Skiing" fronted by color photographs of Pioneers on skis. Therefore the Latvian counterpart also had to have the same headline and similar photographs. But there was no snow in Latvia at the time, so children on skis and sleds were posed on superphosphate piles at the Cēsis railway station. See Elmārs Pelkaus, ed., *Policy of occupation powers in Latvia 1939–1991. A collection of documents* (Riga: Nordik, 1999), p 482.

⁷⁰ The 'Thaw', however, did not bring about any freedom in ideological expression. Published texts were still obliged to follow the "progressive uniformity, anonymity, and predictability of authoritative language", see Alexei Yurchak, *Everything was forever, until it was no more. The last Soviet generation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), p 47.

questions about their preferences and forward the answers to the Committee. The five questions were:

1. Which articles published in the last 17 issues did you like the most and why?
2. What do you think are the newspaper's shortcomings? (arrangement of materials, their placement and layout)
3. What articles, news, information, literary works do you wish to read more of?
4. Have you received all 17 issues of the newspaper? Are there any difficulties in receiving them?
5. Do you have the possibility to freely distribute our newspaper, to read it aloud in front of comrades, to discuss your opinions with them, but if not, what prevents you from doing so?⁷¹

The results of this questionnaire are not presented in subsequent issues of *PaDz*, however, content changes are apparent over the following months, where each successive issue provides growing coverage of Soviet Latvia. This, according to Lešinskis, was attained by Talcis staging a one-man work-to-rule action—he arrived punctually at work but carried out his assignments at such a slow pace and exaggerated precision that the Soviet center of authority eventually surrendered to Talcis' demands for a Latvianized newspaper.⁷² By April 1956, all the contents of *Par atgriešanos Dzimtenē* consist of Latvian subject matter, except for the sections on Soviet foreign policy and a few articles featuring non-Latvian repatriates.

When Talcis returned to Riga from East Berlin in mid-1956, the transformation of the newspaper was close to completion. Over the next months, a local Latvian editorial board was set up in Riga, *PaDz* doubled its publishing rate to twice weekly, and the first articles commenting émigré Latvians and the émigré Latvian community at large made their appearance. *PaDz* no longer cooperated with the Russian *Za vozvrashchenie na Rodinu* in East Berlin, and the last issue with editor-in-chief Igor Muratov's name is *PaDz* No 22(38) June 1956.

Considering the information in a secret report by the head of the Latvian KGB J. Vēvers and the chief editor of *Cīņa* P. Pizāns, which is written to Secretary Jānis Kalnbērziņš of the Central Committee of the Latvian Communist Party,⁷³ it seems that the relatively rapid transformation of *PaDz* to a Riga-based Latvian production took place without fully informing Arvīds Pelše, the head of the Agitprop. Pelše, who was formally responsible for the newspaper's editorial board in Riga and was known for his

⁷¹ 'Dārgie lasītāji!' [Dear Readers!], *PaDz* No 1(17) Jan 1956 p 4

⁷² Lešinskis (1986): p 47

⁷³ LVA PA 101.f., 19.apr., 55.l., 276.–279.lp

opposition to Berkļavs and national communism, was apparently kept in the dark about the changes which already had taken place with the *PaDz*. For example, he gave permission for two columns to be exchanged for local Soviet Latvian materials starting with *PaDz* No 18 (34) April 1956,⁷⁴ while in reality, the changes had been introduced by Talcis months earlier, and in fact, the *PaDz* No 18 issue was already wholly “Latvianized”. Ostensibly, Talcis, Pizāns, and others, were acting in the freer spirit of national communism, and in this respect it seems that the Latvianization process of the *PaDz* took place before all the necessary formal decisions were taken by the Bureau of the Central Committee of the Latvian Communist Party.

Irrespective of all background activities, the transfer of the *PaDz* from East Berlin to Riga was kept a secret from émigré readers, who were supposed to continue to believe that *PaDz* was wholly produced in East Berlin.⁷⁵ Lešinskis proposes that the success of Talcis’ Latvian version of *Par atgriešanos Dzimtenē* paved the way for the other national versions of *Za vozvrashchenie na Rodinu*.⁷⁶

During his half year at the Committee in East Berlin, Talcis worked not only on the Latvian language newspaper and the broadcasts, but also collected information about émigrés. He researched émigré organizations and monitored the activities of the guard, transport, and other work units of the Mixed Service Organizations (MSOs) and the Labor Service Companies (LSCs) in West Germany, in order to “get an insight, establish where and in what places there were emigrant centers, what the atmosphere was like there”.⁷⁷ It was in the MSOs and LSCs that about two-thirds of the working-age émigré Latvians in Germany during the 1950s were employed.⁷⁸ These auxiliary units were formed in the late 1940s in the zones controlled by the American, British and French forces in Germany.⁷⁹ The units, some of which existed into the 1990s, employed displaced persons, former POWs, concentration camp inmates and forced laborers, who had chosen not return

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Officially, *PaDz* (and later *DzB*) retained its publishing venue in East Berlin until late 1961, and its anonymous ‘Board of Editors’ until 1970.

⁷⁶ Lešinskis (1986): p 47

⁷⁷ Talcis (1984): p 55

⁷⁸ About 10,000 Latvian émigrés lived in West Germany in 1951. 67% of those of working age worked for the MSOs and LSCs (1,174 in the British sector, 900 in the US sector). A further 11% worked for the IRO or in other occupation agencies, 7% worked in the DP camp administration, see “Latvieši emigrācijā” (1952–1953), p 1276.

⁷⁹ In the US sector they were called the US Army Labor Service Companies (LSC). In the British sector they were known as the special services of the Mixed Service Organization (MSO) of the British Army of the Rhine. There were also auxiliary units in the French sector called called GAE (Guards Auxiliaire Étranger). See Sarmīte Baltiņa, “Baltiešu militārā palīgdienesta vienības muzeja krājuma materiālos [The Baltic auxiliary military service units in the Latvian war museum's collection],” in *Latvijas kara muzeja gadagrāmata III*, ed. J. Ciganovs (Riga: Latvijas Kara muzejs, 2002), p 153

to their Soviet occupied homelands, for guard, transport, construction and other manual work.⁸⁰ It was usual for émigré Balts to seek out their ethnic group, thereby, for example, forming Estonian and Latvian units.⁸¹

In his memoirs, Talcis claims that by reading émigré Latvian publications, he succeeded in establishing the location of all the Latvian units and determining the number of persons posted to each unit, their occupation and economic situation.⁸² Regrettably, no reports by Talcis on the investigated MSOs, LSCs and other Latvian émigré organizations have yet been uncovered in Soviet Latvian archives. However, he writes in his memoirs that at the time, Latvian emigrants lived in pressing circumstances and that “only a few had found permanent work”.⁸³ This view of émigré Latvians in West Germany corresponds to the plight of the refugees described in the *New York Times* as “jobless, living in slums and hovels and see[ing] few prospects for a better future”.⁸⁴ A similar, unattractive message was relayed in the American picture magazine *Look*, whose three photographs illustrating Soviet Russian refugees in a dreary, fenced-in West German camp, are reprinted in a September 1955 issue of *PaDz*.⁸⁵

Another of Talcis’ assignments while in East Berlin was to search for émigré addresses and mail signed letters to compatriots informing them about the possibility of returning home.⁸⁶ Talcis’ mass mailings eventually gained the attention of the largest Latvian newspaper in exile, the New York-based *Laiks* (*Time*), and in March 1956 it published a sarcastic article signed by “-tj-” titled “Ādolfs Talcis Toiling Away in Berlin”.⁸⁷ As Talcis asserts, since *Laiks* was read throughout the whole Latvian exile, émigré Latvians outside of West Germany learnt—many for the first time—about the Soviet Repatriation Committee and about his work there.⁸⁸ Talcis claims that the *Laiks* article evoked a wide-spread response from exile Latvians and that as a result, contacts between the Committee and émigré Latvians expanded considerably.⁸⁹

⁸⁰ William E. Stacy, ‘US Army Border Operations in Germany 1945–1983’, p 64, retrieved 2012-03-15 from <http://www.history.army.mil/documents/borderOps/ch3.htm>

⁸¹ Baltiņa (2002), pp 152–160. A total of twenty-two Baltic companies were set up in the western occupation zones of Germany. Mart Laar, “Estonians in the armies of the western allies,” in *The Estonian soldier in world war II*, ed. M. Laar (Tallinn: Grenader, 2009), p 523

⁸² Talcis (1984): p 55

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ ‘U.S. Defeat Seen in Exiles’ Misery’, *New York Times* April 26, 1955

⁸⁵ ‘Tā vairs nevar dzīvot’ [One can't live like this any more], *PaDz* No 10, Sep 1955 p 4

⁸⁶ See the Appendix for an example of a repatriation letter sent by Talcis.

⁸⁷ -tj-, ‘Ādolfs Talcis raujas pa Berlīni’ [Ādolfs Talcis toiling Away in Berlin], *Laiks* No 24 (618) Mar 24, 1956 p 1

⁸⁸ Talcis (1984): p 57

⁸⁹ Ibid.

3.5 The *PaDz* in Riga

With Talcis' return to Riga in late spring 1956, the process of setting up a special editorial board for the Latvian language *PaDz* was started. On July 25, 1956, the head of the Latvian KGB J. Vēvers met with P. Pizāns, the chief editor of *Cīņa*, to discuss the *PaDz* project and to make plans for the Latvian foreign radio broadcasts that were being beamed from East Berlin.⁹⁰ They made a note that “nationalistic emigrant organizations” (Latvian Central Council, American Latvian Association, World Association of Free Latvians, Latvia's Renewal Committee, Hawks of the Daugava, and others)⁹¹ were agitating against repatriation. They reported that Eastern European émigrés were receiving financial support from the US State Department and that:

In West Germany alone American money publishes over 80 emigrant newspaper and magazines that actively work against the Amnesty Decree of the USSR Council of Ministers and against the Committee For Return to the Motherland.⁹²

Vēvers' and Pizāns' report ends with a list of suggested measures for the Bureau of the Central Committee of the Latvian Communist Party to decide upon. Subsequently, the Bureau came to an eight-point decision on August 18–24, 1956 concerning the opening of a special *PaDz* editorial board, whose staff would officially be employees of *Cīņa*.⁹³ Among the decision points were a) to start the production of *PaDz* on September 1, 1956, with Milda Vasiljeva as editor-in-chief,⁹⁴ b) to increase the circulation to 5,000,⁹⁵ and c) to adjust *Cīņa*'s finances upwards by an extra 6,000 rubles per month for the extra wages, technical expenses, and remunerations to external contributors.⁹⁶ A note was made that the external contributors were to be recruited by Vasiljeva from the ranks of the literary, artistic and scientific elite.⁹⁷

⁹⁰ Strods, ed., (2004): pp 182–185

⁹¹ Ibid., p 184

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Bureau members Jānis Avotiņš, Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Latvian SSR Kārlis Ozoliņš, and secretary of the Latvian CP CC Jānis Kalnbērziņš were among those participating in the Bureau decision taken at the August 18–24, 1956 Bureau meeting. LVA PA 101.f., 19.apr., 26.l., 83.–84.lp

⁹⁴ KGB officer Vasiljeva remained chief editor of the newspaper until 1959, when she was replaced by KGB officer Žanis Zakenfelds upon his return from East Berlin. Lešinskis (1986): p 50

⁹⁵ Another copy documenting the August 18–24, 1956 Bureau decision mentions a print-run of 9,000. LVA PA 101.f., 19.apr., 26.l., 83.–84.lp

⁹⁶ The editor-in-chief was to be paid 1,200 rubles, the translator—1,000, the literary co-worker—800; 1,000 rubles monthly was reserved for external contributors, and 2,000 per month was budgeted for technical expenses (typing, proofreading). Strods, ed., (2004), p 183

⁹⁷ LVA PA 101.f., 19.apr., 26.l., 83.–84.lp

The final decision point concerns the education of the domestic Soviet Latvian population, which, in preparation for the expected masses coming home, was to be informed about the repatriates. Both *Cīņa* and the sister Russian language publication *Sovetskaja Latvija* were to periodically insert articles about the life of repatriates in Latvia. The articles were to expound on the difficult conditions of the displaced Soviet citizens abroad, mention the “dirty lies” that were spread abroad about Soviet Latvia, and point out the care provided by the Soviet Union to those that have returned.⁹⁸

As an extra measure to strengthen propaganda work among Latvians abroad, the East Berlin Committee was to be sent 2,000 copies of the hard-cover photo album *Soviet Latvia 15 Years*. Incidentally, Pizāns and Vēvers noted in their project report that this album was still in stock as there was no domestic demand for it, but that notwithstanding, “the book is richly illustrated and should serve as good propaganda material”.⁹⁹

After the move of *PaDz* to Riga, the Russian *Za vozvrashchenie na Rodinu* lost its leading role in determining content, and *PaDz* developed according to the ideological guidelines and controls set by the Bureau of the Central Committee of the Latvian Communist Party. The proximity of the editorial board to the printing facilities meant that the publication frequency could be raised to twice per week, since the newspaper was now both typeset and printed in Riga. The stacks of the print-runs, carefully counted and packaged to ensure that no copies disappeared on the way from the printing press to the airport into the hands of ordinary people, were then flown by Soviet military post to East Berlin for further distribution abroad.¹⁰⁰

This procedure ensured that only a limited circle of staff, co-workers, KGB officers and communist party officials knew of the newspaper’s existence. For more than ten years, *PaDz* was an officially kept secret, and it was only in 1968, that the newspaper—now called *Dzimtenes Balss*— was “legalized” and its existence made known to ordinary Soviet citizens.

3.6 New Strategies and Reorganization

By the beginning of 1956 it had become clear to both Western observers and émigré communities alike that DPs and emigrants had no intention of repatriating *en masse* to their respective homelands. The Latvian émigré press noted that according to Committee Chairman Nikolai Mikhailov, only 250 persons had repatriated to the Soviet Union by September 1955, and

⁹⁸ Strods, ed., (2004), p 184

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Lešinskis (1986): p 48

commented that among them there were almost surely no Latvians.¹⁰¹ In mid-1956, seven known cases of Latvian repatriation were reported: “a family from Lübeck, a drug addict from Denmark, and three Latvians from England”.¹⁰² By 1957, official Western figures summarize the total number of repatriates of the Soviet and Soviet bloc country repatriation campaigns from Western Europe, the US, and Canada to Soviet and satellite countries to about 2,200.¹⁰³ Soviet documents place the number of returnees to Latvia at under 100.¹⁰⁴ In an interview published in *Par atgriešanos Dzimtenē*, Chairman Mikhailov answers journalist Mr. Muru, who wonders whether the Committee is preparing to change work methods since emigrants are neither repatriating, nor showing any intention to repatriate in the near future. To this Mikhailov disagrees, replying that DPs and emigrants “have ardently responded to our invitation”, and that “increasing numbers of persons have returned to the Motherland”.¹⁰⁵

The Soviet repatriation campaign, however, did enjoy a small triumph in mid-1956 when approximately 3,500 returnees repatriated from South America to their native regions in the western parts of Belarus and Ukraine.¹⁰⁶ This may have injected new confidence in Committee activities, which unabatedly continued to promote repatriation over the following years. The newspaper *PaDz* carried repatriation stories, incitements, invitations and appeals in all of its 218 issues up to the end of April 1958. The repatriation appeals and stories continued after it changed its name to *Dzimtenes Balss (Voice of the Motherland)* in May 1958, and were featured until the end of 1959. Moreover, the Committee For Return to the Motherland retained the repatriation concept in its name until 1963.

¹⁰¹ ‘Michailova acinājumiem maza atsaucība’ [Little reaction to Mikhailov’s invitations], *Laiks* No 77, Sep 24, 1955 p 1

¹⁰² Aleksandrs Liepa, ‘Padomju repatriācijas aģenti Vācijas latviešu vidū’ [Soviet repatriation agents amidst Latvians in Germany], *Laiks* No 59, July 25, 1956 p 1. By September 1956, at most “a half dozen” émigré Estonians had repatriated to Estonia from Sweden, see ‘Ny kampanj i Baltikum för att få hem flyktingarna’, *Dagens Nyheter*, Sep 21, 1956.

¹⁰³ According to a 1956 September NATO semiannual report, the numbers of those who had returned since the beginning of the campaign: “...the Netherlands, 165 of 10,000 residents of Soviet and satellite origin; Belgium, 59 of 40,000 Poles; Germany, 350 of 13,000 of Russian origin; United Kingdom, 187 of 112,000 Poles; United States, 125 Soviet and satellite nationals of an unspecified number.” Canadian figures are accounted for separately: 814 persons of Soviet or satellite origin by October 1956, and an additional 486 up to February 1957. Roberts et al. (2008): pp141–142

¹⁰⁴ Strods, ed., (2007): pp 234–236

¹⁰⁵ ‘Komitejas «Par atgriešanos Dzimtenē» priekšsēdētāja N. Michailova atbildes aģentūras “Magnus” (Ņujorka-Parīze) fotokorespondentam Muru kungam’ [Chairman N. Mikhailov of the Committee «For Return to the Motherland» answers photojournalist Mr. Muru of the Magnus agency (New York–Paris)], *PaDz* No 24(40) June 1956 p 2 (ref. *Answers to Mr. Muru*)

¹⁰⁶ Kirkpatrick, ed., (1957), p 264

In spite of the external emphasis on repatriation, modifications in émigré strategies were being considered by the ideological center of the Communist Party. Through a decree issued January 8, 1958 by the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, new counter-propaganda measures against emigrants were introduced.¹⁰⁷ Though it would take many years before all measures were fully implemented by the Bureau of the Central Committee of the Latvian Communist Party, the first step was taken in May 1958, when the newspaper was renamed *Dzimtenes Balss*. Other adjustments that followed were to focus even more on individual appeals in place of mass repatriation, to engage the local cultural élite in propaganda work, to make contacts with leading Latvian émigré cultural and scientific personalities and invite them to visit Soviet Latvia and conversely, send Soviet Latvian delegations abroad on friendship visits. In addition, preparations were undertaken to form an initiator group in Riga that would deal with repatriation and cultural exchanges, in place of the East Berlin Committee.

At the same time, changes were also taking place in East Berlin. Towards the end of 1958, N. Mikhailov was replaced by Major General Sergei Vishnievsky,¹⁰⁸ and a year later, the Committee's name was changed to Committee for the Promotion of Repatriation and Cultural Relations with Countrymen Abroad.¹⁰⁹ In 1960, Vishnievsky was replaced by V. I. Kirillov, who headed the East Berlin Committee until 1963.¹¹⁰ In Riga, the "initiator group", as envisaged by the KGB, was formally established in May 1961 as the Committee for the Promotion of Repatriation and Cultural Relations with Countrymen Abroad—Latvian Section.¹¹¹

In late 1963, the seat of the Committee for the Promotion of Repatriation and Cultural Relations with Countrymen Abroad was transferred from East Berlin to Moscow and the organization itself was restructured into a "public organization" (*obshchestvennye organizatsii*).¹¹² The East Berlin venue became the Soviet Committee's representation in the German Democratic Republic.¹¹³

In late 1963, the Latvian Section in Riga was renamed from the longish Committee for the Promotion of Repatriation and Cultural Relations with

¹⁰⁷ LVA PA 101.f, 21. apr., 48a l., 74 lp

¹⁰⁸ 'Michailovs nomainīts "slimības dēļ"' [Mikhailov replaced due to "illness"], *Laiks* No 71, Sep 3, 1958 p 2

¹⁰⁹ GARF f. 9651, *opis* 2, p 4

¹¹⁰ Roberts et al. (2008): p 151

¹¹¹ 'Nodibināta Komitejas Latvijas nodaļa Rīgā' [The Committee's Latvian Section has been founded in Riga], *DzB* No 43(533) May 1961 p 1

¹¹² This restructuring was not an isolated event. Organizations in the USSR that had contacts abroad, such as the Friendship Societies, Peace Associations, Youth Committees, etc., had already been, or were being converted into public organizations.

¹¹³ GARF f. 9651, *opis* 1, p 5

Countrymen Abroad—Latvian Section to become the shorter Committee for Cultural Relations with Countrymen Abroad—Latvian Section. Just like the parent organization in Moscow, the Latvian Section was remade into a public organization at a founders' plenary meeting on September 10, 1964 in Riga, and established under the new name of Latvian Cultural Relations Committee with Countrymen Abroad. While overtly developing cultural relations with Latvian émigrés abroad, it retained its covert engagement in émigré espionage, subversion and disinformation. It is in this form and function, as the Latvian Committee for Cultural Relations with Countrymen Abroad (*Latvijas komiteja kultūras sakariem ar tautiešiem ārzemēs*) that the Committee is still remembered in the Latvian diaspora.¹¹⁴

The Committee For Return to the Motherland was set up early 1955 on Behrenstraße 65 in East Berlin. Overtly, it was portrayed to be a “voluntary organization” founded by former POWs and repatriates, but in fact it was a KGB front organization working as a center of émigré espionage. During the first months of the campaign, the Committee's activities were centered on Slavic émigrés. Latvian émigrés were sent translated versions of the Committee's Russian language repatriation newspaper (*Za vozvrashchenie na Rodinu*), which was secretly produced in Riga, Latvia, for dissemination from East Berlin. With the arrival of journalist Ādolfs Talcis to East Berlin in late 1955, an adaptation of the contents of the *Par atgriešanos Dzimtenē* was initiated. Talcis challenged the principle of “unified content presentation”, and instead, attempted to reflect the interests of the Latvian readership abroad in the columns of the *PaDz*. During his period in East Berlin, Talcis established contacts with émigrés, gathered information about émigré organizations and individuals, and investigated the LSCs and MSOs, which employed a large part of the Latvian émigré population living in West Germany. With Talcis' return to Riga in mid-1956, a new editorial board for *PaDz* was set up by the KGB under the cover of Communist Party organ *Cīņa*. *PaDz* was now produced and printed in Riga, and the contents were thoroughly Latvianized. The publication rate of *PaDz* was increased to twice per week, and the print-runs were flown to the Committee in East Berlin for further distribution abroad. As it became increasingly clear that mass repatriation was not going to take place, new strategies were implemented and restructurizations of the Committee in East Berlin and the Latvian Section in Riga eventually took place in the early 1960s. *Par atgriešanos Dzimtenē* was renamed *Dzimtenes Balss* in May 1958, which marked the beginning of the end of the repatriation phase.

¹¹⁴ The Committee underwent further name changes and reorganizations before it ended operations in 1992. See the Appendix for a list of the organization's names.

In the next chapter the goals of the repatriation campaign and the activities and tasks of the Committee For Return to the Motherland will be examined.



Fig. 3.5: Ādolfs Talcis at work. Photograph from DzB No 23 (1178), June 1970.

4 Goals, Tasks and Actions

4.1 The Goals

In a 1953 letter by Minister of Internal Affairs Kruglov, next to the self-evident goal of repatriation, two other goals of the Committee-to-be are mentioned. They are the “prevention of emigration and the furthering of the struggle against anti-Soviet propaganda”.¹ The fourth aim of the Committee For Return to the Motherland, as mentioned in the *Appeal*, was to support the “Patriotic Movement for the return of Soviet citizens to the Motherland”.

Promoting repatriation, battling against anti-Soviet propaganda, and supporting the Patriotic Movement were all overt goals, and they were repeatedly discussed in the columns of repatriation newspaper *Par atgriešanas Dzimtenē* as the Committee’s aims. However, the “prevention of emigration”, in other words, the annihilation of the anti-Soviet émigré movement abroad, was a covert goal, and as such is not mentioned outright in any of the public Soviet propaganda materials. Though all goals are different, they were treated as being equally important, and Committee work was directed towards the achievement of all four aims: repatriation, to further the struggle against anti-Soviet propaganda, to support the Patriotic Movement, and to destroy the emigration.

4.1.1 Repatriation

The driving force of the repatriation campaign, and the motivation for the existence of the Committee was to “...help emigrants, ‘displaced persons’ return to the Motherland”.² The intent was to achieve the return of all of the exiled Russian, Ukrainian, Belarusian, Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian masses. This is emphasized in the first issue of *PaDz*, which states that the repatriation campaign will continue “for as long as the last of the Soviet citizens, who are withering away abroad, are finally all repatriated to the Motherland.”³

¹ Ahonen et al., eds., (2008), p 191

² GARF f. 9651, *opis* 1, p 4

³ *Announcement*

It was planned that the repatriation of as many émigrés as possible would disrupt organized anti-Soviet émigré activities.⁴ Moreover, mass repatriation would end the involvement by the US, UK, West Germany and other capitalist countries in engaging émigrés in political warfare against the Soviet Union and in preparing them for a future war against the Soviet Union.⁵ After mass repatriation, the remains of emigration would no longer pose a political and physical threat to the Soviet Union.

The repatriation goal was upheld during the three years under study, 1955–1958, and continued to be of top relevance up to the end of 1959. When it became apparent that mass repatriation was not taking place—a few months into the campaign, repatriates numbered in the few hundreds, and not in the expected tens of thousands—a different approach was launched.⁶ Starting in early 1956, a new type of repatriation appeal appeared in *PaDz*. The appeals were no longer addressed to some anonymous “dear compatriot” of Slavic background, but to select groups among the Latvian exiles and to named Latvian émigrés. Through personalizing the repatriation appeals, the goal of “mass repatriation” was modified to “selective repatriation”.⁷ Throughout the remaining years of the repatriation campaign, the plan was to achieve the repatriation of at least “some prominent émigrés”, thereby attaining, it was hoped, disorder and confusion in anti-Soviet émigré activities.⁸

4.1.2 Furthering the Struggle against Anti-Soviet Propaganda

The second goal of the Committee was to fight anti-Soviet propaganda. It is an overt goal and designated among the Committee’s aims and objectives in the *Appeal* and in the Announcement to the government of the German Democratic Republic. It is also a Soviet foreign and domestic policy goal, since the legal grounds for this aim was the basis upon which political prisoners were imprisoned and expressions of dissatisfaction with Soviet rule were stopped. According to Section 58.10 of the RSFSR Penal Code, anti-Soviet propaganda is defined as “propaganda or the incitement containing an

⁴ Andriewsky (1955): p 130

⁵ Yakovlev (2002): p 178

⁶ About 250 persons had repatriated to the Soviet Union by September, 1955. ‘Michailova aicinājumiem maza atsaucība’ [Not much reaction to Mikhailov’s invitations], *Laiks* No 77, Sep 24, 1955 p 1

⁷ Pāvils Klāns, “Klusa kontrevolūcija? Mūsu tautas situācija un padomju viedoklis dzimtenes sakaru jautājumā [The silent counter-revolution? Our nation's situation and the Soviet view on the cultural relations issue],” *Jaunā Gaita* 17, Nos 89–92 (1972): p 43

⁸ Andriewsky (1955): p 130

appeal to overthrow, undermine, or weaken the Soviet government”.⁹ For the Committee this meant that measures were to be employed against those émigré organizations, leaders and individuals, who were working against Soviet interests: who deliberately expressed opposition to the Soviet Union in their new host countries, and in the longer run, who attempted to achieve the overthrow of Soviet rule in their homelands.

The first step was to identify the sources of the anti-Soviet propaganda, and then to deal with these sources (émigré organizations and leaders) through the application of different actions in order to disturb their political activities. An often applied measure was to attack the élites by “unmasking” them through the method of character assassination.¹⁰ Other measures include making requests directly to host country Western governments to halt the anti-Soviet activities of émigrés.

The goal of battling anti-Soviet propaganda is retained unchanged throughout the campaign period. By engaging in this struggle, the Committee could also achieve the goal of the destruction of emigration. By stopping émigré anti-Soviet political activity, the emigration would no longer pose a threat to the continued existence of the Soviet state. Furthermore it was believed that when the émigré leadership no longer was active, then the émigré masses would turn to the Committee for guidance and submit to its authority.

4.1.3 Supporting the Patriotic Movement

The third goal of the repatriation campaign, to support the Patriotic Movement, was presented as one of the reasons for founding the Committee. As alleged in *PaDz*, the Patriotic Movement, a network of promoter groups in the West advocating repatriation, was popular among émigrés and DPs, and the newspaper’s readers were urged to join in the work of these groups: “It is the assignment of every patriot abroad to actively participate in the promoter groups of the Committee For Return to the Motherland”.¹¹ In addition, they were asked to

...disseminate the Amnesty Decree among compatriots, give an energetic counterblow to false enemy propaganda ... help free the witless and frightened persons from the doubts in which they have been ensnared by corrupt emigrant ringleaders ... ruthlessly unmask enemy concoctions.¹²

⁹ “R.S.F.S.R. criminal code as in force on October 1, 1953,” in *The profits of slavery. Baltic forced laborers and deportees under Stalin and Khrushchev*, ed. A. Silde (Stockholm: Latvian National Foundation in Scandinavia, 1958), p 293

¹⁰ See Irēne Šneidere, ed., *Latvija padomju režīma varā 1945–1986. Dokumentu krājums [Latvia under the Soviet regime 1945–1986. Collection of documents]* (Riga: Latvijas Vēstures Institūta Apgāds, 2001), p 272 and Plakans, ed., (2007), p 263.

¹¹ ‘Droši pārvarēt grūtības un šķērslus, kas kavē atgriezties!’ [Courageously overcome difficulties and impediments, that stops one from returning!], *PaDz* No 13 Oct 1955 p 1

¹² Ibid.

The Patriotic Movement was said to have existed at first among Russian émigrés, and then to have gained momentum among “other emigrant circles, especially among the Belarusians and Ukrainians, who had been forced to leave their native land during the reign of the Polish bourgeois government.”¹³ The Committee extended support to the Patriotic Movement “in all possible ways” and, for example, aided volunteers who had established promoter groups in West Germany, Argentina, Brazil, and Belgium.¹⁴ A promoter group in the region of Bavaria, for example, distributed the Amnesty Decree by mail, together with personally written repatriation letters. At the same time, however, it was alleged that participants in the Patriotic Movement were harassed and that the Movement was not allowed to operate freely in the West.¹⁵

Despite the declared popularity of the Patriotic Movement among émigrés, additional descriptions of what the Patriotic Movement did or what it planned to do were not provided in the *PaDz*. Contact details of the promoter groups, such as addresses, names of volunteers, phone numbers, were not published, and therefore interested readers had to approach the Repatriation Committee in East Berlin in order to contact a promoter group.

Supporting the Patriotic Movement was seen as contributing to the achievement of other goals: repatriation, furthering the fight against anti-Soviet propaganda, and the destruction of emigration. The activists of this movement promoted repatriation and battled anti-Soviet propaganda, thereby leading, as it was hoped, to the destruction of emigration.

4.1.4 Prevention of Emigration

The fourth and overarching goal of the Committee was the “prevention of emigration”, a covert measure which encompassed all activities directed towards the stripping of the anti-Soviet émigré movement of its political legitimacy, importance, and dignity, and stopping its anti-Soviet activities. It was the singularly most important goal of the Repatriation Committee, and remained the leading objective of the successor Committees up to the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

Under the cover of the repatriation campaign, the Committee For Return to the Motherland operated as a Soviet center for émigré espionage.¹⁶ The Committee aimed to penetrate and split émigré groups in the West and

¹³ *Answers to Mr. Muru*

¹⁴ ‘Ledus sācis kustēties’ [The ice has begun to move], *PaDz* No 4 Jun 1955; ‘Komitejas «Par atgriešanos Dzimtenē» veicināšanas grupas aktivizē savu darbu’ [Promoter groups of the Committee «For Return to the Motherland» activate their work], *PaDz* No 13 Oct 1955 p 1

¹⁵ ‘Divi lapiņas’ [Two small pages], *PaDz* No 5 Jun 1955 p 2

¹⁶ Fabrichnikov et al., (1968)

obliterate their anti-communist political activities. Its objectives were to take over émigré organizations, subvert them into subordinate pro-Soviet organizations, and to morally destroy the emigration. Through the infiltration of émigré groups, a further ambition was to get near to and penetrate the Western intelligence services.¹⁷ The ultimate aim was to

...create confusion among the émigrés, to disintegrate their centres, to compromise them in the eyes of their compatriots at home and to take from them the confidence of the free world.¹⁸

Allegedly, once this goal was achieved, the émigré masses would no longer have a political will of their own; instead, they would submit themselves to the control of the Soviet center of authority.

4.2 The Reeducational Tasks

To attain the overt and covert goals of the Soviet repatriation campaign—repatriation, support of the Patriotic Movement, the battle against anti-Soviet propaganda, and the destruction of emigration—the Committee defined several assignments for itself, which it called “reeducational tasks”:

- to publish and distribute the repatriation newspaper *PaDz*
- to produce and air the repatriation broadcasts
- to correspond with compatriots that reside in West Germany and in other capitalistic countries
- to meet in person with potential repatriates.¹⁹

Behind these legitimate communicative operations, the Committee also carried out covert operations against émigrés and émigré communities. Among these were to steal émigré address registers, infiltrate émigré organizations with Soviet agents, create false émigré organizations, recruit informants among émigrés, publish false bulletins and other information materials in the West under the names of well-known émigrés or of legitimate emigrant organizations, and to spread false rumors about individual emigrants, émigré leaders and émigré organizations. The covert activities also extended to the exercise of blackmail and other extreme pressures upon émigrés to obtain

¹⁷ Tennesse H. Bagley, *Spy wars: moles, mysteries, and deadly games* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2007), pp 110–111

¹⁸ Andriewsky (1955): p 130

¹⁹ ‘Komitejas «Par atgriešanas Dzimtenē» priekšsēdētāja b. Michailova atbildes laikraksta *Süddeutsche Zeitung* korespondentei Millera kundzei’ [Chairman of the Committee «For Return to the Motherland» comrade Mikhailov’s answers to Mrs. Miller, reporter from the newspaper *Süddeutsche Zeitung*], *PaDz* No 5(21) Feb 1956 pp 2–3

information from them or to bring about their return to the Soviet homeland.²⁰

4.2.1 Publish and Distribute the *PaDz*

The first issue of the repatriation newspaper *Par atgriešanos Dzimtenē* was published in April 1955, with the Committee For Return to the Motherland as publisher. The Latvian language edition was one of several parallel language editions—Estonian, Lithuanian, Ukrainian, and Belarusian—that were translated from the Russian language parent newspaper *Za vozvrashchenie na Rodinu*.²¹ The editor-in-chief of all language editions of the newspaper was the Ukrainian poet and publicist Igor (Ihor) Muratov.

For technological and ideological reasons, the Committee and the *PaDz* were involved in a complicated publication process. The issue was first put together in the Russian language by editor Muratov at the Committee in East Berlin, then the texts were sent to Riga for translation and typesetting. This step was necessary since East Berlin lacked the technical facilities to typeset Latvian text. Thereafter the metal typeset forms were flown from Riga back to East Berlin for printing²² and from there, parts of the print-run were sent to other East German cities, from where the newspaper was posted by mail to Latvian émigrés. Because the contents of the newspaper, especially the articles dealing with émigré issues, were not meant for domestic use, the newspaper was not distributed within Soviet Latvia, and its existence was not disclosed to the ordinary Soviet citizen. This was achieved by placing its production and distribution in East Berlin, an inaccessible venue for most Soviet citizens, and by assigning the translation duties to employees of *Cīņa*.

The *PaDz*, an 8-page tabloid with a circulation of 3,500,²³ was initially issued one to three times per month. The following year, when production was moved to Riga, the size of each issue was halved to 4 pages, the publication frequency was stabilized to twice a week, and circulation was raised to 5,000.²⁴ As mentioned previously, the whole print-run, except for a

²⁰ S.-V., ‘Brīdina no komūnistu infiltrācijas’ [Warning against communist infiltration], *Latvju Ziņas* No 9 May 5, 1955 p 1

²¹ ‘Lasītāju uzmanībai’ [For Reader Attention], *PaDz* No 6, Jul 1955 p 4. According to Roberts et al. (2008), p 38, the Russian *Za vozvrashchenie na Rodinu* was also used as a model for the Polish and Czech repatriation newspapers.

²² A. Gaev, “Return to the Motherland,” *Bulletin of the Institute for the Study of the History and Culture of the USSR* II, No 8 (1955): p 21 observes that due to “certain aspects of the printing...the newspaper is produced on one of the mobile field presses, with which the staffs of Soviet divisions and armies are provided.”

²³ LVA PA 101.f., 19.apr., 55.l., 276.–279.lp. Initially the *PaDz* measured 42 x 27 cm, but starting December 1955, the issues measured 42 x 30 cm, which may indicate the point in time when the printing venue was changed from East Berlin to Riga.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 275.–280.lp

few copies that were retained in Riga for Agitprop use, was transferred to East Berlin. From there, the newspaper, often accompanied by other propaganda publications (the *Appeal* or other Soviet Latvian newspapers and magazines), was mailed twice weekly to Latvian émigrés abroad.



Fig. 4.1: First page of PaDz No 20(110) March 1957. The editorial in the left columns ironizes over émigré beliefs that the legionnaires who were extradited from Sweden in 1946 have all “died a tragic death” after their return to the Soviet Motherland.

The amount of propaganda received by an émigré had the potential to reach impressive numbers. Theoretically, it was possible to receive Soviet propaganda on a daily basis. For example, *Laiks* notes that a certain councilman L. Gifford of Oshawa, Canada, received an envelope “every single day” with propaganda materials from the Soviet Embassy in Ottawa.²⁵ A Latvian émigré who was on the Committee’s address list could receive the *PaDz* twice weekly, plus additional Soviet propaganda—books, letters, brochures—that was being mailed out from Soviet Latvia, from a nearby Soviet Embassy, or from the East Berlin Committee. This meant that a Latvian émigré could be receiving Soviet propaganda at least twice weekly, if not more.

4.2.2 Produce and Air the Repatriation Broadcasts

Another reeducational task of the Committee was to organize radio broadcasts directed towards citizens of the USSR living abroad, as determined by a decree of the Central Committee of the CPSU and the Council of Ministers of the USSR.²⁶ The repatriation broadcasts were launched in late April 1955 and were aired on a daily basis in late evenings.²⁷ The programs were broadcast in Russian, Ukrainian, Latvian and other national languages of the Soviet Union.²⁸ The Latvian language broadcasts, prepared as six one-half hour programs, were aired three times a month, in one-hour periods.²⁹ The broadcasting was done from both East Berlin and from Latvia, when a radio link was made available to the Riga studio.³⁰

The need to improve the quality of the repatriation programs was noted by J. Vēvers, the head of the Latvian KGB, and P. Pizāns, the chief editor of *Cīņa*. In a report to J. Kalnbērziņš, the secretary of the CC of the Latvian CP, Vēvers and Pizāns wrote, among other things, that the Latvian Radio Information Board has not properly prepared the required six hours of monthly programming and that the programs are “monotonous, whereby they do not attain the desired goal”.³¹

²⁵ M. Derums, ‘Garāmejot’ [Passing by], *Laiks* No 17, Feb 16, 1958 p 5

²⁶ LVA PA 101.f., 19.apr., 55.l., 276.–279.lp

²⁷ ‘Sludinājums’ [Announcement], *PaDz* No 2 Apr 1955 p 3; ‘Lasītāju zināšanai’ [Reader information], *PaDz* No 6 July 1955 p 4

²⁸ ‘Radiopārraides pārvietotajām personām un emigrantiem’ [Radio Broadcasts for Displaced Persons and Emigrants], *PaDz* No 7 Aug 1955 p 4

²⁹ Beginning February 1956, the Latvian language broadcasts aired on the 10th, 20th and 30th of each month at 7 p.m. and were repeated the next morning at 8.30 a.m. See *PaDz* No 8(24) Feb 1956 p 4.

³⁰ -rj-, ‘Ādolfs Talcis raujas pa Berlīni’ [Adolfs Talcis toiling away in Berlin], *Laiks* No 24 (618), 24 Mar 1956 p 1

³¹ Strods, ed., (2004), pp 182–185

Two years later, in a top secret decision of the Bureau of the LCP dated December 2, 1958 and signed by J. Kalnbērziņš, the Radio Broadcast and Television Committee of the Latvian SSR Council of Ministers is assigned “the task of improving the Committee’s radio broadcast program”.³² At the same time it is planned to ask permission from the CC of the CP of the Soviet Union to organize local evening radio broadcasts in the Latvian language directed towards the “Scandinavian countries where there are Latvian emigrant centers”.³³

In late 1959, broadcasts directed to Latvians living in North America started airing from East Germany. The broadcasts were a repetition of the repatriation programs broadcast to Latvians in Western Europe.³⁴ However, these broadcasts were soon discontinued, and in March 1960, the total responsibility for the newly established “Broadcasts for Latvians Abroad” was taken over by Radio Latvia in Riga. These were produced under the auspices of the Foreign Broadcasts Section, which was headed by Nikolajs Neilands.³⁵ These broadcasts were to become a significant part of the soon-to-be launched cultural relations campaign.

4.2.3 Correspond with Compatriots

The third reeducational task of the Committee was to correspond with compatriots abroad. In effect, Latvian émigrés were sent not only the *PaDz*, the printed repatriation *Appeal*, Soviet Latvian newspapers, magazines and other propaganda publications, but also personally addressed form letters in the Latvian language informing “compatriots about the possibilities of returning to the Motherland”. For example, a typewritten, stenciled letter signed by Ā. Talcis, addressed to some “Dear compatriot”, begins with the phrase “Your acquaintances gave us your address”. After naming the possibility “of returning to the Motherland”, the letter ends on the hopeful note: “Please regard this letter as a starting point for the renewal of your contacts with the Motherland.”³⁶

Typical mailings from the Committee For Return to the Motherland, for example, were received by Latvian employees of the Chieftain Viesturs Guard Company (*Virsaiša Viestura sardžu rota*) in the American sector. They were regularly sent personally addressed envelopes containing *PaDz* (in Russian and in Latvian), individual repatriation invitations to return to Latvia, copies of the newspaper *Cīņa*, the magazine *Zvaigzne (Star)*, and

³² Plakans, ed., (2007), p 304

³³ Ibid. p 305

³⁴ Mr. A, ‘Uzsākti raidījumi latviešiem Amerikā no Austrumvācijas’ [Broadcasts to Latvians in America have begun from East Germany], *Laiks* No 93, Nov 21, 1959 p 8

³⁵ See Boriss Hiršfelds, *28 stundas diennaktī [28 hours daily]* (Riga: Liesma, 1977), pp 116–117 and Ievkalns (1966), p 54.

³⁶ See the Appendix for an example of a repatriation letter sent by Talcis.

copies of the September 17, 1955 Amnesty Decree.³⁷ These envelopes were sent from East Berlin, from Frankfurt am Main, and from other West German cities. Some envelopes had no return addresses at all, others had the return addresses of persons working for the local Employment Service or of fellow Latvian émigrés living in other DP camps and settlements.³⁸ The false sender addresses were used in order to fool recipients into opening the envelopes and reading the contents. Otherwise, if the sender was marked as the Committee For Return to the Motherland, there was the risk that the émigré would return the envelope or throw it away unopened.³⁹

The émigré press notes other “tricks” that were utilized by the Committee in its interchanges with émigrés. At times, letters were sent to prominent émigrés, thanking them for their interest in contacting the Committee and expressing the wish to repatriate—in spite of the fact that no contact at all had been taken by the émigrés—and promising to support their laudatory intent to return to their homeland where their relatives were waiting.⁴⁰ In this manner, seeds of distrust were sown. Others who had not received such letters were never really sure whether the prominent émigrés had been in secret contact with the Committee or not.

In other cases, exile publications were put in envelopes together with repatriation materials from the Committee. For example, a Latvian émigré in the USA received repatriation materials from the Committee together with the émigré publication *Trimdas arodnieks (Exile Laborer Unionist)*—a publication of the Stockholm-based exile Latvian Social Democratic Workers’ Party.⁴¹ By adding an exile publication to the Committee’s mail-outs, some momentary confusion was probably created. If the persons on the receiving end were not knowledgeable about Latvian émigré organizations, then it could be believed that the exile organization and the Committee were cooperating and working towards the same goals.

³⁷ Sarmīte Baltiņa, *Ieskats Virsaiša Viestura sardžu rotas sarakstē [A look into the correspondence of the Chieftain Viesturs guard company]* (Riga: Latvian War Museum, 2011) retrieved 2011-04-07 from <http://www.karamuzejs.lv/index.php?id=1&sid=104>

³⁸ It was reported that the Estonian version of *PaDz* was posted from Switzerland, with the senders being the former Estonian Minister for Foreign Affairs Karl Selter, or the board of editors of the veteran’s newspaper *Voitleja*, or other well-known émigré Estonians. See ‘Neļaujiet sevi samulsināt’ [Don’t be fooled], *Latvija* No 29, Aug 4, 1956 p 3.

³⁹ See Chapter 6.5.3

⁴⁰ ‘Cīņa aizstāj “Za Vozvraščeniju”’ [Cīņa replaces “Za Vozvraščenija”], *Austrālijas Latvietis* No 308, Oct 22, 1955 p 1

⁴¹ Lasītājs Kanadā, ‘Lasītāju balsis – Adrešu ķērāji’ [Letters to the Editor – Address hunters], *Laiks* No 38, May 13, 1959 p 2

4.2.4 Meet with Potential Repatriates

The fourth reeducational task, to meet with potential repatriates, was possibly the most important task for the Committee in achieving propaganda success. Once a person-to-person contact was made, then a basis was established for further interactions. The person who responded to contact could be influenced to gather, pass on, or disseminate information, he or she might be recruited to as an informant or spy. Moreover, a persuasive word from a person trusted and respected by the émigré could tip the scales in favor for return, if an émigré were unsure whether or not to repatriate.

Towards the end of 1956, meetings at the Committee venue in East Berlin were expressly promoted, and Latvian émigrés begin to receive invitations to travel to East Berlin, all travel expenses paid, for private discussions concerning repatriation and other issues.⁴² Émigrés were also invited to meet with repatriation representatives in their host countries, who could be either legation employees assigned to promote repatriation, or agents acting on behalf of the Committee from among the exile, or of other backgrounds.

Émigré author Jānis Jaunsudrabiņš

Probably the most well-known émigré Latvian who did not hide his contact with the Repatriation Committee is the writer Jānis Jaunsudrabiņš. In late 1957, he and his wife traveled to East Berlin in order to arrange the formalities surrounding the royalties from his books that were published and sold in Soviet Latvia. However, two years before the trip was made, Jaunsudrabiņš was contacted by Kurt Ottersberg, a Latvian-speaking Baltic German residing in East Berlin. Ottersberg, an agent of the Committee, had been assigned to hand over to Jaunsudrabiņš letters from his old friends in Soviet Latvia, the writers E. Birznieks-Upītis and J. Sudrabkalns. Besides general information about the writers' current life in Soviet Latvia, these letters contained repatriation invitations. Upon the first visit to Jaunsudrabiņš' home in Kerbeck, a small village not far from Soest, West Germany, Ottersberg was received at the door by Jaunsudrabiņš' wife, who took the letters, but did not let him enter the house. On the next visit some months later, he was received by Jaunsudrabiņš himself. Ottersberg gave him some Soviet Latvian newspapers and books, and a letter from P. Bauģis, director of the Latvian State Publishing House, which also contained an invitation to return to the homeland. Ottersberg was then invited inside and was asked about the current conditions in Soviet Latvia. Thereafter Ottersberg made a number of visits to Jaunsudrabiņš, at times even staying

⁴² Alvilis Vītrups, 'Uzticība un atbalsts DV' [Trust and support for the DV], *Latvija* No 4, Jan 26, 1957 p 2

for the night. Jaunsudrabiņš also received letters inviting him home from the schoolchildren of Soviet Latvia.⁴³

In December 1957, accompanied by Ottersberg, Jaunsudrabiņš and his wife flew from Hannover to Berlin, where they were received at the airport by the staff of the Committee For Return to the Motherland. During the five-day visit they stayed at Ottersberg's apartment, visited the Soviet Embassy where the royalty issue was resolved,⁴⁴ and also visited the Committee.⁴⁵ The talks with KGB Major Krišjānis Krūmiņš at the Committee however, convinced Jaunsudrabiņš that it was not possible for him and his wife to return to Soviet Latvia.⁴⁶ The trip and all associated costs for Jaunsudrabiņš and his wife were paid for by the Committee.⁴⁷

Soviet Embassy Contacts

Throughout the repatriation campaign, the Soviet Embassies behaved as extra repatriation centers. Due to their proximity to several major émigré Latvian communities, the embassies received and forwarded messages and encouraged contacts between émigrés and the homeland, and where possible, promoted repatriation.

During the 1950s and 1960s, reports appeared in the émigré press about Soviet Embassy employees who attempted to establish personal contacts by making unannounced visits to émigré homes, phoning them, inviting them to events (film showings, lectures) at the Embassy, attending émigré events themselves, or writing personal letters to émigrés.⁴⁸

In the United Kingdom, repatriation agitation was carried out by “embassy employees of Russian and Finnish descent”, and by an embassy worker of Latvian descent named Lucas. These persons visited Latvian homes, offered Soviet publications, and gave away tickets to Soviet film shows. This work was centered in a building controlled by the Soviet Embassy at “5 Bayswater Rd, London W2”.⁴⁹

In Sweden, the repatriation activities of the Soviet Embassy in Stockholm, due to its proximity to Estonian and Latvian émigré communities, were especially noticeable. Estonian émigré newspapers wrote, for example,

⁴³ Ā. Šilde, ‘Es kopoju vēl argumentus par un pret’ [I am still considering the pros and cons], *Laiks* No 34, Apr 6, 1958 p 1

⁴⁴ The royalties from the sale of his books in Soviet Latvia would be paid to his nephew and to his wife's niece, both residing in Soviet Latvia. Ibid.

⁴⁵ See Kurts Ottersbergs, ‘Cimos pie J. Jaunsudrabiņu’ [Visiting J. Jaunsudrabiņš], *PaDz* No 56(146), Jul 30, 1957 p 1, and Anerauds, ed., (1984), pp 72–75.

⁴⁶ Lešinskis (1986), pp 49–50

⁴⁷ Ā. Šilde, ‘Es kopoju vēl argumentus par un pret’ [I am still considering the pros and cons], *Laiks* No 34, Apr 6, 1958 p 1

⁴⁸ ‘Padomju aģenti dzenā pēdas latviešiem’ [Soviet agents track Latvians], *Laiks* No 59, Jul 24, 1957 p 2

⁴⁹ Ibid.

that “repatriation general Mikhailov” turned his attention to Sweden and that several Estonian households were visited by Mikhailov’s agents, who were being chauffeured in the Soviet Embassy’s car.⁵⁰ The visits and phone calls of attaché and KGB Major Bernhards Borgs to members of the Latvian community in Stockholm and Uppsala were widely commented and discussed. His intensive association with a Latvian émigré family who had lived 20 years abroad led to convincing them to repatriate from Sweden to Riga.⁵¹

Other officials of Latvian descent working at the Soviet Embassy in Stockholm were also active in repatriation endeavors. Embassy worker V. Bulaņins was seen attending a Baltic refugee event in Stockholm, and it was noted that he visited émigrés in rural areas in order to persuade them to repatriate.⁵²

Attaché Leonīds Rimjans, stationed in Stockholm from 1957 to 1961, besides maintaining correspondence with émigrés living outside of Sweden, sought contacts in Stockholm by phoning prominent émigrés and inviting them for talks at the embassy. He also made uninvited visits to people’s homes, where he started discussions, promoted repatriation, and offered employment opportunities in Latvia. It is maintained that in this manner Rimjans established contacts with an émigré orchestra conductor X, which in the end, resulted in the repatriation of X and his wife. The émigré press writes that after being contacted by Rimjans, X started receiving letters from old friends in Latvia: from his former classmate, now a playwright at Daile Theater, from a current conductor of the Leningrad Philharmonic, from persons working at the Riga Opera. X then made it known to his friends in Sweden that he was considering offers to work in Riga or possibly in Moscow, since his talent was not respected in the West.⁵³ A few days before his departure to Riga, X phoned his acquaintance AB, a correspondent of the émigré newspaper *Laiks*, and complained that the “Bolsheviks are pursuing him with repatriation offers”. When told that these pursuits could be easily stopped by contacting the Swedish police or by publishing an explanation in the newspaper that he turned down all repatriation advances made by Soviet authorities, X allegedly changed the tone of the conversation and said that he nevertheless was contemplating repatriation. However, AB, the author of the

⁵⁰ ‘Piesardzību sarakstē ar dzimteni!’ [Be careful when writing to the homeland!], *Laiks* No 102, Dec 21, 1955 p 10

⁵¹ See ‘Pēc divdesmit gadiem’ [After twenty years], *PaDz* No 52(142), July 1955 p 1, and ‘No Zviedrijas atgriezusies dzimtenē laviešu ģimene’ [A Latvian family has returned from Sweden], *PaDz* No 62(152), Aug 1957 p 1.

⁵² ‘Krievi meklē repatriantus’ [Russians look for repatriates], *Latvju Ziņas* No 9, May 5, 1955 p 2

⁵³ ‘Bēgļu vervētājiem izdevies lielāks ķēriens’ [Refugee hunters make larger kill], *Londonas Avīze* No 616, Mar 28, 1958 p 1. For more on this repatriation, see Chapter 6.6.2.

article, had the feeling that X was not fully convinced about his decision.⁵⁴ A few days later, X and his wife were fetched at their Stockholm apartment by three men in a Soviet Embassy car and driven to the Bromma airport, from where, via Moscow, they were flown to Riga. They were accompanied to the airport by an émigré Latvian couple, who were said to hold X's power of attorney concerning his remaining financial affairs in Stockholm and who were alleged to be Soviet agents assigned to their surveillance.⁵⁵

Tourism as Contacts

A new opportunity for person-to-person contacts was made possible when Riga was opened to foreign visitors in 1957.⁵⁶ This meant that for the first time since WWII, Latvian émigrés—as tourists—had the possibility to visit the capital city of their homeland.⁵⁷ It also meant that Soviet citizens had the theoretical possibility to visit the capitalistic West. Moreover, in the late 1950s, a new Soviet policy, albeit short-lived, provided for family reunions, whereby elderly persons were allowed to leave Soviet Latvia and live permanently with their families abroad.⁵⁸

Even though the boundaries of the Soviet Union were now opened, visits to and from the Soviet Union remain infrequent events. Tourists usually traveled as part of a delegation or group, and individual tourism was rare.

An exceptional case of repatriation blackmail occurred in connection with a pre-tourism visit from the Soviet Union to a prominent exile Lithuanian scholar, a professor and co-worker at the Baltic Research Institute in Bonn and a well-known anti-communist. In June 1956, the scholar's wife legally travelled from Soviet Lithuania to West Germany with all necessary Soviet exit and entry documents. Her purpose was to meet her husband, the professor, whom she had not seen for eleven years. Accompanied by two Soviet agents, and with no previous notification, she arrived at his apartment in Freiburg.⁵⁹ Her official assignment was to persuade her husband to return to the homeland. She explained that if he refused to return, then their children, who had remained in Lithuania, would suffer. The same would be true, however, if she decided to remain in the West with her husband. After two days, she returned to Lithuania, not having achieved her aim. The professor, shaken by the event, became ill and was placed for some time in

⁵⁴ AB, 'Leons Reiters aizbraucis uz Latviju' [Leons Reiters has left for Latvia], *Laiks* No 26, Mar 29, 1958 p 1

⁵⁵ LR, 'Iekritis krievu slazdā' [Caught in a Russian trap], *Latvija* No 12, Mar 29, 1958 p 1

⁵⁶ Šneidere, ed., (2001), pp 244–255

⁵⁷ With the exception of Riga, Jurmala, and guided tours to Sigulda, the rest of Soviet Latvia was off-limits for foreign tourists.

⁵⁸ 'Polītiski svarīga sanāksme' [Important political meeting], *Latvju Vārds* No 16, May 25, 1956 p 3

⁵⁹ 'Tas iet par tālu' [That is going too far], *Latvija* No 22, June 9, 1956 p 1

clinical care.⁶⁰ The shock of his wife's visit, however, did not deter him from his cultural and academic work, and he continued with his anti-communist lectures in the Baltic émigré community.⁶¹

Other efforts to promote repatriation were made during this period through visiting Soviet delegations and official Soviet tourist groups. According to one Latvian newspaper account, a delegation member representing the Soviet Latvian Lutheran Church, while on an official visit to the UK, gathered émigré addresses and gave these to "his masters". It is suspected that these addresses were then utilized for repatriation mailings.⁶²

4.3 Actions to Implement Goals

To achieve the goals of the repatriation campaign, several plans of action were followed. On the governmental level, attempts were made to summon the aid of international bodies and state governments to pressure individual émigrés and DPs into repatriating. Use was also made of Soviet domestic and foreign policy decisions to pressure foreign governments into forcefully repatriating Soviet nationals. The "top-level" measures targeting state governments were coupled with "low-level" measures targeting individual émigrés. These individually directed measures were communicated through the repatriation newspaper and repatriation broadcasts, through the mails as letters, pamphlets, and other publications, and through person-to-person meetings. All the measures by themselves and in combination worked towards the goals of the repatriation campaign: the repatriation of all "Soviet" nationals, the promotion of the Patriotic Movement, the struggle against anti-Soviet propaganda, and the destruction of emigration.

4.3.1 Exert Government Pressure

During 1955 and 1956, the Soviet government passed several policy measures in its attempt to secure the support of the West for its repatriation plans. For example, the Soviet government influenced France, the United Kingdom, and the USA—the Allied occupying powers—to accept a clause (Article 16) for the forced repatriation of Soviet Bloc refugees from Austria in the Austrian State Treaty. This clause, however, was removed before the treaty was signed.⁶³ The Soviet refugee issue was also taken up at West

⁶⁰ K. D., 'Sensacionāls Padomju mēģinājums panākt repatriāciju.' [Sensational Soviet attempt to bring about repatriation.] *Laiks* No 40, May 19, 1956 p 1

⁶¹ 'Baltijas Pētīšanas Institūts darbojas sekmīgi' [The Baltic Research Institute is working successfully], *Latvija Amerikā*, August 7, 1957 p 3

⁶² 'Koeksistence ar mašīnpestoli' [Coexistence with a machinegun], *Londonas Avīze* No 490, Oct 14, 1955 p 9

⁶³ Epstein (1973), pp 119–134

German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer's state visit to Moscow on September 9–13, 1955. In connection with the negotiations over the return of German civilians from the Soviet Union, Soviet Prime Minister N. A. Bulganin issued a statement about the necessity of the repatriation of "over 100,000 forcefully deported Soviet citizens ... who in many cases are characterized as stateless ... and ... are currently being detained within the territory of West Germany."⁶⁴ In October 1955, the Soviet Union temporarily halted the return of German war prisoners to West Germany. However, after further negotiation, all German POWs were returned by January 1956, without any concessions from the West.⁶⁵ The *New York Times* speculated that the Soviets were using the German unification question and other issues to force the repatriation of the Soviet citizens.⁶⁶

Throughout 1956, the Soviet government continued with appeals to the United Nations and Western governments concerning the return of displaced Soviet citizens, and persisted in voicing its dissatisfaction with the treatment given to this issue.⁶⁷ In October 1956, the Soviet government proposed the passage of a resolution at the United Nations General Assembly Tenth Session concerning the repatriation of 300,000 displaced persons and refugees still residing in the West.⁶⁸ However, this resolution was not passed, as Western governments would not change their standpoint of neutrality on the repatriation issue, i.e. that the refugees themselves can freely choose whether to return or not.

Since West Germany was the country with the largest remaining DP population, special pressure was put on the West German government concerning the repatriation of Soviet refugees. In October 1955, Mikhailov wrote a letter to Gerhard Schröder, Minister of the Interior of West Germany, requesting the minister to instruct all federal governments and border guards to allow Soviet citizens and their families who wish to leave West Germany for the Soviet Union to cross the border with the documents

⁶⁴ N. A. Bulganin, "N. A. Bulganins deklaration om de förflyttade sovjetmedborgare som kvarhålles i Västtyskland, 9–13 september, 1955," *Nyheter från Sovjetunionen*, Sep 26, 1955

⁶⁵ Charles Williams, *Adenauer: the father of new Germany* (London: Little, Brown, 2000), p 434

⁶⁶ M. S. Handler, 'Soviet Meddling Charged by Bonn; West Germany Calls Russian Criticism of Ban on Reds Improper Interference Unification Delay a Factor Russians Free to Return', *New York Times*, Sep 1, 1956

⁶⁷ See 'Par to pārvietoto personu atgriešanas Dzimtenē, kuras atrodas VFR' [About the return of DPs who are in the GDR to the Motherland], *PaDz* No 18(34) May 1956 p 4; 'Jautājumā par padomju pilsoņu repatriāciju no VFR' [The question concerning the repatriation of Soviet citizens from the FRG], *PaDz* No 21(37), Jun 1956 p 1; 'Oficialie paziņojumi un realie fakti' [Official notices and actual facts], *PaDz* No 22(38), Jun 1956 p 1; and 'PSRS Ārlietu Ministrijā' [In the Foreign Ministry of the USSR], *PaDz* No 39(55), Aug 1956 p 1.

⁶⁸ See 'ANO Ģenerālās Asamblejas X sesija' [UN General Assembly 10th Session], *Padomju Jaunatne* No 198, Oct 7, 1955 p 4, and A., 'Krievi pieprasa Apv. nāciju atbalstu repatriācijai' [Russians ask UN support for repatriation], *Laiks* No 81, Oct 8, 1955 p 5.

that they currently possess. He requested that this decision be announced at DP camps and settlements, and via the press and radio.⁶⁹ No direct answer was given to this letter, instead, the West German Minister of the Interior issued a press statement stating that “refugees can leave the Federal Republic of Germany whenever they wish and without special notification to the border guards.”⁷⁰ A petition was submitted requesting that refugees from Soviet-controlled territories living in West Germany be put under Soviet jurisdiction. This request was denied.⁷¹ Committee Chairman Mikhailov then expressed dissatisfaction that anti-Soviet organizations were allowed to exist on West German territory and requested the government to bring about their closure. He stated that the radio stations Voice of America, BBC, Radio Free Europe, and Radio Liberty, and the organizations Russian and Ukrainian Herder Society and the American Committee Against Bolshevism had “added fuel to the refugees’ ungrounded fears of returning home”, and therefore should be shut down.⁷² The West German government, however, did not forbid the activities of the anti-Soviet organizations in West Germany and West Berlin.⁷³

On March 9, 1956, V. A. Zorin, the Ambassador of the USSR to the Federal Republic of Germany, handed a note to the German Foreign Ministry requesting a list of all Soviet citizens living on West German territory, including those in camps and jails, in order that Soviet officials could visit these persons. Zorin also requested the release of forty-six Soviet citizens who were serving jail sentences in West Germany and who had allegedly expressed a wish to repatriate.⁷⁴ The German Foreign Ministry replied in a note on March 29, 1956 that it refused to hand over lists of Soviet citizens living in West Germany, but that it would release from imprisonment thirty-one Russians who had expressed a desire to repatriate to the Soviet Union.⁷⁵ On May 15, 1956, the Soviet Embassy declared in a note to the Foreign Ministry of the Federal Republic of Germany that concerning repatriation, the government of the FRG had taken a standpoint that was in contradiction to the agreement reached by the FRG and the USSR in

⁶⁹ Michailovs, ‘Vācijas Federālās Republikas Iekšlietu ministram Šredera kungam’ [To GDR Minister of Interior Schroeder], *PaDz* No 13 Oct 1955 p 1

⁷⁰ *Answers to Der Spiegel*

⁷¹ “Soviet is Pressing for D.P.S’ Return” in *New York Times*, Dec 2, 1955

⁷² *Answers to Der Spiegel*

⁷³ ‘Soviet is Pressing for D.P.S’ Return’, *New York Times*, Dec 2, 1955

⁷⁴ ‘PSRS Vēstnieka Vācijas Federālajā Republikā V. A. Zorina paziņojums par padomju pilsoņu repatriāciju no VFR’ [USSR Ambassador to the German Federal Republic, V. A. Zorin’s announcement about the repatriation of Soviet citizens from the FRG], *DzB* No 11(27) Mar 1956 p 1. (ref: *Announcement of Zorin*)

⁷⁵ Arthur J. Olsen, ‘Bonn to yield 31 who favor Soviet; Agrees to deliver convicts who ask to return home—other cases studied’, in *New York Times*, Apr 10, 1956.

Moscow the previous September.⁷⁶ In another note to the FRG, the USSR pointed out that Soviet citizens were housed in special camps, which resembled the regimes of the “Hitlerian Eastern area camps”.⁷⁷ The Soviet government also requested the addresses of Soviet citizens, especially children and young adults, who had been “deported from the FRG”.⁷⁸

Altercations over the issue of refugees and repatriation continued from the Soviet side in this manner during 1956. Not meeting with any success, these types of Soviet actions were discontinued towards the end of the year.

4.3.2 Get Addresses

Personally addressed and signed letters were a significant complement to the repatriation newspapers and other published materials that were mailed to recipients abroad. From what can be gathered from the exile Latvian press, typewritten form letters from the Committee were sent in the hundreds to Latvian addressees in West Germany, Sweden, Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, and the USA. The press comments that “refugee camps were being flooded with propaganda materials.”⁷⁹

However, to make contact with émigrés who lived scattered throughout the West, their addresses must first be procured. Therefore attempts were made by the Committee For Return to the Motherland, Soviet legations and other Soviet agencies to determine the whereabouts of émigrés and their organizations, and to find out as much background information about them as possible. Addresses were gathered by both legal and illegal means. On several occasions, the Soviet government, either directly or through its embassies, requested host country authorities to provide them with addresses of what it regarded as its “Soviet citizens” abroad.⁸⁰ Requests were even made for specific groups of people, such as, for example the names and access to all persons with DP or refugee background under psychiatric care in German hospitals.⁸¹

Addresses were also scoured from émigré publications, copied from ordinary Soviet Latvian correspondence with friends and relatives abroad,

⁷⁶ ‘Jautājumā par padomju pilsoņu repatriāciju no VFR’ [The question concerning the repatriation of Soviet citizens from the FRG], *PaDz* No 21(37) Jun 1956 p 1

⁷⁷ N. Michailovs, ‘Dzīvot kopā ar savu tautu’ [To live together with one’s people], *PaDz* No 3(93) Jan 1957 p 1

⁷⁸ ‘PSRS Valdības nota Vācijas Federatīvajai Republikai par padomju pilsoņu repatriāciju no VFR’ [Note from Government of the USSR to the FRG about the repatriation of Soviet citizens from the FRG], *PaDz* No 71(87) Dec 1956 p 1

⁷⁹ -n, ‘15 miljoni darba vergu’ [15 million work slaves], *Laiks* No 59, July 23, 1955 p 1

⁸⁰ *Announcement of Zorin*

⁸¹ Soviet representatives were interested in gaining access to the approximately 60 Latvians placed in psychiatric wards in West Germany. See ‘Jaunā LCP grozīs tautas kopības noteikumus’ [The new LCP will change the national unity statutes], *Latvija* No 41 Nov 3, 1956 p 2

demanded from Latvian émigrés who come in contact with Soviet representatives, and stolen from émigré community and religious centers.⁸²

A major theft of Latvian émigré addresses took place in August 1954, when agents of the Soviet and East German security services forced an office window of the Latvian Central Committee (*Latviešu Centrālā Komiteja*) and took 2,859 registry cards.⁸³ The Latvian Central Committee, located in the Augustdorf DP camp in the British zone, worked for refugee relief and had accrued an address list of over ten thousand Latvians residing in West Germany.⁸⁴ The register cards contained not only the émigré's home address, but also up-to-date information on employment history and family data.⁸⁵ Initially, it was not known that Soviet and East German security was responsible for the theft, therefore certain members of the émigré community utilized the situation and seized the opportunity to blame others for collaboration and irresponsibility in order to further their own political agenda. For example, it was alleged that a former legionnaire living in the DP camp had aided the KGB in stealing the card index,⁸⁶ and it was also rumored that one of the exile political parties had stolen the card index in order to influence the result of the upcoming elections to the Latvian Central Council.⁸⁷

The Latvian address theft was not an isolated event, as burglaries of addresses from émigré organizations in West Germany continued throughout 1955. Fifteen organizations reported intrusions or address register thefts from their offices, including the Lithuanian Freedom Committee (VLIKAS) and the Estonian newspaper *Voitleja*. Eventually, the Bavarian police caught fifteen members of the gang behind the thefts.⁸⁸ The burglaries went by the name of "Operation Red Snow"⁸⁹ and were under the direction of sabotage specialist Ernst Wollweber, head of the State Security of the German Democratic Republic.⁹⁰ At the *Voitleja* break-in, the head of the gang, the

⁸² See 'Adreses—par katru cenu adreses!' [Addresses—at any price addresses], *Laiks* No 35 Feb 5 1956 p 1, and, md, 'Komūnisti reģistrē bēgļu adreses' [Communists register émigré addresses], *Laiks* No 51 Jun 27, 1956 p 6.

⁸³ "Émigré go home," *News from behind the iron curtain* 4, No 10 (1955): p 5

⁸⁴ 'Vācijas LCK kartotēka nozagta' [Address register of LCK in Germany stolen], *Brīvība* No 8(53), Oct 1954 p 3

⁸⁵ Ž. Unāms, 'Maskavas kamols ietin arī Kanadas latviešus' [Moscow's yarn entangles also Canada's Latvians], *Jaunais Apskats* No 39, Nov 11, 1955 p 6

⁸⁶ Unstructured interview, Jānis Vilnis Zaļkalns, January 7, 2000

⁸⁷ See Ž. Unāms, 'Maskava savāc baltiešu kartotēku' [Moscow grabs Baltic card index], *Jaunais Apskats* No 32, Sep 16, 1955, p 5

⁸⁸ 'Sarkanie sniega vīri' [Red snowmen], *Latvija Amerikā* No 17, Feb 29, 1956 p 3

⁸⁹ 'Pa kartotēkas zagļu pēdām' [In the steps of the address register thieves], *Latvija* No 9, Mar 3, 1956 p 1

⁹⁰ Do, 'Notverta komūnistu sabotieru banda, kas Vācijā zaga trimdinieku kartotēkas' [Arrest of Communist saboteur gang that stole émigré address registers in Germany], *Laiks* No 103, Dec 24, 1955 p 1

33-year old Rumanian Peter Karpacki, left a note: “Return—all will be forgiven”, thus betraying his overseer as the Repatriation Committee, to which he also confessed in court.⁹¹ As revealed by the Bavarian prosecutor’s office, the actions of the thieves took place according to the classic “dead letter box” method applied in espionage. The addresses were placed in a bag and taken to a barn forty kilometers outside of Stuttgart, where two locked boxes were hidden: one containing a stack of Deutschmarks as payment, the other for unloading the addresses. After the thieves dropped the address bag, took the money and left the premises, the address bag was picked up by a Committee contact person and flown to East Berlin. It was claimed that the theft and transfer of the Latvian address register to the Committee took place in this same manner.⁹²

Another confirmation of the connection between the Repatriation Committee and the address thefts was inadvertently made in the Russian language repatriation newspaper *Za vozvrashchenie na Rodinu*. A front-page article disclosed: “Thanks to a patriotic event, the Committee has come into possession of many thousands of address register cards of the émigré organizations.”⁹³ This article is accompanied by facsimiles of several address cards, from which it can be seen that they came from the Munich break-ins.⁹⁴

At almost the same time, one more step was taken by the Committee that confirmed its involvement in émigré espionage. A form letter, signed by Chairman Mikhailov and dated March 29, 1957, was sent to recipients in Canada, requesting personal details about compatriots who were conducting anti-Soviet work. The letter specified: “The following must be reported: family name, address, ... what assertions the person is making in open meetings and in private conversations/, does he write to the press/ what publications/, does he associate with foreigners, etc.”⁹⁵ Six days later another letter was sent from the Committee stating that the March letter was a provocation, and that “the Committee has no relation to espionage work and never has called for it”.⁹⁶

Roberts and Cipko suggest that the affair with the March letter and the general failure in achieving repatriation, among other things, led to the downfall of Mikhailov.⁹⁷ To these factors can be added the blunder in openly admitting in the *Za vozvrashchenie na Rodinu* the Committee’s involvement

⁹¹ ‘Sarkanais sniegs uzbrūk’ [Attack of the red snow], *Laiks* No 18, Mar 3, 1956 p 6. See also Roberts et al. (2008), p 41.

⁹² ‘Latvieši brīvajā pasaulē’ [Latvians in the free world], *Londonas Avīze* No 502, Jan 6, 1956 p 3

⁹³ K.D., ‘Repatriācijas ģenerālis nekaunīgi samelojies’ [The repatriation general has told impertinent lies], *Laiks* No 33, Apr 25, 1956 p 2

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Roberts et al. (2008), p 144

⁹⁶ Ibid. p 145

⁹⁷ Ibid. p 150

in stealing address register cards. In late 1958, allegedly due to ill health, Mikhailov was replaced by General Sergei Vishnievsky as head of the Committee For Return to the Motherland, and all references to Mikhailov were removed from government files. He is not mentioned in the Great Soviet Encyclopedia, nor is any information about him found in the Russian state archives.⁹⁸

The scouring for émigré addresses continued throughout the years of Soviet occupation. After the return of an émigré couple to Soviet Latvia from Sweden in 1958, a Swedish newspaper reported that an employee of the Soviet Embassy emptied their apartment, and that the local Latvian émigré community was concerned that a list of 100 members of the Stockholm Latvian Choir, containing dates of birth, addresses, and workplaces, had now ended up in Soviet hands.⁹⁹

4.3.3 Intensify the Patriotic Movement

One of the goals of the Committee For Return to the Motherland was to support the Patriotic Movement, in other words, all types of pro-Soviet repatriation activity among émigrés. Furthermore, the goal implied that if there were no on-going pro-Soviet enterprises, then such were to be created through the agency of the Committee. By establishing repatriation centers abroad under the name of the “Patriotic Movement”, the Committee could use these as entry points to infiltrate the émigré community and carry out émigré espionage. By supporting the Patriotic Movement, the Committee also worked towards the goal of destroying the emigration, since the Patriotic Movement was intended to eventually take over and replace existing anti-Soviet organizations.

Subversive activity by the Committee was quickly observed by exile organizations in West Germany. For example, as early as May 1955 the Baltic Council in Tübingen together with Russian anti-Bolshevik organizations in Frankfurt published warnings in émigré media. The alerts about perceived dangerous Committee activity state that Serov, head of the KGB, had worked out plans to establish false organizations abroad, that so-called “defectors” were attempting to infiltrate émigré communities, and that the recently founded Committee for Repatriation to the Motherland, through the exploitation of alleged re-defectors attempted to accord a special force to this subversive activity.¹⁰⁰ The Latvian press reported on similar measures taking place among Czech and Slovak refugees, who were sent flyers and newspapers from Graz, Austria, containing appeals to establish “communist

⁹⁸ Roberts et al. (2008), p 150

⁹⁹ ‘Ryssar skaffade sig lett-register’, *Aftonbladet* Apr 10, 1958

¹⁰⁰ S.-V., ‘Brīdina no komūnistu infiltrācijas’ [Warning against communist infiltration], *Latvju Ziņas* No 9, May 5, 1955 p 1

cells in DP camps” and proposals to found “activist cells to promote repatriation”.¹⁰¹

Various attempts were made to infiltrate the Latvian émigré community with Soviet agents, set up clandestine promoter groups, and start a Patriotic Movement in the Latvian exile. According to an anonymous top-secret situation report prepared for Western security circles dated Dec 20, 1955, two male Soviet agents had been deployed in the “Baltic network” in West Germany for special assignments against émigré Balts. They were promised a premium of USD 150–800 for each successful Baltic repatriate. The agents could also request the help of a “masked Swiss network” if they wished to implement the forceful repatriation (kidnapping) of persons over to the Soviet side.¹⁰²

The Latvian émigré press reported that in 1956, Soviet funds sponsored the publication in West Germany of several stenciled bulletins—*Sakala* (the name of a pre-war Estonian student fraternity) and *Vanemuine* in the Estonian language, the German language “Baltic Patriots” and *Viesturieši* (*Viesturians*) in the Latvian language.¹⁰³ The choice of the name “Viesturieši” was ostensibly meant to give the impression that the bulletins originated from within the US Army Virsaiša Viestura (8920 Rt.) Guard Company.¹⁰⁴ The bulletins were mailed from Karlsruhe in West Germany, and the contents contained seemingly conservative, anti-communist articles. For example, a *Viesturieši* bulletin accused several prominent émigré politicians for corresponding with relatives in the homeland and the commander of the Viestura Guard Company for secretly opening, reading and then burning letters from the Mikhailov headquarters.¹⁰⁵ These accusations were meant to demonstrate that émigré politicians engaged in pro-communist activities (by writing to their relatives in Soviet Latvia)¹⁰⁶ and that the guard company commander disregarded his own instructions to the

¹⁰¹ ‘Čechus un slovākus aicina dibināt repatriācijas grupas’ [Czechs and Slovaks invited to found repatriation groups], *Laiks* No 49, June 18, 1955 p 1

¹⁰² See “DV nedraugi, skauģi un ienaidnieki [The nonfriends, envious persons, and enemies of DV],” in *Laiks, telpa, laudis. Daugavas Vanagu organizācijas pirmie 25 gadi. Vēstures apcere* [Time, Space, People. The first 25 years of Daugava’s Hawks organization. Historical summary], ed. V. Hāzners (Toronto: Daugavas Vanagu centrālās valdes izdevums, 1976), p 386; ‘Jauni triki’ [New tricks], *Austrālijas Latvietis* No 332, Apr 21, 1956 p 2.

¹⁰³ ‘Michailovs gatavojas “ziemas sezonai”’, [Mikhailov preparing for the ‘winter season’], *Latvija* No 39, Oct 20, 1956 p 3

¹⁰⁴ There was also a Canadian Latvian men’s choir with the same name (*Viesturieši*) with participants from the cities of Toronto, St. Katherine, Niagara and Hamilton. ‘Viesturieši dzied!’ [Viesturians sing!], *Latvija Amerikā*, Apr 18, 1956 p 5

¹⁰⁵ Š.V., ‘Komūnisti “viesturiešu” maskā [Kommunists behind the Viesturian mask] *Laiks* No 80, Oct 6, 1956 p 1

¹⁰⁶ The conservative émigré leadership warned nationals from writing letters to the Soviet Union, stating that such an action meant the legal recognition of the Soviet occupation of the homeland, see Aun (1985), p 155.

rank-and-file, who were to return or destroy communist publications unopened.

Some years later, the story behind the *Viesturieši* group and bulletin was disclosed in an article in *Dzimtenes Balss*. The repatriate Leons Kreilis, a former member of the notorious Arājs unit,¹⁰⁷ wrote that it was he together with some colleagues who had founded the underground communist group *Viesturieši* in Karlsruhe. The group's purpose was to distribute proclamations, mainly amongst members of the LSCs and in camps where members of the underground group lived, for example, in Memmingen.¹⁰⁸

The Latvian émigré press also reported on agent Felikss Navarskis, formerly of the town of Rēzekne, who had been recruited by the Mikhailov Committee. In 1954, the American military authorities sacked him from the Bruchmühlbach LSC, suspecting him of irregularities, whereupon he joined the Latvian transport unit of the British Army in Bielefeld. There he worked as correspondence clerk, having access to the names and addresses of all the Latvians in the unit, until October 1957, when he left for East Berlin. From the Committee For Return to the Motherland he inundated his former friends, acquaintances, and workmates with repatriation materials and invitations. Navarskis also sent hand-written personal letters addressed to his "dear friends", accompanied by a photograph of himself standing in front of the Committee. According to émigré newspaper reports, these letters were written in typical communist propaganda style, where his former émigré chiefs and work associates are described in foul language.¹⁰⁹ In November 1957, Navarskis returned to Riga, and afterwards, some articles about his satisfying return and pleasant life appeared in *PaDz*.¹¹⁰

Additional underground groups and agents were active in other West German camps. In the Oldenburg camp were groups which issued the stenciled publications *Opozicionārs (Opposer)* and *Laika ritmos (In the Rhythm of Time)*. When the exile organization *Daugavas Vanagi* uncovered

¹⁰⁷ The *Sonderkommando Arajs*, led by the Latvian Viktors Arājs, was an auxiliary unit of the Nazi Sicherheitsdienst (SD) that was active in the killing of Jews in Latvia. That a former member of the Arājs unit could apparently repatriate to Soviet Latvia without problems seems to prove Ezergailis' observation: "Membership in the Nazi killing apparatus was no detriment for later participation in a NKVD or KGB network of spies, agents, and informers." See Ezergailis (1996), p 13.

¹⁰⁸ Kreilis, Leonīds: 'Vēlreiz par «sarkanajiem rēģiem» un īstenību' [One again about the "red ghosts" and reality], *DzB* No 85 (370), Nov 13, 1959 p 1

¹⁰⁹ See Eks: 'No sardžu vīra par Michailova aģentu' [From guard to Mikhailov's agent], *Londonas Avīze* No 596, Nov 1, 1957 p 3; and (x): 'Fēliks Navarskis palīdz ģen. Michailovam' [Feliks Navarskis helps gen. Mikhailov], *Laiks* No 92, Nov 16, 1957 p 2.

¹¹⁰ See Navarskis, F.: Mīļie draugi svešumā! [Dear friends abroad!], *PaDz* No 76, Oct 16, 1957 p 1; and Navarskis, Felikss: 'Mani primie iespaidi' [My first impressions], *PaDz* No 85, Nov 18, 1957, p 2.

the activist group behind *Laika ritmos*, its main editor Jānis Gavars repatriated soon thereafter to Soviet Latvia.¹¹¹

Augusts Kalniņš was another Latvian émigré who cooperated with the Committee For Return to the Motherland. According to émigré press, the textile factory director and former member of the *Aizsargi* (homeland defense) organization visited the Committee in East Berlin at least three times. He was positively impressed by what he saw and heard during his visits, and he deemed General Mikhailov to be “a very intelligent person” and the rest of the staff as “very sympathetic”. After his visits he began to act the role of a repatriation agent by making recurring visits “in a black Mercedes from East Berlin” to Latvian settlements and labor service units, and by propagandizing for repatriation.¹¹² He also opened a “promoter center” in his apartment in a West German city to “agitate for the return to the homeland”. In one instance, Augusts Kalniņš visited a prominent Latvian émigré and urged him and three other émigré leaders to form a special delegation to visit Mikhailov to discuss the repatriation of Latvian émigrés in West Germany to Soviet Latvia.¹¹³

In these endeavors, however, Kalniņš was unsuccessful, since a special émigré delegation to discuss repatriation was never formed and no one seems to have repatriated in response to Kalniņš’ agitation. His usefulness to the Soviet center of authority, however, continued for several more years. After a tourism visit to Latvia in 1960, he was assigned by the Latvian KGB to act as editor for *Draugs* (*Friend*), a literary and artistic magazine in West Germany for Latvians abroad.¹¹⁴ Though the stenciled magazine, with a circulation of 200–250, never became popular among émigrés, it continued to be published for six years until 1967.¹¹⁵

4.3.4 Send Personal Letters from the Homeland

While activities were being initiated at the Committee For Return to the Motherland in mid-1955 in East Berlin, a campaign urging Soviet citizens to write to their relatives and friends abroad was being carried out in Soviet Latvia. Ordinary citizens were instructed at work-place meetings to write to

¹¹¹ ‘Daugavas Vanagu centrālās valdes sēde Londonā’ [Daugavas Vanagi central board meeting in London], *Laiks* No 34, 29 Apr 1959 p 2

¹¹² Dz. X.: ‘Padomju propaganda pieaug’ [Soviet propaganda increases], *Laiks* No 71, Sep 5, 1956 p 1

¹¹³ ‘Ģenerāļa Michailova jauns triks’ [General Mikhailov’s new trick], *Londonas Avīze* No 586, Aug 23, 1957 p 8

¹¹⁴ LVA PA 101.f., 24.apr., 72a.l., 321.–322.lp.

¹¹⁵ The magazine *Draugs* published articles on current events in Soviet Latvia and literary works by Soviet Latvian authors. The contents were wholly provided by the Latvian KGB, and the magazine was financed by the KGB residency in East Berlin. See Ievkalns (1966), p 81, and Lešinskis (1986), p 73.

their relatives and friends abroad about specific subjects.¹¹⁶ The assignment could be to write about peace or about the planned introduction of corn in the kolkhozes as a new agricultural product, to present everyday life as having returned to normal after the upheavals of war, as well as to invite the addressee to repatriate.¹¹⁷ This was a radically new Soviet policy in comparison to the Stalinist era, which was characterized by Soviet bans on all types of foreign connections. Émigré Latvians, who had previously refrained from writing to the homeland, fearing that their letters would be used to incriminate the recipient for having unlawful contacts with the capitalistic west,¹¹⁸ were now reassured that it was safe to reply. As a result, the increased correspondence from fellow citizens contributed to a major increase in postal volumes between Soviet Latvia and the West. For example, between the years 1955 and 1958, the number of letters, postcards and printed matter received from abroad in the Latvian SSR increased from 600,000 units to over 3 million units.¹¹⁹

The instruction to write to compatriots abroad was formalized in the party organ *Cīņa* in two articles authored by A. Tīlmanis,¹²⁰ published on July 11 and August 25, 1956. The readers were asked to write directly to the Committee For Return to the Motherland or to the *Cīņa* board of editors if they wished to help their relatives or friends repatriate.¹²¹ They were urged to write “a candid, personal letter” to their relatives and friends abroad stating “who is waiting and why the person is expected home.”¹²² If the writers’ relatives or friends addresses were lost or unknown, then *Cīņa* advised its readers to send inquiries to the newspaper, stating the missing person’s full name, patronymic, date of birth, former employment, when the person left the homeland and under what circumstances and when the person was last heard of, and last known place of residence. These inquiries would then be

¹¹⁶ ‘Padomju valdība trimdniekus aicina uz... Vorkutu’ [Soviet government invites exiles to... Vorkuta], *Latvija Amerikā* No 41, May 28, 1955 p 2

¹¹⁷ Mr. A.: ‘Jauns vilinājums bēgļiem’ [A new allurements for refugees], *Laiks* No 40, May 18, 1955 p 1

¹¹⁸ L. Br.: ‘Vēstules un sainīši’ [Letters and parcels], *Austrālijas Latvietis* No 293, July 9, 1955 p 1

¹¹⁹ It is to be noted that these figures include correspondence from all Western sources, not just émigrés, see Šneidere, ed., (2001), p 275.

¹²⁰ The émigré press speculates that “A. Tīlmanis” may be the same architect Tīlmanis who in pre-war years headed an owned a well-known construction firm in Riga. ‘Padomju vara veicina sarakstīšanos ar tuviniekiem Rietumos’ [The Soviets promote correspondence with relatives in the West], *Londonas Avīze* No 538, Sep 14, 1956 p 1

¹²¹ Tīlmanis, A.: ‘Palīdzēsim viņiem atgriezties Dzimtenē’ [Let us help them return to the Motherland], *Cīņa* No 16, July 11, 1956 p 3

¹²² Tīlmanis, A.: ‘Sasaukšanās ar tuviniekiem svešumā’ [Speak with your relatives abroad], *Cīņa* No 200, Aug 25, 1956 p 4

forwarded to the Committee in East Berlin, who would publish the names in the “missing friends” column of the Committee’s newspaper.¹²³

Furthermore, it was noted that “DPs, especially those that have collaborated with the occupying forces or have been in the so-called Latvian Legion, are convinced that their relatives are no longer alive and that untold horrors await them if they repatriate.”¹²⁴ The article continued with the statement that DPs have no idea what it is like to live in Soviet Latvia, and recommended that letter writers elaborate on their life and that of their family, friends, and acquaintances and correspond even more with folks abroad: “The more we communicate with them and invite them to come home, the quicker the ignorance and distrust will disappear that still exists between us and them.”¹²⁵

The encouragement to communicate with persons abroad gained a large response, and émigrés, some for the first time since the war, began to receive letters from family and acquaintances in Soviet Latvia. Professionals sent repatriation appeals to their colleagues abroad,¹²⁶ and some letter writers even added clippings of the relevant *Cīņa* articles to their repatriation invitations.¹²⁷

The Latvian émigré press has no reports on Latvian exiles receiving threatening or otherwise unusual repatriation letters from the Soviet Union. The press also has no reports of repatriation letters from persons in Soviet Latvia requesting Soviet Embassy help to aid émigrés to return home. In that these types of actions occurred among other emigrant communities, these were noted in Latvian émigré press. Mention was made of a Canadian citizen who received a letter from his brother in Estonia stating that their mother would be retained by the communists in Siberia for as long as her son remained in Canada.¹²⁸ Much larger coverage was given to the case of a Ukrainian Canadian. He had been regularly corresponding with his family in Ukraine when he unexpectedly received a letter from his 14-year old daughter threatening him with forced repatriation if he would not return voluntarily. The Ukrainian Canadian doubted whether these were his daughter’s thoughts, since the language and writing mode were so out of style with the previous letters that he had received from her.¹²⁹

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Dz. X.: ‘Padomju propaganda pieaug’ [Soviet propaganda increases], *Laiks* No 71, Sep 5, 1956 p 1

¹²⁷ ‘Jauni komūnistu triki sarakstē ar bēgļiem Rietumos’ [New communist tricks in corresponding with refugees in the West], *Londonas Avīze* No 535, Aug 24, 1956 p 3

¹²⁸ M. Der.: ‘Ja dēls nerepatriēsies, draud turēt māti Sibīrijā’ [If the son refuses to repatriate, the mother is threatened with being held in Siberia], *Laiks* No 103, Dec 24, 1955 p 1

¹²⁹ ‘Ukraiņu bēgļu piedraudējums padomju sūtniecībai’ [Ukrainian refugee’s threat to the Soviet embassy], *Londonas Avīze* No 539, September 21, 1956 p 3

4.3.5 Promote Repatriation in *PaDz*

A most important action was to agitate for repatriation. This was done by disseminating appeals or invitation to repatriate to the émigré audience. The first general call to repatriate was the *Appeal of the Committee For Return to the Motherland* issued in March 1955 in leaflet form.¹³⁰ It was reprinted in the first issue of *Par atgriešanos Dzimtenē*, dated April 1955, and being a relatively long document, covers the whole front page. The *Appeal* is addressed to “Dear compatriots, brothers, and sisters” and signed by Committee Chairman Nikolai Mikhailov and sixteen other Committee founders and members. It explains how the Committee was founded, its intended sphere of work, and urges compatriots cast off their doubts and return, since the Motherland will “understand each of her children and forgive them”. Repatriates are promised housing and employment, further education if necessary, and the potential of redeeming their guilt by serving the Motherland through honest work. The *Appeal* welcomes persons from the Baltic regions, the western regions of Ukraine and Belarus, as well as former members of the Russian Liberation Army and the national battalions, to return home.

These themes are clarified and expanded in the editorials, which usually are placed on the left side or the left column of the front page. The editorial “Children—our future” writes that abroad, the children of émigrés are forced to dig for food in rubbish heaps and work in mines from the age of seven, whereas in the Motherland, kindergartens, Pioneer camps, and cheerful and airy schoolrooms await them. The editorial asks if parents are not shuddering with fear when they realize that the Motherland has been taken away from the children, and that many will die before their time due to hunger and poverty. In the Motherland, however, these children would grow up to be happy, free citizens.¹³¹ The editorials discuss the doubts returnees have before deciding to return, and how relieved and glad they are once they have reached home. They emphasize that no punishment awaits those that have been in the camps of the enemy, but who admit to their guilt and truly attempt to rectify their mistakes. The émigré is encouraged to “fearlessly face the difficulties and deterrents that are obstructing return.”¹³²

Different types of invitation articles are placed throughout the newspaper. There are accounts of returnees who compare their unhappy and impoverished life abroad to the happiness they now feel at home. Some articles are only a few sentences long: “While I was in German captivity, I betrayed the Motherland [...] Now I have returned to the Motherland [...] Please, tell my compatriots, who are still abroad, that a life of plenty awaits them at

¹³⁰ Roberts et al. (2008), p 17

¹³¹ ‘Bērni – mūsu nākotne’ [Children—our future], *PaDz* No 8 Aug 1955 p 1

¹³² ‘Droši pārvarēt grūtības un šķērslus, kas kavē atgriezties! [Fearlessly overcome the difficulties and deterrents that are obstructing return!], *PaDz* No 13 Oct 1955 p 1

home”.¹³³ Other articles cover half a page and are illustrated with a photograph of the happy repatriate either at his place of work or amongst his family. For example, a physician who repatriated from France ends the story of his “Road to Home” with the following: “Leave the alien lands, come home to your land of birth, become the beloved sons and daughters of your Soviet Motherland. From all my heart, I invite you to participate in honest work for the good of our noble Motherland.”¹³⁴ A photograph of him in his surgery in Czernigov accompanies the article. Some appeals have a personal address, by a mother to her daughter or son, a wife to her husband, a child to its father. During the first year of publication of the *PaDz*, these personal appeals are made by non-Latvians.

The first Latvian invitations appear in the No. 14 October issue of *Par atgriešanos Dzimtenē*. This corresponds to the point in time when the first ethnic Latvians repatriated from West Germany to Riga, and when Ādolfs Talcis, the Latvian representative, started work in East Berlin. Along with Talcis’ involvement in the newspaper, the repatriation messages begin to directly address the Latvian reader. The newspaper prints less about Soviet citizens, Russians, Ukrainians, and Belarusians, and instead gives more coverage to Latvians and Latvian repatriates, within the context of Soviet Latvia. For example, in one article, a returnee from Great Britain wrote that he now works on a Soviet farm, will soon purchase a cow and other farm animals, and that by next year he will have his own farm. In the same article a Latvian repatriate explained how he left Hamburg by train to Berlin, how he was welcomed at the Committee, given money and booked into a hotel. He wrote that today he is leaving for Latvia, where his father, mother and two brothers are waiting. He entreated his “dear compatriots” to stop tormenting themselves abroad, and return to the Motherland.¹³⁵ The same information is aired in the October 11, 1955 Latvian repatriation broadcast, where the Latvian returnee invites compatriots to follow his example and return home.¹³⁶ The *PaDz* issue also carried the story of a repatriate who returned in 1950 from Belgium by ship to Murmansk, and then by train via Leningrad to Riga. The story ends with the advice to his good friends and to “all Latvians wandering about in alien worlds” that “it is never too late to return to the Motherland, to your people.”¹³⁷

¹³³ Alimchans, Hasbulats: ‘Esmu pilntiesīgs pilsonis’ [I am a full-fledged citizen], *PaDz* No 4 Jun 1955 p 3

¹³⁴ Nikolajenko: ‘Ceļš mājup’ [The road to home], *PaDz* No 4 Jun 1955 p 3

¹³⁵ ‘Uz redzēšanos Latvijā, dārgie draugi!’ [See you in Latvia, my dear friends!], *PaDz* No 14 Nov 1955 p 3

¹³⁶ B.: ‘Žanis Bratkus aicina “mājās”’ [Zanis Bratkus invites you “home”], *Laiks* No 84, Oct 19, 1955 p 5

¹³⁷ ‘Uz redzēšanos Latvijā, dārgie draugi!’ [See you in Latvia, my dear friends!], *PaDz* No 14 Nov 1955 p 3

In mid-1956, in pace with the Latvianization of the newspaper, the repatriation appeals begin to take on a more personal tone. Whereas in the beginning of the campaign, the repatriation appeals were directed to “all (Soviet) compatriots in exile” and then “all Latvians in exile”, the appeals now address persons of the émigré Latvian cultural and social elite, members of specific Latvian émigré groups (writers, artists), as well as ordinary Latvian persons by name. For example, in an April 1956 issue of *Par atgriešanos Dzimtenē*, an open letter is published from an eminent Soviet Latvian composer to his brother, also a composer, residing in Sweden, inviting him to repatriate and promising that professionally he would do excellently in Soviet Latvia.¹³⁸ In another example, Soviet Latvian writer Arvīds Grigulis addresses open New Year greetings in *Par atgriešanos Dzimtenē* to his writer colleagues-in-exile, claiming that they all would be so much better off at home in Soviet Latvia. He informs that the works of several émigré authors are about to be published in Riga, and that a play by an émigré playwright is currently being produced at the Riga Academic Drama Theater. Grigulis ends his letter with the words of the 19th century poet Andrejs Pumpurs:

Why are you wandering,
so far away from the beloved Fatherland?
Is there not sufficient room, my brothers,
for you in our Latvia?¹³⁹

This same poem is repeated in another appeal by Archbishop G. Turss, where the reader is informed that the Soviet Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church in Latvia is engaged in the repatriation campaign and has passed a collective repatriation resolution, signed by the archbishop and other members of the Church presidium, inviting clergymen and women of the Church abroad to return.¹⁴⁰

The *PaDz* also features personal invitations to rank-and-file émigrés. For example, a woman from Valmiera writes an open letter to her husband abroad stating that she is still waiting for him and wonders why he is not returning home. She allows for the possibility that he may have acquired a new family, but requests that in that case, he should inform her of that.¹⁴¹

The repatriation invitations, addressed to specific individuals and broader groups, continue to be published in *PaDz* and in *Dzimtenes Balss* until the

¹³⁸ ‘Jēkabs Mediņš aicina braukt mājās Jāni Mediņu’ [Jekabs Medins invites Janis Medins to return home], *Austrālijas Latvietis* No 332, Apr 21, 1956 p 2

¹³⁹ ‘Uz jaunā gada sliekšņa’ [On the threshold of the New Year], *PaDz* No 74(90) Dec 1956 p 1

¹⁴⁰ ‘Uz Dzimteni!’ [To the Motherland!], *PaDz* No 27 (117) Apr 1957 p 1

¹⁴¹ ‘Tevi meklē un gaida piederīgie Dzimtenē’ [You are being sought and awaited by relatives in the Motherland], *PaDz* No 36(52) Aug 1956 p 4

end of 1959. Starting 1960, repatriation invitations and stories about the lives of repatriates in Soviet Latvia are phased out. Apparently, this was done as a result of a policy change announced in the “CPSU CC decision of October 1959 to intensify activities against displaced Soviet persons and emigrants in capitalistic countries.”¹⁴² In this decision, the repatriation goal was apparently replaced with the goals of a) demasking the reactionary émigré leadership b) widening contacts with progressive émigré organizations and c) compromising and wrecking nationalistic organizations and centers abroad. In the spring of 1961, all efforts to achieve the mass repatriation of former Soviet citizens is stopped,¹⁴³ and the overt promotion of “cultural relations” replaces “repatriation” as the main concept in émigré Latvian—Soviet Latvian relations.

The goals of the Committee For Return to the Motherland were declared by Minister of Interior Sergei Kruglov to be: to promote repatriation, to assist the struggle against anti-Soviet propaganda, to support the Patriotic Movement, and to destroy the emigration. To attain these goals, the Committee engaged in what it defined to be reeducational tasks: to publish and distribute the *PaDz*, to produce and air the repatriation broadcasts, to correspond with compatriots, and to meet in person with potential repatriates. To achieve these goals and tasks, a number of actions were carried out. The Soviet government appealed to the UN to support its proposals for the forced repatriation of refugees. The Soviet government also pressured the West German government by threatening to stop the release of German POWs from the Soviet Union to West Germany. At home, Soviet citizens were instructed to write to their relatives and friends abroad and invite them to repatriate. In the *PaDz*, repatriation was promoted unrelentingly. The repatriation invitations were first addressed to Slavic “compatriots”, to be later replaced by named ethnic Latvian individuals and professional groups. At the same time, the Committee engaged in émigré espionage: it attempted to get émigré addresses through break-ins and blackmail, it infiltrated émigré communities, recruited informants and spies, and strove to set up pro-Soviet organizations among émigrés under the guise of the Patriotic Movement.

The next chapter will study the use of narratives as a persuasive strategy.

¹⁴² LVA PA 101.f., 23. apr., 23.l., pp. 30–32

¹⁴³ Lešinskis (1985): p 7

5 Strategies

5.1 The Committee Founding Legend

We could not forget our compatriots who were still suffering abroad as refugees and émigrés. Our deepest and most heartfelt wish was to help them return to the Motherland. Under the initiative of General Mikhailov and with the support of former comrades-in-arms, prisoners-of-war and repatriates, we drafted a proposal to the Soviet government about the establishment of a voluntary committee promoting the patriotic movement for the repatriation of Soviet citizens. The Soviet government responded positively to this proposal, permitting us to establish the Committee For Return to the Motherland, and we, the founder-members, unanimously elected General Mikhailov as Chairman.¹

We, former Soviet and émigré DPs in the USSR and the GDR, applied to the GDR government to permit us to establish a voluntary association in the GDR ... We know that such a Committee can exist only where there is real freedom and democracy. We know that such a Committee cannot openly exist in the FRG. ... [There] the American police regime ... would immediately declare us to be Soviet agents and arrest us.²

The GDR government has granted permission to the group of Soviet citizens to found the Committee For Return to the Motherland on its territory.³

Our Committee is supported by charitable contributions from former displaced persons who have returned to the Motherland, from participants of the Patriotic Movement and from sympathizers in the West. We are thankful for the attention and support provided by the central and local government agencies, as well as by the inhabitants of the German Democratic Republic.⁴

¹ A. Dubovikovs, 'Dzimtenes mīlestībai nav nekādu šķēršļu' [The love of the Motherland has no barriers], *PaDz* No 1 Apr 1955 p 2

² *Announcement*

³ 'Vācijas Demokrātiskās Republikas Valdības atbilde uz Komitejas «Par atgriešanos Dzimtenē» vēstījumu' [The Government of the German Democratic Republic's Answer to the Announcement by the Committee «For Return to the Motherland»], *PaDz* No 1 Apr 1955 p 2 (Ref: *Answer of the GDR*)

⁴ 'Komitejas «Par atgriešanos Dzimtenē» priekšsēdētāja b. Michailova atbildes Vācijas Demokrātiskās Republikas aģentūras ADN korespondentam b. Štečovam' [Chairman of the Committee «For Return to the Motherland» comrade Mikhailov's, answers to comrade Stechov, correspondent of the ADN agency of the German Democratic Republic], *PaDz* No 15 Nov 1955 p 2 (ref: *Answers to Stechov*)

The above is the legend of the founding of the Committee as it is presented to readers in the first issue of *Par atgriešanos Dzimtenē*. It explains how the repatriation campaign was initiated, how a group of former POWs and repatriates become Committee founders and members, from where the Committee gets its financing, and why it is located in the GDR.

Throughout the Soviet period, the founding legend remained a part of Committee history: it appears in internal Soviet documents,⁵ and it is published in domestic and international publications. Time and again, it is declared that the organization was created following the recommendation of “prisoners-of-war imprisoned in Fascist camps”.⁶

The Committee’s remarkable founding history—that former POWs could freely assemble, found an organization, and open offices abroad in East Berlin—engaged Western journalists, who wondered about the status of the Committee. To this, Committee Chairman Mikhailov explained that the Committee For Return to the Motherland was not a state institution, but a public organization founded on a voluntary basis,⁷ and was among many such organizations in the USSR “that serve patriotic goals”.⁸

In reality, according to Soviet law, there were provisions for establishing “all-Russian voluntary associations”. If the stipulated legal process were followed—at least ten founders submit a draft of the charter of the planned organization to the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR, together with an application requesting its approval⁹—then an organization such as the Committee could, in theory, exist. In this case, the legal steps, as recounted in the founding legend, seem to have been followed, and therefore the validity of the Committee could not be doubted on these grounds. Legal requirements also seem to be the reason why permission was sought from the government of the German Democratic Republic to open offices on its territory. The application—signed by “a group of Soviet citizens”: Committee chairman N. Mikhailov and the members/founders A. Dubovikov, I. Muratov, J. Krutij, N. Mitrofanov, A. Lebedev, and V. Rodinkov—was favorably received, the official answer being: “The government of the German Democratic Republic has consented to the application of the group of Soviet citizens to establish the Committee For Return to the Motherland on the territory of the German Democratic Republic.”¹⁰

The financing of the Committee also intrigued Western journalists. The press noted that no appeals to contribute had appeared in the repatriation

⁵ See, for example, GARF f. 9651, *opis* 1, p 4

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ ‘Komitejas «Par atgriešanās Dzimtenē» priekšsēdētāja b. Michailova atbildes’ [Answers from comrade Mikhailov, chairman of the Committee «For Return to the Motherland»], *PaDz* No 9(25) Mar 1956 p 4 (Ref: *Answers*)

⁸ *Answers to Mr. Muru*

⁹ Kulski (1959), pp 146–147

¹⁰ *Announcement; Answer of the GDR.*

newspaper or in other Soviet publications, but that the Committee nevertheless had access to “generous funding sources”, judging from the Committee’s widespread propaganda activities. To this Mikhailov replied that the Committee existed only from donations of former DPs and emigrants and various social organizations of the Soviet Union, and that it was not habitual for the Soviet press to publish contribution lists. Furthermore, he added that the Committee itself did not have such great expenditures, since a large share of the expenses were paid for by the state, i.e. the traveling and accommodation costs of the repatriates.¹¹ When asked about the financial involvement of the German Democratic Republic, Mikhailov replied: “Because the government agencies of the GDR are sympathetic to our cause, we have the opportunity to publish in Berlin the newspaper *For Return to the Motherland* and to organize radio broadcasts.”¹² He also expressed thanks for “the attention and support given by the central and local government agencies, as well as by the inhabitants of the German Democratic Republic.”¹³

Thus, according to the founding legend, the Committee, initiated by former repatriates and POWs for the promotion of repatriation, is a voluntary public organization supported by charitable contributions, which has gained permission and support from the government of the German Democratic Republic to establish operations in the Soviet sector of Berlin. Besides giving the impression of legality and formal plausibility, the legend also highlights the Committee’s democratic base, since a Committee allegedly established by group of former POWs could elicit more understanding and sympathy from émigrés, host country populations and governments than a Committee established by decree of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Council of Ministers of the USSR and staffed by trustworthy agents of the MVD.¹⁴ That the founding legend was sufficient to mislead states is shown in the case of the Canadian government, which decided not to publicly intervene in repatriation campaign activities in Canada since “the campaign was being carried out not by Soviet-bloc governments themselves, but by a private committee of volunteers in East Berlin.”¹⁵

After about a year, Western interest in Committee structure subsided. The Committee’s connections to the KGB had been betrayed through the propaganda blunders made by Mikhailov, leaving no doubt that Soviet security was deeply involved in Committee work. As indicated in the previous chapter, Mikhailov’s public invitation to émigrés to spy on each

¹¹ *Answer to Mr. Muru; Answers.*

¹² *Answers to Stechov*

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ See Chapter 3.2

¹⁵ Roberts et al. (2008), p 57

other and to report their findings to the Committee, and the publishing in the repatriation newspaper of photographs of address registers and other documents that Committee undercover agents had stolen from émigré organizations in West Germany, confirmed to all what had been suspected by many members of the exile communities from the start—that the Committee was a front for Soviet espionage.

The founding legend was used as a deceptive disguise by the Committee. By asserting that it was established by repatriates and former POWs with the purpose to help compatriots abroad return to their Soviet homeland, the Committee could extend its activities over borders, into states and among persons who would otherwise never tolerate the KGB or other Soviet state security agencies in their proximity. The founding legend provided a cover for intelligence officers and agents to spy on émigrés and to carry out subversive activities in the struggle against anti-Soviet propaganda. The Committee For Return to the Motherland, a subsection of the First Chief Directorate of the KGB, could thus freely pursue its covert assignment to destroy the anti-Soviet emigration abroad.

5.2 The Returnee Narratives

Before de-Stalinization and the Thaw, it was not possible to discuss in Soviet media the notion of Soviet citizens abroad or the issue of Soviet POWs in German captivity. The topics had been taboo, since they touched upon the ideologically unacceptable fact that millions of Soviet soldiers had not only surrendered to the Nazis but had also fought in their ranks against the Soviet Army.¹⁶ Therefore, the novel legend of “Soviet patriotism while in German captivity” was introduced, which legitimized the concept and made it possible to write about it. At the same time it aimed to “strengthen the myth of wartime loyalty of all Soviet peoples”:

Soviet scholars ... [could] explore in print the question of Soviet citizens abroad by downplaying or ignoring collaboration with the Nazis and stressing instead the participation of Soviet forced laborers and POWs in European resistance movements.¹⁷

As Elliott notes, over time, the theme “Nazi captives-turned-resistance-fighters” eventually became a fixture in the Soviet Union’s historical

¹⁶ According to German statistics, as a result of the German invasion of Soviet territories (“to the gates of Moscow and Leningrad, to the Volga, and into the Crimea and the Caucasus”), a total 3.6 million prisoners were taken prior to March 1, 1942, see Fischer (1952), p 3. By 1944, about 1 million Soviet citizens were serving in the Wehrmacht, and about 3 million were working as forced laborers in the Third Reich, see Andreyev (1987), p 7.

¹⁷ Elliott (1982), p 223

literature, and this manner of “*Soprotivleniia* [resistance] writing” emerged as a literary genre in Soviet historiography, and more or less turned into an industry.¹⁸

The legends that appear in *PaDz* form a part of this heritage. They were created during the period when it became possible to write about Soviet citizens abroad or in German captivity during the Second World War. The narratives strive to form a corrected historical memory: one which illustrates the solidarity and bolsters the myth of wartime loyalty of all Soviet peoples. Thus, the biography of Committee Chairman Mikhailov follows the narrative of the “resistance leader returnee” that especially emphasizes his heroism while in German captivity.¹⁹ The biographies of the other repatriates who are featured in *PaDz* follow a similar narrative path, but they are given no resistance leadership functions while abroad. Theirs is the narrative of the “unpunished returnee”.

5.2.1 The Unpunished Returnee Narrative

The narrative of the “unpunished returnee” describes the experiences of ordinary people that returned to the Soviet Union before the start of the second repatriation campaign. Though imprisoned or forced to go abroad, they remained loyal Soviet patriots throughout. Typical features of the “unpunished returnee” narrative can be summarized as follows:

- the person is sent abroad as a POW, *Ostarbeiter* (forced laborer), or evacuee
- while abroad: experiences grave difficulties, remains a Soviet patriot, yearns for the Motherland
- is not punished upon returning to the Soviet Union
- rejoins family, continues education
- attains professional success: decorated with medals or wins awards, gains a top employment position

The “unpunished returnee narrative” is used to provide a framework for the biographical stories of the “ordinary” Committee members and of other repatriates of the post-war years. It explains the backgrounds and lives of repatriates to international and domestic audiences, and provides potential returnees with a model of what they could expect their lives to be like in the Soviet Union. It illustrates the possibilities for professional success available to returnees, and reassures them that these opportunities are available to all, even those that had allowed themselves to be captured or evacuated by the Germans, or had worked as forced laborers.

¹⁸ Ibid., pp 223–224

¹⁹ See Chapter 3.2.1



Fig. 5.1: Latvian Committee member Alfons Prūsis' article 'You are awaited' in PaDz No 5, June 1955.

The published biography of the Committee's Latvian signatory, Alfons Prūsis, is an example of this narrative. Prūsis wrote that he was removed by force by the retreating fascists from Latvia to Germany in 1944, and having survived the horrendous last months of the war, ended up in a DP camp. With the help of the Soviet Repatriation Commission, he repatriated voluntarily to the Latvian SSR in 1948 and lived now with his family in Riga. He is employed as senior engineer at the Riga State Project Management Institute. He ended his article by naming that he “joyfully accepted” the invitation from a number of comrades to participate in the activities and work of the Committee, and he appealed to his former camp mates by name to return to the Motherland. The article is illustrated by a portrait photograph and a facsimile of his handwriting.²⁰

The “unpunished returnee narrative” is also applied to the Latvian returnees of the 1940s and early 1950s: to those conscripted into the German work force brigades, to the legionnaires of the 15th Waffen-SS Grenadier Division of the Latvian Legion, and to the extradited legionnaires who were forcefully repatriated from Sweden to Soviet Latvia in 1946. Some of their stories had already been published in the propaganda materials of the first

²⁰ A. Prūsis, 'Jūs gaidā' [You are awaited], PaDz No 5 Jun 1955 p 3

repatriation campaign (1944–1953), and were now being used once again for this campaign. The “unpunished returnee narrative” was meant to impress upon readers that in spite of having been in the service of Germans, the repatriates had not been punished upon returning to Soviet Latvia, and were now comfortably established in Soviet Latvian society and successfully pursuing their education or careers.

One such example is of an extradited legionnaire who had participated in the Radio Riga repatriation broadcasts of March and April 1946 and July 1947.²¹ He was once again featured in *PaDz* in April 1957. In a five-column article extending over two pages and illustrated by three photographs, the former legionnaire talks about his current, successful work in a hospital as a medical doctor and his satisfying home life.²² Another article is illustrated by a photograph of another extradited legionnaire sitting in his personal car. One learns that he “returned to the Motherland from Sweden” after the end of WWII, learned the pottery trade, is currently attending evening classes in law, and is serving on the board of the Soviet Latvian Republican tennis section.²³ In a first-page interview with still another extradited legionnaire, the reader is told that “none of the repatriates (from Sweden) have perished”, that he is currently working as a high-voltage electrical power line network specialist, and that his hobbies are sailing in the summer and skiing in the winter. The article also carried his full home address and a photograph of him together with a work colleague.²⁴ The questions and answers were intended to counteract exile Latvian beliefs that the extraditees from Sweden had been either shot to death or sentenced to long terms in forced labor camps or banished to Siberia. The interview ends with a longer commentary asserting that “all colleagues with whom he returned from Sweden are also living the lives of free Soviet citizens in Soviet Latvia.”²⁵

Many narratives are about the currently rewarding lives of repatriates who once were legionnaires of the 15th and 19th Waffen-SS Grenadier Division of the Latvian Legion. For example, one legionnaire writes that after wandering about for five years in foreign countries, he decided to repatriate in 1949. The Motherland received him with open arms, and he assures all prospective repatriates that they will not be punished, since the Amnesty Decree of the Supreme Council grants amnesty to all who collaborated with

²¹ Osvalds Freivalds, *De internerade balternas tragedi i Sverige år 1945–1946* (Stockholm: Daugavas Vanagi, 1967), p 391

²² E. Akmene: ‘Ikdienas nav’ [No ordinary days], *PaDz* No 28 (118) Apr 1957 pp 1–2

²³ Pēteris Blaus: ‘Veiksmīgs darbs, veiksmīga dzīve’ [Successful work, successful life], *PaDz* No 37(53) Aug 1956

²⁴ ‘Kad mitēsies šie apzinātie meli?’ [When will these intentional lies come to an end?], *PaDz* No 5 (95) Jan 1957 p 1

²⁵ *Ibid.*

the enemy.²⁶ In another article, a former legionnaire describes his current high material standard of living. After repatriating, he first trained to be a caster, but then switched to work as a bus driver, since “in Soviet Latvia, everyone can choose whatever profession he likes.” He plans to purchase a motorboat the coming summer, since his passion is fishing. The article continues that when hunting—he drives his own car, when fishing—he takes his own motorboat. “This is the way a repatriate spends his free time in the Motherland,” the article concludes.²⁷ In general, the articles demonstrate that repatriates, due to their decision to return, have “found their right place in life”.²⁸

The “unpunished returnee narrative” was thus applied to the legionnaires who had repatriated, both forcefully and voluntarily, in the post-war years. The narrative exemplified the future that potential repatriates, former military persons, could expect for themselves if they decided to repatriate. It showed that repatriates returned to their homes and families, and reassured former POWs, émigrés and DPs that their past would not be a reason for punishment, nor would it be an obstacle to personal or professional achievement in the Motherland.

5.3 The Criminal Émigré Narratives

In connection with the launch of the second repatriation campaign, other narratives were created for the persons about to return. The narratives of the “resistance leader returnee” and of the “unpunished returnee” could not apply to these new repatriates, since they had not returned in response to the first repatriation campaign, but instead stayed abroad for over a decade. These non-returners, regardless of background, were thereby criminal offenders, since according to the Soviet Penal Code, Article 58, “the passage to the side of the enemy, fleeing or flying to foreign countries” is a punishable offence.²⁹ It was the article in Soviet law that sentenced the émigré to being a criminal, due to having been outside the borders of the Soviet Union.

The narratives created for the 1955 repatriates are based upon the automatic premise “if émigré, then criminal”. It is assumed that all émigrés are guilty of having committed some crime, whether it be that of taking up arms

²⁶ Aleksandrs Šturms, ‘Arī jūs, bijušos leģionarus, gaida Dzimtene’ [The Motherland awaits you too, former legionnaires], *PaDz* No 30(46) Jul 1956 p 4

²⁷ ‘Repatriants Jānis Cinkuss’ [The repatriate Jānis Cinkuss], *PaDz* No 39 (129) May 1956, p 1

²⁸ Pēteris Blaus, ‘Atradis dzīvē īsto vietu’ [Found his right place in life], *PaDz* No 35 (51) Aug 1956

²⁹ According to Article 58-1a, the penalty for this offence was death by shooting; under extenuating circumstances, the penalty was 10 years imprisonment and the confiscation of all property, see Viksne et al., eds., (1999), p 959.

against the Motherland, or for just having been abroad. However, by admitting to one's guilt, sincerely regretting past crimes, and expressing remorse, the émigré can return to the Motherland, where a happy life awaits him.

5.3.1 The Ordinary Criminal Émigré

The narrative of the “ordinary criminal émigré”, as presented in *Par atgriešanas Dzimtenē*, points out five main reasons why émigrés had ended up abroad:

- They had become POWs
- They were forcefully conscripted as laborers by the enemy
- They had let themselves be evacuated
- They had personal reasons for going abroad
- They began to fight on the side of or work for the enemy³⁰

The last point was especially applicable to “people from the Baltic States, Ukraine, and the western parts of Belarus”, who “believed in the lies of the enemy” and who therefore “thrust themselves head over heels in to the camp of the enemy.”³¹ Yet all of the listed reasons for ending up abroad accentuated and reinforced the wrongdoings of the émigré: “They had succumbed to the enemy, they had eaten their bread from the hand of the enemy, they had earned their keep in ill-gotten ways.”³²

The narrative continues in that the émigrés—Soviet citizens who remained abroad, though they could have repatriated earlier—have been or are currently engaged in anti-Soviet organizations. They are supporting and disseminating anti-Soviet propaganda. However, they are living in difficult circumstances: employed in underpaid jobs, bound by slave-like work contracts, and residing in dank and dreary hovels. Knowing of no other alternative, the émigrés listen to and believe in the lies spread by émigré leaders, who assert that repatriates will be punished if they return to the Soviet Union. When they express a wish to return, they are physically stopped by émigré leaders, whose “Hitlerite hirelings” physically beat them. They also encounter overwhelming administrative difficulties from the local authorities if they express a wish to repatriate. But, the narrative continues, émigrés must gather courage and contact the Committee or a Soviet repatriation officer at a nearby legation. Émigrés are advised “not to be afraid, to put away doubts and fears”,³³ and are assured that “the Motherland

³⁰ *Appeal*

³¹ *Appeal*

³² *Ibid.*

³³ ‘Zem gulošas siekstas ūdens netek’ [Water does not flow under a fallen branch], *PaDz* No 7 Aug 1955 p 1

is ready to forgive everyone that has sincerely repented their actions”.³⁴ All the émigrés have to do is to admit their guilt and make the decision to return, since “the Fatherland—is the true mother. She will understand each of her children and forgive them.”³⁵ The Committee helps émigrés return to the Soviet Union, to their homes where their families await them. They are provided with housing, free education, and appropriate employment. They live the rest of their lives in the secure knowledge that the Motherland will continue to care for them, since the “forgiving Motherland” and “true mother” is the epitome of goodness and humaneness.³⁶ In contrast, the capitalist country is the “evil stepmother”, where there is no future for the émigré.³⁷ In the Soviet homeland, however, all possibilities are achievable.

The “ordinary criminal narrative” can be summarized as follows:

- The émigré ends up abroad during the war (as a POW, forced laborer, evacuee, for personal reasons, or works for enemy)
- The émigré is confused, he is influenced by the lies of emigrant leaders, remains abroad, he doubts the good intentions of the Motherland
- The émigré is recruited into anti-Soviet organizations; he participates in spreading anti-Soviet propaganda
- The émigré tires of living in poverty, being constantly downtrodden by mendacious émigré leaders agitating against his Motherland, so he gathers courage and decides to repatriate
- The émigré’s wish to repatriate is thwarted by émigré leaders and hindered by foreign governments
- The émigré contacts the Committee or the Soviet Embassy and asks if the Motherland will forgive him
- The émigré admits his guilt and repents his crimes
- The Motherland forgives the émigré and receives him with open arms
- The émigré repatriates to his family, to his former place of residence
- The Motherland provides the émigré with a fulfilling life: housing, continuing education and meaningful employment

The story of a former Vlasovite, who had recently repatriated from Australia, is an example of the typical “ordinary criminal émigré” narrative:

Intimidated and persecuted, I wandered around in the American zone in Germany until 1950. The return to the Motherland seemed an impossible dream, since I had served in the Vlasov army, and anti-Soviet provocateurs had impressed upon

³⁴ ‘Berline – NW-7’ [Berlin NW-7], *PaDz* No 7 Aug 1955 p 1

³⁵ *Appeal*

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*

me that the Motherland would shoot me for this. In 1950, I was transported to far-away Australia as a white slave, where I suffered many tribulations. For twelve lengthy years I longed for the Motherland, and I decided to return home.

Leaving the foreign land, I was released from slavery, and now I begin a new, free life. The shifty men X, Y, Z will not succeed in fooling people for long. The truth will overcome and force the provocateurs to shut up.³⁸

One of the main aims of the narratives is to show that persons will not be punished upon return. Therefore, the apprehensions and misgivings that permeate the repatriate before return are recognized: being a former Vlasovite, he expected that “the Motherland would shoot me for this”. Yet, he has obviously been absolved of his criminal background, since he will now “begin a new, free life” in the Motherland. In another example, a recent returnee recounts:

...During the Great Fatherland War I was lured into joining the Ukrainian nationalist organization (OUN). I joined the Legion and went abroad in 1944. The gang leaders of the OUN, kow-towing in front of the fascist leadership, sent us against the Polish people to suppress the Warsaw uprising. The OUN leaders tricked us in all ways, since they were in the service of the Hitlerites. While I was still in the Legion, I understood that I was in opposition to my country. I deeply experienced my mistake and I decided to return to the Motherland, who forgave me and made it possible for me to engage in honest work. At present I am working in my profession—I am a master barber. I have a wife and children. We are living splendidly...³⁹

When the Amnesty Decree of September 17, 1955 is passed, it becomes the legal guarantee that the émigré will not be punished upon return.⁴⁰ Émigrés and DPs from “Neu Ulm, Augsburg, Munich, Hamburg and other GDR cities and Belgian cities” write to the Committee:

We lack words to express the joy that was brought to us by the radio station «For Return to the Motherland» today. The Amnesty! We, a group of DPs, thank the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR from the depth of our hearts for the Amnesty and for the care shown to us, the sufferers, who are aware of our guilt in front of the Motherland.⁴¹

The amnesty decree is important in the decision to repatriate for one of the Latvian returnees, who was “an active member in the fascist war organization” and “served in the ‘C’ group of the German Auxiliary Police”. He expected to “be deported to Siberia upon return”. But thanks to “the Decree of September 17, 1955 of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR,

³⁸ ‘Es biju balts vergs’ [I was a white slave], *PaDz* No 6 Jul 1955 p 1

³⁹ ‘Ukraina sauc!’ [Ukraine is calling], *PaDz* No 14, Nov 1955 p 2

⁴⁰ ‘Ar godīgu darbu attaisnosim Dzimtenes uzticību’ [With honest work we will justify the trust of the Motherland], *PaDz* No 12 Oct 1955 p 1

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

I have been forgiven and enabled to be absolved from guilt through honest work.”⁴²

The narrative emphasizes that repatriation is not an easy decision to make and that there are many obstacles to be faced, but one must be firm in one's endeavors and the Committee will help out in any way it can. A Russian repatriate wrote that he was stopped from repatriating by three obstacles: 1) fear of persecution for past crimes 2) disapproval from fellow compatriots—“when they [émigré leaders, bandits] heard that I was preparing to return home, they threatened me” 3) lack of money. Yet all three obstacles were successfully conquered by overcoming doubt, repenting one's guilt, and turning to the Committee For Return to the Motherland, which took care of all material needs.⁴³ Other repatriates wrote of administrative difficulties imposed upon them by local institutions: “...for the past week, we have been sent from one institution to another... In order to leave [West Germany], we were told that we need several documents, among them some special permit to enter the Soviet Union with baggage.”⁴⁴

The ordinary émigrés were meant to learn from the “criminal émigré narrative”. They were expected to readjust their personal life stories, change their previous understanding of history, and modify their experiences in order to fit into the “criminal émigré” storyline. Once they agreed with the official reasons for having ended up abroad, and once they admitted their guilt and sincerely repented their crimes, then the Motherland was prepared to forgive them and accept them with open arms.

5.3.2 The Émigré who Serves in the Auxiliary Units

The narrative of the “émigré who serves in the auxiliary units” was custom-made for those persons who had been or currently were in the service of the MSOs and the LSCs of the British and American occupation forces in Western Germany and Austria.⁴⁵ These units employed over two hundred thousand civilian workers, a majority with refugee and DP backgrounds, as guards and technicians. The units were thus charged as being the hotbeds of a future, CIA-financed anti-Soviet army, and were regarded as an entry stage into, for example, the CIA-spy schools at Bad Homburg and Kempton, in West Germany, and at Tainton, near Washington DC, USA.⁴⁶ It was in

⁴² J. Kadzejs: ‘Atgriešanās prieks’ [The joy of return], *PaDz* No 14, Nov 1955 p 3

⁴³ ‘Šķērslī nevar iebaidīt’ [Obstacles can't intimidate], *PaDz* No 13 Oct 1955 p 1

⁴⁴ ‘Nevienam nav tiesības aizkavēt tos, kas vēlas atgriezties Dzimtenē’ [No one has the right to stop those, who wish to return to the Motherland], *PaDz* No 15 Nov 1955 p 2

⁴⁵ LSCs and MSOs were units employing third country nationals that were paid by the Army. See Chapter 4.3.2.

⁴⁶ ‘Maskavas sulaiņus biedē Latvijas neatkarības restaurācija. Rīgas *Cīņa* raksta par spiegiem Latvijā’ [Moscow's servants are frightened by the restoration of Latvian independence. *Cīņa* in Riga writes about spies in Latvia], *Londonas Avīze* No 602, Dec 13, 1957 p 1

places like these that Western intelligence was allegedly preparing soldiers for the Third World War who were to fight communism and attack the Soviet Union.

This narrative aims to encourage émigrés working in the auxiliary units to quit and return to their homelands. They are offered a safe return to the Motherland if they admit their guilt and beg to be forgiven. In addition, their narrative is presented as a warning to others to keep away from the MSOs and LSCs, since these are epicenters of Western espionage. The narratives also serve as a warning to Western governments, since they reveal that the Soviet Union had insight into what they assumed was secretly taking place in the MSOs and LSCs. The story provides the émigré in service with a repatriation alternative, and can be summed up as follows:

- The émigré works for the British or American occupation forces
- The émigré is informed about and participates in anti-Soviet intelligence activities
- The émigré decides to repatriate
- The émigré contacts the Repatriation Committee and divulges the anti-Soviet intelligence activities taking place in his LSC or MSO
- The émigré admits guilt, repents crimes and begs for forgiveness
- The Motherland forgives the émigré
- The émigré returns to the Motherland and lives the life of a free man with employment and educational possibilities

An example of this narrative is that of a repatriate formerly employed by the Americans. He claimed that persons working in the LSCs are being trained to fight against the Soviet Union in the expectation of a future war. He also noted that emigrants are hired by the American occupation forces for “dark purposes”, since besides young persons, invalids and the physically impaired are also employed, which could only mean that their backgrounds correspond to the requirements of the American security services. When he realized the true nature of the guard unit he served in, he quit immediately and appealed to the Motherland with an open heart to forgive him. Though currently at the Committee in East Berlin, he expected to depart for Tula after a few days, where his wife was waiting for him. His story ended with the words: “Soon I shall have the possibility to announce by letter, in the newspaper and by the radio about my happy homecoming and about meeting my beloved family.”⁴⁷

An Armenian returnee who had lived twelve years in West Germany wrote in *PaDz*:

⁴⁷ N. Gołtjakovs: ‘Drīz tikšos ar ģimēni’ [I shall soon meet my family], *PaDz* No 4 Jun 1955 p 2

For an extended time period, I was a member of the so-called “Armenian Freedom Fighter Union”, headed by Saruni. [...] Saruni sent me to Bad Homburg. There was a school for spies and insurgents, who were being prepared for being [secretly] sent into the USSR.⁴⁸

He urged his compatriots to return home and reassured them:

It can be understood from the Decree that the Soviet government magnanimously forgives all Soviet citizens who collaborated with fascists during the war or who served in the special units of Hitler’s army ... even those that committed grave offences against our people during the war, the Decree says, if they come back and repent their wrongdoings, then they will be forgiven. [...] Dear Compatriots! Don’t believe in the Saruni-like paid hirelings who exploit you for personal gain. Return home to Armenia, your country of birth!⁴⁹

The story of the Armenian repatriate indicates that the Soviet Union had knowledge of the Bad Homburg training facility, and that it knew about the special ethnic units that had been prepared for subversive actions on Soviet territory. The émigré, an employee of an auxiliary unit, was made to understand that he could go over to the Soviet side. Moreover, if he told all and repented, he would be forgiven.

5.3.3 The Émigré Spy

Several spy rings consisting of former DPs and émigrés from the Baltic States, Belarus, Russia, Ukraine, and other territories of the Soviet Union had been in operation in these areas since the late 1940s. Their main assignment was to relay information about local conditions to the West and provide moral and physical support to the anti-Soviet partisans (“forest brothers”) in their native countries.⁵⁰ Many of the Western spies, but not all, had been caught, imprisoned, sentenced to death and executed years earlier, though it was only in 1957 that the espionage activities were disclosed by the Soviet government. This first disclosure on February 6, 1957 by the Soviet Ministry for Foreign Affairs marked the launch of the “Vigilance Campaign,” which aimed to alert the indigenous population to watch out for spies in their midst.⁵¹ All four arrested “American” spies, N. Yakuta, A. Novikov, I. Kudryavtzev, K. Khmel'nitsky,⁵² were present at the Moscow press

⁴⁸ P. Pogosjans: ‘Mājup uz dzimto Armeniju’ [Homeward bound to country of birth Armenia], *PaDz* No 14 Nov 1955 p 2

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Indrek Jürjo, “Operations of western intelligence services and Estonian refugees in post-war Estonia and the tactics of KGB counterintelligence,” in *The anti-Soviet resistance in the Baltic states*, ed. A. Anušauskas (Vilnius: Du Ka, 1999)

⁵¹ Roberts et al. (2008), p 149

⁵² These were former Ukrainian DPs who had been trained at the NTS Gehlen school of Castel Amalienburg at Bad Wiessee, West Germany. They had been parachuted from a Greek

conference.⁵³ Foreign and domestic correspondents were shown radio transmitters, revolvers, maps, watches, stacks of rubles, bags of gold coins, and parachutes that were obtained at their arrest. Khmel'nitsky, a former Red Army sergeant, announced that he worked for Soviet counter-espionage and had been a double agent since 1945. He stated that the assignments given to him by Americans were, among others, to engage in military and economic espionage, to draw morally unstable Soviet citizens into the Fascist net and to compromise Soviet officials and party workers.⁵⁴

On March 7, 1957, *Izvestia* announced that Soviet state security agencies had liquidated several spy rings led by Swedish intelligence, which had been planted in the Estonian Republic. It was disclosed that thirteen “Swedish” spies had been arrested.⁵⁵ A month later, on April 7, 1957, the Committee For Return to the Motherland held a press conference in Berlin. It was chaired by Committee Secretary A. Dubovikov with the participation of the four “American” spies mentioned above and five other returnees—M. Kolosov, V. Zaleski, J. Teliegin-Kondrashov, S. Rudakov and V. Kravets⁵⁶—who had been sent into the territory of the Soviet Union from abroad.⁵⁷ The press conference opened with Dubovikov’s statement that approximately 100 subversive groups were located in West Germany, whose aims were to undermine the Soviet Union and countries of the Socialist Bloc.⁵⁸ Thereafter Kolosov, Zaleski, Teliegin-Kondrashov, and Rudakov confirmed that they had been leaders of such underground groups, which were “masked behind different names”. When they made the decision to repatriate, they turned to the Committee For Return to the Motherland in Berlin and made a clean breast of their assignments and tasks. They divulged their official contacts with American security agencies, recounted the subversive activities under-

airfield to a location near Minsk in the Belarus in April 1953. E. H. See Cookridge, *Gehlen. Spy of the century* (London: Corgi Books, 1972), pp 302–303

⁵³ ‘Komitejas «Par atgriešanas Dzimtenē» preses konference’ [Press conference of the Committee «For Return to the Motherland»], *PaDz* No 26(116) Apr 1957 p 1 (ref: *Press conference*)

⁵⁴ Cookridge (1972), pp 304–305

⁵⁵ The names published in *Izvestia* indicate that six were actually émigré Estonians: Endel Mumm, Harri Vimm, Johann Maltis, Evald Hallisk, Lembit Ustel, and Axel Pors. They had been trained in Sweden “in secret apartments” in Stockholm, Älvsjö, Ösmo and Lidingö. ‘Spies caught and exposed’, *Current Digest of the Russian Press*, No 10, Vol 9, April 17, 1957 p 24 retrieved 2012-08-24 from <http://dlib.eastview.com/browse/doc/13972020>

⁵⁶ Their repatriation stories were featured in previous *PaDz* issues: ‘V. Zaļesskis atgriezies Dzimtenē’ [V. Zaleski has returned to the Motherland], *PaDz* No 1(17) Jan 1956 p 2; J. P. Teļegins: ‘Atgriešanās īstā dzīvē’ [Return to real life], *PaDz* No 26(42) Jul 1956 p 4; T. Pokatilo: ‘Neticīgais Toms’ [Doubting Thomas], *PaDz* No 16(32) May 1956 p 4; ‘Ceļš uz dzimteni’ [The road to the homeland], *PaDz* No 2(92) Jan 1957 pp 1–2

⁵⁷ *Press conference*

⁵⁸ Dubovikov referred here to information about “100 subversive groups” appearing in the West German newspaper *Frankfurter Rundschau*. See also *Press conference*.

taken against the Soviet Union, and listed the criminal assignments of the American intelligence and security services and their espionage methods. They openheartedly confessed of their mistakes to the Soviet authorities, and asserted that they had broken off all contacts with their criminal past. The press conference ended with the announcement that the former spies now lived a life in freedom in their homeland, where they were meaningfully employed and had all possibilities to pursue further education.⁵⁹

The stories above follow the storyline of the “narrative of the émigré spy”. They expand the MSO/LSC narrative in that the émigré who serves in the military units takes the decisive step to become an operative combatant for a foreign intelligence service and then secretly enters the territory of the Soviet Union. The narrative of the émigré spy can be summed thus:

- works in a MSO or LSC
- joins Western intelligence and engages in anti-Soviet activities
- is sent to Motherland on subversive assignments
- gives himself up to the Soviet authorities and divulges his assignments (either before entering the Motherland, or while in the Motherland)
- admits guilt, begs for forgiveness
- lives the life of a free man with employment and educational possibilities

This narrative of the émigré spy is a representation of the reality that will be faced by the spy if he gives himself up to the Soviet authorities. If the spy admits to his espionage assignments, he can ask for protection and permission to return to the Motherland. A spy can also admit to espionage assignments after having illegally entered Soviet territory. In both cases, one is not penalized if one admits one’s guilt and begs the Motherland for forgiveness. One can thereafter live in the Motherland in the midst one’s family, and engage in normal work and studies.

The émigré spy narrative is also demonstrated through the stories of the captured spies, who had been recruited from the Latvian émigré community and covertly sent into Baltic territory by Western intelligence. On September 27, 1957, the KGB announced the capture and arrest of spies L. Zariņš and L. Brombergs, who were allegedly arrested on Soviet Latvian territory in 1956 and 1957 respectively.⁶⁰ Their adventures and misfortunes, as well as

⁵⁹ *Press conference.*

⁶⁰ ‘PSRS Ministru Padomes Valsts Drošības Komitejas Ziņojums’ [Announcement of the KGB of the USSR Council of Ministers], *PaDz* No 71(161) Sep 1957 pp 1–2. This was false information planted by the KGB, as Brombergs had already been captured by the KGB in May 1954, see Jūrjo (1999), p 259. Zariņš, who had been parachuted into Soviet Latvia in 1953, had been captured and sentenced to death by shooting by a Soviet military tribunal decision on Aug 3, 1954, see Rolfs Ekmanis, ‘Starptautiskie raidījumu latviešu valodā 20. gs. otrā pusē— Radio Brīvā Eiropa/Radio Brīvība (RFE/RL) / VI’ [International broadcasts in the

that of three other “American” spies—Riekstiņš, Herberts and Boriss—were disclosed in the domestic Soviet Latvian press in a series of articles, which were reprinted in the *PaDz*.⁶¹ According to the narrative, Zariņš, Brombergs, Riekstiņš, and Herberts had resisted, and not given themselves up to the Soviet authorities, whereas Boriss had immediately admitted to guilt.⁶² As a result, Boriss was not punished, whereas the others were sentenced to long prison terms. Their story, on “strictly documental” grounds, was presented over a decade later by major general Jānis Vēvers of the KGB, in the book *Poisonous Roots (Indīgās saknes)* published in 1970.⁶³ In an interview with public prosecutor V. Ļīpins, published in *PaDz* early 1958, the following is noted:

No doubt that Brombergs, Zariņš, and other spies could now be working in our factories or agencies, if they, having entered into Latvia, had gone to the Soviet authorities and with an open heart divulged the assignments they had been given when entering the USSR. With honest, patriotic work they could redeem their guilt and no one would punish them as traitors to the Soviet nation, as persons who succumbed to the imperialists in order to realize their war plans.⁶⁴

To emphasize the alternative of giving oneself up and not being punished, as with Boriss, Ļīpins explained: “The former spy Boriss did just that. The Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet has released Boriss from criminal responsibility, and he is now working on a farm.”⁶⁵

Ļīpins repeated that spies can admit to their espionage assignments while still abroad by going to the Soviet authorities. There the spies can ask for protection and permission to return to the Motherland. When they arrive in Latvia, they will be “given an apartment and provided with employment”. The alternative of being punished was only mentioned perfunctorily, and Ļīpins emphasized the “humane treatment given by the Soviet authorities to traitorous and criminal persons”. In conclusion, Ļīpins affirmed:

Anyone who wishes to partake in honest work and invest his share in building Communism will never be redundant in Soviet society. [...] Whoever returns to

Latvian language, latter part of the 20th century—Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL)], *Jaunā Gaita* No 271, Winter 2012, pp 42–46.

⁶¹ Articles about Brombergs, Zariņš, Riekstiņš, Herberts, and Boriss appeared in *PaDz* No 88 (178)—No 92(182), 1957. Vera Kacena’s series about the spies, *Rēgi tumsā* [Ghosts in the dark] appeared in *Cīņa* No 278, Nov 26, 1957—*Cīņa* No 286, Dec 5, 1957.

⁶² *Londonas Avīze* comes to the conclusion that Boriss was a Soviet double agent who had betrayed his comrades. ‘Latvijas okupantu bailes nemitas’ [The fear of Latvia’s occupiers has no end], *Londonas Avīze* No 612, Feb 28, 1958 p 3

⁶³ Jānis Vēvers, *Indīgās saknes [Poisonous roots]* (Riga: Liesma, 1970), pp 81–99

⁶⁴ ‘Kas ar atklātu sirdi un labiem nodomiem atgriezīsies dzimtenē, vienmēr atradīs savu vietu dzīvē.’ [Who with open heart and good intentions returns to the homeland, will always find his place in life.], *PaDz* No 12(198) Feb 1958 p 1

⁶⁵ Ibid.

the Motherland with an open heart and good intentions, will always find his place in life.⁶⁶

The intention of this narrative is manifold. Primarily, it intends to urge émigré spies to turn themselves in, and reassures them of the excellent treatment they will receive from the Motherland. Secondly, the narrative demonstrates to the émigrés and to the Western governments the futility of engaging in espionage against the Soviet Union.

5.4 The Vile Émigré Leader Narrative

Émigré leaders are consistently presented in *PaDz* as vile and felonious individuals, insofar they had not admitted their guilt, repented their ways, begged the Motherland for forgiveness and repatriated to the homeland. The émigré leaders, being anti-communists and spokesmen for émigré organizations and communities, and who filled the function of political representation of émigré interests in host countries, were anathema to the Soviet government. They were the objects of dislike and hatred, because as heads of émigré communities they actively worked against the Soviet Union by producing and disseminating anti-communist proclamations and materials. Moreover, they held the power to sway the émigré masses with them, against Soviet interests.

The “narrative of the criminal and vile émigré leader” strove to dislodge the trust émigrés and host countries had for émigré leaders and organizations. This was done by “unmasking” the émigré leaders, that is, by blackening them and uncovering their alleged “true” character. The unmasking of émigré leaders took place through the use of the *ad hominem* argument—to slander and spread lies about the persons who propagated anti-Soviet sentiments. Émigré leaders were accused of being in the pay of Western security services, of having questionable personal characteristics, and of stealing public and private funds entrusted to them. The language used in their description was full of exaggerations and outrageous charges: émigré leaders were depicted as “villainous lackeys in the pay of foreign bastards”, “crooked gangsters”, “petty leaders”, “unprincipled liars”, “drunkards”, “libertines”.⁶⁷ They were engaged in “mendacious propaganda against the Motherland”: they spread the propaganda of reactionary western circles that “bought the conscience and honor of the émigré with the silver coins of Judas”.⁶⁸ The *PaDz* slandered émigré leadership, urged emigrants to keep

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ ‘Tumšā pagātne palikusi aiz muguras’ [The dark past has remained behind], *PaDz* No 1 Apr 1955 p 3

⁶⁸ *Appeal*

away from their leaders and warned them against listening to their “untruths”. The narrative of the “vile émigré leader” can be summarized along the following points:

- During the German occupation of the homeland, the émigré leader voluntarily joins the ranks of the enemy
- The émigré leader retreats with the enemy and ends up abroad
- The émigré leader follows the instructions of his new masters— Western intelligence services
- The émigré leader spreads anti-Soviet propaganda among ordinary émigrés and stops them from repatriating
- The émigré leader lives off ordinary hard-working émigrés; steals public and private money, spreads lies, lives in debauchery

An example of the “vile émigré leadership” narrative is provided by a Russian repatriate, who testified about the activities of the National Labor Council (NTS), a Russian exile political party, to which he once belonged. The repatriate vilified the head of the Italian section of the NTS as a “lecher and drunkard” who “organizes orgies together with monks”.⁶⁹ He accused another prominent NTS member of being a Gestapo agent. He charged that the head of the NTS had sequestered NTS funds for the private use in purchasing an expensive car and in financing his son's studies at Sorbonne University.⁷⁰ The repatriate claimed that ordinary NTS members living in the Near and Middle East were dissatisfied with the direction taken by the NTS: since the NTS leadership was in the pay of American intelligence, the whole organization was being turned towards serving the goals and interests of the Americans.⁷¹

In a similar manner, other elites were berated: the director of the Institute for the Study of the History and Culture of the USSR in Munich was called a “fascist satrap”, the Ukrainian émigré leadership was dubbed “political speculators” interested only in buying cars and summer homes, the Ukrainian Bandera group leadership was described as “passing all hours of the day in restaurants and cabarets”.⁷² Latvian émigré leaders were accused of avarice, selling invalid passports of “bourgeois Latvia”, sequestering charity funds, and not returning money that had been borrowed from compatriots for the

⁶⁹ ‘Esmu atkal dzimtenē’ [I am in the homeland again], *PaDz* No 3 May 1955 p 2

⁷⁰ I. V. Pitļenko: ‘Baidalokovs un kompanija – bijušie Gestapo aģenti’ [Baidalakov and company – former Gestapo agents], *PaDz* No 3 May 1955 p 2

⁷¹ See I. Pitļenko: ‘NDS vadītāji pārdodas par dolāriem’ [The leaders of the NTS sell themselves for dollars], ‘Šantaža un draudi’ [Blackmail and threats], ‘NDS virsotne – tā ir spiegu banda’ [The NTS leadership is a gang of spies], in *PaDz* No 3 May 1955 p 3.

⁷² ‘Par iemesliem, kāpēc es pārtraucu sakarus ar amerikāņiem un emigrāciju’ [Reasons why I broke off contacts with Americans and the emigration], *PaDz* No 2 Apr 1955 pp 1–2

building of a model farmstead in Great Britain.⁷³ Estonian émigré leaders were said to have stolen “thousands of marks” from the Estonian Central Committee.⁷⁴ Anti-Soviet organizations were claimed to have purchased the services of hooligans, whose job it was to terrorize those persons who wish to repatriate.⁷⁵

Another blast against émigré leaders was given by a prominent Ukrainian repatriate. He was a former leader of anti-Soviet émigré organizations⁷⁶ and former editor of the anti-Soviet exile Ukrainian newspaper *Novaja Ukraina*. He attested that “emigrant ringleaders” are frightening émigrés with “invented Bolshevik atrocities” and that the exile Ukrainian leadership had only one aim—to sell ordinary émigrés to the American intelligence service.⁷⁷ He then added that he broke off contacts with the Americans and with the Ukrainian emigration because émigré organizations existed only insofar that foreign security services were interested in their existence, and that the so-called American Committee used émigrés and émigré organizations as a base from which to recruit spies, insurrectionists and terrorists, who were sent into the USSR and other democratic people’s republics.⁷⁸

A special indictment was directed at Latvian émigré leaders, who were accused of being falsifiers of history:

It is widely known that the so-called Latvian emigration gang leaders are persons that have never preferred to earn money through honest work. During the long years of “exile” they have existed and even today survive by cheating and deceiving. The quacks and charlatans have different gradations, different forms and sizes, the fraudsters have different masks, nevertheless the most widespread type among them is the falsifier of history.⁷⁹

These are the “purchased ink coolies who ‘write’ the history of the Latvian nation and forecast the future”. They trick and dupe the ordinary émigré, and

⁷³ ‘Viegla dzīve uz nelaimīgo tautas brāļu rēķina’ [Easy living off unlucky compatriots], *PaDz* No 15 Nov 1955 p 4

⁷⁴ ‘Vilka žēlums’ [The pity of wolves], *PaDz* No 7(23) Feb 1956 p 4

⁷⁵ ‘Jāievēro humanitātes un personas brīvības principi’ [The principles of humanity and personal freedom must be observed], *PaDz* No 16 Dec 1955 p 2

⁷⁶ In the *PaDz*, he is named as being the leader of the LAONSS (League of Anti-Bolshevik Organizations of the Soviet Union) and UAK (Ukrainskij vizvoļņij ruch) organizations. See V. Vasylaki: ‘Par iemesliem, kāpēc es pārtraucu sakarus ar amerikāņiem un emigrāciju’ [Reasons why I broke off contacts with Americans and the emigration], *PaDz* No 2 Apr 1955 pp 1–2

⁷⁷ ‘Tumšā pagātne palikusi aiz muguras’ [The dark past has remained behind], *PaDz* No 1 Apr 1955 p 3

⁷⁸ V. Vasylaki: ‘Par iemesliem, kāpēc es pārtraucu sakarus ar amerikāņiem un emigrāciju’ [Reasons why I broke off contacts with Americans and the emigration], *PaDz* No 2 Apr 1955 pp 1–2

⁷⁹ ‘Politiskie naudas viltotāji’ [The political counterfeiters of money], *PaDz* No 20(110) Mar 1957 p 1. See Fig. 4.1.

lead the “march towards their destruction”. They are an encumbrance to their native land and an obstacle to people who “reach out with a friendly hand and invite them home to productive employment and to participate in the formation of the ever improving future of the whole Latvian nation.”⁸⁰

By characterizing émigré leaders, émigré elites and other prominent émigré personalities as morally bereft, avaricious, and in the pay of the American, British or other intelligence services, it was hoped that the ordinary émigré masses would no longer trust their leadership. The intention was to reach the point when the rank and file émigré would avoid emigrant organizations and would no longer heed their recommendations and advice. The repeated insinuations, claims of thievery and embezzlement, and disclosures of foreign security service involvement were meant to repel ordinary émigrés away from their leaders and disassociate the rank-and file from centers of anti-Soviet activity. As a result, the masses would be motivated to repatriate, as they no longer listened to their leaders. With the onset of the Soviet counter-propaganda campaign in late 1958 and 1959, the émigré leader narrative gained a new aspect of perfidy: émigré leaders were presented not only as repulsive individuals with a penchant for stealing and lying, but also as responsible for having committed war crimes during the Nazi German occupation.⁸¹ These narratives, however, do not appear in *Par atgriešanas Dzimtenē*, which was published April 1955–April 1958, but in the successor newspaper *Dzimtenes Balss*, which began publication in May 1958.

5.5 The Non-Criminal Émigré Narrative

During 1956, the “criminal émigré narrative” underwent revision in reaction to domestic policy changes following Khrushchev’s denunciation of the Stalin cult in February 1956. A commission was set up under the chairmanship of Marshal Zhukov to investigate the treatment of the country’s former war prisoners. The commission came to the conclusion that to a large extent arbitrariness and lawlessness described the behavior of Soviet authorities towards the former war prisoners.⁸² The Zhukov commission proposed a number of measures to rectify this situation, which resulted in a decree taken by the CC of the CPSU and the Council of Ministers that acknowledged the injustices committed by the previous Stalinist regime.⁸³

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Šneidere, ed., (2001), pp 266–276

⁸² Yakovlev (2002), p 178

⁸³ The decree was dated 29 June 1956 and named “On the Elimination of the Consequences of Gross Violations of the Law in Regard to Former War Prisoners and Their Families”, see Ibid., p. 179.

With regard to the repatriation campaign, the postulate “if émigré, then criminal” was declared as no longer being wholly true, and instead, the notion was promoted that “ordinary émigrés” were not criminals. Since they had not committed any offences, they did not have to admit guilt and there was nothing for the Motherland to forgive. As explained by Committee Chairman Mikhailov in early 1957, “enemies of the Soviet Union...utilized facts previously allowed in our country that trespassed socialistic legality”. He then concluded that ill-willed antagonists of the Soviet Union propagated the falsehood that an émigré’s “very presence abroad was regarded as a criminal offence from the Soviet point of view”.⁸⁴

That it was not by law (Russian Penal Code §58-1a) that persons were punished for having been abroad, and that the consequence (death by shooting, or imprisonment) was a falsehood invented by enemies of the Soviet Union during the Stalin era were exceptional allegations that totally upset all previous Soviet claims. What is more, the revised émigré narrative put forth additional positive terms for the repatriating POW: it was claimed that the time spent as a POW would now be added to the returnee’s years in military service.⁸⁵ Also, cases where a Communist Party member had his membership revoked because he had been a POW would be now put under review by Party institutions. Lastly, officers who had been incorrectly demoted due to their having surrendered and becoming POWs would, after review, be reinstated into their former ranks and their right to a pension would be determined.⁸⁶

The events of the new “non-criminal émigré narrative” can be summarized thus:

- The ordinary émigré ends up abroad during the war (as a POW, forced laborer, evacuee, etc.)
- Influenced by the lies of emigrant leaders, the émigré remains abroad and doubts the good intentions of the Motherland
- The émigré is recruited into anti-Soviet organizations and spreads anti-Soviet propaganda
- The émigré tires of living in poverty, being constantly downtrodden by mendacious émigré leaders and of agitating against his Motherland, so he gathers courage and decides to repatriate
- The émigré’s intention to repatriate is blocked by émigré leaders and foreign governments
- The émigré contacts the Committee or the Soviet Embassy
- The Motherland receives him with open arms

⁸⁴ ‘Ceļš uz dzimteni’ [The road to the homeland], *PaDz* No 2(92) Jan 1957 pp 1–2. This article is a reprint from the Russian *Novoje Vremja* No 40, Dec 1956.

⁸⁵ N. Michailovs: ‘Dzīvot kopā ar savu tautu’ [To live together with one’s people], *PaDz* No 3(93) Jan 1957 p 1

⁸⁶ Ibid.

- The émigré repatriates to his family, to his former place of residence
- The Motherland compensates the émigré for his years as POW and reinstates officers into former ranks
- The Motherland provides the émigré with a fulfilling life: housing, education and meaningful employment

The revised narrative emphasized the differences between the ordinary émigré and the criminal émigré leaders. Ordinary refugees and displaced persons were assured that they could return to the Motherland without fear, “even though they had served in the German army or in other legions organized by fascists”, since the amnesty was fully applicable to them. It was attested that the rank-and-file had “nothing in common with such offences” that had been committed by the “insidious leaders”.⁸⁷ The masses, not being in any leadership position, were not held accountable for their past associations with Germans, and could therefore repatriate without any fear of reprisals or punishment in the Soviet Union. All that was required was the genuine wish to return, and the Motherland would receive the repatriate with sincere benevolence and sympathy, and provide the repatriate with housing, education and employment.

Ordinary émigrés, even those serving in the MSOs or LSCs, were reassured that no punishment awaited them at home. They could expect a friendly reception and would be provided employment and housing, as is shown in the story of repatriate X who recently returned to his native Latvia:

After visiting his parents in Bārta for a while, X went to visit his sisters in Liepāja. He decided to settle there. The City of Liepāja Workers’ Council helped him find work and gave him an apartment. He is now employed as a mechanic at the railway mechanical plant. X is satisfied with his work, and is not at all sorry that he resigned from serving in the Mixed Service Organization “Service Company 323” in the British occupation zone where he was a chauffeur for several years.⁸⁸

X's story ended in the *PaDz* with an appeal to the reader: “You too can safely return home. There is sufficient work here for everybody. But if anybody tries to frighten you with stories about Siberia—don’t believe them!”⁸⁹

The narrative of the non-criminal émigré was also spread in the domestic Soviet Latvian media. It was intended to prepare the domestic population for the inflow of returnees, which were now expected to come in the thousands.

⁸⁷ ‘Ko lai saka, ja nav ko sacīt?’ [What should one say, when one has nothing to say?], *PaDz* No 13, Oct 1955 p 4

⁸⁸ ‘Man sākas jauna dzīve’ [I began a new life], *PaDz* No 28(118) Apr 1957 pp 1–2

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

For example, the following information appeared first in the Party newspaper *Cīņa*, and then in *PaDz*:

Everyone knows that the Hitlerites, when they fled from Latvia, forcefully drove thousands of Latvians abroad. After the war, a fair share returned to the Motherland and now actively participate in the building of our bright future. However, there are quite a lot of those who, confused and intimidated by malicious anti-Soviet propaganda, are still wandering around the world and have not decided to return home. Among them, the majority are honest people, they have never collaborated with the fascists and they have no connections to the American anti-Soviet organizations, which are financed by the US government with a yearly 100 million dollars.⁹⁰

The 100 million dollar financing mentioned in the last sentence refers to the Kersten Amendment,⁹¹ and discloses that the Soviet government was informed about undercover US funding to anti-Soviet organizations. The statement pointed out to western and to émigré audiences that the Soviet government was in control, since it knew about US government secrets.

All mention of guilt is avoided in the revised narrative, and repatriates are assured that they can live wherever they wish and that they will be meaningfully employed. The Soviet center of authority believed that now, with the end of the Stalinist terror and with no implied need to admit to any guilt for having been abroad, the masses would finally begin to return to the Soviet Union.

The main persuasive strategy used to influence DPs and refugees to repatriate was a method promoted by the KGB: the *legenda* and the *legendirovaniye*. According to this method, legends, or narratives, were constructed for the biographies of POWs and repatriates, which were then used in publications and broadcasts. They were meant to make the DPs believe that their lives in the Soviet Union too could become like that of the repatriates: happy, successful, and fulfilling. All they had to do was to beg the Motherland to forgive them for their past crimes, and be sincerely repentant. In connection with changes in émigré policy, new narratives were launched explaining that ordinary émigrés were no longer criminals that needed to be cleared of their offences. They were welcome to repatriate to the Motherland, and they were assured that they would not be punished. A legend, explaining why and how the Committee For Return to the Motherland was founded, was used as a cover for the subversive activities of Committee agents among émigré communities.

In the next chapter the responses of the Latvian émigré audience to the repatriation campaign will be analyzed.

⁹⁰ ‘Tālu no Dzimtenes’ [Far from the Motherland], PaDz No 14(104) Feb 1957 p 1

⁹¹ See Chapter 2.4

6 Reactions

6.1 Majority and Minority Responses

The reactions of the Latvian émigrés to the repatriation campaign are studied by analyzing what was written about the campaign in Latvian émigré press. While it is true that theoretically, audience reaction is not the same as press reaction, in this case I propose that the two are comparable. Since the Latvian émigré press was member-financed through its founding organizations, the newspapers resembled internal membership bulletins and mirrored the viewpoints and biases of its readership. The émigré newspapers were also used as mouthpieces for the heads of the major Latvian émigré organizations. Therefore, I have assumed that the reactions in the émigré press to the repatriation campaign more or less correspond to overall audience reaction.

The émigré newspapers under study are the seven newspapers published by the émigré majority representing the national patriotic or conservative segment of society, the two newspapers published by the liberal-democratic faction, and the one newspaper published by the exile Latvian social democrats. In the manner of reacting to the campaign, the émigré press reflects the political divisions represented by the national conservatives, liberal democrats, and the social democrats. The conservative majority together with the liberal democrats express an immediate, massive and emotionally negative reaction to the repatriation campaign, publishing approximately 300 articles on the subject during 1955–1958. In contrast, the social democratic *Brīvība* purposely ignores the repatriation theme and altogether publishes less than ten repatriation articles, also negative, during the same period.

The first notice appearing in a Latvian émigré newspaper about the repatriation campaign is published in *Laiks* on April 30, 1955. It is a neutral recapitulation of information appearing in American press about the “repatriation commission under the leadership of Major General Nikolai F. Mikhailov” that had “begun operations in the Soviet zone”.¹ During May 1955 all major

¹ ‘Debates par latviešu pašnoteikšanos Ženevā’ [Debates over Latvian self-determination in Geneva], *Laiks* No 35, Apr 30, 1955 p 1. The Canadian Latvian newspaper *Latvija Amerikā* published a short notice on the redefection of V. Vassilaki and J. P. Krutij three days earlier, on Apr 27, 1955, but this was not put in relation to the Repatriation Committee or the repatriation campaign.

Latvian émigré newspapers, except for *Brīvība*, publish several articles about the new Soviet repatriation campaign and the East Berlin Committee. Thereafter, the campaign becomes a recurring theme in the conservative émigré media, and an average of one to two articles treating the subject are published each week.

Brīvība lets a year go by before the campaign gets a mention in its columns in April 1956. This is done as an aside, in conjunction with a notice about the agenda of the Strasbourg Session of the Assembly of Captive European Nations (ACEN). There, *Brīvība* notes that as part of the “refugee issue”, which is one of the Session’s four main themes, a discussion of the “communist promoted repatriation action” is planned.²

Since the repatriation campaign is directed to all the major ethnic nationalities of the Soviet Union and Soviet bloc countries, the conservative Latvian émigré press also comments upon the impact it has within the emigrant communities in Europe and North America, especially noting the actions against the Estonian, Lithuanian, and Slavic emigrants. In addition, the émigré media picks up news about the campaign appearing in the host country press. In this way, for example, the activities of the Estonian community in the US and the Ukrainian and Slavic communities in Canada are covered in detail in Latvian conservative émigré media.

Throughout the period under study, the pattern of campaign coverage remains unchanged: in the majority émigré press, the campaign is given regular coverage, whereas in the social democratic *Brīvība*, the campaign is essentially ignored.

6.2 The Campaign Counter-Narrative

The émigré Latvian conservative and liberal press almost immediately identify the repatriation campaign as a KGB-run operation, and declare that the Committee For Return to the Motherland is a center for refugee espionage. On May 5, 1955, the liberal democratic *Latvju Ziņas* publishes warnings issued by Russian anti-Bolshevik organizations and the Baltic Council of Tübingen in West Germany, which caution that the newly established Repatriation Committee is part of a communist plan to compromise exile organizations:

A new type of Soviet activity has been observed, where groups, established under a false anti-Soviet blind, attempt to enter into [legitimate] refugee organizations. The purpose of this dangerous and destructive Soviet activity is to damage anti-bolshevik endeavors and create confusion. [...] It anticipates the infiltration of non-communistic organizations in the West with Soviet agents and

² ‘ACEN sesija Strāsburgā’ [ACEN Session in Strasbourg], *Brīvība* No 4, April 1956 p 1

collaborators. In order to hide its real goals, use is made of patriotic and anti-communistic slogans, and the creation of neofascist organizations is promoted.³

In conclusion, the Baltic Council regards as its duty

...to inform all Latvians, Lithuanians and Estonians in the free world about this new Soviet course, and warn national representatives from the misguided fall into the trap prepared by Moscow.⁴

Thus from the very first days of the repatriation campaign, emigrant élites know about the covert goals and planned undercover activities of the Committee. This knowledge is then passed on: émigré newspapers declare that the campaign's goals are to create divisions among émigrés, to take away the political legitimacy of the anti-Soviet émigré movement, and to take over émigré organizations and subvert them into subordinate pro-Soviet organizations. The emigrant media relays forewarnings about the impending "onslaught of communist propaganda and repatriation lures" and exhorts the émigré community to be ready when the "enemy knocks on our door".⁵ Predictions are made that anti-Soviet émigré centers will be penetrated and compromised, and it is foreseen that émigré masses might succumb to confusion and disorientation.⁶

A month after the start of the campaign, the conservative émigré press discloses that KGB Chairman Ivan Serov is the initiator of the repatriation campaign and that Alexander Panyushkin, former Soviet ambassador to the USA and head of the First Chief Directorate (Foreign Intelligence) of the KGB, is the actual head of repatriation operations in Moscow.⁷ Though actual proof is never provided, no doubts are ever expressed anywhere at anytime in Latvian émigré media about the veracity of these assertions. Moreover, it is upheld that a Soviet presence outside its territorial boundaries surely indicates KGB involvement, whose aims are the pursuit of anti-Soviet émigrés.⁸ The émigré press therefore concludes that a Soviet organization operating from East Berlin is thereby certainly a KGB institution.⁹ In consequence, Committee Chairman Mikhailov is given the epithet "Checkist

³ S.-V.: 'Brīdina no komūnistu infiltrācijas' [Warning against communist infiltration], *Latvju Ziņas* No 9, May 5, 1955 p 1

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Mr. A.: 'Repatriācijas uzaicinājums no Magdeburgas' [Repatriation invitation from Magdeburg], *Laiks* Jun 18, 1955 p 1

⁶ 'Krievi uzsākuši repatriācijas akciju' [Russians launch repatriation venture], *Latvija Amerikā* No 39, May 21, 1955 p 4;

⁷ 'Sveiciens no Leipzīgas' [Greetings from Leipzig], *Austrālijas Latvietis* No 295, July 23, 1955 p 1

⁸ E. M.: 'Vīnes eksperti Bonnā' [Vienna experts in Bonn], *Londonas Avīze* No 505, Jan 27, 1956; 'Pie repatriācijas ķēries arī Padomju konsulāts Bonnā' [The Soviet consulate in Bonn also deals with repatriation], *Laiks* No 9, Feb 1, 1956 p 8

⁹ A. Dz.: 'Kam kuri jāaicina?' [Who invites whom?], *Laiks* No 45, Jun 4, 1955 p 2

general” and the Committee For Return to the Motherland is nicknamed “Mikhailov’s Committee”. Émigré opinion about the KGB connection is additionally strengthened when American sources and other East European and Soviet bloc émigré organizations reach the same conclusion concerning the Committee and the repatriation campaign.¹⁰ For example, the exile Russian NTS organization also recognizes the Committee as a KGB institution and designates Mikhailov as a state security officer—a “gebist”.¹¹

The émigré media has thus within a month of the start of the repatriation campaign formulated its own counter-narrative about the Repatriation Committee and its activities. It has established the campaign’s overt and covert goals and identified the dangers that these would bring to émigré society. Readers are advised that the Committee is a KGB front organization whose purpose is to trick émigrés into repatriating, where they will become a reserve workforce facing certain deportation to Siberian labor camps.¹² Mikhailov is pointed out as being responsible for organizing acts of terror against émigré centers: carrying out the bombing of buildings and commanding break-ins into bureaus and editorial offices of émigré organizations.¹³

This view of the Committee and its activities is repeated time and again, so as to eventually form the Latvian émigré’s counter-narrative of the repatriation campaign:

- The Committee is a KGB organization that has been assigned to work its subversive dirty tricks in the West
- The Committee’s public goal is to deceive émigrés into repatriating to a life in Siberia or the labor camps of the Gulag
- The Committee’s secret goal is to destroy émigré society

The founding legend, which was supposed to provide a believable cover to the Committee’s KGB background, is given only seldom, ironic mention.¹⁴ Instead, the campaign counter-narrative gains the upper hand and dominates the conservative émigré media discourse.

¹⁰ See for example Walter Duschnyck: ‘Bait for the homesick’, *National Review* No 13, Aug 18, 1956, as cited in Roberts et al. (2008), p 25

¹¹ As quoted from *Posev*, April 17, 1955, retrieved 2014-04-15 from <http://ntsrs.ru/content/p-stolypin-na-sluzhbe-rossii> under link ‘glava-10’

¹² E.M.: ‘Četru Osnabrikas latviešu vilšanās Austrumberlīnē’ [The disillusionment of four Latvians from Osnabrück in East Berlin], *Laiks* No 105, Dec 12, 1955, p 2

¹³ ‘Michailovs nomainīts “slimības dēļ”’ [Mikhailov replaced due to “illness”], *Laiks* No 71, Sep 3, 1958 p 2

¹⁴ K.D.: ‘Repatriācijas ģenerālis nekaunīgi samelojies’ [Repatriation general entangled in lies], *Laiks* No 33 April 25, 1956 p 2

6.3 Themes in Repatriation Articles

Over time, as the campaign progresses, several themes permeate the repatriation articles in the conservative press. The most significant coverage is given to three themes: 1) the Soviet foreign policy of “peaceful co-existence”, 2) the threat of “forced repatriation”, and 3) the “address” issue.¹⁵

The newspapers link the theme of peaceful co-existence to repatriation, by saying that the West, in the name of peaceful co-existence, has given in to Soviet demands. As a consequence, the West has allowed the Soviets to carry out a major propaganda campaign in the free world. Through this capitulation, Soviet agents, under the cover of the repatriation campaign, are provided free access to the private spheres of refugees and émigrés, thereby inflicting the greatest of moral injuries upon them.¹⁶ Yet, as the press writes, this aspect is not fully understood by the West, which willingly lets itself be fooled by the “peace” in “peaceful co-existence”. As the eminent émigré Latvian poet Andrejs Eglītis states:

...the Soviet policy of co-existence attempts to lull the West. Latvians do not believe in this tactic, which is witnessed by the fact that since the launch of the Soviet repatriation campaign, only 6 Latvians from the free world have expressed a wish to return.¹⁷

The second major theme, the fear of forced repatriation, is most prominent in émigré media throughout 1955 and 1956 when the Soviet government repeatedly raised the issue of refugees and repatriation in its relations with the West. The émigré press proclaimed that the West’s acquiescence to Soviet governments actions had wreaked havoc among refugees and among the oppressed peoples in the East. In effect, the West had given the Soviet government a free reign to act out its desire to force the West to hand over refugees to the East, thereby demonstrating Soviet supremacy over weak Western governments:

They [the communists] are destroying Western prestige in the eyes of the refugees and are destroying trust in the West amongst those persons living behind the Iron Curtain.¹⁸

As a result, the press states, the campaign turned into a wedge that dis-associated the refugee from the rest of the host society:

¹⁵ Other ethnic émigré organizations, such as Canadian Slovak Legion, also connected the repatriation drive with the Soviet policy of “peaceful co-existence”. Roberts et al. (2008), p 63

¹⁶ ‘Melnā roka bēgļu vidū’ [A black hand among émigrés], *Laiks* No 81, Oct 8, 1955 p 1

¹⁷ ‘Mums vajag vara pieres un dzelzs plecu’ [We need copper foreheads and iron shoulders], *Austrālijas Latvietis* No 326, Mar 10, 1956 p 1

¹⁸ -n.: ‘15 miljoni darba vergu’ [15 million work slaves], *Laiks* No 59, July 23, 1955 p 1

Refugees feel isolated not only from [the political and social processes of] foreign countries, but also from the citizens of the countries where they are living.¹⁹

Panic arose among émigré circles on the occasion of German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer's visit to Moscow in September 1955. It was rumored that Adenauer and the West Germany government, in an attempt to get German POWs home from the Gulag, had secretly agreed to exchange Soviet and Eastern European DPs for German citizens in the Soviet Union.²⁰ Though the West German government denied that it would ever force DPs and refugees to repatriate, émigrés in West Germany nevertheless were alarmed, since they had the status of *Heimatloser Ausländer* and as such felt vulnerable. In order to allay fears and put a stop to the petitioning to allow political refugees to remain in West Germany, the West German government issued several statements explaining the rights of political asylum, which were regulated in the West German constitution, and the rights of political refugees, which were written into the July 26, 1951 Geneva refugee convention. These statements were published in the Latvian exile press, and eventually émigré anxieties over forced repatriation subsided. Trust in the West was renewed when a Soviet proposal to the United Nations to support a repatriation campaign amongst refugees was turned down, and instead a vote was passed to continue with the current program for the care and integration of refugees as before.²¹

A third major theme in repatriation articles, as expressed in the conservative émigré newspapers, concerned the attempts made by Soviet authorities to gain access to émigré addresses. This issue had already been raised in the early 1950s in connection with Soviet Embassy employee Bernhards Borgs' effort to get the address register of the Latvian Aid Committee (*Lettiska Hjälpkommittén*) in Stockholm,²² the Petrov affair in Australia,²³

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ 'Melnā roka bēgļu vidū' [A black hand among émigrés], *Laiks* No 81, Oct 8, 1955 p 1

²¹ 'Šis gājiens Maskavai neizdevās' [Moscow did not succeed with this measure], *Laiks* No 83, Oct 15, 1955 p 5

²² 'Sensacionāla ziņa' [Sensational news], *Laiks* No 73, Sep 11, 1954 p 1

²³ According to the testimony of former Soviet Embassy employee V. Petrov, who defected in Australia in 1954, the émigré Latvian jurist Andrejs Frīdenbergs had provided him with several addresses of Latvian émigrés and Latvian organizations in Australia. Frīdenbergs, of right-wing views and in the preceding years councillor to chairman Arvīds Krīpens of the Australian Latvian National Council, had been a MVD agent for 14 years. See 'Jons un Frīdenbergs' [Jons and Frīdenbergs], *Brīvība* No 7, Sep 1, 1954 p 4; and 'Mums šī lieta neliekas tik visai smieklīga' [This isn't such a great joke for us], *Austrālijas Latvietis* No 246, Jul 31, 1954 p 1

and the theft of 2,859 addresses from the central register of the Latvian Central Committee in Augustdorf, West Germany.²⁴

The mid-1950s articles express both indignation and apprehension that the Committee For Return to the Motherland, that is, the KGB, knew where Latvian émigrés and refugees resided, their past and present employment records, and details of their family situation. The émigrés feared for their relatives in Soviet Latvia, whom they believed would suffer discrimination if the Soviet authorities knew that they had relatives living abroad. The émigrés were uneasy that Soviet embassy personnel could phone or make unsolicited personal visits to their homes. They were concerned that the Soviet Union, which regarded them as Soviet citizens, would find them, kidnap them, and forcefully return them to their Soviet occupied homeland.²⁵ All of this made émigrés feel anxious and insecure. They felt they were a hunted prey that was being followed and tracked down.²⁶ A constant worry was that the host country governments would disclose their whereabouts to the Soviet government, which every so often put in requests for addresses of what it regarded as its “Soviet citizens” abroad.²⁷

The address issue concerning other ethnic émigré groups is also noted. For example, it was written in early 1956 that

A flood of Soviet letters with invitations to return to the homeland have reached the Lithuanians in Cleveland. The letters, in great quantities, are being sent by a communist agency in East Berlin. The Lithuanians are surprised that so many of their addresses are known to the communists.²⁸

To a lesser extent, other issues were also taken up in the conservative émigré press in connection with the Soviet repatriation campaign. These were the amnesties of the Soviet satellites, the unrest in Poland, and the 1956 Hungarian revolution. Several articles took up the activities of the ethnic Latvian attachés working at the Soviet Embassies in Stockholm and London, where,

²⁴ ‘Vācijas LCK kartotēka nozagta’ [Address register of LCK in Germany stolen], *Brīvība* No 8(53), Oct 1954 p 3

²⁵ Kidnapings by Soviet agents were a real threat, especially for the émigré staff at Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty. See Richard H. Cummings, “The ether war: hostile intelligence activities directed against Radio Free Europe, Radio Liberty, and the emigre community in Munich during the Cold War,” *Journal of Transatlantic Studies* 6, No 2 (2008):168–182. A “Committee to Combat Soviet Kidnapings”, was apparently set up in West Germany, in order to act against a “communist kidnaping ring which as been snatching escapees in West Germany since the end of the war”. See “Moscow still pursues its refugees,” *Saturday Evening Post* Nov 26, 1955 p 12.

²⁶ ‘Sarkanie pirksti’ [Red fingers], *Londonas Avīze* No 480, Aug 5, 1955 p 6; ‘LNPL Prezidija sēde’ [LNPL presidium meeting], *Londonas Avīze* No 504, Jan 1, 1956 p 1

²⁷ ‘Padomju iestādes meklē repatriantus’ [Soviet institutions seek repatriates], *Latvija* No 3, Jan 18, 1958 p 3

²⁸ ‘Klīvlendas Chronika’ [Cleveland chronicle], *Laiks* No 8, Jan 28, 1956 p 6

among other things, they engaged in repatriation activities among Latvian exile communities. Intense coverage was given to the planned opening in 1956 of the Soviet Embassy in Bonn. It was assumed that harassment against émigrés would increase, since there would be more opportunities from Bonn to track down and follow the activities of émigrés residing in West Germany, compared to the more distant East Berlin.²⁹

The social democratic *Brīvība*, in contrast to the conservative émigré press, ignores the theme of forced repatriation and the matter of the addresses. It also refrains from linking international policy issues to the Soviet repatriation campaign, even though the major foreign policy issues of importance to Baltic affairs, such as the Soviet policy of peaceful co-existence, the Austrian State Treaty, the Geneva Summit of 1955, and others, are extensively covered and analyzed.

Concerning the Amnesty Decree of September 17, 1955, *Brīvība* saw it as being more applicable to the German POWs and civilians in the Soviet Union, who were soon to be released from their Soviet imprisonment to Western Germany, than to Latvian émigrés in exile.³⁰ The other amnesties and pardons that had been previously announced by the satellite countries were seen as having been issued in order to entice émigrés, especially leading émigré politicians, to return home. In their homelands the politicians would be tricked into setting up oppositional parties with candidates for the upcoming elections, but with no real chance of winning against the Communist candidates. In this context, the amnesties were seen as a ploy in the process to provide westerners with a false impression that there could be free elections behind the Iron Curtain.³¹

The general suspicion of Soviet promises felt by émigrés can be summed up by the Exile Student Union in Scandinavia, an organization uniting Czech, Estonian, Hungarian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Polish, Ukrainian and Slovak students in Scandinavian exile, who saw the Amnesty Decree as “a good joke...which should have been issued...on the first of April.” This organization concluded: “Bitter experience has made all East Europeans into skeptics concerning communist promises and words of honor.”³² In general, the September 17, 1955 Amnesty was seen mainly as an expression of the Soviet government to gain a propaganda advantage, and not a true guarantee for the legal rights of repatriates. Legal analysis carried out by émigré sources indicated that the amnesty itself did not provide sufficient judicial

²⁹ Btt.: ‘Neveicas ar veselēm, sniedzās pēc slimēm’ [No luck with the healthy, try for the sick], *Laiks* No 39, May 6, 1956 p 2

³⁰ ‘Starp Maskavu un Ženevu’ [Between Moscow and Geneva], *Brīvība* No 8(63), Oct 1955 p 1

³¹ ‘Amnestija satelītu valstīs’ [Amnesty in the satellite states], *Brīvība* No 7(62), Aug/Sep 1955 p 7

³² “Apropå en amnesti,” *Utpost. Exilstudenternas tidskrift*, No 35 (1956)

protection to returning émigrés.³³ Moreover, the unclear situation felt by the potential returnee was further complicated by new laws, passed on December 25, 1958 by the USSR Supreme Soviet, whereby the death penalty could be imposed for the “refusal to return from abroad.”³⁴

6.4 General Émigré Reactions

Initial Curiosity and Confidence

The reactions of the émigré Latvian community to the repatriation newspaper *Par atgriešanos Dzimtenē* and the repatriation campaign as a whole are negative and dismissive. Not a single article suggests any appreciation of the opportunity to return to Soviet Latvia, nor is there any positive appraisal concerning the contents of *PaDz*, the repatriation broadcasts, or the other propaganda publications that were distributed together with the newspaper.

Nevertheless, at first, a certain degree of curiosity about the *PaDz* is evident. Quite a few articles recount the contents of the first issues, noting Latvian names and in what context they appear. The *Appeal* is also given wide coverage. It is analyzed and explained to the readership with an appropriately ironic comment to every cited sentence, and dealt with through the campaign counter-narrative—the reader is assured that repatriates will end up in Siberia:

Return and the Motherland will welcome you... (we can well imagine what the ‘welcome’ will be like. *Ed.*) ... Every pair of hands is useful to our country... (probably in Vorkuta. *Ed.*).³⁵

Interest is also shown in the broadcasts, which were not so easily heard in all the countries where Latvian émigrés lived. The approximately ten articles on the broadcasts focus mainly on reporting about persons from the West—repatriates or tourists—whose voices were heard on the program. For example, the October 19, 1955 issue of *Laiks* reports on an earlier broadcast, in which a Latvian repatriate invited fellow citizens to follow his example and return home.³⁶ In another article, a discrepancy is noted between the date a returnee spoke on the East Berlin radio and the date when he actually, according to *Par atgriešanos Dzimtenē*, arrived in Riga. The eleven and a

³³ Yurchenko (1955)

³⁴ Birger Hagård, “Svenska balter sovjetmedborgare?,” in *Frihet vid fritt hav*, ed. A. Horm, B. Häggman, and B. Nerman (Stockholm: Junikommittén, 1966), p 42

³⁵ ‘Padomju valdība trimdniekus aicina uz... Vorkutu’ [Soviet government invites exiles to... Vorkuta], *Latvija Amerikā* No 41, May 28, 1955 p 2

³⁶ B.: ‘Žanis Bratkus aicina “mājās”’ [Žanis Bratkus invites you “home”], *Laiks* No 84, Oct 19, 1955, p 5

half month gap is explained, according to *Londonas Avīze*, as possibly being due to his “peregrinations through prisons and deportation places”.³⁷ The most comprehensive report about the Latvian broadcasts appears in early 1956, in the *Laiks* article describing the Committee For Return to the Motherland and the work of Ādolfs Talcis there. The repatriation broadcasts are said to be tedious re-readings of the newspaper contents, and the speaker is criticized for having a heavy Russian accent, which “does more to repel than attract the Latvian listener.”³⁸

The émigré press also goes into detail over how often, from where, and what types of published propaganda are being received. A July 1955 article in *Austrālijas Latvietis* reports that “some Latvians in Australia” had received the Russian language *Za vozvrashchenie na Rodinu* from a P.O. Box address in Leipzig, together with an “invitation for ‘Soviet citizens’ to return home”.³⁹ A few months later, the same newspaper informs that in place of *Za vozvrashchenie na Rodinu*, the most recent copies of party newspaper *Cīņa* and photo magazine *Zvaigzne* are being received, and notes with irony that the Soviets must have finally realized that not all Latvians understand Russian.⁴⁰

Laiks reports that Latvians in the US are receiving the repatriation newspaper in the Russian language, and after briefly reviewing the contents of the May issue, maintains that

Communists are still playing on feelings of longing for the homeland, the internal fighting among émigré political leaders, their dependency upon other powers, and the desolation felt by individual émigrés.⁴¹

It is noted that the envelopes, with hand-written addresses spelled out “according to German orthography”⁴² are mailed not only from the Committee For Return to the Motherland in East Berlin, but also from Dresden, Leipzig, Magdeburg, and Potsdam, at times with a fictive person being

³⁷ ‘Ceļš no Austrumberlīnes līdz Rīgai ilgst gadu’ [The trip from East Berlin to Riga takes one year], *Londonas Avīze* No 587, Aug 30, 1957 p 3.

³⁸ -rj-: ‘Ādolfs Talcis raujas pa Berlīni’ [Ādolfs Talcis toiling away in Berlin], *Laiks* No 24, March 24, 1956 p 1

³⁹ ‘Sveiciens no Leipcijas’ [Greetings from Leipzig], *Austrālijas Latvietis* No 295, July 23, 1955 p 1

⁴⁰ ‘Cīņa aizstāj “Za Vozvraščeniju”’ [Cīņa replaces “Za Vozvraščenija”], *Austrālijas Latvietis* No 308 Oct 22, 1955 p 1

⁴¹ Mr. A.: ‘Repatriācijas uzaicinājums no Magdeburgas’ [Repatriation invitation from Magdeburg], *Laiks* No 49 June 18, 1955 p 1; ‘Dažos vārdos’ [In a few words], *Laiks* No 61 Jul 30, 1955 p 7

⁴² According to Unāms, there were three distinct handwriting styles, indicating that three persons wrote the addresses, see Ž. Unāms, ‘Maskavas kamols ietin arī Kanadas latviešus’ [Moscow’s yarn entangles also Canada’s Latvians], *Jaunais Apskats* No 39, Nov 11, 1955 p 6

named as sender.⁴³ Eventually, the émigrés discovered that only the East Berlin venue was real and that all the other addresses were false, since such street and number combinations did not exist in these cities.⁴⁴

PaDz is deemed to be harmless at first. Since mainly the Russian language version is sent to Latvians abroad, there is the conviction that it would not succeed in attaining its repatriation goal. It is seen as a publication addressing the Slavic peoples—Belarusians, Russians and Ukrainians, not Latvians. The newspaper is unfavorably compared to the publications of the first Soviet repatriation campaign that took place in the mid-to-late 1940s, the result of which was the voluntary repatriation of only a few thousand Latvians. This time around, it is presupposed that the repatriation rate would not attain these numbers:

The Mikhailov publication is a weak copy of the refugee seduction literature that was distributed during the culmination of the [previous] repatriation drive. It resembles ordinary communist propaganda publications, which cannot confuse the mind of the refugee.⁴⁵

It is believed that fellow citizens, who are knowledgeable about the true circumstances behind the campaign, will “smile at the perseverance of the Committee” upon receiving such propaganda materials:⁴⁶

Without doubt, also this time communist endeavors will remain without success, and they will not succeed in “accepting” and silencing the voices of their nation’s freedom fighters.⁴⁷

The conclusion is that articles and arguments published in “Mikhailov’s paper” cannot convince émigrés to repatriate, since émigrés will not be disoriented by the “new Soviet sirens”.⁴⁸

Confidence that one will not succumb to communist propaganda and dismissive critique is shown in an article in *Latvija Amerikā*, which reviewed the contents of some recent *PaDz* articles, and pointed out what is wrong in them. The articles, it was said, exaggerated the economic successes of the communist regime. To this, a personal running commentary was added, for example:

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ PO Boxes were also used as sender addresses, for example “C-1, Postfach 264, Leipzig”.
Ibid.

⁴⁵ Mr. A.: ‘Jauns vilinājums bēgļiem’ [New enticement for refugees], *Laiks* No 40, May 18, 1955 p 1

⁴⁶ R-is: ‘Mēs atbildēsim tā’ [This is our answer], *Latvija* No 41 Nov 5, 1955 p 1

⁴⁷ ‘Veltīgas pūles’ [Labor in vain], *Latvija* No 18, May 14, 1955 p 6

⁴⁸ Mr. A.: ‘Jauns vilinājums bēgļiem’ [New enticement for refugees], *Laiks* No 40, May 18, 1955 p 1

X from Rostock, East Germany, visited his relatives in Riga for 6 weeks. He has signed a letter dictated to him by the Cheka saying that “the pavilions of the Riga Central Market are full of meat, butter, cream, cheese, poultry, vegetables, fruits and fish. People are living happily, ready to defend their achievements that have been attained through peaceful work”. (As one is once again obliged to talk about “defending” the country, then this is the best proof that in the sub-consciousness of the Chekists, fear is smoldering that Latvians are silently humming to themselves: Comrade, one day will be pay-back time!)⁴⁹

This pattern of commenting on articles in *PaDz* is followed in other émigré publications. When writing about some Soviet Latvian economic achievement, cultural event or commenting the life of a successful repatriate in *PaDz*, the émigré journalist made sure to demonstrate to the reader that he or she had not been fooled or taken in by the Soviet propaganda. The journalist questioned the authenticity and correctness of the contents and enumerated some negative observations. If appropriate, mention was also made of the campaign counter-narrative, reminding the reader that all repatriates or returnees would have invariably ended up in the Gulag or in Siberia. The article would end with personal comments that illustrated his or her anti-communist ideological steadfastness.

It was also noticed that the *PaDz* was becoming more Latvian in content, and that it was published with increasing regularity. It was speculated that one group of readers would skim the newspaper “looking for some news about life in Latvia,” but that another group would forward it to their “local security agencies,” requesting protection from communist literature. However, the article concluded that both groups of readers couldn't get rid of the thought that the weekly arrival of the *PaDz* to the homes of émigrés indicated not so much that repatriation was the aim of the Chekists, but rather the intimidation and terrorization of émigrés: “See here now, we [i.e., the Soviet center of authority] tracked you down, beware!”⁵⁰

Interest and Interaction

In connection with the move to Riga of the board of editors, a new type of article, the anti-émigré article directed against the émigré leadership, appeared in *Par atgriešanos Dzimtenē*. The anti-émigré articles commented upon specific émigré events (board meetings, social gatherings, concerts, etc.), responded to articles published in émigré newspapers, and attacked prominent Latvian émigré leaders.

The content for the anti-émigré articles was provided in part by recruited informants, and in part from materials seized in the mails. The mid-1950s experienced a significant increase of postal volumes, bringing with it an

⁴⁹ K. Ludis: ‘Morālā terrora lapa’ [Paper of moral terror], *Latvija Amerikā* No 30, Apr 14, 1956 p 3

⁵⁰ Ibid.

inflow of émigré correspondence, newspapers and publications to Soviet Latvia from the West. With the help of the censorship agency (*Glavlit*) that monitored all foreign correspondence, personal letters were copied and read, sending and receiving addresses were registered, and printed matter from the West, including émigré newspaper, magazines, books and bulletins, were controlled and confiscated.⁵¹ From the confiscated materials, most of which were destroyed, émigré publications were extracted and deposited in the limited access central depository (in Latvian: *specfonds*) at the Fundamental Library. The intention was that these restricted materials would be used by the “competent organs” as sources of information on émigrés and émigré organizations.⁵² In this case, the “competent organs” are the KGB staff of the Latvian board of editors of the newspaper *PaDz*, which was being set up in Riga in the middle of 1956. By reading émigré publications and other materials, combined with information taken from private correspondence, the KGB gained continuous access to sensitive information about the emigration. The Latvian editors of *PaDz* utilized this information in slanted articles about émigré organizations and émigré leaders, which began to be published in *PaDz*. The detailed presentation of individual émigrés, the exposés over the warring factions within the émigré communities, and the up-to-date reviews of internal disputes among émigré groups indicate that sufficient materials were reaching the journalists and editors of *Par atgriešanos Dzimtenē* to regularly fill several pages of the newspaper every week with scandalous “émigré news”.⁵³

Though the émigré press usually refrained from publicly commenting these articles, the *PaDz* articles attacking émigré leadership and organizations were read with surreptitious interest and discussed within émigré circles.⁵⁴ A case where an émigré was provoked into responding occurred in early 1957, when émigré journalist and writer Vilis Lesiņš published a rejoinder in *Latvija* to an open letter addressed to him by Mavriks Vulfsons,

⁵¹ Previously, all private foreign correspondence to recipients in Soviet Latvia was directed through and registered at the Main Post Office in Moscow, but after the death of Stalin, the registration and censorship functions were transferred to Riga. *Latvija* alleges that if a letter was written from a person in Soviet Latvia to a new recipient abroad it had to be brought forth to the Main Post Office in Riga to be read through, registered, and accepted before it was mailed. See ‘Spiegošanas centrāle Rīgas pastā’ [Espionage center at the Riga post office], *Latvija* No 6, Feb 9, 1957 p 1

⁵² Plakans, ed., (2007), p 304

⁵³ At about the same time, anti-émigré articles also begin to appear in domestic Latvian SSR publications, such as the Communist Party newspaper *Cīņa* and the literary journal *Karogs* [The Flag].

⁵⁴ A former head of an émigré Latvian youth organization has ironically stated that in the late 50s and early 60s, to find out what was happening in the Gothenburg or Stockholm exile Latvian community, all you had to do was to read the *PaDz*. (Unstructured interview, Anonymous A, January 15, 2003.)

foreign editor of *Cīņa*.⁵⁵ Lesiņš' rejoinder was then again answered by an article in *PaDz* some months later, to which Lesiņš again published a reply. The interchange of articles continued until October 1957, when Vilis Lesiņš declared that he would not reply to any more of Vulfsons' articles appearing in *PaDz*.⁵⁶

Another case involved gift parcels. In line with the opening up of Soviet contacts with the West, it had become possible to send parcels with pre-paid customs to the Soviet Union from abroad. The gift parcels proved to be an issue on both sides of the Iron Curtain. On the one hand, the parcels provided a significant source of income to the Soviet state, since duties on parcels sent were on average at double or triple the value of the goods sent.⁵⁷ On the other hand, the Soviet government disliked the gift parcel's implicit meaning: that Soviet citizens were impoverished and in need of support from senders in the capitalistic West. In a similar manner, the gift parcel issue was a problem in exile. For example, the far-right extremist politician A. Kroders and his Stockholm-based newspaper *Latvju Vārds* argued that the exorbitant customs fee paid for each parcel supported the communist system and the Soviet government by augmenting their foreign currency reserves, and therefore parcels should not be sent, not even to those incarcerated in the Gulag or residing in places of deportation and banishment. Yet, the general consensus among émigrés was that despite the outrageous customs fees, sending parcels helped to alleviate hunger and was a moral support to the oppressed Latvian people, and therefore an acceptable action.⁵⁸ The disposition of Latvians abroad to send parcels is reflected by statistics from a company in Stockholm that in 1956 sent 500 parcels per month to the Baltic states, compared to 1953, when 50 parcels per month were sent.⁵⁹ According to *Latvija*, about 10–15 persons would be queuing daily at the Main Post Office in Riga to receive their parcels from abroad.⁶⁰

The gift parcel issue was raised in *PaDz* in August 1956 by Ādolfs Talcis, who by then had returned back to Riga from East Berlin. He published an article where he took a stand against foreign parcels—his argument being

⁵⁵ Mavriks Vulfsons in 'Atklāta vēstule Vilim Lesiņam' [Open letter to Vilis Lesiņš] in *PaDz* No 68 Dec 7, 1956 p 1, polemizes against Vilis Lesiņš' article 'Klusa atzīšanās' [Silent admittance], published in *Latvija* Oct 20, 1956.

⁵⁶ Vilis Lesiņš: 'Ar to pietiek' [Enough is enough], *Latvija* Oct 12, 1957 p 1

⁵⁷ The parcels were expedited by firms that had received special permits from Soviet agencies. Several such parcel firms had been established by émigré Latvians, and the services of these firms were regularly advertised in the émigré Latvian press.

⁵⁸ A.S.: 'Latvija komūnisma jūgā' [Latvia under the yoke of Communism], *Londonas Avīze* No 479, Jul 24, 1955 p 2

⁵⁹ 'Atrīvotie un amnestētie' [Freed and amnestied], *Brīvība* No 3, Mar 1956, p 4

⁶⁰ 'Spiegošanas centrāle Rīgas pastā' [Espionage center at the Riga post office], *Latvija* No 6, Feb 9, 1957 p 1

that these are subsidized by fascist imperialist organizations.⁶¹ An émigré publicist and poet, living in the United States, privately answered her former colleague Ādolfs Talcis with a personal letter, defending the parcels, stating there is no fault in sending gifts to relatives and friends. Talcis responded by publishing an open letter in *Par atgriešanos Dzimtenē*, citing large sections of her private letter to him.⁶² On her part, the émigré poet made no public reaction to Talcis' articles. The émigré press reported on Talcis' articles and the parcel issue, pointing out that Talcis' articles were produced on the order of the Communist Party, but did not pursue the issue any further.⁶³

Reactions in *Brīvība*

The social democratic *Brīvība*, as mentioned earlier, published very sparingly on the repatriation issue. The first mention of *Par atgriešanos Dzimtenē* in *Brīvība* was made in late 1957, two and a half years after the publication of *PaDz* started. This is done in a thirteen-line short notice, which states that since many of émigré editor A. Kroders' articles in *Latvju Vārds* attack fellow émigrés, he is actually helping out the communists, who willingly reprint these slanderous articles in the *PaDz*.⁶⁴ The next remark appears some months later in a page-one column rebutting Ā. Talcis' allegations against social democracy which appeared in *PaDz*.⁶⁵ The article ends with a personal attack on Talcis:

They say that the liar-like renegade Ā. Talcis has ended his employment with the Mikhailov paper in East Berlin. Having slandered all and everyone as commanded, and after purchasing watches and other objects of speculation in East Berlin, he has returned to Latvia with heavy luggage and is now paying his dues.⁶⁶

A final comment in *Brīvība* appears in April 1958, concerning the publication of the manuscript "Anno 1934" in *Par atgriešanos Dzimtenē*. The manuscript, written over a decade earlier in independent Latvia for personal use by a prominent social democratic party member and current émigré

⁶¹ See Ā. Talcis: 'Ārzemju paciņas, un kas aiz tām slēpjas' [Foreign parcels, and what hides behind them], *PaDz* No 38, Aug 15, 1956 p 2. The same article is reprinted in *Cīņa*, Aug 26, 1956.

⁶² Ādolfs Talcis: 'Atklāta atbilde dzejniecei Rutai Skujiņai-Lācei,' [Open letter to poet Ruta Skujina-Lace], *PaDz* No 55 Oct 18, 1956 p 2. The same article is reprinted in *Literatūra un Māksla*, Oct 27, 1956.

⁶³ 'Ādolfs Talcis vēlreiz dod padomus sainīšu sūtītājiem' [Ādolfs Talcis gives advice again to parcel senders], *Londonas Avīze* No 546, Nov 9, 1956, p 3; -rj-, 'Pamācīgs gadījums' [Being taught a lesson], *Laiks* No 91, Nov 14, 1956 p 4

⁶⁴ A. Kroders was editor of the Stockholm-based *Latvju Vārds*. 'Krodera raksti palīdz komunistiem' [Kroders' articles help Communists], *Brīvība* No 9, Nov 1957, p 4

⁶⁵ 'Ā. Talča izvirdums' [A. Talcis' outburst], *Brīvība* No 2, Feb 1958, p 2

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

activist, had been found in Riga. It was now being published without permission in serial form in *Par atgriešanos Dzimtenē*. The motivation to publish the manuscript was to confuse émigrés into believing that the émigré social democrat author, a respected member of the Committee for Free Latvia, was “collaborating with Mikhailov.”⁶⁷ To further the confusion, the *PaDz* made changes in the published version of the manuscript, as if to show that the social democrats in Latvia prepared the ground for the government takeover by “fascist dictator K. Ulmanis” in the coup of 1934.⁶⁸ The publication of “Anno 1934” was meant to widen the rift between the conservatives and the social democrats, and to increase their distrust of each other. To this the émigré social democrat author responded:

If the Bolsheviks think in this manner they can hurt me or the party to which I belong, then to that I have only one answer: to even more relentlessly fight communism!⁶⁹

Though the manuscript was serialized in over forty issues, the émigré press response was meager. Neither *Brīvība* nor the émigré social democrat author published any further reactions. Except for an explanatory article in *Laiks* and some notices in *Austrālijas Latvietis*, the conservative émigré press was also silent.

6.5 Counter-Strategies, Actions, and Advice

6.5.1 Counter-Strategies of Organizations

Most of the central Latvian émigré organizations were in some way involved in combating the Committee and its activities. For example, the October 7–9, 1955 joint meeting of the Latvian Central Committee (LCK) and the Latvian Central Council (LCP) in Vesthoven, West Germany, discussed the Soviet repatriation campaign and the “growing communist activity amongst émigrés”.⁷⁰ The meeting concluded that émigrés should “make a stand against enemy activity”, and “not to submit to the recently increasing communist activities”.⁷¹ While no explanation is given as to what was meant by “making a stand” or by “not submitting”, the reader gains the impression

⁶⁷ kr.: ‘Šantāža – okupantu ieroču papildinājums’ [Blackmail—a supplement to occupiers’ tools], *Laiks* No 29, April 9, 1958 p 1

⁶⁸ ‘Anno 1934’, *Brīvība* No 5, May 1958 p 6

⁶⁹ ‘Personīgā lietā’ [A personal matter], *Brīvība* No 4, April 1958, p 4

⁷⁰ ‘Mums jābūt modriem’ [We must be vigilant], *Latvija* No 39, Oct 15, 1955 p 1

⁷¹ Ibid.

from the article that some plans had been made by the émigré leadership, but that these were not being disclosed.

One action that had begun before the start of the second repatriation campaign was that the LCK, as a part of its anti-communist strategy, strove to identify and unmask communist spies and their activities amongst Latvian émigrés. With the start of the repatriation campaign, the hunt for communists in exile communities intensified. This action was actively pursued by the *Daugavas Vanagi* organization in West Germany, and in the long run instilled feelings of unease, distrust, and suspicion amongst the émigrés.⁷² In several cases, as noticed by an oppositional émigré politician, even legitimate actions contesting the dominating views of the LCK or DV leadership are declared to be the work of “communist agents”.⁷³ This meant that if someone or some group of persons had differing ideas or suggestions, then there was the risk of being branded as “communist”, and any further activity in the émigré community was encumbered.⁷⁴ In January 1957, the LCK Information Division reported that there were 25 known active communist agents among Latvians in West Germany, and that the LCK was monitoring the agents’ activities.⁷⁵ The names of these agents, however, were not released.

Other actions of the DV were to carry out informative work among members and to warn them against the dangers of communist propaganda. As a step in informing host societies about the campaign, the Latvian National Council in Great Britain (LNPL) and the London-based *Daugavas Vanagu Fonds* (Latvian Welfare Fund) published English language press bulletins. These were distributed to the British and Irish press, organizations, government agencies, and influential private persons. The aim of these bulletins was “to introduce the British press to the working methods of the Soviet Repatriation Committee headed by General Mikhailov”⁷⁶ and to describe “the latest tricks applied by the so-called Mikhailov repatriation commission”.⁷⁷

The central Latvian émigré organizations also gathered Soviet propaganda materials as evidence for host country authorities. In January 1956, the Latvian National Association in Canada (LNAK), an umbrella organization for Canadian Latvians, appealed to “all nationals in Canada” to forward any repatriation or communist propaganda materials they may have received.

⁷² ‘LCP sesija Bielefeldā’ [LCP session in Bielefeld], *Latvija* No 47, Dec 22, 1958 p 1

⁷³ Ž. Unāms: ‘Uz komūnistu aģentu konta’ [Communist agents to blame], *Jaunais Apskats*, No 21, May 25, 1956 p 1

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ ‘Padomju iestādes meklē repatriantus’ [Soviet institutions seek repatriates], *Latvija* No 3, Jan 18, 1958 p 3

⁷⁶ ‘Lielbritānijas chronika’ [Chronicle of Great Britain], *Latvija* No 4, Jan 28, 1956 p 2

⁷⁷ ‘Daugavas Vanagi visā pasaulē’ [The *Daugavas Vanagi* around the world], *Daugavas Vanagi* No 3, May 1, 1957, p 41

The LNAK wrote that it was important to get materials from all regions of Canada, so that “an overview of the width and breadth of the Soviet propaganda activity in Canada” could be gained. The appeal ended with the statement that these materials will be submitted to the Canadian security authorities, who were in contact with the Latvian Information Center in Canada.⁷⁸

In the United States, the Committee for Free Latvia, based in New York, requested in May 1956 *Laiks* readers to

...inform [us] of occasions when propaganda publications [from the Repatriation Committee] or similar communist propaganda literature have been received with invitations to return to Latvia. At the same time we ask you to inform us about instances when Soviet agents have personally visited émigrés with the aim of convincing them to return to the homeland, and about cases when, as a result of these actions, a fellow citizen has already repatriated.⁷⁹

There are no comments in the press, however, on how the gathered materials and information were analyzed and used. Ultimately, the propaganda attained such voluminous quantities that émigré organizations felt bound to appeal to host country authorities to put a stop to the floods of Soviet propaganda: they proposed that communist propaganda publications be confiscated in the mails.⁸⁰ Their motivation was that the propaganda criticizes and attempts to influence host-country foreign policies, which would therefore provide legal grounds for their confiscation. The LNAK, for example, mentioned that much of the propaganda was received by Latvians who are now Canadian citizens, at their home addresses—which proved that the Latvians were being followed and that their addresses were being supplied to the repatriation propaganda centers in Europe. This type of action, the LNAK concluded, was not only an annoyance and encumbrance, but also a kind of moral terror.⁸¹ The Canadian government was therefore requested

...to prevent the delivery of such letters [i.e. appeals to return in letters from families still behind the Iron Curtain and unsolicited return-to-the homeland newspapers and literature]—in effect to censor the mail before its delivery—and to challenge the Soviet Embassy on the grounds of inappropriate diplomatic behavior.⁸²

⁷⁸ ‘Latviešu dzīve Kanadā’ [Canadian Latvian life], *Laiks* No 7, Jan 25, 1956 p 2

⁷⁹ ‘Lūdz ziņot par padomju aģentu uzbāzību’ [Request to inform about Soviet agent obtrusiveness], *Laiks* No 37, May 9, 1956 p 2

⁸⁰ A. Sarkis: ‘Vēstule no Vācijas draugam Anglijā’ [A letter from Germany to a friend in England], *Londonas Avīze*, May 17, 1957 p 6; ‘Lai novērstu propagandas plūdus’ [In order to stop the propaganda flood], *Latvija Amerikā*, No 6, Jan 18, 1958 p 2

⁸¹ M. De.: ‘LNAK valdes sēdes lēmumi un atzinumi’ [LNAK board meeting decisions and resolutions], *Laiks* No 6, Jan 21, 1956 p 1

⁸² Roberts et al. (2008), p 55

To this, the Canadian government responded that “there is not very much which we can do”, since stopping the delivery of certain types of mail would be tantamount to government censorship.⁸³

In the United States, a similar statement was issued by the US Department of State, who in answer to the exile Estonian National Committee’s request to put a stop the Soviet propaganda, wrote:

The US Department of State is convinced that this campaign cannot be stopped by any means, except through total postal censorship of all foreign mail, since these types of propaganda materials can be sent from any country, with different sender addresses, or even without a sending address at all. We are convinced that the free exchange of letters offsets those benefits that may be gained through censorship. Therefore, the only protection against this type of propaganda is and remains the good judgment and sensible attitudes of refugees and the American people.⁸⁴

However, some sort of postal censorship in the US may have occurred, since a non-statutory screening program concerning foreign political propaganda was being administered by the Customs Bureau and Post Office Department in the mid-1950s.⁸⁵ The émigré press, however, does not give any further coverage on this subject, and the question remains unanswered: on the one hand, how much of the materials from the Committee For Return to the Motherland or from Soviet Latvia was seized by the US Customs Bureau, and on the other hand, how many requests were made that these materials be stopped in the mail. Neither does the émigré press discuss the responses of the UK or West German authorities, where it is possible that similar requests were made.

In Australia, émigré organizational activities in connection with the repatriation campaign were similar to those in North America and Western Europe. Émigrés were encouraged to

...keep their eyes open, follow all what is happening that pertains to them, and to report upon any further development to the [Australian] authorities, whose assignment is to know about these things.⁸⁶

Émigrés were also asked to gather examples of Soviet propaganda for the United Council of Migrants, so that these could be shown to radio commen-

⁸³ Ibid. p 64

⁸⁴ ‘Komūnistu aģenti seko bēgļiem arī Sav. Valstīs’ [Communist agents follow refugees also in the US], *Laiks* No 21, Mar 14, 1956 p 1

⁸⁵ “Foreign political propaganda,” *Harvard Law Review* 68, No 8 (1955): pp 1393–1395

⁸⁶ ‘Sveiciens no Leipčigas’ [Greetings from Leipzig], *Austrālijas Latvietis* No 295, Jul 23, 1955, p 1

tators and parliamentarians.⁸⁷ In 1957, Minister of Immigration A. Townley appealed to immigrants to report all received repatriation propaganda to the Australian immigration authorities and declared that “these immigrants to the free country of Australia are valuable citizens and that the government will protect their safety against communists.”⁸⁸ This statement from the government, guaranteeing émigré safety, was reassuring and made the Latvian émigré felt less threatened.⁸⁹ An added safety factor was that Latvian émigrés did not have to fear visits by Soviet Embassy personnel to their homes, as did Latvians living in London or Stockholm. This was because Australia had broken off diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union in 1954 as a result of the Petrov affair.⁹⁰

The CIA-financed ACEN, which represented the occupied countries of Eastern Europe, was especially observant of the repatriation campaign, and had it on the agenda of its 1956 Strasbourg session.⁹¹ The session decided to organize a conference with “representatives of the Free World” in order to investigate possible measures to ward off Soviet repatriation pressures.⁹² In addition, proposals were raised to establish an international refugee organization and a refugee welfare fund.⁹³

While nothing else on the session results were published in émigré newspapers, a notice did appear about the establishment of the American Friends of the Captive Nations organization, inaugurated on May 25, 1956 at the New York Town Hall.⁹⁴ At this meeting, one of the speakers was William J. Donovan, the former head of the Office of Strategic Services, who spoke about his recent fact-finding expedition to “Paris, Geneva, Vienna, Munich, Frankfurt, Bonn, and Berlin,” which investigated the “communist repatriation campaign”⁹⁵ and the “communist tactics used to persuade political refugees to return behind the Iron Curtain.”⁹⁶

Some weeks earlier, a special Bureau for Refugee Protection and Aid, open 24 hours a day and located in central Manhattan, New York, was set up

⁸⁷ ‘Lai laižam dūju uz tēva sētu!’ [Let the dove fly home!], *Austrālijas Latvietis* No 321 Feb 4, 1956, p 3

⁸⁸ ‘Sola aizsardzību’ [Protection offered], *Austrālijas Latvietis* No 395, Jul 20, 1957

⁸⁹ Didrihsone-Tomaševska (2014), p 49

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ ‘ACEN sesija Strāsburgā’ [ACEN Session in Strasbourg], *Brīvība* No 4, April 1956 p 1

⁹² ‘Liels darbs, liela programma’ [A lot of work, a large program], *Latvija* No 16, Apr 28, 1956 p 1

⁹³ A.P.: ‘Apspīstūs tautu sēde Strāsburgā’ [Meeting of oppressed nations in Strasbourg], *Latgolas Bolss* April 28, 1956.

⁹⁴ ‘Savienotās Valsfīs, Ņujorka’ [In the USA, New York], *Latvija Amerikā* No 42, May 26, 1956 p 3

⁹⁵ kr.: ‘Amerikāņu draugu organizācija ievada darbību’ [American Friends' organization begins work], *Laiks* No 39, May 15, 1956 p 6

⁹⁶ A.: ‘Pētīs komunistu piedāvājumus bēgļiem’ [Will investigate communist offers to refugees], *Laiks* No 15, Feb 22, 1956 p 5

by Donovan to provide refugees “protection against communist agents, who by terror and other means attempt to force refugees to repatriate.”⁹⁷ It seems, however, that the services of this Bureau were not utilized by any American Latvians, as there is no information in newspapers of any such occurrences.

6.5.2 Leadership Counter-Strategies

Latvian émigré leaders and élites make several public statements in response to the campaign in the émigré press, but reader reactions to these responses are not noted. Vilis Janums, board chairman of both the DV and the LCK, advises émigrés to “be vigilant” of the “significant increase of Bolshevik activity”.⁹⁸ Ādolfs Klīve, head of the US-based Committee for Latvia’s Freedom, fears that proximity to the USSR might become an influential factor in influencing émigré Latvians to repatriate. He therefore recommends that

...a plan for the resettlement of Latvians from Western Europe to the North American continent should be created, so that followers of the Soviet repatriation propaganda would not emerge.⁹⁹

Émigré Latvian diplomat Dr. A. Spekke of the Washington D.C. Latvian legation suggests quite the opposite. In answer to a question at a meeting of the Chicago Latvian society on how to react to fellow citizens who wish to return to Soviet Latvia, he says that persons should be allowed to repatriate if they wish to do so:

Let them return, those who have fallen ill with returning sickness. ... It would be for the best if they all returned at the same time ... Then those who remain ... are those who care about the future of Latvia—in their thoughts and in their work.¹⁰⁰

This answer, made in response to the recent repatriation of an émigré couple from Stockholm, reassures nationals who remain in the West that they are the true patriots and defenders of Latvia’s future. In contrast, persons who repatriate are not of sound mind, and therefore their presence in emigration is not wanted.

Of the other Latvian émigré diplomats, it is mainly Roberts Liepiņš in Bonn who is mentioned in the press as taking actions and giving advice on behalf of the refugees concerning Soviet repatriation activity. Being the Latvian representative to the government in Bonn, Liepiņš received com-

⁹⁷ ‘Bēgļu aizsardzībai’ [For refugee protection], *Latvija Amerikā*, May 5, 1956

⁹⁸ Alvilis Vītrups: ‘Boļševiki mēģina sagraut trimdas organizācijas’ [Bolsheviks attempt to wreck exile organizations], *Londonas Avīze* No 482, Aug 19, 1955 p 3

⁹⁹ ‘Brīvās pasaules latviešu apvienība vēl jāgaida’ [Federation of Free World Latvians still has to wait], *Latvija* No 6, Feb 11, 1956

¹⁰⁰ I.V.: ‘Ko mums darīt’ [What we should do], *Laiks* No 34 Apr 26, 1958 p 1

plaints and appeals from Latvian refugees in West Germany, and forwarded these to the appropriate instance. For example, when West German authorities released the names of all the mentally ill Soviet citizens, including Latvian DPs, in West German psychiatric hospitals to the Soviet Ambassador to West Germany, V. A. Zorin, it was to Liepiņš that relatives of the patients wrote, asking for advice and requesting him to take counter measures.¹⁰¹

One émigré leader, a Lithuanian, who personally responded to the Soviet authorities is the former ambassador of independent Lithuania, Ignas Scheynius, a Stockholm resident. He published an open letter in the Swedish daily *Dagens Nyheter* addressed to Chairman Mikhailov, in answer to the repatriation appeal and invitation that had been sent to him from the Committee For Return to the Motherland. Scheynius' response is picked up by *Latvju Ziņas*, which paraphrases the contents of the letter in its columns, ending with Scheynius' main argument that if Russians want to renew trust among nations and states, then they should be the first to go home to their Motherland—it being understood that the Soviets should withdraw their troops from the Baltic States and go back to Russia proper.¹⁰² Scheynius' argument is repeated in several Latvian émigré newspapers, and pronounced as being one of the best answers yet sent to the Repatriation Committee.¹⁰³

6.5.3 Advice and Actions

Avoid Contacts

Only a few practical recommendations on how one was to relate to the repatriation campaign were made in émigré press. It was frequently repeated that émigrés should not initiate any relations with “Moscow’s agents”, nor should they nurture any contacts with the Committee.¹⁰⁴ They are told to be watchful and avoid situations where they might inadvertently find themselves in the proximity of Soviet officials.¹⁰⁵

Yet these instructions are not always followed. In October 1955, *Laiks* reports that some “less serious Latvians” had contacted the Committee through the mail:

¹⁰¹ Btt.: ‘Gara slimniekiem Vācijā draud izdošana’ [The mentally ill in Germany threatened by extradition], *Austrālijas Latvietis* No 388, June 2, 1956 p 1

¹⁰² ‘Lai uz savu dzimteni vispirms atgriežas krievu boļševiki’ [Let the Russian bosheviks be the first to return to their homeland], *Latvju Ziņas* No 10, May 20, 1955 p 2

¹⁰³ ‘Padomju valdība trimdiniekus aicina uz... Vorkutu’ [Soviet government invites exiles to... Vorkuta], *Latvija Amerikā* No 41, May 28, 1955 p 2

¹⁰⁴ -rj-: ‘Ādolfs Talcis raujas pa Berlīni’ [Adolfs Talcis toiling away in Berlin], *Laiks* No 24 (618), March 24, 1956 p 1

¹⁰⁵ ‘Krievi meklē repatriantus’ [Russians looking for repatriates], *Latvju Ziņas* No 9, May 5, 1955 p 2

A Latvian youth, meeting difficulties in his private life, had made the decision to 'establish contacts' with the Soviet repatriation commission 'in order to start discussions and clarify some facts'.¹⁰⁶

Laiks comments that notwithstanding the deplorable action of the youth, the Soviet response is rather interesting, since the communist reply to the youth's letter was in a formal tone, explaining the practical details of getting to East Berlin, with no attempt to entice him to return to the Motherland.¹⁰⁷ In December 1955, the reporter "E." of *Londonas Avīze* writes that a young person had contacted the Committee, with the intention of returning Latvia. "E." then insists that this person is crazy and that a return is "out of the question", since the young person, as with all repatriates, will be sent directly to the Vorkuta labor camps in Siberia.¹⁰⁸ In this case, the reporter appeals to the authority of the émigré counter-narrative, which states that upon repatriating to Soviet Latvia, the real destination would be the Gulag.¹⁰⁹

In spite of the warnings posted by émigré organizations not to make contacts with Soviet agents, émigrés seem to have been in touch with both the Committee in East Berlin and the local Soviet Embassies. These contacts involved issues pertaining to repatriation, tourist or exit visas for relatives, and questions concerning the newspaper *Par atgriešanos Dzimtenē*. For example, an individual, who was a professor and Doctor of Theology, wrote to the Committee For Return to the Motherland and requested a complete set of *PaDz* issues. Ādolfs Talcis answered the letter and, mistaking the writer for a medical doctor, offered him employment as a physician in Latvia. To clear up the misunderstanding, the individual replied that he wasn't a medical doctor, whereby Talcis answered that theologians can also repatriate and find employment, since there is religious freedom in Soviet Latvia.¹¹⁰

Whereas the clergyman's mail contact with the Committee receives a mere ironic comment in the émigré press, the trip made by émigré author Jaunsudrabiņš to the Committee to settle royalty matters is treated differently. At first, the visit is mentioned in the press, but not condemned.¹¹¹ However, after a first-page article appeared in *PaDz* next to a photograph of

¹⁰⁶ K.D.: 'Uz Ļeņingradu "pārcēlies" raidītāja Liberation spīkers' [Radio Liberation speaker "moves" to Leningrad], *Laiks* No 82, Oct 12, 1955 p 7

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ E.: 'Dīvaini, bet tomēr saprotami' [Odd, but understandable], *Londonas Avīze* No 498, Dec 12, 1955 p 8

¹⁰⁹ Mr. A.: 'Jauns vilinājums bēgļiem' [New enticement for refugees], *Laiks* No 40, May 18, 1955 p 1

¹¹⁰ kr.: 'Kādas sensācijas vēl piedzīvosim?' [What more sensational news will we experience?], *Laiks* No 28, Apr 5, 1958 p 1

¹¹¹ BA: 'Padomju diplomātu amora pasts' [Soviet diplomats' love letters], *Laiks* No 20, Mar 8, 1956 p 6

Jaunsudrabiņš in East Berlin,¹¹² a flood of condemnation and public criticism followed in the right-wing émigré press. The gravest accusations came from the Stockholm-based *Latvju Vārds*, which declared that Jaunsudrabiņš had now embraced the communist belief, since otherwise Soviet press would not be so positive about the writer, and his books would not be published in Soviet Latvia.¹¹³ The attacks upon Jaunsudrabiņš from the ultra-conservative émigré circles eventually subsided, but the memory of the accusations lingered on for years. In contrast, *Brīvība*'s only comment was an eight-line notice stating that the photograph of Jaunsudrabiņš appearing in one of the recent *PaDz* issues had been put there on purpose in order to compromise the writer in émigré circles.¹¹⁴

Return or Destroy Propaganda Materials

Other practical recommendations published in the émigré press concern the Soviet propaganda sent through the mails. Some articles instruct émigrés to return the propaganda to sender, since in this way “a line will be drawn over all Soviet hopes of possible success.”¹¹⁵ Other articles instruct émigrés to re-address the envelopes containing Soviet propaganda to the Committee For Return to the Motherland, even if there is no return address or there is some other sender address on the envelope.¹¹⁶ Later on it is owned that “without doubt, no one paid any attention” to the “cunning Soviet propaganda endeavors”, and the recommendation is given that the communist propaganda be “torn up” and thrown away unread.¹¹⁷

A spectacular event was carried out by the Schleswig-Holstein and Hamburg section of the LCK. This organization arranged a public burning of the repatriation publications on June 14, 1955, a day of mourning for victims of communist terror in commemoration of the June 14, 1941 mass deportations. This event was given front-page coverage in *Laiks*, and the text beneath the photograph of burning materials states that “communist promises were turned into ashes”.¹¹⁸ These types of paper-burning events seem to have been repeated elsewhere, for example in the West German city of Neustadt.¹¹⁹

The differing advice on what to do with the propaganda (to return or destroy) may have been due to the variations in the periodicity and quantity

¹¹² ‘Jānis Jaunsudrabiņš Berlīnē’ [Jānis Jaunsudrabiņš in Berlin], *PaDz* No 18 (204) Mar 1958 p 1

¹¹³ Kangeris (1978): p 50

¹¹⁴ ‘Sadarbība’ [Collaboration], *Brīvība* No 4, Apr 1958 p 4

¹¹⁵ R-is: ‘Mēs atbildēsim tā’ [This is our answer], *Latvija* No 41 Nov 5, 1955 p 1

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ A. Sarķis: ‘Vēstule no Vācijas draugam Anglijā’ [A letter from Germany to a friend in England], *Londonas Avīze*, May 17, 1957 p 6

¹¹⁸ *Laiks* No 53, Jul 2, 1955, p 1

¹¹⁹ Š.V.: ‘Komūnisti “Viesturiešu” maskā’ [Kommunists in a “Viesturian” mask], *Laiks* No 80, Oct 6, 1956 p 1

of materials that were being sent to émigrés. At first, when *PaDz* was issued a few times per month, a return was seen as a meaningful action: the émigré press reported that in one case a reader returned the *PaDz* to East Berlin with the words “Thanks, but no thanks—I have enough toilet paper” on the envelope.¹²⁰ However, as the publication frequency stabilized to twice a week by mid-1956, it ultimately became much simpler to throw the *PaDz* away. Both actions—returning and throwing away—took place at the Labor Service Company No 7566 in Ettlingen, West Germany. This unit was sent a variety of Russian and Latvian repatriation materials, including *PaDz*, *Cīņa*, and other Soviet publications. At first the materials were returned to the Committee in East Berlin, with expletives written on them in Russian, Latvian and German.¹²¹ As this did not stop the Soviet propaganda flows, a decision was made that from now on, all propaganda materials would be destroyed. To mark this occasion, a personal letter was sent to General Mikhailov with the following message:

These publications do not give us any pleasure, since they do not provide true information about living conditions in the occupied homeland. We recommend that the money spent on publishing and distributing these materials is invested in the sustenance and in improved living conditions of our fellow nationals in Latvia and in your infamous concentration (slave) camps.¹²²

On the whole, it seems that émigrés followed the advice given in the newspapers: the repatriation newspaper and accompanying materials were either destroyed or returned to sender.¹²³ As a result, *Par atgriešanos Dzimtenē* and other materials sent out from the Committee For Return to the Motherland in East Berlin are rarely found in émigré organization archives. The same is true for private Latvian émigré archives, which, considering the propaganda volumes that had been mailed, contain very little documentation pertaining to the repatriation campaign.

6.6 The Counter-Narratives

By and large, the émigré press ignored the repatriation narratives that number in the hundreds and are published in each and every *PaDz*. During the first months of publication, when the newspaper was not so well known to émigré readers, *Laiks* presented a derisive summary of the narratives:

¹²⁰ ‘Repatriācija’, *Latvija* Nov 19, 1955 p 3

¹²¹ Baltiņa (2011)

¹²² ‘Nepūlāities veltīgi!’ [Don’t exert yourself in vain!], *Latvija* No 46, Dec 10, 1955 p 4

¹²³ One émigré remembers that when she was a child, her father made it a ritual to throw the *PaDz* away, unopened, in front of the whole family when it arrived. Unstructured interview, Anonymous B, October 18, 2013.

On the third [page] there are narratives of the “great life” of those who have repatriated, but on the last [page] there are tearful lies on the destitution of refugees and their poverty-stricken life in barracks under the care of the Germans.¹²⁴

It is noted with irony that even though the *PaDz* is intended “especially for Latvians”, the published repatriate letters, the invitations, and the names of the people on the search lists are all of Russians.¹²⁵ However, much interest is shown when Latvian names appear, such as that of Committee member Alfons Prūsis: *Latvija Amerikā*, for example, retells Prūsis’ narrative almost verbatim in its columns.¹²⁶ The Latvian returnees of the 1940s, who are featured in the first issues of *PaDz*, are also carefully noted, though their narratives are tersely laughed off: “How good it was to have done that [to repatriate] and how difficult life was in Belgium and in the DP camps.”¹²⁷

When the first Latvian repatriate of the current campaign is named in *PaDz* in October 1955, *Laiks* writes: “the repatriation commission cannot brag of having made a big gain”.¹²⁸ The repatriate in question was a rank-and-file railroad worker in his mid-thirties. Apparently, he had kept to himself and had not socialized with the émigré Latvians in Hamburg, where he lived. Interestingly, the émigré press as a whole fails to note or comment upon the fact that he returned with his 2-year old daughter and any reactions of the child’s mother are not touched on at all. The return of the 2-year-old together with her father is, however, mentioned briefly in a *PaDz* article, but no further comments or explanations are given concerning the child and/or her mother.¹²⁹

6.6.1 The Counter-Narrative of Deportation

Émigré discourse was dominated by the storyline of film director Voldemārs Pūce, an returnee of the first Soviet campaign. Pūce’s name was first brought up in émigré press in 1946 when he and his wife repatriated to Soviet Latvia from West Germany. His name resurfaced in the Gulag memoirs of Joseph

¹²⁴ Mr. A.: ‘Repatriācijas uzaicinājums no Magdeburgas’ [Repatriation invitation from Magdeburg], *Laiks* No 49 June 18, 1955 p 1

¹²⁵ ‘Neveiklās lamatas’ [Clumsy trap], *Latvija Amerikā* No 14, Feb 18, 1956 p 6

¹²⁶ ‘Izmuļķota repatriācijas komiteja’ [The repatriation committee is fooled], *Latvija Amerikā* No 60, Aug 3, 1955

¹²⁷ ‘Pastiprināts vilinājums’ [Heightened temptation], *Laiks* No 68, Aug 24, 1955, p 1

¹²⁸ B.: ‘Žanis Bratkus aicina “mājās”’ [Žanis Bratkus invites you “home”], *Laiks* No 84, Oct 19, 1955, p 5

¹²⁹ ‘Uz redzēšanos Latvijā, dārgie draugi!’ [See you in Latvia, my dear friends!], *PaDz* No 14, Nov 1955 p 3

Scholmer, published 1954.¹³⁰ There it was confirmed that after repatriating, Pūce was sentenced in 1948 to fifteen years forced labor in the Gulag.¹³¹ In Latvian exile newspapers, Pūce's sentence was seen as typical for what happened to post-war repatriates and what would happen to persons if they were to repatriate today to Soviet Latvia.¹³² Pūce's example is taken as proof that all repatriates will end up in Vorkuta, and his story forms the basis of the émigré counter-narrative of deportation:

- The émigré, tricked by the Committee, is persuaded to repatriate
- The émigré is promised a fulfilling life with his family in Latvia
- After crossing the Soviet border, the émigré is indicted on some trumped up criminal charge (espionage, for having been abroad, for having served the enemy)
- The émigré is sent to prison camp in, say, Vorkuta, to face certain death, or banished to Siberian exile

The narratives that begin appearing in *PaDz* towards the end of 1956 about the extradited legionnaires of 1946 and other legionnaires who had repatriated to Soviet Latvia after WWII, initially elicit expressions of disbelief and disavowal in conservative émigré newspapers. Their “happy-ending” stories are doubted, and, instead, it is proposed that the legionnaires are slaving away in the Gulag and facing certain death, according to the deportation counter-narrative. The media's disbelief in the possibility that legionnaires had survived the Gulag and as a result of Soviet amnesties were currently returning from Siberia was absolute. The conservative émigré press held on to its deportation counter-narrative, and declared that legionnaires were still in the Gulag, or else they were dead. For example, in an article with the telling caption “Their death is not far off”, *Latvija* questions the unpunished repatriation narrative of the legionnaire X of the 19th Waffen-SS Grenadier Division of the Latvian Legion:

Has X slaved 5, 8, or all 10 years in Siberia? Yet that can be read from his face, which is seen in the photograph attached to the article.¹³³

In the same article, another extradited legionnaire's statement—“It seems ridiculous to imagine that our compatriots who remained in Sweden after our departure lamented over us as being lost, and the church prayed for our souls”—is declared to have been written by someone else, since “he simply

¹³⁰ Joseph Scholmer, *Die Toten kehren zurück: Bericht einer Arztes aus Workuta* (Köln-Berlin: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1954)

¹³¹ Viksne et al., eds., (1999), p 618

¹³² Mr. A.: ‘Jauns vilinājums bēgļiem’ [A new allurement for refugees], *Laiks* No 40, May 18, 1955 p 1

¹³³ ‘Viņu gals vairs nav tālu’ [Their death is not far off], *Latvija* No 38, Oct 13, 1956 p 1

could not know where and what fate has met the rest of the 129 extradited legionnaires.” The article asks:

How many of them have died a violent death, and how many are still slaving in order to “repay their crimes”? What has happened to the thousands of military servicemen of the 19th division and other divisions who were taken into Soviet captivity, and who after the release of the German POWs still remain in the prison camps of Vorkuta, Kolyma, Sverdlovsk? And where are all the thousands of deported civilians, who are scattered over all of Asian Russia?¹³⁴

After some initial comments about the *PaDz* legionnaire articles in the conservative press, practically no more notice is taken of them, and the articles that follow are met with silence. The *PaDz* for example, published an article where an extradited Balt explains that he is living well in Riga and currently works as section head of a book storage unit; adding that he would be happy if his friend in Sweden, also a former legionnaire, would read these lines in *PaDz* and “come to the only correct conclusion that also his real place is in his Fatherland, Soviet Latvia”.¹³⁵ This article was ignored in émigré press, as was another article, signed by a former legionnaire of the 15th Waffen-SS Grenadier Division of the Latvian Legion, inviting all legionnaires to return.¹³⁶

These narratives were deemed to be full of lies, created by “Chekists” and therefore not worth any attention. The émigré majority believed that the legionnaires were either still doing their 25 years in the Gulag, or they were dead. This belief was cemented by a series of fanciful articles published some years earlier by émigré journalist H. Brunavs,¹³⁷ and supported by testimonies of recently freed German inmates from Soviet labor camps.¹³⁸ The émigré majority continued to organize annual commemorative events for their martyred comrades and paid no heed to the ironic articles in *PaDz*, which ridiculed their concern and declared that all returnees and extradited legionnaires are alive and “working and living fulfilling lives in Soviet Latvia”.¹³⁹

In contrast to the above, *Brīvība* wrote that most of the extradited legionnaires, after having been sent to labor camps, had been freed in 1947, and that some of the officers, who had been given longer prison sentences,

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ezers, A.: ‘Pie viena no «bojā gājušajiem»’ [Visiting one of the “dead”], *PaDz* no 51(67) Oct 1956 p 1

¹³⁶ Aleksandrs Šturms: ‘Arī jūs, bijušos leģionarus, gaida Dzimtene’ [The Motherland awaits you too, former legionnaires], *PaDz* No 30(46) Jul 1956 p 4

¹³⁷ The article series by H. Brunavs on the extradited legionnaires was published in eleven installments in *Laiks*, from Dec 23, 1953 to Feb 6, 1954.

¹³⁸ Freivalds (1967), pp 393–422

¹³⁹ ‘Par ko viņi gaužas?’ [What are they complaining about?], *PaDz* No 66 (82), Nov 1956 p 1

were being released under the terms of the September 17, 1955 Amnesty.¹⁴⁰ To this the conservative *Latvija Amerikā* answered by declaring that the social democrats and the Bolsheviks had formed a “joint front”.¹⁴¹ *Latvija* wrote that *Brīvība*’s information “borders on criminal offence”.¹⁴² *Brīvība* retorted that their intelligence was provided by the two groups of refugees from Liepāja that had arrived in Sweden a few years earlier, and that it was confirmed in letters written to relatives in Sweden by the amnestied officers who had returned to Soviet Latvia.¹⁴³ Nevertheless, the conservative side refused to consider this information, and the counter-narrative of deportation remained unaffected: previous repatriates to Soviet Latvia, especially legionnaires, were either dead or still serving long-term sentences in the Gulag, and current repatriates would most likely end up in Vorkuta.

6.6.2 The Counter-Narrative of the Mentally Ill

Whereas the repatriation of the first Latvian back to the Soviet homeland in October 1955 is treated with neutral surprise, the following repatriations are severely criticized in the conservative press. The act of repatriation is seen to be possible only if one is insane, and therefore this action is regarded as being carried out by persons with disturbed minds. In consequence, the conservative émigré press equates repatriation with mental disease: “Repatriates are persons with nervous illnesses, persons who are suffering from depression or who have character instabilities.”¹⁴⁴ For example, *Londonas Avīze* writes:

From among the recent returnees, Latvians in England know only of two cases—X and Y. Both are suffering from a serious nervous illness and have been committed to the local psychiatric hospital, but have not been cured.¹⁴⁵

This is echoed in *Laiks*, which writes that the repatriate X is “mentally depressed and ailing from homesickness”.¹⁴⁶ Still another repatriate, a clergyman, is described as mentally unstable and suffering from illness, and *Laiks* adds that he may have been working for a special assignment from the

¹⁴⁰ ‘Leģionāru traģēdija’ [The tragedy of the legionnaires], *Brīvība* No 2, Feb 1956 p 1

¹⁴¹ ‘Vai arī mūsu sociāldemokratu un boļševiku kopējā fronte?’ [Or is it a joint front of our socialdemocrats and bolsheviks?], *Latvija Amerikā* Mar 10, 1956

¹⁴² ‘Atbrīvotie un amnestētie’ [Freed and amnestied], *Brīvība* No 3, Mar 1956 p 4

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ ‘Kvislingu pāris zviedru uzmanības centrā’ [The quisling couple in the center of Swedish attention], *Latvija* No 13 Apr 5, 1958 p 1

¹⁴⁵ ‘LNPL Prezidija sēde’ [LNPL Presidium meeting], *Londonas Avīze* No 504 Jan 1, 1956 p 1

¹⁴⁶ ‘Padomju aģenti dzenā pēdas latviešiem’ [Soviet agents track Latvians], *Laiks* No 59 Jul 24, 1957 p 2

Soviets.¹⁴⁷ The clergyman had returned alone to Latvia, having left his family behind in Chicago. Another repatriate, an actor, is diagnosed in the press as schizophrenic and said to be ill with nerves.¹⁴⁸

Yet, from the articles in the press, it is evident that some of the repatriates were actually suffering from nervous disorders, and for example, one drug addict had repatriated from a Danish mental institution.¹⁴⁹ Towards the end of 1956, the newspaper *Latvija* asserted that

...only 16 Latvians have repatriated from West Germany—they are criminals with long-term sentences, or they are ill with tuberculosis or suffering from nerves, or singles, who have not been able to integrate into normal life.¹⁵⁰

From then on, repatriates to Soviet Latvia are portrayed in the émigré newspapers as persons who in some way differ from the norm. They are given the counter-narrative of the mentally ill, and are characterized by at least one of the following traits:

- Mental illness
- Physical illness (for example, tuberculosis)
- Criminal behavior
- Solitary existence

They are declared to be deviant, since according to conservative Latvian émigré press, normal people do not repatriate. According to this émigré narrative, voluntary repatriation is either an indication of disease (psychological or physical), or the mark of criminal or solitary behavior.

Yet, there are a few cases, when repatriation is tolerated. If the repatriate is sufficiently old—over 60 years of age—and female, then the repatriation is legitimized in the émigré press as an “unquenched longing to see one’s children”.¹⁵¹

Returnees from the Cultural Élite

Of all the approximately 100 Latvian repatriates that returned after 1955, the largest coverage in émigré media is given to a married couple, two members of the Stockholm Latvian social and cultural élite, who returned to Soviet

¹⁴⁷ ‘Repatriants Kalngars Latvijā vēl nav ticis’ [Repatriate Kalngars still hasn’t reached Latvia], *Laiks* No 75 Sep 18, 1957 p 1

¹⁴⁸ AB: ‘Rīga ziņo par Reitera ierašanos’ [Riga reports on the arrival of Reiters], *Laiks* No 27 Apr 2, 1958 p 1

¹⁴⁹ ‘Ceļš brīvs... uz padomju murdu?’ [The way is free ... to the Soviet trap], *Latvija* No 18 May 12, 1956

¹⁵⁰ ‘Būsim uzmanīgi!’ [Let us be careful!], *Latvija* No 42, Nov 10, 1956 p 6

¹⁵¹ ‘Cik stipras var būt ilgas’ [How strong longings can be], *Laiks* No 36, May 3, 1958 p 1

Latvia in March 1958.¹⁵² Over the next few months, over 40 condemning articles about them circulate in the conservative press. Their repatriation is also given coverage in the Swedish press.¹⁵³ The social democratic *Brīvība*, in contrast, devotes a fifteen-line notice about the repatriation.

The émigré articles strongly disapprove of the repatriation and try to proffer explanations why the couple, an orchestra conductor and his wife, returned. They investigate what the pair had done during the period before they repatriated, they interview the conductor's circle of friends, and they probe his contacts with the Soviet Embassy in Stockholm. The press suggests that the reason for their return to Soviet Latvia is that he accepted the offer, given to him by Soviet agents, of a position as conductor for the Riga Philharmonic Orchestra with the enormous monthly wage of 3,000 rubles.¹⁵⁴

The media then presents article after article where the pair are given the “deviant counter-narrative” treatment. The press proclaims the husband to be “helpless”, “depressed” and “of unstable nature”. He is described as someone “spoilt by the overzealous care of his father”, of “living off his father’s money”, and of being “unambitious” and “irresponsible”. He is portrayed as having an “inferiority complex”, an “inclination towards alcohol”, and as being “pursued by narcotic hangovers”.¹⁵⁵ The newspaper *Latvija* describes the husband and wife as the “quisling couple”, whose “egoistical repatriation” is driven by “revenge against émigré society”.¹⁵⁶

The viciousness of the comments towards the couple can possibly be explained in that they were regarded as defectors from their own conservative ranks. According to the beliefs espoused in émigré discourse of that time, members of the right-wing groups were allegedly stronger in their national-patriotic stance than the social democrats. Whereas the conservative émigré community fully imagined that exile social democrats would repatriate to the communist homeland, it was unthinkable that members from their own conservative circles would do so.¹⁵⁷ Thus, the return of two conservative élites to Soviet Latvia is perceived in conservative emigrant circles as a sell-out—they had gone over to the enemy camp and had betrayed their class. It also meant a humiliating defeat in front of the émigré social democrats, from

¹⁵² The couple had repatriated with the help of the Soviet Embassy in Stockholm, not via the Repatriation Committee in East Berlin. See Chapter 4.3.4, under section “Soviet Embassy Contacts”.

¹⁵³ ‘Nu myusu trymdas dzeives’ [From our exile life], *Latgolas Bolss*, April 5, 1958

¹⁵⁴ ‘L. Reiters Latvijā’ [L. Reiters in Latvia], *Brīvība* No 4, Apr 1958 p 4

¹⁵⁵ ‘Bēgļu vervētājiem izdevies lielāks ķēriens’ [Refugee recruiters make a big catch], *Londonas Avīze* No 616, Mar 28, 1958 p 1

¹⁵⁶ ‘Kvislingu pāris zviedru uzmanības centrā’ [The quisling couple in the center of Swedish attention], *Latvija* No 13, Apr 5, 1958 p 1

¹⁵⁷ ‘Atbrīvotie un amnestētie’ [Freed and amnestied], *Brīvība* No 3, Mar 1956 p 4

whose ranks no one had repatriated. The author J. M. concludes in *Latvju Vārds* that the pair's:

...“internal norms” ... negatively projecting to the outside, destroy the morals of society, compromise us to non-Latvians, and harm our political struggle.¹⁵⁸

As time goes by, however, the vile comments about the pair subside, and discreet interest is expressed in how they are faring in Soviet Latvia. By August 1958, the conservative newspapers recount with near sympathy that former foreign minister of independent Latvia, Vilhelms Munters, residing in Voronezh, had visited the couple in Riga.¹⁵⁹

6.7 Emotional Reactions

The emotional reactions in the conservative émigré newspapers, elicited by the repatriation campaign, can be summarized as follows:

- 1) **indignation and anger** at being the targets and recipients of the Soviet repatriation propaganda
- 2) **confidence** in that “we (the Latvian émigrés) won’t be fooled by the communist campaign”: the Soviets will not be able to trick us into returning to certain death/imprisonment/deportation to the Gulag
- 3) a **feeling of collective émigré moral superiority** over the activities of the KGB-run Committee For Return to the Motherland and its Chairman Mikhailov, i.e., we (the émigrés) know that the Committee engages in deceitful and dishonorable espionage against émigrés
- 4) a **feeling of collective émigré moral superiority** over the West, which doesn’t understand the true extent of the treacherousness of the repatriation campaign, i.e. the West doesn’t understand that the campaign is run by the KGB and that it aims to first destroy the anti-communist émigré society, and then, ultimately, Western society itself
- 5) a **fear** that the West, due to its naïveté and willingness to please Moscow, will succumb to Soviet demands and betray the émigrés

¹⁵⁸ J. M.: ‘Kur robeža?’ [Where is the boundary?], *Latvju Vārds* No 12, Apr 17, 1955 p 1

¹⁵⁹ ‘Vai Munters parādījies Rīgā?’ [Has Munters been seen in Riga], *Londonas Avīze* No 639, Aug 15, 1958 p 1

by allowing their forceful repatriation to communist occupied countries

- 6) a **fear** that the Soviets, through intelligence gathering, could monitor the lives of émigrés, invade their private spheres, and penetrate into their society

Thus, according to the conservative press, the Latvian émigré was trapped between the two Cold War adversaries. Though feeling morally superior to both the East and West, the émigré feared them both. The émigré feared the West, which in the name of cooperation could sell them to the East. The émigré feared the East, which through aggressive propaganda attacks had already deeply penetrated into their communities. While émigrés were angry and indignant that they were subjected to the propaganda attacks, they were at the same time confident that they could withstand Soviet propaganda and not be fooled.

In contrast, the social democratic audience remained publicly unmoved by the Soviet repatriation campaign. Save for a few ironic comments about Committee activities or short rebuttals to *PaDz* articles, it cold-shouldered the campaign and made no show of emotion. *Brīvība* did not allow itself to be provoked by the lies and insults published in the *PaDz*. Instead, *Brīvība* devoted its column space to other, more important political pursuits.

6.8 Evaluation and Discussion

Of the 125,000 Latvians abroad, approximately 100 individuals repatriated from countries around the globe. Only two among the returnees can be said to have represented the émigré social and cultural élite, and their repatriation, though creating a commotion in exile circles, did not give impetus to a larger following. The return of 100 individuals from Europe, North America and Australia did not result in the disruption of Latvian émigré community activities nor in stopping their anti-Soviet endeavors. Émigré political, social, and cultural life continued as before. The second Soviet repatriation campaign failed in achieving its main overt goal—repatriation.

The second overt goal—supporting the Patriotic Movement—can also be said to have met with only limited success. Augusts Kalniņš, a recruited repatriation agent working openly in West Germany, gained little response to his work. He did not become the inspiring leader who gathered admirers and influenced émigré actions. Likewise, the agent Navarskis, and the other recruited agents in West Germany, the UK, and Australia, could show no significant repatriation achievements. In Sweden, however, several agents may have been instrumental in persuading two members of the cultural and

social élite to repatriate. Yet, when added together, these activities fell short of achieving a mass repatriation movement.

Concerning the formation of underground promoter groups, here too it can be said that the results were far from successful. Of the over fifty Latvian settlements in West Germany, larger activity cells seem to have been established only in Oldenburg and Karlsruhe. Several underground mimeographed bulletins were issued, such as *Opozicionārs*, *Viesturieši*, and *Laika ritmos*. Since the central émigré organizations eventually identified the underground promoter groups and several of the agents working in these groups, their destructive activities were neutralized. They attracted only a few followers, and émigré response was inconsequential. The underground groups did not convince the masses to repatriate, nor did they succeed in driving wedges between émigré leadership and the rank-and-file. The émigrés chose to ignore the mimeographed bulletins, much as was done with the *PaDz*, and to take the side of their émigré leadership. Ultimately, the leading agents of the Oldenburg and Karlsruhe group, Jānis Gavars and Leons Kreilis, repatriated to Soviet Latvia.

As can be indirectly ascertained, the campaign was successful in increasing tensions and insecurity in émigré communities through the underground activity of Soviet agents, who also gathered background information about émigrés and their organizations. They stole addresses and collected internal information, such as the statutes, minutes and member rosters of émigré organizations. Their destructive work fanned misgivings and distrust between émigrés, and gave reason for organization leaders to urge members of the community to disclose suspicious activity. In its wake, the hunt for communists may have hit innocent persons, causing some, but not all, to withdraw from émigré society. All of this provided the Soviet center of authority additional information on émigré strengths and weaknesses, and laid the basis for developing future contacts with individual émigrés.

Though it is difficult to evaluate the effect of agent activity on émigré communities based on newspaper articles alone, it seems clear that expected outcomes were not attained. The knowledge of where Latvians lived and worked, what their interests were, and what clubs they belonged to, while making émigrés feel under surveillance and stalked, was not sufficient to neutralize or put a stop to their anti-communism. Latvian émigré society continued to function and its anti-communist activities were not disrupted.

The third goal—to stop the spread of anti-Soviet propaganda—also met with failure. The Soviet government's appeal to Western governments to shut down émigré organizations and stop their production of anti-Soviet publications was rejected. Émigré organizations continued to organize anti-communist activities and émigrés continued to participate in anti-Soviet political events in their host countries throughout the coming decades. The Soviet government also failed in its attempts to get the UN to annul the status of political refugee for the DPs still remaining in West Germany and

Austria, and thereby expel or forcefully repatriate them back to the Soviet Union. The UN did not revoke DPs the right of political asylum.

Yet the overall failure of the second Soviet repatriation campaign was that its overarching goal was not achieved: the Latvian emigration was not destroyed and the Latvian émigré community retained its political legitimacy and dignity.

This failure was due to a long list of mistakes made in the repatriation campaign. It seems that the first miscalculation was made in expecting that all the émigré masses would have returned almost immediately, and thereby makeshift procedures were accepted for the supposedly few months necessary to carry through with the repatriation campaign. Probably for this reason, the newspaper production was split between Riga and Berlin, and it is possible that the same motivation lay behind the unusual solution to produce a newspaper consisting solely of translated articles. The short time span envisioned for the *PaDz* also meant, it can be assumed, that there was no apparent need for a Latvian board of editors.

Another misjudgment made by the Soviet center of authority was to presuppose that émigré Latvians would be attracted to reading a newspaper written for Russians, Ukrainians, and Belarusians. The Soviet propagandist mistakenly assumed that exile Latvians identified themselves with the Slavic peoples of the Soviet Union, and that they would be interested in news items from the Russian, Ukrainian and Belarusian SSR and in stories about repatriates to these areas.

Another shortcoming was to think that Latvian émigrés would be so unsophisticated as to believe in the Committee founding legend. Instead of accepting the legend as was intended by the Soviet propagandist, émigré organizations immediately disclosed it to be false. In the Latvian emigration, the Committee was renamed “the checkist Mikhailov’s Committee” and thereby lost its credibility forever. For similar reasons, the Committee was never regarded by émigrés as a legitimate organization representing their interests. The multi-ethnic organization founded by former Russian and Ukrainian POWs, with a sole Latvian repatriate—the unknown Alfons Prūsis—among its members, found no resonance at all among Latvian exiles. Moreover, regarding professional and social background, there was no correspondence between that of the Committee founders and that of the emigration at large. The Committee founders, Russian and Ukrainian POWs, had formerly served in the Soviet Army, whereas the Latvian emigration was comprised of military persons and civilians who had one way or another served the Germans: in the Waffen-SS, in the Self-Administration, or as forced laborers. With its background in the Soviet military, the Committee could forge no links to the values, beliefs, attitudes, and past behavior patterns of the target Latvian émigré audience.

The difficulty in finding common grounds between the Committee and the emigration was also apparent in that there were no leading émigré

opinion leaders who stood up for what the Committee in East Berlin represented. All leading émigré elites, including the social democrats, who were publicly silent on the issue, were negative about the repatriation campaign and distrusted the Committee. The possibility of using Latvian émigré author Jaunsudrabiņš to promote repatriation also failed. If Jaunsudrabiņš and his wife had returned, their action might have possibly swayed émigré opinions in favor of repatriation. Yet, this will never be known for sure, since in the end, Jaunsudrabiņš decided to remain in West Germany.

Augusts Kalniņš, who openly worked for the Patriotic Movement, never became the opinion leader among émigrés as envisioned by the Committee. Though he allegedly had an appropriate background—being a former factory director and a former member of the conservative *Aizsargi* organization—he had not built up a platform of support among émigrés during his years in exile. The lack of repatriation support in émigré newspapers was thus reflected by the lack of opinion leaders who would be willing to support repatriation.

The greatest mistake made by the Soviet propagandist, however, was in believing that the Latvian rank-and-file abroad were a dependent mass, subject to the authority of the Soviet communicator. In trusting that the Latvian emigration was an ideological vacuum—open to any outside influence and prone to the KGB's legendizing strategies—the ineffective strategy of the *legenda* was implemented. It was believed that returnee narratives, published by the hundreds in the *PaDz*, could inspire émigrés to return. Yet, these found no response in émigré hearts and minds, which were permeated through and through with strong anti-Soviet group norms. The returnee narratives could not replace the Latvian émigré's own internalized narrative of the political refugee, which dominated the ideology of Latvian emigration throughout the years of Soviet occupation.

Paradoxically, the event that in practice put an end to the repatriation campaign was the opening of the Soviet Union's borders and the opportunity for western tourists to visit Soviet Latvia. With the availability of an entry and exit visa, the potential repatriate could check out the situation in Riga at first hand, before making a final decision. The choice to return home was no longer solely dependent upon propagandistic newspapers, broadcasts or publications, nor upon persuasive conversations with Soviet agents.

The émigré response to the repatriation campaign mirrors the political landscape of the Latvian emigration: the conservatives reacted with an immediate, massive, and emotional response, but the social democrats held their silence. The majority conservative press published over 300 articles, all negative, on the subject, while the social democratic press published about 10 negative articles during the three year period. In the majority press, the

Committee is immediately identified as a KGB front, and, according to the self-proclaimed counter-narrative, the Committee's goal is to deceive émigrés into repatriating to the Siberian labor camps. The majority press responds to the few persons who do repatriate with its own counter-narrative of the social misfit and mentally ill. Émigrés are admonished to be vigilant and be careful, and to avoid contacts with Soviet agents. They are instructed to return any received Soviet propaganda materials to the Committee or to simply throw it away. Émigrés fear the Soviet propaganda, yet they feel morally superior to the East, since they know about the KGB espionage directed against them. They also feel morally superior to the West, which due to its ignorance, as the émigrés see it, does not understand Soviet treachery. In spite of the feelings of moral superiority, the émigrés nevertheless feel trapped between the two adversaries, the East and the West.

A final discussion of the results of this dissertation will follow.



Fig. 6.1: Stamp issued by the Latvian émigré community commemorating ten years of occupation and exile. Illustration by Latvian artist Niklāvs Strunke.

7 Conclusion

The aim of this dissertation has been to investigate the 1955–1958 Soviet Latvian repatriation campaign, which sought to achieve the voluntary return of approximately 125,000 Latvian émigrés to the Soviet homeland. Specifically, the intention has been to determine the goals, strategies and tactics of the campaign, how they were implemented, and to explore the reactions of émigré Latvians to the campaign. I have sought to answer the following questions: Why was the repatriation campaign undertaken at all? What methods were used to elicit desired behaviors from the Latvian émigrés? What were the outcomes of the campaign?

In the search for these results, the 218 issues of the Soviet Latvian repatriation newspaper *Par atgriešanos Dzimtenē* have been examined. My focus has been on articles about individual repatriates, on articles treating the Committee For Return to the Motherland and the repatriation campaign in general, as well as on articles about Soviet government policies on repatriation. In studying émigré reactions to the repatriation campaign, I have examined over 300 articles that in some way or another treat the repatriation theme that have been published in ten major émigré Latvian newspapers.

The repatriation campaign as a whole is examined according to the method of propaganda analysis as proposed by Jowett and O'Donnell. Through the use of this method, the Soviet propagandist and the émigré target audience are investigated, and their actions and reactions are systemized, described and interpreted. The émigré audience is studied through the reactions in the émigré press.

The theoretical framework for this study is based on Soviet theories of agitation and propaganda, on Soviet émigré theories, and on Paul Kecskemeti's model of Soviet foreign political communication. These theories introduce the following assumptions and concepts:

- a) the goal of the Soviet press is to serve the political aims of the Communist Party
- b) Soviet propaganda measures are not subject to financial or timely constraint as long as the Communist Party sees an ideological need for them
- c) émigrés are regarded as class enemies, socially alien and dangerous elements, wartime collaborators, traitors, likely foreign spies

- d) émigrés can be divided into two classes: 1) the leaders, who are the so-called “political refugees”—non-repentant bourgeois, proven fascists, war criminals; 2) the ordinary rank-and-file, who due to their own stupidity and foolishness, had remained abroad
- e) Soviet political communication to external audiences takes place through “front” organizations, such as the Committee for Return to the Motherland
- f) the Soviet communicator strives to subjugate and exercise control over the audience through the dissemination of authoritative or manipulative messages
- g) the goal of Soviet foreign communication is to elicit desired political behaviors from the audience.

In line with the mentioned theories, these are the points that motivate Soviet propaganda actions and explain for why certain steps and measures have been taken.

The method used to analyze the *PaDz* repatriation articles is that of the *legenda* and the *legendirovaniye*, a technique developed by Soviet security. Accordingly, believable legends or narratives were created and then legendized, that is, implemented by being affixed to a person or thing. The narratives, which followed a set storyline, were used partly as repatriate biographies, partly as a cover for the activities of Soviet intelligence. Through the constant publication and repetition of the repatriation narratives, the Soviet communicator intended to influence the émigrés to give up their convictions that they would be punished if they returned home. Instead, they were to believe that if they were to repatriate, they would experience the same emotions of happiness and achieve the same high material standard of living as portrayed in the repatriation narratives. The Committee founding legend was meant to persuade westerners and émigrés that the Repatriation Committee was a legitimate organization that worked for the repatriation of Soviet citizens. At the same time, the legend provided a cover for the activities of Soviet agents on foreign territories.

Up to now, scholarly research on Soviet propaganda and media has focused mainly on issues involving domestic or foreign relations on the state level. Yet these studies, with only a few notable exceptions, concentrate on the Moscow-centered All-Union Russian language media. Research on Soviet propaganda produced in the non-Russian languages is underdeveloped. I have addressed this problem in the current dissertation, which examines published Soviet propaganda outputs in the Latvian language. This study, one of the first of its kind, is unique in that it investigates Soviet communication in the Latvian language that was directed to one of the Soviet “compatriot” communities abroad—the Latvian émigrés, who were scattered throughout the western world: in Western Europe, North America, South America and Australia.

It is hoped that the findings will provide new insights on how the Soviet homeland engaged in mass communications with compatriots in the West, and how the compatriots, in this case Latvian émigrés, staged their responses to the Soviet appeals. By revealing the developments and changes in Soviet Latvian interactions with its compatriots in exile, and by shedding light on Latvian émigré responses to this propaganda, this study hopes to be a modest contribution to a lesser-known area of Cold War studies.

Why start the second repatriation campaign in the first place? Why did the Soviet government want the return of an émigré community spread out over several continents and which numbered less than 125,000? Why the concern over the anti-Soviet activities of an émigré group, whose attempts to raise the “Baltic issue” were hardly noticeable on the western international political scene?

The answers to these questions, as I have shown in my dissertation, are due in part to the ruling Soviet legal attitudes towards émigrés, and in part due to the dominating Soviet perception of émigré anti-communist activities.

At the start of WWII, the attitude of the Soviet government towards Soviet citizens outside of the country’s borders was one of “recovery”: Stalin demanded their return back to Soviet territory, insisting upon “the return of everyone, up to the very last citizen abroad.” As the Soviet Army overtook territories to the west, Soviet security implemented measures of forced return against fleeing civilians and military persons. Towards the end of the war, agreements were reached with the western Allies and a number of other countries concerning the return of POWs, former forced laborers, refugees and DPs to the Soviet Union. In result, through forced and voluntary repatriation, the return of over seven million civilians and POWs (mainly Russians and Ukrainians) had been secured.

However, approximately one million refugees refused to repatriate, stating that legally they were not Soviet citizens, since they had not resided within the pre-1 September 1939 boundaries of the Soviet Union. Moreover, they were in opposition to the communist rule in their home countries and they had suffered persecution. Over 125,000 of this “last million” were Latvians, who declared themselves to be political refugees. They could not return to their homeland due to objections of a political nature and due to the fear of persecution. They feared incrimination because of their pre-war social and political activity, because of their war-time contacts with the German occupation power, and because they had been abroad, which was a punishable offence in Stalin's regime. Almost all resisted the offers to return made by Soviet repatriation officers, who under the aegis of UNRRA, were allowed to visit DP camps and agitate for repatriation among refugees.

Instead of repatriating, the Latvian refugees chose the IRO option to resettle in the USA, Canada, Australia, the UK, and elsewhere. Approximately 10,000 remained in the Western sectors of Germany and Austria, and another group of 4,500 Latvian refugees, not under IRO jurisdiction, were living in Sweden, where they had fled by boat over the Baltic Sea. By 1953, when the first Soviet repatriation campaign ended, only a few thousand Latvians had repatriated to their Soviet-occupied homeland from the Western exile.

The Latvian émigrés that remained abroad were a highly educated and industrious group that integrated well into their new host countries. Though the émigré community consisted of various factions with conflicting political views and priorities, on the whole, the Latvians were united in their anti-communism and in their mission to fight for the reinstatement of a free and independent Latvia. They cooperated with other anti-communist exile organizations with the goal to free Eastern and Central Europe from communism. In the USA, for example, anti-Soviet émigré activism was given far-reaching support through the CIA-financed National Committee for a Free Europe. In addition, émigrés were involved in plans financed by the West to destabilize the Soviet regime. It was believed by the Minister of Internal Affairs Sergei Kruglov and the KGB Chairman Ivan Serov that large-scale preparations were being made by the USA, with the support of other Western governments, to train émigrés as combatants for an upcoming war against the USSR.

All these anti-Soviet activities were regarded as serious threats to the Soviet state, to which immediate address was necessary. Though small in absolute number compared to the total population of the USSR of over 200 million, the 125,000 émigrés abroad formed a significant percentage of the 1.3 million ethnic Latvians living in Soviet Latvia. The anti-Soviet information activities engaged in by the well-organized émigré Latvians showed no signs of abating, and the Soviet center of authority feared that potentially, these activities could have an impact on domestic Soviet Latvian society. Somehow the anti-Soviet endeavors of the émigrés had to be stopped. It was therefore decided by the Soviet government to once again resurrect the idea of repatriation as a method to counter the perceived émigré threat. A total roundup of émigrés back to Soviet soil seemed to be the best way of breaking up the political emigration, halting the spread of anti-Soviet activities, and putting a stop to US plans to form an émigré army. For these reasons, under the leadership of Serov, a repatriation campaign was prepared with the goal to persuade émigrés to voluntarily repatriate to their homelands. Besides, repatriation was a tried and true method: a recent repatriation campaign among the Armenian abroad had gained exceptional success, resulting in the repatriation of tens of thousands of Armenians from the diaspora.

Following Kruglov's proposal, the decision was made by the Central Committee of the CPSU and the Council of Ministers of the USSR to establish a front organization in the Soviet sector of Berlin. This front, called the Committee For Return to the Motherland, was actually a subsection of the First Chief Directorate of the KGB. Outwardly, it promoted repatriation and functioned as a center for the reception of the expected repatriating masses. Yet at the same time, its undercover function was to act as a base for émigré espionage.

To facilitate the return of the émigrés, the Amnesty Decree of September 17, 1955 was passed, which amnestied all Soviet citizens that had collaborated with the enemy or had participated in anti-Soviet organizations after the war. With the passage of the Amnesty Decree, a change in Soviet attitudes was signaled: the Soviet government no longer saw émigrés as collaborators, socially dangerous elements, or foreign spies, but as individuals whose legal citizenship could be restored upon return. Repatriates were now assured that they would not be punished, and the amnesty would guarantee them their rights.

As a way of justifying the return of the émigrés and a means of explaining their existence, a new émigré theory was developed that still allowed for the possibility by the Soviet government to punish them if necessary. The new émigré theory postulated that the emigration was divided into two classes: 1) the ordinary rank-and-file and 2) the so-called political refugees. The majority of émigrés consisted of the ordinary rank-and-file. They had not returned during the first repatriation drive at the end of the war either due to being intimidated by the émigré leadership or due to repatriation obstruction by Western authorities. Upon their forthcoming repatriation, this class of émigrés would be forgiven by the Motherland and received with open arms.

The second class of refugees were the so-called political refugees. They were non-repentant fascists who defended bourgeois values, and were to be found among the anti-Soviet émigré leadership. Since many were alleged by the Soviets to be war criminals and could expect to be punished upon return, it was not expected that many from this class would repatriate. However, since their numbers were so small in proportion to the anticipated rank-and-file returners, their presence in the West would be of no political importance. Thus, the new theory anticipated the return of the rank-and-file, who would not be punished, whereas the émigré leadership—the so-called political refugees—would stay abroad in order to avoid punishment for their alleged criminal activity during WWII.

It was generally believed that the repatriation campaign would succeed. While it was admitted that perhaps not all émigrés would repatriate, then at least the thousands of DPs and refugees still living in the camps and settlements of West Germany and Austria were expected to return to Soviet Latvia. The West thought that Soviet promises of decent housing and meaningful employment would persuade refugees, tired of unemployment

and inadequate living conditions, to return. The East believed that Soviet reassurances of a forgiving Motherland, and the advantages and benefits provided by the political amnesty, would dispel émigré doubts about their safety and security after repatriation and persuade them to return.

Was repatriation the only goal of the campaign? What tactics were used? How were the goals implemented?

Next to the obvious goal of promoting repatriation, the other goals of the campaign—equally important to that of promoting repatriation—were to battle against anti-Soviet propaganda and to support the Patriotic Movement. The campaign's overarching covert goal, however, was to destroy the anti-Soviet emigration abroad. The first three goals were regularly mentioned in the repatriation newspaper *PaDz* and they were discussed in the repatriation broadcasts. It was also stated in the *PaDz* what the Committee should do to achieve these goals: to publish and distribute the repatriation newspaper *PaDz*, to produce and air the repatriation broadcasts, to correspond with compatriots that reside in capitalistic countries, and to meet in person with potential repatriates. These were the so-called “reeducational tasks” of the Committee. The covert goal of destroying the anti-Soviet emigration abroad, however, was never mentioned at any time or at any place in the campaign materials. It was the top goal to which all other Committee goals were subordinate, and ultimately, it was for this purpose that Committee work was undertaken.

Though the campaign outwardly supported a sympathetic cause—to help refugees return to their homes—it also stood for so much more. Quite clearly there was a threat of imminent forceful return hanging over émigrés, as could be seen by the measures taken by the Soviet government. For example, there were attempts to put the forceful return of refugees and DPs on the agenda of the UN, a proposal that, however, was not passed. The USSR also attempted to blackmail the German government, by forcing them to repatriate all “Soviet citizens” in exchange for the return of over 10,000 German POWs from the Soviet Union to West Germany. In the end, however, the return of the German POWs was secured, without forfeiting the right of political asylum in West Germany for DPs and refugees.

The campaign was also a cover for the legal and illegal hunt for émigré names and addresses, which were necessary for the dissemination of printed propaganda. Returnees were bullied into disclosing the names and addresses of compatriots, émigré publications were canvassed for usable contact information, and the Committee repeatedly requested information about Soviet citizens, including Balts, for example, from government agencies in Sweden and West Germany. The Committee also engaged in outright thefts of addresses. West German police reported on the capture of a band of thieves

called the “Red Snow”, who, working on the assignment of General N. Mikhailov, had stolen address registers from several émigré organizations in West Germany by breaking into their offices at night. The addresses gained in this manner meant that émigrés with no previous contacts with Soviet representatives in the West would suddenly start receiving Soviet propaganda, mailed directly to their homes. This was an unnerving and distressing experience, and exposed the vulnerability of the individual émigré: no matter what you did to avoid contacts, the Soviets tracked you down anyway. Evidently émigré address lists were carefully maintained and regularly updated, since many émigrés testified that a move to a new place of residence did not stop the propaganda flows—soon enough, correctly addressed Soviet propaganda began to arrive once again in the post.

The tactic, which outwardly seemed to be an acceptable activity, but was largely illegal, was the Committee's support to the Patriotic Movement. This so-called grassroots movement that promoted repatriation, was said to have originated among émigrés. However, it seems that such a movement never existed at all, since there was no need for it: émigrés were free to return to the Soviet Union as they wished. Instead, it seemed to be a thinly veiled ploy by the Committee to disguise the activities of its agents abroad. Under the cover of the Patriotic Movement, Soviet agents could travel from one émigré settlement to another, distribute propaganda materials, recruit agents, and travel back and forth between East Berlin and the West without arousing undue suspicion. In this manner the Committee could also infiltrate exile communities and initiate destructive activity among émigrés.

Concerning the Latvian émigré community, it is likely that the centers of subversive activity surrounding the bulletins *Viesturieši* in Karlsruhe and *Opozicionārs* and *Laika ritmos* in Oldenburg, West Germany, were a result of the Committee's efforts to promote a Patriotic Movement among Latvians abroad. Under the cover of the Patriotic Movement, attempts were also made to recruit repatriation agents among émigrés. The émigré Augusts Kalniņš openly worked for Soviet interests as a repatriation agent in West Germany, but others, which émigré sources estimate to have been about 25 in number, operated in secret.

In this way the measures, activities, and tactics, together with the methods of implementation, all together worked towards the achievement of all of the goals. The goal of promoting the Patriotic Movement also supported the goals of destroying the emigration, of battling against anti-Soviet propaganda, and of achieving repatriation. A strong pro-Soviet Patriotic Movement abroad could legally promote repatriation, while at the same time it battled against anti-Soviet propaganda and neutralized émigré organizations or wrecked émigré communities through subversive activities and the infiltration of agents.

In effect, all the listed goals were intertwined in such a way that success in one would lead to success in the others. If repatriation were effectuated,

then the emigration would be destroyed. If on the other hand anti-Soviet propaganda were stopped, then theoretically, the emigration would no longer pose a political threat. If the émigré communities were destroyed through penetration of the Patriotic Movement, that is, if they no longer worked for the common aim to free the Soviet Union from Communism, then this would be a major achievement in furthering the struggle against anti-Soviet propaganda. Thus a success in one goal, would lead to success in the other goals, and all the while, the secret goal of destroying the anti-Soviet emigration abroad would be attained. The enactment of any of the three overt goals—repatriation, battling anti-Soviet propaganda, and supporting the Patriotic Movement—would bring about success in the covert goal: a weakening of the anti-Soviet emigration.

What were the main strategies of the campaign?

As demonstrated in this dissertation, the overarching strategy of the repatriation campaign was one of deception: nothing was what it seemed to be. The main expressions of deceptive work were through the methods of the *legenda* and *legendirovaniye*—to “tell stories” and implement them. The use of legends or stories was a method developed by the KGB to legitimize the presence and activities of KGB agents abroad, and to cover-up the real intentions of an operation.

One of the salient examples of deception was the *legenda* of how the Committee was founded. According to the legend, the idea of a Repatriation Committee originated from a group of former Soviet POWs under the leadership of Major General Nikolai Filippovich Mikhailov. Because the POWs could not forget their compatriots abroad, they proposed to the Soviet government the establishment of a voluntary committee promoting repatriation. The Soviet government responded positively to this proposal, permitting the Committee For Return to the Motherland to be formed, and Mikhailov was unanimously elected chairman. Thereafter, according to the legend, the newly established Committee applied for and was granted permission from the government of the German Democratic Republic to open offices in Berlin. Furthermore, the legend stated that the Committee was supported by charitable contributions from former repatriates and by central and local government agencies of the GDR. By means of this legend, the acceptance of the Committee as a legitimate representative for émigré interests by the émigrés themselves and western governments alike was to be ensured. The legend was meant to give credence to the Committee as an organization acting for the benefit of the émigrés. The founding legend camouflaged the subversive activities of the Committee and legitimized its existence in East Berlin.

The Committee founding legend was apparently a success on the international arena, since the legitimacy of Committee's actions abroad were not challenged by foreign governments. For example, the Canadian government had difficulties in stopping the subversive activities of repatriation agents in Canada, since officially, the Soviet government was not involved, and the Canadian government, according to its own declaration, could not turn against a "private committee of volunteers".

Legends were also used in advocating repatriation in the *PaDz*. By publishing believable, but not necessarily true, stories of repatriates from all sorts of backgrounds and walks of life, the hearts and minds of the émigrés were to be won over. Émigrés were meant to identify themselves with these repatriate stories. They were to believe that they too could be just as successful in the homeland, and thereby be influenced to repatriate.

Different legends were created for the different types of émigrés. The narrative of the "ordinary criminal émigré" was devised for Vlasovites, Latvian legionnaires, forced laborers, evacuees. Legends were written for individuals working for the LSCs and MSOs. Legends were also fabricated for the émigré spies working for Western security agencies. According to these legends, the émigré, influenced by the lies of the emigrant leaders, did not repatriate directly after the war, but was recruited into anti-Soviet organizations, participated in the spreading of anti-Soviet propaganda, or in some other manner committed a crime against the Motherland. The émigré then became tired of his life in poverty and of living away from his Motherland, and therefore expressed the wish to repatriate. Émigré leaders and foreign governments thwarted this wish, whereby the émigré contacted the Committee and begged the Motherland to forgive him. The émigré admitted his guilt and repented his crimes, by which the Motherland forgave the émigré and received him with open arms. Back in the Motherland, he was provided with education and employment, and attained a fulfilling life in the circle of his family.

As these legends did not result in any larger number of returnees, the objects of the legends were modified in late 1956 into "ordinary non-criminal émigrés". From now on, POWs, forced laborers, or evacuees were no longer regarded as criminals, and therefore they no longer had to ask the Motherland for forgiveness. Their narratives remained essentially the same, except that they no longer had to beg to be forgiven. All mention of guilt was avoided in the revised narrative, and assurances were made that the returnee could live wherever he wished and be meaningfully employed.

The émigré leaders were assigned a special legend—that of the "vile émigré leader". According to this legend, émigré leaders were morally bereft, lechers, drunkards, felonious individuals in the pay of the American, British or other intelligence services. The legend told of how the émigré leaders joined the ranks of the enemy during the German occupation of the homeland, how they retreated together with the Germans and ended up

abroad, how they followed the instructions of their new masters—the foreign intelligence services, how they spread anti-Soviet propaganda and stopped ordinary émigrés from repatriating, how they lived off ordinary hard-working émigrés by stealing public and private money and spending it on excesses and debauchery. In later years, the vile émigré leader narrative was supplemented by charges that the émigré leadership had committed war crimes during the German occupation. It was hoped that as a result of this characterization of émigré leaders, the émigré masses would lose trust in their leadership. The intent was to disassociate the rank-and-file from their leaders and from centers of anti-Soviet activity, and motivate the masses to follow the appeals of the Committee to repatriate. The Soviet center of authority believed that now, with no implied need to admit to any guilt for having been abroad, and with no trusted émigré leaders confusing the minds of the rank-and-file, the masses, or at least the bespoken members of the cultural and social élite and other émigré groups, would finally begin to return to the Soviet Union.

What methods were used to elicit desired behaviors from Latvian émigrés?

The analysis of the *PaDz* shows that at the start of the campaign, the Soviet center of authority believed that information geared to a Slavic public would attract the attention of all readers, both Slavic and non-Slavic. The initial idea was to produce all propaganda materials first in the Russian language, and thereafter translate these materials into Latvian. It was thought that translated Russian-language propaganda would be sufficient to elicit a response from Latvian émigrés. This approach was followed for several months after the launch of the repatriation campaign in April 1955.

Translated versions of the repatriation newspaper *Par atgriešanos Dzimtenē* (in Russian: *Za vozvrashchenie na Rodinu*) were mailed to Latvian émigrés, mainly in West Germany, but also to those living elsewhere in the west. The newspaper was first prepared in Russian in East Berlin, then translated into Latvian and typeset in Riga, to be printed and distributed from East Berlin. The complicated production process, which was necessary since there were no Latvian translators or typesetting machines in East Berlin, led to irregular issue dates and ensuing print-run shortages. Quite often, Latvian émigrés would receive the Russian *Za vozvrashchenie na Rodinu* instead of the Latvian *PaDz*.

The Latvian émigrés who received the *PaDz*, either in Latvian or in Russian, if they did not immediately throw it away, regarded it with aloof curiosity. They were not interested in émigré Russian or Ukrainian affairs, nor were they interested in events pertaining to the Soviet Russia. Besides, many could not even read Russian. Moreover, Latvian émigrés were

suspicious of the Committee and distrusted Committee Chairman Mikhailov, since he was a Russian and an officer of the Soviet Army. To the émigrés, there was no doubt that the Committee was a KGB center, that it was run by a Chekist—major general Mikhailov, and that the Committee's "Russian" members represented the hated occupants of one's homeland.

Six months after the start of the campaign, only 250 émigrés, none of whom were Latvians, had repatriated to the Soviet Union. Such a weak result signaled that unless one were to admit to defeat and accept that Latvians would not return, the repatriation campaign must continue on another track and other operative solutions had to be found.

To partially solve the problem of a split production venue, a decision was made in the fall of 1955 to send journalist Ādolfs Talcis from Riga to work at the Committee in East Berlin. His duties were to coordinate the translation of the newspaper articles, thus saving production time. Whether the choice fell on Talcis because he was the best candidate for this position, or because no one else was available, is not known at present. In any case, Talcis was perfect for this job. He was a person whom émigrés knew well, and he naturally became their main contact person at the Committee. He engaged himself wholeheartedly in his work: he not only answered letters, translated articles, and did the other assignments that were expected of him, but he also began to question the contents of the *PaDz*. He pointed out to his superiors that *PaDz* in its present form did not satisfy the needs and sophisticated cultural tastes of émigré Latvians. Talcis contended that the *PaDz* was geared to a Slavic audience, and the translated articles about Russian and Ukrainian exile organizations and repatriates could hardly interest the average Latvian émigré. Then, without waiting for permission from the Soviet center of authority, he successively began to replace the Slavic content of the *PaDz* with Latvian news articles. By April 1956, the "Latvianization" process of the *PaDz* was finalized, and except for the general interest articles on Soviet foreign and domestic policy, all articles in *PaDz* treated Latvian subjects. It is said by Talcis' colleagues that his singlehanded transformation of the *PaDz* inspired the changeovers of the other repatriation newspapers in the national languages.

The posting of Talcis to East Berlin and the Latvianization of the *PaDz* elicited immediate response. Latvian émigrés made note of the changes, and during the first months of the Latvianization, all articles in *PaDz* naming Latvian subjects or topics were discussed in the conservative Latvian émigré press. Talcis' work in East Berlin was commented upon, as were the letters and propaganda publications he sent to Latvian recipients in the west. This indicated that Talcis was on the right track: to bring forth a response from Latvian émigrés, the *PaDz* must discuss issues, topics, and events pertaining to Latvia and Latvians, not about "Russians" or the Soviet Union. Talcis also realized that it was preferable to avoid articles about Slavic repatriates or

topics, since émigré Latvians did not regard themselves as a part of the Slavic world.

Together with *PaDz*, instead of Russian newspapers and magazines, Latvians began to receive copies of the newspaper *Cīņa*, the magazine *Zvaigzne*, or other Soviet Latvian publications. By sending individually addressed letters to Latvian émigrés inviting them home and requesting them to get in touch, he attempted to initiate communication and build up a contact network. In a way, Talcis replaced Major General Mikhailov as the main Committee contact person for Latvians abroad. Ādolfs Talcis became so to say, the spokesman for the Committee. After Talcis departure back to Riga, the Latvian contact person function was continued until 1959 by KGB officer Žanis Zakenfelds.

Talcis seemed to follow the motto that the more you know about your target, the more effective communication will be. He worked diligently at gathering intelligence about émigré organizations and individuals. He paid special attention to the LSCs and MSOs, where many Latvian émigrés were employed. Later he confirmed that while in Berlin, he had succeeded in determining the number of persons posted to each service unit, their occupation, and their economic situation. The personally addressed envelopes sent to the LSCs and MSOs, inviting them to return home, while extremely distressing to most of the recipients, probably succeeded in recruiting a number of informants and agents. As was shown later, there were informants working in the service units, and though it is not known at present, it is possible that the first contacts were made through the letters sent by Talcis from East Berlin.

Talcis' successes in East Berlin may have convinced the Soviet center of authority that the *PaDz* should be completely disengaged from East Berlin and the production venue moved to Riga. This was carried out in mid-1956 under the leadership of Jānis Vēvers, head of the Latvian KGB, and Pāvels Pizāns, the chief editor of Communist Party organ *Cīņa*. In September 1956, a new editorial board of the *PaDz* under editor-in-chief Milda Vasiljeva, a KGB officer, officially began operations under the cover of *Cīņa* in Riga. Circulation of the newspaper was raised from 3,500 to 5,000 per issue and the publication rate stabilized to twice weekly.

Around this time, the *PaDz* began to publish in each issue at least one page of anti-émigré articles that mocked émigré events, slurred émigré leadership, and defamed individual émigrés. The purpose of these articles was to sow seeds of dissension among émigrés, unsettle the émigré communities, to turn the masses away from their leadership, and to engage the émigré community in needless, damaging controversy. The Soviet center of authority was certain that this type of sensational journalism would succeed in its purpose.

Just as from the very start in April 1955, the *PaDz* was a paper still not accessible to ordinary Soviet Latvian citizens. The print-runs, carefully

counted and packaged, were flown to East Berlin for further distribution, and only limited number from among the nomenklatura knew about the *PaDz* or had access to it. The secrecy was necessary, since the masses were to be kept from reading the anti-émigré articles in *PaDz* which commented upon anti-Soviet activity abroad. This was ideologically dangerous information, which in line with the way news was read in the Soviet Union at the time, would be interpreted the other way around, and give impetus to challenge the principles of Soviet society.

By late 1956, the newspaper was no longer a “weak copy of refugee seduction literature”, as an émigré journalist described this publication in May 1955. A year and a half later, the *PaDz* had developed into an up-to-date publication with current news about Soviet Latvian economic and cultural developments as well as the latest in émigré gossip. Twice a week, *Par atgriešanos Dzimtenē* was mailed from East Berlin to recipients all over the world, but the mention of the real producer of the newspaper—the Latvian board of editors working out of Riga—was omitted from the newspaper’s columns.

Back in East Berlin, the Committee continued to pursue the goals of the repatriation campaign: repatriation, battling anti-Soviet propaganda, giving support to the Patriotic Movement, and annihilating the anti-Soviet émigré movement abroad. It continued to inundate émigrés with repatriation invitations, letters, brochures and newspapers. Nevertheless, it could be discerned that mass repatriation would not take place. Statements alleging that the bad living conditions and rampant unemployment would drive West German refugees back to their homelands proved to be false. Considering how ordinary citizens lived in Soviet Latvia, the living conditions in a West German DP settlement were luxurious in comparison. By the same token, West German unemployment benefits could clothe and feed a whole family, which was not always the case with Soviet worker wages. Irrespective of the material advantages or disadvantages in either country, émigré Latvians did not want to live under communism. If they were to return, then it would be to a free and independent Latvia. By mid-1956, the émigré press announced that only seven Latvians had repatriated from the West to Soviet Latvia.

As repatriation met with increasing failure, a different type of repatriation appeal was formulated. Instead of calling upon some anonymous “dear compatriot” to repatriate, specific Latvian exile groups and prominent Latvian émigrés were addressed by name. Invitations were published in *PaDz*, broadcast over the radio, and mailed from the Soviet Latvian homeland by relatives, friends, and professional colleagues. The goal of mass repatriation was modified to selective repatriation by personalizing the repatriation appeals. During the remaining years of the repatriation campaign, continual attempts were made to persuade the cultural and social élites, professionals, former legionnaires, and others, to repatriate. After intensive agitation from the side of the Committee, the prominent author

Jānis Jaunsudrabiņš accepted a trip to East Berlin—instead of Riga—all costs paid for by the Committee, in order to settle legal matters concerning the publishing of his books in Soviet Latvia. Though Jaunsudrabiņš did not repatriate, his East Berlin trip was recounted in a long *PaDz* article and accompanied with photographs, as if to illustrate that Jaunsudrabiņš had become a supporter of the Committee and what it stood for. This resulted in denunciative reactions in émigré press—which was precisely what the Soviet center of authority had hoped for. Different émigré factions began taking sides for and against Jaunsudrabiņš' trip, ensuing in quarrels, accusations, and general recriminations. Jaunsudrabiņš weathered the controversy with equanimity, explaining in the émigré press why he travelled to East Berlin—to arrange the payment of royalties from the sale of his books to a relative in Riga—but not attempting to excuse his actions. In spite of the aggressive attacks on him from certain émigré circles, Jaunsudrabiņš did not go over “to the other side” by seeking solace from the Committee. He remained independent, and retained his position as a much loved and popular author, both in exile and in Soviet Latvia.

By 1957, Soviet communication with émigrés had attained a stable form which would be retained up to the end of the *PaDz* in April 1958. The main center of communication had been secretly transferred to Riga, where the *PaDz* was produced by a Latvian editorial board. Access to background information for the regularly published anti-émigré articles was secured by the *Glavlit* in Latvia, which monitored émigré correspondence and confiscated émigré publications. The Riga center, often in cooperation with the Soviet Embassies in Stockholm, London, and elsewhere, sought new émigré contacts and potential repatriates among the social and cultural élite abroad. In East Berlin, communication and person-to-person contacts with Latvian émigrés were carried out by the Latvian representative Žanis Zakenfelds. The Committee retained its functions as a center of espionage activities, and directed its efforts at recruiting informants and agents in émigré communities, wrecking émigré society, and neutralizing the anti-Soviet political activities of the émigré leaders and émigré organizations.

What were the reactions of the émigrés? What were the outcomes of the campaign?

The reaction of the Latvian émigrés to the *PaDz* and the repatriation campaign was completely negative. Not one word of appreciation or support for repatriation was ever expressed in any of the exile newspapers or publications. The legends and the legendizing experienced a total fiasco: the returnee narratives were either laughed off or totally disbelieved, and the Committee founding legend was dismissed. From the very start of the

campaign, the Committee was declared to be a KGB-run institution and the main goal of repatriation campaign was identified to be the destruction of the anti-Soviet emigration.

The majority press, representing the conservative and liberal Latvian émigrés, wrote extensively about the campaign in over 300 articles, rejecting every aspect of it. The minority press, representing the émigré Latvian social democrats, chose to demonstrate their rejection of the campaign by ignoring it in their press: the repatriation issue was mentioned in less than ten short articles over a three-year period.

In spite of the quantities of propaganda sent to émigrés, and the frequent mention, though negative, given to it in the conservative émigré press, the outcomes of the campaign were relatively meager. The Soviet campaign succeeded in persuading a mere 100 individuals, of which only two were representatives of the émigré Latvian social and cultural élite, to repatriate.

For Latvian émigrés, the decision to remain in the West and not to return to the Soviet-occupied homeland was based upon their first hand experience of lawlessness, persecution, terror, carnage, and repeated deportations during the periods of Soviet occupation in Latvia during and after WWII. To the Latvian émigré, discussions involving Latvia and the Soviet Union were not just intellectual exercises that could be taken up or dismissed at will. Instead, it was a strongly emotional issue that ripped up old wounds and a constant reminder of a happier life that once was and would never be again. The traumas of the war were still there, even though ten years had passed since the end of hostilities.

The dread felt by many émigrés that by crossing the border to the Soviet Union, would be a one-way ticket to Siberia, was very real. The deportation in 1949 of over 13,000 families from Latvia to regions beyond the Urals, was still painfully alive in Latvian émigré consciousness. This deportation had occurred only six short years ago. Neither the September 17, 1955 Amnesty, nor Khrushchev's speech denouncing the Stalin cult, could supplant these memories. The Latvian émigré was in real danger, or so he or she thought, of ending up in Siberia upon returning home. Compared to the reality of the recent horrific deportations, the naive and simple narratives of the happy returnees in the *PaDz* seemed like a tasteless joke. Their authenticity was doubted, and the Latvian émigré press eventually ignored them completely.

At present, the actual results of the subversive activities of the Committee that were carried out under the guise of the repatriation campaign, are not known. The émigré press reported on the activities of some Soviet agents, but except for a few publicized names, the field is left open for speculation as to what extent the Latvian émigré communities were riddled with informants and spies and to what degree the supposed agents succeeded in destroying the work of émigré organizations. This is an under-researched topic that requires closer examination. What is known, however, is that the

anti-Soviet political activities of Latvian émigré organizations continued up to the downfall of the Soviet Union. A decade after the end of WWII, Latvian émigrés still regarded themselves as political refugees, whose mission it was to fight for a free and democratic Latvia. Émigré political activity was to continue as before, and the spirit of anti-communism, which permeated all émigré politics, was further strengthened by the innovative efforts of the younger exile generation that was beginning to establish its voice in the larger émigré community. The émigré conservative majority and social democratic minority continued to engage in anti-Soviet information activities and maintained as their political goal the reinstatement of independent Latvia.

The Latvian emigration was not a mindless mass to be filled with the opinions and viewpoints offered by the repatriation campaign. Instead it was a deeply anti-communist ethnic community, with strong moral convictions of its own. A return to the Soviet Union was not just a simple trip home. A return could only take place to a free and independent Latvia.

Final remarks

This study of the second Soviet repatriation campaign has demonstrated the why, how, and what of Soviet propaganda operations: why they were begun, how they were carried out, and what the outcomes were expected to be. My analysis of the Soviet repatriation campaign targeting Latvian émigrés has shown that a propaganda operation would be commenced against any group of persons that a) had opposed the Soviet regime, b) currently opposed the Soviet regime, or c) could be expected to oppose the Soviet regime. In this context, the absolute size or political importance of the group in a host country was of lesser concern. If there existed a political activity that was directed against Soviet interests, then a propaganda operation would be launched.

My examination has also established that Soviet propaganda efforts were highly complex. What seemed to be a sympathetic campaign with a simple goal and a simple message, actually held elaborate information content with a myriad of directives. For example, the rallying cry of this campaign was “repatriation”, giving the impression that the one and only goal was to aid in the repatriation of refugees to their Soviet Motherland, in itself a noble and humanitarian aim. Yet, this goal was just one of the many goals of the campaign. Additional aims were to be achieved, of which two were publicly mentioned—to battle anti-Soviet propaganda and to support the Patriotic Movement—and one that was never disclosed—to destroy the anti-Soviet emigration. To add to the complexity, all these goals were wide in scope and encompassed many types of activities. As a result, the Soviet propagandist, in this case the Committee, could justify many of its near-legal and illegal actions by pointing out that these formed a part of the politically correct

repatriation campaign. Moreover, all these goals intertwined with each other, meaning that while working towards the achievement of one goal, one was also advancing towards the attainment of the other goals. In result, the seemingly uncomplicated and easy to understand concept of “repatriation” actually included many functions and activities. Thus, a Soviet propaganda effort can be characterized by having a sympathetic and simple goal or message that acts as a cover for additional goals, aims, and purposes, all of which are connected and dependent upon each other. These additional objectives can be wide in scope and may radically diverge from the apparent main goal, yet when pursued individually, all contribute to some extent to the attainment of each other.

Another result of my study is that the many goals and their wide scope inevitably lead to perpetual positive results: any type of reaction by the target audience was utilized by the Soviet propagandist to its own benefit. As soon as some reaction or response had been elicited, whether desired or not, it was presented as a propaganda success. For example, an inquiry made to the Committee from a compatriot in some town in West Germany was presented as being an example of the Patriotic Movement in that region. A visit by émigré Latvian writer Jaunsudrabiņš to the Committee in East Berlin to deal with royalty matters, an act that for all intents and purposes had no connection to repatriation, was celebrated by the Soviet propagandist as a major achievement of the repatriation campaign. Whatever reaction or response a target would show, this would always be placed within the context of the various goals of the campaign and displayed as a positive achievement.

As has been shown, deceit and deception were foremost in all aspects of Soviet propaganda. All things undertaken were never wholly true, nor totally false, and nothing was what it seemed to be. The duplicity was especially prominent in the use of the *legenda* and *legendirovaniye*, which explained the founding of the Committee and covered for its activities. The Committee could present itself as a voluntary association, a respectable legal entity with the deserving goal of repatriating refugees to their homelands. Simultaneously, the Committee was a subsection of the KGB that engaged in émigré espionage with the goal to destroy the political emigration. The duplicity was also apparent in the published repatriation narratives, which related the lives of returnees to the Motherland as joyful happy-end stories. The tales created around repatriates were to some extent true, so they could not be disproved completely, yet they left out certain facts, thus recounting only one side of the story. While it was true that returnees were happy to have returned to their families, their housing situation was most likely to have been substandard, their jobs paid them less than in the West, and the avenues to prestigious higher education and professional advancement were closed.

Next, my investigation has made evident the validity of a basic tenet of Soviet propaganda: if certain measures were perceived to be an ideological

necessity, then neither time nor money was a primary constraint. The repatriation campaign never succeeded in attracting a large number of returnees from among the Latvian émigrés, yet it continued for over five years before it successively was transformed into the cultural relations campaign. Though the costs of the failed campaign were enormous, spending was neither stopped nor reduced to some passable level. Quite the contrary, the propaganda was intensified. An increasing amount of resources were invested in improving the *PaDz*, bettering the repatriation broadcasts, and increasing the production of other propaganda materials. As this study has shown, time and resources were always available for ideological needs.

Finally, my research has revealed that it was possible for a group to withstand major Soviet propaganda attacks, even if one was small, unprotected, and internally divided. If there existed sufficient conviction about one's beliefs and purpose in life, then Soviet propaganda could make no inroads. The Latvian émigré beliefs were arranged in a framework of personal and public narratives, which no measure of other stories could replace. The Latvian émigrés were loyal to their leadership and refused to accept tales that portrayed their leaders as vile criminals. Neither did they consider the other narratives as conceivable. They held on to their own narratives, their understanding of history, and their memories, refusing to let other, Soviet stories take their place. Consequently, actual success was not achieved by the Soviet propagandist, notwithstanding the enormous propaganda effort invested into persuading émigrés to return.

Soviet propaganda could make no inroads on Latvian émigrés, since they were unwavering in their beliefs. Shortly after the end of the war in 1945, émigrés declared their mission to be the reinstatement of a free and independent Latvia, and this mission continued to be their unifying principle in exile until the restoration of the independent Republic of Latvia in 1991. Soviet propaganda was powerless against the unified will of the émigrés to restore their state. Likewise Soviet attempts to exploit the political differences of the exile factions were a failure because all factions rejected the campaign and rejected association with the Committee. A Latvian politician in exile could not imagine colluding with the Committee in order to further personal or party goals. Correspondingly, the émigré masses had embraced anti-communism to such an extent that loyalty to the Soviet Union was out of the question. The émigrés had the strength to withstand Soviet propaganda due to their steadfast inner sense of mission, their determination not to collaborate, and their resolve not to accept allegiance to the Soviet Motherland, but to hold on to their anti-communism.

If we consider the current state of affairs and look to modern Russia, then the strategies of the second Soviet repatriation campaign and the current

operations against Ukraine and the Baltic States are strikingly similar. In both cases the primary motivation to act is based on the concern for compatriots. In 1955, operations were started for the repatriation of compatriots, today, they are undertaken for the protection of compatriots. Then as now, the actions taken are veiled in deception, and the public media space is filled with mock narratives. As current developments indicate, time and resources are not spared, if necessitated by ideological needs. There seems to be no limit to the costs that Russia is prepared to incur in order to achieve its ultimate goal and other equally important partial goals. There also seems to be no time limit set to achieve these long-term plans. Just as sixty years ago, the West is apparently having difficulties in differentiating reality from Russian propaganda. Are the Ukrainians sufficiently convinced in their inner beliefs about the necessity to protect their state? Will the Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians stand strong if the time comes when they must protect their borders? Will the Finns continue to hold their own? Only time will tell.

It has been said that history does not repeat itself, but if we know our history, then we are prepared for the future.

Abstract

Zalkalns, Lilita 2014. Back to the Motherland. Repatriation and Latvian Émigrés 1955–1958. Stockholm Studies in Baltic Languages 8.

This thesis is about a remarkable experience lived through by Latvian émigrés in the mid-1950s. They were the targets of a Soviet repatriation campaign, operated by the KGB, which not only envisioned their repatriation to the Soviet Latvian homeland, but also anticipated the destruction of their émigré society as they knew it.

The purpose of this thesis is to portray and analyze this repatriation campaign and the émigré Latvian reactions to it. By looking at the activities of the Committee For Return to the Motherland in East Berlin, the contents of the Latvian language repatriation newspaper *Par atgriešanos Dzimtenē* (For Return to the Motherland), and the reactions to the campaign in contemporary émigré press, this study shows how highly developed strategies and tactics were implemented in order to elicit certain behaviors from émigrés, and how émigrés advanced their own counter-strategies to offset the effects of the campaign. More specifically, this study examines the standardized narratives in *Par atgriešanos Dzimtenē* that were meant for émigré self-identification and emulation.

This thesis proposes that the repatriation campaign was a highly complex Soviet propaganda effort. The publicly announced goal of repatriation included several parallel goals, aims, and purposes and encompassed many types of activities. Above all, deception was used to cover the actions undertaken against émigrés and to mislead host country governments and agencies. This thesis concludes that notwithstanding the Soviet superiority in organization and resources, a small, unprotected, and internally divided community could withstand the concerted efforts of Soviet propaganda if the group's sense of mission was sufficiently strong and firm.

Keywords: Repatriation, Cold War studies, emigration, Soviet foreign policy, Latvian émigrés, Latvian émigré press, Soviet propaganda, compatriots, KGB, Soviet espionage, displaced persons, political refugees, Soviet Amnesty decree

Sammanfattning

Zalkalns, Lilita 2014. *Back to the Motherland. Repatriation and Latvian Émigrés 1955–1958*. Stockholm Studies in Baltic Languages 8.

Denna avhandling behandlar de lettiska flyktingarna från andra världskriget och deras erfarenheter av ofrivilliga kontakter med Sovjetlettland vid mitten av 1950-talet, då flyktingarna blev måltavla för en sovjetisk repatrieringskampanj. Målet för denna kampanj var repatriering, dvs att få flyktingarna att återvända till hemlandet, det av Sovjet ockuperade Lettland. Ett annat mål var att splittra flyktingarnas sammanhållning.

Avhandlingen beskriver och analyserar den sovjetiska repatrieringskampanjen och de lettiska flyktingarnas reaktioner. Studien bygger på källmaterial från kampanjverkamheten *Committee For Return to the Motherland*, som hade sin bas i Östberlin, samt från artiklar i den lettiskspråkiga tidskriften *Par atgriešanos Dzimtenē (For Return to the Motherland)* som riktade sig till de lettiska flyktingarna. Flyktingarnas reaktioner studeras genom en rad lettiska tidningar som utgavs i Väst. Min avhandling visar hur väl utvecklade strategier användes i syfte att framkalla önskade reaktioner från flyktingarna, samt vilka motåtgärder flyktingar själva utvecklade mot repatrieringskampanjen. Mer specifikt analyseras standardberättelser i *Par atgriešanos Dzimtenē* som var avsedda för flyktingarnas självidentifiering och igenkännande.

Avhandlingen pekar på att den sovjetiska repatrieringskampanjen var en mycket komplex propagandaverksamhet. Utöver det offentligt tillkännagivna kampanjmålet fanns flera parallella målsättningar och avsikter som omfattade en stor mängd skiftande aktiviteter. En strategi som användes aktivt var vilseledning, bl a för att dölja verksamheter riktade mot flyktingarna, och för att förvilliga statsledningar och myndigheter i de nationer där flyktingarna vistades. Avhandlingens slutsats är att trots den sovjetiska överlägsenheten i organisation och resurser kunde en liten oförsvarad och inom sig splittrad lettisk gemenskap motstå de samordnade ansträngningar från den sovjetiska propagandan.

Nyckelord: repatriering, Kalla kriget, emigration, sovjetisk utrikespolitik, lettiska emigranter, lettisk emigrantpress, sovjetisk propaganda, compatriots, KGB, sovjetiskt spionage, displaced persons (DPs), politiska flyktingar, sovjetisk amnestilag

Appendix

Newspaper Publishing Information (incl. *DzB* and *TA*)

Year	Issue (Total no of Issues)	Latvian Name/English Translation	Publication Venue	Production Venue
1955–1956	No 1 – No 32(218)	<i>Par atgriešanas Dzimtenē</i> For Return to the Motherland	East Berlin	East Berlin
1956–1958			East Berlin	Riga
1958–1989	No 33(219) – No 52(2196)	<i>Dzimtenes Balss</i> Voice of the Motherland	Riga	Riga
1990–1992	No 1 – No 35(129)	<i>Tēvzemes Avīze</i> Fatherland's Newspaper	Riga	Riga

Frequency of Publication

Publication frequency per month April 1955 – June 1956

Year	No of issues (Issue No)		Year	No of issues (Issue No)
1955			1956	
April	2 (1,2)		Jan	4 (1–4)
May	1 (3)		Feb	4 (5–8)
June	2 (4,5)		March	4 (9–12)
July	1 (6)		April	3 (13–15)
August	3 (7, 8, 9)		May	5 (16–20)
September	2 (10, 11)		June	5 (21–25)
Oct	2 (12, 13)		Total	25
Nov	2 (14, 15)			
Dec	1 (16)			
Total	16			

Overview Publication Frequency: April 1955–April 1958

Year	No of issues	No of pages	Comments
1955 (Apr–Dec)	16	4	1–3 times/month
1956 (Jan–Jun)	25	4	3–5 times/month
1956 (Jul–Dec)	49	4	twice weekly
1957 (Jan–Dec)	96	4	twice weekly
1958 (Jan–Apr)	32	4	twice weekly

Circulation, Editor in Chief

Name	Year	Circulation	Comments	Editor in Chief
<i>PaDz</i>	1955	3500	Launched April 1955	I. Muratov
	1956	5000		I. Muratov / Board of Editors
	1957	5000		Board of Editors
	1958	5000	Ended April 1958	Board of Editors

Example of Mass Repatriation Letter Sent to Compatriots

Committee “For Return to the Motherland”

Berlin, Behrenstrasse 65

Dear Compatriot,

Your acquaintances gave us your address. We take this opportunity to send you the Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR concerning Amnesty and our publications. The assignment of our Committee is to inform compatriots about the possibilities of returning to the Motherland and to promote repatriation. If you have any questions in this matter, please write to us—we will gladly help you in the most complicated of questions.

Please regard this letter as a starting point for the renewal of your contacts with the Motherland. We are expecting to hear from you and we shall gladly reply to any of your questions.

With friendly greetings from the Motherland!

On behalf of the Committee

Ā. Talcis

Berlin, 14 May 1956¹

¹ RTMM 660046 (Author’s translation from Latvian)

List of Committee Names

Year	Name in English	Name in Latvian	Venue
1955–1959	Committee «For Return to the Motherland»	Komiteja «Par atgriešanos Dzimtenē»	East Berlin
1960–1963	Committee for the Promotion of Repatriation and Cultural Relations with Countrymen Abroad	Komiteja repatriācijas sekmēšanai un kultūras sakariem ar tautiešiem ārzemēs	East Berlin
1961–1963	Latvian section formed in Riga: Committee for the Promotion of Repatriation and Cultural Relations with Countrymen Abroad—Latvian Section	Komiteja repatriācijas sekmēšanai un kultūras sakariem ar tautiešiem ārzemēs. Latvijas nodaļa	Riga
1963–1964	Latvian Section renamed: Committee for Cultural Relations with Countrymen Abroad—Latvian Section	Komiteja kultūras sakariem ar tautiešiem ārzemēs. Latvijas nodaļa	Riga
1964–1965	Latvian Section established as “social organization” on September 10, 1964: Latvian Cultural Relations Committee with Countrymen Abroad	Latvijas kultūras sakaru komiteja ar tautiešiem ārzemēs	Riga
1965–1988	Latvian Committee for Cultural Relations with Countrymen Abroad	Latvijas komiteja kultūras sakariem ar tautiešiem ārzemēs	Riga
1988–1992	Latvian Cultural Relations Committee “Fatherland”	Latvijas kultūras sakaru komiteja “Tēvzeme”	Riga
1991	Newspaper publisher: Newspaper “Fatherland’s Newspaper” Editorial Board	Laikraksta “Tēvzemes Avīze” redakcija	Riga
1992	State-Owned Company “Fatherland’s Newspaper”	Valsts uzņēmums “Tēvzemes Avīze”	Riga
1963–1974	Soviet Committee moves from Berlin to Moscow: Soviet Committee for Cultural Relations with Countrymen Abroad	Padomju komiteja par kultūras sakariem ar tautiešiem ārzemēs	Moscow
1963–1975	East Berlin Section formed: Soviet Committee for Cultural Relations with Countrymen Abroad. East Berlin Section	Padomju komiteja par kultūras sakariem ar tautiešiem ārzemēs. Austrumberlīnes nodaļa.	East Berlin
1975 –	Soviet Committee transformed into Society: Soviet Society for Cultural Relations with Countrymen Abroad “Rodina”	Padomju biedrība par kultūras sakariem ar tautiešiem ārzemēs (biedrība “Rodina”)	Moscow
1975–1989 (?)	Soviet Society for Cultural Relations with Countrymen Abroad “Rodina”—East Berlin Section	Padomju biedrība par kultūras sakariem ar tautiešiem ārzemēs (biedrība “Rodina”). Austrumberlīnes nodaļa.	East Berlin

Facsimile of the September 17, 1955 Amnesty Decree

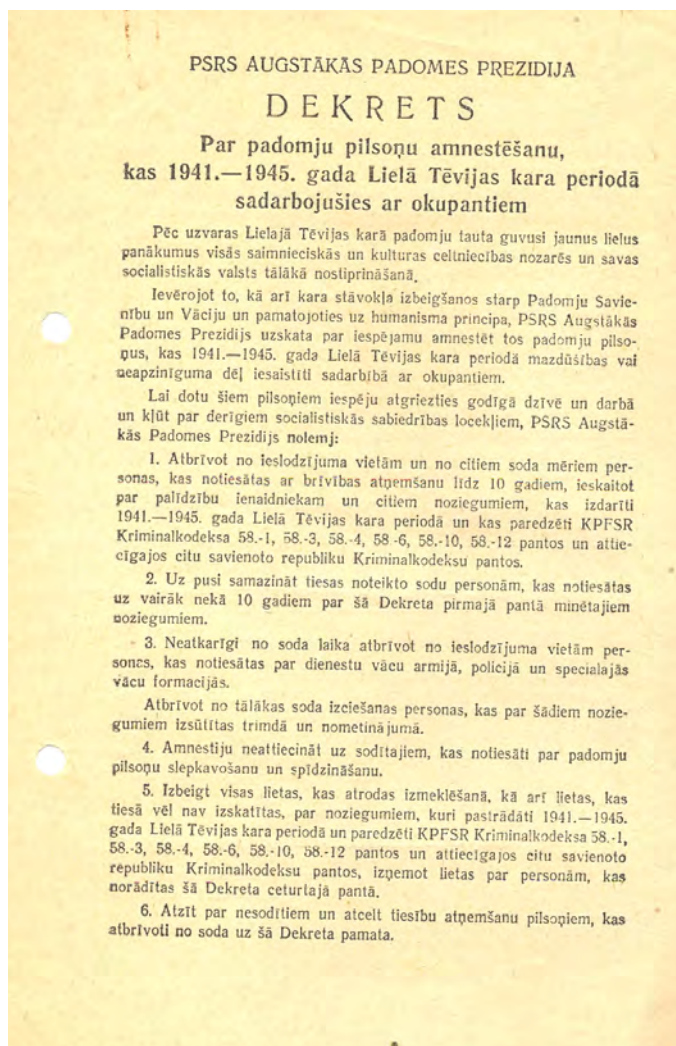


Fig. A1: Front page of the September 17, 1955 Amnesty Decree in Latvian. The flyer was distributed together with PaDz.

Atzīt par nesodītām un atcelt tiesību atņemšanu personām, kas agrāk sodītas un izcietušas sodu par noziegumiem, kuri minēti šā Dekreta pirmajā pantā.

7. Atbrīvot no atbildības padomju pilsoņus, kas atrodas ārzemēs un kas 1941.—1945. gada Lielā Tēvijas kara periodā padevušies ieaidniekam gūstā vai dienējuši vācu armijā, policijā un specialajās vācu formācijās.

Atbrīvot no atbildības arī tos padomju pilsoņus, kas pašlaik atrodas ārzemēs un kara laikā ieņēmuši vadošus amatus okupantu nodibinātajos policijas, žandarmerijas un propagandas organos, tai skaitā arī tos, kas pēckara periodā iesaistīti pretpadomju organizācijās, ja šie pilsoņi ar savu vēlāko patriotisko darbību Dzimtenes labā izpirkuši savu vainu vai paši pieteikušies un savu vainu atzinuši.

Saskaņā ar pastāvošiem likumiem uzskatīt par vainu mīkstinošu apstākli, ja padomju pilsoņi, kas atrodas ārzemēs un 1941.—1945. gada Lielā Tēvijas kara periodā pastrādājuši smagus noziegumus pret Padomju valsti, paši ierodas un atzīst savu vainu. Noteikt, ka šādos gadījumos tiesas noteiktais soda mērs nedrīkst pārsniegt piecus gadus trimdā.

8. Uzdot PSRS Ministru Padomei veikt pasākumus, lai atvieglinātu iebraukšanu PSR Savienībā padomju pilsoņiem, kas atrodas ārzemēs, kā arī viņu ģimeņu locekļiem neatkarīgi no to pavalstniecības, un palīdzētu viņiem iekārtoties darbā Padomju Savienībā.

PSRS Augstākās Padomes Prezīdija Priekšsēdētājs
K. VOROŠILOVS.

PSRS Augstākās Padomes Prezīdija Sekretārs
N. PEGOVS.

Maskavā, Krievijā, 1955. gada 17. septembrī.

DĀRGIE TAUTIEŠI ĀRZEMĒS!

Padomju presē publicētais PSRS Augstākās Padomes Prezīdija Dekrets par amnestēšanu (laikraksta „Izvestija“ 222. num. 1955. gada 18. septembrī, kā arī citos laikrakstos) — labākā atbilde uz visiem jūsu jautājumiem un šaubām.

Tas paver jums tiešu ceļu uz godīgu darbu, uz laimīgu dzīvi Dzimtenē.

ATGRIEZĪETIES MĀJĀS!

Komiteja „Par atgriešanos Dzimtenē“.

Berlīne, Berēnštrāse, 65
Berlīne — 7, pasta kastīte Nr. 6

Илв.

Fig. A2: Back page of the September 17, 1955 Amnesty Decree. The section below the line is an entreaty to “Dear Compatriots Abroad!” explaining that the Amnesty Decree, published in *Izvestia* on Sep 18, 1955 is the best answer to all questions and doubts, and that it opens a direct road to honest work and a happy life in the Motherland. The entreaty ends with the exhortation “Return home!”

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Par atgriešanos Dzimtenē — *Official Committee Statements*

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