

WHO IS IN POWER IN LATVIA?

Introduction.

Twenty years ago the Soviet Union occupied Latvia, carried out there mock-elections and then incorporated it into the Soviet Union. These acts of violence perpetrated on June 17, July 14 and 15th and August 6th, 1940, created the so-called Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic whose constitution in part.3 says as follows: "All power in Latvian S.S.R. belongs to the urban and rural working people vested in the body of the Soviets of deputies of the working people." While reading this article one could come to the conclusion that the entire power in Latvia belongs to the Latvian people themselves though under the leadership of the Communist party. The truth, however, is quite different: all power in the Soviet Union, i.e. also the Latvian S.S.R. belongs to nobody else but the Soviet Union's Communist party, in other words - to the Kremlin dictator and the so-called Latvian Communist party is only executing the orders coming from Moscow in all branches of administration. There could be no talk about an independent policy in Latvia, even this applies to the most insignificant objections against the general line set by Moscow - be it in economic, cultural or some other direction. No objections have ever been tolerated by Moscow. This was best demonstrated once more by the events that took place in Latvia in 1959/60 when there were liquidated the defenders of the local interests - Communists of Latvian origin, and all power transferred again to Kremlin and Kremlin alone, -to the obedient and loyal servants who carry out the orders without any hesitation. The "sovereign" Latvian people / as defined by the above-mentioned art.3. of the "constitution"/ have been pressed today on their knees, Latvia herself has been transformed into a Russian province and object of colonial exploitation, overcrowded with Russian officials. Our country

is being intensively russianized and her school system deliberately educates children and youths in the spirit of the Soviet Union's Communist party - "in loyalty and brotherhood with the great Russian nation - the liberator from the bourgeois nationalistic yoke".

This course dictated by Moscow to Latvia as well as other Soviet republics, is kept by the U.S.S.R. Communist party and local parties fully under the control of the former, local governments and administrative organs.

#### Latvian Communist Party.

There had been only 230 members in the Latvian Communist party in 1940 when the Soviet Union occupied Latvia. Today, twenty years later, its membership has increased and has attained 65,947 / Cina Nr.41, 1960/. Among them there are 45,322 Russians and only 20,625 Latvians. Thus only 3.15% from the total population of Latvia / 2,093,000/ or 1.6% from the Latvian population of the country /1,298,000/ belong to the Communist party. These figures are very significant and characterize themselves what percentage of population belongs to the ruling and omnipotent "higher class".

The number of the Communist party members had been increasing all these years and was 4500 persons in 1959, alone. But during the same year, there were admitted to the party 8311 members and 9695 candidates. While making a comparison between the numerical strength of the party and the increase, one must come to the conclusion that the purges did gravely affect Latvian communists - it is obvious that some 3811 persons have been expelled<sup>d</sup> from the party or that they have simply "disappeared"!

The report of the mandate commission of the XVII Party Congress gives us a rather significant survey on the membership of the Latvian Communist party and its distribution. / Cina No.41, 1960/. The congress took place in Riga, February 16th and 17th and was attended by

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494 voting delegates. Among them there were 248 Latvians, 200 Russians and 46 belonging to other nationalities. So, one half of the delegates to the Latvian Communist party convention are not Latvians at all. As a matter of fact these figures are somehow larger since among the Latvian last names were figuring such "Latvian" first names as Ivan, Grigorij, Igor, Sergei, Fiodor, Vladimir, Boris, Nikita, etc. which makes us to believe that these delegates are offsprings born to Latvians in Russia and therefore these persons have only a Latvian last name, and nothing else.

Riga alone gave 254 delegates to the said congress, other cities gave 145 and only 195 delegates came from the rural districts. Among the delegates there were : 104 workers, 79 kolkhozniks and people working in sovkhoses, 95 party workers, 51 Soviet workers, 23 scientific, cultural and art workers, 41 leading workers of industry and transport and 102 persons belonging to army and security personnel. The said figures induce us to suppose that there were but 163 of "genuine people's representatives". However, most of the deputies belong to the recently created Communist aristocracy, ~~and~~ one fifth of them belonging to military or security police personnel. Are these people the "real representatives" of the Latvian people ? Though it should be noted that one should not pay too much attention to the composition of the congress' delegates or to the decisions adopted there or to the speeches delivered on this occasion because the delegates convene only once a year and therefore such variegated composition of membership could hardly be able to do a practical work. The majority of the delegates were simple "work heroes" / there were among the delegates 78 women, or 15.7% from the total / who did not have much experience in the party's work. Thus those present have to listen to the speeches delivered by the real party bosses, they have<sup>to</sup> ~~to~~ applaud and to give their

unanimous vote in favour of the candidates proposed by the party's central committee. The only interesting thing is to watch the composition so characteristic with regard to the distribution of the delegates' nationality.

The said congress elected the Latvian Communist party's central committee for the year 1960. It is composed of 93 persons, among them 31 Russians. Also there were elected the candidate-members, altogether 40 persons / among them only 13 Russians / and the Latvian Communist party's revisory board consisting of 21 persons / among them 6 Russians. One should note the characteristic "tradition" strictly observed by Moscow when electing the central committees of the national republics' Communist parties which always results in the election of a majority consisting of "aborigenes" in order to demonstrate that those deciding in the respective republics are people belonging to these republics. Also the executive organs of the Latvian Communist party have now great numbers of people having Russian first names thus quite thoroughly eliminating the "aborigenes".

The activities of the Latvian Communist party are being managed by its secretaries and members of the central committee. A. Pelše was elected First Secretary but M. Gribkov was elected Second Secretary. A. Voss, A. Migliniks and P. Strautmanis were elected secretaries. The following are members of the central committee of the Latvian Communist party for the year 1960: V. Aaans, A. Voss, G. Gaile, M. Gribkov, I. Gusakowski, A. Migliniks, J. Peive, A. Pelše, M. Pludonis and P. Strautmanis. In addition to five secretaries the bureau of the Latvian Communist party has been "strengthened" by V. Azans, First Secretary of the Riga City Communist party's central committee; G. Gaile, Chairman of the Latvian S.S.R. National Economy Administration; I. Gusakowski, Commander in Chief of the Baltic Military District; J. Kalberziņš, Chairman of the Latvian S.S.R. Supreme Soviet; J. Peive, Chairman of the

Latvian S.S.R. Council of Ministers and M. Pludonis, Deputy Chairman of the Latvian S.S.R. Council of Ministers. Thus, from the formal point of view, all factors decisive for forming of life in the Latvian S.S.R. are in the hands of the central committee of the Latvian Communist party. But practically the entire central committee of the Latvian Communist party is dependent from Moscow.

Supreme Soviet of Latvian S.S.R.

This body was elected in March 1959, and its term is four years, according to the constitution. The number of deputies is 200. This is one of the most "Latvian" soviets since Latvia's occupation in 1940, because only 33 Russians are among these 200 deputies. The previous soviets had even up to 50 Russians among their members.

The Supreme Soviet is being elected by voting by election districts, the number of which is 200. Each district has only one candidate and thus only one election list. It is of little importance to analyze further the composition of the Supreme Soviet because it has no practical significance though it is regarded as a "people's elected parliament". The soviet has its sessions only once each year - to listen to the reports delivered by the leadership of the Communist party, and to adopt the budget and to appoint government already prepared resp. selected by Moscow. Quite naturally all decisions and votes are made i.e. cast unanimously as it is the case in countries ruled according to communist order. People sitting in the soviets do not possess the necessary qualifications to speak on behalf of those who elected them, or to decide a certain question because of lack of any experience necessary to understand political, social or economic problems. Therefore they are not the true representatives of their countrymen; they are selected by the Communist party and they must be "elected". They are nothing else but puppets displayed in the party's show case.

Practically all decrees that according to the constitution have to be passed by the Supreme Soviet, are prepared and promulgated by this soviet's presidium. All decrees, various amendments to laws and regulations promulgated by the soviet's presidium are sanctioned by the Supreme Soviet once a year during its sessions, and -quite understandably- this is being done unanimously. At the present time the following are members of the presidium of the Latvian S.S.R. Supreme Soviet: Chairman J. Kalnberziņš, 1st Deputy is K. Ozoliņš but E. Ameriķis and K. Gailis are deputy and secretary, respectively. Besides, there are nine more members in the presidium. It goes without saying that all of them are members of the Communist party, and six of them are even members of the Latvian Communist party's central committee.

#### Government.

The government as well as the "parliament" of a Communist-dominated country has no practical significance. Members of such a cabinet are nothing else but the party's employees and are doing everything ordered by the Communist party, in this case the central committee or ~~the~~ its presidium / of the Latvian S.S.R. Communist party/. Special sections of the central committee of the Latvian Communist party deal with matters pertaining to industry and transportation, agriculture, administration, finances, commerce, sciences, schools, culture, etc. These sections prepare the plans and regulations prescribing the government's activities and the latter has to follow these plans without any discussion or thinking or its own activities plan.

The composition of the government, i.e. the number of ministries is rather high as this is the case with all institutions established by the Communist bureaucracy. J. Pelve, Chairman of the Council of Ministers has under him three deputies, 13 ministries and 8 governmental committees, and thus there <sup>are</sup> 26 persons in Soviet Latvia having the rank of a minister. All members of the cabinet are members of the

Latvian Communist party, and among them 21, or 3/4, are also members of the Latvian Communist party's central committee. The most important ministries are under Russian officials: Ministry of Finances is under F. Manoilov; Ministry of Agriculture - under A. Nikonov; Ministry of Communications is under A. Alexandrov; the Ministry of Interior is headed by I. Zujan and Ministry of Construction is under B. Bezelj. In the ministries having a Latvian cabinet member as chief there are Russian Vice-ministers. There is no end to Russians!

Theoretically this so-called cabinet of ministers is supposed to be selected and appointed by the Supreme Soviet but as a matter of fact it is selected by the Latvian Communist party and confirmed in Moscow prior to the "election" by the Supreme Soviet. If somebody of the ministers would not think the way the Latvian Communist party, resp. Khrushchev does, or if he makes something contrary to the prescriptions of the Communist party, he has to go, as it was the case with E. Berklaivs, Deputy Chairman of the Latvian Council of Ministers, and some others, too.

#### Conclusion.

"Independence" and "sovereign rights" of Latvian people mentioned in ART. 13 of the Soviet Latvian constitution could be illustrated best by the analysis made in this feature with regard to the Latvian membership of the Latvian Communist party, i.e. their numbers in comparison with the number of Russian communists in the same party, as well as their "capability" to decide matters in the parliament or in the cabinet of ministers. How powerful in their independence were the central committee of the Latvian Communist party the composition of which was artificially created by the majority of its Latvian members, has been amply demonstrated by the events that took place more than one year ago when some of the Latvian communists did imagine / though after Stalin's death, of course / to give preference to the

local interests and to satisfy the needs of Latvian population. All of them were affected by the large purges and were forced to abandon their posts and even leave Latvia. The Kremlin's strong man Khrushchev was quick and energetic in his actions: many of the leading Latvian Communists, even such henchmen as Kalnberziņš and Lācis and almost 4000 party members were ousted from their posts. The new central committee of the Latvian Communist party was formed entirely according to the pattern pleasing Moscow, the most important posts now being occupied by Russian Latvians or partly by the representatives of the younger Communist generation who have never seen the independent Latvia and the blessings of the people's self-determination, as well. Thus Moscow through its henchman A. Felšs, First Secretary of the central committee of the Latvian Communist party, is able to exercise its control in Latvia on the entire front: the suspicious elements are still being purged, the celebration of the thousand-years old national holiday of St. John / Ligo Svētki/ was not permitted this year. Also other methods like renaming of streets at Jelgava, Mazsalaca, and other places, too, Russian program of the song festival, praising of Russian language and Russian nation in press and speeches, extensive import of Russian officials to Latvia during this year and similar events make us suppose that the leadership of the Latvian Communist party's central committee / while carrying out Moscow's orders/ has decided to continue this russification road driving as fast as possible. We know too well that Latvian people cannot endure this pace. We also know that there are many deficiencies what regards the economic life of the country. On June 23rd Riga Radio reported about the shortage of milk and dairy products in Riga despite the fact that the productivity of the dairy branch did increase this year and despite the fact that the month of June, has always been the best month for highest milk yield. The seven year plan is also limping. The demands asked by

from the industry are not carried out, production of spoils is still continuing and the "other brotherly republics" are not supplied with the necessary products. There is no doubt that the new Russian officials now occupying important posts in Latvia are totally incompetent and the poor Soviet Latvia is like the proverbial sheep in care of the wolf. Though the occupied country's press is geared up and practically occupies itself with propaganda and nothing else but propaganda stimulating the people to raise the productivity and fulfil the Seven Year Plan, - the things do not move. Also attacks directed against the "representatives of the national bourgeoisie abroad" do no help "because they indeed could not be blamed <sup>for the fact</sup> that the Russian overlordship is not being obeyed. The blame is to be looked for in Soviet Latvia proper. Also calling of the Latvians living abroad spies or "Western imperialists" i.e. their agents is a cheap trick. The unmasking of our nation's oppressors and exploiters will be continued. We know that twenty years of Soviet occupation have not been able to break the will of Latvian people to live as free human beings. Latvian people have known periods of foreign domination and they will survive also this period of Communist occupation. Today Latvia is nothing else but a district ruled by the Soviet Union's occupation forces and exploited mercilessly for the benefit of the occupant's economy, and subordinate to Moscow's will and orders. This is quite evident from the Art. 11 of the said constitution which says that "The economic life of the Latvian S.S.R. is determined and developed by the national economic plan of the State, the purpose of which is to..... enhance the independence of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics / U.S.S.R./, and to increase its defensive capacities".

Thus, it seems that Latvia's colonial status has been determined by her constitution, too!