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SOURCE Displaced person of Latvian birth, graduate of the University of Riga, and a judge who for many years was chief secretary of the Latvian Supreme Court, and because of his eminent position was personally acquainted with members of all the pre-World War II Latvian governments, and other persons prominent in the national scene. He left Latvia in 1944 with the retreating German armies and arrived in the US early in 1950.

Kalvins

- For the first few months after their arrival in June 1940, our Soviet conquerors left the judicial system of Latvia undisturbed, except that every few days some official of the courts obnoxious to them disappeared. But on 1 Nov 40 they announced that henceforth the Soviet legal code would be used in our country. All Latvian judges were dismissed and new ones appointed, many of whom were imported from the USSR. Also, for the first time, women were named to judicial rank, and in some numbers. The technical staff, such as clerks, were permitted to remain in their positions, but all lawyers were forbidden the courts. In their place, committees for the defense of those accused of civil or criminal offences were appointed, many of whom were not lawyers. Aside from the circuit courts of the country, there was established a court of appeal, whose decisions were final save for the possibility of a final appeal to Moscow.
- The law school of the University of Riga remained with but few actual changes in its curriculum, except that emphasis was removed from the old subjects and placed on new additional subjects, including the history of Communism and the Soviet Code. Some new faculty members were brought in from the USSR, but several Latvian collaborationists were placed in important positions. Chief among these was young Bruno Kalvins who had just graduated in law at the University but had never practiced. This young man, as far as I could ascertain, had had no connections with the Communist Party but had fought on the Republican side in the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), and had served briefly in parliament as a Social Democrat. His family had achieved some local prominence since both his father and his mother had been members of our parliament. In addition to his law faculty duties, Kalvins was made a general and Chief Political Commissar of the "Baltic Territorial Court." He held these positions three or four months and then precipitately and without explanation fled to Sweden.
- One other member of the old clique who is now in Latvia is Nikolas Vinzars, who fled with many of us to Germany in 1944 but later returned to his native country. The Soviets made him judge over a court in Jelgava and he also appeared in a smart Red captain's uniform. A man of about 40 and previously widely respected for his considerable talents, he was never thought of as a Communist. His friends believe that he succumbed to flattery and the offer of high position. He is fluent in many languages and something of an authority on civil law.

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ABSTRACT INDEX

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