

Aiga Bērziņa  
Guntis Vāveris

**SECURITY SERVICE  
IN INTERWAR LATVIA,  
1918-1940: HISTORY**

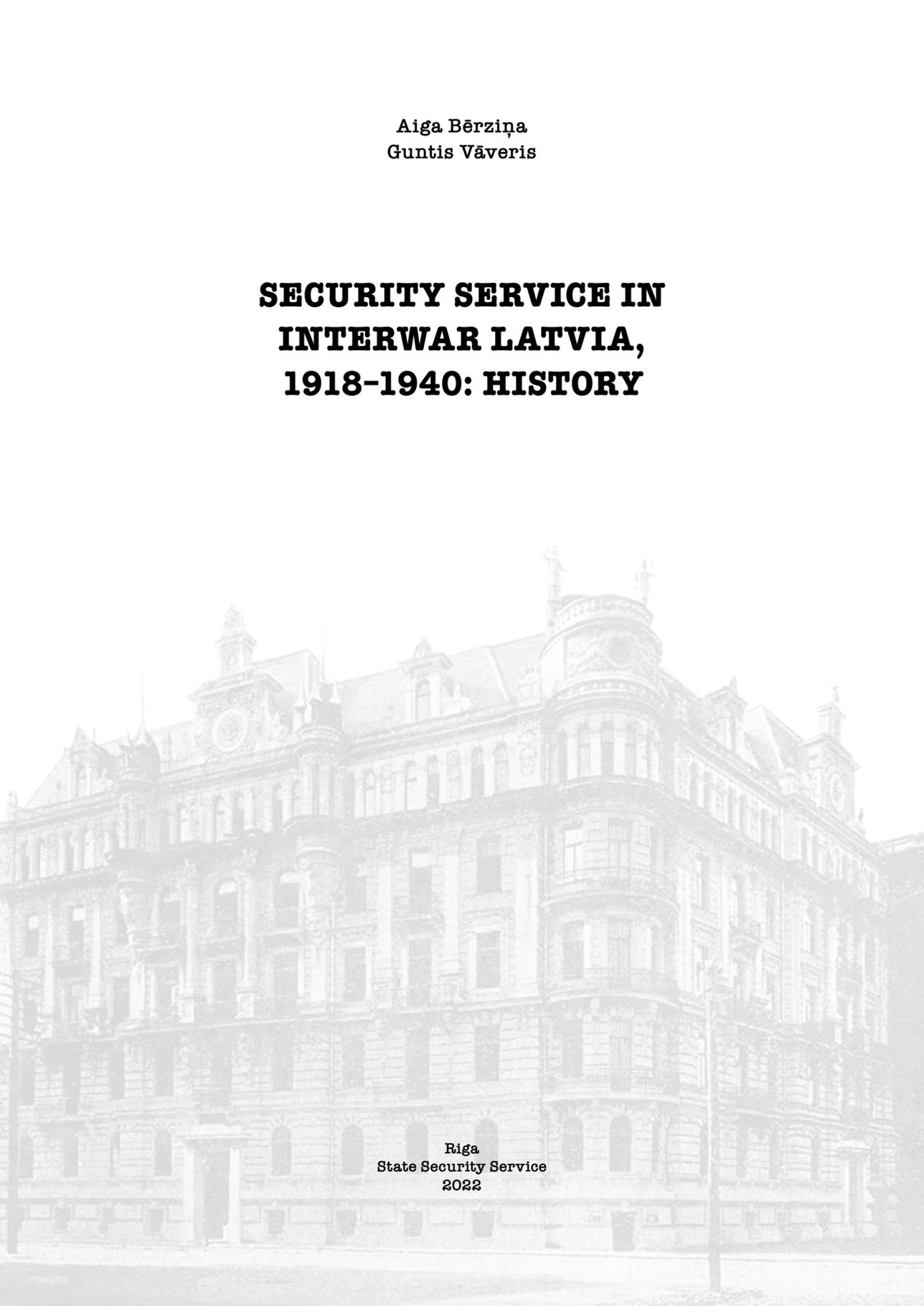


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**SECURITY SERVICE IN INTERWAR LATVIA,  
1918-1940: HISTORY**

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The book uses documents and photos from the Latvian National Historical Archive of the National Archives of Latvia, the Latvian State Archive, the Latvian State Archive of Audiovisual Documents, the Museum of the Occupation of Latvia and Valmiera Museum.

The cover photo depicts a building in Rīga, on 13 Alberta Street, where the Security Service was located between 1921 and 1940. The author of the photo is unknown.

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# Foreword

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The book presents a topic that has been little studied until now – the history of the civilian counterintelligence and internal security service of the Republic of Latvia (nowadays – the Latvian State Security Service) during the interwar period. The Service started its activities almost in line with the founding of the State of Latvia and other institutions vital for the existence of a country. The history of Latvia is unthinkable without this Service.

The book reaffirms the well-known axiom: the successful existence of any country is not and will not be possible without a strong system of intelligence and security services, an indispensable cornerstone in each country's national security and defence structure. The above-mentioned is also confirmed by this study, which reveals the Service's skills to timely identify and successfully eliminate the activities of hostile foreign intelligence and security services against Latvia – espionage, as well as political and information influence operations.

The book “Security Service in Interwar Latvia, 1918–1940: History” is the first serious and fundamental research on the history of civilian counterintelligence and security service of the Republic of Latvia. For every reader – a professional, a scholar or an enthusiast of history – it will provide valuable information on the early days of the State Security Service, threats to the national security of Latvia during the interwar period, officers of the Service and its working methods.

It is our duty to hold in memory those Service officers who lost their lives while protecting our country, who had the immense honour of keeping watch over the most holy of the legacies, and who had the honour to serve Latvia.

We are bound to know these pages of history, to learn and take pride in them, as well as to pass this knowledge to future generations.

**Normunds Mežviets**

Director General of the Latvian State Security Service

# Authors' preface

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It is only by summarising and evaluating the events of the past that we have the opportunity to get to know our own history and that of our country. The Latvian State Security Service and its officers play an important role in modern Latvia. During the War of Independence, parliamentary democracy and authoritarian regime, the activities of counterintelligence and internal security service were crucial for the existence of the country. The newly founded country had to be protected from both external and internal threats. This book should probably have been written many years ago; as surprising as it may sound, in Latvian historiography, there are no extensive studies on the origins of the counterintelligence and internal security services.

This work is not an analytical and detailed assessment of the Service's activities in the interwar period, but a first attempt to cover the very important history of the civilian counterintelligence and security service, which not only reveals information about it, but also about Latvia and its citizens. The authors hope that many examples, quotes from various sources and some funny stories will give the reader the opportunity to get a taste of the era and to make sure once again that Latvia's independence and security are not values that can be taken for granted, and that their safeguarding requires commitment and a sense of statehood.

The authors would like this work to serve as an incentive for the researchers to focus on deeper studies of the counterintelligence and internal security services in the interwar period of the Republic of Latvia. Another

topic worth studying would be the issues addressed in the work, such as the infrastructure and personnel of the Service, its methods and areas of operation, etc., as well as a number of issues that are important for the history of the Service and for the Latvian interwar history in general, but have not been mentioned or covered by this book, such as politicisation of the Service, the image of the institutions in the eyes of society, the attitude of society, portraits of the Service officers– education, work experience, discipline, etc.

The terminology used in the work needs to be considered before proceeding to historical research. In the historiography of Latvian history, when speaking about the civilian counterintelligence and security services of the Republic of Latvia in the interwar period, different terms are used: “Political Police” and “Political Department”. For historical researchers, these terms do not raise questions about the functioning of a particular institution, however they remain unclear for the general public. The understanding is made more difficult by the relatively frequent change in the name of the Service during the interwar period, which suggest the officials and the institution were in search of a more precise term to describe and cover the nature of the Service’s activity. Following the initiative of the Latvian State Security Service, the term “Security Service” is used to highlight the primary operational objective of the authority, common to both the predecessors in the interwar period and the successors nowadays. The term “Service” is also used further in the text with this meaning. In quotes and other particular cases the relevant authority’s name, as it was under the relevant legislation, has been used.

While writing the book, authors were assisted by officers of the Latvian State Security Service and the Latvian National Historical Archive, especially staff of the 4th archive storage – Rita Ņikitina, Lauma Frahadova and Inese Freimane. The authors express their sincere thanks to professor Dr. hist. Ēriks Jēkabsons, who not only gave valuable advice during the review of the book, but inspired the focus on this topic, Dr. hist. Jānis Šiliņš for the help in the book-making process, and the researcher on police history Alvils Zauers, who was altruistic in sharing his knowledge and valuable evidence from various collections of Latvian memory institutions.

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# Being on security guard. Underlying nuances of the period (1918–1940)

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On 18 November 1918 the independent Republic of Latvia was proclaimed. From the first days of the newly established state, it had to build strong foundations to ensure the internal security, governance and protection of citizens. It was entrusted to internal security bodies under the Ministry of the Interior and in particular to the State Security Department established on 11 August 1919.<sup>1</sup> Although the name of this institution changed several times between 1919 and 1940, its nature remained the same: to carry out specific functions, which today is understood as working in the interests of the national security.

The Service's history from the proclamation of the Republic of Latvia until the Soviet occupation covers a little more than 20 years, but it is a time rich in social and political developments, against the background of vast historical experience and a complex socio-political heritage. Therefore, before looking at the Service's history, the following paragraphs outline the elements of the historical background and context. This should be kept in mind by the readers of this book when thinking about the interwar Latvia and the measures taken to ensure the internal security of the country.

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<sup>1</sup> Valdības darbība (ENG: Government Action). *Latvijas Sargs*. 10 August 1919, No. 109, p. 2; Jaunākās ziņas. Ministriju darbība (ENG: Latest News. Activities of Ministries). *Baltijas Vēstnesis*. 11 August 1919, No. 63, p. 3.

In the 1890s there was an increasing social stratification and differentiation of political opinions in the territory of Latvia. These processes marked the scene of political and socio-economic developments in which many events of importance to Latvia took place at the beginning of the 20th century. The course of the political and social developments of the first two decades of the 20th century – the complex relationship between ethnic and social status, the revolution of 1905, the ensuing social and criminal tensions in 1905–1906, the First World War and the War of Independence of Latvia, the effects of the February Revolution and the October coup, created an incandescent atmosphere, in which the diversity of political ideas, different, even confrontational and diametrically opposing beliefs about the truth, influenced by individual and collective experience, existed. The quintessence of these contrasts was the War of Independence of Latvia, when the ideological and practical enemies of an autonomous Republic of Latvia, proclaimed on 18 November 1918, became clearly identifiable in the very difficult military, political and socio-economic circumstances.

The starting point of the Republic of Latvia was unenviable – the defeated German Army – demoralised and negligent towards the newly established Latvian Government, was located in the territory of Latvia; and Russia, following the Bolshevik coup of 7 November 1917, found itself in a state of civil war. The declared independence of Latvia had to be fought for and strengthened both with military actions and all possible diplomatic tools,<sup>2</sup> while also considering a number of other requirements for national existence, including internal security. The first legislative steps were taken on 5 December 1918, when the Internal Protection Unit under the Ministry of the Interior developed rules on the organisation of police work. It was responsible for ensuring “public security and order, to defend each and everyone against all violence and autocracy”;<sup>3</sup> in other words, one of the fundamental pillars of state existence was to ensure compliance with the law and public order.<sup>4</sup>

By the end of 1918, the organisation of internal security of the country had started in the majority of Latvia<sup>5</sup> – the police prefects were appointed in

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<sup>2</sup> For a general insight, see: Jēkabsons, Ē. *Neatkarības kara stāsti. 1918–1920* (ENG: *Stories of the War of Independence. 1918–1920*). Rīga: LN izdevniecība, 2017, 493 pages. See also the collection of source documents of the Latvian State Historical Archive of the National Archives of Latvia issued in 2019 on the War of Independence of Latvia.

<sup>3</sup> Temporary provisions on the organisation of internal security. Adopted at the meeting of the People's Council of Latvia on 5 December. Official Gazette of the Temporary Government. 14 December 1918, p. 2.

<sup>4</sup> 20. gadsimta Latvijas vēsture. 2. daļa. *Neatkarīgā valsts 1918–1940* (ENG: *History of Latvia in the 20th Century. Part 2. Independent State 1918–1940*). Rīga: Latvijas Vēstures institūts, 2003, 499 pages.

<sup>5</sup> In the new regulations, the Provisional Government set out the basic principles of the organisation of the police authorities – to form police prefectures (led by a prefect approved by the Minister of the Interior) in the largest cities (Rīga, Liepāja, Daugavpils, Jelgava, Rēzekne, Ventspils and Valka), while the regional chief is in charge of district police work, but the police work in parishes is supervised by a senior police officer. Town and parish municipal authorities had to ensure the issue of police working premises First Steps. Overall, borders of the regions remained unchanged since the tsarist period and the territory of Latvia was divided into 17 administrative units (Šcerbinskis, V. *Pirmie soļi. Latvijas valsts un tās pārvaldes izveidošana* (ENG: *The First Steps. Establishment of the State of Latvia and its Administration*). Book: *1918.–1920. gads Latvijas Republikas Pagaidu valdības sēžu protokols, notikumos, atmiņās* (ENG: *1918–1920 in the Minutes of Meetings, Events, Memories of the Provisional Government of the Republic of Latvia*). Rīga: Latvijas Vēstnesis, 2013, p. 37.).

Riga, Ventspils and also Heads in regions were appointed in most of Vidzeme, Kurzeme and Zemgale.<sup>6</sup> However, from the early days, the organisation of police forces faced two very important problems which hindered or even temporarily suspended their activities. Firstly, the authorities and troops of the former German occupation power refused to transfer various administrative functions to the Latvian authorities until the end of June 1919.<sup>7</sup> Secondly, on 22 November, the Red Army crossed the borders of modern-times Latvia, and representatives of the Soviet Latvia took over control in the occupied territories.<sup>8</sup> The populist ideas of the Bolsheviks were popular in Latvian society (as in many places in Europe) in the aftermath of the economic and social shock caused by the First World War. Local underground and communist groups sent from the Soviet Russia became more active, as the Soviet troops marched in and moved quickly further into the territory of Latvia. They played the leading role in the organisation of the Soviet power between the end of November 1918 and the first half of January 1919.<sup>9</sup> Although the Soviet Latvian government, led by Pēteris Stučka, quickly revealed its destructive nature, the operation of the communist underground in the areas freed from communists endangered public security and stability. The Latvian police authorities and guards targeted the communist underground and their supporters as much as possible.<sup>10</sup> However, it should be noted at once that the fight against the underground and its supporters, especially in Kurzeme, was difficult due to the lack of supporting authorities.<sup>11</sup>

Although with the signing of the Peace Treaty between Latvia and the Soviet Russia on 11 August 1920, the War of Independence of Latvia was officially over, many people opposing the idea of an independent Republic of Latvia were still in Latvia and prepared for further activities. From February 1920, the Latvian

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<sup>6</sup> Ošs, G. Liepājas policijas prefektūras izveide un darbība (ENG: Establishment and Operation of the Liepāja Police Prefecture). *Latvijas Arhīvi*. 2012, No. 3/4, p. 122.

<sup>7</sup> In the context of the police, the difficult establishment conditions and further course of operation have been studied in more detail about Liepāja. See: Ošs, G. Liepājas policijas prefektūras izveide un darbība (ENG: Establishment and Operation of the Liepāja Police Prefecture). *Latvijas Arhīvi*. 2012, No. 3/4, p. 122.

<sup>8</sup> More information on the activities of Soviet Latvia is available at: Šiliņš, J. Padomju Latvija 1918–1919 (ENG: Soviet Latvia 1918–1919). Rīga: Vēstures izpētes un popularizēšanas biedrība, 2013.

<sup>9</sup> Šiliņš, J. Padomju Latvija 1918–1919 (ENG: Soviet Latvia 1918–1919). Rīga: Vēstures izpētes un popularizēšanas biedrība, 2013, p. 88.

<sup>10</sup> Already on 16 December 1918, Miķelis Valters, Minister of the Interior of the Provisional Government of Latvia, issued “Critical remarks”, calling on local authorities to establish local guard services that would be under the authority of the Provisional Government. From the second half of March 1919, guards carried out corvée, helping local police authorities to fight underground communists. For a more comprehensive insight of the role and functioning of guards in the context of internal security, see: Butulis, I. Latvijas Aizsargu organizācijas tiesiskie likloči (1919–1940) (ENG: Legal Zigzags of the Latvian Guards Organisation (1919–1940)). *Latvijas Vēsture*. 1994 (4), pp. 23–30; Ščerbinskis, V. Aizsargu klaušu dienests (ENG: Corvée of Guards). *Latvijas Vēsture*. 1997 (4), pp. 44–52; Butulis, I. Sveiki, Aizsargi (ENG: Hello, Guards!). Rīga: Jumava, 2011, pp. 20–22.

<sup>11</sup> For more information on the activities of red guerrillas and their popularity in society, see: Āva, U. “Sarkanie” partizāni Kurzemē Neatkarības kara laikā (1919–1920) (ENG: “Red” Partisans in Kurzeme during the War of Independence (1919–1920)). *Latvijas Universitātes Žurnāls VĒSTURE*. 2018, No. 6, pp. 48–61.

Communist Party was represented at the Communist International, or Comintern,<sup>12</sup> and formed a network of communist organisations in Latvia.<sup>13</sup> Activists tried to spread communist literature (brochures, leaflets, etc.),<sup>14</sup> bring together all those unsatisfied with the state apparatus and express anti-governmental opinions – by agitating, hanging red flags, writing communist slogans on the walls of buildings, etc. Besides, the underground was supported by the Soviet Russia ignoring the Peace Treaty.<sup>15</sup>

The intention to destroy an autonomous, democratic Latvia could only be challenged by the internal security structures under the Ministry of the Interior, and primarily by the State Security Department established on 11 August 1919. However, there was no division of functions or competences until November 1919<sup>16</sup>, as the country was still in a state of war, as announced by the Provisional Government on 12 February 1919.<sup>17</sup> The two executive institutions of the Republic of Latvia – the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of the Interior – overlapped in their scope of functions, therefore already a few months later they were reorganised to form the Political Department of the Riga Criminal Police. In the autumn of 1920, the Ministry of the Interior established the need for a separate institution to investigate political crimes, and therefore it founded the Political Security Department (or Political Protection in other sources),<sup>18</sup> which took over the functions of the Political Department of the Riga Criminal Police.

During the interwar period in Latvia, multiple institutions performing police functions were subordinate to the Ministry of the Interior (order police, criminal police, railway police, border police). Although their basic functions were different,

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<sup>12</sup> International Organisation of Communist and Workers' Parties? (1919–1943). Their fundamental tasks were the inspiring of a global communist revolution, the subjugation of the ideologies of moderate Marxist parties to the concept of Leninism.

<sup>13</sup> Andersons, E. Latvijas Vēsture. 1914–1920 (ENG: History of Latvia. 1914–1920). Stokholma: Daugava, 1967, p. 550, 551.

<sup>14</sup> The distribution of agitation materials was topical throughout the entire interwar period. Employees of the Political Administration's Jelgava regional unit indicated that in 1931 "officials seize loads of packages and boxes containing various legal literature of communists. Sometimes the district even lacks space to store it". *Vēsturiskais apskats par Iekšlietu ministrijas Politiskās pārvaldes Jelgavas rajona izveidošanos un darbību* (ENG: Historical Overview of the Establishment and Operation of the Political Department of Jelgava Regional Unit of the Ministry of the Interior). 1938. Latvijas Nacionālā arhīva bibliotēka. P. 34.

<sup>15</sup> See more: Stranga, A. Latvijas–Padomju Krievijas miera līgums 1920. gada 11. augustā. Latvijas–Padomju Krievijas attiecības 1919.–1925. gadā (ENG: Latvian-Soviet Russia Peace Treaty of 11 August 1920. Relations of Latvia and Soviet Russia in 1919–1925). Rīga: Fonds Latvijas Vēsture, 2000, 258 pages.

<sup>16</sup> Latvijas iekšējās drošības nostiprināšanas vēsture, 1918–1925 (ENG: History of Strengthening the Internal Security of Latvia 1918–1925). Rīga, 1925. Otrais iespiedums: ASV, 1979, p. 57.

<sup>17</sup> In Liepāja the state of the war came into force on 14 February 1919; in the rest of Kurzeme – on 16 February, but elsewhere in the territory of Latvia – from the day when the decision was published in the particular location.

<sup>18</sup> The term "protection" has a Russian origin and is related to the Protection Division of the Police Department of the Russian Empire (1866–1917, *Охранное отделение Департамента полиции*) or ochranka (*охранка*) in colloquial speech. A report prepared by the Political Security Department's Investigation Unit on 13 February 1923 states: "“Political Security Department” should be used instead of “Political Protection”. The authority is to be designated by a noun, which in this case is the word “security”. The word “protection” is an abstract concept.”; LVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 44, p. 164.

in the context of valid laws and their amendments,<sup>19</sup> they cannot be completely separated from each other. The police was the most important body of the Ministry of the Interior in the interwar period, and was in charge of internal security of the country.<sup>20</sup> Also the functions of the Security Service were among the responsibilities of the police authorities under the Ministry. In accordance with the Latvian Encyclopaedia, functions of the Security Service were performed by “a special police body aiming at the police protection of a state. It is fighting against the threat to the existing political system, in contrast to other police authorities providing protection to individuals or to certain groups of individuals”.<sup>21</sup> In fact, the Security Service is engaged in internal intelligence or counterintelligence.<sup>22</sup> The primary objective is to collect, systematise and analyse information, which should be passed on to policy makers to help the latter make informed and well-rounded decisions.<sup>23</sup>

Under democratic conditions, the primary task of the state’s internal security institutions was to safeguard the expressions of freedom allowed by the country’s democratic system, which were not in conflict with the Constitution adopted on 15 February 1922. At the beginning of the 1920s, Latvian society finally had the

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<sup>19</sup> Meaning, the Law on Central Criminal Police of 1924, with the creation of the Criminal and Political Department under the Ministry of the Interior; amendments adopted in 1929, which approved the division of institutions into – the Order Police, the Criminal Police, and the Political Department; the Law of 1939, which provided for a separate Order Police Department apart from the Administrative Department, and the merging of the Criminal Police Administration with the Political Department, thus creating a Security Police Department. For the activities of the police authorities subordinate to the Ministry of the Interior, see: Jēkabsons, Ē. Iekšlietu ministrija (ENG: Ministry of the Interior). Book: *15. maija Latvija* (ENG: Latvia of 15th May). Rīga: Latvijas Mediji, 2017, p. 236, 238.

<sup>20</sup> The functioning of police and local authorities in the country were significantly affected by the limited resources, but particularly by the catastrophic lack of adequate staff. Formally, the Latvian Police (Order Police and Criminal Police) were re-established, but its material and legal base was inherited from previous regimes. The material basis – the premises and their installation – was taken over from the police established by the German occupying power, but at the same time the police staff were completely created anew (Ščerbinskis, V. Aizsargu klaušu dienests (ENG: Corvée of Guards). *Latvijas Vēsture*. 1997, No. 4, p. 45; Ščerbinskis, V. Pirmie soļi. Latvijas valsts un tās pārvaldes izveidošana (ENG: The First Steps. Establishment of the State of Latvia and its Administration). Book: *1918–1920. gads Latvijas Republikas Pagaidu valdības sēžu protokolos, notikumos, atmiņās* (ENG: 1918–1920 in the Minutes, of Meetings, Events, Memories of the Provisional Government of the Republic of Latvia). Rīga: Latvijas Vēstnesis, 2013, p. 39.). But already in the early 1920s the certification of police officers was ongoing with the aim of improving the quality of the police personnel’s work, compliance with the post held and promoting decent work performance (*20. gadsimta Latvijas vēsture. 2. daļa. Neatkarīgā valsts 1918–1940* (ENG: History of Latvia in the 20th Century. Part 2. Independent State 1918–1940). Rīga: Latvijas Vēstures institūts, 2003, p. 504.). However, the aspired quality was hampered by decisions taken by the political elite and the executive authorities, most directly by those relating to the reduction in the budget allocated to police authorities, often driven by political rather than practical intentions. In general, despite various operational constraints, especially in the 1920s and the early 1930s, insufficient funding, a lack of equipment, armaments and personnel (Jēkabsons, Ē. Iekšlietu ministrija (ENG: Ministry of the Interior). Book: *15. maija Latvija* (ENG: Latvia of 15 May). Rīga: Latvijas Mediji, 2017, p. 235.), police authorities were able to fulfil their tasks.

<sup>21</sup> *Latviešu konversācijas vārdnīca* (ENG: Latvian Conversion Dictionary). Compiled by Švābe, A., Būmanis, A., Dišlers, K. Volume XVII. Rīga: A. Gulbja apgādībā, 1938, column 33001.

<sup>22</sup> The Law on National Security Authorities defines that “counter-intelligence is the action by state authorities specifically empowered to protect national constitutional system, national independence, economic, scientific, technical and military capabilities, national secrecy and vital national interests and to protect against espionage, diversions, harmful actions, terrorist acts and other threats, and to take specific measures to prevent, eliminate such threats or mitigate the consequences of such threats”.

<sup>23</sup> *The Oxford handbook of National Security Intelligence*. Oxford University press, 2010, p. 886.

opportunity to freely practice democratic participation in public and political events, which it had been striving for since the 1850s.<sup>24</sup> The support of Latvian society for democracy is not only reflected in the active involvement of citizens in democratic institutions.<sup>25</sup> It is also confirmed by the high level of public activity in the elections to the Saeima (around 80%) and the large number of public organisations established – associations and societies (11 071).<sup>26</sup> The personnel of the Service protected the democratic system and ideals, but at the same time learnt for themselves what democracy means under the constitution of the country. This understanding could have been and was different in the society as a whole, taking into account the historical experience of the society, the level of education, the values, demands and opportunities of everyday life and, finally, the political vision. The freedom to have political opinions and run organisations (with the exception of communist organisations that were banned) formed the fundamental basis of democracy in the country. In practice, this also meant the necessitous skills to accept and recognise the coexistence of different ideas in the society. Moreover, not only accept and recognise, but constantly engage in self-reflection,<sup>27</sup> by following whether political and social development in the country are in the line with the democratic process.

The focus and attention of the Service was wide-ranging: the country's democratic system was threatened not only by the Communists, but also by other anti-democratic forces (right-wing extremists), which were particularly active at a time when Latvia was hit by the global economic crisis in the early 1930s. Under the influence of economic difficulties, the part of the society that supported far-right and extreme opinions, looked for the guilty parties within the liberal democratic political system and the precondition was often the political opinion, ethnicity and stereotypes of individuals or groups. For example, right-wing extremists considered that the existing political system for national minorities in Latvia offered too many cultural, economic and political opportunities.<sup>28</sup> This was also accompanied by the national political elites fighting for power and

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<sup>24</sup> Ijabs, I. Starp plurālismu un efektīvu pārvaldi – Latvijas demokrātija kopš neatkarības atjaunošanas (ENG: Between Pluralism and Effective Governance – Latvian Democracy since the Restoration of Independence). Book: *Latvija. 1918–2018. Valstiskuma gadsimts* (ENG: Latvia 1918–2018. The Century of Statehood). Rīga: Mansards, 2018, p. 197.

<sup>25</sup> Ijabs, I. Starp plurālismu un efektīvu pārvaldi – Latvijas demokrātija kopš neatkarības atjaunošanas (ENG: Between Pluralism and Effective Governance – Latvian Democracy since the Restoration of Independence). Book: *Latvija. 1918–2018. Valstiskuma gadsimts* (ENG: Latvia 1918–2018. The Century of Statehood). Rīga: Mansards, 2018, p. 198.

<sup>26</sup> Oberlenders, E. Jaunās valsts stiprās un vājās puses (ENG: The Strengths and Weaknesses of the New State). Book: *Latvija. 1918–2018. Valstiskuma gadsimts* (ENG: Latvia 1918–2018. The Century of Statehood). Rīga: Mansards, 2018, p. 49.

<sup>27</sup> Ijabs, I. *Politikas teorija: Pirmie soļi* (ENG: Policy Theory: First Steps). Rīga: Lasītava, 2017, p. 206.

<sup>28</sup> Oberlenders, E. Jaunās valsts stiprās un vājās puses (ENG: The Strengths and Weaknesses of the New State). Book: *Latvija. 1918–2018. Valstiskuma gadsimts* (ENG: Latvia 1918–2018. The Century of Statehood). Rīga: Mansards, 2018, p. 51.

influence, where the clash of opinions was determined not only by different political ideals, but also often by personal prejudices and disagreements. Against this background, the Service carried out its tasks while being a direct witness to painful socio-political processes, which were also common to the development of a democratic country.

This development was interrupted by the coup of 15 May 1934 under the leadership of Prime Minister Kārlis Ulmanis. The next period, until the occupation of Latvia on 17 June 1940 – the state administration under the authority of an authoritarian dictator, without parliament, when the public was denied of its constitutional right to legally participate in the shaping of the country's political life, can be described as the one, which stops natural development of a democratic society. The ideology of nationalism created a myth of democracy as a form of government being inappropriate to achieve historical justice in Latvia. In fact, at the end of the 1930s, Latvia faced a gradual centralisation of its internal security institutions, which, in the opinion of the authoritarian regime, had to effectively eliminate the possibility of harmful, anti-governmental events.

This also had a major impact on the internal security structure, first of all on the principles of operation: these structures had to transform from the guard of the democratic system to an entity extensively monitoring the public, where such entity would be obedient to authoritarianism. Internal security institutions – the counterintelligence and internal security service, police structures, the organisation of guards – became an effective tool, underlining their importance for maintaining order and a sense of security in the country. At the same time, it included stronger monitoring of the public and its current mood, allegedly for the good of the society itself. Vilis Gulbis, Minister of the Interior, who was loyal to K. Ulmanis, marking the 20-year anniversary of the police (including all the subordinate security institutions) and expressing its loyalty to the policy pursued by the regime, wrote: “The entire Police family is grateful to our National Leader, to our President and Prime Minister, Kārlis Ulmanis, for the security and order established on 15 May, and for the care shown by our President for police officers; it will be forever submissive and ready to follow the direction of the Leader, in order to safeguard this order and fulfil its obligations”.<sup>29</sup> The occupation of Latvia on 17 June 1940 interrupted internal security measures taken by an independent state, which had been carried out continuously for two decades.

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<sup>29</sup> Gulbis, V. *Pagājuši 20 gadi...* (ENG: 20 Years Later...). *Police*. 1 November 1938, p. 6.

# References and literature

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## SOURCES

18 The study uses mostly unpublished sources, mainly archive documents, many of which have so far not been introduced into scientific circulation. These sources not only reflect the activity of the Service, but also to a wider extent, allow to understand Latvia in the interwar period. The following paragraphs briefly describe the main sources and literature used, identifying what has been done so far in historiography and outlining the prospects for future research.

### Unpublished sources

The book relies on a number of unpublished sources, which are mainly located in Fund 3235 ("Political Police Department"; orig.: "Politiskās policijas pārvalde") of the Latvian National Historical Archive (orig.: Latvijas Nacionālā arhīva Latvijas Valsts vēstures arhīvs; hereinafter – LVVA). In the historiography of Latvian history, the historical research of the 1920s–1930s cannot be imagined without the documents produced by the Service in its activities. These documents served as a source of essential information (indeed, sometimes highly subjective) to study various topics on the history of Latvia, often as a source of striking, nuanced quotations. However, the history of the one entity standing behind the documents – the Service – and its more in-depth review, analysis of its activities and the context of the documents remained in the background.

The range of documents in Fund 3235 is very wide, varied in content and numerous – 24,794 files<sup>30</sup> for the period 1917–1940. However, the review of the history of the Service is hampered by the chaotic nature of the documents in the archive fund. It should be noted that during the interwar period, deficiencies were found in the documentation during the operation of the Security Service, particularly in the beginning of the 1920s. In February 1923, the director of the Political Security Department wrote to all the departments that “various defects have been established as a result of audit”.<sup>31</sup>

Most of these related to the record keeping: the files were incomplete, the documents lacked the necessary information, some particular types of documents required for the institution’s operation could not be found at all. It was also pointed out that the “text to be entered is at some places squeezed into small handwriting”, “remarks are missing” or “superfluous remarks are made”, etc.<sup>32</sup> The Political Security Department sometimes also received objections from the court and prison authorities for incomplete documentation. For example, on 8 November 1922, the prosecutor of Latgale Regional Court claimed that he received cases concerning the clarification of identity of refugees from the Soviet Russia, and only the records of questioning were included, but files on the opening of a case, records of the questioning of other persons, details of their identity and place of residence were missing, which had already been collected by the Security Service, etc.<sup>33</sup>

Service documents in LVA Fund 3235 are listed in six descriptions, the most extensive of which is the 1st description divided into 24 parts. The descriptions of this fund have been drawn up during the Soviet occupation and the principles for their creation have been determined by the operational tasks of the archive at that time, the workload of the employees and the level of knowledge about the specifics of the institution’s work and record-keeping. This makes it difficult for researchers today to work with these descriptions, as it requires not only patience, but also good fortune. Such a non-friendly format for researchers has developed for a variety of reasons. On the one hand, it was influenced by the change of power in 1940, when Latvia was occupied by the USSR. Suddenly, the vast numbers of accumulated documents threatened to fall into the hands of the occupying power. It is known that a small part of the Service documents have been lost (505 cases), either by transferring them to the USSR in June 1941 – to Chkalov (nowadays, Orenburg in Russia),<sup>34</sup> or earlier – on 17–18 June 1940, when before the occupying army reached Riga, some of the documents were destroyed. The fact that this may have been a deliberate action by the senior leadership of the Service is to

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<sup>30</sup> LVA, Latvijas Iekšlietu ministrijas Drošības policijas departamenta Politiskās policijas pārvalde (ENG: Political Police Department of the Security Police Department of the Ministry of the Interior of Latvia). Fund file. Fund No. 3235. Volume I.

<sup>31</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 45, p. op. 42.

<sup>32</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 45, p. op. 42.

<sup>33</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 45, p. 25.

<sup>34</sup> LVA, fund 2580, description 1, file 272, p. 1.

some extent demonstrated by the lack of lists, registers and personal files concerning the agents and informants.<sup>35</sup> The quality of the descriptions was also influenced by the fact that, in the second half of 1940, Security Service's documents were archived without the relevant supporting documents – the protocol of acceptance, protocol of inspection, and other documents, which apparently affected the further organisation of the files.<sup>36</sup>

As mentioned above, the range of documents in LVVA Fund 3235 is very wide. Its composition, record keeping and characterisation would be worthy of separate study. The composition of LVVA Fund 3235 consists of a variety of correspondence (within the institution, with other institutions, officials and natural persons), different types of logbooks and order books, reports of officers to senior officers, annual reports of certain aspects of the activity, cases of organisations and individuals, clippings from newspapers, photo albums, photographs, various technical drawings, etc. The card index of the Security Service should be particularly highlighted, as it summarises the most important information on a wide range of people, from politically influential individuals to ordinary workers to farmers to pupils, etc. The card index illustrates the work of the Security Service – public monitoring (even control), especially in authoritarian conditions. It should be noted that the range of documents also illustrates shortcomings in the activity of the Service. For example, photo albums in the fund are practically not annotated and their context is unclear.

Particularly important for this book are the reports prepared in 1938 on the history of the Political Administration's Liepāja District (1918–1938),<sup>37</sup> which are stored in LVVA, and on the history of Jelgava District (1918–1938)<sup>38</sup> which, for unknown reasons, have not been stored at LVVA, but are located in the Latvian State Archive library (orig.: Latvijas Nacionālā arhīva bibliotēka). Both documents were created at the order of the Director of the Administrative Department of the Ministry of the Interior of 1938: "On the compilation of history of police authorities and the establishment of corners of history",<sup>39</sup> the aim of which was to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Republic of Latvia and to honour the personnel of the Ministry of the Interior and its subordinate institutions who had been active during this period. Although the documents were created during the authoritarian regime and are full of the regime's official rhetoric, they followed the historical development of the districts, with a particular focus on activities of political criminals (mainly communists and nationalists) and the personnel turnover at the District.

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<sup>35</sup> LVVA, Latvijas Iekšlietu ministrijas Drošības policijas departamenta Politiskās policijas pārvalde (ENG: Political Police Department of the Security Police Department of the Ministry of the Interior of Latvia). Fund file. Fund No. 3235. Volume III, p. 1a, 4.

<sup>36</sup> LVVA, Latvijas Iekšlietu ministrijas Drošības policijas departamenta Politiskās policijas pārvalde (ENG: Political Police Department of the Security Police Department of the Ministry of the Interior of Latvia). Fund file. Fund No. 3235. Volume III, p. 1a, 1.

<sup>37</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/8, file 553.

<sup>38</sup> *Vēsturiskais apskats par Iekšlietu ministrijas Politiskās pārvaldes Jelgavas rajona izveidošanos un darbību* (ENG: Historical Overview of the Establishment and Operation of Jelgava regional unit Political Administration of the Ministry of the Interior). 1938. Latvijas Nacionālā arhīva bibliotēka. P. 78.

<sup>39</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 318, p. 20.

LVA keeps a series of documents covering the studied period of time in other funds that contain complementary, explanatory or even unique information on the functioning of the Security Service and its personnel. These are, first of all, funds of different military and civilian institutions,<sup>40</sup> but it is certain that information on this topic can also be found in funds and collections of and by public authorities, associations, natural persons. It would also be important to use other public authorities' documents in future research, which provide valuable information on the activities of the Service that are not found in Fund 3235 documents. For example, the documents of the Administrative Department of the Ministry of the Interior (Fund 3234), under the authority of which the Service was operating, as well as the documents of the Prosecutor of the Judicial Chamber (Fund 7432), etc. It is clear that documents on the operation of the Service are also stored in other Latvian and foreign memory institutions, first of all in files of persons detained by the Political Department in the Latvian History Archive (orig.: Latvijas Valsts arhīvs; hereinafter – LVA).

The documents used for this book reveal essential details of the activities and specifics of the Service. The documents stored in the Fund and partly used for this book contain extensive information on both the functioning of the Service and the society of that period of time as a whole. It is therefore understandable that until now Fund 3235 has served and will continue to serve as a significant source of information on the socio-political and economic situation in Latvia in the 1920s–1930s. Although the Service documents contain very interesting and valuable information for researchers, they must always be used critically and with caution, keeping in mind that the Service was a specific institution and the subjective factors for the processing and interpreting of the information it collected shall be considered.

### Published sources

Until now, a collection of source documents dedicated to the operation of the Service has not yet been created. Taking into account the range and variety of existing sources of LVA that relate to the Service activity, preparing such a collection in the future would be a valuable contribution to the study of Latvian history. Meanwhile, most of the Service documents were published in the collection of sources prepared by the historians Ēriks Jēkabsons and Valters Ščerbinskis in 2012, dedicated to the coup of 15 May 1934.<sup>41</sup> This fundamental publication of sources covers documents from various collections, with selected valuable information on the involvement, role and nature of the activities of the Service during the coup and in the years leading to the Soviet occupation.

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<sup>40</sup> For example, fund 5601 "Armijas štāba personas lietu kolekcija" (ENG: Collection of Personal Files of Army Staff) and Fund 3503 "Liepājas pilsētas komandatūra" (ENG: Liepāja City Commandant's Office), etc.

<sup>41</sup> Ščerbinskis V., Jēkabsons, Ē. (comp.). *1934. gada 15. maija notikumi avotos un pētījumos* (ENG: Coup. Events of 15 May 1934 in Sources and Studies). Rīga: Latvijas Nacionālais arhīvs, Latvijas Arhīvistu biedrība, 2012, 576 pages.

## Printed material

The book is based on individual works of a different nature prepared and published during the interwar period. They can be relatively divided into two groups:

- 1) printed materials prepared by the Service. In the context of the book, the work instruction document prepared and printed by the Security Service in 1924 should be highlighted,<sup>42</sup> which provides detailed information not only on the skills and competences of the personnel, but also on its *modus operandi*;
- 2) printed materials dedicated to the organisation of police work (in a comprehensive context) – manuals for police officers laying down police duties and working principles.<sup>43</sup>

The book also refers to specific printed materials focusing on national security issues,<sup>44</sup> as well as general documents prepared in the context of the 10th anniversary of the Latvian State.<sup>45</sup> These publications summarise the activity of the Service. Informative and thus useful, was an entry in the Latvian Encyclopaedia (orig.: *Latviešu konversācijas vārdnīca*) devoted to the functioning of the “Political Police”.<sup>46</sup> In fact, it is the first information on the work of the Service available to the general public, which at the same time shows how the institution positioned itself in society.

## Memories

Human textual insight into one’s course of life, or published memories, is a very specific group of historical sources that shall always be used with some caution, given the time, place and motivation of memories. These sources are also used in the writing of this book, which are relatively divided into two groups.

1. Memories left by Service personnel. The first group is represented by the memories of the director of the Political Security Department, Voldemārs Alps. They are particularly important as they are the only ones left by the head of the civilian security service. Although they are published in a specific format, the actual work done in 2006<sup>47</sup> is a collection of clippings from 1930s newspapers and should not be considered as a standard format for publishing memories. Although V. Alps deliberately focused on the assessment of the activities of

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<sup>42</sup> *Instrukcija Politiskās apsardzes aģentūrai* (ENG: Instruction for the Political Security Department Agency). Rīga: Politiskās apsardzes izdevums, 1924, 100 pages.

<sup>43</sup> Ceriņš, A. *Vadonis policijas ierēdņiem un aizsargiem* (ENG: Leader for Police Officers and Privates). Rīga: Rīgas Policijas skola, 1925, 474 pages; Ceriņš, A. *Policijas tiesības un pienākumi* (ENG: Rights and Obligations of the Police). Rīga: Iekšlietu ministrijas Administratīvais departaments, 1931; *Likumu un noteikumu sakopojums policijas darbiniekiem* (ENG: A Codex of Laws and Regulations for Police Officers). Rīga: Iekšlietu ministrijas Administratīvais departaments, 1938. Unofficial edition. 135 pages.

<sup>44</sup> *Izlūkošana un spiegošana* (ENG: Intelligence and espionage). Ārējās izlūkošanas nodaļa, 1921, 45 pages.

<sup>45</sup> *Latvija desmit gadus. Latvijas valsts nodibināšana un viņas pirmo 10 gadu darbības vēsture* (ENG: Latvia in Ten Years. History of the Establishment of the State of Latvia and its First 10 Years). Rīga, 1928, 384 pages.

<sup>46</sup> *Latviešu konversācijas vārdnīca* (ENG: Latvian Conversion Dictionary). Compiled by Švābe, A., Būmanis, A., Dišlers, K. Volume XVII. Rīga: A. Gulbja apgādībā, 1938.

<sup>47</sup> Alps, V. *Latvija spiegu tīklos* (ENG: Latvia in Spy Networks). Rīga: LARO, 2006, 38 pages.

communist organisations, memories disclose certain significant events in the functioning of the Service, which allow for an insight into the nature of the work of the institution. The book also uses memories of persons related to military security structures, such as Sergejs Staprāns.<sup>48</sup>

2. The second memory group is linked to the published memories of other stakeholders, such as politicians, who express their views on the objectives and working methods of the Service. They mainly represent the Service as a highly repressive and barbaric institution. Such assessment is mentioned in memories left by various Latvian communists, who inevitably have a strong ideological tone and an interpretation of historical events.<sup>49</sup> The Service is also mentioned (mainly in a critical light) in the memories of politicians<sup>50</sup> or public figures<sup>51</sup> (especially in the period after 15 May 1934) who came to the attention of the authority.

## Press

The study also uses various specific printed media of the interwar period (e.g. “Policijas Vēstnesis”, “Valdības Vēstnesis”, “Latvijas Sargs”, “Latvis”, “Policija”, etc.), which publish informative articles connected with the Service’s activities. The information published in the articles is often complemented by data from archive documents, as well as providing a relatively clear picture of what selected media wrote about the Service. In addition to this, it also uses periodical media that provides an assessment of the Service’s performance. For example, the book uses a left-leaning newspaper “Sociāldemokrāts”, which often takes a critical view of the Security Service, which was also collected (collecting clippings from newspapers<sup>52</sup>) by Service personnel.

In general, the sources used for this book provide a general overview of the tasks, organisation of work, areas of operation, structure, tradecraft and problems of the Service.

## LITERATURE

The book refers to research by multiple authors, which, in the context of the topic, focuses on the issues of the history of national internal security, including certain aspects of the Service’s operation.

<sup>48</sup> Staprāns, S. *Caur Krievijas tumsu pie Latvijas saules* (ENG: Via Russian Darkness to Latvian Sun). Second Edition. Rīga: Arto-1, 2014, 140 pages.

<sup>49</sup> Kalnbērziņš, J. *Atmiņas* (ENG: Memories). Rīga: Liesma, 1983, 181 pages; Šteimanis, J. *Latvijas Komunistiskā partija cīņā par strādnieku šķiras vairākumu* (ENG: Latvian Communist Party in the Fight for the Working-class Majority). Rīga: Latvijas Valsts izdevniecība, 1957, 142 pages.

<sup>50</sup> Cielēns, F. *Laikmetu maiņā* (ENG: In the Change of Periods). Volume 2. Lidinge: Momento, 1963, pp. 313–316; Bastjānis, V. *Gala sākums: Vērojumi un vērtējumi* (ENG: Beginning of the End: Observations and Insights). Lidinge, 1964, p. 33–38, 41–45, 49–65.

<sup>51</sup> Šilde, Ā. *Ardievas Rīgai. Tikai atmiņas* (ENG: Goodbye to Rīga. Memories Only). Bruklina: Grāmatu Draugs, 1988, p. 118, 119.

<sup>52</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 604.

## Publications by historians

It is surprising to some extent that a comprehensive study of the history of this politically and socially important institution has so far been omitted in the historiography of Latvia at the academic level. This could be explained by the state of the particular search and accounting tools of LVVA Fund 3235, which would require significant improvement, as well as by the specific nature of the documents and the research topics – the counterintelligence and internal security service activities.

The book uses the few publications of historians in various sources dedicated to the brief description of the Service,<sup>53</sup> to the fate of the leadership of the authority,<sup>54</sup> which through these stories reveal the background of the political scene,<sup>55</sup> as well as potential risk groups under the Service's attention.<sup>56</sup> These publications have played an important role in the book-writing process, as they not only described the issues raised by the study of the subject, but also sought a new approach for the first time after the end of the occupation regime, free from the Soviet ideology, in viewing the functioning of the Service and the fate of its officers.

This course is continued to some extent by other studies referred to in this document, which are devoted to the history of state security institutions,<sup>57</sup> as well as the history of police<sup>58</sup> and military intelligence.<sup>59</sup> The quality of these publications (by some authors) raises a number of objections,<sup>60</sup> yet, in the context of the elaboration of this book, they are valuable not only in terms of historiography, but also content.

The book is also based on works of exiled authors dedicated to the establishment and operation of state safety authorities. The documents are prepared free from the Soviet ideology and contain interesting information about the history of the Service. The

<sup>53</sup> Žvinklis, A. *Ieskats Latvijas Republikas politiskās policijas darbībā* (ENG: Insight into the Activities of the Political Police of the Republic of Latvia). Latvijas Vēstures Institūta Žurnāls, 1994, No. 1, pp. 114–124; Jēkabsons, Ē. Iekšlietu ministrija (ENG: Ministry of Interior). Book: *15. maija Latvija* (ENG: Latvia of 15 May). Rīga: Latvijas Mediji, 2017, pp. 235–241; Andersons, E. *Latvijas bruņotie spēki un to priekšvēsture* (ENG: Latvian Armed Forces and their History). Toronto: Daugavas Vanagu apgāds, 1983, p. 451; Trejs, Ē. *Policijas darbība pirmajos Latvijas valsts pastāvēšanas gados* (ENG: Police Activity during the First Years of the Independent Latvia). Book: *Valsts iekšējās drošības 100 gadu evolūcija. Attīstība. Dinamika. Problemātika. Zinātniski-praktiskais materiālu krājums* (ENG: Evolution of 100 Years of Internal Security. Development. Dynamics. Problems. Collection of Scientifically-practical Materials). Valsts Policijas koledžas V Starptautiskā zinātniskā konference (ENG: Vth International Scientific Conference of the state Police College). Rīga: Valsts Policijas koledža, 2018, pp. 186–196.

<sup>54</sup> Jēkabsons, Ē., Ščerbinskis, V. *Latvijas politiskās policijas vadītāji* (ENG: Chief Officials of the Latvian Political Police). *Lauku Avīze*. 29 July 1997, p. 31.

<sup>55</sup> Stranga, A. *Jāņa Fridrihsona liecības* (ENG: Testimonies by Jānis Fridrihsons). *SestDiena*. 31 March 1994; Stranga, A. *Jāņa Fridrihsona liecības* (ENG: Testimonies by Jānis Fridrihsons). *SestDiena*. 9 April 1994.

<sup>56</sup> Gusachenko, A. The Activities of “Russian Monarchists” in the Documentation of the Latvian Political Police Department (1920–1940): Specific Characteristics of the Source. *Modern History of Russia*. 1/2020. P. 959.

<sup>57</sup> Niedre, O.; Zālite, I.; Bergmanis, A.; Feldmanis, I.; Ābola, Z. *Latvijas izlūkdienesti 1919.–1940. 664 likteņi* (Latvian Intelligence, 1919–1940: 664 Fates). Rīga: LU žurnāla “Latvijas Vēsture” fonds, 2001.

<sup>58</sup> Žigure, A. *Latvijas policijas vēsture. Otrā grāmata* (ENG: History of the Latvian Police. Second book). Rīga: Likuma vārdā, 1998, 317 pages.

<sup>59</sup> Stabiņš, E. *Latvijas armijas izlūkdienests. Īss dienesta vēstures apskats* (ENG: Latvian Army Intelligence Service. Brief Overview of the History of the Service). Rīga: Aizsardzības ministrijas Militārās pretizlūkošanas dienests, 1997, 57 pages.

<sup>60</sup> See: Jēkabsons, Ē. *Latvijas izlūkdienesti 1919.–1940. 664 likteņi* (Latvian Intelligence, 1919–1940: 664 Fates). Recenzija (ENG: Review). Latvijas Vēstures Institūta Žurnāls. 2001, No. 4, pp. 104–133.

main drawback of documents written in exile is the failure to use archival documents, which was not possible for understandable reasons.<sup>61</sup> Works on Latvian history also provided useful information in the preparation of the book,<sup>62</sup> which either have complete chapters or sub-chapters on the subject or, if not, the existing information allows for a better understanding of the epoch in the context of the Service as well.

### Final theses by students

This literature group consists of the final theses by students of the Faculty of History and Philosophy of the University of Latvia of the bachelor's and master's study programmes, focusing on topics that also concern the Service's activities. The topics devoted to the history of the interwar period often cannot be fully explored without looking at the Service documents. The theses of the Faculty of History and Philosophy of the University of Latvia students referred to in the book focus on the history of ethnic minorities during Latvia's interwar period,<sup>63</sup> also covering social history<sup>64</sup> and trade union history,<sup>65</sup> one thesis is devoted solely to the activities of the Political Department in Riga District in the second half of the 1930s.<sup>66</sup> The latter deals with a topic that has not been studied previously and is duly elaborated in accordance with the requirements of a high-quality master's thesis. The student theses used in the context of the history of the Service generally reveal certain operational features of the institution, as well as provide examples of activities that were useful during this study.

Although the literature used for the book can be described as diverse in terms of content, it most often illustrates, reveals and explains specific domains of security in the context of another central issue of research.

<sup>61</sup> *Latvijas iekšējās drošības nostiprināšanas vēsture, 1918–1925* (ENG: History of Strengthening the Internal Security of Latvia 1918–1925). Rīga: Valters and Rapa, 1925, 259 pages; Andersons, E. *Latvijas bruņotie spēki un to priekšvēsture* (ENG: Latvian Armed Forces and their History). Toronto: Daugavas Vanagu apgāds, 1983, 832 pages.

<sup>62</sup> *20. gadsimta Latvijas vēsture. 2. daļa. Neatkarīgā valsts 1918–1940* (ENG: History of Latvia in the 20th Century. Part 2. Independent State 1918–1940). Bērziņš, V. (ed. in charge). Rīga: LU Latvijas Vēstures institūts, 2003, 1024 pages.

<sup>63</sup> Feldentāle, E. *Lietuvus politisko bēgļu darbība Latvijā 20. gs. 20. gadu otrajā pusē* (ENG: Lithuanian Political Refugees in Latvia in the Second Half of the 1920s). Bachelor Thesis. Rīga: LU VFF, 2015. Thesis supervisor: Dr. hist. Jēkabsons, Ē.; Gusačenko, A. *“Sokol” organizācijas darbība Latvijā (1928.–1940. g.)* (ENG: Activity of the Organisation “Sokol” in Latvia (1928–1940)). Master's Thesis. Rīga: Latvijas Universitāte, 2017. Scientific supervisor Gavriļins, A. 186 pages; Kazachonak, K. *Latvijas baltkrievu sabiedriski politiskā darbība 1919.–1934. gadā* (ENG: Civic Political Activities by the Belarusian Community in Latvia 1919–1934). Master's Thesis. Rīga: Latvijas Universitāte, 2013. Scientific supervisor Jēkabsons, Ē. 85 pages.

<sup>64</sup> Bērziņa, A. *Sieviete-ieslodzītā Latvijas Republikas cietumos, 1919.–1921. gadā* (ENG: The Imprisoned Woman in Prisons of the Republic of Latvia, 1919–1921). Master's Thesis. Scientific supervisor Jēkabsons, Ē. Rīga: Latvijas Universitāte, 2015, 125 pages.

<sup>65</sup> Plakane, G. *Legālo kreiso sabiedrisko organizāciju sociālpolitiskā darbība Latvijā 1920. gados: Rīgas arodbiedrību centrālbiroju piemērs* (ENG: Socio-political Activity of Legal Left Social Organisations on Latvia in the 1920s: Example of Trade Unions' Central Offices in Riga). Master's Thesis. Scientific supervisor Jēkabsons, Ē. Rīga: Latvijas Universitāte, 2020, 95 pages.

<sup>66</sup> Puša, G. *Politiskās pārvaldes darbība Latvijā 1934.–1939. gadā: Rīgas apriņķa piemērs* (ENG: Activity of Political Department in Latvia in 1934–1939: an Example of Riga County). Master's Thesis. Rīga: Latvijas Universitāte, 2013. Thesis supervisor Butulis, I. 108 pages.

# CHAPTER 1

# Functions and operations of the Service and its institutional changes

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After the independence of the Republic of Latvia was proclaimed on 18 November 1918, the newly established state was threatened not only by external enemies with the onset of the War of Independence of Latvia. One of the key tasks was to ensure and strengthen the internal security of the country. Although the first steps in this direction were already taken immediately after the proclamation of the state, the organisation of the respective internal security authorities was delayed due to the military-political situation. It was only possible to fully develop it in the summer of 1919, when the Provisional Government of the Republic of Latvia under the leadership of Kārlis Ulmanis and the public administration institutions returned to Riga after the city was liberated from the Bolsheviks and took over control from the German occupation authorities.

With increasing strengthening of the security of the country, diminishing external threats and ever-developing public administration, a complex and challenging transition to functioning in a state of peace was launched, which came with lifting the increased protection level and assigning a gradually increasing role to civilian authorities.

**The Latvian counterintelligence and internal security services under the Ministry of the Interior and their duration (1919-1940)**

Institution name	Operating time
State Security Department	11 August 1919 - 15 November 1919
Riga Criminal Police Political Department	15 November 1919 - 01 October 1920
Political Security Department	01 October 1920 - 09 May 1924
Political Department	09 May 1924 - 06 July 1939
Political Police Department	06 July 1939 - 24 July 1940

## 1.1.

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### Security and counterintelligence services from December 1918 till August 1919

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The Republic of Latvia, after the proclamation of independence, was in an extraordinary position as determined by the general military-political situation. Not only did it prevent a normal functioning of the state institutions, but since warfare was ongoing in the territory of Latvia and a state of war was announced, all internal security institutions were in the hands of military authorities. The Latvian Army, the Commandant's offices and other military institutions were directly responsible, not only for the war with external enemies (the Red Army, Bermond's Forces, etc.), but also for the reconciliation of the country's internal life and strengthening the internal security. Therefore, the first counterintelligence and security services of the Republic of Latvia were organised under military institutions, and only as the situation became stable, were such institutions organised under the authority of the Ministry of the Interior (i.e. the Civil Administration).

During wartime, intelligence, political security and counterintelligence issues were under the responsibility of the military. At the end of 1918, when drafting the Ministry of Defence Plan, a Control-Information Unit was scheduled to be established to deal with intelligence and counterintelligence. The Control-Information Unit, started operations in March 1919 under the direction of Sergejs Staprāns, taking over control of persons detained at Liepāja Naval Port (a few hundred) who were accused of illegal front crossing and of belonging to communists. The Control-Information Unit also continued its work during the April putsch and again later by reporting to the Provisional Government and the ministries on the state's internal situation.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Pārskats par Iekšlietu ministrijas darbību mūsu valsts 5 gadu pastāvēšanas laikā (ENG: A Review of the Performance of the Ministry of the Interior during the 5 Years of our Independent Latvia). *Policijas Vēstnesis*. 1923, November 16, No. 57, p. 3, 4; *Latvijas iekšējās drošības nostiprināšanas vēsture, 1918–1925* (ENG: History of Strengthening the Internal Security of Latvia 1918–1925). P. 56; Reports prepared by the Control-Information Unit are available at: Jēkabsons, Ē., Šiliņš, J. *Cīņa par brīvību: Latvijas Neatkarības karš (1918–1920) Latvijas Valsts vēstures arhīva dokumentos. 1. daļa. 1918. gada 18. novembris–1919. gada 16. aprīlis* (ENG: Battle for Freedom: The Latvian War of Independence (1918–1920) in the Records of the Latvian National Historical Archive. Part 1. 18 November 1918 to 16 April 1919). Rīga: Latvijas Nacionālais arhīvs, 2019, 335 pages.

In his memories, the head of the Control-Information Unit, S. Staprāns, writes that he was instructed to perform “intelligence management on the other side of the front, at the front and in Liepāja”. His first work was the establishment of divisions, the search for co-workers and the organisation of information gathering from the area under the control of the Bolsheviks. The unit also focused on monitoring Rüdiger von der Goltz, who was “weaving secret political networks”, and the activities of his associates. S. Staprāns claims that he already had information at the end of March about Germans preparing to overthrow the government of K. Ulmanis, concluding that “my agency was well placed: my officers were at the headquarters of Goltz, and I received certain information from the Landeswehr”. During the April putsch, S. Staprāns took care to ensure that the Minister of Agriculture, Jānis Goldmanis, and the Minister of Protection, Jānis Zālītis, would “not fall into the hands of Germans”; and he had met with K. Ulmanis and General Augusts Misiņš every day and was on board of the ship “Saratov” with the ministers where he informed the latter about the situation in Liepāja, front and elsewhere. S. Staprāns writes that he “had his secret chancellery at the Hotel Hansa, where two typists help with technical work on writing reports, etc.”. S. Staprāns had also cooperated with Latvian commander’s offices and the police. Following the putsch, the staff of the Control-Information Unit travelled to rural areas where they observed the mood of the population and said that “the Provisional Government will soon return to power, that Germans went bankrupt with their putsch, etc.”. Also, S. Staprāns participated in the “kidnapping” of Andrievs Niedra and other topical events.<sup>68</sup>

Following the return of the Provisional Government to Riga (15 July 1919), the headquarters of the Commander-in-Chief of the Latvian Army, which included the Operational Section, were established. The Operational Section consisted of: Political War Unit, Intelligence Unit (initially expected to deal with both internal and external intelligence, but later subdivided into two separate units – Internal and External Intelligence units), War Censorship Unit, Topography Unit and the Communication Unit.<sup>69</sup> The Head of the Internal Intelligence Unit, Voldemārs Beķers, recalled in his memories issued in 1925 on the establishment of the Republic of Latvia, that in summer 1919 he “[...] engaged in the organisation of the political unit at the army headquarters”. However, the work was interrupted because V. Beķers was sent to the Vidzeme-Latgale prisoner camp in Valmiera. In September, V. Beķers returned to Riga and he described the events as follows: “At that time, due to its inaction and the unwarranted actions by the personnel, the army’s intelligence unit was in a sad and fearful state. [...] Looking at the crucial role of the Intelligence Unit in this era of the creation of state and troops, I took it upon myself [running the

<sup>68</sup> Staprāns, S. *Caur Krievijas tumsu pie Latvijas saules* (ENG: *Via Russian Darkness to Latvian Sun*). Second Edition. Riga: Valters and Rapa, 2014, pp. 59–100.

<sup>69</sup> *Latvijas Brīvības cīņas 1918–1920: Enciklopēdija* (ENG: *Freedom Battles of Latvia, 1918–1920: Encyclopaedia*). Pētersons, I. (ed. in charge). Riga: Preses nams, 1999, p. 64.

unit]. [...] I received the Intelligence Unit in a chaotic situation, because nothing was organised and there were few officers that could be trusted. It was also impossible to lay off all the former officers immediately, because there was no one to replace them; it could only be done gradually. First of all, I tried to make all investigations completely lawful, i.e. the rumours and charges, by filing and processing everything according to the law and then by handing it over to the relevant court.”<sup>70</sup>

However, already with the establishment of the Republic of Latvia, attempts were made to organise national internal security structures under the authority of the Ministry of the Interior established on 19 November 1918. As early as on 5 December 1918, the Cabinet of Ministers adopted “Temporary provisions on the organisation of internal security” elaborated by the Ministry of the Interior. They set out the principles, procedure, the governance and structure of the organisation of the internal security. The rules also provided for the establishment of civilian police authorities and services and defined their administrative powers. Although particular tasks of the Security Service were not set, all police units were instructed to maintain order and security, collect information and participate in pre-trial investigation of various crimes.<sup>71</sup> Although due to the military situation in the country the establishment of a special counterintelligence and internal security service was not possible at the end of 1918, this issue was undoubtedly discussed by the Provisional Government, in particular, by the Ministry of the Interior. The struggle with the Soviet Latvian troops meant that in 1918/first half of 1919, police functions in the parts of Latvia free from Communist power were still in the hands of the authorities established under the German occupation, which significantly impeded the establishment of the security institutions of the Republic of Latvia.<sup>72</sup> The German occupation authorities in Riga operated since September 1917 and they were the first to resume work after the withdrawal of the Bolshevik forces at the end of May 1919.

A different situation existed in Liepāja, where in difficult political circumstances the Unit of Internal Security under the Ministry of the Interior was tackling threats to national security. The special tasks officer Eduards Kaimiņš on the ship “Runeberg”, which arrived at the port of Liepāja from Sweden, intercepted a “mysterious package with stamps of Vidzeme nobility”. A special committee checked it later to discover documents of a conspiracy plan by the Baltic nobility aimed against the Temporary Government of Latvia, and on 24 February an order

<sup>70</sup> Beķers, V. *Manas atmiņas par Latvijas valsts nodibināšanās laikmetu* (ENG: My Memories about the Time on the Foundation of the State of Latvia). Rīga: Author's edition, 1925, pp. 111–113.

<sup>71</sup> Pagaidu noteikumi par iekšējās apsardzības organizēšanu. Pieņemti Latvijas Tautas Padomes sēdē 5. decembrī (ENG: Temporary Provisions on the Organisation of Internal Security. Adopted at the Meeting of the People Council of Latvia on 5 December). *Pagaidu Valdības Vēstnesis*. 14 December 1918, p. 2.; Also available from: LVVA, fund 1368, description 2, file 20, pp. 6–9.

<sup>72</sup> For example, already on 2 December 1918, the Minister of the Interior, Miķelis Valters, had to explain to the Social Democrats at the People's Council meeting why the police had dispersed the Riga workers' meeting, indicating that the police power in the city is still in the hands of the German authorities (*Latvijas valsts dibinātāji* (ENG: Founders of the State of Latvia). Rīga: Latvijas Nacionālais vēstures muzejs, 2018, p. 141.).

was issued to arrest the organiser of the plot, Heinrich von Stryk, offering a reward of 10'000 Roubles "to the one who will bring him in or arrest him". It was not possible to arrest him.<sup>73</sup>

An interesting testimony of his work in early 1919, indirectly giving details of the efforts to create a counterintelligence and internal security authority and reflecting the difficult circumstances in which it happened, was left by Augusts Kārlis Ferdinants Kazakats, who was questioned on 24 January 1934 by the Political Department, suspecting him of cooperating with the Bermondts Army during the War of Independence.<sup>74</sup> During interrogation, A. Kazakats informed that in February 1919 he joined the Service in the Iron Division, but in March he left the Service and in March-May of the same year he continued service for the benefit of the Temporary Government of Latvia. The following events are described in the records of interrogation: "Immediately afterwards I was appointed by the Minister of the Interior of the Provisional Government, Valters, to be the head of the Political Police, i.e. in the unit on meetings. In May 1919, I left the service. I joined the Iron Division immediately afterwards. In 1919, I was beaten in Liepāja by hooligans and I was sent to hospital in Karalauči. In June 1919 I arrived in Riga to collect my belongings and, having found them, I went to Germany. I lost my stuff there. I finally found some of the belongings and returned to Liepāja. I did not return to Liepāja, but went from Germany to Jelgava. In Jelgava I once again joined the Iron Division and submitted a request to the Western Army Headquarters to take me in this army. I was subordinate to the Western Army Reserve Officer. In 1919, I was transferred to Jelgava as a deputy to the chief of the secret police. My task was to arrest German and Russian soldiers who had gone looting. I was here as the deputy to the head until mid-September 1919. I was then arrested for claiming that 6 people were illegally shot by a Bermondts-man and I was accused of spying in favour of Latvians. I was handed over to the Bermondts War Court, which cleared me, and I was released from detention on 8 October 1919. On 19 October in 1919, I travelled to Germany, where I stayed until September 1930."<sup>75</sup>

Although so far more information about the creation or functioning of the Service under the Ministry of the Interior in spring 1919 has not been found, this was undoubtedly one of the most topical issues for the Ministry. Further research should also focus on cooperation between Latvian and German authorities in strengthening internal security, as well as on the fate of personnel of such institutions at the time.

<sup>73</sup> LVVA, fund 1368, description 2, file 20, p. 3.

<sup>74</sup> A. Kazakats and his family, while residing in Germany, had already since 1924 submitted requests to receive Latvian citizenship, which the Ministry of the Interior "given that the applicant has taken part in the Bermondts Affair" did not approve. A. Kazakats returned to Latvia in September 1930 after the permission granted by the Latvian Embassy in Berlin and later acquired Latvian citizenship. See: LVVA, fund 3234, description 2, file 15939.

<sup>75</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 189/1, p. 40.

## 1.2.

### State Security Department (August–November 1919)

On 11 August 1919, the State Security Department started its work in Riga under the authority of the Ministry of the Interior, “to strengthen the internal security”.<sup>76</sup> This, like the Ministry of the Interior, was based on the “Temporary provisions on the organisation of internal security” issued on 5 December 1918.<sup>77</sup>

One of the first tasks of the State Security Department was under the order of the Commander-in-Chief of the Latvian Army of 29 July 1919 to disband and liquidate the German Gendarmerie in Riga. It had started on 4 July 1919, when the Commander-in-Chief of Latvia's Southern Brigade issued an order to appoint a new gendarmerie chief and to take over the German Gendarmerie,<sup>78</sup> and it was completed by 12 August 1919.<sup>79</sup> The sources indicate that the State Security Department was founded to replace the German Gendarmerie, which is why in historiography, the date of establishment of the institution was often mentioned as 29 July 1919 when the above mentioned liquidation order was issued.<sup>80</sup> However, there is no justification for this and it is more likely that a decision on the establishment of the State Security Department was taken later, in August 1919. This is proven by the fact that in the summer of 1919, the Prefecture<sup>81</sup> of the Military Police was established in Riga, which, like the State Security Department, claimed to take over the functions of the German Gendarmerie.<sup>82</sup>

<sup>76</sup> Valdības darbība (ENG: Government Action). *Latvijas Sargs*. 10 August 1919, No. 109, p. 2; Jaunākās ziņas. Ministriju darbība (ENG: Latest News. Activities of Ministries). *Baltijas Vēstnesis*. 11 August 1919, No. 63, p. 3.

<sup>77</sup> Pagaidu noteikumi par iekšējās apsardzības organizēšanu. Pieņemti Latvijas Tautas Padomes sēdē 5. decembrī (ENG: Temporary Provisions on the Organisation of Internal Security. Adopted at the Meeting of the People Council of Latvia on 5 December). *Pagaidu Valdības Vēstnesis*. 14 December 1918, p. 2.; Also available from: LVVA, fund 1368, description 2, file 20, p. 6–9.

<sup>78</sup> See, for example: *Latvijas iekšējās drošības nostiprināšanas vēsture, 1918–1925* (ENG: History of Strengthening the Internal Security of Latvia 1918–1925). Rīga: Valters and Rapa, 1925, p. 41–57.

<sup>79</sup> Par žandarmērijas izformēšanu (ENG: On the Dissolution of the Gendarmerie). *Valdības Vēstnesis*. 13 August 1919, No. 11, p. 2.

<sup>80</sup> See, for example: *Latvijas iekšējās drošības nostiprināšanas vēsture, 1918–1925* (ENG: History of Strengthening the Internal Security of Latvia 1918–1925). Rīga: Valters and Rapa, 1925, p. 56, 57.

<sup>81</sup> Prefecture – Police administration.

<sup>82</sup> *Rīgas prefektūra, 1919–1929* (ENG: Prefecture of Riga, 1919–1929). Rīga: Rīgas prefektūras izdevums, 1929, p. 9, 10.

The main task of the State Security Department during the War of Independence was to maintain the internal security of the country, to conduct investigations into the activities of unreliable and suspicious persons, to investigate the crimes committed during the Bolshevik period, and undertake similar actions in line with the nature of the counterintelligence and internal security service, thus ensuring political security in the country. Officers of the State Security Department monitored the overall political situation in the country, fought against illegal political activities, drew up lists of communists, Bermond Army supporters and other politically unreliable persons, issued migration permits for natural persons, undertook arrests and transferred suspects to the Prosecutor's Office for further examination of the case. Besides, the State Security Department was involved in drafting legislation, in the work of the prisoners' amnesty commission, etc.,<sup>83</sup> as well as in the examination of documents left by the Soviet Latvian authorities, and in the autumn of 1919 it participated in battles with the Bermond-men.<sup>84</sup>

The tasks of the State Security Department largely overlapped with those of the activities of the Internal Intelligence Unit of the Headquarters of the Commander-in-Chief of the Latvian Army, which had "more competence and a broader scope of work" on a number of key issues such as the investigation of Bermond Army supporters' cases.<sup>85</sup> Therefore, on 1 November 1919, only after a few months of activity, the Minister of the Interior, Alfrēds Bīrznieks, issued an order to liquidate the State Security Department by 15 November of the same year, entrusting the liquidation to the Director of Department, Jānis Liģeris-Liggers.<sup>86</sup> For the organisation of the liquidation work, the director of the Administrative Department of the Ministry of the Interior appointed a Liquidation commission, which besides J. Liģeris-Liggers also included Jānis Garoziņš, an employee of the Internal Protection Unit; Gustavs Tīfentāls, chief of the Riga Criminal Police; and special tasks officials of the Ministry of the Interior, E. Kaimiņš and Mr. Šveics. However, the work of the Liquidation Commission, "excusing itself with a lack of time", had not yet started on 13 November.<sup>87</sup>

The Latvian Provisional Government Declaration, issued on 8 December 1919, states that the State Security Department is being dissolved because it has "failed to justify expectations".<sup>88</sup> The inventory of the State Security Department was

<sup>83</sup> Valdība atsvabina apcietinātos no cietuma (ENG: The Government is Freeing Prisoners from Prison). *Latvijas Sargs*. 26 October 1919, No. 174, p. 2.

<sup>84</sup> *20. gadsimta Latvijas vēsture. 2. daļa. Neatkarīgā valsts 1918–1940* (ENG: History of Latvia in the 20th Century. Part 2. Independent State 1918–1940). Rīga: Latvijas Universitātes Latvijas Vēstures institūts, 2003, p. 500.

<sup>85</sup> Pārskats par Iekšlietu ministrijas darbību mūsu valsts 5 gadu pastāvēšanas laikā (ENG: A Review of the Performance of the Ministry of the Interior during the 5 Years of our Independent Latvia). *Policijas Vēstnesis*. 16 November 1923, No. 57, p. 3, 4.

<sup>86</sup> LVVA, fund 3725, description 2, file 144, p. 2, 4.

<sup>87</sup> LVVA, fund 3725, description 2, file 144, p. 2, 4.

<sup>88</sup> *1918.–1920. gads Latvijas Republikas Pagaidu valdības sēžu protokolos, notikumos, atmiņās* (ENG: 1918–1920 in the Minutes of Meetings, Events, Memories of the Provisional Government of the Republic of Latvia). Rīga: Valsts kanceleja, 2013, p. 765.

intended to be handed over to the Administrative Department of the Ministry of the Interior and the personnel (subject to an individual order) to be appointed to work elsewhere or to be dismissed.<sup>89</sup> In the districts, the inventories and documentation were taken over by the heads of regional units and the police prefects, who were scheduled to be allocated additional staff, and it was also set that “you must proceed with the existing resources on all pending investigations of the Security Department”.<sup>90</sup>

In historiography, there is an opinion that the State Security Department was dissolved because it was not able to successfully combat political crimes and that its role largely overlapped with that of the Intelligence Unit of the Headquarters of the Commander-in-Chief of the Latvian Army (“two institutions basically did the same work”<sup>91</sup>).<sup>92</sup> Similarly, historiography indicates that such liquidation of the State Security Department was premature and generally unsuccessful.<sup>93</sup> In this context, the fact that the State Security Department was being dissolved in a hurry shows, for example, that the officers were not notified of dismissal in good time.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Drošības departamenta lietā (ENG: In the Case of the Security Department). *Baltijas Vēstnesis*. 4 November 1919, No. 135, p. 1.

<sup>90</sup> LVVA, fund 3725, description 2, file 144, p. 53.

<sup>91</sup> Pārskats par Iekšlietu ministrijas darbību mūsu valsts 5 gadu pastāvēšanas laikā (ENG: A Review of the Performance of the Ministry of the Interior during the 5 Years of Our Independent Latvia). *Policijas Vēstnesis*. 16 November 1923, No. 57, p. 3, 4.

<sup>92</sup> See, for example: *Latvijas iekšējās drošības nostiprināšanas vēsture, 1918–1925* (ENG: History of Strengthening the Internal Security of Latvia 1918–1925). Rīga: Valters un Rapa, 1925, p. 41–57; Žigure, A. *Latvijas policijas vēsture* (ENG: History of the Latvian Police). Second book. Rīga: Fakts, 1998, 317 pages.

<sup>93</sup> *20. gadsimta Latvijas vēsture. 2. daļa. Neatkarīgā valsts 1918–1940* (ENG: History of Latvia in the 20th Century. Part 2. Independent State 1918–1940). Rīga: Latvijas Universitātes Latvijas Vēstures institūts, 2003, p. 500.

<sup>94</sup> Valsts kontrole (ENG: State Audit Office). *Latvijas Sargs*. 28 December 1919, No. 224, p. 2.

### 1.3.

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## Political Department of Riga Criminal Police (1919–1920)

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With the dissolution of the State Security Department, its functions and record-keeping were partly taken over in November 1919 by the newly established Riga Criminal Police Political Department (elsewhere – Fifth Unit). Along with the Riga Criminal Police, as already mentioned in the previous chapter, some of the functions of the State Security Department were taken over by the heads of the regional units and prefectures of the cities, however, they did not take on the role of the security service.<sup>95</sup>

The functioning of the Political Department of Riga Criminal Police was also greatly influenced by military developments in the country and the organisation of the internal and external security of the country in general. Moreover, until 14 March 1920, when the state of war announced by the Provisional Government was lifted, all police authorities were subject to military authorities and were only transformed into a civilian police force from that date. This meant that the Political Department also moved under civilian authority, but the process, with the civilian and military sector moving away, was more complex than it would seem initially. Still, in the Government declaration of 16 June 1920 it was stressed that “security and a certain order are first required for the internal life of our country”. Further, it was emphasised that the country cannot yet move to “normal forms of administration” (meaning, forms of administration used in peace time), but this should be done gradually, and it was explained that “the gradual and targeted separation of the security organs from the war institutions and their reorganisation under civilian authorities will be an important step”.<sup>96</sup>

In practice, such militarised police structures predominantly dealt with criminal offences, but political crimes and threats were not successfully combatted. However, the Political Department was actively involved in monitoring political life and

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<sup>95</sup> *Latvijas iekšējās drošības nostiprināšanas vēsture, 1918–1925* (ENG: History of Strengthening the Internal Security of Latvia 1918–1925). Rīga: Valters and Rapa, 1925, pp. 41–57.

<sup>96</sup> *1920.–1925. gads Latvijas Republikas Ministru kabineta sēžu protokolos, notikumos, atmiņās* (ENG: 1920–1925 in the Minutes of Meetings, Events, Memories of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia). Rīga: Valsts kanceleja, 2018, p. 792.

activities in Riga and the surrounding area, along with the investigation of various cases, detection and prevention of criminal activities. The personnel of the Political Department, together with their colleagues from other police bodies, monitored suspicious persons, identified them, provided opinion on political reliability, and undertook search and detention. It should be noted that the action did not always deliver the expected results. There are also funny cases found in the sources. For example, on 16 December 1919, at 11 p.m., the officers of the Political Department of Riga Criminal Police received a search order in Riga, on 2 Akmeņu Street. On arrival at the site, the officers found that the building had burnt down, so the neighbouring building on 4 Akmeņu Street was checked, where nothing suspicious was detected.<sup>97</sup>

The Political Department also had the task of combatting the risks of corruption in governmental institutions. For example, on 9 July 1920, the Political Department was asked to “clarify through covert surveillance” whether Antons Launags, Director of the Trade Department of the Ministry of Industry, and Kārlis Ikšels, Head of the Export-Import Division “do not live too high from their salaries”.<sup>98</sup> Similar to the case with the State Security Department, the tasks of the Political Department of Riga Criminal Police still overlapped with the tasks of the Internal Intelligence Unit of the Headquarters of the Commander-in-Chief of the Latvian Army. Thus, it was decided to establish a professional body dealing with the combat of political crime that would operate in the entire territory of Latvia. The Political Department of Riga Criminal Police was dissolved in autumn 1920.<sup>99</sup> In addition to the work of the Internal Intelligence Unit, intelligence activities required for military and civilian purposes were also carried out in other army units.<sup>100</sup> On 15 October 1920, following the dissolution of the Internal Intelligence Unit of the Headquarters of the Commander-in-Chief of the Latvian Army, the army maintained both external and internal intelligence functions, which often provided information on internal security issues. However, certain problems were identified in this respect, as revealed by the brochure on intelligence and espionage issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1921. It states that “unfortunately, the intelligence is not yet a separate domain in the science of war, which is why there are now many laymen<sup>101</sup> among the soldiers on this issue, which, by its very nature, is one of the foundation stones on which the art of the war is built”.<sup>102</sup>

<sup>97</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/21, file 13, p. 20, 21.

<sup>98</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/21, file 8, p. 126.

<sup>99</sup> *20. gadsimta Latvijas vēsture. 2. daļa. Neatkarīgā valsts 1918–1940* (ENG: History of Latvia in the 20th Century. Part 2. Independent State 1918–1940). Rīga: Latvijas Universitātes Latvijas Vēstures institūts, 2003, p. 501.

<sup>100</sup> For more information on the Internal Intelligence Unit and other Military Intelligence Services see: Stabiņš, E. *Latvijas armijas izlūkdienests. Īss dienesta vēstures apskats* (ENG: Latvian Army Intelligence Service. Brief Overview of the History of the Service). Aizsardzības ministrijas Militārās pretizlūkošanas dienests, 1997, 57 pages.

<sup>101</sup> Layman an ignoramus.

<sup>102</sup> *Izlūkošana un spiegošana* (ENG: Intelligence and Espionage). Ārējās izlūkošanas nodaļa, 1921, p. 3.

## 1.4.

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### Political Security Department (1920–1924)

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On 1 October 1920, along with the dissolution of Riga Criminal Police Political Department, the Ministry of the Interior re-established the counterintelligence and internal security service – Political Security Department (elsewhere – Political Protection), which continued the functions of its predecessor – conducted domestic intelligence, followed the political mood in society, checked the political credibility of individuals, and monitored politically unreliable persons, investigated crimes committed by such persons, continued the fight against underground communists and drew up lists of politically unreliable persons. According to the words of Voldemārs Alps, the Director of the Political Security Department, the institution's task was “to look for where it smells like politics”.<sup>103</sup>

Looking back at the beginning of the Service, in 1938 officers of the Political Department's Jelgava regional unit wrote: “After the state was established, Political Department's officers, with little experience, yet committed to the new state, engage in fierce battles with anti-establishment organisations and individuals to grow in peace and security in a new country.”<sup>104</sup>

On 10 November 1921, in response to a question from the Ministry of Justice on the establishment and competences of the Political Security Department, it is stated that “its activity includes the persecution of all political violations, except for those by soldiers”.<sup>105</sup> The continuity of operations is also evidenced by the fact that the Political Security Department often recruited former officers of the State Security Department. Their career experience and practices made it easier in many ways to organise the work of the institution, but sometimes this also caused some difficulties. In the past, officers from regional units were used to acting somewhat independently and this made it difficult to centralise and coordinate the work carried out by the Political Security Department's leadership. For example, at the end of 1920 no action

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<sup>103</sup> Alps, V. *Latvija spiegu tīklos* (ENG: Latvia in Spy Networks). Rīga: LARO, 2006, p. 57.

<sup>104</sup> *Vēsturiskais apskats par Iekšlietu ministrijas Politiskās pārvaldes Jelgavas rajona izveidošanos un darbību* (ENG: Historical Overview of the Establishment and Operation of the Political Department of Jelgava Regional Unit of the Ministry of Interior). 1938. Latvijas Nacionālā arhīva bibliotēka, p. 75.

<sup>105</sup> LVVA, fund 7432, description 3, file 8, p. 188.

plan in the regions was in place, and the responsible person – an investigator from Riga – lacked information on whether the activities in certain areas were carried out openly or covertly. The investigator also admitted that the activity in the regions had not yet been properly organised, justifying this with the fact that some local leading police officers will “undertake activities detrimental to the state”, such as in Krustpils and Tukums police stations.<sup>106</sup>

The dissolution of the Internal Intelligence Unit of the Headquarters of the Commander-in-Chief of the Latvian Army on 15 October 1920 played a crucial role in the further development of the Political Security Department. Its functions “as regards fighting political crime” were taken over by the Political Security Department of the Ministry of the Interior. For example, the latter took over all prisoners who until then were controlled by the Internal Intelligence Unit of the Headquarters of the Commander-in-Chief of the Latvian Army. During the study period, there were three prisoners in Valmiera Prison, whose cases, based on a writing of 14 October 1920, were taken over by the Political Security Department’s Valmiera regional unit. Likewise, the Political Security Department took over reports from parish boards, police prefects and other institutions and officers from Internal Intelligence Unit.<sup>107</sup>

The dissolution of the Internal Intelligence Unit of the Headquarters of the Commander-in-Chief of the Latvian Army opened up opportunities to expand the Service activity beyond Riga and in its surroundings. For example, on 20 October 1920, when taking over the records of the Internal Intelligence Division of Lower Courland District of the Internal Intelligence Unit of the HQ of the Commander-in-Chief of the Latvian Army, as well as its functions and tasks, the Political Security Department Unit in Liepāja was founded, which started its operations on the same date. The establishment of Liepāja regional unit was particularly important due to the existing port. In their reports, the officers of the unit noted that “many different people are flowing into Liepāja by rail and by ship – war refugees return to Latvia, political emigrants from Europe and America go to Russia and many flee from Russia’s communist terror”.<sup>108</sup>

The seat of the Political Security Department in Liepāja regional unit was originally located in the premises of the State Treasury, at 3 Hagedorna (now Teātra) Street. The first head of the regional unit was the investigation officer Pēteris Matvejs,<sup>109</sup> but from 11 May 1921, the unit’s administration was taken over by the investigation officer Kārlis Alksnis.

In the first three months of operation alone – in October–December 1920 – according to press reports, the Political Security Department arrested 716 persons throughout the territory of Latvia, 193 of whom were transferred for prosecution to the Prosecutor’s Office and administrative authorities, while 105 were expelled

<sup>106</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 8, p. op. 172.

<sup>107</sup> LVVA, fund 3277, description 1, file 274, p. 12; LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 8, p. 58.

<sup>108</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/8, file 553, p. 6, 12.

<sup>109</sup> On P. Matvejs, see: LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 392.

from the country and 372 were released after the investigation.<sup>110</sup> The activity in the regions at the end of 1920 is once again revealed by the work carried out in Liepāja region, where, according to the information gathered in 1928, 98 investigations were launched in less than three months in 1920 (of which 73 on proclamations and red flags), 63 searches were carried out and 59 people were arrested.<sup>111</sup>

Initially, the Political Security Department operated under the terms of the state of war,<sup>112</sup> but from 11 January 1921, on the basis of the rules issued by the Ministry of the Interior.<sup>113</sup> These set out the operational tasks of the Political Security Department: “to strengthen national security and independence by monitoring individuals and organisations”.<sup>114</sup> On 4 February 1921, Minister of the Interior, A. Bergs, indirectly providing an assessment of the previous activities of Latvian counterintelligence and internal security services, wrote to the director of Political Security Department: “Please receive and pass on my sincere thanks to all the Political Security Department officers for the expressed feelings as regards the recognition of Latvia<sup>115</sup> and their patriotic commitment to continue working to strengthen the foundations of the state, of which I also notify Mr. Prime Minister. I have always respected the idealism of our intelligent youth and the self-abnegation with which they have done the rather responsible and hard work at the Political Security Department, and which is much needed by the country. This work, for a large part, underlies the maintenance of peace and order and ensuring the course of country’s internal developments. I am convinced that the Political Security Department will always remain at the top of their tasks, and I wish the best of happiness to it on the occasion of Latvia’s recognition.”<sup>116</sup>

However, despite the praise given by the Minister of the Interior, the transition to a peace-time order within the institution was difficult, as evidenced by the audit of the Requests and Complaints Commission<sup>117</sup> in the Political Security Department on 24 May 1921. The Audit committee found: “The current structure and equipment of the Political Security Department is not consistent with the basic democratic laws of Latvia, nor with existing former Russian laws [...]. Considering the present system at the Political Security Department, it allows for greater arbitrariness than the former Russian Gendarmerie, since a representative from the Prosecutor’s Office

<sup>110</sup> Pārskats par Iekšlietu ministrijas darbību mūsu valsts 5 gadu pastāvēšanas laikā (ENG: A Review of the Performance of the Ministry of the Interior during the 5 Years of Our Independent Latvia). *Policijas Vēstnesis*. 16 November 1923, No. 57, pp. 3, 4.

<sup>111</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/8, file 553, p. 9.

<sup>112</sup> Announced on 11 February 1919. See: LVVA, fund 1368, description 2, file 20, p. 17.

<sup>113</sup> 20. gadsimta Latvijas vēsture. 2. daļa. Neatkarīgā valsts 1918–1940 (ENG: History of Latvia in the 20th Century. Part 2. Independent State 1918–1940). Rīga: Latvijas Universitātes Latvijas Vēstures institūts, 2003, p. 501.

<sup>114</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/9, file 7, p. 24.

<sup>115</sup> On 26 January 1921, the Entente Supreme Council in Paris adopted a decision on the *de iure* recognition of the Republic of Latvia.

<sup>116</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/9, file 13, p. op. 19.

<sup>117</sup> The Request and Complaint Commission was founded by a decision of the Constitutional Assembly of 12 October 1920 to deal with incoming complaints about state institutions and civil servants. See more: Iss pārskats par Lūgumu un sūdzību komisijas darbību (ENG: A Brief Overview of the Activities of the Request and Complaint Commission). *Valdības Vēstnesis*, 16 April 1923, No. 78, p. 1.

participated in the scoping interview and questioning, while now the Political Security Department officers do not follow the rules of the instructions approved by the Minister of the Interior and use such means in interviews and questioning as beating the arrested persons”.<sup>118</sup>

The transition to peace-time and the lifting of a state of reinforced security required the development of a new legislative basis for the operation of the Service. In February 1923, the Political Security Department indicated that “recently in the press and society rumours have been spreading about the liquidation of Political Security Department, including the reorganisation of it by merging it in urban areas with the Criminal Police and in rural areas under the regional heads. It is even emphasised that the Prefecture has already prepared premises in Riga for this purpose”, and it stressed the dangers of these rumours and the “negative implications on the overall functioning of the Political Security Department”.<sup>119</sup>

In 1923, the Ministry of the Interior drafted a new law on the Political Security Department, which would supplement and specify the previously adopted regulations of the Ministry of the Interior. The law states that the task of the Political Security Department is to “take care of the prevention and detection of political crimes”.<sup>120</sup> The draft law was submitted to the Saeima on 16 October 1923, where it was rejected in the final vote and returned to the Ministry of the Interior to be improved. The draft law was not adopted because its content was sharply criticised by the Social Democrats, who opposed the creation of an independent service. On 15 February 1924, the duration of the reinforced security was extended for three months (until 15 May 1924), which allowed the Political Security Department to operate in its current status.<sup>121</sup>

From the very beginning, the Social Democrats strongly opposed the activities carried out by the institution and, more broadly, its existence. For example, on 6 April 1922, at a declaration meeting of Riga City Council’s trade union fractions it was decided that the state’s economic and general policy needed to be radically changed in order to allow for a successful economy of the city of Riga “in the interests of the people”, which, among other things, provided for the liquidation of the Political Security Department and civic self-protection units, and for the introduction of municipal militia that was not hostile to the labour class for public security.<sup>122</sup>

The relations of the political forces in the Saeima and the implementers of political power with the Service would be worthy of separate research. In the context of work, the regular criticism by the Social Democrats both in the press and from the Saeima tribune against the activities of the Political Security Department

<sup>118</sup> LWA, fund 7432, description 3, file 17, p. 165.

<sup>119</sup> LWA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 894, p. 52.

<sup>120</sup> LWA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 44, p. 138.

<sup>121</sup> 20. *gadsimta Latvijas vēsture. 2. daļa. Neatkarīgā valsts 1918–1940* (ENG: History of Latvia in the 20th Century. Part 2. Independent State 1918–1940). Rīga: Latvijas Universitātes Latvijas Vēstures institūts, 2003, p. 502.

<sup>122</sup> *Pasaulē un mājās* (ENG: Away and at Home). *Darbs un Maize*. 25 May 1922, No. 6.

and later the Political Department until May 1934 should be highlighted. Left-wing newspapers (such as the “Socialdemokrāts” (ENG: “Socialdemocrat”)) devoted to the Service epithets such as “political perversion”, “guardian of citizenship and guardian angel” (in a sarcastic sense), “provocateurs”, “shame”, “servants of Ulmanis”, etc.,<sup>123</sup> which on the one hand points to the freedom of speech, expression and political opinion that exists in the country, but to some extent reveals not only the problems related to functioning of the Service, but also the difficult relations between political organisations and public authorities with a low degree of confidence and suspicion, which were created under the influence of ideological contrasts, the history of mutual relations<sup>124</sup> and also the current political backstage talks.

42 Despite this background, on 14 February 1923, the director of the Political Security Department, Pēteris Martinsons, looking back at the work carried out and describing the activities of the authority, underlined the progress achieved during the year: “These days mark the time, since I took over the management of Political Security Department a year ago. This past year has been generally active and rich in good success. The direct work of Political Security Department – the persecution, weakening and destruction of Latvia’s enemies – has brought the necessary success. During this period, many key communist and other criminal organisations of the country have been identified and destroyed. The Central Committee of the Communists of Latvia, organisations of Riga, Zemgale, Ogre, Vidzeme, etc., have been eliminated through tireless work; the activities of the Communist Jewish organisation throughout Latvia have been paralysed; spy organisations have been detected; many criminal activities were eliminated at their roots; many of our country’s criminals have been brought to justice and convicted; many were deported beyond the borders of Latvia, etc. In celebrating these merits of last year’s work, I do not want to attribute them to my management, but I acknowledge that this has been achieved through joint work, with the direct participation of all officers subordinate to me. Acknowledging your selfless work and merits for the good of all, I hereby find it my pleasure to express my gratitude to you for the joint work that has been undertaken. I am confident and hope that next year will be no less productive and full of successful work, to which I invite you all.”<sup>125</sup> In general, it can be concluded that with the stabilisation of the situation in the country and the strengthening of the ruling power, the scope of work of the Service also decreased in the mid-1920s compared to the first years of operation in wartime and in post-war conditions. On 13 March 1923, the Minister of the Interior,

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<sup>123</sup> See: LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 604.

<sup>124</sup> It is possible that such attitude of the Social Democrats towards the internal security services was shaped by the harsh experience with the ochranka staff in the context of the events of the 1905 revolution. The experienced arrests, persecution and often physical violence may have created an instinctive desire to treat the national internal Security Service with the same or similar attitude during the period of the independent Latvia as well.

<sup>125</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 45, p. 43.

Pēteris Bergis wrote that “due to the general political calming in the country, the scope of work of Political Security Department has greatly decreased”<sup>126</sup>.

The Instruction of human intelligence (hereinafter – HUMINT) work for the Political Security Department issued in 1924 (shortly before the reorganisation of the institution) was crucial in the work of the Service. It was elaborated to “provide more or less guiding rules for the HUMINT work of Political Security Department” and to give “purely practical instructions” to new officers based on lessons learnt in the past and practical experience. The first part of the instruction, defining the nature of the Service, states: “Political security is one of the most tangible forms of expression of state administrative power.”<sup>127</sup> It is reasonable to believe that this instruction was of significance throughout the entire interwar period. It consists of two parts. The first focuses on the main preconditions for the successful functioning of the network of informants:

- 1) general provisions,
- 2) secrecy,
- 3) characteristic features and skills of the case officers,
- 4) monitoring at a personal initiative,
- 5) agent network,
- 6) covert surveillance,
- 7) intelligence gathering,
- 8) associations, unions and meetings,
- 9) search,
- 10) questioning.

The second part focuses on (1) intelligence and espionage, and (2) ciphers, codes and transmission of messages. The need for this part is justified by the fact that “the task of the Political Security Department is also to combat foreign espionage, which is also closely linked to the active local anti-establishment organisations” and for this to be carried out successfully, the officers must understand the very nature of the espionage.<sup>128</sup>

In May 1924, the rules on the Political Security Department were also repealed by the lifting of the situation of increased protection. This led to the need to develop and adopt new rules for operation. In May 1924, the Saeima approved a law that ended the work of the Political Security Department, transforming it into the Political Department.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> LWA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 894, p. op. 55.

<sup>127</sup> *Instrukcija Politiskās apsardzes aģentūrai* (ENG: Instruction for the Political Security Department Agency). Rīga: Politiskās apsardzes izdevums, 1924, p. 3–5.

<sup>128</sup> *Instrukcija Politiskās apsardzes aģentūrai* (ENG: Instruction for the Political Security Department Agency). Rīga: Politiskās apsardzes izdevums, 1924.

<sup>129</sup> LWA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 45, p. 103.

## 1.5.

Political Department  
(1924–1939)

On 9 May 1924, the Political Department (called “Polit-Department” by the general society) continued the work of the Political Security Department. The establishment of the Political Department was a result of the Law on Central Criminal Police, adopted on the same date. The law stipulates that the Central Criminal Police under the Ministry of the Interior consists of the Criminal Police and Political Department. Though merged in one department, both administrations were autonomous in their functions.<sup>130</sup> The Political Department acted on the basis of the Criminal Procedure Law and other national laws and regulations, but with a number of exceptions relating to operational activities. The task of the Political Department was to “detect and pursue crime against the democratic system and security of the country”.<sup>131</sup> The press points out that, with the establishment of the Political Department, “no major changes in the establishment of the Administration are expected. Some of the direct functions will move to the Administrative Department”.<sup>132</sup> The creation of a single Central Criminal Police force was not only facilitated by the Social democrats’ complaints of the functioning of a separate security service, but also by the removal of the state of protection in the country and the consequent need to act in accordance with the rules of criminal procedure.<sup>133</sup>

Looking back at the first decade of the activities of the Ministry of the Interior and its subordinate institutions, the journalist, editor of the ministry’s newspaper “Iekšlietu Ministrijas Vēstnesis”, Jānis Ozols, wrote in 1928: “The functioning of the Political Department must be viewed separately, as it plays a particularly important role in our country’s life. This is because an independent Latvia had many enemies from its birth, who are trying to destroy our country’s democratic system and the independent

<sup>130</sup> *Latvijas iekšējās drošības nostiprināšanas vēsture, 1918–1925* (ENG: History of Strengthening the Internal Security of Latvia 1918–1925). Rīga: Valters and Rapa, p. 58; Ceriņš, A. *Vadonis policijas ierēdņiem un aizsargiem* (ENG: Leader for Police Officers and Privates). Rīga: Rīgas Policijas skola, 1925, p. 117.

<sup>131</sup> LVVA (Latvian National Historical Archive), fund 3235, description 1/1, file 44, p. 155; Likums par Centrālo kriminālpoliciju (ENG: Law on Central Criminal Police). *Policijas Vēstnesis*. 29 April 1924, No. 34, p. 1.

<sup>132</sup> Centrālā Kriminālpolicija (ENG: Central Criminal Police). *Latvijas Vēstnesis*. 9 May 1924, No. 104, p. 1.

<sup>133</sup> *20. gadsimta Latvijas vēsture. 2. daļa. Neatkarīgā valsts 1918–1940* (ENG: History of Latvia in the 20th Century. Part 2. Independent State 1918–1940). Rīga: Latvijas Universitātes Latvijas Vēstures institūts, 2003, p. 502.

Latvia.<sup>134</sup> In the second half of the 1920s, the work of the Political Department played an important role in maintaining the internal security of the country, thus increasing the prestige of this institution in the political context. According to some political forces, this raised concerns about the politicisation of the Political Department. This is confirmed by the remarks made in the memories of the politician, Social Democrat and former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Fēlikss Cielēns, about the alleged creation of another state intelligence and security service under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs,<sup>135</sup> which reveals the difficult relations of the domestic political elite.

In the late 1920s and early 1930s, the legal basis of the Political Department was extended with new alterations. In the Regulations of the Police System issued in 1929, the functions of the Political Department and the Criminal Police were increasingly separated. In turn, the new law on the police system adopted in 1933 completely separated the activities of the two institutions.<sup>136</sup>

The further operation of the domestic Security Service was radically changed by the coup of 15 May 1934, after which the authoritarian regime of Kārlis Ulmanis came into being until the loss of Latvia's independence in the summer of 1940. Even in the second decade of the 21st century, these more than 80-year-old events are still a relatively sensitive topic in the Latvian public space, provoking various opinions and discussions. The involvement of the Political Department in the implementation of the coup and the politicisation of its activities would also be worth a separate study, which to some extent has already been indirectly initiated by historians Ēriks Jēkabsons and Valters Ščerbinskis, preparing a source collection on the coup.<sup>137</sup> The documents published in the collection, indirectly but at the same time vividly, illustrate the involvement of the Political Department and its great role in the coup. Moreover, the coup took place with the direct participation of the Political Department. In fact, the Political Department violated the laws and regulations governing the operation of the Service, such as the mandatory requirement set out in the instruction document of 1924 that the Service personnel must be loyal to the existing state system<sup>138</sup> – the parliamentary democracy. Direct involvement in the coup, in violation of the tasks set forth in the 1933 Law on the Police System, made the Political Department a perpetrator of the crime. In

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<sup>134</sup> *Latvija desmit gados. Latvijas valsts nodibināšanas un viņas pirmo 10 gadu darbības vēsture* (ENG: Latvia in Ten Years. History of the Establishment of the State of Latvia and its First 10 years). Rīga: Jubilejas komisija, 1928, p. 151.

<sup>135</sup> See: Cielēns, F. *Laiķmetu maiņā. Atmiņas un atziņas* (ENG: The Change of Age. Memories and Insights). Volume No. 2. Lidinge: Momento, 1963, pp. 438–449.

<sup>136</sup> Žigūre, A. *Latvijas policijas vēsture* (ENG: History of the Latvian Police). Second book. Rīga: Likuma vārdā, 1998, p. 261.

<sup>137</sup> See: Jēkabsons, Ē., Ščerbinskis, V. (comp.). *Apvērsums: 1934. gada 15. maija notikumi avotos un pētījumos* (ENG: Coup. Events of 15 May 1934 in Sources and Studies). Rīga: Latvijas Nacionālais arhīvs, Latvijas Arhīvistu biedrība, 2012, 576 pages.

<sup>138</sup> *Instrukcija Politiskās apsardzes aģentūrai* (ENG: Instruction for the Political Security Department Agency). Rīga: Politiskās apsardzes izdevums, 1924, p. 10.

particular, according to the law the Political Department had to “detect and combat criminal offences against the political system and security”.<sup>139</sup>

The involvement in the coup led to an openly contradictory position of the Political Department, not only against the democratic system and the Constitution, but also against society as a whole. Namely, by supporting the new political regime and becoming one of its pillars, in the opinion of the Political Department (and the authoritarian regime), every resident who expressed any dissatisfaction with the authoritarian regime of K. Ulmanis could be potentially dangerous to the internal security of the country.

The politicisation of Political Department at the leadership level began shortly before the coup. Namely, there had been changes in the management level of all police structures in the past. Jānis Fridrihsons, a long-term and experienced officer of the Security Service, but also closely associated with the Latvian Farmers' Union (Latviešu Zemnieku savienība, hereinafter – LZS), became the Director of the Political Department from 20 April 1934, less than a month before the coup of K. Ulmanis.<sup>140</sup> Such step was implemented with the coup in mind, and this is also confirmed by the remarks of the Minister of Public Affairs, Alfrēds Bērziņš, who pointed out the participation of the new director in the planning of the coup.<sup>141</sup> For sure, K. Ulmanis wanted people in the most important state positions to be reliable and related to the LZS, especially in the context of the Service, where previously finetuned work practices for guarding democracy could serve for public monitoring or even control under the authoritarian regime.

On the eve of the coup, the Director of the Political Department ordered senior officers to prepare search warrants, thinking mainly of the arrests of members of the Social Democratic Party (including members of the Saeima),<sup>142</sup> which immediately followed.<sup>143</sup> The high level of participation is confirmed by the fact that Political Department officers worked 14 to 16 hours a day during the coup.<sup>144</sup> The coup led to closer monitoring of civic organisations (associations, unions, etc.), public mood and various groups of the country (such as ethnic minorities) and the establishment of registers (for example, of politically untrustworthy and potentially untrustworthy people).

<sup>139</sup> Policijas iekārta (ENG: Police Apparatus). *Valdības Vēstnesis*. 29 April 1933, p. 3, 4.

<sup>140</sup> *20. gadsimta Latvijas vēsture. 2. daļa. Neatkarīgā valsts 1918–1940* (ENG: History of Latvia in the 20th Century. Part 2. Independent State 1918–1940). Bērziņš, V. (ed.). Rīga: Latvijas Universitātes Latvijas Vēstures institūts, 2003, p. 590.

<sup>141</sup> Bērziņš, A. *Nepublicētās atmiņas. Laiks, kas negaist* (ENG: Unpublished Memories. Time that doesn't Fade). Rīga: LN izdevniecība, 2015, p. 52.

<sup>142</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/22, file 531, p. 4.

<sup>143</sup> Ziņojums laikrakstā "Jaunākās Ziņas" par 1934. gada 15.–16. maija notikumiem (ENG: Article in the Newspaper "Jaunākās Ziņas" Reporting on the Events of 15–16 May 1934). Book: Šcerbinskis, V., Jēkabsons, Ē. (comp.). *Apvērsums: 1934. gada 15. maija notikumi avotos un pētījumos* (ENG: Coup. Events of 15 May 1934 in Sources and Studies). Rīga: Latvijas Nacionālais arhīvs, Latvijas Arhivistu biedrība, 2012, pp. 213–214.

<sup>144</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/22, file 531, p. 52, 53.

The Political Department was also directly involved in the establishment and operation of the Liepāja concentration camp,<sup>145</sup> monitoring political prisoners brought to the camp. The historian V. Ščerbinskis points out that the Political Department, together with the Information Unit of the Latvian Army Headquarters, as part of counterintelligence measures, compiled lists of detainees who were escorted from prisons, where the detained persons were taken on 16 May and the following few days, to the specially created Liepāja concentration camp, which existed for about six months.<sup>146</sup> The Political Department was also in charge of the prisoners' contact with relatives – visits were possible not more than once a week; moreover, only one family member could be met at one time. Meeting permits were issued by the Director of the Political Department in Riga and the head of the relevant structural unit in Liepāja.<sup>147</sup>

The activities of the Political Department in the second half of the 1930s provided significant informative assistance to the regime of K. Ulmanis, monitoring society in a truly police-like manner. On the one hand, such increased attention made it possible to prevent various, still existing internal security threats (such as underground communist activities). On the other hand, in the second half of the 1930s the functions and manifestations of the Service reached the highest level of politicisation, and the desire to justify the trust shown by the usurper of political power K. Ulmanis increased, thus increasingly looking for (and exaggerating) danger and conspiracies against the existence of the anti-democratic regime. Therefore, after K. Ulmanis' coup in 1934, the bureaucratic workload of the Political Department increased significantly. Even after the coup, the Political Department carried out a series of searches and arrests as an even larger number of risk groups were brought to its attention. For instance, in 1932 the Service carried out 2,031 searches, and in 1934 the number already reached 2,420.<sup>148</sup> However, it should be noted that shortly after the coup, the activities of the Political Department decreased significantly.<sup>149</sup> This is also indicated by the decrease in the number of

<sup>145</sup> The purpose of this type of concentration camp (camps of prisoners of war) was preventive – to prevent military or civilian (political opponents) involvement in actions hostile to the state or regime, to prevent potential threats to the state (or regime) that could be caused by such group being free. See more: Ščerbinskis, V. Liepājas koncentrācijas nometne un tās režīms. 1934. gada maijs–1935. gada marts (ENG: Liepāja Concentration Camp and its Regime. May 1934–March 1935). *Latvijas Arhīvi*. 2009, No. 1/2, p. 79.

<sup>146</sup> Ščerbinskis, V. Liepājas koncentrācijas nometne un tās režīms. 1934. gada maijs–1935. gada marts (ENG: Liepāja Concentration Camp and its Regime. May 1934–March 1935). *Latvijas Arhīvi*. 2009, No. 1/2, p. 79.

<sup>147</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 189/2, p. 72, 73.

<sup>148</sup> Puša, G. *Politiskās pārvaldes darbība Latvijā 1934.–1939. gadā: Rīgas apriņķa piemērs* (ENG: Activity of the Political Department in Latvia in 1934–1939: an Example of Riga County). Master's Thesis. Rīga: Latvijas Universitāte, 2013, p. 94.

<sup>149</sup> Žvinklis, A. Ieskats Latvijas Republikas politiskās policijas darbībā (ENG: Insight into the Activities of the Political Police of the Republic of Latvia). *Latvijas Vēstures Institūta Žurnāls*. 1994, No. 1, p. 115; Jēkabsons, Ē. Iekšlietu ministrija (ENG: Ministry of Interior). Book: *15. maija Latvija* (ENG: Latvia of 15 May). Rīga: Latvijas Mediji, 2017, p. 240, 241.

arrested persons: in 1934 – 1,846 arrested, in 1935 – 790, while in 1939 – 410.<sup>150</sup> The number of searches also decreased. Respectively, in 1934 – 2420, in 1935 – 1383, and in 1939 – 389 searches.<sup>151</sup>

In 1938, the codex of laws issued by the Administrative Department of the Ministry of the Interior states that the Political Department is one of the central authorities of the Administrative Department under the Ministry of the Interior, whose task is to prevent and detect crimes against the democratic system and security of the country. The Political Department consists of:

- 1) An Investigation Unit – it is in charge of the investigative operations of regions, cases to be settled through administrative procedure, card index of the Department and archive;
- 2) Operational Unit – in charge of issues of illegal anti-governmental movements and organisations;
- 3) Secretariat – in charge of maintenance and human resource issues.<sup>152</sup>

Already before, at least from November 1936, each regional unit of the Service – Rīga, Jelgava, Liepāja, Rēzekne, Daugavpils, Valmiera and Gulbene – covered about three counties. Each head of the regional unit had one investigation officer, six to eight junior and senior case officers, and a desk officer providing assistance at his disposal – a total of eight to twelve officers,<sup>153</sup> as well as informants.

<sup>150</sup> Puša, G. *Politiskās pārvaldes darbība Latvijā 1934.–1939. gadā: Rīgas apriņķa piemērs* (ENG: Activity of the Political Department in Latvia in 1934–1939: an Example of Riga County). Master's Thesis. Rīga: Latvijas Universitāte, 2013, p. 95.

<sup>151</sup> Puša, G. *Politiskās pārvaldes darbība Latvijā 1934.–1939. gadā: Rīgas apriņķa piemērs* (ENG: Activity of the Political Department in Latvia in 1934–1939: an Example of Riga County). Master's Thesis. Rīga, Latvijas Universitāte, 2013, p. 94.

<sup>152</sup> *Likumu un noteikumu sakojums policijas darbiniekiem* (ENG: A Codex of Laws and Regulations for Police Officers). Rīga: Iekšlietu ministrijas Administratīvais departaments, unofficial edition, 1938, p. 7.

<sup>153</sup> Jēkabsons, Ē. Iekšlietu ministrija (ENG: Ministry of Interior). Book: *15. maija Latvija* (ENG: Latvia of 15 May). Rīga: Latvijas Mediji, 2017, p. 241.

## 1.6.

### Political Police Department (1939–1940)

On 24 May 1939, the Latvian Government adopted a new law on the structure of the Ministry of the Interior. As a result, on 6 July 1939, the Political Department and the Criminal Police Administration were joined into the Security Police Department, which meant that the Service was separated from the Administrative Department, under whose authority it worked for many years. Jānis Fridrihsons, the former Director of the Political Department was appointed the Director of the Security Police Department, while he also remained the Director of the Political Police Department.<sup>154</sup>

The explanations issued in 1939 regarding the structure of the Ministry of the Interior state: “The Criminal Police Department and the Political Department have been merged into the Security Police Department, transforming the Political Department by analogy into the Political Police Department and assigning the duties of the director of this Department. The Secretariat of the Political Department separated from the Department, as it will handle the maintenance issues, personnel and general issues of both administrations.”<sup>155</sup>

Along with the changes, it was planned to increase the internal security of the country by promoting the increase in the number of employees of the Order and Security Police Department, as well as the improvement of armament. In October 1939, the Cabinet of Ministers allocated 225'000 Lats for this purpose. In total, in the 1939 budget, the government allocated 790'000 Lats for the improvement of police work.<sup>156</sup>

Intensified public monitoring activities took the form of celebrations important for the authoritarian regime, of which the celebrations of 15 May, or in the sense of the authoritarian regime – the national revival holiday, should be highlighted first.

<sup>154</sup> Andersons, E. *Latvijas bruņotie spēki un to priekšvēsture* (ENG: Latvian Armed Forces and their History). Rīga: Daugavas Vanagi, 1983, p. 451; Jēkabsons, E., Ščerbinskis, V. *Latvijas politiskās policijas vadītāji* (ENG: Chief Officials of the Latvian Political Police). *Lauku Avīze*. 29 July 1997, p. 31.

<sup>155</sup> LVVA, fund 1368, description 1, file 1894, p. 1.

<sup>156</sup> Andersons, E. *Latvijas bruņotie spēki un to priekšvēsture* (ENG: Latvian Armed Forces and their History). Rīga: Daugavas Vanagi, 1983, p. 452.

In the regions, the structural units of the Service submitted detailed reports to the director in Riga on the course of the celebration, involvement of participants, public mood,<sup>157</sup> which conditionally served as an indicator for measuring attitudes towards the existing regime. If any incidents occurred during the course of such measures to build a sense of community and unity,<sup>158</sup> they were investigated by the Service officers. For example, regarding the loudspeaker disturbances detected during K. Ulmanis' radio speech broadcast in Ludza on 18 November 1939, the head of Rēzekne regional unit was instructed to "find out the causes of these disturbances in a completely secret manner".<sup>159</sup>

In 1940, the Service consisted of Investigation and Operational Units, as well as eight regional units – Rīga, Jelgava, Liepāja, Rēzekne, Daugavpils, Valmiera, Gulbene, and from the autumn of 1939 – also Ventspils. The Service employed heads of regional units and 206 investigation officers and case officers, and an extensive network of informants.<sup>160</sup> The last major campaign before the Soviet occupation was carried out by the Service in April 1940, arresting numerous communists.

After the occupation of Latvia, the Political Police Department with all its inventory and documentation was taken over by the Soviet Political Police (The People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs or NKVD – *Народный комиссариат внутренних дел*), which quickly started arresting officers of the Latvian Political Police Department. On 22 June 1940 J. Fridrihsons was dismissed. In the period from the dismissal of J. Fridrihsons to the complete liquidation of the Security Service, the management was taken over by Vikentijs Latkovskis, who was a supporter of the communist regime. LVVA documents show that already in July 1940, all Service decisions were approved and signed by V. Latkovskis. The replacement of Security Service officers at various levels is evidenced, for example, by the request of the Central Area Committee of the Latvian Communist Party of 11 July 1940 to appoint Jānis Edgars Cinis, a member of the Latvian Communist Party, as the Head of Valmiera regional unit of the Political Police Department.<sup>161</sup>

After taking over the Security Service, its liquidation was launched, and on 24 July, all Latvian law enforcement and internal security institutions were shut down, replacing them with popular militia units.<sup>162</sup> Historian A. Žvinklis describes the situation as follows: "In a state of complete secrecy, the Soviet Political Police took revenge on the personnel of intelligence and security services of other

<sup>157</sup> For example, see the reports of the districts of the Political Administration in connection with the public holidays – National Revival, 18 November, Harvest festival, Song festival, Children's festival, and others for the period from 1937 to 1940. LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/22, file 767, p. 143.

<sup>158</sup> See more: Hanovs, D., Tēraudkalns, V. *Laiks, telpa, vadonis: autoritārisma kultūra Latvijā, 1934–1940* (ENG: Time, Space, Leader: Culture of Authoritarianism in Latvia, 1934–1940). Rīga: Zinātne, 2011, 328 pages.

<sup>159</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/22, file 767, p. 90, 91.

<sup>160</sup> Jēkabsons, Ē. Iekšlietu ministrija (ENG: Ministry of the Interior). Book: *15. maija Latvija* (ENG: Latvia of 15 May). Rīga: Latvijas Mediji, 2017, p. 241.

<sup>161</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 876a, p. 60.

<sup>162</sup> Jēkabsons, Ē. Iekšlietu ministrija (ENG: Ministry of the Interior). Book: *15. maija Latvija* (ENG: Latvia of 15 May). Rīga: Latvijas Mediji, 2017, p. 241.

independent neighbouring countries.”<sup>163</sup> It was particularly important for the new regime to take over the records of the already dissolved Service and all the information at its disposal to be used in its operations.

It should be noted, however, that some of the Service officers still continued to carry out their job duties in the summer of 1940 and even participated in the first arrests of the Soviet Political Police.<sup>164</sup> For example, Konstantīns Vasiļevskis, a member of the organisation “Sokol”, remembers (memories were recorded in 2011) his father Sigismunds Vasiļevskis, founder and chief of the Daugavpils organisation “Sokol”, being arrested in 1940. K. Vasiļevskis, who was a 12-year-old boy at that time, was present at the arrest when already after the Soviet troops had marched into Latvia, the Political Department officers entered the house, and in cooperation with the Soviet officers, were searching the house for personal letters. After the search, K. Vasiļevskis left Riga, while his father was arrested on 6 July and then sentenced for “counter-revolutionary relations with the international bourgeoisie” and shot in Babīte on 15 January 1941 in the execution of his death sentence.<sup>165</sup>

A description of the events in 1940 in the Service has also been left by the historian and lawyer Ādolfs Šilde. He writes that in 1940 Semjons Šustins (alias Simons Šustins) laid the foundation for the operation of the KGB in Latvia and quotes another officer of Political Police – Herberts Teidemanis, who recalled that when the Red Army marched into Riga, the officers of the Service continued their work and listened to the order of K. Ulmanis to “stay in their places”. H. Teidemanis formally continued his work until August 1940 and instructed S. Šustins “on issues of local life” and watched illegal contacts with foreign countries. H. Teidemanis writes that “on about the fourth day after the Russians marched into Latvia, Šustins arrived to us at the Political Police Department. He used the cover name “Silenieks”. Together with him came also other Soviet personnel. They were all issued with Latvian domestic passports with fictional but Latvian words. That was still in the days of June. Šustins wanted to know everything. At the beginning, he was courteous and moderate. He sat in the office of the former director of the Political Police Department, Fridrihsons”. H. Teidemanis also pointed out that “someone from the old officers, a man by the name Krūze, managed to sign off the

<sup>163</sup> Žvinklis, A. Ieskats Latvijas Republikas politiskās policijas darbībā (ENG: Insight into the Activities of the Political Police of the Republic of Latvia). *Latvijas Vēstures Institūta Žurnāls*. 1994, No. 1, p. 114.

<sup>164</sup> Ērglis, Dz., Šneidere, I., Viksne, R., Žvinklis, A. Padomju represijas Latvijā 1940. gada jūnijā–augustā: struktūranalīze (ENG: Soviet Repressions in Latvia in June–August 1940: Structural Analysis). Book: *Totalitārie okupācijas režīmi Latvijā 1940.–1964. gadā. Latvijas Vēsturnieku komisijas raksti* (ENG: Totalitarian Occupation Regimes in Latvia in 1940–1964. Articles of the Commission of Historians of Latvia). Volume No. 13. Latvijas Vēstures institūta apgāds, 2004, pp. 99–129, p. 100.

<sup>165</sup> S. Vasiļevskis was rehabilitated on 18 May 1993. Memories by Konstantīns Vasiļevskis. Memories recorded in January 2011. By the priest of Daugavpils St. Boris and Gleb Cathedral, Georgijs Petrovskis. Transcribed by Andrejs Gusačenko on 15 January 2017. Duration: 82 minutes. Stored in the personal collections of G. Petrovskis and A. Gusačenko.

release of civic prisoners in the first few days”, most likely in combination with the communists to be liberated.<sup>166</sup>

Ā. Šilde also points out that the fate of other Service officers in 1940 was less successful than that of H. Teidemanis, who “managed to save himself in time”,<sup>167</sup> and writes that “other officers in this administration experienced hard days”, many of whom (in particular leading officers) were arrested and repressed. Ā. Šilde claims that the campaign resulted in the death of around 300 security officers.<sup>168</sup>

Similarly, the historian Ā. Šilde, based on statements by H. Teidemanis, briefly describes what has happened with the archives of the Service and the network of informants. He stressed that the Head of the Operational Unit of the Political Police Department, Roberts Štiglicis, who had information about the network of informants to the Security Service, managed to escape the Soviet repressions by fleeing to Finland via Estonia. Likewise, Ā. Šilde welcomes R. Štiglicis’ action regarding the operational documentation because for “about three days he was keeping the overn burning and destroying his secret documents”; while the actions of the Director, J. Fridrihsons, who ordered “the card indices to be left untouched and prohibited their destruction” surprised some, creating confusion.<sup>169</sup> Contradictory news is provided by the documents of the occupying power according to which J. Fridrihsons was accused of destroying certain documents.<sup>170</sup> However, a full study of the events in 1940 in the Latvian Service is lacking, and this time is still covered by indifferent myths and assumptions; to change them, it would be necessary to study the archives of Latvia and Russia.

<sup>166</sup> Šilde, Ā. *Pasaules revolūcijas vārdā* (ENG: In the Name of the World Revolution). Second Edition. Rīga: Elpa, 1993, p. 98.

<sup>167</sup> Some of the former officers of the State Security Service collaborated with the occupying power during the German occupation. One of these was Herberts Teidemanis, who, during the Nazi German occupation, ran the Latvian Political Police Department, which was subordinate to the Security Police Commander from April 1942 to October 1944 (Kangeris, K. *Policijas struktūras Latvijā vācu okupācijas laikā* (ENG: Police Structures during the German Occupation in Latvia). Book: *Okupētā Latvija 20. gadsimta 40. gados. Latvijas Vēsturnieku komisijas raksti* (ENG: Occupied Latvia in the 1940s. Articles of the Commission of Historians of Latvia). Volume No. 16. Rīga: Latvijas Vēstures institūta apgāds, 2004, p. 298.).

<sup>168</sup> Šilde, Ā. *Pasaules revolūcijas vārdā* (ENG: In the Name of the World Revolution). Second Edition. Rīga: Elpa, 1993, p. 98, 99.

<sup>169</sup> Šilde, Ā. *Pasaules revolūcijas vārdā* (ENG: In the Name of the World Revolution). Rīga: Elpa, 1993, p. 98, 99.

<sup>170</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/6, file 1269, p. 34, 46.

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Maintaining and strengthening the internal security of the state was an essential precondition for the existence of an independent Republic of Latvia, where the Security Service played an essential role. It operated during a complex and dynamic period of political and social developments that have and had a direct impact on its functioning.

During the interwar period, the Service underwent a number of institutional changes: the name, leadership, personnel and the legal basis changed. However, the core tasks remained unchanged and were continued, ensuring ongoing monitoring of the internal security of the state and combatting political crime.

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## CHAPTER 2

# Service infrastructure and resources

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One of the first tasks of the Service was related to the development of a successful, operational infrastructure which would cover the whole territory of Latvia and thus allow the Service to successfully detect and combat illegal politically motivated activities.

The development of the infrastructure was hampered by the military-political situation in the country and by institutional changes, and only with the establishment of the Political Security Department in autumn 1920 was it possible to state and coordinate activities as well as develop the operational framework and institutional structure.

The Service was under the authority of the Ministry of the Interior and its budget was also under the strict control of the Cabinet of Ministers and the Ministry of the Interior. Premises, equipment, machinery, weapons, etc., were acquired and maintained in accordance with the state financial situation.

## 2.1.

### Service structure

The structure of the State Security Department in Riga consisted of the Secretariat (Service's Leadership), the Investigation Unit (dealing with investigation activities, gathering information on the political reliability of individuals and drawing up lists of supporters of Bermond Army), the Registration Unit (prepared feedback on the political reliability of individuals, certificates of entry to Latvia and departure, revised the documents left by the Bolsheviks, drew up the lists of communists) and Control Unit (took over and processed the files of the dissolved Control-Information Unit, developed documentation forms for the Service, processed materials on persons who were accused of espionage for Russia). A convoy team also operated separately.<sup>171</sup>

As soon as the military situation and human resources made it possible, the State Security Department expanded its activities in 1919, not only in Riga but also in the regions, mainly by working under regional commander's offices and local police structure. For example, in Liepāja, on 12 Lielā Street, an investigation officer of State Security Department Liepāja regional unit was working closely with the Prefecture of Liepāja City.<sup>172</sup> Such model of operation was also developed in other regions and cities, and in general the State Security Department was located in Pārdaugava, Ventspils, Liepāja, Cēsis and Valmiera.<sup>173</sup> By dissolving the State Security Department, Riga Criminal Police Political Department was only deployed in the capital city and its surroundings, where, as already mentioned, its tasks were overlapping with the tasks of the Internal Intelligence Unit of the Headquarters of the Commander-in-Chief of the Latvian Army. In the regions, military units, commandant's offices and regional chiefs performed counterintelligence and other tasks of the former State Security Department as far as possible.<sup>174</sup>

The Political Security Department established in 1920 worked under the direct authority of the Ministry of the Interior. The building of the Ministry of the Interior was located on 37/39 Aleksandra (now Brīvības) Boulevard. In November 1920, the Ministry of the Interior and the institutions under it included: Ministry's Chancellery, Press and Association Division, Department of Religion Affairs, Administrative

<sup>171</sup> LVA, fund 3725, description 2, file 144, p. 24, 25; LVA, fund 1368, description 2, file 204, p.

<sup>172</sup> LVA, fund 3503, description 1, file 100, p. 68.

<sup>173</sup> LVA, fund 3725, description 2, file 144, p. 24, 25.

<sup>174</sup> 20. *gadsimta Latvijas vēsture. 2. daļa. Neatkarīgā valsts 1918–1940* (ENG: History of Latvia in the 20th Century. Part 2. Independent State 1918–1940). Rīga: Latvijas Universitātes Latvijas Vēstures institūts, 2003, p. 500, 501.

Department, Department of Internal Security, Parish Guards Division, Passport Division, Department of Local Governments, Rural Parish Division, Urban Division, Housing Inspectorate, Prisoners-of-War and Refugee Division, Department on Latgale Affairs, Department of Health, Pharmacy Administration, Hospital and Resort Division, Veterinary Board, Insurance Department, Technical Department, General Department, State War Loss Commission, Riga City War Loss Commission, Riga Regional War Loss Commission, Vidzeme Evangelical Lutheran Consistory and Political Security Department, which was located in a separate building.

As early as December 1920, the Political Security Department activities in Latvia were divided as follows:

- 1) Headquarters (Administration) of Political Security Department located in Riga, 9 Baznīcas Street;
- 2) Liepāja regional unit with its office in Liepāja, 3 Hagedorna (now Teātra) Street, which managed Liepāja, Aizpute and Kuldīga districts;
- 3) Valmiera regional unit with its office in Valmiera pastorate (now Valmiera, 9f Raiņa Street), which managed Valmiera region, part of the regions of Cēsis and Valka;
- 4) Daugavpils regional unit with its office in Daugavpils, 57 Pēterpils (now Saules) Street, which managed the regions of Daugavpils and Ilūkste;
- 5) Rēzekne regional unit with its office in Rēzekne, 5 Vakzāles (now Brīvības) Street,<sup>175</sup> which managed Rēzekne region and part of Ludza region;
- 6) Vecgulgbene regional unit with its office in Aluksne, which managed part of the regions of Valka and Ludza;
- 7) In other regions and cities of Latvia, the Political Security Department's officers worked under regional unit's head, under the direct authority of the Riga Administration of the Political Security Department and Riga District investigation officer.<sup>176</sup> In Ventspils, for example, in October 1920, the institution was located at 8 Sinagogas Street, apartment 3, where one Political Security Department's officer worked – the junior case officer Jūlijs Krauze.<sup>177,178</sup> People working in regions and other cities of Latvia were subordinate to the Political Security Department's leadership in Riga and were working closely with it. For example, in December 1920, the junior case officer J. Krauze asked the Riga regional Political Security Department's officers to send him the newspaper “Jaunākās Ziņas” (ENG: “Latest News”) and “if possible others”,<sup>179</sup> as well as regularly reported on the situation and various activities in his territory of activity.

<sup>175</sup> In November 1920, the seat of Rēzekne regional unit was located in Rēzekne, 17 Pestitāja (Spaskaja) Street; see: LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 10, p. 10.

<sup>176</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 8, p. 162; *ibid.*, file 10, p. 10.

<sup>177</sup> For more information about J. Krauze, see: LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 428.

<sup>178</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 8, p. 14.

<sup>179</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 8, p. 160.

In their area of responsibility, each Political Security Department's regional unit organised their own internal structure of the unit. For example, in 1921, Liepāja regional unit had organised maintenance and secretary work considering the growing number of officers; regional sites – Kuldīga, Aizpute, Palanga and Priekule – were established in the same year, the covert surveillance was expanded and the network of informants was purposefully established.<sup>180</sup>

However, it should be noted that some concerns about the issue of the Political Security Department's infrastructure were caused by the division of the Political Security Department “not being in line with the units of the Public Prosecutor's Office, which is particularly disturbing when inviting officials to give testimonies”.<sup>181</sup>

Another topic of attention was that of premises. The premises in which the officers were working were often not only unsuitable for work, but even harmful to some extent. In September 1921, the head of Vecgulbene regional unit indicated that the chancellery subordinate to him was located in one apartment with natural persons (Alūksne, 7 Pils Street), and “secrecy does not work in this way”; moreover, he also noted that neither the board of the town of Alūksne nor the chief of police are able to provide other premises for the Chancellery (Secretariat).<sup>182</sup> In March 1923, the same head of unit reported that “the premises are not meeting hygiene requirements”, explaining that “the Chancellery premises and the office of the regional unit's head, since it is located on the second floor of the house above the uninhabited shop and warehouse rooms, is constantly full of unhealthy fumes that are coming through the floor from underground Jewish shops”.<sup>183</sup>

Later, certain changes were made to the structure of the Service, and in December 1922 the Political Security Department consisted of Administration (Rīga), Investigation Unit (Rīga), Rīga, Liepāja, Valmiera, Daugavpils Site, Rēzekne, Vecgulbene regional units and the refugee quarantine site in Rēzekne.<sup>184</sup> At the end of 1923 and in 1924, the Political Security Department's structure was as follows: the Investigation Unit, the Secretariat, the Operational Unit, Rīga, Liepāja, Valmiera, Vecgulbene regional units, Daugavpils Site and Rēzekne Site.<sup>185</sup> It can be seen that the leadership only slightly changed the structure of the Service to clarify it, and this did not have a significant impact on the institution's activities.

Each Political Security Department's unit was further subdivided. For example, the Counterintelligence Unit operated under the supervision of the Director of the Service, senior case officer with executive rights, handler of the informants' network and a desk officer subordinate to him. The desk officer was in charge of the logbook,

<sup>180</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/8, file 553, pp. 12–14.

<sup>181</sup> LVA, fund 3234, description 1/2, file 146/2, p. 39.

<sup>182</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 933, p. 36.

<sup>183</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 933, p. 248.

<sup>184</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 45, p. 36.

<sup>185</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 45, p. 124.

refugee issues, foreigners' issues, embassy issues and issues related to trade unions and press, as well as contacted the Investigation Unit of the Political Security Department and the Secretariat.<sup>186</sup>

Prokuratūras iecirkņi.			
I Rīgas	II Liepājas	III Jelgavas	IV Lāzgaļos
Rīgas, Valmieras, Cēsu un Valkas apr. ar pilsētām	Liepājas, Tīņpils, Ventspils, Kuldīgas un Talsu apr. ar pilsētām	Jelgavas, Bauskas, Tukumis, Jauņjēlgavas, un Pleskavas apr. ar pilsētām	Daugavpils, Rēzekis un Daugavas apr. ar pilsētām
Politiskās aps. rajoni.			
I Rīgas rajons	II Liepājas rajons	III Valmieras raj.	IV Vecgulbene
ietilpot Prokuratūras rīgas (Rīgas, Jelgavas un Liepājas) un tīņpils, Cēsu, Rīgas un Talsu, Valmieras, Jauņjēlgavas, Tukumis un Ventspils ar pilsētām	Prokuratūras un apsūdz. Liepājas, Tīņpils un Kuldīgas apr. ar pilsētām.	ietilpot Rīgas prokuraturu un apsūdz. Valmieras, Daugavpils, Cēsu un Talsu apr. ar pilsētām	Prokuratūras (Rīgas) un Liepājas, un Liepājas un Daugavpils apr. ar pilsētām.
V Rēzeknes rajons		VI Daugavpils priekš.	
Lāzgaļos prokuratūras un apsūdz. Rēzeknes un Daugavas apr. ar pilsētām.		Daugavpils priekš. Prokuratūras (Daugavpils) un Jelgavas apr. ar pilsētām.	

Distribution of Political Security Department's regions and prosecutors' offices. 1921.

LWA, fund 3234, description 1/2, file 146/2, p. 39.

Other Service sites could also be opened for longer or shorter periods, as necessary. For example, in February 1923, the Daugavpils Site reported that there were several "dubious and anti-governmental" persons in the vicinity of Pridruiska (now Piedruja) and Dagda who, inter alia, had contact with the Soviet Russia and there were many illegal border crossings in this area, so it would be desirable to establish an additional site, "to allow for better work and to paralyse the activities of anti-governmental elements".<sup>187</sup> In reply to this, P. Martinsons pointed out that such site should be immediately established and the means for its operation would be released from the Department.<sup>188</sup>

<sup>186</sup> LWA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 45, p. 124.

<sup>187</sup> LWA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 146/2, p. 44.

<sup>188</sup> LWA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 146/2, p. 43.

In 1924, along with institutional changes, the Political Security Department's structure and the property it owned were taken over by the Political Department, the centre of which was located in Riga. As the name changed, no major changes in Service infrastructure can be identified. Similar to the Political Security Department, the Political Department had "seven regional units subordinate to it with sites incorporated in the latter",<sup>189</sup> namely the regional units of Rīga, Liepāja, Valmiera, Vecgulbene (later Gulbene), Daugavpils, Rēzekne and Jelgava, which was founded on 7 July 1924 and which included the regional sites of Jelgava, Tukums, Ventspils, Jēkabpils and Bauska.<sup>190</sup>

In general, the structure of the Latvian Security Service was similar to that in neighbouring countries. In February 1924, Kārlis Alksnis, special tasks officer at the Political Security Department, upon returning from his mission to Tallinn, Estonia, reported: "As regards the structure of the Estonian police, namely the Political Police, it does not differ much from the Political Security Department in Latvia. The entire police staff, together with the main administration, consists of 80 people. The central administration consists of 14 officers and does not deal with the initiation or the investigation of cases. The central administration only controls and follows the operation of the regions and provides guidance. Tallinn is set as a special region. Only the reception (card index) is located at the central administration, there are some 10,000 registered persons. There is no dedicated Operational Unit in the headquarters. Each region has its own Operational Unit, whose activity is controlled by the headquarters. Every week, the regional units shall send reports to the central administration on the situation in the region. All sums of money, except for the money to run the agents network, are received by the regional units according to the regional budget from the local branches of the national bank. The money for work with agents is paid by the headquarters. [...] The amounts allocated for running the agents network at the disposal of the headquarters amount to 500,000 Marks per month."<sup>191</sup>

A similar service structure remained until the institution was liquidated. For example, the new structure of the Ministry of the Interior, developed in 1939, provides that the Political Police Department consists of an Investigation Unit which is in charge of the investigative operations of regions, cases to be settled in administrative procedure, card index and archives, and an Operational Unit dealing with issues of illegal anti-governmental movements and organisations.<sup>192</sup>

<sup>189</sup> Ceriņš, A. *Vadonis policijas ierēdņiem un aizsargiem* (ENG: Leader for Police Officers and Privates). Rīga: Rīgas Policijas skola, 1925, p. 117.

<sup>190</sup> Initially the newly established Jelgava regional unit was under the authority of Riga regional unit and only moved to Jelgava in autumn 1925 with a seat in Jelgava, 2 Pulkveža Briēža Street, later – 7 Bisenieka Street; *Vēsturiskais apskats par Iekšlietu ministrijas Politiskās pārvaldes Jelgavas rajona izveidošanos un darbību* (ENG: Historical Overview of the Establishment and Operation of the Political Department of Jelgava Regional Unit of the Ministry of the Interior). 1938. Latvijas Nacionālā arhīva bibliotēka. P. 11.

<sup>191</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 44, p. 179

<sup>192</sup> LVVA, fund 1368, description 5, file 1894, p. 14

## 2.2.

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### Key buildings of the Service in Riga

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Nowadays, tourists visiting the architectonically ornate Alberta Street in Riga, are told the history of building No. 13 by tour guides, emphasising its close connection with the Political Department in the interwar period in Latvia. Although the building was home to the Service for nearly 20 years (and later in the Soviet occupation years this was the first building home to the NKVD), it was not the only building in the history of the institution, where the management of the Service was located. During the first years of its functioning, before moving to building No. 13 on Alberta Street, the Service changed its seat several times.

The first building, where from August 1919 the headquarters of the Service was located – then the headquarters of the State Security Department in Riga – was a magnificent building on 12 Suvorova (now Krišjāņa Barona) Street, with the official working hours from 9.00 to 15.00.<sup>193</sup> The building built in 1876 in the style of historicism (neo-Renaissance), served as a tenement house, owned by the rich merchant family of Pfab. The house was designed by German architects from Berlin – Hermann Ende and Wilhelm Böckmann.<sup>194</sup> Apparently, due to financial conditions the Family Pfab were forced to rent<sup>195</sup> the premises of the building to the State Security Department, or maybe the premises were alienated thus becoming the headquarters of the Service. It should be noted that in later years this house was called “Benjamiņš’ House”, as it was purchased by the businessmen Antons and Emīlija Benjamiņš in 1928.<sup>196</sup> Nowadays, the building owned by the Lithuanian company “*Europe Royale Hotels*” bears the name of Benjamiņš, forgetting that one of the most important national internal security services was once located there for a short time.

The next building, which was temporarily home to the Service, was a building then owned by Dr. Med. Oskars Bušs. The building was built in 1897 by

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<sup>193</sup> Valsts Drošības Departaments (ENG: State Security Department). *Valdības Vēstnesis*. 16 August 1919, No. 14, p. 3.

<sup>194</sup> LVVA, fund 2761, description 3, file 524, p. 3.

<sup>195</sup> This is an assumption by the authors and would require further research.

<sup>196</sup> Šaitere, T. Benjamiņu nama ceturrtā dzīve (ENG: Fourth Life of the House of Family Benjamiņš). *Latvija Amerikā*. 20 May 2006, No. 20, p. 10.

the architect Konstantīns Pēkšēns,<sup>197</sup> and was located on 9 Baznīcas Street.<sup>198</sup> In this building the management of the Political Security Department was seated from 1 October 1920 to 20 December 1921.<sup>199</sup> Previously the premises of this building were used by the Latgale and later Vidzeme Division Headquarters (from October 1919).<sup>200</sup>

The authority's documents indicate that in 1920, anyone "can enter [the central building of the Political Security Department] without special invitation", as long as it is during its working hours from 9.00 to 15.00. Visitors to the Political Security Department were registered in a special logbook created for this purpose.<sup>201</sup> On 9 Baznīcas Street, the Service had 40 rooms of different sizes at their disposal with an average of 82 officers and a capacity of arrest premises to accommodate 30 to 40 people. The premises were used as follows:

- The cabinet of the Director and the waiting room – 2 rooms;
- Cabinets of the Deputy Director – 2 rooms;
- Investigation Unit – 11 rooms;
- Operational Unit – 6 rooms;
- Reception and photographer – 4 rooms;
- Secretariat, archive and storage of items and belongings – 5 rooms;
- Room for the case officer on duty – 1 room;
- Room for the officer on duty – 1 room;
- Guard team room – 1 room;
- Room for the officer in charge of the detained persons – 1 room;
- Watchman's (guard) room – 1 room;
- Arrest premises – 5 rooms.<sup>202</sup>

However, the building did not meet the needs of the Service and its officers faced some inconvenience affecting the performance of their duties. For example, at the arrest premises, the Request and Complaint Commission, which inspected the building in May 1921, prepared a critical description: "The equipment of all these premises is not suitable for arrest; for example, in one room where the arrested men are located, entry is through a room where women are detained; entrance from this room into an adjacent room leads through a room occupied by case officers. Those arrested are placed in cells of 2 to 10 people; one arrested person is placed in a separate room. The arrest premises, although located on the third floor, are not safe enough as windows are only protected by barbed wire. Arrested people

<sup>197</sup> The building was built as the family residence of the merchant Mihails Lobahs. LVVA, fund 2671, description 3, file 2212, p. 12.

<sup>198</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 10, pp. 14–17.

<sup>199</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 933, p. 92.

<sup>200</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 933, p. 23.

<sup>201</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 894, p. 70, p. op. 82.

<sup>202</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 933, p. 9, 13, 14, 21.

complain of insufficient cleanliness because the floor is unwashed, there are no sacks on the plank beds, water is not given for washing and it is not allowed to purchase products with their money.”<sup>203, 204</sup>

On 21 June 1921, the home owner O. Bušs turned to the Ministry of the Interior asking for the termination of the rental agreement (the premises were rented by the Service, the rent specified in the draft agreement amounted to 2000 Latvian Roubles per month) so that he could repair it and set up a clinic in the building, which was once there. O. Bušs pointed out that in 1918 he left Riga and went to Germany, from where in April 1921 he returned to “his devastated life” and found that “the house is in a state requiring a thorough repair”, indicating that “from top of the building down to a window on the 4th floor there is a crack in the middle of the house”, which is growing.<sup>205</sup> It is likely that the request by Bušs was one of the main reasons why the Service left the building on 9 Baznīcas Street at the end of 1921. At the same time, the letter from the owner of the building clearly shows the circumstances in which the Service found itself at the beginning of the 1920s and confirms that the Service operated in premises that were not suitable for it.

On 13 August 1921, Political Security Department’s officers took over the state-owned building in Riga, on 13 Alberta Street from the Construction Board of the Ministry of the Interior, which until then belonged to the Ministry of Finance.<sup>206</sup> In this building, the Service was located for almost 20 years – up to the occupation of Latvia in 1940. The building played a symbolic role in the eyes of the society representing the whole institution and is therefore discussed in more detail.

The building was built in 1904 at the commission of the state adviser Andrey Lebedinsky,<sup>207</sup> and designed by architect Mikhail Eisenstein. The building had already been placed at the disposal of the Ministry of the Interior before 1923, but often also other institutions were located in this building, for example, in 1921 it was planned to be “reserved for the Catholic seminar”.<sup>208</sup> On 11 July 1923, at the Saeima meeting, the Minister of the Interior, A. Birznieks spoke on the transfer of the rights to use the building on 13 Alberta Street to the Service as follows: “I have to say that buying this building has made a lot of profit for the government and, if the Political Security Department is located in this house, it is a very advantageous place, and for that the building is especially pleasing.”<sup>209</sup>

<sup>203</sup> During the War of Independence and in the post-war period, imprisoned persons were allowed to take food from “outside” or purchase with their own means, because of the insufficient portions of prisoners due to the country’s economic situation.

<sup>204</sup> LVA, fund 7432, description 3, file 17, p. 165.

<sup>205</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 933, p. 27.

<sup>206</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 933, p. 7, 8.

<sup>207</sup> LVA, fund 2671, description 3, file 2081, p. 2.

<sup>208</sup> Valdības darbība (ENG: Government Action). *Valdības Vēstnesis*. 20 July 1921, No. 159, p. 1.

<sup>209</sup> Par mūsu lekšlietu ministrijas darbību (ENG: On the Activities of Our Ministry of the Interior). *Valdības Vēstnesis*. 13 July 1923, No. 148, p. 1.

While taking over the building, it was found that the building consists of 22 apartments and ancillary premises (staircases, cellar, attic), each of which found various deficiencies. It was concluded that “all apartments require general repair, as almost all apartments lack window handles and door locks, furnaces and closets<sup>210</sup> are not in order, electrical wiring is only partial and provisional, and no door calls are available, painting works are needed, asphalt is damaged in the courtyard, etc.”<sup>211</sup> The Ministry of the Interior allocated additional budget for repairs.<sup>212</sup>

The taxation protocol of the building of 11 December 1922 contains the following description: “A brick masonry building, five floors high with cellars that are inhabitable. Basement rooms are nine feet high. The height of premises on habitable floors is 11.5 to 10<sup>213</sup> feet. On each floor there are 20 living rooms. The rooms are heated with furnaces. The building has a water pipeline and electric lighting, as well as tubs and water closets. The roof is covered with slate from the street side and with zinc<sup>214</sup> tin on the courtyard side. In 1921, most of the premises have been redecorated, namely, whitewashed, and the heating furnaces are repaired. The building was built in 1904 and is heavily worn on both the outside and the inside.”<sup>215</sup>

After settling in to the new building on 13 Alberta Street, the Service had 26 rooms located on five floors.<sup>216</sup> On the ground floor was the office of the head of the Investigation Unit, premises for the Secretariat of the Investigating Unit, a room for filing, a room for archiving, a working cabinet, and a waiting room. On the second floor there were offices for the Secretariat, the chancery of the headquarters, the treasury, as well as rooms for the desk officer and Director of the Service. On the fourth floor there were rooms for the head of Riga regional unit, head of the Operational Unit, investigation officer, the Secretariat for the unit, the officer on duty, senior case officer; there were also two rooms for case officers, the waiting room, the classified registry of Riga regional unit and a room for the typist. On the fifth floor there were premises for the Secretariat for the Operational Unit and three working rooms for investigators.<sup>217</sup> In 1922, a garage for cars was built in the basement of the building.<sup>218</sup> In the same year, the building was home to the Political Security Department’s director (he occupied 4 rooms), a legal adviser (4 rooms), an officer in charge of maintenance (4 rooms), a driver (2 rooms), four case officers (each 2 rooms), four junior officers on duty (each one room), a janitor and a stoker (each one room).<sup>219</sup>

<sup>210</sup> Meaning, toilet bowls.

<sup>211</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 933, p. 7, 8.

<sup>212</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 933, p. 60.

<sup>213</sup> 3–3.5 metres.

<sup>214</sup> Meaning, coated with zinc.

<sup>215</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 933, p. 232.

<sup>216</sup> Floor No. 3 of the building was not at the disposal of the Political Police.

<sup>217</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 879, p. 44.

<sup>218</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 933, p. 110.

<sup>219</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 933, p. 131.

Regular building inspections were carried out annually, and it can be concluded that various problems remained for a long time. For example, in 1927, a survey was carried out on 13 Alberta Street, which found that the building needed the following repairs: to strengthen the cement figures of the building facade and remove those that threaten passers-by, to reconstruct chimneys, to repair the tin roof, to paint the roof with red oil paint, to whitewash and paint the main staircase (the panels in light oil paint, the rest in white glue paint, in several shades); to paint all of the building's "very worn windows and doors" in white oil paint from the outside and in light grey oil paint – balcony metal rails, to restore damaged furnaces and to incorporate iron bars as required for the arrest rooms.<sup>220</sup>

In January 1923, the Political Security Department turned to the Minister of the Interior asking for funds to be allocated for the installation of a museum.<sup>221</sup> It was pointed out that the Political Security Department had already established a small library containing various newspapers and illegal literature, but the development of the library was hampered by a lack of funding. It is also indicated that "there are various materials, which have been found and taken away from criminals of our country and which are of a museum value" at the disposal of the Service.<sup>222</sup> In order to set up the museum, the Political Security Department asked the Minister of the Interior to allocate it 22'720 Roubles. The Ministry of the Interior made a remark that the report received should be taken into account when drafting the budget of the Service.<sup>223</sup> Although documentary confirmation of the setup of the museum has not been found so far (and the building plan of 13 Alberta Street does not confirm the existence of the museum), a number of photos are available, which show that the museum has been established.<sup>224</sup> However, this probably happened later. In 1938, on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Republic of Latvia, the Director of the Administrative Department issued an order "On the compilation of history of police authorities and the establishment of corners of history". The order gives concrete guidance on what these "corners of history" should look like: "Prefects, regional chiefs, head of the Railway Police, Criminal Police and Political Department officers should choose an appropriate room, which does not need to be big, because it will only serve for presentation purposes. If there is no such room, the corner of history shall be arranged in the office of the Director of the Service. In the room or corner of history, wall-mounted plates with the names and dates of the officers killed while on duty are to be placed along the walls. A table with two albums on particularly good paper and a corresponding cover shall be placed near this wall.

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<sup>220</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 933, p. 1.

<sup>221</sup> A museum was often understood in a narrower sense at that time – as an exhibition.

<sup>222</sup> Part of the illegal material seized by the Security Service during the interwar period can be seen in the Latvian War Museum and other Latvian memory institutions. Some printing works can be found in LVA, fund 3235.

<sup>223</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 894, p. 30, 31.

<sup>224</sup> See the album of J. Fridrihsons' daughter in the collection of the Museum of Occupation of Latvia.

One smaller album contains photos of the deceased, their biographies and description of their heroic works. The second, larger album, shall contain the history of the institution written in calligraphic writing in ink. This work must be done with great care and love. [...] Between the text, photos shall be placed that further enhance the importance of such an album. [...] Awards of honour that the institution has received as a gift or which its employees have won in contests shall also be placed on a table or in suitable showcases. The history corner or room shall be gradually decorated without damaging its festive atmosphere, with works by the Service officers: paintings, sculptures, good, durable handcraft [...].<sup>225</sup>

The Service was located at 13 Alberta Street until 1940. In the following Soviet occupation years, it marked the attitude of society toward this building and even the whole street. It was not for nothing that the street was renamed in the name of the communist Fricis Gailis, who was detained on 3 January 1933 and placed in the arrest premises of the Political Department, but a day later – on the evening of 4 January – he died in mysterious conditions, falling through the building's 4th floor window.<sup>226</sup> In the Soviet propaganda, this case is used to demonstrate the repressive methods of the Service, where “a young communist was killed in the torture chambers of the polit-department”.<sup>227</sup> However, a study on the death of F. Gailis is missing, so it is not possible to provide an evaluation of it.

One of the designated rooms of the Service was the photo room and laboratory. This is where photos related to the cases under investigation were taken and developed, such as photos of exhibits, as well as photographs of the persons arrested.

The historian Alvilis Zauers, who focused on studying police history, concludes that the shooting of crime sites and evidence seized in them in the early 1920s was initially only done for the documentation of particularly important cases, but in the 1930s, with the set-up of new photo laboratories in various police entities, it was used to a much larger extent.<sup>228</sup> It is likely that over time, the Service also saw a significant increase in the photo-shooting of crime scenes and evidence, and the developments in the forensic sciences contributed to the ever broader use of other forensic methods, as can be seen in the photo albums of the Security Service at the LVVA.<sup>229</sup>

<sup>225</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 318, p. 20. Part of the exhibits of the Security Service Museum are currently in storage at the Latvian War Museum.

<sup>226</sup> Kočāne, S. Ēka Alberta ielā 13 beidzot laimīga (ENG: The Building at 13 Alberta Street is at Last Happy). *Diena*. 7 March 2001.

<sup>227</sup> See, for example: *Latvijas PSR vēsture. No vissenākajiem laikiem līdz mūsu dienām* (ENG: History of Latvian SSR. From the Past till Nowadays). Volume 2. Drizulis, A. (ed.). Rīga: Zinātne, 1986, p. 113; Lāsts bendēm! Friča Gaiļa piemiņai (ENG: Cursed are the Executioners! In Memory of Fricis Gailis). *Liesma*. 5 February 1966, No. 21.

<sup>228</sup> Zauers, A. *Kriminālistiskā ekspertīze Latvijā laikmetu griežos* (ENG: Forensic Expertise in Latvia in the Change of Time). Rīga: Latvijas Policijas akadēmija, 2001, p. 131.

<sup>229</sup> See, for example, LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/6, file 1243, 1254–1256, 1263.

The report of the Political Department's Investigation Unit of 27 April 1934 provides interesting details of the Service's photo laboratory and its operating conditions. It criticises the condition of the lab premises, which were described as "totally unsuited to such an important sector of work in the Political Department as is the taking of photos".<sup>230</sup> According to the report, there was a catastrophic lack of light in the premises "to correctly and sufficiently illuminate the object to be shot, namely, a person or anything else, not to mention the creation of illustrations, posters, drawings and articles or portraits".<sup>231</sup> Moreover, the narrow room and the lack of light had an impact on the quality of the photos required for the investigation work.

The report also criticised the photo equipment, or the camera at the Service's disposal, which "was purchased many years ago [in 1925], [...] has deteriorated and is damaged, and requires repair".<sup>232</sup> While the reshooting equipment is described as "so primitive that it does not even include the most basic requirements".<sup>233</sup> The laboratory for the production of photos has also been recognised as only fit for temporary operation, and "nothing has been done regarding its facilitation, since the photographer [Mārtiņš] Bērziņš has not come forward with any suggestions or initiative on this matter".<sup>234</sup>

The premises were unsuitable for work: in terms of making photos, as well as the health of the officers. The laboratory was located in a room that was once a bath and the "old, rusty, very dirty former bath tub of this washing room was used for negatives and paper washing".<sup>235</sup> It is also stressed that chemicals needed for work are also not stored very conveniently, and that the containers lack the necessary labels. There is also criticism of the procedure for registering people of whom photos were taken in these premises, which would be simplified if "a card system was introduced instead of a large number of alphabet books, which would facilitate a faster search for a person who has already been photoshot in the past". At the end of the report, it is indicated that the leadership should pay a visit to inspect the photo equipment of the Forensic Scientific Expertise unit and that of the Riga Prefecture, from which "practical guidance could also be obtained for further development of the photography of the Political Department".<sup>236</sup>

The Service itself (in the building at 13 Alberta Street) did not have a hospital or a clinic, so those who needed medical assistance or requested it were sent to the Riga Central prison hospital.<sup>237</sup>

<sup>230</sup> LWA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 189/1, p. 64.

<sup>231</sup> LWA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 189/1, p. 64.

<sup>232</sup> LWA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 189/1, p. op. 64.

<sup>233</sup> LWA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 189/1, p. op. 64.

<sup>234</sup> LWA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 189/1, p. op. 64.

<sup>235</sup> LWA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 189/1, p. 65.

<sup>236</sup> LWA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 189/1, p. 65.

<sup>237</sup> LWA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 146/2, p. 23.

The issue of the building's safety was particularly important. In 1924, it is written that "the building also features arrest premises for arrested persons, and in this context the building is protected by two control posts controlling each person arriving in the building".<sup>238</sup>

At the headquarters, the leadership of the authority prepared instructions in 1927 which regulated its safe operation and the precise performance of its duties. Upon the receipt of the current information (road accident, unauthorised demonstration, anti-governmental agitation, distribution of anti-governmental slogans, etc.), either by telephone or in person, the case officer had to immediately report to the head of the regional unit or, where appropriate, to the director of the Service. In parallel to the reports to the heads, the case officer "at his initiative had to invite senior case officers living in the headquarters' building and those living nearby so that when the leadership arrived, the necessary number of case officers were present on site".<sup>239</sup>

The security of the building was particularly important. It had two posts, each of which with two junior officers on duty (door and gate guards). One of the posts was located at the entrance to the staircase, and the other was located in the back gateway. The guards monitored individuals who arrived at the Service, not only by questioning the reasons for the arrival, but also by recording the personal details of the visitor (name, surname and place of residence), as well as by marking whom they visited. A special entrance ticket was issued to the visitor, which included a room number for a conversation with the particular officer. Leaving the Service premises was only possible with a note by the respective officer on the ticket or if the person was accompanied by the officer. Only "well-known persons" were allowed to leave the premises alone.<sup>240</sup> Visitors were also monitored in the waiting time before they met either the Director or officers of the Service, or other people working in the building, including the institution's driver and the janitor.

At the end of each day, the guard had to pass a daily schedule of visitors on to the Service secretary. Also at the end of the day, the officer on duty assigned at the disposal of the secretary locked the second floor door and handed the keys to the officer on duty at the main entrance. The latter remained in charge of monitoring the arrival of Service officers coming in for "evening work" and to lock the door when they were all inside the Service building. At 22.00 o'clock "the entrance door and gate must be moved to the night position, i.e. closed, a chain shall be put on the entrance door – including wooden plates, and the lights must be switched off, except for guard lamps".<sup>241</sup> If an unknown person wanted to enter the Service premises, the guard immediately reported to the person on duty by signalling with

<sup>238</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 933, p. 388.

<sup>239</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 879, p. op. 41.

<sup>240</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 879, p. 42.

<sup>241</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 879, p. op. 42.

a special call. The officer on duty went to the guard and then opened the door with the “chain on”, inquiring about the reason for the visit. The arriving people were “only allowed to enter, if necessary” and, if there were several people, only one of them was allowed to enter the building.<sup>242</sup>

**Explanation of warning signals (calls) in the Service building in Riga<sup>243</sup>**

Number of successive calls	Entity of the Service (officer)
2	Secretary
3	People in the arrest premises
4	Desk officers
5	Driver
7	The officer on duty (guard), if the door (gate) guard outside the door (gate) observes something suspicious outside
1 (as long as possible)	If the door (gate) guard observes something “particularly threatening”

Previously, in September 1923, the head of the Operational Unit instructed the officer on duty “to ensure that they [visitors to the Operational Unit] would only stay in waiting room No. 28 without being allowed to walk around the corridors and other rooms”.<sup>244</sup> Sleep during the night while on duty was strictly prohibited, as it could not only jeopardise overall safety but also lead to serious disturbances in the investigative work. For example, on 28 November 1934, an acting guard on duty, Liberts, was sleeping, thus enabling “an arrested person to enter the duty room, take the evidence – proclamations [...] – attached to the case on the table, and destroy them”.<sup>245</sup>

<sup>242</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 879, p. 43.

<sup>243</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 879, p. 43.

<sup>244</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/6, file 726, p. 7.

<sup>245</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 726, p. 53.

## 2.3.

### Political Security Department Site at the refugee quarantine in Rēzekne (1920–1924)

Due to its specific nature, the Site of Political Security Department at the refugee quarantine in Rēzekne shall be viewed separately. This site was designed to control the flow of refugees and check the past activities and political credibility of arriving individuals. This Political Security Department's site differed in its structure and function from the other entities of the Service, which were autonomous. After getting acquainted with the operation of the Site, it will be easier to understand the complexity of the activities of the Political Security Department and the various difficulties during its initial functioning, which more precisely also depict the first years of Latvia's existence.

In the summer of 1920, a general re-evacuation of refugees from the Soviet Russia began. The re-evacuation of refugees was coordinated by the Ministry of the Interior, which stated that when crossing the border of Latvia, every person entered under the supervision of the Latvian law enforcement authorities until all necessary entry formalities were completed. After border control, refugees were moved to refugee quarantine sites, the biggest of which was in Rēzekne. The purpose of quarantine was to provide essential goods for refugees, as well as to check the people who arrived: health status surveys, documents, political reliability, etc., and to produce statistics on people who arrived.<sup>246</sup> Precisely because of the political check, the Political Security Department's Site at the refugee quarantine in Rēzekne was opened as with the refugees, a large number of politically unreliable persons were flowing into Latvia from the Soviet Russia and political opponents were even deliberately sent to Latvia.

The Political Security Department's Site at the refugee quarantine in Rēzekne was the largest refugee site in Latvia. It was located in 46 buildings in a total of 50 ha land.<sup>247</sup> However, the quarantine site of refugees was in a catastrophic situation: there was no water supply, premises were neglected and destroyed, there was no

<sup>246</sup> Pārskats par Iekšlietu ministrijas darbību 1922. g. (ENG: A Review of the Performance of the Ministry of the Interior in 1922). *Valdības Vēstnesis*. 24 January 1923, No. 19, p. 2; Brusbārdis, R. Problēmas Latvijas valdības organizētajā bēgļu reevakuācijā no Padomju Krievijas (ENG: Problems in the Re-evacuation of Refugees from Soviet Russia Organised by the Latvian Government). *Latvijas Vēsture*. 2011, No. 1, p. 40.

<sup>247</sup> Pārskats par Iekšlietu ministrijas darbību 1922. g. (ENG: A Review of the Performance of the Ministry of the Interior in 1922). *Valdības Vēstnesis*. 24 January 1923, No. 19, p. 2.

adequate hygiene requirements and there was no heating. Apart from infrastructure problems, there were also difficulties with the quarantine case officer, insufficient capacity of the Refugee release commission and corruption in both the army that carried out the quarantine guard and in the civil service. Work in the refugee quarantine was linked to permanent overstrain and was carried out under heavy psychological conditions.<sup>248</sup> Officers of the Political Security Department's Site at the refugee quarantine in Rēzekne were not subject to the Rēzekne refugee quarantine, who had their own leadership, but there was active cooperation between them.

The first head of the Political Security Department's Site at the refugee quarantine in Rēzekne was lieutenant Otto Ivansons. To understand O. Ivansons' professional activities, a small insight into his previous career is presented. O. Ivansons was born in 1893 in Koknese, unmarried, graduated from middle school (Realschule). In 1911, he voluntarily joined the army of the Russian Empire, from which he was released in 1912 due to myopia. During the First World War, in 1915-1917, he worked in the All-Russian Zemstvo Union<sup>249</sup> and in the Red Cross, as well as later in the Russian Empire Army's Counterintelligence Division. In 1918, in Riga he was elected as the deputy chairman of the Council of the II Pārdaugava Savings Bank. On 5 December 1918 in Riga, he voluntarily joined the armed forces of the Latvian Provisional Government, and was included in the Officers-trainers' company; as of 19 December, he was Deputy to the Chief of the 3rd Division of Headquarters. In January 1919, he left Riga. On 4 February 1919, he was sent on a mission to Estonia. On 1 April 1919, he was promoted to the rank of lieutenant. As of 15 July 1919, in the Northern Latvia Brigade as Head of the Intelligence Division; as of 14 October, the Chief of the Investigation Department with the Riga District Commandant. On 25 February 1920, he was appointed special tasks officer of the Vidzeme Division Headquarters. On 23 April 1920, he retired from the Service. On 21 October 1920, he joined the Political Security Department as investigatory official, and was sent on a mission to Rēzekne as the head of the Political Security Department's Site at the refugee quarantine in Rēzekne, "assigned with the reorganisation of the political security among refugees coming across the border". On 1 June 1921 he was promoted as a special tasks officer and appointed as the Head of the Counterintelligence Unit on 16 January 1922. On 4 March 1922, at his own request he was released from the Service in the Political Security Department due to health reasons. Later he worked in the Forensic Institute as the responsible expert.<sup>250</sup> In 1928, he was awarded the Order of the Three Stars, Class 5. The application of the order, signed by the Director of the Political Department, states: "Ivansons, while in service at the Political Security Department, in a short time very successfully organised and

<sup>248</sup> Brusbārdis, R. Problēmas Latvijas valdības organizētajā bēgļu reevakuācijā no Padomju Krievijas (ENG: Problems in the Evacuation of Refugees from Soviet Russia Organised by the Latvian Government). *Latvijas Vēsture*. 2011, No. 1, p. 40, 41.

<sup>249</sup> During the First World War, the highest interdepartmental body established in the Russian Empire.

<sup>250</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 397, p. 12, 48, 49, 57; LVVA, fund 7432, description 1, file 113; Aizsaulē aizgājis (ENG: Deceased). *Policija*. 1 December, 1937, No. 12, p. 45.

sensibly managed the Political Security Department through the Rēzekne quarantine among arriving refugees and in the border area; besides, thanks to the energetic and selfless activities of Ivansons, it was possible to detect and arrest many high-standing communists, who, together with Latvian refugees, knew to enter Latvia for the purposes of espionage and terror.”<sup>251</sup>

Taking the general condition of quarantine into account, the working conditions in the refugee quarantine in Rēzekne were particularly severe. The Political Security personnel resided in the barracks at the reception place of refugees, where living and working conditions did not meet hygiene requirements due to a lack of finance and facilities.

For example, in December 1920, the Director of the Political Security Department's site O. Ivansons wrote a request to the Director of the Political Security Department, V. Alps, to send him five kerosene lamps – one was intended for him, two for interrogators and two at the Chancellery, because due to a lack of firewood they had been without electricity for several days, but lighting with candles was very expensive. He also wrote, among other things, that they had been working in the cold for three days already, as a result of which one of the desk officers of the Chancellery “got sick due to being cold”. A few days later, the Head of the Site reported that “the order in the quarantine unit worsens with every day”; there is neither water, light, nor firewood, blaming these conditions on the maintenance manager of the Rēzekne quarantine site.<sup>252</sup> But a few days later O. Ivansons indicated that “the issue of premises is hard, but we will still somehow settle for the time being. What is very uncomfortable and detrimental to the issue is the fact that there are others living in the barracks of our unit, who hear each word through thin walls; questioning must be carried out at the Chancellery, where the female employees work, which is unacceptable in any way; the public has no place to stay, everyone going to the Chancellery has to walk through my office, so I can only work peacefully at night, etc.”<sup>253</sup>

The officers of the Political Security Department's Site at the refugee quarantine in Rēzekne were faced not only with everyday problems, but also with other difficulties at the Service. At the end of 1920, O. Ivansons wrote to the leadership in Riga: “The local case officer fears going out to the city later in the evening, because threats have been expressed from several people, people know everyone, there are no weapons, because the big revolvers are not suitable for carrying around in one's pocket. Case officers start talking about the fact that they will no longer be able to remain in the Service if the strictest secrecy is not in place.”<sup>254</sup>

It should be noted that cooperation between the quarantine site and the Service was not always successful. The officers of the Political Security Department's Site at the refugee quarantine in Rēzekne repeatedly turned to the director of the Political Security

<sup>251</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 397, p. 63; LVA, fund 5601, file 1, description 2358, pp. 2–5.

<sup>252</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 8, p. 197, 198.

<sup>253</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 8, p. 151.

<sup>254</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 95, p. 100, p. op. 110.

Department with a request to transfer the control of the site to the Service, explaining that there is weak security and various deficiencies at the Site; for example, in the organisation and reception of refugees echelons, which would be preventable.<sup>255</sup>

The activities of the Political Security Department's Site at the refugee quarantine in Rēzekne were greatly hindered by the large flow of refugees, the improper arrival procedures and documentation of refugees, as well as the fact that the management of the Site worked independently from the Service. Political Security Department's officers indicated that they received lists of incoming refugees with delay, lacked premises at border crossings to run their activities, the refugee echelons were not coordinated and they concluded that at the "present system and lack of people" the Site officers were unable to produce reports on those who had been released and detained.<sup>256</sup> However, despite various difficulties, the Political Security Department's officers checked all persons who entered Latvia through the quarantine site in Rēzekne as far as possible. For example, 1328 refugees arrived on 7 December 1920 from the Soviet Russia (Pskov, Perm, Yaroslavl, Rybinsk, Rostov, Uglich and Novgorod) in Rēzekne: 889 Latvians, 267 Russians, 95 Jews, 80 Lithuanians, nine Germans, nine Belarusians, two Estonians and one Pole. They were all accepted in the quarantine site of Rēzekne and no one was sent back to the Soviet Russia.<sup>257</sup>

In addition to this, the officers of the Political Security Department's Site at the refugee quarantine in Rēzekne worked in the most direct way to prevent the expansion of the agents network sent by the Bolsheviks and, in cooperation with entities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, drew up a list of refugees undesirable for Latvia. Despite the importance of this work in maintaining national internal security, the Service had not developed specific guidelines as to which persons should be considered as undesirable for the new state and which should be included on such a list. Moreover, this work was also hampered by the fact that the Latvian authorities generally did not have a consistent policy regarding the issue of which persons should be allowed to enter Latvia and who should be denied.<sup>258</sup>

As the flow of refugees decreased, the Political Security Department's Site at the refugee quarantine in Rēzekne was liquidated as a separate unit on 9 August 1923 and its functions were taken over by the Political Security Department's Rēzekne regional unit. But on 1 April 1924 Rēzekne regional unit was renamed the Rēzekne Site with region-level rights,<sup>259</sup> because on 26 September 1924, the Rēzekne refugee quarantine was dissolved.<sup>260</sup>

<sup>255</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 8, p. 86.

<sup>256</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 8, p. 133.

<sup>257</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 8, p. 135.

<sup>258</sup> Brusbārdis, R. Problēmas Latvijas valdības organizētajā bēgļu reevakuācijā no Padomju Krievijas (ENG: Problems in the Evacuation of Refugees from Soviet Russia Organised by the Latvian Government). *Latvijas Vēsture*. 2011, No. 1, p. 42.

<sup>259</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 45, p. 49, 77.

<sup>260</sup> Bēgļu karantīnas likvidēšana (ENG: Liquidation of the Refugee Quarantine). *Latvijas Sargs*. 23 September 1924, No. 216, p. 1.

## 2.4.

**Budget and technical resources**

Funding was allocated to the Service in the general state budget procedure. According to its objectives and tasks, the Service was a non-profit body, with all the financial resources earmarked for its operation being allocated by the state. In the early independence period, all institutions had to face acute shortages of resources. For example, in August 1919, the State Security Department asked for a budget of 34'634 Roubles to be spent on salaries (23'634 Roubles), office and daily expenses (4'000 Roubles), agent allowances (2'000 Roubles in "gratifications") and unforeseen allowances (5'000 Roubles). As the number of employees and the volume of work grew, a larger budget was needed, and in September 103'950 Roubles was already requested, in October – 117'550 Roubles and in November – 131'344 Roubles.<sup>261</sup>

The availability of resources of the State Security Department is described by the equipment transferred at liquidation of the Department. For example, Cēsis regional unit, located in Cēsis, at 17 Rīga Street, transferred the following to the Head of Cēsis regional unit: a besom, recorder, table call, paper basket, "bill balls", five presses, two rulers, five penholders, three seal pads, three pencils, five inkpots, three rubber seals ("stempel") and one metal seal, one bottle of red ink, a box with "clips", one "perforator", three tables, three benches, a tin bucket, five "spaustuvė",<sup>262</sup> 10 repaired door keys and five new, eight drawer keys, glass "wetter", three paper notebooks, 198 paper sheets, a thread spool with a needle, typewriter "Idial Poliglot No. 2" (sent from Riga), as well as various furniture that according to a list were allocated by the Cēsis Regional Reception Commission to Cēsis regional unit of State Security Department for use.<sup>263</sup>

Even more vividly the material situation is characterised by a request from the Head of Valmiera regional unit of the State Security Department, A. Vecvagars, already after the Service liquidation in January 1920, in which he requested to be paid 409.20 Roubles, which he had spent from his personal resources on the needs of the regional units.<sup>264</sup> The Political Security Department was working in poor conditions, as demonstrated, for example, by the order of 16 October 1920 "to watch closely that no more lamps at night are on at the Political Security Department than is necessary

<sup>261</sup> LVVA, fund 1368, description 2, file 204, p.

<sup>262</sup> *Spaustuvė* – typography (in Lithuanian). Meaning, printing equipment.

<sup>263</sup> LVVA, fund 3725, description 2, file 144, p. 49.

<sup>264</sup> LVVA, fund 3725, description 2, file 144, p. 181.

and to ensure that the electric power is strictly saved”.<sup>265</sup> At the end of September 1923, the head of the Operational Unit issued a special order to guards “to pay attention to avoid the disappearances of electric lamps, and the number of lamps in the Operational Unit rooms should be noted when taking over the duty shift”.<sup>266</sup>

Mobility of the Service and the need for transportation were important. In the post-war years, there was a shortage of horses throughout Latvia, which was the main transport mode. To ensure the mobility of Service officers, sometimes in the 1920s, so-called “post horses” were used on the basis of a certificate issued by the Ministry of the Interior (the owner was paid for this).<sup>267</sup> In 1921, for example, the officers of Liepāja regional unit of Political Security often had to carry out searches and arrests for several days, because the route to and from the more distant municipalities had to be done by “post horses”. There were also cases where the Chief of Liepāja Garrison, colonel Krišs Kūķis, “sometimes helps” officers of Liepāja regional unit “with his car”.<sup>268</sup> The Service still used “post horses” against immediate payment in accordance with legislation in the 1930s.<sup>269</sup> To save funds, there were strict restrictions on the use of phones<sup>270</sup> – in 1920 it was only allowed to use them for emergency cases and only for phone conversations outside the city.<sup>271</sup> Three years later, this requirement was complemented by the order “when using the phone at the headquarters, not to engage in private calls and to behave correctly”.<sup>272</sup> But in 1926, the Service leadership once again pointed out that the “institution’s telephone apparatus should be used as little as possible for the private calls of officers and only in the event of need”.<sup>273</sup>

In the early days, many relevant things were often missing. For example, there were no typewriters in regional units, and therefore all documentation was handwritten. Moreover, in the context of the general lack of paper,<sup>274</sup> one had to look for creative solutions and use the available paper, so “private letters, advance payments, wine recipes and hotel bills can be read on the other side of the archived transcripts”.<sup>275</sup>

An overview of the available resources by the Political Security Department in regional units is provided by the inventory of Rēzekne regional unit on 15 November 1921. As can be seen, the regional unit has four rooms at its disposal. The first room has a simple table, a work desk, a corner sofa, a wicker chair, a cabin chair, a Vienna chair, a paper basket, a map of Rēzekne region, a wall calendar, an electric lamp, a Russian rifle

<sup>265</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 10, p. 5.

<sup>266</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/6, file 726, p. 8.

<sup>267</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 8, p. 100.; description 1/9, file 13, p. 4.

<sup>268</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/8, file 553, p. 10.

<sup>269</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 428, p. 69.

<sup>270</sup> As far as possible, the State Security Department’s officers were already equipped with phones in 1919. For example, Valmiera regional unit had telephone apparatus, which was assigned to it by the post-office director of Valmiera. LVA, fund 3725, description 2, file 144, p. 60.

<sup>271</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/9, file 7, p. 8.

<sup>272</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/6, file 726, p. 8.

<sup>273</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/6, file 726, p. 25.

<sup>274</sup> See, for example: Lasītājiem! (ENG: For Readers!). *Latvijas Sargs*. 10 December 1919, No 210, p. 1; The article indicates that there is a shortage of paper in the country, hindering the publishing of newspapers.

<sup>275</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/8, file 553, p. 12.

and a window gardine (curtain). The second room has a work desk, two simple tables, three Vienna chairs, a cabin chair, a typewriter, a field telephone, an electric lamp, a map of Latvia, ink painting, shelf cabinet and press. In the third room, there was a bicycle, a brown birch bed, a broken sofa, a tin bucket, a washing table with a bowl, a broken brush and a bench. While in the fourth room there were two simple tables, two Vienna chairs, a wooden plank chair, a bench, a gardine (curtain) and an iron bed. The situation with weapons and ammunition was particularly severe. The regional unit had a *Smith & Wesson* revolver without cartridges and two *Webley* revolvers, each with four cartridges.<sup>276</sup>

Budget means were allocated for the maintenance of the Service's technical resources and infrastructure for the entire interwar period. The legal code of 1938 states: "Political Security Department's authorities receive public funds from the state for the facilitation of premises, work, storage of exhibits and vehicles, as well as for the arrested persons. The state also took care of the lighting and heating of these premises."<sup>277</sup>

According to the information published in the newspaper "Sociāldemokrāts", the budget for the Political Security Department was around 4 million Roubles in 1920–1921, around 11 million Roubles in 1921–1923, around 13 million Roubles in 1922–1923, and 15'750'000 million Roubles was requested in 1923–1924.<sup>278</sup> These figures are considered to be intentionally wrong, indicating a higher budget for the institution and thus demonstrating the institution's non-productivity in a national context.

More detailed information shows that in the 1923/1924 budget year, 313'765 Lats were allocated to the Political Security Department from the state budget, most of it – 211'959 Lats for the remuneration of officers, and 101'806 Lats for other expenditure.<sup>279</sup> In 1925/1926, 367'884 Lats were allocated to the Political Department. Of these, 295'103 Lats – remuneration (salaries, allowances and special work or free contract workers), 79'397 Lats – administrative expenses (chancellery, communications, travel expenses, appointment and/or transfer expenses, secret expenses and other minor expenses), 9'210 Lats – maintenance (rent, heating, lighting, cleaning, water supply, maintenance of transport equipment, etc.), 900 Lats – for the purchase of equipment (institutional equipment and household utensils) and 9'274 Lats – for the repair of a building in Riga, on 13 Alberta Street.<sup>280</sup> This amount only represented around 4% of the budget of the Ministry of Interior for 1925/1926 (9'051'597 Lats).<sup>281</sup>

Following the coup by K. Ulmanis, funding for internal security was increased, and this included an increase in the budget of the Service. For example, for the surveillance of Riga region, the state budget funds had grown by around 40% over five years – from 8'574 Lats in 1933/34 to 14'169 Lats in 1938/1939.<sup>282</sup>

<sup>276</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 33/3, p. 136.

<sup>277</sup> *Likumu un noteikumu sakopojums policijas darbiniekiem* (ENG: A Codex of Laws and Regulations for Police Officers). Rīga: Iekšlietu ministrijas Administratīvais departaments, unofficial edition, 1938, p. 20.

<sup>278</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 604, p. op. 2.

<sup>279</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 314/2, p. op. 10.

<sup>280</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 314/3, p. op. 16.

<sup>281</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 314/3, p. op. 16.

<sup>282</sup> Puša, G. *Politiskās pārvaldes darbība Latvijā 1934.–1939. gadā: Rīgas apriņķa piemērs* (ENG: Activity of the Political Department in Latvia in 1934–1939: an Example of Riga County.) Master's Thesis. Rīga: Latvijas Universitāte, 2013, p. 32.

## 2.5.

### Weapons and special equipment

In the early days, the Service officers lacked equipment, weapons, ammunition and various special means. The Political Security Department was also unable to provide weapons to all the case officers. In particular, the lack (especially in the early days) was felt by the officers in the regional units and sites of the Political Security Department.<sup>283</sup> For example, as regards Liepāja regional unit of the Political Security Department: in 1920, there were only two *Webley* revolvers per six officers.<sup>284</sup>

The situation with weapons improved very slowly. In 1922, the Political Security Department had a total of 214 weapons – revolvers. Of these, 108 were in the headquarters and others were distributed for use: 14 for the Chancellery, 63 for the Operational Unit, seven for Daugavpils, Liepāja and Rēzekne regional unit each, five for Valmiera regional unit and three for Vecgulfene regional unit. Among the types of revolvers, the majority were *Sauer & Sohn*, *Mauser* and *Nagant* revolvers, but there were also *Parabellum*, *Colt*, *Breise*, *Browning*, *Webley & Scott*, *Pieper*, *Smith & Wesson* and others.<sup>285</sup>

In April 1923, it was instructed to compile a register of arms handed over to officers, and to keep track to ensure that the guns, which were once exhibits, would only be used subject to written consent by the Director of the Service.<sup>286</sup> Attention should be paid to the fact that the lack of arms was, to a certain extent, solved by the use of the weapons the Service had acquired as a result of its activities, such as confiscated weapons and evidence. For example, the Deputy Director of the Political Security Department, Jānis Kaktiņš, in July 1923, had a double-barrel shotgun, which had been previously confiscated by the head of Talsi Region and sent to the Service as evidence.<sup>287</sup>

Weapons (at least for the Operational Unit officers) had to be carried under appropriate orders at all times “in full order with the expected quantity of patrons” and, in the event of non-compliance, a disciplinary penalty could be imposed.<sup>288</sup>

<sup>283</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 847, p. 57.

<sup>284</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/8, file 553, p. 9.

<sup>285</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 847, pp. 69–71.

<sup>286</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/6, file 726, p. 2.

<sup>287</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 363, p. 68.

<sup>288</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/6, file 726, p. op. 26.

Such reminders of the need to take care of armament appear in the documents at the end of the 1930s, when the situation had improved considerably. Nevertheless, the Director of the Service again stressed to the regional and unit heads that “negligence against own duties shall not be tolerated, because the officer of the Political Department must at all times and in all conditions be ready to engage in fights”.<sup>289</sup>

A more accurate picture of the weapons at the Service’s disposal is provided by the inventory list of the Operational Unit of the Political Security Department of 17 March 1923. The Operational Unit was the best-armed and equipped unit of the Service with the following at its disposal:

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**arms and ammunition: revolvers – 60 pcs:**  
*Webley* revolvers: 21 pcs and 126 cartridges,  
 Side-loader revolvers<sup>290</sup> – 1 pc.,  
*Parabellum* revolver – 1 pc.,  
*Sauer & Sohn* revolvers – 25 pcs and 1000 cartridges,  
*Mauzer* revolvers: 12 pcs,  
**guns – 24 pcs:**  
 Russian system guns: 18 pcs and 650 cartridges,  
 German system guns – 5 pcs and 830 cartridges,  
 English system guns – 1 pc. and 65 cartridges,  
**machine guns – 2 pcs** (received from the  
 HQ of the Latvian Army together with five  
 machine gun boxes with cartridge belts),  
**hand grenades – 25 pcs:**  
 “Egg” grenades – 10 pcs,  
 “Spalas” grenades – 15 pcs;

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**special equipment: “stick” (bayonet) – 1 pc.,**  
**sword – 1 pc.,**  
**“кобура” (pistol holster) – 1 pc.,**  
**handcuffs – 5 pcs;**

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**vehicles: bicycle – 1 pc.**  
**motorcycle – 1 pc.**<sup>291</sup>

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Despite the lack of weapons and special equipment, the instruction document of 1924 states that “case officers must be fully familiar with, handle and shoot guns of all classes and systems”.<sup>292</sup> As the armaments improved, the Service used automatic pistols of different calibre (7.65 mm, 6.35 mm), which were suitable

<sup>289</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/6, file 664, p. 9.

<sup>290</sup> A special type of revolver with adapted cartridges, where the cartridge side is taped rather than the centre, thus initiating the ignition and shot.

<sup>291</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 847, p. 96, p. op. 96.

<sup>292</sup> *Instrukcija Politiskās apsardzes aģentūrai* (ENG: Instruction for the Political Security Department Agency). Rīga: Politiskās apsardzes izdevums, 1924, p. 54, 12.

for secret work, as well as other special equipment such as wire truncheons with wooden handles.<sup>293</sup> In the second half of the 1930s, regional and unit leadership also had to watch closely so that “every officer would always carry an automatic gun of not less than 7.65 [calibre]”.<sup>294</sup>

The situation with armament improved as the budget of the Service increased. However, the entire interwar period was characterised by a variety of larger or smaller violations of officers on the use and storage of weapons. For instance, on January 1939, the Administrative Department of the Ministry of the Interior issued an order stating: “The armament inspections carried out show that police officers are still paying little attention to the storage and maintenance of weapons”, and notes that the overall situation of weapons has deteriorated rather than improved recently.<sup>295</sup>

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<sup>293</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 894, p. op. 82.

<sup>294</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/6, file 664, p. 9.

<sup>295</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 354, p. 4 (Administratīvā departamenta rīkojumi, 1939 (ENG: Administrative Department Orders, 1939)).



The only armament of the Political Security Department in Liepāja regional unit in 1920 were two *Webley* revolvers.

*LVA, fund 3235, description 1/8, file 553, p. 9.*

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The structure of the Service, the available resources and the nature of the activity of the institution were generally dependant on the political system and its attitude to certain phenomena in society. Looking at the interwar period, there is succession in the work of the State Security Department, Riga Criminal Police Political Department, Political Security Department and later the Political Department, which leads to the conclusion that the issue of political and internal security issues at the Ministry of the Interior was topical.

Maintained from state budget resources, the Service reacted to threats to national security and tried to anticipate and prevent them with the resources at its disposal. However, the Service was affected by the general economic and political situation in the country, which resulted in the Service operating in times of austerity after the war, without being able to meet all its needs. A serious opponent to increase the budget of the Service was the argumentation by the Social Democrats who actively pointed out errors in the work of the Service in the Saeima and also in the general public, thus provoking a negative view of its work and heated discussions on the budget of the Service. The situation only improved gradually, culminating post the coup by K. Ulmanis. Although the coup did not lead to changes in the structure of the Service, it gave the Political Department higher prestige and influence in society and contributed to the improvement and expansion of its resources.

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## CHAPTER 3

# Officers and working conditions

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In 1919, the Security Service was in need of professional, reliable and knowledgeable officers. It was equally important to select top officers and assess the suitability of individuals to be hired; this was due to the work specifics and the high national importance of the job. Officers were required to have a particularly high degree of professionalism and moral training. The instruction of the Political Security Department of 1924 reads: “The ethics and moral duties of the Political Security Department’s officers require them to be fully committed and truthful to their work.”<sup>296</sup>

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<sup>296</sup> *Instrukcija Politiskās apsardzes aģentūrai* (ENG: Instruction for the Work of Political Security Department). Rīga: Politiskās apsardzes izdevums, 1924, p. 5.

The officers had to observe strict hierarchy and, even during the peace period and when abandoning the military leadership, strict discipline and a system of subordination was kept. At the same time, various disciplinary violations were not rare among officers, especially in the post-war years. The working conditions at the Service largely resulted from the state budget and the general economic situation of the country. For the officers, it was a job of increased risk and was emotionally challenging.

### 3.1.

## Description of the personnel

The first officers of the State Security Department started their work in August 1919; however, they were officially assigned in early September. According to the resolution of the Minister of the Interior, Alfrēds Birznieks, as of 1 September Jānis Romanovs was assigned as the Head of the Investigation Unit of the State Security Department, as of 14 August; as of 15 August – Edgars Rempis was made Deputy to the unit head, Kārlis Celmiņš was made the Head of the Registration Unit and Teodors Brigis was made the Head of Pārdaugava regional unit; as of 16 August– Kārlis Albertiņš was made the Head of the Control Unit; and as of 1 September – Jānis Supāns was made the Head of Cēsis regional unit, Jānis Šilinskis – Head of Ventspils regional unit, and Fricis Vītoliņš – Head of Liepāja regional unit.<sup>297</sup> The Head of the Control Unit, Kārlis Albertiņš also appointed Acting Director of the State Security Department as of 12 August.<sup>298</sup> These postings were not a coincidence, as many of them had previously held similar positions. For example, J. Romanovs had served in the Latvian Central Gendarmerie as the Head of the Investigation Unit and the head of the Operational Unit.<sup>299</sup>

Jānis Liģeris-Liggers was appointed as the first (and – the only) Director of the State Security Department (elsewhere – Acting Director of the Department) at the Cabinet meeting of 3 September 1919.<sup>300</sup> J. Liģeris-Liggers and several other officers of the State Security Department, such as J. Romanovs, had previously worked for the Riga Gendarmerie Service, where J. Liģeris-Liggers was the Director of the Service.<sup>301</sup> Other officers of the State Security Department had previously been related to various army troops.

According to the State Security Department Human resource plan, in August 1919, 87 jobs were envisaged for Riga (Centre):

- 1) Management – 12 officers (director, deputy director, senior special task officer, secretary, desk officer, female typist, female journalist, an office worker, two messenger boys and two charwomen);

<sup>297</sup> Iecelšanas (ENG: Appointments). *Valdības Vēstnesis*. 2 September 1919, No. 28, p. 3; Iecelšanas (ENG: Appointments). *Valdības Vēstnesis*. 3 September 1919, No. 29, p. 2.

<sup>298</sup> *Latvijas valsts dibinātāji* (ENG: Founders of the State of Latvia). Riga: Latvijas Nacionālais vēstures muzejs, 2018, p. 326.

<sup>299</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 694, p. 3.

<sup>300</sup> Ministru Kabineta sēde (ENG: Cabinet Meeting). *Latvijas Sargs*. 4 September 1919, No. 130, p. 3; Elsewhere it is wrongly indicated that J. Liģeris-Liggers was appointed in August.

<sup>301</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/20, file 58, p. 60.

- ▶ Investigation Unit – 45 officers (head of the unit, two desk officers, five female office workers, two female typists, two messenger boys, senior case officer, a traffic officer at the Police prefect, senior investigation officer, 11 investigation officers, 14 case officers, two case officers at the Telephone Station, a case officer to the Port Board, a case officer on the Railway Board and a case officer in the Mail/Telegraph Unit);
- ▶ Registration Unit – 10 officers (head of unit, two desk officers, five female office workers, one female typist and one messenger boy);
- ▶ Control Unit – 10 officers (head of unit, desk officer, five female typists, three investigation officers);
- ▶ Convoy team – 10 officers (head of convoy, senior officer on duty and eight junior officers on duty).<sup>302</sup>

But another 134 jobs were envisaged in the administrative districts or regions of the State Security Department:

- ▶ Rīga Pārdaugava regional unit (in charge of Rīga Region and the left bank of the Daugava) – 15 officers (head of the unit, desk officer, female office worker, female typist, senior case officer, two interrogators, six case officers, a charlady and messenger boy);
- ▶ Jelgava regional unit (in charge of Jelgava and Bauska regions) – 16 officers (head of the unit, desk officer, female office worker, female typist, senior case officer, two interrogators, seven case officers, a charlady and messenger boy);
- ▶ Tukums regional unit (in charge of Tukums and Talsi regions) – 12 officers (head of the unit, desk officer, female office worker, female typist, senior case officer, interrogator, four case officers, a charlady and messenger boy);
- ▶ Ventspils regional unit (in charge of Ventspils and Kuldīga regions) – 14 officers (head of the unit, desk officer, female office worker, female typist, senior case officer, two interrogators, five case officers, a charlady and messenger boy);
- ▶ Liepāja regional unit (in charge of Aizpute and Grobiņa regions) – 20 officers (head of the unit, desk officer, female office worker, female typist, senior case officer, three interrogators, 10 case officers, a charlady and messenger boy);
- ▶ Jaunjelgava regional unit (in charge of Jaunjelgava and Ilūkste regions) – 12 officers (head of the unit, desk officer, female office worker, female typist, senior case officer, an interrogator, four case officers, a charlady and messenger boy);
- ▶ Krustpils regional unit (in charge of the part of Latgale, which was freed up until then) – 14 officers (head of the unit, desk officer, female office worker, female typist, senior case officer, an interrogator, six case officers, a charlady and messenger boy);

<sup>302</sup> LVVA, fund 1368, description 2, file 204, p.

- ▶ Cēsis regional unit (in charge of Cēsis regions) – 15 officers (head of the unit, desk officer, female office worker, female typist, senior case officer, two interrogators, six case officers, a charlady and messenger boy);
- ▶ Valmiera regional unit (in charge of Valmiera and Valka regions) – 16 officers (head of the unit, desk officer, female office worker, female typist, senior case officer, two interrogators, seven case officers, a charlady and messenger boy).<sup>303</sup>

In total, it was planned to extend the activities of the State Security Department throughout Latvia, with a total staff of 221 people.

However, this was never achieved. The number of officers of the State Security Department decreased in line with plans to liquidate it. For example, in October 1919 there were 53 officers in Riga (five at the Chancellery, seven at the Registration Unit, three at the Control Unit, 14 at the Investigation Unit, 17 at the Operational Unit, and seven junior officers on duty).<sup>304</sup>

On 18 December 1919, already after the liquidation of the State Security Department, the Director of the Administrative Department provided the following explanation to the State Audit Office: “Officers of the former State Security Department could not be offered new jobs because a new authority could not be established after the previous one was liquidated. However, some officers were recruited by the Riga Criminal Police as of 15 November and some desk officers started their duties in the Administrative Department. New jobs could not be offered to the local units’ officers of the liquidated department because the matter regarding the increasing vacancies at the Criminal Police was not yet definitively decided.”<sup>305</sup>

The staff of the Political Department of the Riga Criminal Police was made on the basis of the liquidated State Security Department. A large proportion of the former officers of the State Security Department went to work for the Political Department. Several other former officers of the State Security Department, in particular soldiers, also joined the Intelligence Unit of the Headquarters of the Commander-in-Chief of the Latvian Army.<sup>306</sup> In January 1920, by reducing the activities of the Intelligence Unit of the Headquarters of the Commander-in-Chief of the Latvian Army, several people applied to work in the Political Department of the Riga Criminal Police. For example, on 14 January 1920, a request was received from Alfrēds Rieka stating: “Since the number of officers at the Intelligence Unit of the Headquarters of the Commander-in-Chief of the Army is reduced and I am forced to leave my job, I would kindly ask you to assign me to a case officer position in the Criminal Unit of the Riga Police. During the Tsar’s reign I served in the Cavalryman Intelligence Squad of the 1st Latvian

<sup>303</sup> LVVA, fund 1368, description 2, file 204, p.

<sup>304</sup> LVVA, fund 3725, description 2, file 144, p. 14.

<sup>305</sup> LVVA, fund 3725, description 2, file 144, p. 166.

<sup>306</sup> *Latvijas iekšējās drošības nostiprināšanas vēsture, 1918–1925* (ENG: History of Strengthening the Internal Security of Latvia 1918–1925). Rīga: Valters and Rapa, 1925, p. 41–57.

Riflemen. When the Bolsheviks attacked, I joined the Green Army (partisans). Upon the return of the Latvian Provisional Government, I joined the National Army, where I was sent to the Headquarters of the Commander-in-Chief of the Latvian Army, Riga Region's Intelligence Unit. I studied in secondary school."<sup>307</sup>

As was the case when previous service divisions were established (the State Security Department and the Riga Criminal Police Political Department), the personnel recruited for the Political Security Department<sup>308</sup> mostly had a military background. Officers from the Political Department and several former staff members of the Internal Intelligence Unit of the Headquarters of the Commander-in-Chief of the Latvian Army went to work for the Political Security Department. For example, in 1920, four of the six officers of Liepāja regional unit of Political Security Department had previously served in the Internal Intelligence Unit.<sup>309</sup> At the end of 1920, Mr. J. Fridrihsons, the investigation officer at that time and the later Head of the Political Department, wrote that "so far all officers have been taken over from the old intelligence units".<sup>310</sup> This also largely applied to women employed in the Service – desk officers, office workers, secretaries, typists, etc. For example, on 1 October 1920, Antonija Buzarova was hired in a desk officer's position at the Political Security Department. On 10 June 1919, A. Buzarova applied to be in the service of the Latvian Army, working as a writer in the Internal Intelligence Unit of the Operational Division of the Headquarters of the Commander-in-Chief of the Latvian Army. She was in service until it was liquidated and was sent to Siberia in 1940. In 1929, A. Buzarova was awarded with the first class medal of honour of the Order of the Three Stars. The order, signed by the Director of the Political Department, states: "Antonija Buzarova has shown a good understanding of work throughout her service and performs her duties diligently."<sup>311</sup>

However, it is very important to stress that, compared to the Security Unit of the Police Department of the Russian Empire or the *Ohranka*, the officers of the Service had practically no experience in such institutions. Even more, the hiring of such former *Ohranka* employees was absolutely rejected by the Social Democrats, who still remembered the clashes with the Tsarist Police in the context of the Revolution of 1905. The most striking example of such an attitude by Social Democrats is related to the dismissal of Jānis Dāvuss, the Head of Riga Police Investigation Unit, from the newly created Latvian security institutions in 1919.<sup>312</sup>

<sup>307</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/21, file 18, p. 56.

<sup>308</sup> In his memoirs, Voldemārs Alps calls the Political Security Department's officers "Privatees". See: Alps, V. *Latvija spiegu tīklos* (ENG: Latvia in Spy Networks). Rīga: LARO, 2006, p. 38.

<sup>309</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/8, file 553, p. 7.

<sup>310</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 8, p. 151, 172.

<sup>311</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 920, p. 1, 11, 14.

<sup>312</sup> Jānis Dāvuss is remembered by several participants in the revolution (for example, by the Social Democrat Fēlikss Cielēns) as a cruel and even brutal person. Jēkabsons, Ē.; Šcerbinskis, V. *Latvieši armijā un policijā 1905. gada revolūcijas laikā* (ENG: Latvians in the Army and Police during the Revolution of 1905). *Latvijas Arhīvi*. 2005, (4). P. 24–26; Memories by J. Dāvuss, see: *Slepenpolicista Dāva atmiņas par savu darbību un 1905. gada revolūciju Latvijā* (ENG: Memories of the Secret Police Officer Dāvuss about his Activities and the Revolution of 1905 in Latvia). Rīga: published by the author, 1925.

The officers were civil servants. Such a service was a legally authorised operation in public administration subject to laws and specific rules.<sup>313</sup> During the first years, the appointment of officials and officers specifically for the Service throughout the public administration, was informal: there were no formal procedures or requirements for the appointment of officers. The selection procedure for officers was also not regulated. Only on 14 April 1920 did the Civil Service Act of the Provisional Government come into effect, which stipulated the recruitment and dismissal of officers, and on 13 May 1921 “Rules on the breakdown of public service persons by categories of posts” were adopted, which laid out the division of people employed in the public service by categories of posts (and, consequently, wages).<sup>314</sup>

In November 1920, 152 people worked in the Political Security Department: Head, Deputy Director of the Political Security Department, Secretary, 10 desk officers (three first-class, three second-class and four third-class), four log-book registrars, three senior secretariat officers, six secretariat officers, an archive manager, a photographer, four registrars, a senior investigation officer, 12 investigation officers, head of case officers, 29 senior case officers, 52 case officers, two senior officers on duty, eight junior officers on duty, seven messengers, a server, driver, senior mail censor, and two junior post censors. 43 officers were married. Of the personnel, 18 were women,<sup>315</sup> who were mainly employed in the office work. However, these included two junior mail censors (Aleksandra Švarcbaha<sup>316</sup> and Otilija Baštika) and one junior case officer (Anna Keglere).<sup>317</sup>

The only known female case officer, Anna Keglere, was born in 1897 in Riga, had completed five classes in a gymnasium, and was unmarried. She lived with her parents before working for the Political Security Department; she worked at the Telephone Station for two years. She joined the Political Security Department on 1 October 1920. On 1 September 1922, A. Keglere was dismissed because she was suspected of maintaining contact with communists. The “official remark” of 1923 indicated that the work of A. Keglere was particularly important in the search for female suspects.<sup>318</sup>

Recruitment was positively influenced by the demobilisation of the army in the 1920s and the re-evacuation of refugees, which led to a large number of men being forced to seek new employment. For example, on 10 October 1920, a sergeant of the Defence company of Cēsis region turned to the “Political-secret division” with a request to recruit him in the Political Security Department due to

<sup>313</sup> Ceriņš, A. *Vadonis policijas ierēdņiem un aizsargiem* (ENG: Leader for Police Officers and Privates). Rīga: Rīgas Policijas skola, 1931, p. 118.

<sup>314</sup> See more: Danovskis, E. *Civildienesta izveidošana Latvijā pēc valsts proklamēšanas (1918–1920)* (ENG: Creation of Civil Service in Latvia after the Proclamation of the State (1918–1920)). *Latvijas Universitātes Žurnāls "Juridiskā Zinātne"*. 2014, No. 7, p. 84–98.

<sup>315</sup> Also later, women were hired in the Security Service. For example, in April 1921, nine 18 to 30 year-old women were working for the Political Security Department. Of these, there were eight Latvians and one German woman. LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 95, p. 247.

<sup>316</sup> For more information about A. Švarcbaha see: LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 484.

<sup>317</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 95, p. 46–51.

<sup>318</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 444, p. 10, 14, 15, 17, 27.

the demobilisation of the army and explained that “I have always had a liking for the Police service that I intend to carry out with good will and hard work”.<sup>319</sup>

On 18 August 1921, Political Security Department employed 53 people, excluding the headquarters with around 60 officers (see table). Despite the various positions held by the officers, Aleksandrs Seglenieks, the Prosecutor’s comrade, who audited the Political Security Department in August 1921, established the following: “The allocation of duties is not right. All officers, including case officers, carry out the same work – search, arrest, interrogation and addressing courts. In this context, all officers are made public and the case officers cannot perform their duties – producing secret reports, secretly collecting intelligence, conducting surveillance. Thus, the activities of the Political Security Department do not differ from the activities of the External or Criminal Police.” Similarly, A. Seglenieks points out that “each and every officer of the Political Security Department, almost without exception, lack theoretical and practical knowledge”.<sup>320</sup>

#### Officers of Political Security Department’s regional units as of 18 August 1921<sup>321</sup>

	Head	Investigation officer	Senior case officer	Case officer	Cartographer	Office worker	Typist	Total
Daugavpils regional unit	1	-	2	-	-	-	1	4
Rēzekne regional unit	1	-	1	11	1	-	1	15
Vecgulbene regional unit	1	-	-	5	-	-	-	6
Liepāja regional unit	1	-	3	3	-	-	-	7
Valmiera regional unit	1	-	3	3	-	1	-	8
Riga regional unit	1	2	6	4	-	-	-	13
Total	6	2	15	26	1	1	2	53

On 1 January 1922, the Political Security Department employed 162 people: head, deputy to the head, lawyer (legal adviser), heads of three units, five heads of regional units, three special task officers, a secretary, 15 investigation officers, nine desk officers, an archive manager, three censors, four typists, four senior secretariat officers, four secretariat officers of Class I and four secretariat officers of Class II, 42 senior case officers, 43 case officers, a photographer, a driver, two senior guards, eight junior officers on duty, four messengers and two servers.<sup>322</sup>

<sup>319</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 99, p. op. 2.

<sup>320</sup> LVVA, fund 7432, description 3, file 22, p. op. 2.

<sup>321</sup> Compiled by the authors based on: LVVA, fund 7432, description 3, file 22, p. 1, 2.

<sup>322</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 896, p. 4, 4a.

Allocation of Political Security Department's officers by workplace.

- › In the Headquarters (Administration) in Riga – 61 officers**
  - Director
  - Deputy Director
  - Lawyer
  - Heads of three units
  - Three special task officers
  - Secretary
  - Nine desk officers
  - Eight investigation officers
  - Three censors
  - Archive manager
  - 23 senior case officers
  - Three typists
  - Four senior secretariat (chancellery) officers
  
- › In Riga regional unit – 14 officers, of which seven in the regional unit and seven at local sites**
  - Head of regional unit
  - Investigation officer
  - Two senior case officers
  - Two case officers
  - Typist
  - › Site Ventspils (subordinate to Riga) – one senior case officer
  - › Site Tukums (subordinate to Riga) – one senior case officer
  - › Site Jelgava (subordinate to Riga) – two senior case officers
  - › Site Krustpils (subordinate to Riga) – one senior case officer
  - › Site Madona (subordinate to Riga) – one case officer
  - › Site Bauska (subordinate to Riga) – one senior case officer
  
- › In Liepāja regional unit – eight officers, of which six in the regional unit and two at local sites**
  - Head of unit
  - Investigation officer
  - Three senior case officers
  - Case officer
  - › Site Aizpute (subordinate to Liepāja regional unit) – one case officer
  - › Site Kuldīga (subordinate to Liepāja regional unit) – one case officer

- › In Valmiera regional unit – seven officers, of which five in the regional unit and two at local sites**
  - Head of unit
  - Investigation officer
  - Three case officers
  - › Site Rūjiena (subordinate to Valmiera regional unit) – one senior case officer
  - › Site Cēsis (subordinate to Valmiera regional unit) – one senior case officer
  
- › In Vecgulfene regional unit (with the centre in Alūksne) – eight officers, of which five in the regional unit and three at local sites**
  - Head of unit
  - Investigation officer
  - Two senior case officers
  - Case officer
  - › Site Domopole (subordinate to Vecgulfene regional unit) – one case officer
  - › Site Vecgulfene (subordinate to Vecgulfene regional unit) – one case officer
  - › Site Kalsnava (subordinate to Vecgulfene regional unit) – one case officer
  
- › In Rēzekne regional unit – 15 officers, of which six in the regional unit and nine at local sites**
  - Head of unit
  - Investigation officer
  - Two case officers
  - Two junior secretariat officers
  - › Site Viļāni (subordinate to Rēzekne regional unit) – one case officer
  - › Site Ludza (subordinate to Rēzekne regional unit) – three case officers
  - › Site Kārsava (subordinate to Rēzekne regional unit) – two case officers
  - › Site at refugee quarantine in Rēzekne (subordinate to Rēzekne regional unit) – senior case officer and two case officers
  
- › In Daugavpils regional unit – nine officers in the regional unit**
  - Two investigation officers
  - Three senior case officers
  - Three case officers
  - Secretariat officer.<sup>323</sup>

According to newspaper “Sociāldemokrāts” of 1923, 38 people were initially employed by the Service (supposedly in the department) in 1923, and in April 1923 the number of officers reached 150, thus advocating that such a rapid increase in the number of officers was too high. The newspaper described the officers of the

<sup>323</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 896, p. 4, 4a.

Service as follows: “There is not a single lawyer in this service, and the personnel predominantly consists of former tsarist policemen and university students, politically immature people who enrol in these positions out of “bluster”<sup>324</sup> and “adventure.”<sup>325</sup> This is a clear representation of the opinion of left-wing groups of society regarding the Service that was deliberately aimed at discrediting the image of the institution in the eyes of the public.

The Political Security Department’s leadership had an opposite view of the number of officers, stressing that there was an acute shortage of officers within the institution. The leadership of the Political Security Department often received reports from its subordinates on the lack of officers and the need to hire new people. A great amount of people was needed in the Riga Administration, because it was the largest and central body; it was not only in charge of the capital and its surroundings, but also initially of the areas of Latvia where there were no permanent on-site Political Security Department’s structures. For example, at the end of 1920, J. Fridrihsone pointed out that at least two more case officers were needed in Riga, one of whom would work in Birži-Vecgūbene and the other in Madliena.<sup>326</sup>

There was also a lack of officers in the regional offices: in 1920, normally only one Political Security Department’s officer was appointed in each office. For example, in Ventspils there was only one person in the Service – Jūlijs Krauze, who worked as the case officer in the Political Security Department from 14 October 1920, leaving his previous job in the Ventspils Intelligence Unit (sergeant). When J. Krauze took the office, the new officer was introduced to the head of the region by writing that J. Krauze’s task was to “collect intelligence on the political situation and politically unreliable persons in the region, as well as to do searches and arrests within the region where necessary” while at the same time, he asked the head of the region “to assist J. Krauze in every way” in carrying out the tasks.<sup>327</sup> Shortly after the start of work, in October 1920 J. Krauze reported from Ventspils to the Political Security Department’s Director that in the future there would be a lot of work to be done “I will not be able to accomplish by myself”, therefore he asked to send to Ventspils a senior case officer as soon as possible.<sup>328</sup> On 16 November of the same year, J. Krauze was promoted to senior case officer. Despite the requests made by J. Krauze to increase the number of officers in Ventspils, it is likely that the second officer arrived only in 1921. On 9 August 1921, due to family reasons, J. Krauze asked to be dismissed or transferred to Tukums, pointing out that “the management of Ventspils Site may be handed over to my subordinate Blumfelds, because Blumfelds is now familiar with the operation of Ventspils and, in general, Blumfelds is a diligent officer”.<sup>329</sup> On 12 August, Blumfelds took over the management of

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<sup>324</sup> Bluster, blustering – a person showing off, a boastful, assertive person.

<sup>325</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 604, p. op. 2.

<sup>326</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 8, p. 151, 172.

<sup>327</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 428, p. 10.

<sup>328</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 8, p. 10.

<sup>329</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 428, p. 18.

the Ventspils Site. J. Krauze was moved to Riga regional unit, where he left the job at his own initiative on 29 April 1924. Already on 8 July of the same year, J. Krauze returned to Service in the post of an investigation officer. On 13 December 1937 he was moved to the External Police Service (Criminal Police), putting an end to his career in the Security Service. When leaving the Service, J. Fridrihsons stated the following characteristics of J. Krauze: “Krauze has demonstrated great love for the work and diligence in more than ten years he has worked at the Political Department. He has always been disciplined towards his superiors and a good colleague to his fellow peers. I can recommend Krauze as a capable, fair, reasonable and well-suited employee to the public service.”<sup>330</sup>

The situation elsewhere was similar. For example, in October 1920 the only Political Security Department’s officer from Jelgava reported that “in order to limit the activities of the communists to at least some extent, and also to limit the spread of the various rumours which due to the recent events come from local German-haters of the state of Latvia, it is necessary to increase the number of Political Security Department’s officers in Jelgava or, even better, to organise a permanent unit”.<sup>331</sup> Also, in December 1920, the head of the Political Security Department’s Site at the refugee camp in Rēzekne, O. Ivansons, wrote to Director of the Political Security Department, pointing out the shortage of officers, that “I cannot meet the specifications in a short time considering the existing number of secretariat personnel, because you have to make and extract this from the files”.<sup>332</sup> Similar reports were sent a lot at the beginning of the Service’s work, but similar complaints were also received throughout the entire interwar period, which points to long-term problems. The historian Edgars Andersons, describing the interwar period, indicated that the number of officers of the Service was small compared to the number of people hostile to the Latvian state.<sup>333</sup>

The lack of officers outside Riga was also recognised by the Political Security Department’s leadership. In December 1920, J. Fridrihsons reported that it was necessary to give an autonomous function to the Jelgava and Ventspils sites, but if this was not possible, to at least increase the number of case officers in these sites, each employing at least three people.<sup>334</sup> However, this did not improve the situation. In January 1921, Deputy Director of the Political Security Department, P. Martinsons wrote: “The Political Security Department cannot meet these requirements or can only partially meet them, because their personnel is limited to a certain number of officers”.<sup>335</sup> It can be seen that only one senior case officer was present in Ventspils in 1922. If necessary, officers from Riga were sent to regions and sites. For example, it is known that in August 1922, “Political Security Department’s officers, who had arrived

<sup>330</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 428, p. 130.

<sup>331</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 8, p. op. 13.

<sup>332</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 8, p. 128.

<sup>333</sup> Andersons, E. *Latvijas bruņotie spēki un to priekšvēsture* (ENG: Latvian Armed Forces and their History). Toronto: Daugavas Vanagu apgāds, 1983, p. 479.

<sup>334</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 8, p. 172.

<sup>335</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/9, file 7, p. 35.

from Riga” managed to arrest nine people in Ventspils “for belonging to the communist organisation”.<sup>336</sup> Besides, other justice and home affairs representatives indicated the need to increase the staff of the Service. For example, in August 1921 such a suggestion was made by A. Seglenieks, the Prosecutor’s comrade at Riga Regional Court, stating that “the number of [senior] case officers and case officers must be increased to 120”.<sup>337</sup>

The Service’s officers worked according to the procedures laid down by the laws and regulations. The rules on Political Security Department of 1921 clearly define the positions held by officers, their tasks and their subordination. The Political Security Department was led by a Director, who was appointed by the Minister of the Interior and approved by the Cabinet; he was subordinate to the Minister of the Interior. The director was the “direct executor of orders and instructions given to Political Security Department. He informs the Minister of the Interior of incoming news relating to the Political Security Department’s administration and announces the Minister’s orders. He must have all the information necessary for the attention of the Minister of the Interior, and also for execution by the Political Security Department. Duties of the Director of the Political Security Department: to promote the proper functioning of the Political Security Department by detecting and preventing anti-establishment offences in due time. Thus, he is obliged to keep records of cases according to statutory requirements”.<sup>338</sup>

The second most important officer was the Deputy Director, who was appointed by the Minister of the Interior at the recommendation of the Head of the Political Security Department. The role of the assistant was “to assist in the management and operation of Political Security Department”. He also replaced the Director if necessary.<sup>339</sup>

The rest of the Political Security Department’s personnel was determined by the vacancies of the institution, which, considering the resources (budget, availability of staff, etc.), could be changed at the discretion of the Director. All officers were obliged to “use all the means at their disposal to identify and disclose organisations and people who actively or passively support and promote anti-national criminal activity”.<sup>340</sup>

The draft law on Political Security Department of 1923 provides that Political Security Department’s officers are the Director of Political Security, Deputy Director, special tasks officers, secretary, Head of the Operational Unit and of the Investigation Units and officers, heads of regional units, senior and junior case officers and desk officers. The director and his deputy are appointed by the Minister of the Interior and the rest by the Director of Political Security Department with the consent of the Minister of the Interior.<sup>341</sup>

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<sup>336</sup> LWA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 896, p. 4, 4a, 231.

<sup>337</sup> LWA, fund 7432, description 2, file 22, p. 1, 2.

<sup>338</sup> LWA, fund 3235, description 1/9, file 7, p. 24.

<sup>339</sup> LWA, fund 3235, description 1/9, file 7, p. op. 24.

<sup>340</sup> LWA, fund 3235, description 1/9, file 7, p. op. 24.

<sup>341</sup> LWA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 44, p. 138.

The Service also employed various desk officers. The officers were divided into two groups by their tasks and requirements: external (secret officers, such as investigators, case officers, etc.) and internal (public officers, such as desk officers, secretaries, typists, etc.). For example, in 1920 at the office of the Rēzekne quarantine site, at least two local residents were employed. In December 1920, the typist Johanna Stiere, who worked in the evenings, and Emilija Stervena, were hired. Prior to employing the new workers, both women and their families were examined and “no compromising data” was found.<sup>342</sup> In 1915, Stervena had emigrated as a refugee with her parents and ended up in Nizhny Novgorod, where her father worked in a factory; in April 1918, E. Stervena had completed eight classes at the school. On 25 August 1920, the family returned to Latvia where E. Stervena was employed at the Political Security Department’s Site at the refugee camp in Rēzekne. The story of J. Stiere was similar, in 1915 she emigrated as a refugee with her parents and ended up in Petrograd, where she graduated from a six-class gymnasium. In May 1918, J. Stiere returned to Latvia where she lived with her parents, until at the end of 1920 she got a job at the Political Security Department’s Site at the refugee camp in Rēzekne.<sup>343</sup> Such verification of biography and political credibility before recruitment was carried out for all potential officers, irrespective of the positions they were recruited for.

The so-called “intelligent unemployed” (compared to freelancers nowadays) were also recruited to work for the Political Department in the 1930s. For example, Veronika Greste was employed as a free-contract worker on 26 October 1934, worked as a typist, and was sent to work in Jelgava in May 1936. On 23 March 1939, the woman was dismissed at her own request.<sup>344</sup>

Changes in personnel composition were influenced by changes in the leadership. On 6 July 1923, an article was published in the newspaper “Latvis”, in which its author Ārgalis says that while Pēteris Martinsons was the Director of the Political Security Department (1922–1923), he “started to introduce radical changes, urgently dismissing some of the older officers, replacing them with unexperienced, young people full of bravado. [...] Inexperienced officers cannot work successfully and only harm the prestige of the body”.<sup>345</sup> In reply to this, P. Martinsons wrote in the press: “As regards “inexperienced, young people”, I am pleased to note that during my time, indeed “inexperienced, young people” were employed and they were among those who fought for Latvia’s freedom, with bare feet and old rifles. I was not wrong about them, because these “inexperienced, young men” fought equally well on the internal front, as they did on the external”.<sup>346</sup> However, even before P. Martinsons was appointed to the post of the Director, a number of inexperienced people worked for the Political Security Department. For example, this was pointed out by the Request and

<sup>342</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 8, p. 151, 166.

<sup>343</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 151, p. 168.

<sup>344</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 812, p. 1, 2.

<sup>345</sup> Ārgalis. Mūsu Politiskā apsardzība (ENG: Our Political Security Department). *Latvis*. 6 July 1923, No. 537, p. 2.

<sup>346</sup> Cut-outs from the press about the Security Service, 1922–1924. LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 604, p. 2.

Complaint Commission Audit in May 1921, which writes that “first-year students are predominantly employed by the department as investigation officers; they have less experience”.<sup>347</sup> The instruction document of 1924 also states that one of the reasons for issuing it was the change and recruitment of new officers, stating that “it is not always possible to give them practical training in advance, through special schools and specialised literature”.<sup>348</sup>

On 9 May 1924, when the Political Department was established, major changes in the composition of personnel were not apparent; only the leading individuals were mainly changed. Such a statement was also published in the press, stating that along with the foundation of the institution “great changes [...] are not expected in the personnel of the Political Department’s administration”.<sup>349</sup> The same applies to the appointment of officials; for example, according to the law of 1924 the Director of the Political Department was appointed by the Minister of the Interior.<sup>350</sup> And in the second half of 1920s, it was observed that there were individuals working in the Political Department, who in 1919–1920 had served in army intelligence units. For example, in 1926, the Headquarters of the Commander-in-Chief of the Latvian Army informed the Political Department that 20 of latter’s officers had previously served at the Internal Intelligence Unit of the Headquarters of the Commander-in-Chief of the Latvian Army.<sup>351</sup>

Over the next 10 years, the number of officers gradually increased, but obviously not too fast. A few months after the coup, on 3 October 1934, the new Director of the Political Department, J. Fridrihsons (appointed shortly before the coup), wrote to the Director of the Administrative Department of the Ministry of the Interior about 146 employees working in the Department, of which almost half – 71 were located in Riga. He appreciated the government’s support for the request to increase the number of Political Department’s officers by another 20, given that the new circumstances “impose many new important tasks on the Political Department”.<sup>352</sup> The report stressed that the new situation in the country increased the threat to national security from various illegal and, in the eyes of the new regime, anti-governmental organisations. According to the historian Edgars Andersons, in 1940, there were already 206 case officers and supervisors in the Political Department,<sup>353</sup> and various desk officers were employed as well.

Most of the officers in the Political Department, including after the coup of 1934, had a military background (see table).

<sup>347</sup> LVA, fund 7432, description 3, file 17, p. 164, 165.

<sup>348</sup> *Instrukcija Politiskās apsardzes aģentūrai* (ENG: Instruction for the Political Security Department Agency). Rīga: Politiskās apsardzes izdevums, 1924, p. 3.

<sup>349</sup> Centrālā Kriminālpolicija (ENG: Central Criminal Police). *Latvijas Vēstnesis*. 9 May 1924, No. 104, p. 1.

<sup>350</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 44, p. 155.

<sup>351</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 428, p. 103.

<sup>352</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 879, p. 53.

<sup>353</sup> Andersons, E. *Latvijas bruņotie spēki un to priekšvēsture* (ENG: Latvian Armed Forces and their History). Kanāda: Daugavas Vanagu apgāds, 1983, p. 451.

**Data on previous military career of the officers of the  
External Service of the Political Department<sup>354</sup>**

	1934 1 January	1935 1 January	1936 1 January	1937 1 January
Reserve officers	17	20	20	20
Deputy officers	5	6	13	16
Instructors	22	28	21	22
Soldiers and first soldiers	41	48	51	52
Not served	12	15	12	12

Also, in the coming years until the Soviet occupation, the officers of the Service followed a strict system of subordination. The Service was led and supervised by its Director, acting under the authority of the Director of the Administrative Department of the Ministry of the Interior. Local authorities of the administration, similar to before (in the 1920s) were led by heads of units. Along with chancellery officers, investigation officers, senior case officers and case officers were subordinate to the head of the regional unit; the latter executed orders from senior fellow officers and performed operational activities.<sup>355</sup>

Very little is known about the membership of the Service officers in various associations and other organisations. For example, it is known that in 1939, 42 employees of the Political Department were members of the Latvian Aeroclub<sup>356</sup> (including the head J. Fridrihsons). Accordingly, in 1938, the club had 47 members – Service officers, but in 1937 – 48.<sup>357</sup> And during the entire interwar period, several officers belonged to different student corporations and other life-long academic organisations.

It should be noted that the Service officers also engaged in sport activities. For example, at the end of the 1930s, they formed a football team, and in their first game on 15 August 1939 they defeated the team of the Riga Prefecture protection company 7:1 (4:0).<sup>358</sup>

The Service officers also participated in various events and competitions organised for police personnel. For example, in August 1925, the officers of the

<sup>354</sup> Compiled by the authors based on: LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 879, p. 40.

<sup>355</sup> *Likumu un noteikumu sakopojums policijas darbiniekiem* (ENG: A Codex of Laws and Regulations for Police Officers). Rīga: Iekšlietu ministrijas Administratīvais departaments, unofficial edition, 1938, p. 7, 20, 135.

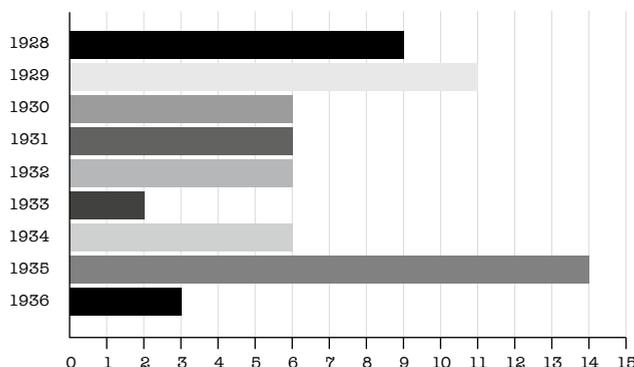
<sup>356</sup> For more information on the club, see: LVVA, fund 1893, (biedrība "Latvijas Aeroklubs" (ENG: Association "Latvian Aeroclubs")) documents, as well as the magazine "Spārnotā Latvija" which was printed and released during the inter-war period.

<sup>357</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 879, p. 10–12.

<sup>358</sup> Timrots, H. Pirmās bezdelīgas (ENG: First Swallows). *Policija*. 1939, No. 1, p. 375.

Service participated in the shooting competition of Riga Police.<sup>359</sup> On 30 June 1939, 10 officers (two of whom were substitutes) participated in the “General police shooting tournament” and on 2 July of the same year – “wearing sports shorts and shoes”, they participated in the celebration commemorating the 20 years of Police, with three Service officers marching with the patrol, two participating in a 400 m race for “non-athletes” and 15 senior and junior case officers participating in gymnastics.<sup>360</sup>

Several officers were in the Service for a long time. It is also possible to track the career development of some individuals, as evidenced by the number of personnel receiving state awards. Among the officers of the Political Department were several who were awarded the Order of Three Stars, as well as nominated for the Cross of Recognition and other prestigious awards.



Number of officers of the Political Department awarded with the Order of the Three Stars.

Compiled based on: LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 879, p. 297.

There were a number of long-term officers in the Department who, at the end of 1930s, were nominated by the Department for the award of state honours. Of the 38 officers in 1938, nine were women (four female desk officers, three typists and two senior office workers) and 29 men (nine senior case officers, 12 case officers, four investigation officers, three officers on duty (guards) and one desk officer).<sup>361</sup> Already at the beginning of the 1930s, the Cabinet of Ministers recognised that around 1% of all governmental and municipal employees should be awarded each year.<sup>362</sup> The awarding of long-term officers of the Service was included, and thus the merits of officers regarding their work in the interests of the country were appreciated and highlighted.

<sup>359</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/6, file 295, p. 77, 10.

<sup>360</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 354, p. 77, 84, 91.

<sup>361</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 879, p. 298.

<sup>362</sup> Triju Zvaigžņu ordeņa vēsture (ENG: History of the Order of the Three Stars). Available at: (<https://www.president.lv/lv/valsts-apbalvojumi/triju-zvaigznu-ordenis/ordena-vesture>) [Reviewed on 4 February, 2019].

## 3.2.

### Personal qualities, level of education and political views of officers

100 The requirements placed on the officers were high. Therefore, the recruitment process involved a particularly detailed assessment of candidates' abilities, characteristics, general education and interest in work, indicating that "productivity and performance depend to a large extent on the individual capacity of the officer".<sup>363</sup> Particular attention was also paid to the individual characteristics of potential security officers. The instruction document of 1924 indicates that "an officer must first be clever, cold-blooded, resistant, physically and mentally-developed, loyal to the existing political system, have certain life experience and be definite in his/her actions when required".<sup>364</sup> In 1926, the Head V. Ozoliņš issued an instruction for the "collection of suitable evaluation materials for candidates", which lists qualities of officers and case officers working for the Political Department – with secondary education (at least 6 completed classes), sound and physically developed, flawless in terms of political, criminal and ethic aspects, abstinent from alcohol.<sup>365</sup>

Moreover, one had to continue the improvement of individual skills while in the Service, in particular by developing perseverance, wit, monitoring skills, memory ("good memory is the best tool to test other people without them being aware of it") and hearing ("only perfect hearing helps to capture the tone of discussions on the road, tram and elsewhere, and to draw the necessary conclusions"). In order to develop these skills, a number of exercises were also proposed, for example, turning away from a desk and listing all the things on it.<sup>366</sup>

General skills and education were also one of the criteria for promotion or, on the contrary, for transferring a person to a lower-level job. For example, on 8 November 1933, referring to the request made by Pēteris Matvejs, the Head of the

<sup>363</sup> *Instrukcija Politiskās apsardzes aģentūrai* (ENG: Instruction for the Political Security Department Agency). Rīga: Politiskās apsardzes izdevums, 1924, p. 5, 11.

<sup>364</sup> *Instrukcija Politiskās apsardzes aģentūrai* (ENG: Instruction for the Political Security Department Agency). Rīga: Politiskās apsardzes izdevums, 1924, p. 10.

<sup>365</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 876a, p. 614.

<sup>366</sup> *Instrukcija Politiskās apsardzes aģentūrai* (ENG: Instruction for the Political Security Department Agency). Rīga: Politiskās apsardzes izdevums, 1924, p. 12, 13.

Political Department in Gulbene region, to be moved to Valmiera, the Director of the Political Department said that this was not possible and proposed that P. Matvejs was “downgraded” as an investigation officer. The explanatory statement says that “Matvejs is only suitable for the post of an investigation officer, not higher. He is not suitable for the post of a head of the unit, due to a lack of tact in service and lack of general education. Gulbene regional unit is one of the smaller regions, with no major centres, and only in this region is he somehow dealing with his duties, but the lack of service tact brought him into conflict with the society”.<sup>367</sup> On 1 April 1934, P. Matvejs was removed from the head of the unit and made senior case officer at Riga regional unit. He explained this step with the fact that “he was “eased out” of Gulbene by the local community” and that “The Farmers’ Union is now ruthlessly paying him back”.<sup>368</sup>

The education of officers was also important. For example, there are data on the level of education of the officers of the External Service of the Political Department in 1934–1937.

**Data on the level of education of the officers of the  
External Service of the Political Department**<sup>369</sup>

	1934 1 January	1935 1 January	1936 1 January	1937 1 January
Uncompleted higher education	14	24	21	24
Completed secondary education	20	27	31	35
Uncompleted secondary education	30	32	33	31
Completed primary education	24	25	23	23
Uncompleted primary education	9	9	9	9
Number of students graduated from the Police School	2	2	2	5

Education in the form of various training sessions and courses also continued after the start of employment. For example, three officers from the Political Department, Liepāja regional unit, completed two-week service courses in 1926.<sup>370</sup> In total, in the 1920s–1930s, the Service carried out various educational activities (official trips, various briefings, etc.), which was an integral part of ensuring that job duties were carried out properly. The Service strived to ensure suitable and

<sup>367</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 3923, p. 30.

<sup>368</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 3923, p. 34, 35.

<sup>369</sup> Compiled by the authors based on: LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 879, p. 40.

<sup>370</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/8, file 553, p. 35.

well-trained officers fulfil the tasks assigned, which would allow the internal security of the country to be maintained more effectively. This was particularly important in the second half of the 1930s, when due to the coup there was a relatively potentially greater danger to the peaceful existence of the authoritarian regime of K. Ulmanis within the country. Thus, in the second half of the 1930s, the Department focussed on raising the level of education and training of officers.

Training also continued shortly before the Service was wound up. In the first half of 1940, the Ministry of the Interior organised courses for public officials at the Congress House, in Riga, on 6 Amatu Street, which were also attended by the officers of the Service. The registration lists reveal the courses were attended by officers of various levels – ranging from heads of units to officers on duty.

#### **Course Programme for officers.**

##### **Riga, January, March 1940<sup>371</sup>**

Time	Title of thesis	Expert
10 January 1940	Being a man	Captain J. Students
17 January 1940	End of the historical period (historical notes on repatriation)	Professor A. Tentelis
17 January 1940	Work and tasks of the LDC	Director A. Šmits
24 January 1940	Price sorting tasks	Price Inspector A. Elpers
24 January 1940	Riga construction style (Encyclopaedic overview with light photos)	Prof. A. Krūmiņš
31 January 1940	Latvian farmers in times of change	Doc. B. Ābers
06 March 1940	Building national defence	Colonel J. Streipa
12 March 1940	Role of local authorities in urban supply	J. Vāgners
13 March 1940	Role of industry in our economy	Director J. Švanks
13 March 1940	Latvian painting	O. Saldavs
15 March 1940	Jelgava Agricultural Academy	Rector P. Kreišmanis

The content of the programme suggests the current economic trends and even challenges of the authoritarian regime of K. Ulmanis<sup>372</sup> and this is probably how the officers of the Political Department were trained to adequately respond to the public mood in the context of these topics.

The need for education and training of officers is characterised by the fact that, in the day-to-day performance of duties, the officers often faced conspiracy

<sup>371</sup> Compiled by the authors based on: LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 879, p. 601, 604, 605.

<sup>372</sup> See more on the economic policy of the regime and its problems: Stranga, A. *Kārļa Ulmaņa autoritārā režīma saimnieciskā politika. 1934–1940* (ENG: Economic Policy of Kārlis Ulmanis' Authoritarian Regime. 1934–1940). Riga: LU Akadēmiskais apgāds, 2017, 269 pages.

of potential political opponents and attempts to combat it. For example, in the instruction document of 1924, a separate chapter addresses various types of cyphers and codes, and explains methods for the way in which such information was transmitted. The Service officers had to be able to decrypt various messages which was “a difficult and sometimes unmanageable task. To do this, the relevant skills come with much practice, effort, perseverance, and the performer of the tasks shall use common sense and must be quick-witted”.<sup>373</sup>

Service officers were restricted from becoming members of political parties or organisations. V. Alps, however, claims that Mr. “Š.”, a member of the Constitutional Assembly belonging to the left, had worked with the Political Security Department in 1921.<sup>374</sup> In a similar context, the appointment of the last Director of the Service, J. Fridrihsons, on the eve of the coup, and the close relationship with the Latvian Farmers’ Union, should also be mentioned.<sup>375</sup>

In his memoirs, the social democrat F. Cielēns expressed a critical opinion of the political views of the officers in the second half of the 1920s. He pointed out that the Director of the Political Department, Mr. V. Ozoliņš, “stood close to a democratic centre [centrist political party], yet [Marģers] Skujenieks [Prime Minister and at the same time Minister of the Interior from 1926 to 1928] could not fully trust the institution of Political Secret Police, because only right-wing people had settled there over time”.<sup>376</sup> An opinion like this should be seen with precaution, considering that F. Cielēns had leftist views; however, holding the position of Minister for Foreign Affairs in the cabinet led by M. Skujenieks (1926–1928), Mr. Cielēns was also well informed about domestic political developments and the operations of the agencies concerned.

<sup>373</sup> *Instrukcija Politiskās apsardzes aģentūrai* (ENG: Instruction for the Political Security Department Agency). Rīga: Politiskās apsardzes izdevums, 1924, p. 90, 91; As regards decoding of messages, the Security Service also cooperated with the Office for Scientific Forensics.

<sup>374</sup> Alps, V. *Latvija spiegu tīklos* (ENG: Latvia in Spy Networks). Rīga: LARO, 2006, p. 48.

<sup>375</sup> *20. gadsimta Latvijas vēsture. 2. daļa. Neatkarīgā valsts 1918–1940* (ENG: Latvia in the 20th Century. Part 2. An Independent State 1918–1940). Bērziņš, V. (ed.). Rīga: LU Latvijas Vēstures institūts, 2003, p. 590.

<sup>376</sup> Cielēns, F. *Laikmeta maiņā. 2. sēj.* (ENG: In the Change of Eras. Volume 2) Līdzige: Momento, 1963, p. 307.

### 3.3.

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## Description of the work environment

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Working conditions, especially in the 1920s, were challenging, due to both the general atmosphere of the war and post-war and the specifics of the Service. This is confirmed by many proposals and recommendations for action submitted by various officers to the managers and the management of the authority, bringing various problems to light and seeking effective solutions. According to the instruction document of 1921, “complaints of improper conduct of officers during investigation may be submitted to the Head of the Political Security Department,” and “complaints of illegal conduct, to relevant judicial prosecutors”.<sup>377</sup> When facing the actual situation, the officers were able to assess the situation and propose a working model to prevent illegal actions and strengthen internal security and public confidence in the state.

Not only were the officers required to have knowledge of niche investigation issues, but also to see the overall situation in the country, analyse various processes and handle large amount of information. It was established that “the psychological sophistication of the operational methods obliges officers to be alert to external and internal phenomena in the country”.<sup>378</sup>

The success of the Service could not have been imagined without respect for discipline. In this context, in-house and outsource officers should be considered as two separate groups. Internal discipline requirements were mainly related to the precise, correct and timely preparation of documents, which was regulated by various corporate instructions. Such requirements were, of course, also binding on outsource personnel, but they were also subject to special requirements and, in particular, they had to observe the secrecy.

Secrecy or “secret arrangement” was one of the most important requirements to work for the Service and it was prescribed that “the officers must be very careful to ensure that the enemy with whom the battle is unremitting gets to know nothing of the activities of the Political Security Department and its officers”. Service officers

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<sup>377</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/9, file 7, p. 25.

<sup>378</sup> *Instrukcija Politiskās apsardzes aģentūrai* (ENG: Instruction for the Political Security Department Agency). Rīga: Politiskās apsardzes izdevums, 1924, p. 5.

were prohibited (without particular need) from speaking about their duties; their identity was kept secret and only disclosed in exceptional circumstances; it was defined that officers, except public officials, preferably used a cover name and case officers were recommended to disguise themselves. The instruction document of 1924 provides three key principles for the secrecy:

- 1) when dealing with a stranger, ask more, say less,
- 2) reveal a secret to no one (except for leadership), either secretly or under an oath; even if it is a friend – do not entrust anything beyond the necessary,
- 3) do not say what you know, but what is necessary.<sup>379</sup>

However, secrecy was not always respected. This was due to two aspects: an officer's individual skills and the common policy and operation of the authority. At the end of 1920, the head of the Political Security Department's Site at the refugee camp in Rēzekne, Mr. O. Ivansons, wrote to the Director of the Political Security Department: "I hereby report that case officers often speak about and are very upset by the fact that the central unit in Riga is said not to follow the rules of secrecy", indicating that the public is aware of the real names of all heads, including the names of informants, and that all the officers of the Service are known to the Bolsheviks.<sup>380</sup>

The issue of keeping silent also remained on the agenda further on. For example, on 13 June 1921, head of Daugavpils regional unit, Jānis Sausais, reports on the flaws of obeying secrecy: "My subordinated case officers [...] are far too known in the entire region; and people tend to avoid and keep away from them well in advance. Indeed, it is true on the one hand, as regards case officers being known by locals. Not only are the majority of them known in person, but people are even aware of their pseudonyms and some – of their surnames." J. Sausais pointed out that this situation made the region more difficult to operate and, as a solution, suggested the rotation of officers by moving some of his subordinate case officers to other places and replacing them with others instead. This suggestion was accepted by the Political Security Departments' leadership and implemented.<sup>381</sup> In July of the same year, P. Martinsons also highlighted the need for secrecy: "It has come to the attention of the Political Security Department that there is an insufficient respect for secrecy in the political security regions, both regarding the course of proceedings and on the steps to be taken, as well as witness reports. Such carelessness and negligence are impermissible in the operations of the Political Security Department, since it rules out any success. In view of this, I propose to ensure that the officers of

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<sup>379</sup> *Instrukcija Politiskās apsardzes aģentūrai* (ENG: Instruction for the Political Security Department Agency). Riga: Politiskās apsardzes izdevums, 1924, p. 8–10.

<sup>380</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 95, p. 110.

<sup>381</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 95, p. 283.

the region always respect secrecy and do not reveal secrets of the Service, neither in negotiations nor in reply to requests.”<sup>382</sup>

Officers were prohibited from taking part in political events, while wearing their uniforms or distinctive marks.<sup>383</sup> In general, for violations of the duties of office “Political Security Department’s officers shall be held accountable on a general basis through courts or administrative procedures.”<sup>384</sup>

In August 1923, all case officers, senior case officers and investigation officers were instructed to submit their resignation documents as of 1 September 1923. The resignations had to be accompanied by requests for employment containing a reference to the cover name, rather than the real name, since “for the sake of secrecy, the leadership finds it is preferable for outsource personnel to work under cover names”.<sup>385</sup> On 19 October 1923, for example, the Political Security Department received two job applications written by the same person – one signed by Hugo Mērnies in his real name, and the other signed by Kārlis Krastiņš as his cover name.<sup>386</sup> However, the officers already used cover names before 1923. For example, Arturs Krūmiņš, a case officer of the Political Security Department of Rēzekne regional unit in 1922, used the cover name “Siliņš”.<sup>387</sup>

In order to ensure smooth functioning, the leadership was entitled to appoint officers under its authority to work for another division of the Service. This was another feature of this job which had to be taken into account. These changes were usually unexpected and affected the privacy and material conditions of the officers. For example, in March 1921, Jānis Sausais started working for the Political Security Department in Riga as an investigation officer (previously – first lieutenant of Riga 4th Infantry Regiment). Shortly after that, on 5 March, J. Sausais was transferred to Daugavpils to work as the head of Daugavpils regional unit. He had to change his residence from Riga to Daugavpils. In November 1921, J. Sausais had to move for the second time, because he was appointed to the head of Rēzekne regional unit. He writes that, since “the relocation took place without my wish, was a surprise to me, and had to be done without delay, it resulted in higher expenditure for me”.<sup>388</sup>

The relationship between the Service officers is defined in the instruction document of 1924, which highlights the need for mutual “solidarity and comradeship that is based on mutual assistance and trust”. However, two more principles are

<sup>382</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/9, file 7, p. 104.

<sup>383</sup> *Likumu un noteikumu sakopojums policijas darbiniekiem* (ENG: A Codex of Laws and Regulations for Police Officers). Rīga: Iekšlietu Ministrijas Administratīvais departaments, unofficial edition, 1938, p. 23, 24, 135; Ceriņš, A. *Vadonis policijas ierēdņiem un aizsargiem* (ENG: Leader for Police Officers and Privates). Rīga: Rīgas Policijas skola, 1925, p. 121.

<sup>384</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/9, file 7, p. op. 25.

<sup>385</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 146/2, p. 101.

<sup>386</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 700, p. 4, 42.

<sup>387</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 599, p. 12.

<sup>388</sup> It should be noted that in the personal file it is not indicated that J. Sausais would have actually moved to Rēzekne; LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 510, p. 30, 31.

pointed out in the context of mutual relations. It is written that junior officers shall abide by instructions from senior, experienced officers, and they shall learn to “respect practices and adventures of the senior officers” without “sticking much to the remarks of senior officers”. Moreover, it is noted that the “enemy” will seek ways into the Service – either as new officers working undercover or by convincing existing officers to collaborate with the “enemy”. It is therefore not desirable that the Service officers “speak to each other about their work without particular need”. It is also stressed that the communication with the superiors shall be absolutely frank and that “the reports to the superiors shall contain the naked truth; however, not surprisingly fictional things tend to stand out or become apparent in other ways”.<sup>389</sup>

Officers, both on and off duty, shall act adequately and be reserved. In December 1921, P. Martinsons pointed out that “in order to successfully work on sites, the Department suggests to strictly observe the behaviour of your subordinates by filing each unacceptable action of officers and reporting it to the Department. Besides, the Department finds it necessary to point out that you must strive to combat alcohol consumption among officers in every possible way, since it has been the underlying reason for various unacceptable incidents in the district until now”.<sup>390</sup> Alcohol consumption (including alcohol abuse), despite repeated remarks by the leadership of the Security Service, was a common bad habit among officers, especially in the post-war period – in the first half of the 1920s. For example, on 29 November 1925 in the town of Rēzekne, the Order Police found the Head of Rēzekne regional unit of the Political Department, Kārlis Bērziņš, “lying on the street, heavily intoxicated”; he was taken to the police station to sober up. When released, he “behaved rudely”. Voldemārs Ozoliņš, Head of the Political Department, found such behaviour as “degrading the dignity of a public official and the institution”. He punished K. Bērziņš with a strict reprimand, noting that in the event of a repeated violation K. Bērziņš might face 3-days’ imprisonment, while in the case of a third violation, he would be dismissed from the Service.<sup>391</sup>

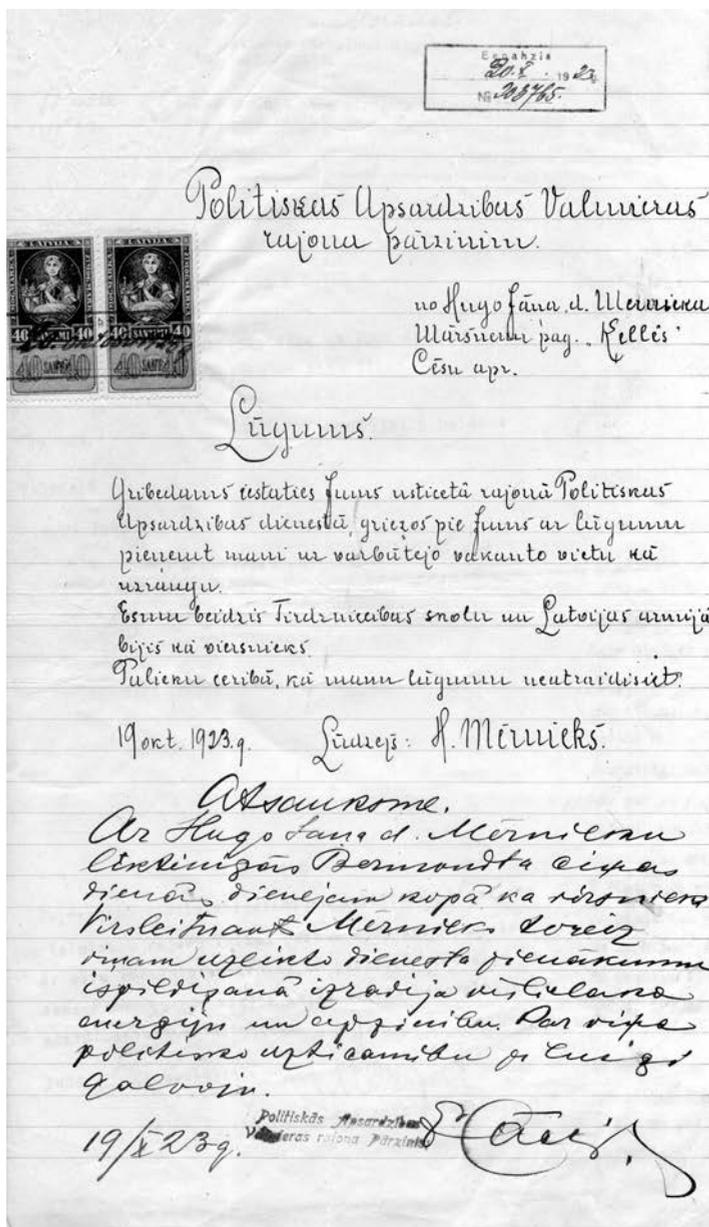
There are also a number of other types of violations found in the archive documents. For example, in 1926, Aleksandrs Bērziņš, senior case officer of Daugavpils regional unit, abusing his office, was accused of having “sexual intercourse several times” with a woman, who was detained on a train “for identification purposes”, which was seen by several witnesses.<sup>392</sup> The violation of discipline, particularly in the 1920s, could be explained by the recruitment of new officers, who apparently had a military background. It took some time for the new officers who had once been soldiers to adapt to reasonable working methods and behaviour during peacetime.

<sup>389</sup> *Instrukcija Politiskās apsardzes aģentūrai* (ENG: Instruction for the Political Security Department Agency). Rīga: Politiskās apsardzes izdevums, 1924, p. 9–12.

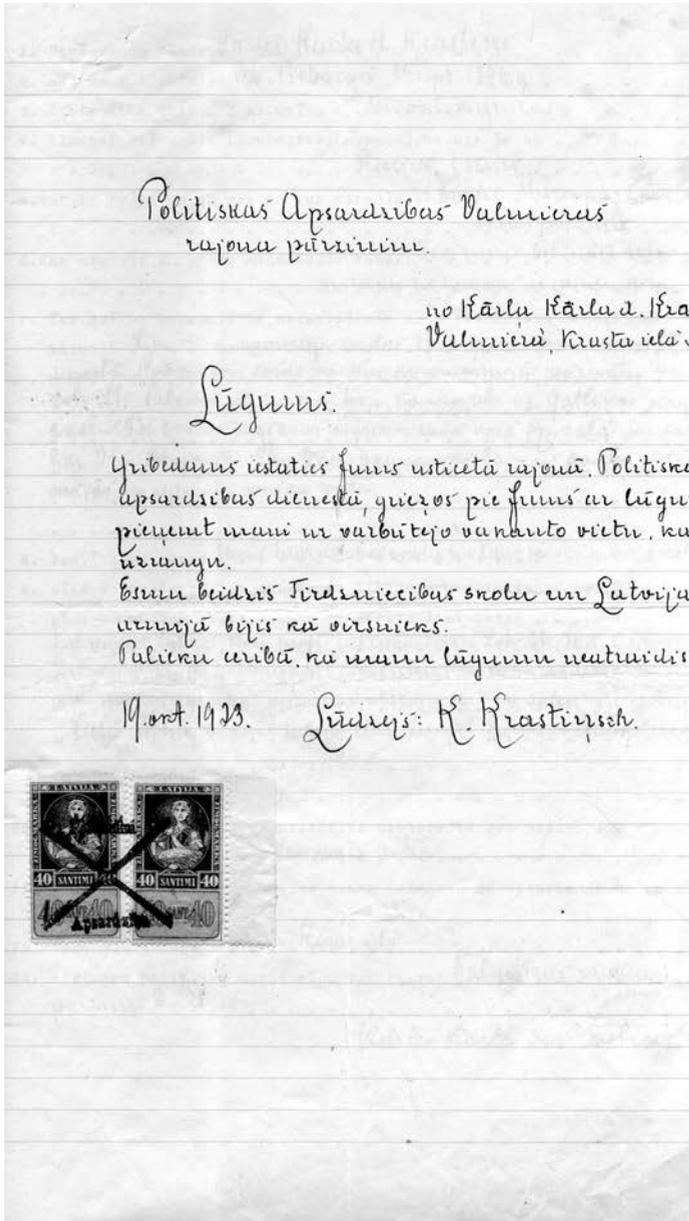
<sup>390</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/9, file 7, p. 151.

<sup>391</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 739, p. 13.

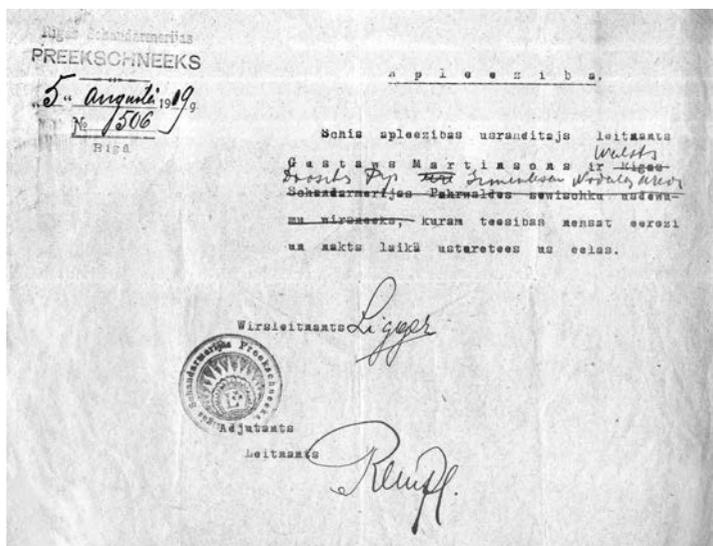
<sup>392</sup> See: LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file p. 719.



Job application by Hugo Mērnieks *alias* Kārlis Krastiņš, sent to  
the Political Security Department. 19 October 1923.



Job application by Kārlis Krastiņš *alias* Hugo Mērnīeks, sent to  
the Political Security Department. 19 October 1923.



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The Service ID card of Lieutenant Gustavs Martinsons, issued by Jānis Līģers-Liggers, head of Riga Gendarmerie, with a correction from “an officer of special tasks of the Riga Gendarmerie Administration” to “officer of the Investigating Unit of the State Security Department”. Riga, 5 August 1919. LVA, fund 3235, description 1/20, file 58, p. 39.



Service ID card of the Deputy Director of the Political Security Department, later Acting Director Jānis Kaktiņš, issued in 1922. LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 363, p. 75.



Service ID card of a Service officer, Pēteris Matvejs, issued in 1933.

LWA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 392, p. 44.



Service ID card of the investigation officer of the Political Department  
of Rēzekne regional unit, Alfrēds Fimbauers, issued in 1934.

LWA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 587, p. 52.

Each officer held a Service ID card, which had to be carried with its owner at all times. Several types of Service ID cards issued to Service officers are currently known. The first – printed on ordinary paper (sometimes due to a general shortage of paper, the already printed overleaf was used), without a person's photo – were issued to the officers of the State Security Department. The Political Security Department developed new Service ID cards, which were printed from 1920 onwards. Only one side was printed, indicating the name, position and photo of the officer;<sup>393</sup> each Service ID card bore an individual number, along with the signature and stamp of the Head. The Political Department took over the model of the previous Service ID card, changing the name of the institution according to the situation, and later the Service ID cards were printed so they could be folded in half, and in hard covers. Upon receiving the new type of Service ID card, produced from 1934 onwards, the old card had to be returned.<sup>394</sup> The new Service ID cards looked different; they were smaller and printed on both sides, but provided the same information as the previous ones.

The Service ID card came with a badge, or special chest badges produced for the Political Security Department in 1922, approved by the Minister of the Interior.<sup>395</sup> Chest badges depicted the small coat of arms of the Republic of Latvia, behind which was a bound bundle of wooden rods, including an axe with its blade emerging (*fascio littorio*). There were three stars above the axe and the shield. The chest badge featured the national symbols of the new country – the coat of arms, the three stars, and the bundle of wooden rods with axe or fasces, which originated from Ancient Rome and is symbolically closely associated with the watchkeeping function.

The badges were created in the workshop of the engraver Friedrich Wilhelm Müller by order of Alfrēds Bērziņš,<sup>396</sup> the Head of Operational Unit.<sup>397</sup> Interestingly, according to the report by the senior case officer at the Political Security Department, “the Head of the Maintenance Unit has neither documents, nor instructions on how many and what amount of badges were made”.<sup>398</sup> For the next few years until the mid-1920s, in correspondence with its partners, the Political Security Department sought to determine the number of issued badges and the individuals who had received them. Each badge had its own number, which, if lost, would allow one to identify the person to whom it was issued. When leaving the Service, officers had to hand over the chest badge to send it to the Department in Riga.

In order to work for the Service, officers had to be prepared for unforeseen events and swift action. The by-laws binding on those working for police and

<sup>393</sup> Often, when changing the officer's duty pass, a new photograph was not taken, but the old one was used instead, which would be torn off from the previous one and glued to the new one.

<sup>394</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 587, p. 34.

<sup>395</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 44, p. 138.

<sup>396</sup> See more on the career of A. Bērziņš at the Political Police: LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 570, (File of A. Bērziņš), p. 30.

<sup>397</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 879, p. 204.

<sup>398</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 879, p. 204.

prisons allowed one to appoint extra duties or a post or guard.<sup>399</sup> The Service was not an exception, although normally officers were on duty according to a pre-established schedule. It should be noted that the duty to watch could also be scheduled on weekends and holidays.<sup>400</sup> Already in the first half of the 1920s, it was established that the Service leadership as well as their direct superiors (e.g. officers of the Investigating Unit and Operational Unit) “were obliged to be present in the Department every evening from 9 to 11 o’clock”.<sup>401</sup> Long working hours were nothing out of the ordinary.

Already in the early 1920s, the head of the Political Security Department’s Site at the refugee camp in Rēzekne, Mr. O. Ivansons, explained that all work could only be done with difficulty, working late in the evenings.<sup>402</sup> On-call duties could also be imposed as a disciplinary penalty, for example, for arbitrary absences from the Service.<sup>403</sup> Moreover, not only outsourced but also in-house officers frequently worked longer than the standard working hours. For example, in 1938, Anna Doreda, a desk officer at the Political Department, was nominated for the Order of Three Stars. Although she was not awarded, the justification stated, inter alia: “The work at the chancellery often cannot be done during working hours, and sometimes it comes to working some extra hours, which she is happy to do.”<sup>404</sup> Most officers generally stuck to the working hours. For example, the Director of the Political Security Department, Liepāja region, established on 18 September 1922 that “officers arrive late for work for the first time”,<sup>405</sup> affirming that this was not normal practice.

In November 1922, P. Martinsons wrote: “The work of the Political Security Department is very different from that of other institutions, since officers of the Political Security Department, while performing their job duties, never take account of the actual 6-hours of work, but always come to work whenever necessary, regardless of the time.”<sup>406</sup> Moreover, it should be noted that the officers were also required to be alert in the performance of their duties outside working hours. The instruction document of 1924 says: “An officer shall always perform its service by the type of activity, i.e. shall not miss any suspicious circumstance, either in public or elsewhere in private life.”<sup>407</sup>

<sup>399</sup> Ceriņš, A. *Vadonis policijas ierēdņiem un aizsargiem* (ENG: Leader for Police Officers and Privates). Rīga: Rīgas Policijas skola, 1925, p. 119.

<sup>400</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 45, p. 112.

<sup>401</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/6, file 726, p. 9.

<sup>402</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 8, p. 151.

<sup>403</sup> For example, senior case officer Ērdmanis (Rīga) received such a penalty for “late notification of falling ill, due to which he was absent from work”. LVA, fund 3235, description 1/6, file 726, p. 20.

<sup>404</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 637, p. 35.

<sup>405</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/8, file 553, p. 19.

<sup>406</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 933, p. 213.

<sup>407</sup> *Instrukcija Politiskās apsardzes aģentūrai* (ENG: Instruction for the Political Security Agency). Rīga: Politiskās apsardzes izdevums, 1924, p. 13.

## OCCUPATIONAL HAZARDS

The duties and nature of the work of the Service officers implied permanent conditions of increased danger and even life-threatening conditions. Historian E. Andersons points out that in the 1920s, the continuous armed clashes with enemies resulted in significant losses of officers in the Service.<sup>408</sup> On 26 June 1939, J. Fridrihsons, Director of the Political Department, informed that five officers had fallen during the Service. All in 1920, 1921.<sup>409</sup> The first casualty was Jānis Arājs, who died in April 1920. Before the Service, J. Arājs served as a junior case officer in the Internal Intelligence Unit of the Headquarters of the Commander-in-Chief of the Latvian Army.<sup>410</sup>

In 1920, on the night of 24/25 November, the senior case officer of the Political Security Department (previously also served in the State Security Department), Alfons Štrohs, was shot; allegedly by the “long-wanted treasurer of the Central Committee of the Latvian Communist Party, Zommers-Zviedris”. He managed to flee, and the Director of the Political Security Department instructed all the regions “to take the most active steps in his search and delivery to the Political Security Department”.<sup>411</sup>

More on the murder of A. Štrohs can be found in an expert report drafted later: “In 1920, on the night of 24/25 November at around 12.00 o’clock, while observing the departing train to Liepāja at Riga Central Station, in one of the compartments [Štrohs] had spotted the long-wanted treasurer of the Central Committee of the Latvian [illegal] Com[munist] party, Mr. Zommers-Zviedris. Zommers had presented Alfons Štrohs with a Latvian passport, issued for a person named Kubdancis. As Zommers noticed he had been recognised by Štrohs, he suddenly pulled a revolver out of his pocket and shot Štrohs 3 times in the same train compartment, hitting him fatally in the chest. Štrohs was shot dead immediately. Despite the fact that the train compartment and the railway platform were crowded with passengers and a railway police officer was standing at the compartment door holding a loaded gun, Zommers managed to get out and disappear in the crowd, while running towards Dzirnavu Street.”<sup>412</sup> Interestingly, the clashes of the Security Service, when writing about “Latvia under the rule of national bourgeoisie” are also addressed by the Soviet historians, emphasising mass arrests, clashes and aggression of “Political Department’s case officers”.<sup>413</sup>

On 25 May 1921, while performing their duties, “attacking communists” shot the Political Security Department’s officers – Jānis Ozols and Kārlis Ķīmenis. In 1938, a Service note reads the following on this: “On 25 May 1921, in relation to the liquidation of Kretulis’ communist-terrorist group of the illegal communist organisation, a

<sup>408</sup> Andersons, E. *Latvijas bruņotie spēki un to priekšvēsture* (ENG: Latvian Armed Forces and their History). Toronto: Daugavas Vanagu apgāds, 1983, p. 479.

<sup>409</sup> LVVA, fund 3725, description 2, file 122, p. 11.

<sup>410</sup> LVVA, fund 3725, description 2, file 122, p. 11.

<sup>411</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 8, p. 124.

<sup>412</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 406, p. 17.

<sup>413</sup> *Latvijas PSR vēsture. No vissenākajiem laikiem līdz mūsdienām* (ENG: History of Latvian SSR. From the Past till Nowadays). Rīga: Zinātne, 1986, p. 79, 115.

member of this organisation Eduards Kummermanis, who lived in Riga at Apt. 1, 45 Miera Street, was arrested. After the arrest of Kummermanis, a trap was found in his apartment by two junior case officers of the Political Security Department, Kārlis Ķīmenis (born on 15 January 1872) and Jānis Ozols (born on 7 December 1883). While both of the case officers were on duty, a lady by the name of Vilhelmīne Simanovičs came to the Kummermanis' apartment holding a basket with communist literature inside it. Once Ms Simanovičs was detained and delivered to the Political Security Department, a woman named Olga Ozoliņš arrived at the Kummermanis' apartment, who said she had come to pick up her coat, which Kummermanis allegedly had taken at some festive event in Saules dārzs. Following the detention of Olga Ozoliņš, two more members of the communist-terrorist group – Jātnieks and Upmalis – appeared at the apartment; both were detained by the case officers Ķīmenis and Ozols. According to an eyewitness, who had been present in the Kummermanis' apartment together with the detained Jātnieks and Upmalis, while the case officer Ozols wrote a report to his superior about people arrested in Kummermanis' apartment; one of the detainees asked for water, and in reply the case officer Ķīmenis went into the kitchen to grab some. At that moment one of the detainees pulled out a revolver and killed the case officer Ozols, who sat at the desk, with one shot. After the shot, Ķīmenis ran out of the kitchen and was killed by the detainee with a second shot. After that, the two arrested men fled, taking a *Nagant* revolver from the shot case officer Ozols, along with documents, hand grenades and other items he had on him.”<sup>414</sup>

On 21 September 1921, the former investigation officer of the Political Security Department Roberts Bormanis, who previously served as an investigation officer at the Internal Intelligence Unit of the Headquarters of the Commander-in-Chief of the Latvian Army, was shot. Mr. Bormanis was at the Political Security Department between 8 November 1920 and 16 February 1921, when he left the Service at his own request. The following is written about the circumstances of the death of R. Bormanis: “On 21 September 1921, at around 15:30, the chief of Balvi police station called by phone to report on the murder that had happened on the road Liepna-Kuprava, where armed bandits had attacked Bormanis, a former officer of the Political Security Department, and the latter was shot dead.”<sup>415</sup> Despite the fact that R. Bormanis was killed after leaving the Service, he was counted on the personnel who fell while in the Service.

Officers were subjected to emotionally hardworking conditions, related to great tension and often exhaustion. In order to better understand the specifics of the work, we shall take a look at the retirement of Ādolfs Graikste, a senior case officer at the Political Department, Liepāja region. Ā. Graikste was appointed as the junior case officer with the creation of Political Security Department on 1 October 1920. Previously, as of February 1919, Ā. Graikste served in the Latvian armed forces – the Internal Intelligence Unit of the HQ of the Commander-in-Chief of the Latvian Army

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<sup>414</sup> LWA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 455, p. 35; LWA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 500, p. 24.

<sup>415</sup> LWA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 399, p. 40.

and later in the Intelligence Unit of the Lejaskurzeme region, “he had been particularly active during the Bermondts Affair, and thanks to his witty action, several Bermondts spies were arrested”. On 1 April 1921, he was promoted to senior case officer and on 10 May 1922 he left the Service and joined the Border Police. On 1 July 1923, he returned to service in the Political Security Department in the position of senior case officer of Liepāja regional unit. The nomination for the Order of Three Stars, written in 1930, describes Ā. Graikste’s performance: “Throughout his service at the Political Department, in Liepāja regional unit, Graikste took an active part in the liquidation of various illegal organisations. By the way, at his personal initiative he explored the operation of the Lejaskurzeme regional communist organisation resulting in the liquidation of this committee. In 1922 he arrested the secret courier of the Soviet diplomatic mission in Liepāja; the courier had material evidence and party letters with him stating Graikste has carried out a lot of important duties over the course of his more than ten years of service.”<sup>416</sup>

On 3 February 1931, at the age of 34, due to disease (“he had been ill for more than seven months”) Ā. Graikste was pensioned off. The disease was caused by an apoplectic stroke, which had “hit” Ā. Graikste during the performance of his tasks. Ā. Graikste<sup>417</sup> described the case as follows: “On 12 June 1930 at 16:00 o’clock, while on duty, according to your [head of Liepāja regional unit] instructions, while following key individuals of a communist organisation for nearly a whole day uninterrupted starting from 10 June, I was suddenly hit by a nerve stroke on Arnolda Street [in Liepāja], due to which the right side of the body was paralysed and I lost the ability to move. The main reason for the stroke was extreme fatigue of the nervous system, due to the long-time work at the Political Department and especially recently, i.e. in April and May of this year, when I worked intensively for a whole month on the elimination of communist organisations within the district.”<sup>418</sup> Following the accident Ā. Graikste was taken to Liepāja Hospital and later continued treatment at home.

The Director of the Political Department, V. Ozoliņš, also provided an opinion on this case, asking the Medical Treatment Department of State Employees to grant Ā. Graikste a subsistence benefit during the period of illness, indicating: “Given that the work of the Departments linked to constant worries and nerve strain, this case is considered to be a direct consequence of unfavourable working conditions [...]”<sup>419</sup> Although the outlook on the recovery of Ā. Graikste was optimistic, it did not happen and he was retired from Service. Moreover, his health situation continued to deteriorate and “he lost mental balance”; his wife placed him in the Psychiatric Ward of Liepāja City Hospital, where he stayed until at least November 1940. On 28 July 1931, the Ministry of Civic Welfare, following the decision of the Pension commission,

<sup>416</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 470, p. 20, 54.

<sup>417</sup> Since Ā. Graikste had a paralysed hand due to the stroke, he was unable to write; the description was written in his place by the Political Department’s officer Georgs Fimbaueris.

<sup>418</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 470, p. 60.

<sup>419</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 470, p. 55.

decided that Ā. Graikste, “while working under particularly unfavourable and health-damaging conditions, had lost his capacity to work by 75 percent”, and it was decided to grant Ā. Graikste a state pension of 85.50 Lats per month as his future allowance.<sup>420</sup>

There were several such cases where exhaustion led to sickness or even the death of officers. Another example is the death of Rodions Mergins from a heart attack on 3 May 1931. R. Mergins was the head of Daugavpils regional unit of the Political Department. When asking the Ministry of Civic Welfare to grant a pension to Mr Mergins’s widow, the Director of the Political Department states: “The death of Rodions Mergins was entirely due to exhaustion and continued self-sacrifice during service.”<sup>421</sup>

The general working environment and various subjective struggles also affected the officers of the Service. For example, on 12 February 1922, the following note was written by Arturs Krūmiņš, a case officer at Rēzekne regional unit: “Let my parents know that I was forced to take this step so that my old father did not have to blush” and another, in which he writes that he was innocent, “shot one bullet in his left side”. A. Krūmiņš was taken to hospital where it was not possible to save him, and the young man died on 13 February. The case officer’s motivation was explained by the head of the regional unit, who indicated that A. Krūmiņš was charged with several accusations, including taking bribes and disturbing public order, and A. Krūmiņš was aware of these charges. A. Krūmiņš had already not acted properly, for example on 8 February of the same year, A. Krūmiņš had got drunk and started to make noise in a hotel where he had settled, and had fired his revolver several times on the street, smashed several windows, cutting hands, and had even threatened to shoot a bank official. A. Krūmiņš was detained by the local police, who later fined him.<sup>422</sup> It has to be indicated that in the attestation of A. Krūmiņš he was described as follows: “Well-built, of average height, very nervous with regard to his health. Changes his mood, sometimes does not know when to stop when drinking alcohol. Good relations with other Service officers. His moral qualities are good enough. [...] Due to the nerve problems caused by the harsh experience while being in the captivity of the Bolsheviks<sup>423</sup>, he is not useful for Service in special tasks.”<sup>424</sup>

Another tragic example is the fate of the officer Kārlis Siliņš. On 29 January 1926, the newspaper “Jaunākās Ziņas” published an article entitled “Drama followed by a happy evening” (orig.: “Drāma pēc jautri nosvinētas Kārļa dienas”), which mentions the life of a 24-year-old man, which led to his suicide, probably, “for romantic reasons”. On the day of suicide, several friends arrived to the apartment of K. Siliņš to celebrate his name-day. At night, he had left the apartment together with a young lady to walk her home. When they arrived at her porch, they parted, since “the young

<sup>420</sup> LVVA, fund 5213, description 31, file 7623, p.161.

<sup>421</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 749, p. 34.

<sup>422</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 599, p. 12.

<sup>423</sup> A. Krūmiņš was arrested in Azerbaijan in 1920 and placed in a prison in Ryazan, later in Moscow prison, from where he returned to Latvia as a result of hostage exchange.

<sup>424</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 599, p. 4.

lady had refused to let him into her apartment because it was already late at night”. After this, K. Siliņš had entered a neighbour’s apartment, where he shot himself in the chest with a revolver – “unluckily the bullet did not cause immediate death”.<sup>425</sup> Suicide is a complex phenomenon, related to various outer and inner factors. During the mid-1920s, 13% of all suicides were committed “due to romantic reasons”.<sup>426</sup> It is possible that the choice was facilitated by the specific job duties at the political police; however, this is just a guess. The Service also provided access to the weapon which was used by K. Siliņš to take his own life.

Although in the 1930s, and especially after the coup of the regime of K. Ulmanis, the prestige of the Service officers considerably increased, and with war events moving further away the military clashes had become less frequent, there were a number of occasions when they got into uncomfortable or even dangerous situations during or after their work. For example, in March 1931, local communists attacked the Political Department of Liepāja regional unit and “smashed 4 windows of the unit’s Chancellery and the head’s apartment with stones. A stone wrapped in a red rag was found under the windows on the street [later], with the inscription: “We, the Latvian Comm-party, respond to your vile lies. Let us answer your fascist terror with terror!”<sup>427</sup>

Similarly, in January 1933, in response to the death of Fricis Gailis, windows of the Liepāja regional unit building were smashed and one of the stones was wrapped in paper saying “Down with fascist murders! We will take revenge on our murdered fellow member! L[atvian] C[omunist] P[arty]”. This case was described later as follows: “On the evening of 19 January, the officers of the region are chatting at the chancellery, waiting for the head of the regional unit to return from Riga. The siren of the fire service is indicating that there is a fire somewhere in the city. The investigation officer Mergins is smoking at a window, watching the street and two teenagers are standing on the other side of the street for a long time, warming their hands in the pockets. “We should use the “black lamprey”<sup>428</sup> and thwack them!” – the investigation officer says this in suspicion and turns away from the window. As soon as he has taken a couple of steps – stones and glass from the window fall behind him on the floor. A siren is heard. Two teenagers run down the street. “Probably, to the site of the fire”, the head thinks to himself, meeting the two who had smashed the windows on his way.”<sup>429</sup>

On the night of 14 and 15 May 1935, another incident was registered. At night, at around 1:00 o’clock, the senior case officer of the Political Department, Mr Fricis Smilškalns, together with the case officers Eduards Miķelsons, Oļģerts Zaļaiskalns and Valfrīds Ekšteins went to have dinner at Hotel Riga after finishing work, where they ordered bread rolls and a bottle of beer. Shortly afterwards, a dizzy man, Ansis Šnore, who had previously “touched visitors”, saw the officers of the Political

<sup>425</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 604, p. op. 6.

<sup>426</sup> See more: Gile, I. Pašnāvību kultūra Latvijā: Latvijas armijas 1928. gada piemērs (ENG: Suicide Pattern in Latvia: an Example of the Latvian Army in 1928). *Latvijas Vēstures Institūta Žurnāls*. 2018, No. 2, p. 82–112.

<sup>427</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/8, file 553, p. 53, 54.

<sup>428</sup> A truncheon.

<sup>429</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/8, file 553, p. 61.

Department, and stuck out his tongue at the three men. Since the men did not respond to the mocking of the intoxicated man, he continued by insulting them: “We will settle scores with the officers from the Political Department!” As a result, one of the officers went looking for a police officer. And the other three went out, where they were followed by Šnore with another man – Rūdolfs Feldbergs. Both attacked the Political Department’s officers on the street, “grabbed them by the neck and then pushed them”. Meanwhile, Ekšteins returned with a police officer, and both men were detained and taken to the police station. On the way to the station both were noisy and called the police officers “tospots”, but on the intersection of Elizabetes and Tērbatas streets Feldbergs tried to escape. With the help of passing Privates, they managed to catch him; “after that, he showed strong resistance, raged while throwing his fists at everything and everyone, and kicking with his foot”. Both men were taken to the police, where R. Feldbergs continued his physical resistance.<sup>430</sup>

Later, in May 1935, the detained R. Feldbergs filed a complaint to the Administrative Department of the Ministry of the Interior about the Political Department officers, who had attacked Feldbergs without reason, grabbed him by the arms and took him to the station. Since he had not recognised the officers of the Political Department, he managed to get away, “but then strangers knocked him down to the ground and started to hit him, causing damage to his right eye and teeth”. The Political Department investigated the complaint and, after obtaining evidence from all the parties involved, forwarded it to Riga Regional Court, which ruled that “it does not find signs of a criminal offence in the acts of the officers of the Political Department”.<sup>431</sup>

## WAGES AND FINANCIAL INCENTIVES

There are no in-depth studies on the remuneration of Service officers so the following paragraphs serve more as illustrative examples of the remuneration model and of various financial incentives in the institution. The salaries were calculated according to the category of post, on the basis of the Civil Service Act and other binding laws and regulations.

It is known that during the period from 26 August 1919 to 15 November 1919, the case officer Antons Priede, who served at the State Security Department, received a monthly wage of 350 Latvian Roubles and an additional 35 Latvian Roubles for each family member. After the dissolution of the State Security Department, Mr Priede went to work for the Criminal Police.<sup>432</sup> Working in the public sector provided a guaranteed income and various social benefits, which were particularly tempting in post-war Latvia, where many families fought hunger, poverty, and the country was

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<sup>430</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 2, file 6035, p. 14, 18.

<sup>431</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 2, file 6035, p. 1, 16, 20.

<sup>432</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 879, p. 255.

facing high unemployment rates. At the same time, it should be noted that given the nature and high requirements of this job, the contribution of political police officers was not always valued fairly.

In February 1924, K. Alksnis, a special tasks officer at the Political Security Department, compared the circumstances in Latvia and Estonia: “In terms of wages, Estonian Security Police officers are in a better position than Latvian Political Security Department’s officers. Besides a fixed salary, they receive a special premium of 25%. A senior observer, similar to our senior case officers, receives 8700 Estonian Marks, which would equal around 6500 Roubles in our currency. And according to information I have collected, other officers also receive higher salaries than Latvian Political Security Department’s officers.”<sup>433</sup> It is known that already in the second half of the 1930s, the salary of the head of the Political Department reached about 500 lats (a concrete example from 1938 – 494 lats).

The specifics of the job led to long working hours and officers often had to work overtime. Their payment could be formally requested if it was “caused by exceptional circumstances”. The Service budget did not provide for the payment of overtime, and therefore it was decided by the interdepartmental committee by the decision of the head of the Service. However, payment was not always made. For example, on 12 June 1924, the head of the Liepāja regional unit of the Political Department, Kārlis Briedis<sup>434</sup> writes that the investigation officer under his authority, Jēkabs Kuške, is entitled to payment for overtime, “In the context of the cases of the Lejaskurzeme County Committee and the Latvian Communist Red Cross” (260 hours worked in the period 11 March – 28 April 1924) – 25 000 Latvian Roubles. The answer states that “the head does not agree with your feedback that the overtime was necessary” and no payment was made.<sup>435</sup>

The material provisions of the Service officers and the proportionality of salaries with the responsibility of the post are characterised by the fate of Mr Kuške. On 15 May 1926 he held a relatively high position, and was the acting head of Liepāja regional unit. He left it on 1 March 1927 when he was replaced by O. Kalniņš. J. Kuške was reappointed as an investigation officer and transferred to Valmiera on 4 May 1927. In August 1927, the Director of the Political Department received a report from the head of Valmiera regional unit R. Auniņš: “I hereby report that on 22 August this year, between 3 and 5 o’clock in Valmiera, Apt. 4 Brūveru Street<sup>436</sup>, Jēkabs Kuške, an investigation officer of Valmiera regional unit subordinated to me, committed suicide by shooting himself in his apartment. To my knowledge, the underlying reasons for suicide are related to his grave financial situation.”<sup>437</sup>

<sup>433</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 44, p. 179.

<sup>434</sup> See more on K. Briedis in LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 394.

<sup>435</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 535, p. 49–52.

<sup>436</sup> The street disappeared as a result of the reconstruction carried out in Valmiera after World War II.

<sup>437</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 535, p. 73.

At the end of the 1930s, it was common practice in public institutions to deduct salaries of Political Department's officers. For example, the list of 1–1/2 daily salary deductions for the benefit of the Aviation Fund lists the calculated amount of salary and deduction for each officer by month and day.<sup>438</sup> The officers of the Political Department also made monetary contributions to other public events, such as the building of Victory Square by purchasing lottery tickets.<sup>439</sup> The question of voluntary participation by officers in the donation process remains open. It is clear that in this way the officers of the Service symbolically demonstrated their loyalty to the regime of K. Ulmanis and their readiness to support his architectural intentions in Riga.

At the beginning of March 1938, the head of the Political Department ordered “all heads of regional units, heads of units and the secretariat to carry out a survey of subordinate officers and to draw up a list (including themselves) of those who have other income besides salary, and the amount and source of such income [...]”.<sup>440</sup> Such surveys were also carried out in the past from time to time, by controlling the combining of jobs and calculating the institution's budget.

The documents contain information on the various social benefits, to which the officers were entitled. The officers of the Riga regional unit of Political Department had the opportunity to travel free of charge on public transport (bus and tram). In total, 60 people (51 men, 9 women) were entitled to such benefits and these free tickets were issued starting from 1935 onwards.<sup>441</sup> The Director of the Political Department was handed a “free pass”, which entitled him to travel by train on any route free of charge.<sup>442</sup> The Service also employed secretariat officers and outsource personnel. According to the law, the latter received a 20% salary allowance as compensation for the absence of a guaranteed place of residence.<sup>443</sup> Officers were provided a place of residence free of charge (apartment).<sup>444</sup> The law on central criminal police of 1924 states that “criminal administration personnel receive a free flat and work rooms with heating and lighting”.<sup>445</sup>

Officers were also entitled to official trip allowances. In as early as 1920, they accounted for 3% of the basic salary: 36 Roubles per day for the investigation officer, 27.90 Roubles per day for the senior case officer and 25.20 Roubles per day for the junior case officer.<sup>446</sup> In March 1920, for the purpose of saving funds, each regional unit was authorised to use a maximum of 25 official trip days per month.<sup>447</sup>

<sup>438</sup> LWA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 879, p. 326–330.

<sup>439</sup> LWA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 879, p. 533.

<sup>440</sup> LWA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 879, p. 578.

<sup>441</sup> LWA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 879, p. 1–5.

<sup>442</sup> LWA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 361, p. 3.

<sup>443</sup> *Likumu un noteikumu sakopojums policijas darbiniekiem* (ENG: A Codex of Laws and Regulations for Police Officers). Riga: Iekšlietu ministrijas Administratīvais departaments, unofficial edition, 1938, p. 20.

<sup>444</sup> Initially, the assigned place of residence was subject to the payment of certain contributions. Only later, in the second half of the 1920s, was this issue sorted out, and the places of residence were assigned free of charge. LWA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 933.

<sup>445</sup> LWA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 44, p. 155.

<sup>446</sup> LWA, fund 3235, description 1/9, file 7, p. 1.

<sup>447</sup> LWA, fund 3235, description 1/9, file 7, p. 57.

## 3.4.

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### Top management officials, executives and directors

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A capable leader is particularly important for the proper functioning of the Service. The Latvian government had already initially been looking for educated, experienced people to be entrusted with this post. However, in the initial phase, there was a rather frequent change of executives, which can be explained both by institutional changes and by the institution's original instability, high volume of work and various personal reasons and the impact of the political conjuncture (such as criticism by social democrats of the activities of the Political Police and of its existence in general). The last head of the Service spent six years in office, up until the occupation of Latvia.

The first and only Director of the State Security Department was **Jānis Liģeris-Liggers**, who began his military career in 1909 when joining the 98th Jurjeva Infantry; in July 1910, he was pensioned off holding the rank of warrant officer. In 1914 he was mobilised in the Russian Army, and participated in battles in Galicia. In January 1915, he fell ill with malaria and was evacuated to Lviv and then further to Riga. In May, the medical commission declared J. Liģeris-Liggers invalid for frontline service, and he continued service in commissariat bodies in the territory of the former Russian Empire. In December 1916 he was promoted to sub-lieutenant. In October 1918, he returned to Riga and started studies at the Agricultural Department of the Baltic Technical University. He had been in the service of the Republic of Latvia since 17 December 1918, when in Riga, he applied voluntarily to the Latvian troops being made commander of a squad of the Separate (Student) Company, and from April 1919 – commander of a platoon in the rank of first lieutenant. On 4 July he was made the head of the Riga Gendarmerie and promoted to the rank of captain on 10 July to acknowledge his merits in the battlefield.<sup>448</sup>

He served with the State Security Department from 15 August 1919 until the liquidation of the Department on 17 November 1919. After leaving the State Security Department, he returned to the Latvian Army, where he served with the 3rd

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<sup>448</sup> LVVA, fund 5601, description 1, file 3847, p. op. 2–5.

Latgalian Division as the head of Transport, later – the head of Vecgulbene Garrison. The 1920 attestation on J. Liģers-Liggers reads: “An excellent administrator and a talented organiser, accurate, disciplined and a person who is decisive regarding subordinates.”<sup>449</sup> He was pensioned off from the Latvian Army in February 1921. He resumed forestry studies at the University of Latvia,<sup>450</sup> and graduated in 1923. In 1922, he was awarded the Order of Lāčplēsis to acknowledge his contribution when fighting the Bolsheviks in the battles near the town of Saldus. After graduation, he worked as a forester, later – at a trade office in Moscow he was a deputy director, but from 1925 he was a manufacturer, taking the post of director of the G. Ērenpreiss Bicycle Factory and later – shareholder and director of the bicycle production JSC “Omega”. In 1941, he was deported, and he died in the district of Tomsk in Camp Vasygana on 25 April 1942.<sup>451</sup>

We can also read the memories of the 1940s by Gunārs Liģers, the son of J. Liģers, who was born in 1931 and was also subject to repressions. In his memories, he not only tells of his life, but provides a broad insight into the fate of many Service officers and their families after 1940. At the end of the 1930s, the family of J. Liģers lived in Riga, at 41 Kalnciema Street, and he also owned a summerhouse in Lielupe. G. Liģers describes the time after the Soviet occupation as follows: “Father was immediately removed from the post of director of [Omega] and made a store manager at 55 Elizabetes Street, where there was a bicycle store. [...] The quality of life deteriorated. [...] 14 June 1941 was slowly approaching. My father was warned by his friends to flee, fearing deportation. I do not know why we didn’t flee anywhere. My mother told me later that we did not have money, because everything was invested in the factory; we had nothing luxurious at home, unlike the millionaires nowadays! Then came 13 June. My father and I went to stay overnight on Kalnciema Street, at my nannies – just to be on the safe side. My father told me a lot that night about his military expeditions in war. In the morning, we arrived calmly in the yard, coming over the hillocks of Āgenskalns. The dog did not bark. We entered the house. Father called his sister because we intended to visit her in Ropaži, where she had a house. The dog started to bark right at 9:30. One Russian soldier, wearing a greatcoat, came through the gate, holding a gun and a cudgel. He was not a Russian, but rather a Tatar judging by his face. He was followed by two men in black jackets, then came one officer with shoulder-straps, and a blue hat with a red rim. They entered, grabbed father, turned his arms behind his back and took him into another room. I thought to myself – what will they do? I noticed my father, stood with his hands to the wall,

<sup>449</sup> LVVA, fund 5601, description 1, file 3847, op. 6.

<sup>450</sup> LVVA, fund 7427, description 1, file 2769.

<sup>451</sup> Jēkabsons, Ē., Šcerbinskis, V. Latvijas politiskās policijas vadītāji (ENG: Chief Officials of the Latvian Political Police). *Lauku Avīze*. 29 July 1997, p. 31.; Biography of LKOK (Recipients of the Order of Lāčplēsis). J. Liģers. Available at: <http://lkok.com/detail1.asp?ID=956> (Reviewed on 22/12/2018).

and he was searched for weapons. My father didn't have weapons. Then he was released. Those Latvians wearing leather jackets said – "you have 15 minutes to pack your things". They shouted at us, mum cried, but nothing could be done. Only pure confusion – what was happening and why? We were told that we would be relocated to work in Samara, because father was an engineer. Ok then. The Russian officer could see that nothing was working, he shouted at the Latvians, told mother to gather belongings, to take everything she could, because it would be cold there. He said he would wait. We took everything we could – in suitcases, in the wicker box. Before that, father was deprived of all documents, taken to the heavy weight vehicle and then to Šķīrotava. Four of us were deported – father, mother, me and my brother." G. Liģers also describes the course of the journey until all four arrived at Camp Vasyugana, kolkhoz "Tevriža", where the family had to live and work. Being an educated individual, J. Liģers was employed in the state forest company or the so-called *lespromhoz* (Russian – *Леспромхоз – лесное промышленное хозяйство*), but shortly after he began his work duties, he was regularly summoned to the security institutions of the Soviet Union, to the so-called KGB, where he was accused of espionage and had a heart attack. The later course of events is described by G. Liģers as follows: "He started feeling a little better and then he was repeatedly summoned to NKVD. Then father was taken to a hospital, where he was given some sort of medicine. We visited him all the time, but he did not recognise us for a whole week. [...] He died there within a week. At the hospital. That's how they got rid of father." J. Liģers was buried in a "simple funeral ceremony" in the cemetery of Novovasyugan. In 1945, the eldest son of J. Liģers died from pneumonia in exile. In 1948, when G. Liģers came of age, he returned to Riga, but the wife of J. Liģers was released in 1957.<sup>452</sup>

The first Director of the Political Security Department was **Voldemārs Alps**. V. Alps was born on 4 August 1891 in Riga. He graduated Riga Polytechnic Institute's Trade Department. He was enlisted in the riflemen' forces on 2 December 1915, and he fought in battles. On 3 June 1916, he enrolled at Vilnius War School, which he graduated as an officer on 1 December 1916. In March 1917, he was transferred to the Latvian forces. During March–April 1918, he was held captive by Germans. On 5 December 1918, he joined the Ministry of Food of the Provisional Government of Latvia as a special task officer. When the Bolshevik Army troops came to Riga, he continued to work for the Soviet Latvia Food Commissariat as a clerk. He was enlisted in the Soviet Army, but he left Riga later and joined the guerrilla movement. After returning to Riga on 2 July 1919, he joined Latvian military units, and later the Latvian Army – he enlisted in the Riga City Commandant's Office, where he was appointed as the head of the Riga Halting Place, and on 22 July– as the assistant

<sup>452</sup> Gunārs Liģers. Book: *Sibirijas bērni. Mums tas bija jāizstāsta...* 2. sēj. (ENG: Children of Siberia. We Had to Tell It... Vol. 2). Rīga: Fonds "Sibirijas bērni", 2007, p. 123–131.

to the commander of the same halting place. On 15 November 1919, he was appointed as the interrogation officer at the Internal Intelligence Unit of the HQ of the Commander-in-Chief of the Latvian Army, and on 1 December he was instructed to organise the Riga Unit of Internal Intelligence in the role of head.<sup>453</sup>

On 22 October 1920, following a recommendation from the Minister of the Interior, the Cabinet of Ministers appointed V. Alps as the first Director of the Political Security Department. On 15 July 1920, he was promoted to the rank of captain for his contribution to achieving the independence of Latvia. The application for promotion reads: "As the head of the Riga Unit of Internal Intelligence, first lieutenant Alps has shown his hard-working personality in combatting anti-governmental elements and organisations."<sup>454</sup> The appraisal document of 28 September 1920 on V. Alps describes him as follows: "A determined, active officer. Excellently performs responsible tasks on his own. Does not fear revenge, is fearless. Alcohol consumption is completely managed. Loves money."<sup>455</sup>

He was in the post of the Director of Political Security Department until 7 March 1922, when he was released at his own request.<sup>456</sup> Previously, on 17 January 1922, V. Alps was dismissed from this post, due to finding that he had "been negligent"<sup>457</sup>.

After leaving the post of Director of Political Security Department, V. Alps engaged in private economic activity. However, it is reasonable to believe that he was trying to maintain his political significance. For example, in 1927, Mr Alps was appointed Secretary of the Latvian Consulate in Bremen, but, since he did not arrive at the place of employment, the appointment was cancelled; and the Latvian Consul General in Berlin, Edgars Krieviņš, doubted whether "Mr Alps is a suitable candidate to fulfil these duties"<sup>458</sup>.

The activities and personality of V. Alps are characterised by a report prepared by the Political Department on 13 October 1927 to the Minister of the Interior, which states that V. Alps had turned to the Department reporting of an illegal monarchist organisation. Believing that Alps "provokes various foreigners, already then and now", Alps was being monitored and it was concluded that he cooperated with the

<sup>453</sup> Elsewhere: On 1 October 1920, he was appointed executive director of the Political Security Department, and on 22 October – he was appointed head of the Political Security Department. See: LVVA, fund 2570, description 14, file 44, p. 21.

<sup>454</sup> LVVA, fund 5601, description 2, file 30, p. 11; LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 359, p. 1; *1920.–1925. gads Latvijas Republikas Ministru kabineta sēžu protokolos/ notikumos / atmiņās. 1. daļa, 1920–1922* (ENG: Minutes of Meetings/Events/Memories Regarding the Cabinet Meetings of the Republic of Latvia. Part 1. 1920–1922). Rīga: Valsts kanceleja, 2018, p. 187.

<sup>455</sup> LVVA, fund 5601, description 2, file 30, p. 7.

<sup>456</sup> *1920.–1925. gads Latvijas Republikas Ministru kabineta sēžu protokolos/ notikumos / atmiņās. 1. daļa, 1920–1922* (ENG: Minutes of Meetings/Events/Memories Regarding the Cabinet Meetings of the Republic of Latvia. Part 1. 1920–1922). Rīga: Valsts kanceleja, 2018, p. 692.

<sup>457</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 896, p. 1.

<sup>458</sup> LVVA, fund 2570, description 14, file 44, p. 4, 7.

controversial Sergejs Staprāns (see Section 1.5) and the “provocative actions of both men greatly impede the functioning of the Political Department”<sup>459</sup>

The gutter press magazine “Aizkulises” (ENG: “Behind the scenes”), which was considered to be among the most evident and influential tabloids in Latvia, and positioned itself as the opposition of power and political elite, painted a rather negative portrait of the former investigator four years after the resignation of V. Alps from the Political Security Department. The newspaper wrote that the former head was depressed and living in poverty: “Alps never saved money, loved a lush lifestyle; his elegant, beautiful wife [Nadežda Alpa] was always well dressed. [...] Usually, the top officers of the Political Security Department, when leaving the job, try to live quietly, without unnecessarily standing out too much, because they have a lot of enemies. However, Mr Alps is not given peace by the lefties<sup>460</sup> and the press. [...] Alps has many enemies; even his sympathetic wife is not left alone, and they talk all kinds of nonsense about her political life in Petersburg.<sup>461</sup> Of course, all of this is nonsense. Indeed, Alps is not loved by the press. Others work quietly and slowly, but if Alps were to apply for some job in a public institution, you can only imagine how much fuss the lefties would make. I am really sorry for this man; indeed, he is not worse than others. His beautiful eyes are sad. He is no longer the nifty Alps that he once used to be, in the years of power.”<sup>462</sup>

Repeatedly, Alps came to the attention of public authorities, including in the investigation of the Political Department, in the 1930s. In 1936, the Head of the Riga region of the Political Department, Jēkabs Vinters,<sup>463</sup> concluded that the former head was a member of the illegal organisation “Brīvības cīnītāji” (ENG: “Freedom Fighters”), which aimed to overthrow the existing political system in Latvia. V. Alps had been involved in preparing and spreading the illegal leaflet “Trauksme” (ENG: “Alarm”). On 5 May, his place of residence was searched, during which no compromising materials were found. Alps denied any accusations and the case was referred to Riga Regional Court.<sup>464</sup>

In 1940, Mr Alps worked in the company “Aldaris” as assistant director. He travelled to Germany in February 1941, where he joined the German Army as an interpreter. He was released from the army in 1942. After World War II, he lived in exile in Germany, from where he travelled in 1951 to the United States of America.<sup>465</sup>

<sup>459</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/6, file 313, p. 1.

<sup>460</sup> Social Democrats.

<sup>461</sup> Nowadays, Saint Petersburg.

<sup>462</sup> Bijušie lielvīri (ENG: Former Big Men). *Aizkulises*. 15 October 1926, No. 41, p. 3.

<sup>463</sup> Jēkabs Vinters was a member of the Latvian Farmers' Union until May 1932, suggesting his close relationship with the ruling K. Ulmanis' regime.

<sup>464</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 2, file 7368, p. 10.

<sup>465</sup> Valdemāram Alpm 65 gadi (ENG: 65-year Anniversary of Valdemārs Alps). *Latvija Amerikā*. 1 August 1956, No. 61, p. 3.

Latvian readers were already reminded of V. Alps during the Soviet occupation in the mid-1960s, through a literary story of the former employee of the National Security Committee, retired Lieutenant Colonel V. Ansonovs, “Atmaksa” (ENG: “Payback”). Fragments of this story were published in 1965 by the newspaper “Rīgas Balss” under the title “Politpārvaldes nagos” (ENG: “Caught by the Political Department”). In these fragments V. Alps was portrayed as an arrogant, aggression-loving person, while the rest of the mentioned officers – as envious individuals, intriguers weakened by bad habits, while the institution was called repressive and accused of generating false accusations; whereas the underground communists were just the opposite, they were hard-working, committed and of strong political position, not to be broken by any form of torture or influence.<sup>466</sup>

When V. Alps was dismissed, on 17 January 1922, the Minister for the Interior entrusted the Political Security Department to **Pēteris Martinsons**, who was officially appointed on 30 August 1922.<sup>467</sup> He was a tax inspector before his appointment, and on 25 October 1920 the Minister of the Interior, A. Bergs, appointed Mr Martinsons as the Deputy Director to the Political Security Department.<sup>468</sup>

On 13 March 1923, the Minister of the Interior expressed his dissatisfaction with P. Martinsons’s performance and a call for his removal from office in a letter to the Cabinet of Ministers was written by P. Bergīis, the Minister of the Interior, who pointed to “great error, childish behaviour and ignorance of his tasks”. He also stated that, under the leadership of P. Martinsons, “complete disorganisation” had been found in the Political Security Department. Next, he wrote: “When further observing the work of Martinsons, I was surprised by the primitive methods which Martinsons used to carry out his tasks. Without proper preparation, with the help of intelligence and surveillance, he is first resorting to files, which should come last in the investigation and surveillance.” The Minister of the Interior also noted that, under the leadership of P. Martinsons, within the Political Security Department “as in all institutions with a conspirative character, intrigues arise between the personnel of the institution; and officers and agents spend their free time monitoring and spying on each other”.<sup>469</sup> After leaving the post, P. Martinsons worked at the Riga Commercial Institute, where he was the acting director until 1938; he was also the director and member of the board at “Diskontbanka”<sup>470</sup> bank.<sup>471</sup>

<sup>466</sup> See: Politpārvaldes nagos (ENG: Caught by the Political Department). *Rīgas Balss*. 12 August 1965, p. 6; Politpārvaldes nagos (ENG: Caught by the Political Department). *Rīgas Balss*. 13 August 1965, p.6.

<sup>467</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 896, p. 1, 233.

<sup>468</sup> Iecelšanas (ENG: Appointments). *Valdības Vēstnesis*. 20 October 1920, No. 240, p. 1.

<sup>469</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 894, p. 55, 56.

<sup>470</sup> Bank dealing with discount transactions – credit operations, where the Bank, when buying a bill, deducts interest from its nominal value for the time up to maturity.

<sup>471</sup> Jēkabsons, Ē., Ščerbinskis, V. Latvijas politiskās policijas vadītāji (ENG: Chief Officials of the Latvian Political Police). *Lauku Avīze*. 29 July 1997, p. 31.

P. Martinsons was also criticised by a Service member, former head of Operational Unit, Egons Lukstiņš. In his letter to the head of the Operational Unit, R. Štiglicis, he wrote: “When looking at and comparing the performance of the Political Security Department under the leadership of the former Director Alps, and then again Martinsons, I come to the conclusion that, if a certain system were to be organised during the leadership of Alps, then this system was completely destroyed during the leadership of Martinsons, and all performance was just like groping through darkness and switching from one thing to another, without a certain systematic pattern, and Martinsons put the rest of the officers in charge – the heads of the units, into a strict frame and did not even give them the chance to operate as the right circumstances of the case required; the whole activity was led at the individual discretion of Martinsons.”<sup>472</sup>

On 15 March 1923, P. Martinsons was replaced by his deputy **Jānis Kaktiņš**.<sup>473</sup> J. Kaktiņš was the Acting Director of the Political Security Department until 9 July 1923, when the Minister of the Interior approved a new director.<sup>474</sup>

In 1915, J. Kaktiņš voluntarily joined the Latvian Riflemen battalions where he worked in the organisation’s committee as a battalion historian and organiser of the war museum. In 1917, as the German troops approached, he departed as a refugee for Russia, and later the Caucasus. On 1 January 1920, he returned to Latvia, where he joined the Intelligence Unit of the HQ of the Commander-in-Chief of the Latvian Army as an Intelligence Officer; later he was promoted to deputy to the head. He was also a co-editor of the newspaper “Latvijas Kareivis” (ENG: “Soldier of Latvia”). On 3 August 1920, the Minister of the Interior appointed him as the acting deputy director of the Administrative Department. On 10 October 1922, he was dismissed from the department due to redundancies. Two days later, on 12 October, J. Kaktiņš was appointed as the Deputy Director of Political Security Department.<sup>475</sup>

When he left the post of Acting Deputy Director of the Political Security Department, J. Kaktiņš continued his work as the Deputy Director of the Political Security Department. When leaving the post he wrote: “I feel a pleasant duty to express my sincere thanks to all the officers of the Political Security Department for the work they have done during my time here and for the help they have given me in fulfilling these difficult obligations.”<sup>476</sup> On 7 May 1941, NKVD arrested J. Kaktiņš, accusing him of “maintaining contact with the police and fighting against the revolutionary movement.”<sup>477</sup>

<sup>472</sup> LVVA, fund 7432, description 3, file 31, p. 2.

<sup>473</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 894, p. 59.

<sup>474</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 45, p. 64.

<sup>475</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 363, p. 30, 31.

<sup>476</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 363, p. 66.

<sup>477</sup> *No NKVD līdz KGB. Politiskās prāvas Latvijā, 1940–1986* (ENG: From NKVD to KGB. Political Trials in Latvia, 1940–1986). Rīga: Latvijas Universitātes Latvijas Vēstures institūts, 1999, p. 321.

On 3 July 1923, the lawyer **Ernests Āboltiņš** was appointed as the Director of the Political Security Department. When starting his duties, he wrote: "I invite all my officers to also remain alert in the future, to continue the tireless and ongoing hard work that has been initiated, and to make every effort to strengthen the internal security of our country by persistently fighting those undermining the existing order."<sup>478</sup>

In 1919, E. Āboltiņš graduated from the Faculty of Law of the University of Petrograd (Petersburg). As of 25 January 1921, he was a special task officer at the Ministry of the Interior. In 1922 he was appointed as a prosecutor's partner at Jelgava Regional Court, where he worked until he started his work in the Political Security Department. E. Āboltiņš held the post of Director of the Political Security Department until 10 May 1924, when he was dismissed from the service due to "liquidation of the post."<sup>479</sup>

After his dismissal, E. Āboltiņš continued to work in law. In 1925 he was appointed as a prosecutor's partner at Riga Regional Court, but from 1934 he was the prosecutor's partner at the Judicial Panel. He was awarded with the Order of the Three Stars. He was arrested on 14 June 1941 and deported to the prison camp of Ussollag, where he died on 11 May 1942.<sup>480</sup>

**Voldemārs Ozoliņš**, captain of the army of the former Russian Empire, was appointed as the first Director of the Political Department, and he held this post for almost ten years, from 1924 to 1934. On 10 May 1924, V. Ozoliņš was appointed Acting Director of the Political Department and as from 16 July he was appointed Director of the Political Department.<sup>481</sup> Already earlier, on 11 June 1923, V. Ozoliņš was recruited in the Political Security Department as an investigation officer, but on 11 August of the same year he was appointed acting head of the Riga regional unit, and on 4 October he was appointed the head of the same region.

Prior to his work with the Service, he gained military experience in the Russian Empire Army, where he had served since 1912. In 1913, he graduated from Vilnius War School in the rank of sub-lieutenant. Later, in 1918, he completed studies at the General Staff Academy in Petrograd (St Petersburg) and Yekaterinburg. He joined the army of Admiral Alexander Kolchak, with whom he pulled back to the Far East. He returned to Latvia in 1922 via Japan and settled on his father's farm. For his service in Latvia, in 1927, he was awarded with the Order

<sup>478</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 45, p. 64.

<sup>479</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 361, p. 1, 13; Politiskā apsardze (ENG: Political Security Department). *Latvis*. 10 May 1924, No. 790, p. 1.

<sup>480</sup> Lielas iecelšanas tieslietu resorā (ENG: Huge Appointments to the Judiciary). *Brīvā Zeme*. 12 June 1936, No. 130, p. 9; Ievērojamas personības Jelgavas novadā (ENG: Notable People in Jelgava District). *Jelgavas Ziņotājs*. 5 November 1991, No. 176, p. 3; Jēkabsons, Ē., Ščerbinskis, V. Latvijas politiskās policijas vadītāji (ENG: Chief Officials of the Latvian Political Police). *Lauku Avīze*. 29 July 1997, p. 31.

<sup>481</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 685, p. 1–4.

of the Three Stars, Class 3, and he received the Order of the White Rose of Finland on 19 November 1927.<sup>482</sup>

In 1930, when celebrating the 10th anniversary of the Political Department, Riga region officers wrote in a letter to V. Ozoliņš: “When commemorating this day, the officers of Riga region of the Political Department remember the merits of their long-standing director in his office. For more than six years under your leadership, the Political Department has made great progress in fighting the internal enemies of the country, thanks to which major obstacles to the construction of the state have been removed. By working tirelessly for national defence, you, Mr Director, have always found the time to give a helping hand to your subordinates at difficult times, and you have done all this with genuine sincerity, treating everyone equally, which is why the officers of the region will continue to work with the same enthusiasm and perseverance as they have done so far.”<sup>483</sup>

In 1934, V. Ozoliņš was promoted to police inspector of the Administrative Department, but already after a month he was released as a result of redundancies. A pension was granted in 1935. From then on, he performed various tasks in several Latvian companies. During the Soviet occupation years, he worked as a salesperson in a Riga industrial commodity store. He was arrested in 1941 and deported to prison in Russia, where on 25 February 1942 he was executed by shooting in a prison in Stalingrad (now Volgograd).<sup>484</sup>

Just before the coup of Kārlis Ulmanis, on 20 April 1934 **Jānis Frīdrihs Valentīns Frīdrihsons** (from 1939, Skrauja) was appointed the Director of the Political Department. In 1917, while in Moscow, J. Frīdrihsons worked in a bank. Later, he returned to Latvia, and on 8 July 1919 he joined the Latvian Army and was appointed as junior desk officer in the Commandment's Office of Ļaudona District, from November – senior desk officer. In December, after the dissolution of the Commandment's Office, he was included in the half company of the Commandment's Office of Fortress Daugavgrīva. From February 1920, he was at the disposal of the army's intelligence officer to the Internal Intelligence Riga Section, where on 15 February he was promoted to wartime officer. At the end of the same year, the attestation gives the following characteristics of J. Frīdrihsons: “Slow by nature, fair and determined. Very hard-working and intelligent. Good sportsman.<sup>485</sup> Does not use alcoholic beverages and leads a very humble life.”<sup>486</sup>

<sup>482</sup> LLVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 685, p. 1–4; Jēkabsons, Ē., Ščerbinskis, V. Latvijas politiskās policijas vadītāji (ENG: Chief Officials of the Latvian Political Police). *Lauku Avīze*. 29 July 1997, p. 31.

<sup>483</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/6, file 585, p. 2.

<sup>484</sup> Jēkabsons, Ē., Ščerbinskis, V. Latvijas politiskās policijas vadītāji (ENG: Chief Officials of the Latvian Political Police). *Lauku Avīze*. 29 July 1997, p. 31.

<sup>485</sup> An athlete.

<sup>486</sup> Jēkabsons, Ē., Ščerbinskis, V. Latvijas politiskās policijas vadītāji (ENG: Chief Officials of the Latvian Political Police). *Lauku Avīze*. 29 July 1997, p. 31.

On 7 November 1920, J. Fridrihsons was appointed as investigation officer of Riga region with a seat in Riga.<sup>487</sup> In 1921 – head of the Political Security Department in Liepāja regional unit. In January 1922, J. Fridrihsons was detained on suspicion of the misappropriation of material evidence – diamonds. On 16 January, several of Fridrihsons' colleagues turned to the Minister of the Interior requesting his dismissal. The request contains a characterisation of him as a person and as a public official: “[..] we have worked together with Fridrihsons for more than two years building and strengthening Latvia; and during the entire time the mentioned person has fulfilled his duties with the utmost cordiality and was hard-working, without doing anything that would cast a shadow over his honesty. I also know him as a selfless and truly fair person [..].”<sup>488</sup> Charges of J. Fridrihsons were reversed and in 1924 he already held the position of the head of Riga regional unit and head of the Operational Unit, and from 20 April 1934 he was Director of the Political Department. From 13 July 1939, he was also the Director of the newly created Security Police Department. J. Fridrihsons was awarded the order of Three Stars in 1928 (Class IV) and in 1934 (Class III).

After the occupation of Latvia, the decision on the dismissal of J. Fridrihsons “at his wish” was taken by the Cabinet of Ministers led by Augusts Kirhenšteins, in a meeting of 22 June 1940. This was followed by regular and frequent interrogations with the Soviet Security Police by Vikentijs Latkovskis, whose aim was to obtain all the documentation of the former Latvian Security Service and the agents network.

Some authors writing on history (for example, O. Niedre<sup>489</sup>) mention J. Fridrihsons' connection to the Soviet occupation power and, to a certain extent, his betrayal of former colleagues.<sup>490</sup> An interesting remark can also be found in the memories of the social democrat V. Bastjānis, where he writes: “[..] as was gradually seen, the above-mentioned Fridrihsons and his chief, the later Minister of the Interior at the government of Ulmanis, Veidnieks, were both in the secret service of the communists.”<sup>491</sup> The case of Fridrihsons deserves further research in the future.

According to the information provided by A. Žvinklis, the KGB gathered information on J. Fridrihsons and his activities from at least 1932. As a result of his interrogations, J. Fridrihsons handed over part of the Security Service documents –

<sup>487</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 8, p. 103.

<sup>488</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 896, p. 43.

<sup>489</sup> Niedre, O.; Zālīte, I.; Bergmanis, A.; Feldmanis, I.; Ābola, Z. *Latvijas izlūkdienesti 1919.–1940. 664 likteņi* (Latvian Intelligence, 1919–1940: 664 Fates). Rīga: LU žurnāla "Latvijas Vēsture" fonds, 2001, p. 18, 19.

<sup>490</sup> Niedre, O.; Zālīte, I.; Bergmanis, A.; Feldmanis, I.; Ābola, Z. *Latvijas izlūkdienesti 1919.–1940. 664 likteņi* (Latvian Intelligence, 1919–1940: 664 Fates). Rīga: LU žurnāla "Latvijas Vēsture" fonds, 2001, p. 18, 19.

<sup>491</sup> Of the Social Democrat V. Bastjānis' memories of his arrest on the night of 16 May 1934. Book: Jēkabsons Ē., Ščerbinskis, V. (comp.). *Apvērsums: 1934. gada 15. maija notikumi avotos un pētījumos* (ENG: Coup. Events of 15 May 1934 in Sources and Studies). Rīga: Latvijas Nacionālais arhīvs, Latvijas Arhīvistu biedrība, 2012, p. 249.

three suitcases – to his Soviet-regime successor Vikentijs Latkovskis, and revealed the names of agents.<sup>492</sup> On 18 July 1940, J. Fridrihsons was arrested and taken to a prison in Moscow, where the interrogations continued, and the Soviet authorities gained valuable information about the functioning of the Latvian Security Service. He died in Astrakhan Prison on 11 August 1941.<sup>493</sup>

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<sup>492</sup> In historiography, there is a negative evaluation of J. Fridrihsons' actions in 1940 (see for example: Žvinklis, A. *Ieskats Latvijas Republikas politiskās policijas darbībā* (ENG: Insight into the Activities of the Political Police of the Republic of Latvia); Šilde, Ā. *Pasaules revolūcijas vārdā* (ENG: In the Name of World Revolution), however, account must be taken of the complexity of the times and the capacity and impact of the Soviet special authorities. The authors of the article believe that this issue, as well as the issue of the liquidation of the Latvian Security Service in general, has not been sufficiently studied to make such an assessment. For some insight into the interrogation documents of J. Fridrihsons, see: Stranga, A. *Jāņa Fridrihsona liecības* (ENG: Testimonies by Jānis Fridrihsons). *SestDiena*. 31 March 1994; Stranga, A. *Jāņa Fridrihsona liecības* (ENG: Testimonies by Jānis Fridrihsons). *SestDiena*. 9 April 1994.

<sup>493</sup> Jēkabsons, Ē., Ščerbinskis, V. *Latvijas politiskās policijas vadītāji* (ENG: Chief Officials of the Latvian Political Police). *Lauku Avīze*. 29 July 1997, p. 31; Žvinklis, A. *Ieskats Latvijas Republikas politiskās policijas darbībā* (ENG: Insight into the Activities of the Political Police of the Republic of Latvia). *Latvijas Vēstures Institūta Žurnāls*. 1994, No. 1, p. 117.

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The officers of the Service played a significant role throughout the interwar period in monitoring the internal security of the Latvian state and in respect of the rule of law. They had to not only be able to fulfil their direct duties, but also draw the appropriate conclusions and make important decisions on their own, often under conditions of increased stress and danger. To ensure the smooth functioning of the Service, high moral and physical preparedness was requested, but there was debate regarding the material and social security that the state was able to provide to its officers. The personnel were initially mainly recruited from former military personnel, who did not have previous experience in the secret police. The tasks entrusted and the specific nature of the institution's functions obviously affected the fact that the composition of the personnel did not change significantly over time, except for changes in top management. Voldemārs Ozoliņš, who successfully managed the institution, was the longest in office. However, he was dismissed for political reasons. The new Director of the Political Department Jānis Fridrihsons was not only the director of an influential institution, but also, to a certain extent, a public figure in the authoritarian regime.

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## CHAPTER 4

# Methods of investigatory operations

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When monitoring the activities and mood of various society groups and individuals, the operational tasks of the security services were to obtain, gather and analyse intelligence. Such monitoring was primarily focused on those groups and individuals who openly acted against the internal security, but at the same time it was also essential to monitor the part of the population that caused potential safety risks. The instruction document of 1924 of the Political Security Department highlighted the fact that the Service officers had to be “alert regarding all external and internal phenomena happening in the country”, and they had to be “well aware of the current situation in the country, the government’s requirements and the revolutionary movements”. The instruction document also stressed that officers “need to collect and not wait for information to arrive”, thus addressing inactivity as a major threat to the quality of the Security Service’s performance.<sup>494</sup> To prevent internal security

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<sup>494</sup> *Instrukcija Politiskās apsardzes aģentūrai* (ENG: Instruction for the Political Security Department's Agency). Rīga: Politiskās apsardzes izdevums, 1924, p. 5.

threats, a proactive or swift response to real or potential threats was required.

In practice, public monitoring faced a number of practical difficulties due to the routine work and public environment situation. This is evidenced by the work description included in the same instruction document: "As action is taking place in a daily rush, it is not possible to give detailed instructions, since one may face cases that are not provided for by the law or instructions."<sup>495</sup> Basically, this required the officers to be permanently alert and improvise in the interests of the internal security of the country, meaning one had to act based on the principle: "everything must be seen, everything must be heard, one must be everywhere".<sup>496</sup> This is confirmed by the performance requirements of the Service mentioned in the Latvian Encyclopaedia, "to monitor anti-governmental meetings and press, and to monitor all the organisations and individuals from whom anti-governmental action is anticipated".<sup>497</sup> When establishing threats to the internal security of the country, the officers undertook active steps, including investigative measures, by participating in the detection of anti-governmental crimes, proving the guilt of the suspected persons and contributing to the prosecution of the person responsible in accordance with national law.

Public monitoring was carried out using the various methods listed in the following section: intelligence gathering and surveillance, establishment of special logbooks, engagement of reporting agents or informants, as well as various preventive measures to prevent or reduce risks to national internal security.

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<sup>495</sup> *Instrukcija Politiskās apsardzes aģentūrai* (ENG: Instruction for the Political Security Department's Agency). Rīga: Politiskās apsardzes izdevums, 1924, p. 4.

<sup>496</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/8, file 553, p. 2.

<sup>497</sup> *Latviešu konversācijas vārdnīca* (ENG: Latvian Conversion Dictionary). Compiled by Švābe, A., Būmanis, A., Dišlers, K. Volume XVII. Rīga: A. Gulbis apgādībā, 1938, column 33002.

## 4.1.

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# Intelligence gathering and surveillance

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The collection of operational information and accurate intelligence is an essential prerequisite for successfully counteracting security threats. According to the previous chapter regarding unexpected situations which are difficult to predict and describe in the instructions, it is clear that the Security Service officers used various methods and locations to gather information. This sub-chapter addresses the methods and provides illustrative examples highlighting the specifics on information gathering and monitoring. Examples of the functioning of the Security Service are particularly interesting at the beginning of the 1920s, at a time when the country was in a situation of increased protection until May 1924.

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### INTELLIGENCE GATHERING

When safeguarding Latvia's internal security or conducting counterintelligence measures, the collection of intelligence must be systematic, continuous and discreet. Service officers had to be able to process and analyse the intelligence obtained, to prepare reports and to assess the current situation and the political importance of various events. This was quite the opposite of military counterintelligence, where it was stated that "during intelligence work, the officer must not decide on the importance of the intelligence obtained, he must pay equal interest to each case; the importance of the information obtained is determined by the leading intelligence authority, which brings together all the intelligence and this is where systematisation of the intelligence is carried out".<sup>498</sup> Officers had to be erudite and able to make correct and successive decisions quickly, even if it meant improvising.

This is evidenced by a broader, colourful example of a high degree of confidence in the early 1920s. Political Security Department's Director V. Alps writes in his memoirs: "The head of Operational Unit of the Political Security Department is informed by telephone at night from Madona<sup>499</sup> that an official from the former Bolshevik times representing Gulbene Region is on the train to Riga. She had placed

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<sup>498</sup> *Izlūkošana un spiegošana* (ENG: Surveillance and Espionage). Rīga: Ārējās izlūkošanas nodaļa, 1921, p. 3.

<sup>499</sup> Most likely, the reporting person was not a Political Security Department's officer.

some heavy packages under the seats and was behaving rather anxiously. The head of the Operational Unit immediately ordered the case officer of Pļaviņas Site to get on the train and drive to Riga to keep an eye on the suspicious woman. Since the woman's description was vague, the officer from Pļaviņas was unable to identify her and reported from Skrīveri that the woman was not on the train. I instructed a case officer to wait for the train at Riga Station, who was strictly ordered to tag the woman<sup>500</sup> and follow her into the city. In addition, it was agreed that as soon as she settled there, this would be reported to appointed case officers on duty. [...] When the train arrived at Riga Station, the female suspect was easy to detect, because she had a blue hat with a red feather. She sat without a hat on the train, so this easily explains why the case officer from Pļaviņas was not able to identify her. As soon as she stepped off the train, she was welcomed by an acquaintance [...]. In the early morning, two cabmen rode along Gogoļa and Maskavas streets: one carried both women, and the other – a case officer disguised as a rural man.” Upon arrival at the destination, a laundry house, the case officer informed the respective unit and went into the building where both suspected women had previously entered. The case officer did not find them; what was left, was only the hat with the feather and the delivered packages. Inside the packages, the case officer found new lead letters for printing illegal proclamations, etc. The interrogation of the laundry owner did not provide any relevant intelligence, so the Political Security officers searched the premises. Later, V. Alps writes: “[.] the only useful clue that was found was a 3rd-class ticket bought the day before at Vecgulfene Station to travel to Riga by night train. There was no doubt that the woman who fled had left the ticket. It was Mrs Švēde, the laundry owner, who had paid travel expenses and kept the “supporting document” to pass it on and receive the money they had given.”

Next, a surveillance point (trap) was installed in the laundry, resulting in the detention of several underground communists, from whom important information was obtained, which led to setting up hiding places in their places of residence.<sup>501</sup> The ticket slip that was found gave hope that the wanted woman could be captured at the train station on her way back to Vecgulfene. However, the case officers arrived too late to the station, so with the private automobile<sup>502</sup> of the head, they drove to Vecgulfene, where they arrived before the train. In Vecgulfene, when inquiring among locals, a woman “wearing a bright hat” was recognised. At the same time, another case officer reported to Mr Alps from Riga that he had detained a fugitive-like woman at the station and learnt that her name coincided with the name of the person in Vecgulfene. The detained woman confessed that she had supplied an illegal communist printing house with the necessary letters and other things needed for

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<sup>500</sup> As in recognise.

<sup>501</sup> Alps, V. *Latvija spiegu tīklos* (ENG: Latvia in Spy Networks). Riga: LARO, 2006, pp. 22–28.

<sup>502</sup> Apparently, the Political Security Department had no cars at its disposal at that time, due to the institution's poor financial situation initially.

the illegal printing of communist literature. In addition to questioning, the person's place of residence in Vecgulfene was searched, which resulted in finding objects for underground use – letters of a printing house, rifles, illegal proclamation and literature belonging to the husband and father of the detained woman. V. Alps stresses the operational actions of the Service officers, which enabled him to discover this anti-governmental activity: “Since all these family members were surprised and were not able to communicate with each other, their activities were smoothly revealed while interrogating them.” It should be noted that the counterintelligence operation also generated valuable information on other underground communists, including Kārlis Kretulis,<sup>503</sup> and their activities, which further contributed to the detention of other communists.<sup>504</sup>

Not only should the threat itself and the fast response of Service officers be highlighted, but also the issue of transport. In the interwar period, railway was the fastest transport mode, which not only ensured the movement of people, but also the movement of various information and information tools. Thus, the Service's interest in monitoring and observing suspicious people on trains is easily explained. The memoirs of the artist Uga Skulme refer to a lady Elīna Zālīte, who, according to the writer Linards Laicens, “in the 1920s had monitored underground workers on behalf of the Political Department on a railway section”.<sup>505</sup>

It is exactly the fight against the main internal security threat to the country – the anti-national action of underground communists – that most vividly describes the functioning of the Service, which required not only swift and correct decision-making, but also patience. For example, at the beginning of December 1920, the Political Security Department officers of Liepāja suspected that certain locals in Liepāja Region, Rāva Parish (now Dunalka), had engaged in secret anti-governmental correspondence with communists abroad. When checking this intelligence, the Political Security Department, together with the regional police, carried out searches at the places of residence of suspected persons as early as on 10 December. However, evidence of such correspondence was not found. Nevertheless, the Political Security Department Unit in Liepāja continued the investigations and “the residents of the said houses were placed under secret police supervision”.<sup>506</sup>

There were many ways in which intelligence about a person of interest or an event or the situation as a whole could be collected. For example, in November 1920, the senior case officer of the Political Security Department arrived at the Hotel

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<sup>503</sup> Kārlis Kretulis organised the establishment of Soviet rule in Talsi; in 1919–1920, he led a guerrilla unit in Western Latvia, and participated in the illegal work of the Latvian Communist Party in 1920–1921. From 1921, he lived in Soviet Russia.

<sup>504</sup> Alps, V. *Latvija spiegu tīklos* (ENG: Latvia in Spy Networks). Rīga: LARO, 2006, pp. 22–28.

<sup>505</sup> Skulme, U. *Atmiņu grāmata* (ENG: Book of Memories). Rīga: Neputns, 2013, p. 280.

<sup>506</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 8, p. 148.

Metropol, where at the instruction of his direct case officer “he would inquire with the porter about the guests who intend to leave Riga this evening.”<sup>507</sup> Yet it should be pointed out that the officers were not always competent to collect intelligence, i.e. it was not always done correctly. This is illustrated by some examples, which in December 1923 led to some case officers being reprimanded by the head of the Counterintelligence Unit of the Political Security Department “for overbearing behaviour” when collecting intelligence on suspicious persons. The head of the unit stressed once more that, when on duty, the “case officers shall be polite, not threaten people without need, and not speak up for the Political Security Department without need”,<sup>508</sup> which in the future would avoid gross infringements of the requirement for the so-called “secrecy”. However, certain secrecy risks often led Service officers to take more active forms of action by organising special raids aiming to verify the identity of suspicious persons. For example, on 13 October 1924, the officer of the Service, Mr Jūlijs Krauze, was authorised, “in cooperation with police on the night of 13/14 October, to verify documents at certain places of residence when searching for people holding no documents or forged ones”.<sup>509</sup>

The different nature of the intelligence obtained is confirmed by processes identified in the officer reports in the context of economic safety, which suggested alleged safety risks. For example, on 18 December 1920, the Riga regional unit investigation officer J. Fridrihsons reported “two recently observed events” in society, one of which was related to the “complete lack of action and the standstill is observed in municipal boards, which results in roads and bridges staying unrepaired and all external arrangements cancelled”.

In the context of national economic life, the awareness of the officers of the Service of the progress of the agrarian reform and the social events around it should also be mentioned. In April 1921, head of the Political Security Department, P. Martinsons, pointed out that when the Land Management Committee divides land in the parishes, disputes between interested parties often arise. In the settlement of these disputes, the political background of an interested party is sometimes revealed, which, among other things, is actively highlighted by other interested parties. P. Martinsons encouraged the use of such cases in the interests of the Political Security Department and initiation of investigations into persons against whom political accusations were being made.<sup>510</sup> Apparently, the management realised that the agrarian reform, which was a complex and sensitive process, essential from the point of view of national security, should distinguish between the real threat to security from features characteristic of humans (for example, the distribution of false information for vested interests), which is in conflict with the law.

<sup>507</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 11, p. 392.

<sup>508</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/6, file 726, p. op. 9.

<sup>509</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 428, p. 58.

<sup>510</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/9, file 13, p. op. 19.

Misleading or even false intelligence significantly impeded the work of the Service. Already in April 1919, the Minister of the Interior, M. Valters, issued an order stating that it was forbidden to spread rumours, not to comply with Provisional Government orders, to engage in anti-governmental agitation or otherwise threaten the existence of the State;<sup>511</sup> these crimes were also targeted by the Service officers. Rumours and similar false information were deemed by the Service authorities as undermining the image of the State and officials, which, in a democratic environment, always required a very thorough assessment of whether it was a real harmful activity or a freedom of expression and political opinion. This should be borne in mind when considering the report by J. Fridrihsons of December 1920. He states in his report that “seen from a distance, nothing extraordinary has happened, no forbidden meetings, no agitation has been observed and all is quiet in political terms”, but at the same time J. Fridrihsons notes that the other “phenomena observed recently” is the activity of members of the social democratic fraction of the Constitutional Assembly, in which they hold lectures and presentations on the functioning and political situation of the Constitutional Assembly, but in fact these events were being used to “destroy the existing political system”.<sup>512</sup>

In the context of discrediting the image of the country, its wide range should also be mentioned, which the Service personnel continuously monitored. Not only political forces or anti-national underground movements, but also simple civilians. For example, in June 1920, Hilda Tīrums and Johanna Dišlere were imprisoned in Tukums Prison for spreading rumours and “slandering the government and calling officials bad names” in public.<sup>513</sup> That very same year, the sister of mercy, Fanija Dambe, served her time in Riga Central Prison: while on the train from Riga to Cēsis, she had spoken in public that “if the Provisional Government welcomes a swindler like General Yudenich,<sup>514</sup> then the government itself must be a “swindler”. According to the intelligence collected by the Service officers, this was the basis for the sentence.<sup>515</sup> The intelligence obtained enabled officers to bring charges against her and pass the case to the authorities for the prosecution. However, the officers did not always find political unreliability or other violations of the person under investigation. For example, in 1920, Ventspils case officer J. Krauze reported

<sup>511</sup> See more: Bērziņa, A. Cietumos ieslodzīto sieviešu politisko apsūdzību raksturojums Neatkarības kara laikā (1919–1921) (ENG: Description of Political Indictments of Women Imprisoned during the War of Independence (1919–1921)). *Studenti vēstures zinātnē* (ENG: Students in History Science). Rīga: LU Akadēmiskais apgāds, 2018, pp. 87–102.

<sup>512</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 8, p. 226.

<sup>513</sup> LVVA, fund 578, description 1, file 311, p. 29; *ibid.*, file 281, pp. 1–3.

<sup>514</sup> In the 1920s, rumours about granting asylum to General N. Yudenich were circulating in Latvia, which did not happen, and he was not let into Latvia.

<sup>515</sup> LVVA, fund 3273, description 1, file 2918, p. 1. Interestingly, in July 1920, Mrs F. Dambe was repeatedly imprisoned in Riga Central Prison for spreading rumours on a train. See: LVVA, fund 3273, description 1, file 2919, p. 1, 4.

on a lawyer Šulcs,<sup>516</sup> that “according to the intelligence gathered, Šulcs is a big con man, but is not engaged in politics”, while pointing out that the case officer shall continue to gather intelligence.<sup>517</sup>

The intelligence about the general public mood was not only acquired by the Service itself; it also came from various other institutions (e.g. parishes, town municipalities, police authorities) and individuals. Already in October 1920, by winding up the Internal Intelligence Unit of the HQ of the Commander-in-Chief of the Latvian Army and establishing a further information exchange network, each parish was obliged to send reports or reviews on the situation in the parish to the Political Security Department.

The reports prepared by the police included specific sections by topics which allowed further analysis of the information provided:

- 1) where and when public gatherings, meetings or presentations were held, what was on their agenda and what decisions were made,
- 2) what information had become known of secret meetings or sessions,
- 3) which political persons arrived and for what purposes,
- 4) what sensitive information about the activities and intentions of the communists or German agitators had become known,
- 5) what reports had been submitted on the activities of communist groups, and
- 6) what crimes had been committed in the parish.<sup>518</sup>

As can be seen, the content of the report shows detailed monitoring of the public for internal security purposes. Such reports were at regular intervals (for example, the head of Riga Jūrmala Police – every week, even if there were no changes or events during the reporting period,<sup>519</sup> or twice a month as, for example, did the Katriņa parish (now part of Ērgļi municipality) council<sup>520</sup> etc.) sent such to the Service during the interwar period.

The guidelines for intelligence gathering did not change significantly after 15 May 1934, under the authoritarian regime; the only difference was that the officers of the Service were also forced to respond to information which involved violations of petty crimes and which would otherwise, under democratic conditions, have been the responsibility of the Order Police. For example, in spring 1936, Ādolfs Šilde, a then publicist and person related to the organisation “Pērkonkrusts”, recalled that during his detention in the Political Department’s

<sup>516</sup> Referring to Pauls Šulcs, who was an attorney in Ventspils as of 15 September 1919; *Latvijas Advokatūra 1919–1945. Biogrāfiskā vārdnīca* (ENG: Latvian Bar 1919–1945. Biographic Dictionary). Jēkabsons, Ē., Ščerbinskis, V. (comp.). Rīga: Latvijas Valsts vēstures arhīvs, 2007, p. 491, 492.

<sup>517</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 8, p. 77, 78.

<sup>518</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 8, p. 18, 28.

<sup>519</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 8, p. 110.

<sup>520</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 8, p. 18, 113.

premises (13 Alberta Street), he found himself there together with Ķegums power plant employees, whose infringements under the influence of alcohol or violations of work ethics were verified for any deliberate anti-governmental mischief and sabotage.<sup>521</sup> This is a good example of an odd feature of an anti-democratic regime in taking care of internal security (but mostly that of the regime), suspecting almost all members of the public.

The Service monitored the media (newspapers) where necessary, analysing the articles of both Latvian and foreign press (especially of Soviet Russia and from December 1922, that of the Soviet Union), aiming to determine the position of the newspaper and the mood of the represented groups (e.g. Social Democrats) and any changes. The activity of the Service should be highlighted as regards the collection and analysis of information in newspapers on the institution's activities.<sup>522</sup> For example, in August 1923, head of the Political Security Department, E. Āboltiņš, wrote to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs: "I have observed on several occasions that [Soviet] Russian press slanders the Latvian government, as is, among others, seen in the newspaper "Krievijas Cīņa" (orig.: "Российская Борьба"), articles contained in section No. 85 "White Latvia". I deem it appropriate to submit a note to the [Soviet] Russian Government on this matter."<sup>523</sup>

It was also important for the Service to identify the sources of information from which the editorial boards of newspaper and journalists received the published news. For example, in February 1924, the Political Department's investigation officer of Rēzekne regional unit, Alfrēds Fimbauers, reported to the Director of the Political Department that it was necessary to know the source of information of the newspaper "Jaunākās Ziņas", because he had suspicions that information (apparently, confidential) was being distributed by the officers of the Zilupe Site of the Political Department or the Border Guard post.<sup>524</sup>

An important task of the Service was to detect and prevent the dissemination of illegal literature. In order to achieve this, the officers controlled the range of literature available in bookshops and gathered signed declarations from booksellers, in which they confirmed that only approved written works would be sold, especially in the case of writings issued by the Soviet Russia (from December 1922 – the Soviet Union).<sup>525</sup> For example, in Riga in the second half of 1923, in response to the strikes in factories, the Political Security Department monitored booksellers and press kiosks.<sup>526</sup>

<sup>521</sup> Šilde, Ā. *Ardievas Rīgai. Tikai atmiņas* (ENG: Goodbye to Riga. Memories Only). Bruklina: Grāmatu Draugs, 1988, pp. 118–119.

<sup>522</sup> Alps, V. *Latvija spiegu tīklos* (ENG: Latvia in Spy Networks). Rīga: LARO, 2006, p. 50; LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 604.

<sup>523</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 45, p. 75.

<sup>524</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 587, p. 103.

<sup>525</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 45, p. 96.

<sup>526</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/6, file 726, p. 6.

Finally, archive records contain information on the contact of the Service with the activities of people which may have been caused by mental health problems. For example, in 1936, the Political Department intercepted two articles of the same content, one of which was addressed to the Swedish King and the government, and the other – to the Italian Government and Benito Mussolini. In them, a person who calls himself “the Man of Christ sent by Jesus Christ, the Holy Ruler of all, a bishop of the whole world appointed by him and a guest of all the noble kin of Divine, whom Latvia was not worthy of accepting”, and who was “brought back from the dead”, but who was called a “religious lunatic” in the report by the Security Service officers, asks foreign governments (especially Italian, Danish and Swedish) to accept him and some “sister of Lazarus” in their countries and “to set them free from Latvia”, where he is not shown a proper position and where he is “kept like in prison”.<sup>527</sup>

### **SURVEILLANCE (MONITORING)<sup>528</sup>**

Three types of surveillance used by the Service and law enforcement authorities during the interwar period: open, special and covert (external). They are all typical methods used by the Service, but covert surveillance was the primary method. Its nature and specifics have been defined by former head of the Police School, Aleksandrs Ceriņš: “Covert surveillance exists under the covert surveillance of politically unreliable persons, of which the person being monitored and other persons outside the Service must not be aware of, and therefore the person under such surveillance shall not be restricted in any way. This surveillance is considered to be a means of preventing a crime against the state that can be expected from a known person, whose unreliability has been sufficiently proven. Although the surveillance of these people is carried out by Political Department officers, the police must come to aid here. If the police acquire some more or less important material during its surveillance activities, it must be reported to the Political Department.”<sup>529</sup>

The intent of the covert surveillance was to verify the intelligence obtained, to disclose the unlawful acts of the person or people being under surveillance. The instruction document of 1924 of the Political Security Department stipulated that such surveillance activities could lead to the discovery of new suspects as well as meeting venues, thereby enabling the development of an covert surveillance network.<sup>530</sup>

<sup>527</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 189/1, description 1/2, file 939, p. 33.

<sup>528</sup> Nowadays, the term “monitoring” refers to investigatory activities, the legal basis, principles, tasks, objectives and content of which are described in the Investigatory Operations Law.

<sup>529</sup> Ceriņš, A. *Vadonis policijas ierēdņiem un aizsargiem* (ENG: Leader for Police Officers and Privates). Rīga: Rīgas Policijas skola, 1925, p. 254.

<sup>530</sup> *Instrukcija Politiskās apsardzes aģentūrai* (ENG: Instruction for the Political Security Department's Agency). Rīga: Politiskās apsardzes izdevums, 1924, p. 20.

Covert surveillance was carried out by not less than two officers at the same time. Several involved objects could be observed:

- 1) the person concerned aiming to gather information on him/her,
- 2) the person concerned aiming to gather information on the people with whom he/she is meeting,
- 3) a specific place (house, hotel, apartment, factory, private premises, etc.),
- 4) dignitary protection (see chapter 7.2.).<sup>531</sup>

In terms of performance, external surveillance is further subdivided into mobile (focused on the person subject to surveillance), and static.

Surveillance was a direct expression of public monitoring, which allowed Service officers to record the general public mood, public opinion on a subject that was discussed at length, or simply to identify certain daily phenomena in society and to analyse the impact and extent of the impact on the threat to the internal security. This required particular attention, secrecy and analytical skills.

The officers tried to be present at public and cultural events, where visitors' reactions or general behaviour was observed. For example, already in November 1920, the Director of the Political Security Department sent writings to the Latvian National Opera, the Latvian National Theatre, the Russian Drama Administration, the Daile Theatre and other cultural institutions, in which he "politely asks to book two free tickets per each performance in its [Political Security Department] interests by sending the respective entrance tickets to it [the Political Security Department]".<sup>532</sup> This ensured the presence of the Service officers at public and cultural events – not only in the theatre, but also at various events and cinemas. However, the opportunity to attend cultural events free of charge raised concerns that there were unjustified losses to cultural institutions, since theatre plays and other events were visited free of charge by the officers not only as part of their duties, but also out of personal interest. The involvement of the Interior Minister, Alfrēds Bīrznieks, speaks of the severity of this issue – in a letter he sent to the Political Security Department in December 1920, he calls such practice an "undesirable phenomenon" and points out among other things that he is aware of cases where several officers of the Political Security Department and other public authorities come to see a single event.<sup>533</sup>

Various institutions also played a special role in learning public opinion, especially institutions that gathered large numbers of people, the primary social

<sup>531</sup> *Instrukcija Politiskās apsardzes aģentūrai* (ENG: Instruction for the Political Security Department's Agency). Rīga: Politiskās apsardzes izdevums, 1924, p. 21.

<sup>532</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 10, p. 22, 26, 36; Many cultural institutions, such as the Latvian National Theatre, explain in their reply to the Political Security Department that free tickets are already granted to the city prefect and duty police officer, so the request for two free tickets is rejected.

<sup>533</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 95, p. 94.

function of which was a gathering. Individuals or groups gathered in particular places which, according to the Service, were not only should “hotels and pubs be constantly monitored and frequently checked”,<sup>534</sup> but also workers’ canteens, various gatherings of local associations, educational presentations hosted by societies, clubs of creative intellectuals, salons, and favourite cafés. There is an episode worth mentioning from the memories of the artist Uga Skulme, in which he describes a visit (in the mid-1930s) of a group of artists (without disclosing names) paid to the later Minister of Public Affairs and former Service officer, Alfrēds Bērziņš. He had asked whether the artists truly had to seek their creative inspiration in “smoke-filled cafes, where ministers are assigned and sacked, where public officials find partners and are divorced, where national borders are shifted”.<sup>535</sup> This issue was the result of a meeting of artists in the Švarcs’ Café, where the people who gathered had openly discussed the political changes that had taken place in the country.<sup>536</sup>

The Service officers also noted in their observations, the external manifestations of society that had been identified. For example, on 16 November 1920, the Political Security Department reported that people in Latvia tend to often wear tsarist uniforms, hats and badges, which was evident in the student hats made according to Russian and German samples. It was also noted that language law was often not respected in the shop signs – their inscriptions were not in Latvian, underlining that “all this is incompatible with the Latvian political system, and makes residents doubt Latvia’s independence, its new system and, in general, obscures the sense of an autonomous state”. Based on these observations, the Political Security Department urged the Minister of the Interior to issue relevant orders prohibiting the wearing of Russian Empire uniforms and other symbols of “foreign powers”, and to oblige the police to monitor and to ensure that such uniforms are not worn, while the national language law is observed at trade sites.<sup>537</sup> The Ministry of the Interior issued relevant orders on 3 December 1920, however, at the end of December, the Political Security Department repeatedly turned to the Ministry in writing, in which it pointed out that “despite orders from the Ministry of the Interior, some pupils, such as pupils from the Olav’s School of Commerce, and students of the Latvian High School, continue to wear Russian-type school hats and clothing”.<sup>538</sup>

<sup>534</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/8, file 553, p. 11.

<sup>535</sup> Skulme, U. *Atmiņu grāmata* (ENG: Book of Memories). Rīga: Neputns, 2013, p. 303.

<sup>536</sup> Skulme, U. *Atmiņu grāmata* (ENG: Book of Memories). Rīga: Neputns, 2013, p. 303.

<sup>537</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 10, p. 17.

<sup>538</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 10, p. 54.

## 4.2.

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### Registers

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To organise work and follow the processes in the society, organised record-keeping, reference systems and the creation of different registers were of particular importance for national internal security. The registers gathered information from the thorough monitoring and reporting process and produced as accurate and transparent documentation as possible, which in turn allowed for the effective handling of existing information and for the prompt identification of politically unreliable and suspicious persons and organisations.

During the interwar period, the officers of the Service compiled different registers – lists of suspicious persons, including them in a special file, compiling intelligence on events, making reports on political mood, cases of activities of different organisations, etc. Each unit had to complete certain documentation – a table register, a file book of cases, logbooks of incoming and outgoing writings, of incoming and outgoing “packets”,<sup>539</sup> logbook of arrested persons, logbook of material evidence, logbook of wanted persons, inventory logbook, logbook of persons under investigation, logbook of household cases, logbook of orders, etc.<sup>540</sup> The work of the institution’s case officer on duty had to be of particularly high quality and carried out in an exemplary manner. For instance, the instruction document of 1927 focuses on the precise preparation of the various registers by the Political Department of Riga regional unit’s case officer on duty, officers on duty and the responsible officer for so-called “arrest hall”, who had a key role in further investigations, clarification of the circumstances of the case, etc. The case officer on duty was in charge of the table book, the logbook of personal search of people arrested and detained, the logbook of incoming “packets”, the registration logbook of case officers, the logbooks of outgoing and incoming telephonograms, the orders and the files of wanted persons.<sup>541</sup> In order to fill these registers accurately and sequentially, a person had to pay attention to detail and constantly engage in learning new things. Therefore, the relevant officers were consistently reminded of the relevant record-keeping skills to carry out their duties in due quality.

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<sup>539</sup> As in parcels.

<sup>540</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 45, p. 42.

<sup>541</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 879, p. 41.

As early as November 1920, the Ministry of the Interior obliged all police investigation officers “to fill in a registration card on their own for each case under investigation, containing information on when the case was started, ended, where and when the case was sent, and, if possible, to attach a photograph for the Political Security Department’s Registration Unit”, in order to ensure that each case was recorded and each and every “political criminal and suspicious person” had been entered in the register.<sup>542</sup> Such cards were already completed before November 1920, but the Ministry of the Interior documents point to shortcomings in the creation of registers. In parallel, the officers of the Service filed special cards on suspicious people or those under investigation. Such cards contained information on the person’s name, surname, father’s name, age, place of affiliation, previous and current place of residence, description of the person’s external appearance. A photograph (however, not in all cases) was added and information was provided on the charge against him, as well as comments on the progress of the charge, such as detention or release.<sup>543</sup>

In the Service’s regional units and the sites, cartography cards were filed about the people in question, and such cards were sent to the Riga Cartography Unit to compile them and form a single and complete reference system. It also included information on people reported by other authorities, such as police, thus creating a special file on people who were brought to the national security authorities’ attention. The file was not only made for the purposes of current investigations, but also to verify the political reliability and past of a particular person in cases of suspicion. Such a card filing cabinet was located both in each regional unit and site and in an aggregated form – in the centre (Riga). The proactive work of the Service and police in the interests of internal security is evidenced by the fact that in October 1922 there were already some 40,000 people in the Political Security Department’s files – communists, employees of the Soviet Latvia, monarchists, etc., including “all those Landeswehr men who proved their betrayal to Latvia during the fatal “putsch”<sup>544</sup> days”.<sup>545</sup>

Despite the wide scope, the card files often initially revealed various shortcomings – often, the necessary entries were not made at all. For example, in November 1923, as a result of the change in personnel, the new office worker of the Investigation Unit reported deficiencies in the work of the previous colleague: “Any changes in the cases on people to be expelled, as regards the freeing of such people or granting them amnesty – nothing has been reported to the card filing, due to the remark on the registration card.”<sup>546</sup> In the following years, various shortcomings were addressed and the card filing cabinet was significantly improved: both

<sup>542</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 8, p. 91.

<sup>543</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/9, file 7, p. 47.

<sup>544</sup> As in the coup of 16 April 1919.

<sup>545</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 896, p. 291.

<sup>546</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 45, p. 109.

quantitatively – by adding new people, and qualitatively – by examining, updating and extending the information provided on certain individuals.

Following the coup in the second half of the 1930s, the Service officers strived to improve the existing nationwide intelligence gathering practices that would help to monitor and control the various anti-governmental organisations, follow the public mood and, consequently, address various anti-governmental manifestations.<sup>547</sup> In the coming years, the creation of special logbooks or registers, as well as special files, served for the monitoring of public opinion. This would be the case in particular for the second half of 1930s, when, following the coup, various state and municipal authorities and companies dismissed politically untrustworthy employees. It should be noted that, in parallel with the redundancies, the Service registered these people<sup>548</sup> by inviting national authorities to send a list of those dismissed. This led to a significant increase in the number of allegedly suspected people, and the very fact of a person being filed apparently limited the possibility for such a person to pursue a career or even find a job.<sup>549</sup> For example, at the end of the 1930s, a citizen seeking a job requested the Security Service to “remove him from the list of politically unreliable persons”, as he was prevented from finding a job.<sup>550</sup> This is in no way the only case to prove the great influence of such registers and similar logbooks, as well as the presence of Service activities in the everyday life of society. Such documents, which gathered information on suspicious persons and their activities, could have played a crucial role in attracting new reporting agents during the entire interwar period, when allegedly suspicious and actually compromised persons, due to various pressing circumstances, might become informants to Service officers (see Chapter 4.3.).

One of the outcomes of the activities of the Service was the preparation of various reports/reviews on the domestic political situation, which were submitted to the Minister of the Interior. In drawing up such reports, the Political Security Department’s leadership pointed out in the first half of the 1920s that “the Operational Unit has to show a clear picture of its activities. The reporting notes of the Operational Unit shall always contain remarks as to what has been done to the report and how the report will be used. Officers shall be required to properly report on each and every circumstance they are aware of and what has become known in public or elsewhere outside the Service. It must be strictly observed that documents are drawn up properly, that the reminders are not delayed and that documents requiring action are not missed”.<sup>551</sup> In 1923, all subordinate entities

<sup>547</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/22, file 896, p. 141.

<sup>548</sup> Stranga, A. *LSDSP un 1934. g. 15. maija valsts apvērsums: demokrātijas likteņi Latvijā* (ENG: Latvian Social Democrat Workers Party and the Coup of 15 May 1934: Democracy Fates in Latvia). Rīga: Author’s edition, 1998, p. 165.

<sup>549</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 189/1, pp. 184–185.

<sup>550</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 189/1, pp. 184–185.

<sup>551</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 45, p. op. 42.

submitted progress reports to the Political Security Department on a weekly basis, and once a month – a statistical overview of the number of cases and persons arrested.<sup>552</sup> From 1 January 1924, it was established that:

- 1) once a month, a progress report shall be sent which chronologically lists all cases brought to an end in the previous month, chronologically arranged cases which are still under investigation, as well as a list of persons arrested and at the disposal of a district or site;
- 2) the statistical summary will be prepared by the Political Security Department in Riga;
- 3) urgent decisions and other related documents concerning each person arrested shall be submitted immediately.<sup>553</sup>

150 It is evident that all the units' reports were also drawn up on the various events that occurred in their area of responsibility. In order to assess the situation in the country as a whole in terms of security, not only in certain locations, all units were obliged to send frequent reports to the headquarters (Riga) on their area of responsibility. They were used in the preparation of a common review of the general situation in the country. In April 1921, inviting the regional units to submit broader reports, Director P. Martinsons wrote: "The political situation is closely linked to the entire public life on sites. It is not possible to judge the state and the needs of the people's spirit by simply spreading proclamations and flying red flags. For the Political Security Department to be aware of all major events in the public life of the regions, I strongly request that all major event descriptions in public life be as detailed as possible, describing not only events in your town, but also in the entire region, as well as the activities of political parties and the opinion of citizens toward these, any dissatisfaction with one or another government order, if any, misbehaviour and shortcomings of public officials, etc. I also propose to give serious consideration to the local and municipal elections. If council elections are coming up in any of the district towns, the election campaigning and candidates should be reported in advance, in the form of separate reports. Also report in general on elections and campaigning for local government authorities."

While in February 1923, E. Āboltiņš pointed out "that the site case officers shall be required to submit reports twice a month on the situation and events, to use them for overviews by the administration in the headquarters, and to keep them in a secret administration report (overview) file", noting at the same time that "some regions have drawn up a lot of notes on operational work, but little practical action can be seen".<sup>554</sup>

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<sup>552</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 45, p. 55.

<sup>553</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 45, p. 125.

<sup>554</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 45, p. op. 42.



## 4.3.

### Informants

From the launch of the State Security Department in August 1919, it already strived to involve individuals who would pass on information about events and people around them – they were so-called informants. Other sources refer to them as secret messengers, secret agents or network of agents, but the Service officers called them “their own eyes and ears”.

The involvement of informants was a common practice of public service bodies in other countries as well. The instruction document of 1924 of the Political Security Department states that “the secret agency shall include all and any person not in the permanent service of the Political Security Department but who, either permanently or occasionally, for remuneration or without remuneration, shall secretly report to the Political Security Department on the internal and external activities of illegal organisations, and shall report on the political situation, etc.”. The instruction also stresses that “the informants must be everywhere: in every furthest corner of the country, every organisation, institution, parish, club, etc.”.<sup>556</sup>

In 1924, in the Saeima, while discussing the law on the Central Criminal Police, the social democrat Andrejs Petrevics indicated that the instruction document of 1924 to Political Security Department officers provides a clear definition of informants. It states that the informants network (“the engagement of informants who, while operating in illegal organisations, continuously and periodically provide information and shed light on the activities of these organisations”) is “the main factor of the Security Service”. In practice, the informants are divided into two groups: informants and members of secret organisations.<sup>557</sup>

The informants were those who reported to the Service about the political mood in society, suspicious individuals and events. They were well-informed of local circumstances, thus contributing significantly to the work of the Service. The members of the secret organisations were the ones who “shed light on the activities of an organisation from an insider’s point of view”. The engagement of such informants

<sup>556</sup> *Instrukcija Politiskās apsardzes aģentūrai* (ENG: Instruction for the Political Security Department's Agency). Rīga: Politiskās apsardzes izdevums, 1924, p. 14.

<sup>557</sup> *Latvijas Republikas Saeimas stenogrammas, 4. sesija / Latvijas Republikas Saeima* (ENG: Shorthand Reports of the Saeima of the Republic of Latvia, 4th Session / Saeima of the Republic of Latvia). Rīga: Latvijas Republikas Saeimas izdevums, [1924]. Column 819.

was particularly important because, unlike the informants, the members of secret organisations were much more difficult to involve. They were trusted people working undercover in organisations or, under certain conditions, they were existing members of organisations who worked as collaborators in the interests of the Service. Such individuals were recruited in various ways: offering full rehabilitation in exchange for work in the interests of the Service, persuading them to change political views or enticing with in-kind compensation.<sup>558</sup>

In January 1921, Deputy Director of the Political Security Department, P. Martinsons, pointed out that involving a larger number of informants, they may replace the shortage of officers in the regions to a certain extent. He wrote: “In order to avoid any disruption in the operation of the regions, Political Security Department finds that the above-mentioned circumstances can be prevented by the wider use of informants, if necessary for remuneration. For this purpose, the responsible officer, either investigation or case officer, in the region should contact the relevant individuals, making them interested in our national work, and, where appropriate, use the means appropriated for this. For reasons of secrecy, the receipt for the money received is to be signed by informant under their cover name.”<sup>559</sup>

However, at the beginning, despite the importance of informants, the creation of their network was problematic. For example, in August 1921, the following information can be found on the number and activities of informants in the districts:

- ▮ in Daugavpils regional unit, the “informants network is weak and unsatisfactory. There is no internal informants network at all; there are only 6 more or less permanent “informants” on the political situation”;
- ▮ in Rēzekne, “there is almost no internal informants network at all; there is only 1 “informant” on the political situation”;
- ▮ in Vecgulfene, “the informants network is insufficient; internal agent – 1, “informant” – 1”;
- ▮ in Liepāja, “the informants network is insufficient; internal agent – 1. There are no other permanent informants”;
- ▮ in Valmiera, “the informants network under the regional unit is completely absent”;
- ▮ in Riga, “the number of internal agents – 3, “informants” – 6 across the entire region”.<sup>560</sup>

The activities of the informants and their role, along with the reliability of the officers of the Service, are described in the report of 11 June 1921 by the senior case officer of Ventspils Site, Jūlijs Krauze. The report of 11 June states: “On 10 June, my informant Priedīts came to me and announced that members of the communist

<sup>558</sup> *Instrukcija Politiskās apsardzes aģentūrai* (ENG: Instruction for the Political Security Department's Agency). Rīga: Politiskās apsardzes izdevums, 1924, p. 16, 17.

<sup>559</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/9, file 7, p. 35.

<sup>560</sup> LVA, fund 7432, description 2, file 22, p. 31.

organisation of Ventspils had suspended contact with him and that they were aware that he is reporting to me. The news of termination of the relationship with Priedits came from Riga, and it is said that there is an officer at the Riga Political Security Department who reports to the headquarters on all informants. Contact was almost interrupted with the entire Ventspils organisation. Now, as far as I can see, a new, completely unknown organisation in Ventspils is emerging that does not even come into contact with the old organisation, because the old organisation is in fact heavily compromised, all of its members are known and most of them have been deported to the Soviet Russia. I think a number of returnees from Russia are entering the new organisation, because it has been proven that the communists who travel from the Soviet Russia do not engage with the old organisation and there have even been cases of proclamation spreading, but the organisation knows nothing about it.”<sup>561</sup>

It should be noted that the successful counteraction resulted in information coming to light of what the communist organisations had already established about the people who chased them. There are photo portraits of the communists with representatives of the Service or the army among the official documents. For example, one of the Service’s photo albums, which is a collection of materials confiscated from the communists, shows a photo of army intelligence officers Alberts Broders<sup>562</sup> (remark – “executioner”) and Mednis (alias Fausts; remark – “once in the party, but excluded from it”).<sup>563</sup>

As can be seen from these examples, it was essential for the officers of the Service to ensure that the identity of the informants was not disclosed, not only for the personal purposes of the agent concerned, but also for the purposes of internal security of the country. As early as the end of 1920, the Director of the Political Security Department, V. Alps, pointed out that he and the deputy were the only ones who know the identity of the informants, while receipts for the payment of money to them were only available to the cashier and kept secret.<sup>564</sup>

In order to ensure the anonymity of the informants, the Service introduced the cover names under which they signed the reports. For example, the list of reporting agents contained cover names, such as Kārlis, Liepājnieks, Marka, Tumšais, Žeņa, Žuks, Bērziņš, Daugavietis, Jefimovs, Gaitnieks, Nemo, Maksis, Sisenis, Sliede, Slimais, Partizānis, Puķīte, Roze, Ābols, Tralles, Zemzarītis, V-s, Āzis, Balodis, Ceriņu zieds, Dadzis, Kalējs, Djadja, Ikss, Kurmis, Olga, Ripa, Spieķītis, Zilais, Zviedris, Blondīne, Ceļinieks, Miesnieks, Grants, Dūņa, Melnais, Ronis, Sams, Saša, Upe, Zvaigznītis, etc.<sup>565</sup>

<sup>561</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 146/2, p. 40.

<sup>562</sup> For more information about A. Broders see: LVVA, fund 5601, description 1, file 982; *Lāčplēša Kara ordeņa kavalieri. Biogrāfiskā vārdnīca* (ENG: Recipients of the Order of Lāčplēšis. Biographic Dictionary). Rīga: Jāņa sēta, 1995, p. 98.

<sup>563</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/6, file 1254, p. 3.

<sup>564</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 95, p. 111.

<sup>565</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/22.

In total, description 1/22 of fund 3235 of the Latvian National Historical Archive (LVVA) contains information on 1040 informants (in Liepāja region – 111; Jelgava region – 90, Valmiera region – 105; Daugavpils region – 159, Gulbene region – 99, Rēzekne region – 198, and Rīga region – 278).<sup>566</sup> However, given the state of preservation and systematisation of documents nowadays, it is reasonable to say that the real number of informants was higher.

The activity of informants was based on mutual trust between the informant and the officer. It was therefore pointed out to the Service officers that “every effort should be made to deal with the informant in a delicate and sensitive way so that this trust is not interrupted or impaired”. It is also pointed out that informant should be given discretion and not be burdened with constant requests for new information.<sup>567</sup>

The difficulty engaging informants and using their evidence in the investigation, and in particular in judicial proceedings, is illustrated by the Political Security Department’s report of 16 June 1922 to the Ministry of the Interior, which reveals the willingness of investigative judges to bring the Political Security Department’s informants to court as witnesses, but which “seriously undermines the further successful functioning of Political Security Department”. The report says: “We already find it very difficult to get certain statements from witnesses-countrymen, who fear revenge, and it is common that when summoned to court, i.e. to an investigating judge, they give up their earlier testimonies, and the accusation is thus brought to an end.” It is also noted that the Political Security Department’s “enterprise is being ruined because informants will never look to disclose their identity. Political trials will hardly ever take place because the material we give is called into question by the judiciary”.<sup>568</sup>

As we can see, the engagement of reliable informants was particularly important; therefore, in February 1923, the Director of the Political Security Department, E. Āboltiņš, when writing to his subordinated officers, stressed that “every regional unit should seek to engage a few valuable regular informants and look at it in terms of practicality”. These particularly were included in the list of informants.<sup>569</sup>

Writings of similar content were sent to various subordinate units on several occasions. For example, in a letter of 25 February 1923 to the head of Vecgulbene regional unit, the Director of the Political Security Department indicated that in Kačanova Parish (also Kacēnu Parish, now part of Pskov District, Russia), “the activities of various gangs threatening the internal peace of the country has not ceased until now”, which the head sees as “a flaw in running operations and a major defect that was the fault of the head of the regional unit, who has not made every effort to successfully organise the operational work”. To solve this, the head instructed the establishment of

<sup>566</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/22.

<sup>567</sup> *Instrukcija Politiskās apsardzes aģentūrai* (ENG: Instruction for the Political Security Department’s Agency). Rīga: Politiskās apsardzes izdevums, 1924, p. 18.

<sup>568</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/22, file 896, p. 175.

<sup>569</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/9, file 7, p. 61.

a network of informants in the parish to “pay special attention to the counterintelligence activities, by trying to get informants in each economic organisation”<sup>570</sup>.

P. Martinsons pointed out to other regional units as well that “well-defined informants network is the safest guarantee of good success, and that every possible error is prevented in our difficult work. Therefore, informant shall be recruited in every economic sector, with particular attention paid to the more revolutionary layers of society, which are more quickly tempted by various forms of anti-national agitation and promises. The character of relationship with informants should not be occasional [...]. To avoid possible surprises, heads of regional units need to know what the current trends and intentions are of each organisation. And this cannot be achieved by some random informants who often tend to compile erroneous and incorrect reports, and who cannot be verified due to the lack of other informants”<sup>571</sup>.

It can be assumed that in the coming years such regular informants were engaged. This is confirmed by looking into the list of informants and their reports,<sup>572</sup> which, in particular after the coup, were entered in special logbooks with even greater care. The existence of informants was also not a secret in the public space – Volume 17 of the 1938 Latvian Encyclopaedia justifies their necessity as follows: “As anti-governmental plans are being drawn up in strictly closed circles which Political Police Department’s officers cannot access, the Political Police Department are forced to collect information from people not in their Service, so-called agents.”<sup>573</sup> One of the most striking examples of the activities of an informant is the work of Pēteris Kurlis, a high-ranking official in the Communist Party, where, as a result of his work, the Service arrested many communists (including high-level officials) in April 1940.<sup>574</sup>

According to the Latvian National Historical Archive (LVVA) documents, secret agents involved in the work of the Service had various social backgrounds, and their network covered the entire of Latvia. However, it should be borne in mind that the evidence provided by informants was not always true. This was due, firstly, to the expertise and level of education of informants, and, secondly – there were cases where they deliberately provided false information aiming to harm a disliked person in their own interests. Therefore, when analysing their activities, the motivation of these individuals had to be constantly kept in mind; it is not always obvious, but it becomes apparent in the entire context. There are examples in the archive documents of civilians, most likely not being informants, voluntarily reporting suspicious citizens to the Service. For instance, when reporting on people supporting the ideas of the organisation “Pērkoņkrusts”, an anonymous reporter wrote in the second half

<sup>570</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 146/2, p. 40.

<sup>571</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/9, file 7, p. 41.

<sup>572</sup> For example, information gathered by the Political Department on politically unreliable persons and individuals working for the communist organisation. LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/22, file 896.

<sup>573</sup> *Latviešu konversācijas vārdnīca* (ENG: Latvian Conversion Dictionary). Compiled by Svābe, A., Būmanis, A., Dišlers, K. Volume XVII. Riga: A. Gulbja apgādībā, 1938, column 33002.

<sup>574</sup> Jēkabsons, Ē. *Iekšlietu ministrija* (ENG: Ministry of the Interior). Book: *15. maija Latvija* (ENG: Latvia of 15 May). Riga: Latvijas Mediji, 2017, p. 241.

of the 1930s: “As a true citizen of Latvia, I find it necessary to report some more undesirable citizens living in Latvia and eating Latvian bread to you, therefore, I urge you to interrogate the witnesses I have listed; I wish not to disclose my identity, because I am a close friend of theirs.”<sup>575</sup> There are also cases, where such report/letter listing the suspicious persons living in the territory (linked to a prohibited or illegal organisation such as communists or members of “Pērkoņkrusts”) is addressed to the Service authorities, drafted and signed by a group of persons.<sup>576</sup> It is also possible that, as a result of the initiative of such citizens, the Service engaged new voluntary informants who, fuelled by patriotic feelings and personal political beliefs, considered it their obligation to report on local news and events. In the second half of the 1930s, a pupil of Aglona Gymnasium indicates in his report (the title he used for his letter): “Although I have not been formally accepted into your Service, I feel obliged to describe that which is against our country.”<sup>577</sup>

It would be worth studying these reports, letters and other type of overviews, particularly in terms of their content. Informants mainly described their observations and eaves-dropping on suspicious persons in detail, and there are cases (identified in documents) where the reports also contain certain fun elements, implying that the informants were willing to report sensational events. For example, a person in Ilūkste Region not only reported a secret meeting (in fact, birthday celebrations), but also found the dinner speech suspicious (“a new Latvian revolution!”).<sup>578</sup>

Considering the anti-democratic situation, increased attention was paid to public statements following the coup of 15 May 1934. Interesting things happened in the summer of the same year, when the informant noticed that civilians often expressed their emotions in public places, such as railway stations, and used this to produce a report. Based on this, some individuals were quite strictly punished. For example, a railway worker was fined (10 Lats or 1 week’s detention) because “on 16 or 17 May, while drunk, he had told the station supervisor he will travel to Riga where the Central Prison will be attacked and prisoners will be released.”<sup>579</sup> On another occasion, the words: “I believe that once the Civic House in Riga<sup>580</sup> will be taken back” by a railway worker resulted in a fine of 5 Lats or 3 days in detention.<sup>581</sup> A painter, drunk on a train, was punished with a fine of 50 Lats or 15 days in prison for saying that “Ulmanis has suckled piglets, calves and pigs.”<sup>582</sup> In the context of public control and monitoring, these examples revealed that public places, in particular railway stations, were still relevant to obtain intelligence on the public mood.

<sup>575</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/22, file 808, p. 130.

<sup>576</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 189/2, p. 234.

<sup>577</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/22, file 808, p. 163.

<sup>578</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/22, file 808, p. 12.

<sup>579</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 189/2, p. 324.

<sup>580</sup> Referring to the building of the Latvian Social Democrat Workers Party, which was seized after K. Ulmanis’ authoritarian coup, i.e. The Riga Civic Club at 29/30 Bruņinieku Street.

<sup>581</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 189/1, p. 167.

<sup>582</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 189/1, p. 333.

Similar examples of some sort of public criticism of the political changes that took place in the country have been repeatedly found in documents, but it should be noted that as early as autumn 1934, certain statements are becoming increasingly rare, and it was only formally being reported that particular people had disrespected the existing political system.

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God polatursmai parvaldi

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 jo esmu wimam tuos draugs, kas bati person  
 krustusu lerta Akniste drivo Peter Kikens  
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 bet ir loti urmanigs wims kadi reisi no  
 Rijas bje wedi person krustusu literaturo,  
 ka leccinekus nopratinat Jani Kruminu  
 darwajisu rusejas pagaste Lamberga maja  
 un Jaiwisi Lewinsons drivo Aknistes pagaste  
 sawa maja domaju kalcineckium nebus  
 imerle nokluset jo minetas personas  
 liti rinu nau ne uz wenu pusi  
 politisui nosnamotas

Pamats parvalde  
 Darsu 1935  
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158

A handwritten report by an informant to the Political Department on illegal activity of the organisation “Pērkonkrusts” in Aknīste Parish. 1935.

LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/22, file 808, p. 130.

## 4.4.

### Preventive measures

Public monitoring not only allowed the officers of the Service to collect intelligence and act swiftly against illegal activities, but also to prevent various forms of disorder, unauthorised mass events and other potentially dangerous events and harmful activities, through preventive steps.

The already-mentioned Latvian Encyclopaedia Volume 17 defines the term “preventive action” “the purpose of the actions by the Political Police is to prevent political crime”.<sup>583</sup> From the first day of the State Security Department, one of its tasks was to pre-emptively prevent various internal security threats. For example, on 15–23 September 1919, the officers of the State Security Department Liepāja regional unit implemented the following measures: all hotels in Liepāja were monitored five times (four immigrants from Arkhangelsk were found in Hotel Monopol, who had not been announced to the police or entered in the house register as required by law), all inns and “furnished rooms” (rental rooms) were controlled three times, public houses were checked each night and all public events were visited.<sup>584</sup> On 28 October 1920, the junior case officer of the Political Security Department in Ventspils, Jūlijs Krauze, learnt that it was planned to spread proclamation material of illegal (criminal) content on the streets of the city at around 19:00 that night. He “took the appropriate steps to combat the upcoming crime” and in cooperation with Ventspils police officers prepared to stop the spread of proclamations and assess the situation by sending case officers and police officers to various places of the city. As a result, around 200 copies of communistic proclamation leaflets were collected from the streets and yards of Ventspils, outskirts and nearby villages, which therefore did not reach their destination. The officers found that “the criminal activity was driven by the dark period of the year and the lack of street lighting”.<sup>585</sup>

Next, when observing the surrounding area, two women were spotted who had attracted the “attention of the case officers due to their behaviour”; they

<sup>583</sup> *Latviešu konversācijas vārdnīca* (ENG: Latvian Conversion Dictionary). Compiled by Švābe, A., Būmanis, A., Dišlers, K. Volume XVII. Rīga: A. Gulbja apgādībā, 1938, column 33002.

<sup>584</sup> LVA, fund 3725, description 12, file 144, p. 211.

<sup>585</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 8, p. 79, 79a, 172.

were detained and searched, which resulted in finding 53 copies of proclamation material and several numbers of the illegal newspaper “Cīņa” of the Latvian Communist Party on one of the woman. Other illegal, anti-governmental propaganda materials were found in both women’s homes during the search. One of the detainees, Elvīra Zvejniece, did not plead guilty and claimed she had been to a theatre play in the city and did not know anything about the proclamations that were found on the other woman. The other – Grieta Pētersone – initially admitted being part of a communist organisation, but later denied it, claiming that she had found the proclamation material on the street. During investigations, E. Zvejniece was released due to a lack of evidence.<sup>586</sup> While G. Pētersone was found guilty of illegal communist activity and on 17 January 1921, was expelled to the Soviet Russia.<sup>587</sup>

The expulsion of politically unreliable persons (including Latvian citizens) from the country – mainly, but not only communists – was among the top preventive tasks of the Service, especially in the early 1920s. At the beginning of 1923, the Ministry of the Interior issued an order to limit the expulsion of Latvian nationals from the country. In response to the changes, the Political Security Department’s Leadership asked the Ministry for further guidance regarding the limitation of the place of residence or expulsion of citizens, whose activities threatened the security of the State and society, or another region or town. The government explained that: “There are cases, when boards or councils of parishes provide information on one or another citizen living in the parish stating that his presence in the parish is not desirable for the sake of public and national security. Such feedback is also sometimes received from police or found in certificates produced by the Political Security Department.” According to the Political Security Department’s leadership, in such cases, these citizens should be banned from visiting certain places. However, the Ministry of the Interior rejected this suggestion, claiming that “expulsion from the place of residence cannot be overly decisive. In no way can expulsion to another region be carried out solely because of the hostility of the local population towards a person who is to be expelled. Anti-governmental activities, if carried out, can be observed more easily in his or her permanent place of residence”.<sup>588</sup>

Political Security Department often (especially after its establishment) received reports on a variety of criminal activities, which the officers tried to prevent, and passed on to local police units. Various solutions were sought to maintain order in certain areas, particularly during the war time situation. For example, in November 1920, in Jelgava, as a result of the increasing number of

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<sup>586</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 8, p. 79, 79a.

<sup>587</sup> LVA, fund 3273, description 1, file 8752, p. 1.

<sup>588</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 45, p. 40.

criminal offences, 15 rifles were issued to local, politically reliable people, and night patrols were introduced with the consent of local residents.<sup>589</sup>

The importance of preventive action is well illustrated by the following example. According to the information provided by the social democrats, in 1922, out of the 2455 arrests made, 409 people, or 16% of all those arrested, were brought to justice. This fact was interpreted by the social democrats in their own interests and used as an argument for criticism of the performance of the Service's officers, being an apparent demonstration of their ineffective operation.<sup>590</sup> At the same time, the context of preventive action by Service officers (which is difficult to report) was completely ignored, which led to the timely prevention of various breaches of internal security and law.

Public monitoring was also carried out in other ways. For example, the Service could set various restrictions or, on the contrary, issue permits and use different control mechanisms by referring to the information obtained, or addressing the Minister of the Interior to advance such restrictions further. The Service also issued opinions on whether to grant firearms licences or not.<sup>591</sup>

Public awareness-raising was another key preventive action taken by the Service. The aim was to strengthen the information space by reducing the spreading of rumours and other fake news. However, the Service's activities had to be explained in detail for information purposes. On 30 March 1921, the Political Security Department's leadership turned to the regional units with the following letter: "The strengthening of the State and the productive work of the population are greatly hampered by the spread of various false rumours and by the agitation of anti-governmental elements which encourage citizens to commit crimes. Such ill-intentioned agitation could be largely paralysed by briefing the population from the point of view of the State. Political Security Department's officers could also do a great deal here. It would be desirable if the officers of the Political Security Department showed more activity in briefing the population, because it is better to prevent crime from happening than to punish what has already happened."<sup>592</sup> The officers of the Service also continued to pay attention to various frivolous, reckless statements, and also fought against the spread of rumours threatening internal security. In 1921, the Foreign Intelligence Department of the Latvian Army pointed out that "in our times, in times of persistent agitating rumours and striving for various kinds of sensations, those who spread rumours do a big favour to enemies by disturbing the public peace. The strictest of measures must be taken against these elements [...]"<sup>593</sup>

<sup>589</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 8, p. 144.

<sup>590</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 604, p. op. 2.

<sup>591</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 10, p. 22, 26, 39.

<sup>592</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/9, file 7, p. 58.

<sup>593</sup> *Izlūkošana un spiegošana* (ENG: Surveillance and Espionage). Ārējās izlūkošanas nodaļa, 1921, p. 42.

In January 1934, the printed press, which sought to disseminate biased information, or information now referred to as “fake news” to cause anxiety and a sense of insecurity in society, was monitored. In particular, the right-wing extremist underground paper “Latviešu vara” (ENG: “Latvian power”) had published lies, where the article in the paper of 17 November 1933 with an article “A monument of 15 years of public administration work” (orig.: “15 gadus valsts darba piemineklis”), contains the following text: “During the 15 years of existence, Latvia and the Latvian people have been robbed, defrauded, ripped off of 16’000’000’000 (16 billion Lats).” The following is a citation from the newspaper: “What rests here, are the millions robbed, defrauded, stolen and lost to the well-being of the people during fifteen years... The soul of the Latvian people is pushed under Panama<sup>594</sup> and the curse of corruption! [...] most absurd is the system, that allows all kinds of absurdity to happen in our country. Big comen, big wrongdoers get away with petty punishments...” The report prepared by the Political Department explains these phrases: “As can be seen from the content of the articles, the losses caused to the Latvian people amount to 16 billion Lats due to the government’s failure. As the newspaper does not mention any data from which such a huge sum of losses is drawn, the amount of these losses is considered to be an empty statement – a fantasy of the article’s author.” The report further explains that “claims of such nature could raise public concern”.<sup>595</sup>

Where necessary, preventive action also concerned written and printed text. The officers of the Service, with the written permission of the prosecutor, had the right to review or confiscate post and telegraph correspondence, shipments, and to control telephone conversations.<sup>596</sup> Monitoring of correspondence was carried out knowing that “sensitive information can be sent in ordinary private letters dealing with family issues, trade or other business”.<sup>597</sup>

Initially, during the War of Independence, control and censorship of correspondence was the task of war censors under military authorities. For example, in 1920, there were three war censors in Liepāja, who were assigned to the Investigatory Division of the HQ of the Commander-in-Chief of the Latvian Army in December of the same year.<sup>598</sup> As early as in 1920, control of correspondence was gradually taken over by the Political Security Department. In November 1920, there was already a senior postal censor and one junior postal censor job in Riga, as well as a junior postal censor in Liepāja.<sup>599</sup> Other authorities also handed over detected

<sup>594</sup> Here, an epithet is intended to refer to large-scale fraud by bribing officials; this epithet was common in colloquial language referring to the corruption scandal at the time when the Panama Canal was built in 1889.

<sup>595</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 189/1, p. 36.

<sup>596</sup> *Latviešu konversācijas vārdnīca* (ENG: Latvian Conversion Dictionary). Compiled by Švābe, A., Būmanis, A., Dišlers, K. Volume XVII. Rīga: A. Gulbja apgādībā, 1938, column 33003.

<sup>597</sup> *Instrukcija Politiskās apsardzes aģentūrai* (ENG: Instruction for the Political Security Department’s Agency). Rīga: Politiskās apsardzes izdevums, 1924, p. 91.

<sup>598</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/8, file 553, p. 7.

<sup>599</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 95, p. 50, p. op.; LVVA (Latvian National Historical Archive), fund 3235, description 1/2, file 484, p. 1.

illegal mail to the Political Security Department. As early as in December 1920, the Political Security Department's leadership reported to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that "the censorship of Latvian Post detains a vast majority of foreign-addressed shipments every day. All of these shipments are paid at a given tariff, but they contain Russian agitation literature, which is why they are detained and handed over to the Political Security Department. There are several piles of such agitation material at the Political Security Department. [...] It remains to be seen how this literature enters Latvia. According to all the information, it is printed in, and sent from Russia, which obviously wants to use Latvia as a transit route, and to send this literature further, by putting it in closed letters".<sup>600</sup>

Information on the postal censor job is obtained from the report of 26 February 1921 of the junior postal censor in Liepāja, Otilija Baštika, to the Political Security Department. O. Baštika had previously worked at Liepāja Post as the junior censor, from where on 4 October 1920 she was appointed to work for the Political Security Department.<sup>601</sup> In her report, she writes that large shipments ("many printed matters and letters, all of which have to be reviewed, i.e., be censored") arrive at Liepāja Post twice a week (on Thursdays and Sundays), sent in by ship coming from Germany, while on other days foreign shipments arrive via Riga. She writes: "I am working not less than the known hours of the office every day, often in the afternoon, as post often arrives with a huge delay. Because of the direct postal traffic with Germany, I can report the following: when postal mail is reviewed, I always work until late afternoon, including every Sunday. I have always done my job with great care, I'm never absent, but due to the increasing amount of work I am no longer able to do everything alone accurately; and, as I work without a single day off, I feel my health is getting worse."<sup>602</sup>

In the context of correspondence, some funny cases arose in the early period after the Service was established – on 5 November 1920, the head of the Political Security Department's Site at the refugee camp in Rēzekne, Otto Ivansons, wrote to the Director of the Political Security Department about an absurd situation. He reported that the Rēzekne Post and Telegraph Office would not accept his telegrams, indicating that they should be taken to the Political Security Department and be subject to censorship because they did not bear the respective stamps. He writes: "Sent from political police to political police – and censored!"<sup>603</sup>

After the coup of 15 May 1934, the Service had much wider possibilities for checking suspicious correspondence. Via the Ministry of Transport, the closure of various types of suspicious and seemingly anti-governmental organisations (in the

<sup>600</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 10, p. 47.

<sup>601</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 484, p. 1.

<sup>602</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 95, p. 184.

<sup>603</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 8, p. 90.

eyes of the authoritarian regime), primarily several social democrat organisations, opened up the possibility at the end of May to retrieve correspondence that was not collected by these organisations from the Department of Post and Telegraph, and this was labelled as being done “for the investigation of various cases”.<sup>604</sup> The Department of Post and Telegraph drew up a list of correspondence it held, but in practice, by the end of 1934, the Political Department had not fully taken over this correspondence.<sup>605</sup> This was obviously hindered by the abnormal workload and lack of officers in exercising the requirements of the authoritarian regime.

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<sup>604</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 189/2, p. 90.

<sup>605</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 97, p. 99.

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One of the primary tasks of the Service during the entire interwar period was public monitoring. It changed depending on the country's political situation, especially after the destruction of the democratic system, when in the context of authoritarianism, it became necessary to pay attention to nearly every aspect of society. The intelligence gathered served both for assessing the general public mood and identifying suspicious persons and activities; and it could be the basis for initiating investigations and carrying out investigatory measures.

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## CHAPTER 5

# Areas of investigatory operations

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The Service officers could deem nearly any person as suspicious, if statements of such person were classified as anti-governmental, anti-democratic, or if a person expressed radical views against other people or acted aggressively, whereby such acts could pose a threat to the internal security of the country. One of the most important tasks of the Service was therefore determining the areas of investigatory operations and the monitoring of various risk groups – legal and illegal organisations, ethnic minorities and other important groups. The instruction document of 1924 already indicates “the main focus is to deal with secret organisations operating in the country”.<sup>606</sup>

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<sup>606</sup> *Instrukcija Politiskās apsardzes aģentūrai* (ENG: Instruction for the Political Security Department's Agency). Rīga: Politiskās apsardzes izdevums, 1924, p. 6.

This chapter does not provide an analysis of the directions of investigatory operations; instead, it outlines and gives examples of key trends related to this broad scope, as well as the potentially largest threats to national internal security. The following sub-chapters do not provide in-depth analysis and study of all these risk groups, but briefly explains the risk factors of these groups in terms of national internal security.

However, the most important directions of investigatory operations (risk groups, whose members are more likely to become hostile to the existing regime) were identified at the very beginning of Service's functioning. The report of 1921 to the Director of the Political Security Department, which had to be sent to the Department on a regular basis, shows that the following groups had to be reported:

- 1) secret communist organisations,
- 2) trade union movements,
- 3) activities of social democrats,
- 4) activities by non-residents,
- 5) foreigners,
- 6) refugees,
- 7) other groups (different intelligence).<sup>607</sup>

As the political and general situation in the country changed, the list was extended, for example, to include right-wing extremists.

## 5.1.

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### Communist underground

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The greatest threat to the Republic of Latvia during the entire interwar period was the communists (in sources referred also as underground, Bolshevik, Komsomol members, etc.) – people who were hostile to the statehood of the Republic of Latvia and their organisations, where they shared the same beliefs or were at least supportive of the dogmas of Communist ideology.

The outcome of the Independence War – victory of the Latvian Army by evicting the totalitarian regime of the Soviet Latvia, led by Pēteris Stučka – was only the end of the military part of the battle. Many activists and people, who, in terms of Latvian legislation, committed offences during the five months when the Soviet Latvian government was active, were still present in the territory of Latvia. Similarly, the activists who had quit together with the Soviet Army were sent across the front (later – across the border) on purpose or returned to Latvia with the refugee flow. If such persons could be identified, they were held liable for the crimes committed. It was the Service that played a very important role in this – by drawing up lists of communists, identifying and monitoring suspects, investigating their crimes and filing charges for further prosecution. For example, on 30 October 1920, a Political Security Department's investigation officer reported to his head upon arrival that during his duty travel in Vidzeme he had observed and obtained intelligence from competent persons that "Latvia is systematically flooded with former members of the Communist Executive Committee and the Soviet members and other members of the Communist party".<sup>608</sup> The degree of severity of the situation was confirmed by the instructions given by the Political Security Department to the government to take relevant preventive measures, because a situation where the return of Soviet-system workers to Latvia is left without punishment, "gives raise to general outrage and misunderstanding among people" and "makes people annoyed with the government".<sup>609</sup> It should be stressed that the influx of such anti-governmental persons into Latvia was accompanied by the re-evacuation of numerous refugees (around 250,000), as determined by the peace agreement between Latvia and the

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<sup>608</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 8, p. 11.

<sup>609</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 8, p. 11.

Soviet Russia. The control of refugees took place in extremely difficult circumstances, which on the one hand were affected by the lack of adequate infrastructure, and on the other hand, by the dishonest behaviour of non-compliant officials.<sup>610</sup>

Underground communists were particularly active in Latvia in the early 1920s and during the global economic crisis in the late 1920s and early 1930s.<sup>611</sup> The Service focused on individuals who were suspected of illegal communist practices, such as the promotion and spread of this ideology, the organisation of various illegal meetings, passive or active engagement in the Communist Party and other aspects detrimental to the internal security of Latvia.<sup>612</sup> Examples are found in sources of such things taking place on dates important for communists; for instance, red flags were raised in the city of Jelgava on 6 and 8 November 1920, or slogans supporting communism were painted by stencilling on the walls of some buildings.<sup>613</sup>

In many cases, the Service officers not only had to invest time in their routine and investigative work, but also demonstrate an understanding of the current times and situation (including historical). The complexity of the operational and investigative work and the complex fate of women during the war is shown in the following example: On 19 February 1921, 21-year-old Matilda Dakša was taken to Riga Central Prison as a person who “came over from the Soviet Russia” and was suspected of illegal communist activity. In an emotional letter of 27 February 1921, the prisoner M. Dakša asked the head of the Political Security Department to release her and to allow her to live in Latvia in the future. In her letter, she wrote that during the Bolshevik reign in Latvia she had worked as a clerk at the Industrial Commission. Shortly before the Bolsheviks were evicted, she joined the Communist Party to keep the job needed to provide a living. When Riga was occupied by the Germans on 22 May 1919, M. Dakša found herself in the city – with no documents and no valuable belongings on her. She describes the further events: “Knowing that I was in the party, I was afraid to stay in the city. My permanent place of residence was with my parents on the countryside 8 versts<sup>614</sup> from town. When I entered Russia, I worked from home on a regular basis. I have never worked for any institution or joined a party. I do not like the communists or their political system, I generally have opposite views.” While living in the Soviet Russia, M. Dakša started pedagogical studies in Moscow, and, learning that refugees had started to return to Latvia, the woman submitted a request to release her from her studies. After receiving a negative reply, M. Dakša

<sup>610</sup> See more: Brusbārdis, R. *Problēmas Latvijas valdības organizētajā bēgļu reevakuācijā no Padomju Krievijas* (ENG: Problems in the Evacuation of Refugees from Soviet Russia Organised by the Latvian Government). *Latvijas Vēsture*. 2011, No. 1, pp. 35–46.

<sup>611</sup> See more: Andersons, E. *Latvijas bruņotie spēki un to priekšvēsture* (ENG: Latvian Armed Forces and their History). Toronto: Daugavas Vanagu apgāds, 1983, p. 480.

<sup>612</sup> See more: Stranga, A. *Latvijas – Padomju Krievijas miera līgums 1920. gada 11. augustā. Latvijas – Padomju Krievijas attiecības 1919–1925. gadā* (ENG: Latvia-Soviet Russia Peace Treaty of 11 August 1920. Relations of Latvia and Soviet Russia in 1919–1925). Rīga: Fonds Latvijas Vēsture, 2000, 258 pages; Niedre, O., Daugmalis, V. *Slepenais karš pret Latviju. Komunistiskās partijas darbība 1920.–1940. gadā* (ENG: Secret War against Latvia. Activities by the Communist Party in 1920–1940). Rīga, 2016, 97 pages.

<sup>613</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 8, p. 94.

<sup>614</sup> 1 verst equals 1066.8 m.

left the studies as soon as possible and returned to Latvia illegally in January 1921. Then the woman was detained and put in prison. At the end of the emotional letter, the woman writes: "I'm not going to Russia because I ran away from there. I am not allowed to live in Latvia. Where should I go? To prison? I don't feel like I have sinned so much to lose my homeland; my own Fatherland." M. Dakša was released on 28 February 1921 and the investigation was terminated.<sup>615</sup>

However, there were also cases with provocateurs, who were dangerous to the internal security of the country, who were often very interesting and talented people. For example, at the beginning of the 1920s, a chanson singer who had arrived from Petrograd, Nadezhda Otto, succeeded in "fooling the then-head of Political Security Department, Mr Alps, who released her and took her "under his personal protection", despite the Service's initially successful counteraction. The Political Security Department's report states that the task of Nadezhda Otto "was undoubtedly to get closer to higher-ranking men to extract necessary information from them".<sup>616</sup>

In Latvia, similar to elsewhere in the Baltic States and the region as a whole, during the interwar period the communist movement was organised, led and financed by the Soviet Union.<sup>617</sup> Many people were deliberately sent from the Soviet Russia, the later Soviet Union, and were among the communists of Latvia who were instructed to agitate and otherwise promote the spread of communist ideas in Latvia. Money (often counterfeit) and propaganda materials were also imported in large quantities.<sup>618</sup> The detection of such movements posing huge threats to the internal security of a country was the primary course of action by the national security authorities during the interwar period, which they succeeded in from time to time.

Many communists living in Latvia held false identity documents, which made it particularly difficult to identify them. For example, in 1929 the Political Department found that in Bauska district, an unidentified woman who was detained on 16 November was organising and managing the illegal communist movement. The detained woman presented a false Latvian passport issued in the name of Anna Timofejeva to the Service officers. Later, the woman admitted that her real name was Marta Vārpa, but the passport of A. Timofejeva she had obtained in Moscow, had a photo that was re-glued, and part of the stamp on the photograph was counterfeited.<sup>619</sup>

<sup>615</sup> See: Bērziņa, A. *Sieviete-ieslodzītā Latvijas Republikas cietumos, 1919.–1921. gadā* (ENG: The Imprisoned Woman in Prisons of the Republic of Latvia, 1919–1921). Master's Thesis. Scient. Supervisor E. Jēkabsons. Rīga: Latvijas Universitāte, 2015, p. 82.

<sup>616</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 146/2, p. 8.

<sup>617</sup> Žvinklis, A. Ieskats Latvijas Republikas politiskās policijas darbībā (ENG: Insight into the Activities of the Political Police of the Republic of Latvia). *Latvijas Vēstures Institūta Žurnāls*. 1994, No. 1, p. 114; See more: Niedre, O., Daugmalis, V. *Slepenais karš pret Latviju. Komunistiskās partijas darbība 1920.–1940. gadā* (ENG: Secret War against Latvia. Activities by the Communist Party in 1920–1940). Rīga, 2016. 97 pages.

<sup>618</sup> *Latvija desmit gados. Latvijas valsts nodibināšanas un viņas pirmo 10 gadu darbības vēsture* (ENG: Latvia in Ten Years. History of the Establishment of the State of Latvia and its First 10 Years). Rīga, 1928, p. 151.

<sup>619</sup> *Vēsturiskais apskats par Iekšlietu ministrijas Politiskās pārvaldes Jelgavas rajona izveidošanos un darbību* (ENG: Historical Overview of the Establishment and Operation of the Political Department of Jelgava Regional Unit of the Ministry of the Interior). 1938. Latvijas Nacionālā arhīva bibliotēka, p. 27.

Other covert activities hampered the detection of communists, such as not declaring the place of residence, secret apartments, etc. For example, in 1931, the Service concluded that the legal newspaper of Jēkabpils, “Laika Vārds” (ENG: “Word of Time”), had published glorious articles of the Soviet Union, and even communist proclamations were found. The Service found that several members of the communist organisation worked for the newspaper. But to avoid being discovered, the official editor-in-chief of the newspaper was “an old man, Azains, who was a total illiterate, could only sign his name, and knew nothing of the existence and publishing of the said newspaper”.<sup>620</sup>

Up until 15 May 1934, Latvia was a democratic parliamentary republic and the legal functioning of communist organisations (primarily the Latvian Communist Party) was prohibited by law. However, it did not necessarily mean that the communists did not exercise all the rights a democratic state granted regarding the establishment and assembly of meetings, hiding their activities under the labels of various other organisations. In the context of the Saeima elections, in the summer of 1925 the Service carried out extensive preventive work – it prevented communists from taking part in the elections, and the searches and arrests (80 people) resulted in stopping communist organisations which operated under the cover of legal organisations.<sup>621</sup>

These suspicious persons were noticed in various ways. For example, on 17 December 1925, a meeting and demonstration of unemployed people took place in Daugavpils led by an expert from the Daugavpils Customs Department, a social democrat, Daugavpils city deputy and a “person uniting the working class against the government”, Vilis (Vilhelms) Ganšovs. As a result, the Political Department started the screening of Ganšovs’, revealing and reporting that “the distributors of communist proclamations are known and are now subject to observations”.<sup>622</sup>

The Service paid particular attention to the events where it was reported that supporters of communism attended. These included not only public rallies and demonstrations, but also private events. For example, in 1932 a left-wing craftsman was buried in Ventspils, and the funeral was also monitored by the Service. They found that a politician, Fricis Bergs had participated in the funeral, who had said in his speech that “the person to be buried is a victim of the bourgeois political system and the current ruling class murders and will continue to murder the workers”; he was promoting communism. F. Bergs’ detention was followed by open outcries of other communists: “We swear to punish the murderers and executioners of workers! Down with bourgeois Latvia! Long live the workers-farmers’ government!” and they attacked the police.<sup>623</sup>

<sup>620</sup> *Vēsturiskais apskats par Iekšlietu ministrijas Politiskās pārvaldes Jelgavas rajona izveidošanos un darbību* (ENG: Historical Overview of the Establishment and Operation of the Political Department of Jelgava Regional Unit of the Ministry of the Interior). 1938. Latvijas Nacionālā arhīva bibliotēka, p. 39, 40.

<sup>621</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/22, file 940, p. 223.

<sup>622</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 939, p. 12.

<sup>623</sup> *Vēsturiskais apskats par Iekšlietu ministrijas Politiskās pārvaldes Jelgavas rajona izveidošanos un darbību* (ENG: Historical Overview of the Establishment and Operation of the Political Department of Jelgava Regional Unit of the Ministry of the Interior). 1938. Latvijas Nacionālā arhīva bibliotēka, p. 42.

By the end of 1928, thanks to the Service, the judicial authorities had closed at least six organisations in which illegal communist activity was found: the sports society “Enerģija” (ENG: “Energy”); the Jewish associations “*Arbeiter Heim*” and “*Kultur Liga*”, “Latvijas darba jaunatnes kultūras biedrība” (ENG: “Latvian Proletariat Youth Culture Club”), “Kurzemes arodniecisko biedrību centrālbirojs” (ENG: “Central Bureau of Kuzeme Trade Unions”) and “Darba pionieru biedrība” (ENG: “Union of Proletariat Pioneers”).<sup>624</sup> In 1928, an official government publication looking back at the performance of the Service, concluded that “the political police has eliminated many communist organisations and their agents in Latvia, who were working both in illegal cells as well as legal societies and organisations. There are many excellent members of the Communist Party, even members of the Central Committee of their Party among the prisoners and emissaries arrested by the political police”.<sup>625</sup>

It should be noted that having reviewed the annual reports of the Service’s investigation cases, it is evident that regular arrests and monitoring of people who were engaged in anti-governmental campaigning continued during the interwar period.<sup>626</sup> In a report to the Minister of the Interior in June 1930, the head of the Political Department wrote “that the activities of communists are reflected through:

- 1) activities of illegal organisations;
- 2) activity in various legal societies, mainly trade unions and cultural organisations;
- 3) meetings and events;
- 4) published agitation materials, both legal and illegal. In addition, the communists continue to use the opportunities provided by the law on associations to gather and hold meetings, and established associations serve as cover for communist propaganda.”<sup>627</sup>

However, communist activity was based on deliberate, outward-targeted propaganda, which was carried out in different ways. For example, by spreading proclamations and various slogans or demonstrating items representing Communist ideology in public places, such as the hanging of red flags. For example,

<sup>624</sup> *Latvija desmit gados. Latvijas valsts nodibināšanas un viņas pirmo 10 gadu darbības vēsture* (ENG: Latvia in Ten Years. History of the Establishment of the State of Latvia and its First 10 Years). Rīga, 1928, p. 153.; Mendel, B. *Four Hundred Years of the Jews in Latvia*. A Historical Survey. Available at: <https://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/latvia1/lat021.html> [Reviewed on 30/04/2019].

<sup>625</sup> *Latvija desmit gados. Latvijas valsts nodibināšanas un viņas pirmo 10 gadu darbības vēsture* (ENG: Latvia in Ten Years. History of the Establishment of the State of Latvia and its First 10 Years). Rīga, 1928, p. 151; Trejs, Ē. *Policijas darbība pirmajos Latvijas valsts pastāvēšanas gados* (ENG: Police Activity during the First Fears of the Independent Latvia). Book: *Valsts iekšējās drošības 100 gadu evolūcija. Attīstība. Dinamika. Problemātika. Zinātniski – praktiskais materiālu krājums* (ENG: Evolution of 100 Years of Internal Security. Development. Dynamics. The Problems. Scientific – Practical Collection of Materials). Valsts Policijas koledžas V Starptautiskā zinātniskā konference (ENG: V International Scientific Conference of the State Police College). Rīga: Valsts Policijas koledža, 2018, pp. 186–196.

<sup>626</sup> For example, on the activities of communist organisations in Bauska Region, see: Ruhočka, A. *Komunistu pagrīdes darbība Bauskas apriņķī 20. gadsimta 20. un 30. gados: ieskats Bauskas muzeja krājuma materiālos un presē* (ENG: Communist Underground Activity in Bauska Region in the 1920s and 1930s: Insight into the Collection Material of the Bauska Museum and Press). Book: *Jauno vēsturnieku zinātniskie lasījumi I* (ENG: Scientific Presentations of Young Historians I). Rokpelnis, A. (compiled by). 2016, pp. 74–81.

<sup>627</sup> LWA, fund 3235, description 1/22, file 940, p. 56, 57.

in 1930 in Kurzeme, “communists with their slogans damage the walls of homes and use a lot of cloth on red flags. An inscription on a flag by the communists of Kuldīga says: “Down with the murderers of Indian workers!” – this is how far the Latvian communists have already gone”<sup>628</sup>.



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Printing house set up by underground communists in Riga, Ziepniekkalns, 2 Numurmuiža Street, which was discovered by the Political Department in early 1937.

*LVA, fund 1986, description 1, file 9332.*

<sup>628</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/8, file 553, p. 51.

The Service had relatively detailed information on the activities and manifestations of a number of communist organisations. This was thanks to the successful and targeted operation of the Service, gathering important intelligence and revealing the underground network, which allowed the Service to draw very detailed schemes on the operation of communist organisations. The main threats to the internal security of Latvia were posed by the Latvian Communist Party, the Latvian Communist Youth Union, the communist trade unions, the Latvian Red Aid (MOPR's), the communist sports organisations, the communist movement in the countryside, the communist press, the influence of communists in the army and the activities of the spies.<sup>629</sup>

In 1932, the Service stressed in its report to the Minister of the Interior that more effective activity against communists was not possible to implement “considering the existing rules of law, relatively soft sentences of justice”, and the “special and sophisticated secrecy of communists”, “that makes it impossible to localise this movement endangering the existence of the state”.<sup>630</sup> In particular, the Service highlighted the existing penalties in the event of “getting caught”: the small security or police probation meant that suspected underground members were able to avoid punishment.<sup>631</sup>

At the beginning of the 1930s, there were anti-governmental manifestations of Comintern Lat-section members. Some of them were detained with forged documents (passports of the Republic of Latvia), as well as various communist literature. Between 1929 and 1931, 20 members were convicted thanks to the Service.<sup>632</sup>

Even though a number of other political organisations and groups were brought to the attention of the Service after the coup of the authoritarian regime of K. Ulmanis, whose activities “are definitely directed against the security and independence of the state of Latvia”,<sup>633</sup> in the second half of the 1930s, monthly reports of the Political Department to the government almost always started with a description of the communist movement in Latvia, as well as a description of the outcome. For example, it was found that in Riga, in comparison with the late 1920s and early 1930s, the number of members of the Latvian Youth Communist Union Riga organisation had even decreased by the late 1930s.<sup>634</sup> However, the behaviour of suspicious persons was still monitored and the number of communists in illegal unions or units was estimated.

An example of a successful fight against underground communists, is the detection of a secret printing house at the end of January 1937 in Riga, Pārdaugava, at 2 Numurmuiža (now called Bišumuiža) Street, which actively printed illegal

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<sup>629</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/22, file 940, pp. 61–70.

<sup>630</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/22, file 940, p. 4.

<sup>631</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/22, file 940, p. 4.

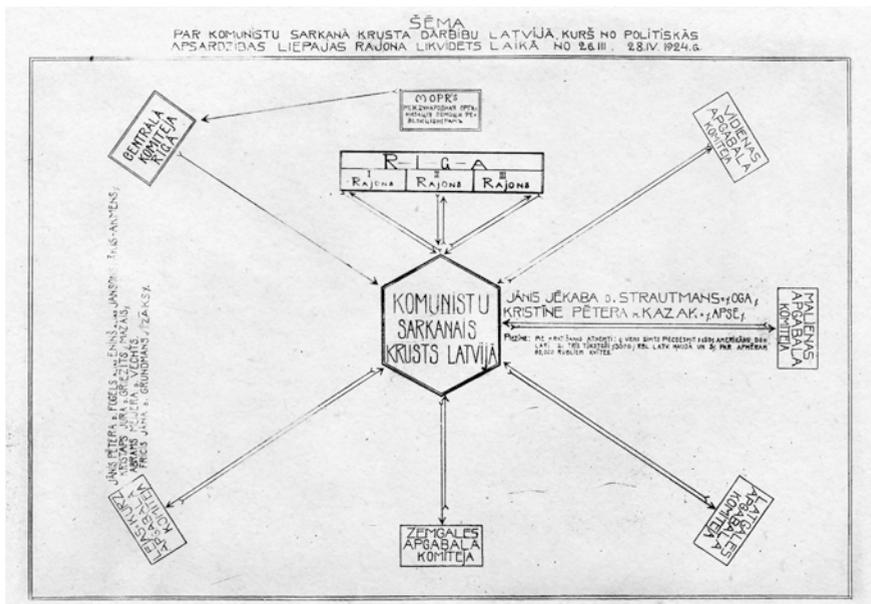
<sup>632</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/22, file 940, p. 28, 29.

<sup>633</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/22, file 940, p. 28, 29.

<sup>634</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 879, p. 35.

literature from 1934. The printing house was located under a greenhouse and was entered through a cast iron furnace. 25 underground communists (members of the illegal communist organisation “Sarkanā palīdzība” (ENG: “Red Aid”) and members of other illegal organisations) were arrested during the operation.<sup>635</sup>

Similarly, after the signing of the Mutual Assistance Pact of 1939 with the USSR, the so-called Treaty on Military Bases, a previously unmonitored group came to the attention of the Service – Soviet land forces.



A schematic of the activities of the “Communist Red Cross” in Latvia, prepared by the Security Service. 1924.

LVA, fund 3235, description 1/6, file 1254, p. 1.

<sup>635</sup> Slepna spiestuve siltumnicā (ENG: Secret Printing in a Green House). *Brīvā Zeme*. 23 February 1937, No. 43, p. 7; “Sarkanā palīdzība” – siltumnicas pagrabā (ENG: “Red Aid” in the Greenhouse Cellar). *Jaunākās Ziņas*. 23 February 1937, No. 43, p. 6; Zem siltumnicas atrasta slepena spiestuve (ENG: A Secret Printing House Found under the Greenhouse). *Rīts*, 23 February 1937, No. 54, p. 5; Politiskā policija (ENG: Political Police). *Policija*. 1 November 1938, No. 11, p. 523–535; Genkina, D., Ozola, B. Revolūcijas muzeja zālē (ENG: In the Hall of the Revolution). *Ciņa*. 20 March 1964, No. 68, p. 2; Krūze, A. Tipogrāfija Numurmuīžas ielā 2. Fragments no Sarkanās palīdzības vēstures (ENG: Printing House at 2 Numurmuīža Street. A Fragment of Red Aid History). *Padomju Jaunatne*. 16 June 1971, No. 116, p. 2.

## 5.2.

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### Diplomatic representation of Soviet Russia (later the USSR)

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Special attention was paid to the diplomatic representation of the Soviet Russia, the later Soviet Union, in Latvia. As early as on 30 October 1920, in a fully secret report, the Director of the Political Security Department wrote: “To set the Political Security Department’s agents to the required heights, and adapt to the current political situation in the country, they must pay particular attention to the Russian embassy, which seeks to establish contacts with local secret communist party organisations and their staff.”<sup>636</sup>

Information about the Soviet Russian diplomatic representation regularly appeared in reports prepared by case officers, the informants and the leadership. For example, as early as 1920, the officers reported on the efforts of the “Bolshevik mission” to buy a building and a car, as well as on the activities of the mission’s staff and representatives of the Russian Peace Delegation, and other related issues.<sup>637</sup> Soon after concluding the agreement, the Soviet Russian diplomatic representation in Latvia presented demands similar to an ultimatum – to counteract the White Russian emigrants in Latvia, to introduce censorship, which would prohibit the press from criticising the Soviet Russia and determining Latvia’s foreign policy (especially in the context of the region, Latvia’s relations with Poland).<sup>638</sup>

The activities of the employees of the Soviet diplomatic representation were also monitored outside Riga. For example, the activities of Liepāja regional unit of the Political Security Department in 1921 and the supervision of Soviet diplomats are reported as follows: “It has been discovered that the illegal literature and money to the communists of Lejaskurzeme region are delivered by the Soviet Russian consulate in Liepāja. The consular staff visit emigrants’ ships and agitate against the independence of Latvia. [...] In the form of poverty benefits, the Russian

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<sup>636</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 11, p. 199.

<sup>637</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 146/2, p. 841.

<sup>638</sup> See more: Gusachenko, A. The Activities of “Russian Monarchists” in the Documentation of the Latvian Political Police Department (1920–1940): Specific Characteristics of the Source. *Modern History of Russia*. 1/2020. P. 959.

consulate pays large sums of money to Liepāja's communists."<sup>639</sup> While in 1922, it was stated that "via sailors, the Soviet Russian consulate keeps illegal contact with London and organises spying in Liepāja garrison".<sup>640</sup> It was also stated that "the case officer Saulītis has managed to get into the spy chain and observe it", which "brought the spying swindle by the Soviet Russian consulate and its involvement in communism propaganda closer to an end" and several consulate employees were arrested in 1923.<sup>641</sup>

At the end of 1922, the Political Security Department reported to the Finnish Political Police that "in Riga, within the local Sov[iet] Russian Embassy there is a communist cell, made up of the embassy's employees, the so-called "Moscowites' cell". The letter also indicated that two Latvian citizens – chancellery workers at the Soviet representative office, who lived in the house and whose task was to liaise with the Central Office of the Latvian Communist Party – have worked in this "Moscowites' cell". It was also reported that "close liaison" with the Central Bureau of the Latvian Communist Party "and liaison officers" were discovered in August 1922, when the Central Bureau of the Latvian Communist Party was wound up and correspondence was found at the office.<sup>642</sup>

More detailed information on monitoring the activities of the Soviet Russian representation is contained in the secret report of the Political Security Department of 12 January 1923 to the Minister of the Interior, Alberts Kviesis. The Minister was informed that, based on witness' testimonies and other investigative files, a member of the Soviet diplomatic representation was monitored, namely, J. Soirio<sup>643</sup>, who "is engaged in spying and establishing a spying organisation network in Latvia in order to harm Latvia as an autonomous state". The investigation revealed that "Soirio meets all kinds of suspicious persons in different locations. Such meetings with agents were held both in elegant restaurants and various worker pubs. After collecting sufficiently offensive material on Soirio being a spy network organiser and leader, it was decided to arrest him at the first opportunity. On 9 January of this year, it became known that Soirio had arrived at restoration<sup>644</sup> "Marienbāde" on Marijas Street at 7 o'clock in the evening to meet with one of his agents. Political Security Department's officers arrested Soirio in a separate office [...]. Due to the arrest of Soirio, more searches and arrests were carried out, and the questioning of the suspect Anna Vilciņa resulted in finding

<sup>639</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/8, file 553, p. 11, 12.

<sup>640</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/8, file 553, p. 15.

<sup>641</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/8, file 553, p. 20.

<sup>642</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 146/2, p. 4.

<sup>643</sup> There are no extensive studies on the activities of J. Soirio in Latvian historiography. A small insight into the activities of the Soviet diplomatic mission (which according to A. Stranga "was loaded with VDK agents") and the VDK in Latvia, including the activities of J. Soirio, can be obtained from: Stranga, A. Krievu labējās monarhistiskās organizācijas Latvijā vēsturnieka skatījumā (ENG: Russian Right-monarchist Organisations in Latvia from the Perspective of a Historian). *Latvijas Jaunatne*. 4 September 1991, No. 118.

<sup>644</sup> At a restaurant.

out that Soirio was a cover name, and his real name was Zeltiņš. [...] Preliminary investigations established that Soirio-Zeltiņš lived in Riga during the period of peace<sup>645</sup> and was once a rafter, and due to the movement of 1905 was forced to emigrate abroad. At the time of the Bolshevik coup, Soirio-Zeltiņš had worked in Ukraine for some time and then in Evening-Siberia<sup>646</sup> he was a treasurer in the Soviet Latvia Commission for Purchase and Supply". The report also notes that "according to established facts and testimonies, Soirio-Zeltiņš has been found to be in close contact with Jānis Mucenieks, the commandant at the Soviet Russian embassy in Helsingfors<sup>647</sup> [...], who was also the leader of the Soviet Russian spy organisation in Finland"<sup>648</sup>.

Ten days later, the Political Security Department prepared the next report, including the latest updates: "The activities of Soiro-Zeltiņš were paid for and supported by the Political Police, Department 3, and in particular the department officer Linde."<sup>649</sup> The services actively followed each new employee of the Soviet representative office. For example, in August 1923, a new officer – Viktors Kosiņskis – arrived to work in the office. The Service quickly revealed that the real name of V. Kosiņskis was Viktors Steckēvičs and he was registered as the head of counterintelligence in the Riga office of Soviet Intelligence Centre.<sup>650</sup> Special registers were introduced for the staff of the mission, which contained known personal data and photos.<sup>651</sup>

The Service also continued to monitor the USSR diplomatic representation building at 2 Antonijas Street (24 hours a day), as well as the representation office's summerhouse at 3 Lielā Street in Vakarbuļļi. The monitoring is disclosed in reports and special logbooks of 1927<sup>652</sup>, written by Service officers.<sup>653</sup> The diplomatic representation visitors were carefully monitored, with reports indicating the time of arrival, the appearance of the person(s), the items taken with them (such as packages and bags), and whether visitors had left the institution with them or not. The case officers wrote down the registration marks of vehicles – cabs, motorcycles, taxis and cars – which allowed their owners to be checked against the existing registers. The reports of the officers of the Service reveal that in the case of suspicion, visitors were followed when they left the office building. The reports

<sup>645</sup> Before World War I.

<sup>646</sup> In Western Siberia.

<sup>647</sup> The capital of Finland, Helsinki.

<sup>648</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 146/2, p. 9.

<sup>649</sup> Probably, the Political Security Department's case officer Arturs Linde. in Political Police service from August 1923 to November of the same year. LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 902.

<sup>650</sup> Jēkabsons, Ē. Latvijas un Polijas militāro izlūkdienestu sadarbība 1919.–1939. gadā (ENG: Cooperation between Latvian and Polish Military Intelligence Services in 1919–1939). *Latvijas Kara muzeja gadagrāmata. IV* (ENG: Yearbook of the Latvian War Museum. IV). 2003, pp. 47–74, p. 125, 126.

<sup>651</sup> See, for example, LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/6, file 1257.

<sup>652</sup> Most likely, such increased attention is linked to the conclusion of the Trade Agreement between Latvia and the USSR in the summer of 1927.

<sup>653</sup> See LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/6, file 313, pp. 1–238.

also describe the routine of Ivan Lorenz, a representative of the USSR in Latvia, when he visited his summer house in Vakarbuļļi with his wife.

In December 1926, it was reported that with the support of the USSR representation, “local communists were supported to a large scale” in the warehouses of the trade representative office “*Vneshtorg*”.<sup>654</sup> In November 1928, the Service reported to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the continuation of these events – repeated gatherings of Riga workers in the USSR representation premises. Meetings “gathered several hundred workers” and gatherings, which praised Soviet revolutionaries and the Soviet political system, were recognised by the Service as such, which “to a large extent contribute to the dissemination of communism in Latvia and in the national context, should not be allowed”.<sup>655</sup> The reports to the Minister of the Interior continue to mention actions that threatened Latvia’s internal security. On 10 December 1930, the Minister of the Interior and the Service reported to the Minister of Foreign Affairs that the employees of the USSR representation “in Latvia once again start to implement activities that are very hostile to the Latvian state”; two representation employees were listed in particular – Nikolay Smirnov and Grigory Bezhanov, due to their activities in espionage and secret communist agitation.<sup>656</sup>

At the same time, the documents show that the USSR representation regularly instructed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to investigate the provocations by Russians living in Latvia against the work of the representation. In the second half of the 1920s, the Service investigated several provocations allegedly carried out by Russian monarchists, successfully identifying the authors who sent threatening letters to the USSR representation.<sup>657</sup> While in 1932, in light of the negotiations on the renewal of the trade agreement between Latvia and the USSR, the representation drew attention to the activities of the White Russian emigration communities in Latvia, taking advantage of the recent events in France (the assassination of the French President by a mentally unstable Russian émigré), without being afraid to speak about Russian terrorists in Latvia who supposedly threatened the safety of the diplomatic representatives of the USSR representation.<sup>658</sup> The Soviet representation in Riga sent the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Latvia a list of “monarchic” organisations and persons hostile to Latvia. After verification, the Service classified this information as “highly outdated”, while regarding the people on the list – Latvian nationals – it wrote that “there is no information that they are involved in anti-governmental activity, prohibited

<sup>654</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/22, file 940, p. 210.

<sup>655</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/22, file 940, p. 176.

<sup>656</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/22, file 940, p. 94.

<sup>657</sup> Letters and investigation reports are available from LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/6, file 313, pp. 124–137.

<sup>658</sup> Gusachenko, A. The Activities of “Russian Monarchists” in the Documentation of the Latvian Political Police Department (1920–1940): Specific Characteristics of the Source. *Modern History of Russia*. 1/2020. P. 960.

by law”.<sup>659</sup> The representation sent several such memorandums, reproaching the fact that “the Latvian government has not taken any steps toward organisations or individuals who would behave and act in any hostile way against the Union Republics<sup>660</sup>”, which the Ministry of the Interior considered to be unfounded in accordance with the Service’s activities. Moreover, the Minister of the Interior pointed out that the USSR itself did not comply with the mutual peace agreement,<sup>661</sup> as various agitators were freely operating in the territory of the USSR (including those who were caught by the Service, but who fled Latvia), who expressed a clearly hostile position, agitating against Latvia’s statehood.<sup>662</sup>



USSR diplomat, authorised representative  
in Latvia – Ivans Lorencs.

*LVA Political Police Administration card files.*

<sup>659</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/22, file 940, p. 9.

<sup>660</sup> The Union of the Socialist Soviet Republics.

<sup>661</sup> In accordance with Article 4(2) of the Latvian–Soviet Peace Treaty, both parties had committed to: “Prevent the establishment and residing of any organisations or groups in their territory, where such entities claim the role of government in the entire territory, or a part of it, of the other party of the treaty, as well as representatives and officials from organisations and groups whose purpose is to overthrow the government of the other party.” LVA, fund 3235, description 1/22, file 940, p. 40.

<sup>662</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/22, file 940, p. op. 38.

## 5.3.

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### Refugees, border trespassers and foreigners

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During the early period of the independent state, in the context of national internal security it was particularly important to ensure the control and surveillance of national borders, especially to control the flow of people over them. Failing to care for the security of the national border, there was a real risk that a large number of political opponents, mainly supporters of communism, would enter the country's territory. This could have happened both legally when crossing the border and coming via certain border crossing points, and illegally – crossing the border in secret. Border crossing was regulated by a law issued by the Ministry of the Interior, and illegal border crossings were punishable by prison sentence. The detained person was also referred to the Service “for identification and feedback on his/her political reliability”,<sup>663</sup> as in the example of the natural person M. Dakša mentioned in sub-chapter 5.1.

Several examples illustrate the heavy work of the Political Security Department when dealing with trespassers. In December 1923, the Political Security Department found that the Daugavpils and Rēzekne sites “mostly have files on illegal foreign nationals who have trespassed the border and who wish to leave Latvia in the same way to travel to another country”. The officers from these sites explained: “On some days, there are several such trespassers; the officers are always occupied with filing their information, and it is impossible to deal with much more important direct tasks of Political Security Department.” It is also noted that most trespassers “entered Latvia by accident” and it was not related to political activities; besides, the Political Security Department did not have any information at their disposal of these people and there were no cases that could reveal any important information; therefore, in order to deal with the situation, it was decided to interrogate such persons on the day of their detention to understand whether political motives were behind the border crossing, and if not, to transfer the detainees to the regional head for punishment and expulsion.<sup>664</sup>

As already mentioned in sub-chapter 5.1., in autumn 1920 large numbers of refugees from Russia started returning to Latvia. These included people who had an active or passive role in the government of the Soviet Latvia or in the authorities,

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<sup>663</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 45, p. 117.

<sup>664</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 45, p. 112.

and who were supposed to be punished in accordance with the procedure laid down by law. The communist agents, who planned extensive agitation and other anti-governmental activities, were also entering Latvia along with the refugees. In order to catch these people, the Political Security Department checked the travellers and questioned suspicious persons, which often led to detentions. If detained people were not found to be guilty of particularly serious crimes, they were released on the basis of the amnesty act and the provisions of the Latvian–Russian Peace Treaty, thus the number of released persons increased significantly in the second half of the 1920s.<sup>665</sup> As of 7 December 1920, the Political Security Department was entitled to decide on the admission or non-admission of individual refugees at the border.<sup>666</sup>

On 10 December 1920, the secret report to the Minister of the Interior states that “echelons, groups and individual refugees enter Latvia from Russia every day, with many of them undesirable. These include foreigners as well as Latvians who travel to Latvia for the purposes of agitation, or other reasons”. To fight this, the officers of the Service actively worked to ensure the control of the arriving people, and sought preventive solutions to prevent problems, also involving Latvian diplomatic representatives and delegates abroad. For example, in this report it was suggested “to instruct our superiors in Russia to approach with the greatest care when issuing permits to enter Latvia to foreigners and those Latvians who, because of their behaviour in Russia, have presented themselves as criminal members of their country”.<sup>667</sup>

However, the Service also paid attention to citizens of other countries and, in particular, to official representatives. For example, in October 1920, a fragment of a letter from the Latvian diplomatic representative in Bern, Jānis Sesks, was forwarded to the Political Security Department, in which the ambassador said that the Ukrainian delegation of Galicia (Bolshevik-minded) was about to come to Riga aiming to participate in the Russian-Polish peace negotiations and, based on a recommendation by the Ukrainian mission, it stated “special attention is paid to the actions of the members of this delegation in Latvia”.<sup>668</sup> This example also shows the crucial role of Latvian representations abroad in maintaining internal security and promoting the activities of national security authorities, which all through the interwar period informed the Ministry of the Interior about foreigners who intended to enter Latvia, of their political activities in their places of residence. The Service emphasised that “attention should be paid to foreigners and their missions, where we often find hostile persons hiding”, further explaining that “it cannot be excluded that some collaborators are residing in neighbouring countries, to provide information about the political situation on-site”.<sup>669</sup>

<sup>665</sup> Pārskats par Iekšlietu ministrijas darbību mūsu valsts 5 gadu pastāvēšanas laikā (ENG: A Review of the Performance of the Ministry of the Interior during 5 Years of our Independent Latvia). *Policijas Vēstnesis*. 16 November 1923, No. 57, p. 3, 4.

<sup>666</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 8, p. 219.

<sup>667</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 10, p. 33.

<sup>668</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 11, p. 23.

<sup>669</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 146/2, p. 199.

On 1 November 1920, the Political Security Department reported to the Minister of the Interior that requests for information on the political credibility of persons requesting admission to Latvia were received from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on a daily basis. The report says: "According to observations by the Political Security Department, among the people who wish to enter Latvia from Germany, the majority are the so-called war-brides<sup>670</sup>, Baltic estate owners, etc., on whom there is no direct compromising data at the disposal of the Political Security Department, but their arrival and residence in Latvia is generally deemed undesirable under current political conditions." The Political Security Department invited the ministries to order the Latvian mission in Berlin "to temporarily stop issuing permits to enter Latvia for German, Russian or Jewish citizens".<sup>671</sup> Subject to approval by the Minister of the Interior, many foreigners were expelled from the territory of Latvia on the initiative of the Service.<sup>672</sup>

All through the entire interwar period, the Service also dealt with people who entered Latvia legally. Already on 5 November 1920, the Political Security Department submitted a request to the Ministry of Trade and Industry to order the Management Board of Ventspils Port to allow an officer of the Ventspils branch of the Political Security Department to participate in the control of incoming and outgoing ships, as well as the control of passengers, and to send him information about all incoming and outgoing ships.<sup>673</sup>

In the early period of the independent state, while the country borders were still unclear, particular attention was paid to border areas, including the border areas with the later Lithuania and Estonia. For example, on 20 December 1920, the Liepāja regional unit of the Political Security Department reported that in Palanga (part of Lithuania from 1921 onwards) "there are no political parties and no propaganda is spread among citizens. Citizens only care about the issue of borders".<sup>674</sup>

The Political Security Department's officers also had to deal with war prisoners and other people, including the communists who returned to the Soviet Russia via Latvia from the port of Liepāja. On 16 December 1920, the head of the site in Rēzekne wrote that such people "get out in the stations, covered in red, with ribbons, etc., singing the Internationale and other Bolshevik "anthems"" and he concluded that "such demonstrations should not be allowed in the territory of Latvia, because if our refugees tried to pin national colours in Russia, they would definitely land with the KGB". He calls for the troops to "remind "members" that they are still in Latvia" or to ban them from getting out at the stations.<sup>675</sup>

<sup>670</sup> Women who followed soldiers from other countries' armies out of romantic motives.

<sup>671</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 12, p. 231.

<sup>672</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 45, p. 3.

<sup>673</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 8, p. 56.

<sup>674</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 8, p. op. 148.

<sup>675</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 8, p. 206.

Surveillance of foreigners continued throughout the entire interwar period. Reports of foreigners entering Latvia can be found in the LVVA Fund of documents on the Political Department. Such lists were drawn up for reports in each district, especially in border areas. The Service also compiled lists of foreigners who stayed in resort sites in the city of Jūrmala. However, holidaymakers were far from the only foreign visitors in Latvia who could attract the Service's attention. In 1926, the Service reported an American journalist to the Minister of the Interior, the correspondent of the newspaper "Chicago Tribune", a Mr Donald Dey, who "shares Communist ideas, maintains close contact with the local Sov[iet] Russian representatives, giving them information on local Latvian circumstances derived from journalists and other local circles". Based on instructions given by the USSR mission, the journalist had also written articles that compromised Latvia.<sup>676</sup>

In 1927, the Liepāja regional unit of the Political Department found that "some foreign ship company is organising an emigration trip to Brazil, which is being campaigned for by Šneiders and Kāns, taking 2 Dollars from every person departing. The ticket costs 600 Lats, which shall be repaid through labor to the company over a period of 7 months".<sup>677</sup> The issue of Latvians departing for Brazil also came to the attention of the Service in the 1930s when to Latvia arrived Jānis Inķis, a Baptist pastor who inspired and organised Latvia's Baptist emigration to Brazil in early 1920s where he founded the Latvian colony "Vārpa". J. Inķis was suspected of trying to "lure Latvians to Brazil".<sup>678</sup> On 18 February 1936, J. Stiebris reported on the case: "Considering the way in which live propaganda is being carried out in Latvia on the case of a new movement of emigrants, it would be desirable for the Political Department to paralyse everything in due time, as such emigration helps some [meaning, the organisers of emigration – author's remark] to build houses in Riga, accumulate wealth, but Latvia loses part of its human power."<sup>679</sup>

On 20 January 1940, the Service wrote about a German citizen Otto Schneider, who supposedly visited Latvia often. According to the information at the disposal of the Service, O. Schneider was a police officer and had been called to Germany to take up a responsible position in the former Polish territory, but he would continue to liaise with Latvia. The Service officer Jānis Kīselis wrote: "It is unclear whether or not this concerns military, political or economic espionage, but in any case, Schneider works in one or more of these sectors."<sup>680</sup>

<sup>676</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/22, file 940, p. 214.

<sup>677</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/8, file 553, p. 37.

<sup>678</sup> In light of this case, more attention was focused not only on J. Inķis but also on other Baptist priests and parishioners. For example, on 21 February 1936, the Service reported that "it has come to the attention of the Administration that Baptist priests have recently started to conduct anti-governmental agitation due to some restrictions and spread unjustified rumours about the internal lives of some confessions, especially Orthodox"; LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/22, file 742, p. 69.

<sup>679</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/22, file 742, p. 78.

<sup>680</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 939, p. 28.

## 5.4.

### Trade unions and other organisations

The law on associations, unions and political organisations adopted on 18 July 1923 established the rights and legal framework for Latvian citizens wishing to join various organisations. In general, this opportunity was widely used in the context of democracy, with thousands of different entities being established. But before 1923, various legal organisations were already used not only for their official purpose, but also as platforms for illegal political activity. For example, the communists deliberately put their staff in existing organisations, and established new ones, defined by at least two circumstances: “1) convenient access to the masses and 2) communist agitators able to act under the cover of these organisations”.<sup>681</sup>

In the context of parliamentary democracy, the Service had to monitor whether the activities of these associations and other legal organisations were a threat to the internal security of the country. Various social and cultural associations could operate relatively freely. The Service only focused on organisations with a higher degree of risk of politicisation in the anti-governmental direction, primarily trade unions.

#### TRADE UNIONS

From its first day, the Service controlled trade unions, as they often served as cover for the organisation of illegal meetings actively used by communist supporters. The working class was the group of society that had the greatest potential risk of leaning towards anti-governmental, mainly extreme left, communist ideas. Monitoring of the working class is evidenced by a report from Ventspils in October 1920, stating that the overall political situation in the city was satisfactory, “the working class is also partly satisfied, as several sawmills operate in Ventspils”, which means that people have jobs and can earn a living.<sup>682</sup> The Service paid greater attention to the mood of the workers and daily factors that affected

<sup>681</sup> *Vēsturiskais apskats par Iekšlietu ministrijas Politiskās pārvaldes Jelgavas rajona izveidošanos un darbību* (ENG: Historical Overview of the Establishment and Operation of the Political Department of Jelgava Regional Unit of the Ministry of the Interior). 1938. Latvijas Nacionālā arhīva bibliotēka, p. 7.

<sup>682</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 8, p. op. 12.

it. Such monitoring triggered a counterreaction, which was sometimes harsh and extremely critical.

The social democrats were actively opposed to monitoring the working class, explaining that the Service carries out “systematic terror against the movement of workers, which is expected to be suppressed by arrests and deportations”. They wrote: “The Political Security Department does not care whether the arrested worker is a communist or not. It is important to intimidate, break up and deter the working class from engaging in political-economic life. And this is quite easy to achieve by means of provocateurs who find their way into each and every workers’ organisation and weave their webs there, making hundreds of workers and their families unhappy; and all this in the name of the all-mighty citizenship power and well-being.”<sup>683</sup>

The way trade unions operated resulted in increasing numbers of members, and it could be predicted that this would be used by agitators to spread anti-governmental ideas. This was also proven in practice, because for example, officers of the Political Department Liepāja regional unit called the headquarters of the trade union office building at 8 Barona Street the “communist citadel”.<sup>684</sup> However, sources reveal cases where the Service found the restriction of trade union activity to be unjustified. For example, in December 1920, the Trade Union of Teachers in Aizpute was banned from convening a meeting. Shortly afterwards, the head of the region acknowledged that the ban was inappropriate.<sup>685</sup>

Both existing and newly established associations and organisations were monitored. In 1923, E. Āboltiņš, the Director of the Political Security Department, wrote: “The Political Security Department, in exercising its functions, shall pay great attention to trade unions because, as shown in practice, in most cases all members of the illegal Communist Party are also members in one or another trade union, where they network with each other and gather to realise their true intentions and tasks.”<sup>686</sup> Latvian communists considered that trade unions always received a lot of attention, emphasising at the XXIV conference of the Latvian Communist Party in 1927 that “to conquer and revolutionise trade unions means conquering and revolutionising the masses”.<sup>687</sup>

Why, however, did it not work in Latvia? The democratic system, which contributed to competition and diversity, played an important role. The success of the social democrats should be highlighted here, because by setting up different organisations, they prevented workers from joining the communists in large numbers. From the beginning of the 1920s, the number of members of the extreme left-wing

<sup>683</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 604, op. 3.

<sup>684</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/8, file 553, p. 46.

<sup>685</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 8, p. 88.

<sup>686</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/8, file 45, p. 69.

<sup>687</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/22, file 940, p. 45.

trade unions had dropped significantly: in 1922 – there were 14,970 members, and in 1928 – 4,736 members.<sup>688</sup> Another report of 23 May 1928 stresses that the number of so-called legal communist organisations had increased and that “a whole range of legal workers’ organisations are under the full control of communists”. In particular, the report highlights the Riga Trade Union Central Office, the Kurzeme Trade Union Central Office, Ventspils trade unions, the Latvian Labour Society for Youth Sports and Culture in Riga, Jugla Sports and Culture Association “Jaunais strādnieks”, the Workers’ Sports and Culture Association “Sila” and the society “Gaisma”, both in Daugavpils, and others.<sup>689</sup> This means that despite success, in monitoring trade unions, the Service could not afford any further mistakes or negligence. In particular, the Riga Trade Union Central Office was in the spotlight of the Service: although it was a legal left-wing organisation, in practice it was the centre of legal activity of the Latvian Communist Party. The activities by the Service played an important role in the closure of the Trade Unions’ Central Association.<sup>690</sup>

But there was also a different opinion, and in response to the criticism by social democrats, the Service stressed that “left-wing unionists” and other communist supporters use the popularity of social democrats in society and “at their expense” not only join associations, but also other types of coworking organisations (such as health insurance organisations), local governments and even the Saeima.<sup>691</sup>

The criticism of the activity of provocateurs in trade unions cannot be denied by the social democrats. Thanks to the informants, the Service was well informed about the mood of the workers and, in the event of dissatisfaction, of any planned strikes of certain industries. In the second half of the 1930s, the Service also systematically gathered information on factories and production sites, paying particular attention to the mood of the workers of these facilities.

## OTHER ORGANISATIONS AND ASSOCIATIONS

The instruction document of 1924 of the Service clearly defines the need for associations and other organisations to be placed among the most important areas of investigatory activities. It reads: “One of the ways for secret, anti-governmental organisations to pursue criminal activities is to use legally operating organisations

<sup>688</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/22, file 940, p. 64, 65.

<sup>689</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/22, file 940, p. 189.

<sup>690</sup> Plakane, G. *Legālo kreiso sabiedrisko organizāciju sociālpolitiskā darbība Latvijā 1920. gados: Rīgas arodbiedrību centrālbiroju piemērs* (ENG: Socio-political Activity of Legal Left Social Organisations on Latvia in the 1920s: Example of Trade Unions’ Central Offices in Riga). Master’s Thesis. Scientific supervisor Jēkabsons, Ē. Latvijas Universitāte. 2020, p. 60, 61.

<sup>691</sup> *Vēsturiskais apskats par Iekšlietu ministrijas Politiskās pārvaldes Jelgavas rajona izveidošanas un darbību* (ENG: Historical Overview of the Establishment and Operation of the Political Department of Jelgava Regional Unit of the Ministry of the Interior). 1938. Latvijas Nacionālā arhīva bibliotēka, p. 9.

that openly work towards the destruction of the state on a larger scale.”<sup>692</sup> In 1927, the Service collected all the information it had until then regarding “organisations, associations and some individuals” and ordered “to undertake the relevant registration of each organisation and person”.<sup>693</sup>

Latvian National Historical Archive (LVVA) Fund 3235 of the Political Department contains a large number of documents on the activities of certain associations. Moreover, the Service addressed organisations of various industry branches: in 1928, for example, officers of Jelgava regional unit concluded that in their area of responsibility “communists are present in the following organisations”: Jelgava Construction Workers’ Union, Latvian Association of Retired Soldiers in Ventspils and the surrounding divisions, Ventspils Rainis’ Club and many social democratic organisations.<sup>694</sup> Monitoring was manifold and focussed on associations representing various segments – agriculture, livestock breeding, charity, beekeeping, singers, sports, engineers, students, Christian, aid, mutual friendship, non-drinkers, etc. The Service gathered information on the activities and composition of the board of associations, events and any activities carried out, which could lead to the suspicion of a threat to internal security. The scope of the association was not always the most important criterion for the attention of the officers of the Service. The degree of influence of the particular organisation in a local context was also important – this could even mean associations of marginal activities, such as alcohol abstinence or teetotalists’ associations, were monitored. For example, on the outskirts of Rīga, in Vecmīlgrāvis, the Teetotalists’ association “Ziemeļblāzma” was the most influential organiser of culture and social events, and the nature of its activities united representatives of various political views. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Service monitored members of the “Ziemeļblāzma” who supported radical left and right wing ideas.<sup>695</sup>

When monitoring associations, the presence or proximity of the Service was felt in everyday life, however, it would be too much to say that during the time of parliamentary democracy, the activity of the associations as a whole was strictly controlled. Considering the strict monitoring of associations in the Russian Empire, which was still present in public memory, any reckless or hasty move by the Service could provoke dissatisfaction in the society.

<sup>692</sup> *Instrukcija Politiskās apsardzes aģentūrai* (ENG: Instruction for the Political Security Department’s Agency). Rīga: Politiskās apsardzes izdevums, 1924, p. 40.

<sup>693</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/6, file 726, p. op. 27.

<sup>694</sup> *Vēsturiskais apskats par Iekšlietu ministrijas Politiskās pārvaldes Jelgavas rajona izveidošanos un darbību* (ENG: Historical Overview of the Establishment and Operation of the Political Department of Jelgava Regional Unit of the Ministry of the Interior). 1938. Latvijas Nacionālā arhīva bibliotēka, p. 21.

<sup>695</sup> Vāveris, G. *Latviešu pretalkohola kustība 1934.–1940. gadā: bezalkohola biedrības “Ziemeļblāzma” piemērs* (ENG: Latvian Temperance Movement in 1934–1940: the Case of the Non-drinker Association “Ziemeļblāzma”). *Latvijas Arhīvi*. 2012, No. 3/4, p. 189.

Until May 1934, a total of 11,071 associations existed in Latvia, but after the abolition of democracy, some 7,000 societies came to the attention of a special liquidation commission and were subject to the evaluation of further activity.<sup>696</sup> In general, after 15 May 1934 and the martial law that was announced in Latvia, there was a growing trend of the authoritarian regime to control and monitor public opinion and its manifestations. The closure of some of the most visible legal organisations (such as social democrats) clearly indicates the violent suppression of the principles of voluntary participation and democracy.<sup>697</sup> In the context of democracy, it was an unthinkable practice that, at a national level, the Ministry of the Interior, and then the Ministry of Public Affairs assessed whether the activities of a particular association were desirable or to be regarded as detrimental to the country. Monitoring and even direct control of associations and societies, where the Service also took part, were based on the law on non-profit associations and unions of 11 February 1938, where the Minister of Public Affairs, A. Bērziņš had the decisive vote on the fate of an association.<sup>698</sup> The mandatory re-registration of associations required the Service officers to provide already existing intelligence on the organisation's previous activities, as well as members of the board of the association. After the law of 1938, the Service, based on its established logbook database, examined the reliability of nominated board member candidates and provided the Ministry of Public Affairs with recommendations for further evaluation. Such direct control mechanism, as established by the new law, allowed the Service to include in its registers and monitor almost all public associations in Latvia.

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<sup>696</sup> Oberlenders, E. Jaunās valsts stiprās un vājās puses (ENG: The Strengths and Weaknesses of the New State). Book: *Latvija. 1918–2018. Valstiskuma gadsimts* (ENG: Latvia 1918–2018. The Century of Statehood). Rīga: Mansards, 2018, p. 57.

<sup>697</sup> Oberlenders, E. Jaunās valsts stiprās un vājās puses (ENG: The Strengths and Weaknesses of the New State). Book: *Latvija. 1918–2018. Valstiskuma gadsimts* (ENG: Latvia 1918–2018. The Century of Statehood). Rīga: Mansards, 2018, p. 57.

<sup>698</sup> Likums par bezpeļņas biedrībām un savienībām (ENG: Law on Non-profit Associations and Unions). *Valdības Vēstnesis*. 14 February 1938, p. 1.

## 5.5.

### Social Democrats

Among those political forces who could legally operate and who were very popular in Latvian society, the social democrats should be highlighted in terms of monitoring by the Service. Already in 1920, the Service increasingly monitored various political, mainly left-inclining, groups and parties. For example, in December 1920, the Liepāja regional unit reported all political activities in its area of responsibility, indicating that “to attract supporters, the Menshevik party of social democrats establishes agricultural worker union branches in the parishes, convenes mass meetings and general assembly meetings of members, where members of the Constitutional Assembly are speaking. In contrast, other parties and organisations are not active in any way, except for the Farmers Union, which has held some meetings of the members”.<sup>699</sup> This indicates that from the beginning of the 1920s, it was the Social Democrats who showed a high level of civic activity and involvement. During the parliamentary democracy, this political force was able to gather huge masses around it, which in many ways was achieved by promoting civic activity, and establishing a series of different left-wing public organisations, as permitted by the Law on associations, unions and political organisations of 18 July 1923.<sup>700</sup>

Legal left-wing political and public opinion was represented by organisations of various levels, starting with the Latvian Social Democratic Workers’ Party (orig.: Latvijas Sociāldemokrātiskā strādnieku partija; hereinafter – LSDSP), a major political force in the Latvian parliamentary democracy, the society “Strādnieku sargs un sports”, or the SSS (ENG: “Guard of Workers, and Sports”), the largest social democratic public organisation, which established branches in the entire territory of Latvia<sup>701</sup>, down to small associations of local scale, which comprised left-wing citizens. Similarly, trade unions also had a significant impact on the left-minded society groups (alongside the SSS). It should be stressed that these

<sup>699</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 8, p. 149.

<sup>700</sup> Likums par bezpeļņas biedrībām un savienībām (ENG: Law on Non-profit Associations and Unions). *Valdības Vēstnesis*. 18 July 1923.

<sup>701</sup> “Strādnieku sports un sargs” (abbreviated – SSS) operated from 1921 to 1934. The organisation was led by Bruno Kalniņš (1899–1990), representative of the notable Social Democrat family Kalniņš.

organisations were closely connected and, together, they publicly represented left-wing ideas on the political stage and in public and cultural life at different levels. Even more, the role of these organisations (mainly LSDSP) in the context of national internal security is invaluable. It was the social democratic organisations that prevented the majority of the Latvian working class from joining the far-left extremists, the communists.<sup>702</sup> However, the criticism and concern expressed by the social democrats in the press about the Service's work, as mentioned in Chapter 1, reveals the complex relationship between them, particularly during the period of parliamentary democracy. It should be stressed that despite the high level of public participation, there was disagreement and political turbulence among the left-wing members of society (and within the LSDSP) as a result of the global economic crisis. During the first half of the 1930s, the LSDSP saw an increase in the influence of the communists, but not as large as the party itself expressed under the influence of its internal political struggle.<sup>703</sup> This is why the officers paid particular attention to the activities of the LSDSP and the left organisations as a whole.

The Service switched from monitoring to direct counteraction during the coup of 15 May 1934, participating in the arrests of the most prominent social democrats. Under anti-democratic conditions, the social democrats, in the opinion of the authoritarian regime, became one of the most dangerous groups in terms of internal security. Already on 29–30 May 1934, the Investigation Division of the Service asked the Chancellery of the Saeima for transcripts of speeches of 8 or 11 May by the former Member of Parliament, the social democrat Bruno Kalniņš, where he “speaks about the social democrats stepping up with weapons in their hands”.<sup>704</sup> Already previously – on 16 May, the Political Department carried out searches at the places of residence of most prominent social democrats, such as Jūlijs Celms, Pēteris Ulpe, Pauls Kalniņš, etc. At the residence of Jūlijs Celms, in Riga, at 37 Krišjāņa Barona Street, a suitcase with guns was found in the apartment; the guns were likely smuggled from abroad. They were delivered to the Service premises as material evidence.<sup>705</sup> On 9 June, the Investigation Unit requested the prosecutor of Riga Regional Court to authorise obtaining from Riga Post correspondence of persons and organisations of which “it is suspected they are detrimental to national interests”.<sup>706</sup> The Department of Post and Telegraphs delivered such correspondence to the Political Department until the end of November. A week later, on 16 June, the

<sup>702</sup> Stranga, A. *LSDSP un 1934. gada 15. maija apvērsums: demokrātijas likteņi Latvijā* (ENG: Latvian Social Democrat Workers Party and the Coup of 15 May 1934: Democratic Fates in Latvia). Rīga: Author's edition, 1998, p. 55.

<sup>703</sup> Stranga, A. *LSDSP un 1934. gada 15. maija apvērsums: demokrātijas likteņi Latvijā* (ENG: Latvian Social Democrat Workers Party and the Coup of 15 May 1934: Democratic Fates in Latvia). Rīga: Author's edition, 1998, p. 54, 55.

<sup>704</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 189/1, p. 68, 69.

<sup>705</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 189/1, p. 139, 141.

<sup>706</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 189/1, p. 91.

Political Department submitted a report to the Minister of the Interior, listing the organisations (political parties, associations and unions) which were recognised as “being under the actual influence of the Latvian Social Democrats Worker’s Party [...], the true purpose of which is [...] promotion of the introduction of a socialistic political system, based on proletariat dictatorship”.<sup>707</sup> In total, the report mentions 83 organisations whose activities were suspended. In summer 1934, at least 503 members of social democratic organisations were arrested.<sup>708</sup> In total, 109 political parties and 113 associations were closed as a result of the repressions.<sup>709</sup>



Extract from a logbook (notebook) of the Security Service Counterintelligence Unit on Latvian Social Democrats with photographs and addresses. 1928–1930. LVA, fund 3235, description 1/22, file 877, p. 9.

<sup>707</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 189/1, p. 169.

<sup>708</sup> Ščerbinskis, V. 1934. gada 15. maija apvērsums: cēloņi, norise un sekas (ENG: Coup of 15 May 1934: Causes, Course and Consequences). Book: *Apvērsums. 1934. gada 15. maija notikumi avotos un pētījumos* (ENG: Coup. Events of 15 May 1934 in Sources and Studies) (compiled by Ščerbinskis, V., Jēkabsons, Ē.). Rīga: Latvijas Nacionālais arhīvs, Latvijas Arhivistu biedrība, 2012, p. 45.

<sup>709</sup> Ščerbinskis, V. 1934. gada 15. maija apvērsums: cēloņi, norise un sekas (ENG: Coup of 15 May 1934: Causes, Course and Consequences). Book: *Apvērsums. 1934. gada 15. maija notikumi avotos un pētījumos* (ENG: Coup. Events of 15 May 1934 in Sources and Studies) (compiled by Ščerbinskis, V., Jēkabsons, Ē.). Rīga: Latvijas Nacionālais arhīvs, Latvijas Arhivistu biedrība, 2012, p. 47.

## 5.6.

### Right-wing extremists

From the beginning, the Service faced activities of various right-wing extremist groups. For example, in 1922 the Latvian National Club (1922–1925), the later Latvian Nationalist Club (1925–1927), became more visible – it was a right-wing, radical nationalist organisation supporting fascist ideas. The decision to close the Latvian Nationalist Club, on the basis of a report prepared by the Political Department and its evaluation, was taken by Riga Regional Court on 28 March 1925. But later in the same year the officers of the Service reported to the Ministry of the Interior that the newly established organisation – the Latvian Nationalist Club – continued the activities of the closed organisation; it had taken over its members, uniforms, symbols and principles of military organisation.<sup>710</sup>

The threats posed by this organisation in the context of national security were related to anti-democratic manifestations, by disrupting social democrat assemblies and using physical force against political opponents, thus taking over these and other methods of the Nationalist Club. The Service pointed out that the nationalist actions were mainly due to the fault of organisation's chairman, Indriķis Pone, who illegally organised the club's meetings, and in one of these he called the Saeima a "Jew Brothell". Based on the report by the Political Department, the Minister of the Interior and the Minister of War decided to expel I. Pone from the country. However, this club, as well as the activities of I. Pone, did not come to an end, and the Service continued to monitor the activities of the organisation. On 7 February 1927, the head of the Political Department V. Ozoliņš and the Minister of the Interior, M. Skujenieks, signed the Department's proposal to close the Latvian Nationalist Club, which states that the actual goal of the organisation was "to destroy the existing political system and instead create a national dictatorship"; it also referred to the organisation's deep sympathy for the fascist regime in Italy. Based on this application, Riga Regional Court decided on 19 February 1927 to close the Club.<sup>711</sup>

<sup>710</sup> See more information on nationalist activities in Latvia: Krēsliņš, U. *Aktīvais nacionālisms Latvijā (1922.–1934.)* (ENG: Active Nationalism in Latvia (1922–1934)). Rīga: Latvijas Universitāte, 2001, 425 pages.

<sup>711</sup> Paeglis, A. *Visu par Latviju! Latvju Nacionālais klubs un aktīvais nacionālisms 1922–1927* (ENG: All about Latvia! Latvian National Club and Active Nationalism 1922–1927). Rīga: Author's edition, 2009, p. 123, 346, 347, 476, 477.

Along with the National Socialists coming to power in Germany in 1933, more attention was paid to right-wing extremists – activities of Latvians and the German community in Latvia.<sup>712</sup> But already a year before – in 1932 – the right-wing extremists in Riga founded the organisation “Ugunskrusts”, of which officers of Jelgava regional unit later wrote that, although it was officially an apolitical organisation, “the hidden purpose of it is to gather people in order to later overthrow the existing political system in Latvia, without excluding the involvement of armed force”.<sup>713</sup> In 1933, the organisation “Ugunskrusts” (ENG: “Swastik Cross”) was closed. One of the key organisations whose activities and anti-democratic views attracted the Service’s attention was the organisation “Pērkoņkrusts” (ENG: “Thunder Cross”), the ideological successor and follower of “Ugunskrusts” (other radical organisations in Latvia, such as the “Leģions” (ENG: “Legion”) and the “Tēvijas Sargs” (ENG: “Protector of Fatherland”), can also be discussed in this context).

The Service saw a threat to the internal security in this organisation, especially in the early 1930s: and not only in the context of international political developments, but also the economic crisis, which is why it was closely monitored. “Pērkoņkrusts” was formed in the early 1930s as an extreme nationalist political and ideological power, which united into an organisation with characteristics of paramilitary activity.<sup>714</sup> Members of “Pērkoņkrusts” were not shy in criticising the country’s democratic system, openly expressing their anti-semitic views<sup>715</sup> and their support for an anti-democratic form of public administration. The political struggles between the parties and the economic difficulties of the country in the early 1930s contributed to the growing popularity of “Pērkoņkrusts” and similar far-right groups in the society.

At the beginning of the 1930s, both far-left and far-right extreme forces were closely watched in the context of threats to the country’s internal security: they expressed a very critical and even hostile attitude towards the existing democratic system of Latvia. A report to the Minister of the Interior on 28 July 1933 stated that the organisation had made very critical, even derogatory and insulting remarks about the existing political system, speaking out “against all existing political parties, their leaders and current deputies of the Saeima, who were plunderers of the last pennies of the people, who were corrupt, slaves to rotten political parties, leading the nation into poverty, who only cared for their personal well-being, served the interests of their party, who had sold their souls to socialists, Jews, etc.”<sup>716</sup>

<sup>712</sup> Žvinklis, A. Ieskats Latvijas Republikas politiskās policijas darbībā (ENG: Insight into the Activities of the Political Police of the Republic of Latvia). *Latvijas Vēstures Institūta Žurnāls*. 1994. No. 1, p. 114.

<sup>713</sup> *Vēsturiskais apskats par Iekšlietu ministrijas Politiskās pārvaldes Jelgavas rajona izveidošanos un darbību* (ENG: Historical Overview of the Establishment and Operation of the Political Department of Jelgava Regional Unit of the Ministry of the Interior). 1938. Latvijas Nacionālā arhīva bibliotēka, p. 44.

<sup>714</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/22, file 921, p. 6.

<sup>715</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/22, file 708, p. 8.

<sup>716</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/22, file 940, p. 10

Following the destruction of the democratic state on 15 May 1934, the range of internal threats was extended from both sides to include not only the above-mentioned social democrats, but also certain persons critical of the authoritarian regime of K. Ulmanis, for example: the Service monitored the politician and publicist A. Bergs, who was still influential among the political and civic community.<sup>717</sup>

The Service closely followed the activities of the members of “Pērkoņkrusts”, seeking evidence of the threat to the internal security of the country to justify the closure of the organisation. The decision to close the organisation “Pērkoņkrusts” was taken on 30 January 1934. It was the Service that had collected a series of evidence for trials against the most visible members of “Pērkoņkrusts” and that monitored the organisation’s activities illegally. It not only observed and secretly visited the member meetings, but also looked at whether the members sought support from any other closed organisation and former ideological opponents, such as social democrats.<sup>718</sup> At the same time, the Service focused on its officers because of the suspicion that some officers were also members of “Pērkoņkrusts” or at least supported their ideas.<sup>719</sup> For example, on 30 August 1934, the informant of the Security Service reported to the head of Liepāja regional unit on the activities of two alleged members of “Pērkoņkrusts”/officers of the Political Department, who had warned the organisation of the upcoming measures by the Service.<sup>720</sup> Another report by the agent refers to “3 or 4 members of “Pērkoņkrusts””, who were “very useful in duly announcing the upcoming threat”. One of the informants “is said to be a very influential Political Department's officer”.<sup>721</sup>

Members of “Pērkoņkrusts” continued to operate illegally, and already after the coup, the Service closely followed their activities underground and reported observations. For example, in 1934, officers of Liepāja regional unit described the right-wing organisations as follows: “Communist practices are also taken over by civic organisations such as “Tēvijas Sargs” and “Pērkoņkrusts”, which also include some underground communists. “Pērkoņkrusts” glue posters like “Latvia for Latvians! Bread and jobs to Latvians! Ready to fight!” on walls, draw the “swastika” on street, and write its slogans “Latvia for Latvians!”, “Latvians, be alert!”, “Beat the jews”, “Pērkoņkrusts sees everything”, “Pērkoņkrusts is alert”, “Marxists to the gallows”, etc.<sup>722</sup>

<sup>717</sup> For a little more on relations between the regime of Ulmanis and A. Bergs, see: Stranga, A. Jāņa Fridrihsona liecības (ENG: Testimonies by Jānis Fridrihsons). *SestDiena*. 9 April 1994.

<sup>718</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/22, file 921, p. 24, 233.

<sup>719</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/22, file 710, p. op. 62.

<sup>720</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/22, file 710, p. 62.

<sup>721</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/22, p. 218.

<sup>722</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/8, file 553, p. 71.

Looking at the reports prepared by the Service in the second half of the 1930s to the Ministry of the Interior, special attention is given to the members of “Pērkoņkrusts”. This organisation was the second most important threat to the internal security of the country after the communists. The large number of reports from the Department and the agents, lists of suspicious persons, collected material evidence (mainly printed works)<sup>723</sup> on the activities of the members of “Pērkoņkrusts” illustrate how much attention was given to them and right-wing extremists as a whole by the officers of the Service.



Fragment from the album of the Political Administration “with portraits of the arrested members of fascist and nationalist socialist organisations”.

From the left: Andrejs Švēde and Ādolfs Šilde. 1933–1940.

*LVA, fund 3235, description 1/6, file 1250, p. 20.*

<sup>723</sup> These specific documents in the Political Department fund (orig.: Politiskās pārvaldes fonds) can serve as a basis for exploring the history of the members of “Pērkoņkrusts” (ENG: “Swastic Cross”), where some attempts have already been made. For example, Paeglis, A. *Pērkoņkrusts pār Latviju. 1932–1944* (ENG: Swastic Cross over Latvia 1932–1944). Rīga: Rīga: Klubs 415, 2005, p208 pages. The work is based on documents of the Political Department, but its content and the author’s comments should be viewed and assessed very critically.

## 5.7.

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### Ethnic minorities

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The monitoring of ethnic minorities living in Latvia (motivation, methods, etc.) carried out by the Service is a topic worth a separate study; therefore only the largest minorities living in Latvia are mentioned below and those aspects of monitoring are outlined that drew the Service's attention during both parliamentary democracy and K. Ulmanis' authoritarian regime when the supervision of minorities was increased. Given the international situation, political tensions and economic background, such public supervision was not unusual during the interwar period. The Service was informed about the political mood of ethnic communities (at least at the intelligence level), activities and contacts with various non-governmental organisations abroad, which could always come to the attention of the authorities in the context of national security. The main focus was on the largest and potentially most influential groups – Russians, Germans, Jews, Poles, etc., but almost every group could be in the spotlight. For example, a funny thing has to be mentioned: according to the monthly reports of the 1930s, there are concerns even about the small Liv community.<sup>724</sup> To an extent, this illustrates the need for close monitoring of the public in order to have an anti-democratic regime in place.

#### GERMANS

In view of the historical and complex background of the social relations between Latvian and Germans, the German minority was at the focus of the Service in the 1920s–1930s of the interwar period. The activities of various German organisations were closely followed – “*Deutsches Frauenbund*”, “*Deutscher Verband für Wandern*” and “*Jugendherbergen in Lettland*”. In particular, this attention intensified as the Nationalist German Workers' Party, or the Nazi Party, came to power in Germany in 1933, when the German minority in Latvia, especially the younger generation, was supportive of the changes that had taken place. In the second half of the 1930s, monthly reports prepared by the Service regularly

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<sup>724</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/22, file 710, p. 79, 80.

describe observations of the German community, in particular of the activities of the organisation “*Bewegung*”, which approved of Nazi ideas.<sup>725</sup>

## JEWS

During the interwar period in Latvia there were also people among Jews (just as among all other nations living in Latvia) who approved of communism. The Service closely watched their activities and provided proposals to the Ministry of the Interior. For example, in 1924, in its report to the Minister of the Interior, the Service pointed to the pro-communist activity of Jews. It also refers to the activities of Jewish organisations, where they are recognised as being good in terms of secrecy, so the anti-governmental stance of certain actors active in legal Jewish organisations is difficult to prove. In view of the reserved Jewish community, the Minister of Education was asked to “strictly limit the immigration of Jews into Latvia arriving from both [Soviet] Russia and Germany, and from other countries”.<sup>726</sup>

However, this ethnic minority was primarily monitored in terms of business and economy. After World War I, Jews played a major role in restoring Latvia’s economy, especially in the context of the activities of industrial enterprises, as well as in the financial sector (e.g. banking services).<sup>727</sup> The relatively successful operation of Jewish companies, made up of experience, and a network of mutual and international contacts, triggered a mixed response in society. The nationalist-minded groups of society specially, viewed Jewish economic activity with suspicion or even came to anti-Semitic conclusions (especially in the press of far-right extremists). The coup by K. Ulmanis had a major impact on Jewish companies, which were affected by so-called “Latvianisation” and state interventions in the economy aiming to reduce the major influence of minorities (mainly Jews and Germans). During this time, monitoring of the economic activity of Jewish entrepreneurs and information on their mood appeared in the monthly reports prepared by the Service to the Minister of the Interior, which often highlighted the dissatisfaction of these entrepreneurs with the processes in the national economy (e.g. tax policy),<sup>728</sup> which did not have any connection with anti-governmental mood. These arguments were made in the context of business.

<sup>725</sup> See: Cerūzis, R. *Vācu faktors Latvijā (1918–1939): Politiskie un starpnacionālie aspekti* (ENG: German Factor in Latvia (1918–1939): Political and International Aspects). [no place of issue]: LU Akadēmiskais apgāds, 2004.

<sup>726</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/22, file 940, p. 246.

<sup>727</sup> Stranga, A. *Ebreji Baltijā. No ienākšanas pirmsākumiem līdz holokaustam. 14. gadsimts – 1945. gads* (ENG: Jews in the Baltic States. From the Beginning of their Arrival to the Holocaust. 14th century – 1945). Rīga: LU žurnāla “Latvijas Vēsture” fonds, 2008, pp. 442–448; Feldmanis, I., Jēkabsons, Ē., Stranga, A. *Latviskošanas pasākumi un minoritātes* (ENG: Latvianisation Measures and Minorities). Book: *15. maija Latvija* (ENG: Latvia of 15th May). Rīga: Latvijas Mediji, 2017, pp. 137–140.

<sup>728</sup> See, for example, LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/ 22, file 920, 922.

## RUSSIANS

During the interwar period, in the 1920s–1930s, the Service closely monitored the Russian emigration organisations located in the territory of Latvia,<sup>729</sup> which had an anti-Bolshevik character. In their activities, they sought to strengthen the national self-confidence and the values of common identity, linked to a certain nostalgia for the Russian Empire. The Security Service treated such organisations as “monarchic”, meaning not only supporters of the restoration of the Russian monarchy, but also all anti-Bolshevik-minded citizens, thus also using this designation for organisations who were not “monarchic” in terms of their activities.<sup>730</sup> In fact, the Service watched the majority of Russian immigrants in Latvia.<sup>731</sup> The official documents contain extensive information on the mood of this community.

In the mid-1920s, the politician Pēteris Koreckis (1887–1929) was monitored in particular, since his public action and statements were seen as posing a threat to the internal security. Meanwhile, in the context of the national security, the community of Old Believers was recognised as harmless.<sup>732</sup> There is a view, however, that the Service overestimated the impact of these organisations on national security, and the aim of the Russian organisations did not foresee any real anti-governmental action against Latvia.<sup>733</sup> This is also partly confirmed by the observations of the Service, elaborately listing or identifying risk groups or so-called Russian monarchic organisations in Western Europe and their relations with the Russian minority in Latvia. In 1932, it was concluded that a number of Russian organisations in Latvia “do not carry out any activities hostile to Latvia or any other country”<sup>734</sup>.

After the coup against the authoritarian regime of K. Ulmanis, the number of public organisations established by Russians decreased – in 1934 they were around 150, while in 1940 – only 58. During this time, the Service, in the interests of the authoritarian regime, closed various, even completely apolitical, Russian organisations, which were deemed “monarchist”.<sup>735</sup> However, particularly

<sup>729</sup> Of these, two major: “Krievu taisnības brālība” (ENG: The Brotherhood of Russian Truth) (*Братство русской правды*) and “Jaunās paaudzes nacionālā darba savienība” (ENG: The New Generation’s Labour Union) (*Национально трудовой союз нового поколения*).

<sup>730</sup> Gusachenko, A. The Activities of “Russian Monarchists” in the Documentation of the Latvian Political Police Department (1920–1940): Specific Characteristics of the Source. *Modern History of Russia*. 1/2020, p. 958.

<sup>731</sup> Gusačenko, A. “Sokol” organizācijas darbība Latvijā (1928.–1940. g.) (ENG: Activity of the Organisation “Sokol” in Latvia in 1928–1940). Master’s Thesis. Thesis supervisor Dr. hist. assoc. prof. Gavriļšins, A. Rīga: LU VFF, 2017, p. 51, 52.

<sup>732</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/22, file 940, p. 241.

<sup>733</sup> Gusačenko, A. “Sokol” organizācijas darbība Latvijā (1928.–1940. g.) (ENG: Activity of the Organisation “Sokol” in Latvia in 1928–1940). Master’s Thesis. Scientific supervisor Dr. hist. assoc. prof. Gavriļšins, A. Rīga: LU VFF, 2017, p. 52.

<sup>734</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/22, file 940, p. 34.

<sup>735</sup> Gusachenko, A. The Activities of “Russian Monarchists” in the Documentation of the Latvian Political Police Department (1920–1940): Specific Characteristics of the Source. *Modern History of Russia*. 1/2020, pp. 962–963.

at the end of 1930s, along with the economic difficulties in the country, the Russian community, especially in Latgale, expressed its dissatisfaction with the economic policy in Latvia, which allowed the informants of the Service to point out that the Russians were therefore sympathetic to the Soviet power, and it was necessary to take the appropriate steps to change this mood. Among these were easings in education policy; namely the number of Russian schools, which was reduced following the coup of Ulmanis' regime, once again grew. Dissatisfaction was also largely related to agricultural policy as the government banned Russians from buying land in Latgale, while in spring 1940 the dissatisfaction was due to the government-introduced labour service.<sup>736</sup>

## POLES

As early as in the 1920s, relations between Latvia and Poland were affected by the seemingly<sup>737</sup> internal politics issue regarding the situation of the Polish minority in Latvia. The countries had a different view on some key issues, such as education. At the end of March 1921, the Service's Daugavpils regional unit investigated the activities of the teacher Kazimirs Pruhņiks in organising secret Polish schools, which in some places threatened with Polonisation.<sup>738</sup>

The Polish majority was also continuously monitored in the second half of the 1930s, particularly in relation to the various foreign policy developments in Poland, and it even led to certain suspicions regarding the loyalty of the community, which were not properly justified.<sup>739</sup> Already in the second half of the 1930s, informants were present in the main Polish cultural institutions of Latvia; for example, the Polish theatre director Staņislavs Ficners-Jarskis (cover name "Polis").<sup>740</sup>

Meanwhile, in a report of August 1939 to the Minister of the Interior, the prominent public figure, long-standing member of the board of the charity organisation of the Polish Catholic Church of Riga, and prelate Aleksandrs Novickis, was called a "Polish chauvinist" and "one of the most harmful Catholic priests to the Latvian national interests". It should be noted that the Ministry of the Interior did

<sup>736</sup> Stranga, A. Jāņa Fridrihsona liecības (ENG: Testimonies by Jānis Fridrihsons). *SestDiena*, 9 April 1994.

<sup>737</sup> The context of the military developments of the Independence War in Latgale is crucial here. See more: Jēkabsons, Ē. *Piesardzīgā draudzība: Latvijas un Polijas attiecības 1919.–1920. gadā* (ENG: Cautious Friendship: Relations between Latvia and Poland in 1919–1920). Rīga, 2007, pp. 71–117.

<sup>738</sup> See more: Jēkabsons, Ē. Latvijas un Polijas konflikts poļu skolu jautājumā 1921. gadā (ENG: Conflict between Latvia and Poland on the Issue of Schools in 1921). *Latvijas Vēstures Institūta Žurnāls*, 2013, No 3, pp. 45–71, here: p. 51, 52; LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 299.

<sup>739</sup> See: Jēkabsons, Ē. *Poļi Latvijā* (ENG: Poles in Latvia). Rīga: Latvijas Zinātņu akadēmijas Filozofijas un socioloģijas institūts, 1996.

<sup>740</sup> Jēkabsons, Ē. Padomju represijas pret Latvijas poļiem, lietuviešiem un baltkrieviem 1940.–1941. gadā (ENG: Soviet Repressions against the Polish, Lithuanian and Belarusian Community in Latvia in 1940–1941). Book: *Totalitārie režīmi un to represijas Latvijā 1940.–1956. Latvijas Vēsturnieku komisijas raksti. 3. sēj.* (ENG: Totalitarian Regimes and their Repressions in Latvia 1940–1956. Articles of the Commission of Historians of Latvia. Vol. 3). Rīga, 2001, p. 56.

not take this opinion into account (the prelate was not removed from the board),<sup>741</sup> which indicates that the information provided by the Service was assessed by the national authorities before taking further decisions.

## LITHUANIANS

Many Lithuanians in Latvia were priests in Catholic churches. They played an important role and they had influence in local Lithuanian communities. This is why the activities of these Catholic priests, in particular after the end of the 1930s, came to the attention of the Service. The reports stressed the activities of the priests in Riga (for example, the nationalistic activities of the prelate Eduards Stukelis), but especially in the border area of Latvia-Lithuania, where their national views, in the opinion of the Service, contributed to the Lithuanisation of the local Latvian population there.<sup>742</sup> After the coup of 1926 in Lithuania, the neighbouring Latvia became a refuge for those Lithuanians who did not support political changes in their country, and therefore the Service supervised the activities of Lithuanian political refugees and emigrants (mainly Lithuanian Social Democrats) in Latvia.<sup>743</sup>

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## BELARUSIANS

From the beginning of the 1920s, the head of the Political Security Department in Daugavpils regional unit reported a quasi-separatist mood among Belarusians in Pustiņa Parish.<sup>744</sup> In 1924, in liaison with the investigation judge on important cases of Latgale Regional Court, the Political Security Department investigated “a case of a criminal Belarusian union in Latgale”. The head of the Political Security Department in Daugavpils regional unit was instructed to gather information about Belarusian schools and pupils, especially those schools that were close to the Latvian-Russian border.<sup>745</sup> Service officers reported in the mid-1920s that there were suspicions of Belarusian separatist actions found during a charity event.<sup>746</sup> For example, in April

<sup>741</sup> Jēkabsons, Ē. Aleksandrs Novickis (1888-1972) prelāts, profesors un redaktors (ENG: Aleksandrs Novickis (1888-1972) Prelate, Professor and Editor). *Katoļu kalendārs 2013. Katoļu Baznīcas Vēstis*. 2012, p. 148–157. Here: p. 156.

<sup>742</sup> Jēkabsons, Ē. *Lietuvieši Latvijā* (ENG: Lithuanians in Latvia). Rīga: Elpa, 2003, pp. 86–88.

<sup>743</sup> Feldentale, E. *Lietuvas politisko bēgļu darbība Latvijā 20. gadsimta 20. gadu otrajā pusē* (ENG: Activities of Lithuanian Political Refugees in Latvia in the Second Half of the 1920s). Bachelor's Thesis. Thesis supervisor Dr. hist. assoc. prof. Jēkabsons, Ē. Rīga: LU VFF, 2015, p. 64; LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 298.

<sup>744</sup> *Latvijas izlūkdienesti, 1919–1940: 664 likteņi* (Latvian Intelligence, 1919–1940: 664 Fates). Rīga: Totalitārisma seku dokumentēšanas centrs, 2001, p. 239; LVVA, fund 3235, description 2, file 1527; See: Kazachonak, K. *Latvijas baltkrievu sabiedriski politiskā darbība 1919.–1934. gadā* (ENG: Civic Political Activities by the Belarusian Community in Latvia 1919–1934). Master's Thesis. Thesis supervisor Dr. hist. assoc. prof. Jēkabsons, Ē. Rīga: LU VFF, 2013, p. 31.

<sup>745</sup> LVVA, fund 7432, description 3, file 38, p. 15.

<sup>746</sup> See: Kazachonak, K. *Latvijas baltkrievu sabiedriski politiskā darbība 1919.–1934. gadā* (ENG: The Social-Political Activities of Belarusians in Latvia 1919–1934). Master's Thesis. Scient. supervisor Jēkabsons, Ē. Rīga: Latvijas Universitāte, 2013, p. 32.

1925, the Service expressed its concern about a possible separatist mood and the influence of the communists, “which the Political Department follows closely”.<sup>747</sup> Thus, in the mid-1920s, the officers of the Service monitored the political activities of the Belarusian minority.<sup>748</sup> While as early as the end of the 1920s, the institution monitored those Belarusian organisations in the border area of Latvia who had contact with communists.<sup>749</sup> However, it is known that some of the leaders of public life in the Belarusian community living in Latvia, such as Nikolajs Demidovs, Konstantīns Jezovitovs and Vladimirs Korti, were informants to the Service and reported on the activities and political mood of the Belarusian community (in the case of V. Korti, including the Russians<sup>750</sup>).<sup>751</sup> This was a common preventive method also used in other countries – to engage the most active community individuals in working in the interests of the Service.

<sup>747</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/22, file 940, p. op. 233.

<sup>748</sup> Kazachonak, K. *Latvijas baltkrievu sabiedriski politiskā darbība 1919.–1934. gadā* (ENG: The Social-Political Activities of Belarusians in Latvia 1919–1934). Master’s Thesis. Scient. supervisor Jēkabsons, Ē. Rīga: Latvijas Universitāte, 2013, p. 43.

<sup>749</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/22, file 689, p. 63; See more: Kazachonak, K. *Latvijas baltkrievu sabiedriski politiskā darbība 1919.–1934. gadā* (ENG: The Social-Political Activities of Belarusians in Latvia 1919–1934). Master’s Thesis. P. 34, 38.

<sup>750</sup> Gusachenko, A. The Activities of “Russian Monarchists” in the Documentation of the Latvian Political Police Department (1920–1940): Specific Characteristics of the Source. *Modern History of Russia*. 1/2020. pp. 963–964.

<sup>751</sup> Jēkabsons, Ē. Padomju represijas pret Latvijas poļiem, lietuviešiem un baltkrieviem 1940.–1941. gadā (ENG: Soviet Repressions against the Polish, Lithuanian and Belarusian Community in Latvia in 1940–1941). Book: *Totalitārie režīmi un to represijas Latvijā 1940.–1956. Latvijas Vēsturnieku komisijas raksti*. 3. sēj. (ENG: Totalitarian Regimes and their Repressions in Latvia 1940–1956. Articles of the Commission of Historians of Latvia. Vol. 3). Rīga, 2001, pp. 62–63.

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### Other groups

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As part of ensuring national security, the focus was also on those professionals whose position was related to the circulation of information in a particular and essential environment. Not all professions are covered, since the wide scope of work of the Service cannot be pictured in detail within this book. This sub-chapter gives examples of professions that have attracted the attention of Service officers.

#### EMPLOYEES OF PUBLIC AUTHORITIES

For internal security, employees of public authorities were also monitored from the onset of the War of Independence. This happened in those cases where suspicious individuals allegedly, and did, endanger internal security. First of all, it is linked to the support for the Voluntary Army of Western Russia, led by Pavel Bermondht-Avalov. From autumn 1919, the civil security authorities of Latvia focused on soldiers of Bermondht Army who arrived in the territory of Latvia from Germany. Senior case officer of the Political Department in Jelgava region wrote on 30 October 1920, reporting on the situation in Jelgava: “The Bermondhtians, who had arrived from Germany, also started to campaign against the Latvian state quite openly. The former Jelgava city mayor Šmits was particularly apparent due to his provocative behaviour.<sup>752</sup> The investigators, however, took active steps to put an end to his activities, and Šmits was expelled.”<sup>753</sup>

It should be stressed that in the very first years of the post-war period, nationality was a pretext for suspicion. For example, on 2 December 1920, the Political Security Department received a secret report from the Ministry of the Interior, the latter instructing as follows: “[.] to observe the activities of civil servants, with particular attention to non-residents, as it appears that the activities of civil servants often, either through their personal lives or through exercising their duties,

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<sup>752</sup> Referring to the attorney Gustavs Šmits. From 1889 – sworn attorney in Jelgava. In 1918 he was a member of the Provisional Land Council of Kurzeme. In 1918, in the III Enlarged Landtag of Kurzeme he supported the idea of creating the Duchy of Courland. In 1919 – Jelgava city mayor. Arrested in September 1920 for supporting Bermondht troops in autumn 1919. Subsequently released, lived and worked in Berlin in the 1920s; Jēkabsons, Ē., Ščerbinskis, V. (compiled by). *Latvijas Advokatūra 1919–1945. Biogrāfiskā vārdnīca* (ENG: Latvian Bar 1919–1945. Biographic Dictionary). Rīga: Latvijas Valsts vēstures arhivs, 2007, p. 483.

<sup>753</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 8, p. 13.

do not benefit the State but rather harm its interests instead. It is known that there are officials who counteract strengthening the State of Latvia. The detection of such crimes also lies within the scope of work of the Political Security Department.<sup>754</sup> This is linked to the monitoring of local minorities mentioned in the previous sub-chapter.

However, ethnic background was not the decisive criterion, as in the case of suspicion, the officers of the Service examined the political credibility of the officials, regardless of their nationality. For instance, in a secret report of early 1922 to the Minister of the Interior, A. Kviesis, it is stated that the ministry's accounting officer Marta Krūmiņa was recognised as politically unreliable. The husband of M. Krūmiņa was arrested twice and investigated by the Political Security Department, but the investigation was suspended and he was released at the personal request of M. Krūmiņa to the next Minister of the Interior P. Bergis. According to the Political Security Department, M. Krūmiņa's husband was "an active communist member, and very careful, using his wife's service to avoid the deserved punishment". The report also indicates that at her office in the Ministry of the Interior M. Krūmiņa had access to information on the staff within and subordinate to the Ministry of the Interior, which M. Krūmiņa "uses to provide her husband with the necessary information on the Ministry's officers, in particular on the Political Security Department". Thus, the minister was invited to remove M. Krūmiņa from office.<sup>755</sup>

Apart from specific examples, the attention of the Service was also focussed on general observations, which allowed conclusions to be drawn on the performance of duties of certain public officials. For example, on 6 November 1922 Political Security Department's officers reported an undesirable trend to ministries. To avoid walking long distances and to save their time, instead of delivering packages to relevant authorities on site, the messengers meet at Riga Post, where after lunch, the couriers and messengers of the many institutions meet and exchange mail/packages. Moreover, the mail/packages are not handed directly over to the messengers of the authorities concerned, but also to those who "appear to have the relevant authority closer on their way". Due to this, secret shipments "have passed through several hands, resulting in delays, without excluding the possibility that the content of these "packets" has been disclosed for malicious purposes as confirmed by the arrest of a messenger and the material found on him".<sup>756</sup>

## MILITARY ENTITIES

Although the monitoring of troops in Latvia was carried out by special units and was not a task of the Service, military personnel and guards often came to the attention of the Service. From the outset of its operation, the Service was entitled

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<sup>754</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/9, file 7, p. 22.

<sup>755</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 896, p. 54.

<sup>756</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 45, p. 25.

to require Guard Divisions for information on the staff composition, the agreed communications, the location of the guard posts, etc.<sup>757</sup>

Often, the Security Service was aware of the crimes committed by military personnel, particularly in the early 1920s. For instance, on 30 November 1920, the Prefect of Jelgava reported to the Political Security Department that upon the invasion of troops in Jelgava (3rd Jelgava Infantry Regiment as a permanent garrison), various crimes grew by 25%, which, according to the prefect, was explained by the fact that “among soldiers there are many people of low morale”.<sup>758</sup> The Service also informed the Ministry of the Interior about problems in other internal security authorities. For instance, on 27 March 1922, it was reported that “there were many undesirable people – communists – in the new border police. [...] Generally speaking, many criminally and politically questionable people had joined the border guards”.<sup>759</sup>

The military structures for national defence were interesting to various types of agitators and spies, mainly communists, who shared anti-governmental views. In the history of Jelgava region of the Political Department of 1938, it was stated that “various factions are established in the army, railway, etc., to operate illegally under the Communist Party, such as, the War Centre, the Railwaymen Faction, etc.”.<sup>760</sup> The task of the Service was to identify and prevent the activities of such people and their groups on a preventive basis, primarily in the Latvian Army. For example, in November 1926, following investigatory measures, the Service reported it had liquidated five spy organisations within the Latvian Army (two in Riga and three in Latgale, a total of 40 members) which had been involved in gathering information and data on the Latvian Army.<sup>761</sup> Already earlier, the Service pointed out the need to improve discipline and patriotic education in order to reduce the risk. On 5 January 1923, the Security Service reported to the Ministry of the Interior that “the army pays little attention to strengthening and developing the national identity of soldiers. It cannot be said that the army lacks external discipline, but this alone does not guarantee that the army’s internal ideological sense is clear and strong enough so that, if necessary, the soldiers will be able to decide where they should go”.<sup>762</sup>

The discipline and strengthening of the soldier’s awareness of duty was like a countermeasure to the activities of hostile agitators and instigators (mainly communists). The Service regularly reminded the Ministry of the Interior of this, indicating that the army was one of the targets of communist campaigning. For example, the report of 23 May 1928 mentions the need to monitor troops, as the Third International Instructions on communist activity in the army stressed that

<sup>757</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 8, p. 130.

<sup>758</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 8, p. 144.

<sup>759</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 896, p. 97.

<sup>760</sup> *Vēsturiskais apskats par Iekšlietu ministrijas Politiskās pārvaldes Jelgavas rajona izveidošanos un darbību* (ENG: Historical Overview of the Establishment and Operation of the Political Department of Jelgava Regional Unit of the Ministry of the Interior). 1938. Latvijas Nacionālā arhīva bibliotēka, p. 5.

<sup>761</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/22, file 940, p. op. 215.

<sup>762</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 894, p. 3.

“revolutionary propaganda must be carried out in the army; avoiding mobilisation and deserting from the army is by no means to be allowed; the labour nation shall hold weapons in their hands in order to point them at the bourgeoisie in the appropriate situation”.<sup>763</sup>

In this way, the Service tried to identify individuals, who qualified to be enlisted in terms of age, whose political views and actions involved potential risks of danger. For example, in 1933, 405 young people (176 in the war district of Riga, 68 in Vidzeme, 81 in Latgale, 51 in Zemgale, 29 in Kurzeme) of those to be enlisted (a total number is not provided) were found to be politically unreliable; 184 in the war district of Riga, 20 in Vidzeme, 55 in Latgale, 67 in Latgale, 26 in Zemgale, and 16 in Kurzeme were labelled as active communists.<sup>764</sup>

The risk that there might be people in the army and other military organisations posing a threat to the country’s internal security increased to some extent following the coup. From the first days, the Service paid attention to those soldiers serving in the Latvian Army, whose political views were different from those expressed by the new anti-democratic regime. For example, on 16 May, the recruit Jakovs Zēgals of the 4th Valmiera Infantry Regiment declared to the sergeant of the 1st company of his regiment, Elbergs, that the government had not acted lawfully when announcing the state of war (contrary to Article 62 of the Constitution). Despite the reprimand of the sergeant, J. Zēgals on the same day in the evening at around 18.00 repeated the same to the great soldier, Zaķis, and the young soldier Grunsbergs. He also announced that the state of war in the country had been lifted and incited soldiers not to listen to the “government’s legitimate order”.<sup>765</sup> Almost a week later, on 22 May, another recruit – Augusts Berovskis – in the premises of the regiment instructors where the company soldiers had gathered to attend a lecture on history, knowing that based on a government order, the social democratic party’s activities had been suspended, called out: “Long live Social Democrats!”<sup>766</sup> On 30 May, it was found that Leons Molotonovs, a soldier of the 5th Cēsis Infantry Regiment had kept 23 illegal press items (“Sarkanais Kareivis”, “Cīņa”, “Komunisti”, etc.) at the Stopiņi camp aiming to distribute them among soldiers.<sup>767</sup> These are just a few examples, but they are a good illustration of the risk factors that contributed to the future monitoring of army units at all levels.

The dislike towards the new regime is well described by an example, when the Service monitored General Jānis Balodis, a highly respected and popular individual, top-ranking military officer and statesman. He was well informed about the army’s ambiguous attitude to the political change in the country. The frustration of the army was caused by the open sympathies of K. Ulmanis towards the Guard Organisation, leaving the country’s main military force – the Latvian Army – behind. In the political

<sup>763</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/22, file 940, p. 187.

<sup>764</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/22, file 940, p. 2.

<sup>765</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 189/1, p. 128.

<sup>766</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, p. 129.

<sup>767</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, p. 172.

community there were secret talks of the plans of the Kalpaks-followers<sup>768</sup> who intended to overthrow the regime of Ulmanis, especially in 1939 when the Service increasingly monitored J. Balodis and military personnel close to him.<sup>769</sup> However, it should be noted that this information comes from J. Fridrihsons, head of the Political Department, found in the interrogation files of the KGB. This should be borne in mind when analysing the conditions for obtaining information in the file and the psychological background.

## TEACHERS

Teachers were an important profession involving public, educational activities. It should be stressed that they were not considered as a separate and specific monitoring group, but that the focus of the Service was on those cases where teachers' views affected national security interests. For example, as early as in December 1920, Political Security Department officers reported: "It has come to our attention that there is a school in Liepāja under the name "Society of teachers in Liepāja", which is supposed to be managed by a Jewish man Bernšteins, an immigrant from the Soviet Russia. This man is said to be a well-known communist supporter and introduced the order of Bolsheviks to the school, and he has even allowed pupils to set up a "club of pupils", in which pupils discuss various rather anti-national issues. According to other teachers of the school, Bernšteins is supposed to teach children in a Bolshevik spirit. Bernšteins' activities are followed up and the case about him will be investigated. It has been observed that some of the pupils of Riga Secondary School No. 4 also maintain contact with communists. Some of the pupils of this school have been arrested by Political Security Department and brought to justice."<sup>770</sup> While in 1926, the officers of Jelgava regional unit of the Political Department concluded that one of the most active participants of the Latvian Communist Party in Sauka Parish was the teacher Jānis Greņģis of Kalna School, who, among other things, actively campaigned among young people and pupils by teaching them how to use weapons.<sup>771</sup> A politically unreliable teacher could have been viewed as particularly dangerous among children and young people, and the Service therefore strived to undertake certain investigatory measures in similar cases.

Just like many other professions, the monitoring of teachers intensified following the coup. Already in the summer of 1934, the Service officers closely followed the behaviour of teachers. For example, on 11 July, a Valmiera regional unit's

<sup>768</sup> Soldiers who served previously in Kalpaks' Battalion.

<sup>769</sup> Stranga, A. Jāņa Fridrihsona liecības (ENG: Testimonies by Jānis Fridrihsons). *SestDiena*. 31 March 1994.

<sup>770</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 10, p. 54.

<sup>771</sup> *Vēsturiskais apskats par Iekšlietu ministrijas Politiskās pārvaldes Jelgavas rajona izveidošanos un darbību* (ENG: Historical Overview of the Establishment and Operation of the Political Department of Jelgava Regional Unit of the Ministry of the Interior). 1938. Latvijas Nacionālā arhīva bibliotēka, p. 17.

case officer reported to his superior about the 6th grade teacher and school master of Daugulu Parish Elementary School, Herberts Vēliņš, who gathered left-leaning youth around himself [...], introduced the socialist-progressive education system to the school and never tried to raise children in a national spirit'.<sup>772</sup>

In June 1934, the Service drew up a list or register of unreliable teachers. The list, which was subsequently submitted to the Ministry of Education's School Department for relevant activities (in the best case for dismissal), lists politically unreliable teachers.

#### **Breakdown of politically unreliable teachers by place of residence, June 1934**<sup>773</sup>

	Number of teachers	Men	Women
Riga City	3	3	0
Riga Region	3	3	0
Valmiera Region	3	3	0
Madona Region	4	4	0
Valka Region	3	3	0
Jelgava Region	6	4	2
Ventspils Region	3	3	0
Jēkabpils Region	2	2	0
Ilukste Region	11	9	2
Tukums Region	1	1	0
Rēzekne Region	6	4	2
Ludza Region	12	11	1
Total	57	50	7

In a democratic regime, such a list would be much shorter, as almost half of the listed persons – 30 teachers (including two female teachers) – were members of the LSDSP, while nine teachers (including three female teachers) had communist views, eight were members of former Jewish left-wing organisations, while two teachers were members of illegal Belarusian separatist organisations.<sup>774</sup>

#### **RAILWAY AND POSTAL STAFF**

The railway was very important in the 1920s–1930s, not only in the context of public mobility, but also information exchange. This is why the railways attracted underground communists, as well as Service officers and informants. In 1930, the Service reported to the Minister of the Interior that “there is a Communist

<sup>772</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 189/1, p. 182.

<sup>773</sup> Compiled by the authors based on: LVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 189/1, pp. 190–196.

<sup>774</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 189/1, pp. 190–196.

Party organisation on the Latvian Railway”, as evidenced by the proclamations issued directly to railway workers. They are distributed by certain professions – conductors and luggage-weighers.<sup>775</sup> Following the coup, particularly in the second half of 1934, there were always some eaves-droppers on trains who reported discussions between passengers and also railway workers. The railway workers communicated on a daily basis with passengers and station visitors, therefore, especially in rural areas, the information or opinion provided in an emotional state could have a lasting local impact on society, at least in the eyes of the Service. For example, already at the beginning of June 1934, the Head of Vecgulbene regional unit reported to the Political Department in Riga on anti-government railway workers – a switchman at Dzelzava railway station (in response to the introduction of the martial law, he had said “farmers should be punched”) and a conductor (“a person with communist views, [...] who has been arrested previously for offences during the reign of Bolsheviks in Latvia”).<sup>776</sup> In turn, an opinion expressed by a Jewish tinman on the subject of political changes: “The government of Ulmanis stinks, we will overthrow it with shotguns” carried either a sentence of 50 Lats or one month in prison.<sup>777</sup> While some drunken carpenter on the train later received the same punishment after calling out loud in Russian: “*Chto mne eta jobanaja Latvija, kogda ei ne sochuvstvuyu, a sochuvstvuyu Rossii*”,<sup>778</sup> and this was followed by singing a revolutionary song.<sup>779</sup> Finally, when a Latvian blacksmith vented his anger by saying: “This guy, Ulmanis, will not be in the leading position in Latvia for a long time; he deserves to have his guts removed”, he was punished with a 100 Lats fine or one month in prison. It is interesting that these examples, as well as most others found in the case, are described as “spreading false news and rumours”.

Some cases in documents relating to the period after the 1934 coup indicate that the Service also paid attention to postal and telegraph staff whose routine tasks involved the exchange of key information. For example, a mailwoman working in Ape parish came to the attention of Service officers as a former head of the Ape branch of the local Social Democratic Workers' Party and a member of the SSS, who hosted meetings for members of these organisations at her home.<sup>780</sup> Although these are only a few examples, they highlight the interest of the Services towards specific professions, relevant in terms of communication.

<sup>775</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/22, file 940, p. 86.

<sup>776</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 189/1, p. 163.

<sup>777</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 189/1, p. 171.

<sup>778</sup> Translation: “Why the fuck would I need that fucking Latvia, if I don't care about it? I only care about Russia!”

<sup>779</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 189/1, p. 246.

<sup>780</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 189/1, p. 187.

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The Service focused on different groups of society, but the common feature was the expression of anti-establishment statements and conduct. Due to the specifics of its work, the Service had to keep an eye on almost every organisation and ethnic minority. The scope especially expanded following the coup in the second half of 1930s, when any organisation or individual could be suspected due to their activities or statements in the context of national security.

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## CHAPTER 6

# Pre-Trial Investigation

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During the interwar period, the Security Service not only monitored the society in Latvia, but was also entitled and able to take action. In order to fulfil its task – the fight against politically unreliable and state-threatening individuals and groups of individuals – the Service conducted pre-trial investigations and various investigatory activities, including searches, questioning and detention of persons, in order to gather sufficient evidence of indictment so that the suspect could be brought before court.

In November 1923, Director of Political Security Department E. Āboltiņš told his subordinates at the Political Security Department that “the Political Security Department must, by its nature and tasks, be swift and determined in its action”,<sup>781</sup> and this applies in particular to the investigative activities to be carried out.

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<sup>781</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 45, p. 101.

## 6.1.

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### Investigation (scoping)

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The pre-trial investigation, or the review of information concerning a person, group or organisation, was initiated by the Service based on:

- 1) “written reports by natural persons or Service officers; and, verbal reports by natural persons must be recorded and have to be signed by the reporting person,”
- 2) and receiving such a top-down order.

The launching of an investigation had to be immediately notified to the prosecutor of the regional court, and relevant documents had to be filed according to statutory requirements.<sup>782</sup> In Valmiera, for example, upon submission by the Social Democrats, the officers of the Service investigated the disruption of the meetings of Social Democrats, which happened on 2 and 3 October 1923 and which was deliberately carried out by supporters of the Latvian National Club – Vanagi. The investigation, however, concluded the opposite: the Social Democrats had organised events with the aim of compromising the Vanagi movement of secondary school pupils, thus negatively reflecting the civil (non-socialistic) parties and their supporters.<sup>783</sup>

The investigation was carried out by each regional unit. For example, in August 1921, 165 investigations were open in the regions. Of these, 44% or 72 cases concerned crimes committed during the so-called Bolshevik period, and 93 cases about “recent times”. 58 investigative cases, or only 35% of all of them, were initiated by the Political Security Department, while the remaining 107 were initiated by other authorities (mainly police) or natural persons.<sup>784</sup>

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<sup>782</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/9, file 7, p. 106.

<sup>783</sup> Paeglis, A. *Visu par Latviju! Latvju Nacionālais klubs un aktīvais nacionālisms 1922–1927* (ENG: All About Latvia! Latvian National Club and Active Nationalism 1922–1927). Riga: Author’s edition, 2009, p. 123.

<sup>784</sup> LVVA, fund 7432, description 3, file 22, p. 1, 2.

**Number of investigation cases in Political Security Department regions,  
August 1921<sup>785</sup>**

	Cases under investigation (total)	Cases by time of commission of a crime		Investigation cases by party of initiation		Arrested	Total arrested
		For activities during Bolshevik times	For activities during "recent times"	Political Security Department	Other institutions, police and natural persons		
Daugavpils region (as of 02/08/1921)	25	4	21	12	12	4	5
Rēzekne region (as of 04/08/1921)	17	10	7	7	10	0	0
Vecgulbene region <sup>786</sup> (as of 05/08/1921)	30	9	21	7	23	0	2
Liepāja region (as of 11/08/1921)	16	9	7	8	8	5	5
Valmiera region (as of 12/08/1921)	12	3	9	7	5	6	8
Rīga region (as of 13/08/1921)	64	37	27	17	47	7	48

The historian Ojārs Niedre claims that “the arrest and conviction of opponents was not the main objective of the action of the Latvian counterintelligence,<sup>787</sup> but one of the means to weaken the actions of opponents.”<sup>788</sup> One could agree with this, but both the LVVA documents and, in particular, the memoirs of V. Alps, show that the investigation and its logical follow-up – the judicial proceedings – have been an important part of the Service. For example, at the beginning of October 1920, the senior case officer of the Political Security Department, Jūlijs Krauze, reported from Ventspils to the head of the Political Security Department that the “contacts of Ventspils case officers with secret communist agents from Ventspils Intelligence site were hindered, so now I am forced to establish new contacts”. Moreover, he

<sup>785</sup> Compiled by the authors based on: LVVA, fund 7432, description 3, file 22, p. 1, 2.

<sup>786</sup> A remark is made to this entry: “The scoping takes a rather slow pace – several non-completed files from January and February.”

<sup>787</sup> The author counts the Security Service among these.

<sup>788</sup> Latvijas izlūkdienesti, 1919–1940. 664 likteņi (Latvian Intelligence, 1919–1940: 664 Fates). *Latvijas Vēstures Institūta Žurnāls*. 2001, No. 4, p. 11.

points out that it would be difficult to do so because “there is nothing serious going on in Ventspils and in the region, because all the communist elements are in a waiting position”, but as soon as it will be possible to establish contacts and collect intelligence, there will be a lot of work.<sup>789</sup>

However, in as early as 24 October J. Krauze reported that “he has established contact with the Ventspils communist organisation” and provided a more detailed description of it. Ventspils region is said to be divided into two districts. The first is the city, led by the district’s head and courier Marija Grantiņa (previously arrested but released due to a lack of evidence), with six groups and two youth groups – “Zieds” and “Vētra” (ENG: “Blossom” and “Storm”). The second district comprises the rural areas with communist groups in at least seven sites, such as Dundaga, Kolka, Zlēkas and Ēdole, and the youth groups in Ugāle, Pope and Puze.<sup>790</sup>

At the beginning of 1924, the head of the Operational Unit pointed to the lack of proactivity and initiative by his subordinate officers, stating that “the success of work does not exist in the mere execution of files and documents that are handed over, but each officer has a duty, regardless of his/her direct duties, to pursue contact with organisations and layers of society, which hide the political criminals, who perform their destructive activities there”.<sup>791</sup> The head makes an interesting statement saying that “extra remuneration will be paid to officers, on top of the monthly salary, for turning in recruited informants and reports, depending on their value and usefulness”.<sup>792</sup>

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<sup>789</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 8, p. 10.

<sup>790</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 8, p. 30.

<sup>791</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/6, file 726, p. 12.

<sup>792</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/6, file 726, p. 12.

## 6.2.

### Search and inspection

To obtain evidence, the officers carried out searches of the suspect and of his/her place of residence or any other building or room. The instruction document of 1924 defines a search “as an inspection or searching of a known person, thing or premises with the intent to find something criminal or prohibited by law”.<sup>793</sup> A search was only carried out after the observation had brought enough information and was only allowed to be carried out in accordance with the procedures laid down by law.

As early as in 1920, the Service officers were told that searches may only be carried out “on the basis of an appropriate warrant” and in consultation with law enforcement authorities.<sup>794</sup> As a result, searches, such as those at the place of residence, were only carried out by the Service in cases where confirmed information was received on the presence of compromising materials such as proclamations, illegal literature, weapons, etc., at the address. Based on the evidence found, the person was detained. Similarly, for evidence to be regarded as legally obtained by searches in private apartments, two witnesses, who could not be officers, were always invited. Most often they were a janitor or manager of the house, a night guard, a door guard or one of the residents of the house.<sup>795</sup>

Successful searches were based on an action sudden and unexpected to the suspect(s). If the search was planned at more than one site linked to a single infringement, all of these places had to be searched at the same time. In order to ensure successful results, the relevant preparatory work was carried out before the envisaged operation, during which all the officers involved studied the case and the specific features of the person or premises to be inspected.<sup>796</sup> It has been pointed out that, during the search, the safety of the Service officers should first be considered, in terms of arms, external risk assessment, invisible and quiet approach. When entering the area, all roads out of it must be blocked and the persons in the room

<sup>793</sup> *Instrukcija Politiskās apsardzes aģentūrai* (ENG: Instruction for the Political Security Department's Agency). Rīga: Politiskās apsardzes izdevums, 1924, p. 42.

<sup>794</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/6, file 726, p. 210.

<sup>795</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/9, file 7, p. 95; *Instrukcija Politiskās apsardzes aģentūrai* (ENG: Instruction for the Political Security Department's Agency). Rīga: Politiskās apsardzes izdevums, 1924, p. 44.

<sup>796</sup> *Instrukcija Politiskās apsardzes aģentūrai* (ENG: Instruction for the Political Security Department's Agency). Rīga: Politiskās apsardzes izdevums, 1924, p. 43.

must be ordered to remain in their places, and they must also be inspected first. The reason for the search shall be announced loudly and clearly. After a search, the people must be led together under the supervision of a guard to the corner of the room or in a separate room, so that they can follow the ongoing search. Then, there should be a general inspection of the premises followed by the search, which should be planned, not chaotic, but gradually moving from one object to another.<sup>797</sup>

The search needed to be carried out with particular care, because political activists used various original and particularly innovative ways to hide evidence. In order to better understand why the officers of the Service had to work carefully and creatively and how political criminals were hiding evidence, the detection of the illegal communist printing works “Spartaks” in Liepāja in 1930 shall be drawn as an example. For almost 10 years, intelligence was collected on communist activities in and around Liepāja, but the Service officers had not been able to find illegal printing works, the existence of which had previously been reported. In spring 1930, new leads were obtained on persons who were allegedly related to the operation of the printing works. They were followed and a search was carried out in their apartment later, during which compromising materials and further indications were found – remarks on sums of money to be given to Oto Ansiņš. Then the apartment of O. Ansiņš was searched, but “without success”. However, it was decided to repeat the search, which resulted in finding: “2 tin cans with printing ink and fresh excavations under the wood shed rubble and moving of bricks in the walls of the narrow cellar. Search results: 50 kg metal letters, 3 typesetting machines, printing rollers, earlier on 19 April, scattered proclamation set “Down with Judases – traitors of the workers’ class!”, various printing equipment, “Propaganda library” (50 kg), manuscripts, false seals and stamps and 4 loaded guns.” Finding the printing house (even during the search) was particularly difficult because the manager “had hidden it in a specially prepared carpenter desk, and the imitation of the carpenter workshop had been a great disguise for the secret printing house”.<sup>798</sup>

Later on, the officers of the Political Department write about the operation of the Liepāja printing works: “Vilis Babkovskis managed the “Spartaks” printing house for 9 years – initially he was a shopkeeper at 62 Brīvības Street, later a disabled war veteran at 13 Kapsētas Street. He received 80 Lats per month for the management of the printing works, for which he had promised his comrades that the Security Service “won't get me alive!” and had got himself 4 guns. Babkovskis was initially assisted by his wife, but she died in 1921, leaving him with their underage son. To bring up his son, the 32-year-old Babkovskis found a nanny – the daughter of his sister-in-law Anna Gaile, whose 14-year-old daughter Alīde became

<sup>797</sup> *Instrukcija Politiskās apsardzes aģentūrai* (ENG: Instruction for the Political Security Department's Agency). Rīga: Politiskās apsardzes izdevums, 1924, p. 46, 47.

<sup>798</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/8, file 553, p. 49, 50.

his closest aid in the printing house and his romantic partner. In the summer of 1929, Babkovskis died from galloping consumption. The management of the printing house is taken over by Alīde Gaile and her future romantic partners Jānis Kupše and Andrejs Lanka.<sup>799</sup>

Illegal communist printing works, which were deliberately hidden, were operating elsewhere in Latvia. For example, in 1931, the Service discovered an illegal printing works on the outskirts of Ventspils, at 20 Arāju Street, where the printed material “Ventspils komunisti” (ENG: “Ventspils Communist”) was made. The printing works consisted of “typewriters, a “multiplier” and other necessary accessories. It was located in a rented apartment and the equipment was hidden in bags in a shed for firewood.<sup>800</sup> In 1934, a printing works was discovered in the apartment of a Tukums deputy, Fricis Sproģis, which “was located in a specially made and well-screened room within the apartment wall”.<sup>801</sup>

A similar procedure to that described above occurred when searches were carried out at the premises of the Service. The persons arrested and detained were immediately searched and a relevant protocol signed by the detained person and witnesses was filled in. The protocol had to be entered in a special register (search logbook).<sup>802</sup> The search was carried out by the duty officer of the arrest premises, following an order by the Service officers, drawing up a respective protocol. The personal belongings of the arrested person were “transferred for storage in the archive”, and the evidence and documents “to the department in charge of the arrested person”.<sup>803</sup>

The officers had to understand or distinguish a search from an inspection of detained persons. On 21 December 1923, the head of the Political Security Department, E. Ābotiņš, wrote to all the departments under his authority: “I must point to the fact that inspections of persons placed in the detention facilities of the Political Security Department are not properly understood – it is not like a personal search, for which the protocol on the search of a person is drawn up. Each person is also searched besides the search carried out in his/her apartment, and this should also be done by placing him or her in the arrest premises. The search is performed with the intent to remove anything that is not allowed to be held with the arrested persons, such as: valuables, knife, string, some sharp items, papers, etc. So, an inspection is not the same as a search: it [...] is based on the internal rules on the arrest premises

<sup>799</sup> LWA, fund 3235, description 1/8, file 553, p. 50.

<sup>800</sup> *Vēsturiskais apskats par Iekšlietu ministrijas Politiskās pārvaldes Jelgavas rajona izveidošanos un darbību* (ENG: Historical Overview of the Establishment and Operation of the Political Department of Jelgava Regional Unit of the Ministry of Interior). 1938. Latvijas Nacionālā arhīva bibliotēka, p. 37, 38. For a representation of Soviet propaganda events see: Pārlicināts komunistiskās partijas dēls (ENG: A Determined son of the Communist Party). *Tukuma Ziņotājs*. 25 April 1961, No. 50, p. 2.

<sup>801</sup> *Vēsturiskais apskats par Iekšlietu ministrijas Politiskās pārvaldes Jelgavas rajona izveidošanos un darbību* (ENG: Historical Overview of the Establishment and Operation of the Political Department of Jelgava Regional Unit of the Ministry of Interior). 1938. Latvijas Nacionālā arhīva bibliotēka, p. 59.

<sup>802</sup> LWA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 879, p. op. 41.

<sup>803</sup> LWA, fund 3235, description 1/6, file 726, p. op. 6.

and rules on holding a person in detention and therefore a search protocol does not have to be filled in and all the necessary requirements of a search shall not be met, but an appropriate remark is to be drawn up for the search of a certain person.”<sup>804</sup>



Fragment from the photo album of Liepāja regional unit of the Political Department.

In photos – communist underground workers. The case of the illegal printing house

“Spartaks”. Early 1930s.

LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/8, file 368, p. 1.

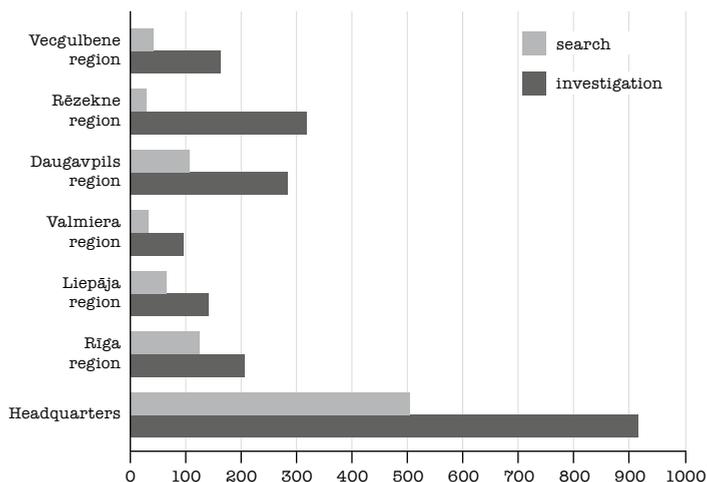
Inspections of individuals had to be carried out particularly carefully given that ever new and novel ways were invented to store illegal materials, such as the sewing of messages in the lining of clothing, hiding them in artificial teeth or inside various items of the person to be inspected, while “female collaborators tend to carry them hidden in a hairdo, corset, menstruation pads, secreted away in the most hidden body parts, etc.”<sup>805</sup> It shall be noted that the Service has also sometimes carried out so-called seizure operations. They were different from searches due to the fact that the purpose was to find a specific, particular item rather than to conduct a general check.<sup>806</sup>

<sup>804</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 45, p. 118.

<sup>805</sup> *Instrukcija Politiskās apsardzes aģentūrai* (ENG: Instruction for the Political Security Department's Agency). Rīga: Politiskās apsardzes izdevums, 1924, p. 100.

<sup>806</sup> *Instrukcija Politiskās apsardzes aģentūrai* (ENG: Instruction for the Political Security Agency). Rīga: Politiskās apsardzes izdevums, 1924, p. 54.

It was not always the case that when an investigation was initiated, searches were also carried out, and *vice versa*. Within one investigation, searches could be carried out at several locations. The active investigation and search carried out is demonstrated by the Performance report of the Political Security Department for the period 1 April–1 December 1921.



Number of searches and investigations by the Political Security Department from 1 April to 1 December 1921.

*Compiled according to: LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 62, p. 56.*

It was precisely the search and arrests that were the stages of the Service operation that also drew the attention of the society and the political community. In 1923, the Minister of the Interior, P. Bergis, described these activities as follows: “Search and arrest is a serious injury to the private life of a citizen, and arrest in particular, can only be applied by the state authority regarding a citizen against whom sufficient material has been collected to prosecute him.”<sup>807</sup>

In the Saeima debates and in the public space the Social Democrats strongly criticised the Service and made various accusations against its officers, including blaming them, claiming that they had placed evidence and various compromising materials in the personal belongings or places of residence of the accused persons, on the basis of which charges were later brought. This practice was followed by Soviet activists after the Second World War. For example, Josifs Šteimans wrote in his publication of 1957 on the activities of the Latvian Communist Party in the interwar period: “More than 900 members of the revolutionary trade unions were

<sup>807</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 894, p. op. 55.

arrested in 1920–1922. During the search at the Riga Trade Union Central Office, the Political Security Department's officers switched off the light and secretly placed illegal literature, hand grenades and even counterfeit money as “evidence” to allow for the arrest and further prosecution of revolutionary trade union workers. Under constant repression, less confident and mature workers were taken over by fatigue and pessimism and they left revolutionary trade unions.”<sup>808</sup> However, it should be borne in mind that although the author intended to show the Security Service in a negative light, he implicitly referred to a successful operation, not only in arresting illegal workers, but also in preventing others from joining the communist movement.

At the same time, the case described by J. Šteimans on the search of 8 August 1922 at Riga Trade Union Central Office, 116 Suvorova Street (now Krišjāņa Barona Street) and at the Student Club at 57/61 Tērbatas Street, not only received wide public attention and criticism by Social Democrats, but was also checked by the Political Security Department and judicial authorities. During the search, illegal literature and hand grenades were found, and one of the versions was that these, according to the instructions by Alfrēds Bērziņš, the head of the Political Security Department's Operational Unit, had been placed in the premises earlier by the informants of the Service – Alfrēds Līcītis (secretary of the Riga Trade Union Central Office, cover name “Anonīms”) and Vilis Folkmanis (cover name “Draugs”<sup>809</sup>), thereby committing “obscene provocation” and guaranteeing the arrest of suspects. During the investigation, evidence was gathered from stakeholders – Service officers and informants – and the latter changed their testimony several times, leading to the conclusion that the case had been politicised (note that the 1st Saeima election was approaching) and it turned into a demonstration of power between the Director of the Political Security Department, P. Martinsons, the former head of the Operational Unit, A. Bērziņš, and the new head, R. Štiglicis, as well as other officers and stakeholders (for example, an opinion in the form of criticism of P. Martinsons was also expressed by the retired officer of the Latvian Army, Artūrs Aparnieks). Based on the decision by the Acting Director of the Political Security Department, J. Kaktiņš, the case came to the Minister of the Interior and the Prosecutor of the Judicial Chamber who on 31 August 1923 ended the case against A. Bērziņš and P. Martinsons.<sup>810</sup>

Undeniably, the search as a demonstration of power had a psychological effect on the detained person, as demonstrated by the memoirs of the Social Democrat Voldemārs Bastjānis for his arrest and search during the coup of 15 May 1934:

<sup>808</sup> Šteimans, J. *Latvijas Komunistiskā partija cīņā par strādnieku šķiras vairākumu* (ENG: *Latvian Communist Party in the Fight for the Working-class Majority*). Rīga, 1957, p. 26.

<sup>809</sup> See more on his activities as the informant here: LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/22, file 632/7.

<sup>810</sup> See more: LVVA, fund 7432, description 3, file 31 (File Summary by the Judicial Chamber Prosecutor's Office On the Alleged Provocation by the Political Security Department at the Riga Trade Union Central Office and Student Club (orig.: Tiesu palātas prokuratūras “Izziņa par Rīgas arodbiedrību centrālajā birojā un Studentu klubā it kā no Politiskās apsardzības izdarīto provokāciju”).

“The armed men occupied the entire rather huge apartment. Searches started. No one was allowed to move anywhere. Each movement needed authorisation and had to be assisted by a policeman or a guard.”<sup>811</sup>

The purpose of the search was to obtain different types of evidence for the prosecution of the suspect. Not only verbal information, but also evidence, which served to make accusations and were later used in judicial proceedings, were important to Service’s work. Such evidence was collected deliberately and purposefully in parallel to gathering intelligence and during the detention and verification of persons. The archive documents contain information on a wide variety of evidence. These were various printed materials and printing equipment, weapons and ammunition, attributes of different organisations or ideologies, etc.

The obtained evidence from the investigators and the Operational Unit were sent to a desk officer, who received these together with a file and signed in the Unit’s logbook, as well as took care to ensure that all evidence “is well-packed” – in individual parcels (packages), with the relevant written statements (name, surname, father’s name, order No., case No. of the investigation unit) and tied together.<sup>812</sup>

Initially, there were frequent problems due to the fact that the received evidence and other items, which were subsequently to be returned to the persons under investigation, disappeared. For example, a lady by the name Zelma Lāce who was imprisoned in the Term Prison wrote several times in 1922 requesting the return of “an office book of intimate content”, which was listed in the search protocol, but “despite the most detailed search”, could not be found. And, the opposite happened when far more evidence were transferred than mentioned in the Operational Unit’s documents. This situation was explained by the fact that the desk officer often had to receive as well as acknowledge the receipt of the evidence without reviewing or comparing these with the current lists. Sometimes, there was a huge number of evidence, and their checking delayed the file from being transferred to the investigating judge. It has also been pointed out that investigators paid very little attention to such evidence, despite the instructions given, and returned them to the desk officer in “very poor” condition – in torn packages, not bound together, etc., and without any remarks on which evidence should be attached to the case, and which should be disposed of or returned to their owners.<sup>813</sup> It is interesting that some of the evidence, especially weapons, in the early 1920s, were used by the Service to perform its work (see more in chapter 2.4.).

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<sup>811</sup> The Social Democrat Voldemārs Bastjānis’ memories of his arrest on the night of 16 May 1934. Book: Ščerbinskis V., Jēkabsons Ē. (compiled by). *Apvērsums: 1934. gada 15. maija notikumi avotos un pētījumos* (ENG: Coup. Events of 15 May 1934 in Sources and Studies). Rīga: Latvijas Nacionālais arhīvs, Latvijas Arhīvistu biedrība, 2012, p. 249.

<sup>812</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 45, p. 21.

<sup>813</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 45, p. 21.

## 6.3.

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### Trap (setup)

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The creation of traps or setups (nowadays – conspiratorial apartment) was an important investigative activity. They were set up in different premises, apartments, houses and public buildings to carry out operational and investigative activities. Often, traps were installed in premises where pre-search and material was found to indicate the involvement of several persons in criminal activity. When setting up such traps, complete secrecy was a precondition.<sup>814</sup>

More information about their function can be obtained from the Riga Operational Unit's "Slēpņu grāmata" (ENG: "Book on traps"). It shows that traps were set up for longer or shorter periods as necessary and Service officers replaced each other according to the schedule and made the necessary entries in a trap logbook. The duration of stay in the trap varied from less than a day (for example, the trap at 27 Matisa Street was set up on 1 October 1921 and was already removed on the same day) up to a week and longer (for example, a trap was set up on 20 August 1920 at Apt.7, 7 Kazarmu Street, and was only removed after 10 days – on 30 August). Often, a number of traps existed at the same time. For example, on 23 May 1924 traps were put in parallel at Apt.87, 10 Marijas Street, and Apt.3, 12 Marijas Street, and on the same day both were removed.<sup>815</sup>

It is known that a total of 224 traps were installed in Riga in 1920–1926:

- › in 1920 (as of 20 August) – 38
- › in 1921 – 68
- › in 1922 – 40
- › in 1923 – 27
- › in 1924 – 22
- › in 1925 – 17
- › in 1926 – 12 (last entry made on 29 April).<sup>816</sup>

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<sup>814</sup> *Instrukcija Politiskās apsardzes aģentūrai* (ENG: Instruction for the Political Security Department's Agency). Riga: Politiskās apsardzes izdevums, 1924, p. 53; see also Chapter 3.3. on the killing of Service officers in a trap.

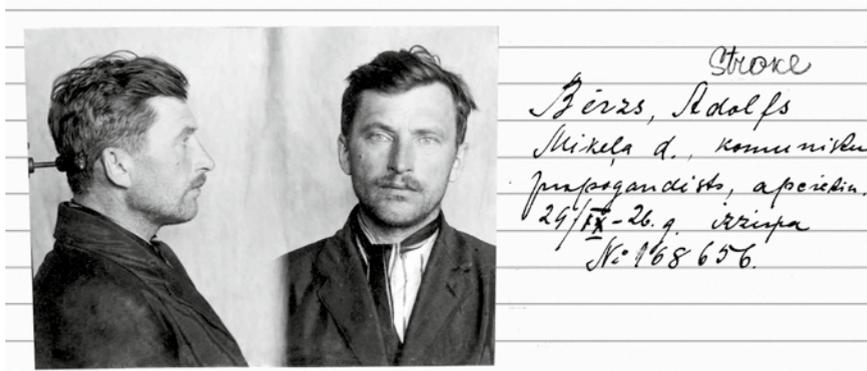
<sup>815</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 320.

<sup>816</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 320.



Fragment from the photo album of Liepāja regional unit of the Political Department.  
The detained communist underground member Lote Traukmane. 1926.

LVA, fund 3235, description 1/8, file 554, p. 73.



Fragment from the photo album of Liepāja regional unit of the Political Department.  
Ādolfs Bērzs (alias “Džentelmens”), the detained member of the communist underground. 1926.

LVA, fund 3235, description 1/8, file 554, p. 72.

V. Alps also shared his memories of the traps. He indicated that it was particularly difficult in public places – shops, laundry facilities and other places with a lot of people being present on a daily basis, because “people on duty within the trap find it hard to distinguish the visitors” and understand the reason for their arrival. He also pointed out that traps used to continue to operate after somebody was “caught”, while noting that “people detained in traps are never transferred to

the Service in the day, but only in the dark, so that the remaining members are not able to get to see the detained ones”<sup>817</sup>.

V. Alps also highlights the importance of the traps for the Service and claims that on occasions when the Service officers noticed in good time, the warning signs displayed by the communists to their fellow members to inform them that police officers or Service officers were present in the apartment or in another place of search or setup (for example, a note attached to the front door in a pre-agreed location or a note in the window), they had removed these notes. He stresses that “progress in catching underground workers was surprising”<sup>818</sup>.

An interesting example of a setup can be found in a letter prepared by the Political Department, Liepāja regional unit. According to the letter, in 1926, following the activities of an illegal communist organisation, it was found that the actual manager of the Lejaskurzeme organisation of the Latvian Communist Party, Grīnpauks alias “Likais” was living in a hairdressing salon in Liepāja, and the neighbouring apartment, which was entered through the salon, was a secret meeting place of communists. Later, on 28 September, search and arrest were carried out in the hair salon and apartment, and a trap was installed on site. The trap was successful and already on the next day, on 29 September, it “catches” a lady by the name of Lote Traukmane,<sup>819</sup> and the search at her apartment resulted in finding burnt communist newspapers in Russian. The search was also carried out by the detainee’s sister in Riga, where false documents and propaganda material were found.<sup>820</sup>

On the same day, the communist propaganda distributor, Bērzs alias “Džentelmens”, falls into the trap with false documents on him. His detention is described as follows: “On 29 September a “Džentelmens” goes to shave his beard in the hairdresser salon of Trankels. The salon is closed – doors shut, windows closed. But the “Džentelmens” knows about the entrance from the back. He knocks. The door is opened by the senior case officer Fimbauers<sup>821</sup> and, in the narrow hallway, he sees a broad-shouldered man, who with his hands in the pockets asks him whispering – “In the house?” – “In the house!” answers Fimbauers and moves behind the door. The incomer is the propaganda distributor, Bērzs. When stepping over the threshold, he is grabbed on each arm by two men – senior case officers Georgs Fimbauers and Ādolfs Graikste.<sup>822</sup> Both trap men feel that Bērzs has

<sup>817</sup> Alps, V. *Latvija spiegu tīklos* (ENG: Latvia in Spy Networks). Riga: LARO, 2006, p. 28.

<sup>818</sup> Alps, V. *Latvija spiegu tīklos* (ENG: Latvia in Spy Networks). Riga: LARO, 2006, p. 21.

<sup>819</sup> In 1924, in the vicinity of Ventspils, also known under the cover name “Meiņa Grieta”. *Vēsturiskais apskats par lekšlietu ministrijas Politiskās pārvaldes Jelgavas rajona izveidošanos un darbību* (ENG: Historical Overview of the Establishment and Operation of the Political Department of Jelgava Regional Unit of the Ministry of the Interior). 1938. Latvijas Nacionālā arhīva bibliotēka, p. 15.

<sup>820</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/8, file 553, p. 34.

<sup>821</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, The file on Georgs Fimbauers has not been preserved.

<sup>822</sup> Ādolfs Graikste, in service from 1 October 1920. In 1926, the senior case officer of Liepāja regional unit. See: LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 470.

something hard in his pockets. Guns! Disarm! But there is nothing dangerous – a big key in one pocket, and an electric torch in the other. Bērzs tries to escape and flee. The rooms are too narrow to fit three men in a serious fight. Trying to escape, and considering the narrow room, Bērzs beats the walls and fists of the case officers. “Murderers! White Guards!” shouts Bērzs in anger until he becomes calm and quiet. And he remains like that until the court day.”<sup>823</sup>

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<sup>823</sup> LWA, fund 3235, description 1/8, file 553, p. 34, 35.

## 6.4.

### Detention and arrest of suspected persons

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Detention of a person and their subsequent arrest was the logical next step. For example, detention of persons was closely linked to the inspection of persons and search of their residence. On 8 December 1920, the Political Security Department's officers together with representatives of the Prefecture of Jelgava searched the places of residence of multiple suspicious people after communist proclamations were spread for several nights in the city. As a result of the search, five (Jelgava Prefecture points out – four) people – two men and three women, were arrested. Proclamations, articles of political content and letters were found on them. The arrested persons were brought to the Political Security Department's officers in Jelgava, who sent all of them to the Riga Political Security Department.<sup>824</sup>

On several occasions, particularly at the beginning after the Service was founded, people were detained without a sufficient basis. For example, on 21 October 1919, the commandant of Vidzeme-Latgale district released two people arrested following the decision of the officers of Cesis regional unit of the State Security Department, stating that “the data on the basis of which they were arrested [...] I find to be completely insufficient”, and for those arrested “as doubtful persons without any charges”, the responsible persons were fined.<sup>825</sup> The commandant in the region, describing the overall situation in the summer and autumn of 1919, stated that “security authorities such as Commandants, Intelligence units and Security Department units – all arrested, searched and imprisoned both “dubious” and “suspicious” persons, and absolutely without reason, with a large proportion of them arrested without any written charges”<sup>826</sup>

At the beginning of its operation, the Political Security Department acted rather freely in detaining people. On 24 May 1921, an audit carried out by the Request and Complaint Commission found that “in the inspection of the arrest premises at the Service, the commission found people to be in detention for between one and 22 days, without decisions and notification to the Prosecutor. The Department considers these persons to be detained, not arrested. Besides, those arrested are not grouped according to the severity of their crime, and therefore are not subject to being guarded

<sup>824</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/8, file 8, p. 216, 221.

<sup>825</sup> LVVA, fund 3725, description 2, file 144, p. 71.

<sup>826</sup> LVVA, fund 3725, description 2, file 144, p. 72.

so that they cannot escape detention. [...]. The commission also found that detainees are kept for a long time without questioning. [...] The commission establishes that people are also being detained for the purpose of identification, along with speculators, tricksters and those who find themselves in a confused state”<sup>827</sup>.

As the instructions evolved and the war gradually ended, the detention of persons was strictly regulated and was only done if sufficient evidence was collected to justify it. On 4 January 1924, a Political Security Department’s officer was issued with a warrant to search a suspect’s home in Riga, at Apt. 1, 7 Kungu Street, “placing the issue of arrest according to the results of the search”. During the search, no compromising evidence was found, but the Political Security Department’s officer arrested the suspect. The head of the Investigation Unit called such action “arbitrary” and “a negligent performance of job duties”, for which the officer was punished.<sup>828</sup>

Account should also be taken of the fact that detention did not always happen calmly. There were cases when the suspect fled or fought back, resulting in physical force or firearms being used against the detained.<sup>829</sup>

Historian Edgars Andersons points out that at the beginning of its operation, between June 1920 and June 1921, 250 people were arrested by the Political Security Department, who were accused of communist activities. In February–March 1921, the Political Security Department detained more than 400 people, mostly communists and “suspicious persons”, but in May of the same year it arrested a large majority of the leading members of the Latvian Communist Party, many of whom were tried and punished.<sup>830</sup>

Looking at 1921 in more detail, it can be seen that on 1 April–1 December, the Political Security Department arrested 2322 persons or, according to their estimates, 0.00134 arrests per capita of the Latvian population. Of these, 1120 – by the Department, 246 – Riga region, 51 – Liepāja region, 87 – Valmiera region, 232 – Daugavpils region, 459 – Rēzekne region, 127 – Vecgulbene region.<sup>831</sup> However, the Security Service did not always manage to gather sufficient evidence to punish individuals and the detainees were often released without charges, as was pointed out by V. Alps in his memories. He writes: “For many underground workers it was not possible to find sufficient evidence of their anti-governmental activities, and such were always released.” But Alps continues to say that such people were often repeatedly caught, and “then they were treated with no care and had to be included in the next shipment to “paradise”<sup>832, 833</sup>.

<sup>827</sup> LVA, fund 7432, description 3, file 17, p. 164.

<sup>828</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 44, p. 6.

<sup>829</sup> Alps, V. *Latvija spiegu tīklos* (ENG: Latvia in Spy Networks). Rīga: LARO, 2006, p. 36.

<sup>830</sup> Andersons, E. *Latvijas bruņotie spēki un to priekšvēsture* (ENG: Latvian Armed Forces and their History). Toronto: Daugavas Vanagu apgāds, 1983, p. 479.

<sup>831</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 62, p. 56.

<sup>832</sup> Meaning deportation to Soviet Russia.

<sup>833</sup> Alps, V. *Latvija spiegu tīklos* (ENG: Latvia in Spy Networks). Rīga: LARO, 2006, p. 38.

The instruction document of 1921 provided that detainees were allowed to be imprisoned for up to two weeks, but, if necessary, subject to consent from the Minister of the Interior, this period could be extended to two months.<sup>834</sup> The Law on Central Criminal Police of 1924 enabled the Director of the Political Department, his deputies and heads of regional units to issue written orders to inspect persons suspected of political crimes, to search their homes and to detain and imprison them, of which the Regional Court had to be informed in writing within 48 hours. The law stipulated that people may be held in detention for up to five days, but with the consent of the Minister of the Interior and the prosecutor of the Judicial Chamber, this term could be extended to two weeks.<sup>835</sup>

The Service had arrest facilities, but sometimes, particularly during peak periods, the number of them was not sufficient to accommodate all detainees, and different conditions had to be taken into account, such as to prevent the arrested from communicating with each other. In order to address the issue of the premises, in particular in the early days of operation, some of those under investigation were transferred to imprisonment facilities under the authority of the Ministry of Justice – the prisons and arrest houses. For example, there are 20 women who were placed in Riga Central Prison in 1919 (August–November) on the order of the State Security Department, and 32 women who were transferred from the Political Security Department to the same prison in 1920 (October–December).<sup>836</sup> However, the placement of such people who were under investigation by the Service in prisons and arrest houses, was much more widespread.

Member of the organisation “Pērkonkrusts”, Ā. Šilde, was also among those questioned by the Service following the coup in May 1934. In his memories he remembers two nights spent at the Service building at 13 Alberta Street, where his cellmate was a member of the extreme right-wing organisation “Leģions”, who, according to Ā. Šilde, was recruited by the Service and brought to the cell “to elicit something from me and thus break me”.<sup>837</sup> During his second detention, exactly two years later – on 15 May 1936 – Ā. Šilde particularly emphasised that the time spent at the “dreadful house” on Alberta Street was hard not only because of the uncertainty about why he was detained, but also because he was not allowed to bring anything to read in the cell. Only on the third day, when Ā. Šilde went on hunger strike, was he granted the previously requested New Testament.<sup>838</sup>

<sup>834</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/9, file 7, p. 25.

<sup>835</sup> 20. *gadsimta Latvijas vēsture. 2. daļa. Neatkarīgā valsts 1918–1940* (ENG: History of Latvia in the 20th Century. Part 2. Independent State 1918–1940). P. 502, 503.

<sup>836</sup> Bērziņa, A. *Latvijas Republikas cietumos ieslodzītās sievietes, 1919.–1921. gads: ieslodzījuma raksturojums, ieslodzīto skaits un sociālais portrets* (ENG: Women Incarcerated in Prisons in the Republic of Latvia in 1919–1921: a Characterisation of Imprisonment, Prisoner Numbers and a Social Portrait). *Latvijas Arhīvi*. 2016, No. 1, pp. 131–163, p. 142.

<sup>837</sup> Šilde, Ā. *Ardievas Rīgai. Tikai atmiņās* (ENG: Goodbye to Riga. Memories Only). Bruklina: Grāmatu Draugs, 1988, p. 102, 103.

<sup>838</sup> Šilde, Ā. *Ardievas Rīgai. Tikai atmiņās* (ENG: Goodbye to Riga. Memories Only). Bruklina: Grāmatu Draugs, 1988, p. 117.

When arrested persons were brought in and out of the Service premises, care had to be taken to ensure that no people were present in staircases (including other officers). Similarly, a severe violation of discipline was a case, when a guard, a junior officer on duty or a case officer spoke to the arrested person during his/her transfer, as well as if several arrested persons spoke to each other while being transferred.<sup>839</sup> It was mandatory to record the time of arrival and transfer of the arrested person, while the person in charge of the transfer had to observe confidentiality subject to a previously received order.

At the same time, it is likely that the arrested persons sometimes managed to communicate with the outside world. For example, a letter of 26 July 1922 by a detained woman, Zelma, was found in the Service files. In the letter, the detained woman asks her aunt to bring her some underwear and clothes from her apartment to the Political Security Department's building at 13 Alberta Street. In the letter, the woman writes among other things: "Don't you worry about me. It's not that bad."<sup>840</sup>

Not only did the left-wing politicians criticise the work methods of the Service; they also expressed their opinion against arrests. For example, on 31 January 1922, the Social Democrats faction in the Constitutional Assembly submitted a "Request on the persecution of the workers' movement and beatings of those arrested and held by the Political Security Department", which describes the repressive methods of the Service against detainees ("beating of some arrested persons in the Political Security Department") and asked for an urgent examination of the said document. This was the case, because at the Constitutional Assembly meeting on 1 February 1922 this issue was already being considered, but its urgency was rejected and it was referred to the commission for further consideration.<sup>841</sup> Obviously, these objections were followed by a corresponding response, since the following documents give examples of the Service drawing attention to the circumstances of the persons arrested. For example, on 1 June 1922, the special task offerings Egons Lukstiņš was sent to Rēzekne, where among other things he had to "find out the behaviour of the case officers Potašņiks and Ziemelis towards the detainees", but a few months later – on 15 September, E. Lukstiņš was repeatedly sent to Rēzekne with the task of obtaining information on that which was published in the newspaper "Sociāldemokrāts" about "the refugee torture case in Rēzekne quarantine".<sup>842</sup>

<sup>839</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 879, p. op. 43.

<sup>840</sup> LVVA, fund 3234, description 1/2, file 146/1, p. 3, 4.

<sup>841</sup> Pieprasījumu par.. (ENG: Request for...). *Strādnieku Avīze*. 2 February 1922, No. 26, p. 1; Latvijas Satversmes sapulce (ENG: Constitutional Convention of Latvia). *Valdības Vēstnesis*. 2 February 1922, No. 26, p. 1.

<sup>842</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 389, p. 25, 28.

## 6.5.

### Interrogation

The interrogation or the hearings under the instruction document of 1924 were “the hearing of the accused or witness as regards issues of any criminal event”. The Service did so either in cases of urgency at the site of the event or after the detention of persons in specially designated facilities. Interrogation of the suspect had to be carried out within 24 hours of the detention. If several persons were interrogated, each hearing was to be made separately.<sup>843</sup> Prior to that, the identity of such person had to be verified. During the questioning, the task of the Service officers was “by asking various witty questions” to “make the accused, even if he tried to deny guilt, muddle his/her words and thus be forced to confess”. As necessary, the confrontation of prisoners or witnesses was allowed.<sup>844</sup>

In practice, the officers were aware that the people who were questioned most often tried to avoid the disclosure of truth, either to justify oneself or due to any other subjective reasons, but if this was not possible, to provide information on various extenuating circumstances. For example, in 1928, in Liepāja the Political Department detained an individual by the name of Tillers, who due to “miserable circumstances” had misappropriated a coat in the theatre. In the pocket, the officers found a notebook “with comments on the operations in the communist organisation”. Tillers tried to justify the content of the comments by explaining that he was not conscious when these remarks were made; namely, he “classifies his remarks as being written under the influence of cocaine”.<sup>845</sup>

A protocol was drawn up for each hearing, which was also presented to the person being heard at the end of the hearing. In July 1923, the head of the Political Security Department, E. Āboltniņš, pointed out to the subordinate bodies that the interrogation protocols contained general phrases (for example, disseminates communist literature, active in communist agitation, part of a communist organisation, etc.), without listing the specific and very important details – the

<sup>843</sup> *Instrukcija Politiskās apsardzes aģentūrai* (ENG: Instruction for the Political Security Department's Agency). Rīga: Politiskās apsardzes izdevums, 1924, p. 55, 56.

<sup>844</sup> *Instrukcija Politiskās apsardzes aģentūrai* (ENG: Instruction for the Political Security Department's Agency). Rīga: Politiskās apsardzes izdevums, 1924, p. 54, 55.

<sup>845</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/8, file 553, p. 42.

time and place of the crime, how the crime was discovered, etc., which would allow one to specify the charges. He also pointed out that “only the surname is often written in the protocol, without the name or the father’s name”, resulting in misunderstandings and individuals of the same names being mistaken for someone else.<sup>846</sup>

Not only did the interrogations play a key role in the detection of certain crimes, they also served in the gathering of general, complete information on a particular issue. For example, in July 1923, E. Āboltiņš pointed out that “under the existing trade union structure, rules and reservedness towards the outside, via the agents alone, it is difficult and even impossible to collect all the necessary information on the organisations’ structure, internal situation, composition of the board, number of members, etc.”. In order to tackle this type of problem, E. Āboltiņš stressed the significant role and importance of questioning during which “those accused on the merits and witnesses may be faced with questions of direct interest to the Political Security Department on the particular subject”. Thus, in his future work, he instructed the officers of the Service, “when questioning the accused and witnesses who have any connection with the trade unions to ask them questions related to the trade union’s structure and internal life. Statements of this kind, if they had no direct connection with the case under investigation, can be recorded separately for the purpose of the Political Security Department tasks”.<sup>847</sup>

Legal left-wing press of the 1920s, as well as communist memories published after the Second World War during Soviet occupation, contain information about illegal methods of interrogation used by the Service. According to the press, the officers of the Service tried to bribe witnesses during interrogation, beat and even tortured them. For instance, in 1926, the newspaper “Sociāldemokrāts” (ENG: “Socialdemocrat”) contains an article “Detainees are tortured in Latgale”, which describes the battering of a man named Eidelmanis in the Krāslava site of Political Department: “He was hit by a fist on his head, the temple area, punched in his sides, grabbed by the hair and pushed to the ground. Those committing the beating wore rubber gloves so that no bruising would be visible on the flesh. During interrogation, officers forced him to kneel on the floor. He was forced to kiss the cross but when he refused to do so, they injured his lips. There was blood, too! When he left the torture room, other arrested persons had seen blood on his face.”<sup>848</sup> Such details are also disclosed by members of the LSDSP. For example, Ansis Rudevics, a Social Democrat, member of the Constitutional Assembly and multiple-times parliamentary deputy, spoke in 1923 at the Saeima about the torture cases in Bauska. In particular, A. Rudevics referred to the former head of Bauska

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<sup>846</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 45, p. 68.

<sup>847</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 45, p. 69.

<sup>848</sup> Fragments from newspapers. LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 604, p. 10.

Region (the head since 1923), who together with police officers “tortured people and had hung them upside down from the ceiling”; women were also tortured.<sup>849</sup> However it should be noted that such publications were aimed at creating a certain notion (which is only partly true) in the eyes of the reader, and that the relevant newspapers (such as the “Socāldemokrāts”) were an important tool in political battles, which were often as biased as the far right-wing press.

Many suspicions of torture originated from stories told by detained communists, which were published in underground press to reflect the Service in a bad light, and also through such stories to actively promote Latvia as a repressive and police state abroad. Later, the communists’ memories already issued in the Soviet period are dominated by a uniform style aiming to shape the interwar period in Latvia’s history as barbaric and to create a discourse that is in line with communist propaganda. For example, in his memories the politician, communist Jānis Kalnbērziņš indicates in 1983 that in the interwar period in Latvia “the bourgeoisie had acted ruthlessly, acquiring work methods from tsarist *okhranka* and Western intelligence services that helped it”. J. Kalnbērziņš writes that the Service (he, like other communists, referred to the institution as *okhranka* in their memories, thus linking it to the Secret Police of the Russian Empire) was an essential part of the state’s “huge apparatus of violence” and indicates that “*okhranka* had ruthlessly dealt with communists long before the coup of the fascist [Ulmanis’] regime”. J. Kalnbērziņš describes his arrest and questioning, which took place in 1939, as follows: “I was grabbed by my arms and led. There was a car nearby. I was seated in it and brought to *okhranka*. I was photographed from the side, front, back [...] I was placed in a room without windows. A small bulb was shining from the ceiling. The bed was equipped with a wire net, without a mattress. These “rooms” had the nickname of coffins. During the day, I was taken to an investigator for interrogation. I was brought back to the cell. At night, two or three came back and transferred me to another cell with a wooden bunk. One ordered: “Take your pants off and lie down!” Before the torturing of those detained, they used to have a drink to get some courage. They started to hit me with rubber bats on the back and bottom. Then they asked for a response. I kept silent while biting the end of the wooden plank. I was hit some twenty times and then I was taken back to the cell. It always repeated. During the day I was called to the investigator, and at night came the drunken agents. When the oldest of them got tired and out of breath, he would sit down and hand the bat to the younger one. Then he could beat with full power again. The agents of the bourgeois Political Department had learnt their work from the German and English intelligence service. It was not in Riga that torture and rubber bats were invented. There were a number of beating methods. The tormentors knew how to beat. I was beaten on the muscle, but if one wanted to kill someone, he was beaten on the

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<sup>849</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 604, p. 10.

spine. Such punches echo in the brain, and a man becomes a cripple, a madman. However, they were obviously hoping to get something from me and therefore did not finish me. I was tortured for 17 days and nights. After 17 days, I was informed that I would be transferred to the Central Prison, where I would have to stay until court. I had hoped that there was some order in prison, that they would not make a mockery of the detainees there like in the *okhranka*.<sup>850</sup> The memories published in the Soviet era and the various articles relating to the methods of work of the Service would be worthy of separate studies.

It is undeniable that such stories, which reveal the violent methods of individual Service officers, were true at least partially. However, in the documents of the Service, there is little indication of violent interrogation methods. More information confirming the existence of such cases in the early days of the Service is provided by documents obtained from judicial authorities. On 22 October 1919, illegal interrogation methods were used by the officers of the State Security Department – the chief of Liepāja regional unit, Fricis Vītoliņš, and the case officers Šņoriņš and Ansons, who had interrogated three men in Ventspils Prison, suspected of operating in the gang of Kārlis Kretulis. The event was described in a letter by the Ventspils Police Prefect as follows: “The detainees had been brought to the prison manager’s apartment and beaten, especially the [detained] Polis, who had to be urgently transported to the hospital on the basis of a doctor’s conclusion. It is thought that Polis had suffered a rib fracture, but due to the swelling it was not possible to tell on site; a thorough investigation will be carried out in the hospital. As far as is known, the case officers Šņoriņš and Ansons had participated in the beating, using a sword and chair, which they had broken.”<sup>851</sup>

Already in the early days of the Political Security Department, its head V. Alps had instructed everyone verbally to “not use resources of power in questioning”. However, at least one case of infringement of the order is known. In particular, in October 1920, the senior case officer of the Political Security Department, Jēgers, was dismissed from the Service, and investigations were carried out for a violation of the order. As information on this case spread to other units, V. Alps writes: “I once again remind and instruct the Political Security Department’s officers to treat the public and those questioned correctly, without any power and threats when questioning. Officers who do not comply with this order will be dismissed immediately without ruling out their filing before court.”<sup>852</sup> All officers were repeatedly informed of the illegitimacy of the use of violent methods by the deputy to the head J. Kaktiņš, who wrote on 5 March 1921: “Since the Political Security Department has become aware of rumours that Political Security Department’s

<sup>850</sup> Kalnbērziņš, J. *Atmiņas* (ENG: Memories). Rīga: Liesma, 1983, pp. 104, 121, 145–185.

<sup>851</sup> LVA, fund 7432, description 1, file 11, p. 26.

<sup>852</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/9, file 7, p. 5.

officers approved of lawlessness and torture in questioning, once again I strictly instruct the investigation officers and case officers not to allow any abuses in their activities and to act in accordance with the rules of the Political Security Department. If, despite these remarks, violations by officers will be found out, the guilty parties will be brought to justice.”<sup>853</sup>

More specific information and examples of illegal work methods by the Political Security Department and violence by certain officers of the later Political Department are provided by the investigation cases of the Service that ended up in court. However, there are (at least as yet) no cases known where Service officers were found guilty of the charges that had been brought against them. For example, in 1926–1927, Latgale Regional Court accused the head Kārlis Briedis, the investigation officer Vilhelms Plass and the case officers Jānis Vītols, Mārtiņš Amatnieks, Hugo Mērnīeks and Voldemārs Tērauds, all of the Political Department’s Daugavpils regional unit, of using “means incompatible with a fair trial” during questioning. Namely, on 13 October 1926, the detained Leibs Lurje (detained in Krāslava) and his peer members, who were suspected of belonging to a communist organisation, which aimed at organising a military coup, were interrogated in the premises of the Political Department’s Daugavpils regional unit. The evidence provided by the victims shows that the Political Department’s officers had questioned L. Lurje “by holding him by his arms, punching him with a fist on various parts of the body, spitting in his face, clenching his genital organs with hands, pushing him down to the floor and forcing him to walk around on his knees on the floor, which causes light injuries to Leibs Lurje’s right elbow and both thighs”. Another detained, Zamuels Lurje, had been questioned “by holding him by his chest, pushing him against the wall several times and punching him in the head”. But one man by the name of Jākobs Gorodins was questioned “by punching him with rubber gloves on, on the heat, pushing him and pulling his head down with force, forcing him to kneel, pulling his hands up, pulling his trousers down and strongly clenching his genitals.”<sup>854</sup>

On 12 October 1927, Latgale Regional Court ruled that the Political Department’s officers were guilty of the accusations and would be prosecuted,<sup>855</sup> and the case was forwarded to the Latvian Judicial Chamber for further examination. On 26 October 1928, following the case investigation and review, the final judgment was handed down by the Latvian Judicial Chamber, which concluded, on the basis of the evidence obtained, that the charges were unfounded and the accused Service officers were found to be justified.<sup>856</sup> For example, the medical reports by doctors were taken into account; they had immediately addressed the plaintiffs

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<sup>853</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/9, file 7, p. 52.

<sup>854</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 394, p. 116; LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 700, p. 30.

<sup>855</sup> LVVA, fund 7432, description 3, file 50, p. 361.

<sup>856</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 394, p. 119.

and confirmed that slight injuries could only be detected on L. Lurje.<sup>857</sup> However, the investigation and prosecution of the case clearly demonstrate the efforts of the Service to prevent violence and unauthorised means of questioning, while stressing the importance of this issue.

Similarly, as in Daugavpils, also in Liepāja, in response to complaints of abuse by the Political Department from persons who had been brought to Liepāja Prison, in May and the summer of 1927 the case was reviewed by a specially established Commission composed of representatives of the Ministry of Justice and Ministry of the Interior. The Commission questioned a number of witnesses: the persons questioned and those in contact with them, prison officers and others. Several of those questioned, including women, provided a detailed description of the violence at the premises of the Political Department Liepāja regional unit. For example, the 22-year-old Ādams Voldemārs Kozlovskis, who demonstrated the violence and attempts of the Service to hide it, describes the events as follows: “I lost balance from the punch and fell to the floor. I can assume that someone else [...] was also pushing me. When I stood up, I was surrounded by the officers; they encircled me, and one of them had brought a football [ball] which he started to bang into my head. My head was spinning from the football and I once again fell to the floor. [...] I guess the officer Puriņš brought me to consciousness with some fluid. At this moment, I felt blood flowing. To have evidence of what happened, I wanted the blood to soak the clothes. This was seen by one of the officers and he shouted – he is bleeding! The officer who had come down to me cut off a piece of cloth and cleaned the blood with a towel.”<sup>858</sup> Also, Ā. Kozlovskis gives testimony that his pregnant bride, Eda (Ida) Kesenfelda, was detained and was physically abused during detention, and lost her child as a result. While in prison, E. Kesenfelda was also questioned, and she attested: “Briedis<sup>859</sup> grabbed me by the hair and pulled me, kicked me and slapped his hand on my head. I had been shouting while he was beating me. I was also made to stand for two hours at a wall without being allowed to sit or move. I was held at the premises of the Political Department for one day and night, after which I was sent to prison. In prison, I had uterine bleeding. I think it was due to the beatings at the Political Department.”<sup>860</sup>

However, similar to the above-mentioned communist memories, these testimonies of detainees should also be treated with the utmost caution, bearing in mind that there were people among the extreme left-wingers, who deliberately attempted to undermine the image of Political Department. The charges against officers of Liepāja regional unit of the Political Department were reviewed by Liepāja Regional Court, which decided on 4 November 1926 to end the case due to

<sup>857</sup> LVA, fund 7432, description 3, file 50, p. 167.

<sup>858</sup> LVA, fund 7432, description 3, file 51, p. 246.

<sup>859</sup> Head of Liepāja regional unit of the Political Department.

<sup>860</sup> LVA, fund 7432, description 3, file 51, p. 250.

a lack of evidence. The reason the case was closed was that “there were no signs on the detainees, which might lead to the conclusion that they might have been subject to some form of violence”.<sup>861</sup>

Also, in archival records of the 1930s and post-coup, there is no information yet found of torture or physical aggression during interrogation. In response to the allegations published multiple times in the newspaper “Sociāldemokrāts”, reporting of violence against detainees in the Service on 5 February 1935, after the newspaper was closed, the head of the Political Department J. Fridrihsons asked the Minister of the Interior to administratively punish the newspaper’s editor for publishing misinformation, and, with a rebuttal of the accusations, he explained: “While I have been head of the Political Department, there has been no case of an arrested person being beaten, because I have strictly prohibited it and I have not received any complaints, nor have any complaints been filed with other relevant authorities about similar cases. When you, Minister, visited the arrest premises at the Political Department– no one complained of verbal or physical abuse. The alleged inscriptions on the cell walls, referred to in the report: “I was badly beaten when arrested” and “I was questioned today, threatened and beaten once again in the evening” are a quick way to portray the Political Departments a “torture chamber” in the eyes of the public and thus to create a feeling of annoyance and outrage about it.”<sup>862</sup> However, the study of such sensitive, complex issues would require separate studies to review and analyse this issue, now – a preliminary notion – in depth.

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<sup>861</sup> LVVA, fund 7432, description 3, file 51, p. 255, 256.

<sup>862</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 146/2, p. 23.

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The forms and examples of the investigatory activities of the Service reveal the peculiarity of the authority's work and the need to act based on certain statutory procedures. For investigative activities, the officers of the Service needed to follow a thorough, successive set of activities, while respecting the principles set out in the instruction document, also seeking to obtain as much information as possible necessary for the investigative work. The sensitive context of investigative activities, in the view of the political regime concerned, became a subject of criticism of the Service, which at the same time contained both the truth and elements of exaggeration.

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## CHAPTER 7

## Other areas of operation

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The Service covered a wide range of areas which often overlapped with competences of other internal security institutions (such as the police). It was therefore necessary to establish constructive and effective cooperation with them during the interwar period. This chapter outlines the aspects of cooperation and the areas of operation which reveal the specific features of the Service's work during the interwar period.

## 7.1.

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### Inter-institutional cooperation

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The Service actively cooperated with various policing authorities, both military and civilian, especially in the first half of 1920s when the situation in the country was still fragile. For example, in December 1920, the Political Security Department's unit in Liepāja reported to the leadership that last summer in Priekule neighbourhood and close to the railway, a communist proclamation had been noted. To find the perpetrators, the Political Security Department worked together with the Internal Intelligence Unit of the HQ of the Commander-in-Chief of the Latvian Army. Cooperation resulted in the detention of several persons and the subsequent spread of proclamations ceased.<sup>863</sup>

The relevant legislation also provided for different police structures (political, order and criminal) to operate "in close coordination". In cases where there is no officer of the respective police at the scene of the crime, a file shall be initiated by the police officer on site, who shall immediately notify the responsible body. It was established that other crimes outside the competence of the Service were transferred to the appropriate authority. For example, "when a file was initiated in cases of smuggling, only the mere transaction should be recorded, after which the file should be immediately transmitted to the local customs official for further action, and communicated to the appropriate judicial authority and department for information".<sup>864</sup>

The former chief of the Police School, A. Ceriņš, wrote on cooperation between various police units: "Criminal Police and Political Department's officers have the right to request assistance from the Order police at search, seizure and detention. All Criminal Police and Political Police Department's commands in the fight against crime must also be executed by the Order police. Only by acting in concert and helping each other can the police do their difficult task."<sup>865</sup> Cooperation with the Criminal Police was also reflected in the obligation for each regional case officer on duty "to call all police stations in the mornings and in the evenings, between 7 and 8 o'clock, to inquire about any political incidents" and to report to the head of the Political Security Department and the Operational Unit.<sup>866</sup> Assistance in "important crime cases" could also be

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<sup>863</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 8, p. 149.

<sup>864</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 45, p. 197, 59.

<sup>865</sup> Ceriņš, A. *Policijas tiesības un pienākumi* (ENG: Rights and Obligations of the Police). Rīga: Policijas skola, 1931, p. 5.

<sup>866</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/6, file 726, p. op. 7.

requested from the guards,<sup>867</sup> as was the case during the War of Independence.<sup>868</sup> The most evident and, at the same time, controversial assistance of such kind took place during the coup, when in the second half of May 1934 the arrest of people potentially dangerous to the new regime was carried out by the guards.

In practice, however, cooperation with different internal security-related institutions often went smoothly, especially at the very beginning of 1920s. This was due to two circumstances: the level of mutual trust and concerns about competence and professionalism in certain but relevant issues affecting the operation. For example, on 16 November 1920, the head of the Political Security Department received a report from the Daugavpils regional unit saying that in the districts of Daugavpils and Ilūkste “a vile Polish lobby from local and arriving agents about Latgalian incorporation into Poland is being carried out”. The report stresses that the Service officers are investigating the case and “have already tracked down Polish agents”, but the Service officers are being hampered by local police, which mostly (around 80%) consists of foreigners. Whereas, “the Daugavpils Police Prefect Berķis<sup>869</sup> is known as a briber in the eyes of the Political Security Department and is now behaving very strangely on the Polish issue, maintaining contact with the Polish consul in Daugavpils [...]”. Thus, the Service officers stressed the need to “bring about radical changes in the team of the Daugavpils police” as a matter of urgency, and take other actions to stop Polish agitation.<sup>870</sup> Another example: the report of October 1920 describes cooperation between the Service and the police in Jelgava as “only possible to a very small extent, because the regional police are afraid to take action on political matters, but the city police are busy with their tasks”.<sup>871</sup>

In later years, as the Latvian police forces became stronger and more developed, the above-mentioned problems partly disappeared and cooperation improved in various areas – detaining suspects, information and operational activities, as well as preventive action. The close cooperation and sense of unity are illustrated by different photos of the relevant era, where senior officers of the Service are present at both formal and informal events, together with the executives of other bodies, in particular in the second half of 1930s. Moreover, since 6 July 1939, the Director of Political Department Janis Fridrihsons became the Director of the joint Political Police Department and the Criminal Police Department – Director of the Security Police Department,<sup>872</sup> which provided for further closer cooperation between security entities, which was suspended by the Soviet occupation less than a year later.

<sup>867</sup> Ceriņš, A. *Policijas tiesības un pienākumi* (ENG: Rights and Obligations of the Police). Rīga: Policijas skola, 1931, p. 5.

<sup>868</sup> See more: Butulis, I. *Latvijas Aizsargu organizācijas tiesiskie likloči (1919.–1940.)* (ENG: Legal Zigzags of the Latvian Guards Organisation (1919–1940)). *Latvijas Vēsture*. 1994, No. 4. p. 23–30; Ščerbinskis, V. *Aizsargu kļaušu dienests* (ENG: Corvée of Guards). *Latvijas Vēsture*. 1997, No. 4, pp. 44–52.

<sup>869</sup> Meaning, Kārlis Berķis (1879–1932).

<sup>870</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 10, p. 18.

<sup>871</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 8, p. op. 13.

<sup>872</sup> Andersons, E. *Latvijas bruņotie spēki un to priekšvēsture* (ENG: Latvian Armed Forces and their History). Toronto: Daugavas Vanagu apgāds, 1983, p. 451; Jēkabsons, Ē., Ščerbinskis, V. *Latvijas politiskās policijas vadītāji* (ENG: Chief Officials of the Latvian Political Police). *Lauku Avīze*. 29 July 1997, p. 31.

## 7.2.

**Dignitary protection**

A specific duty, including in cooperation with other internal security bodies, was to protect and safeguard the security of senior state officials – the President, the Prime Minister and others, including foreign officials when they visited Latvia. The preventive security measures included several levels, ranging from specific instructions on the task to a broader strategy. The instruction document of 1924 stipulated that one of the ways of monitoring was the “protection of higher statesmen”, where “the observer must be located close to the guarded person and shall carefully watch whether any of the public is trying to attack or otherwise harm them”.<sup>873</sup>

Precise instructions to the Service officers are revealed by the example of 6 July 1923, when “two capable officers” from Rīga were sent to Vaiņode railway station to meet and protect the Prime Minister, Zigfrīds Anna Meierovics. Previously, the Political Security Department’s Operational Unit had received news that an assassination was being planned against the Prime Minister. One officer was asked to monitor the road from Vaiņode to Embūte and the other – the surroundings of the station, as well as to organise a driver called “šķūtnieks”<sup>874</sup> and escort Z. A. Meierovics to the destination of his trip – Embūte Manor, where the meeting of the Farmers Union took place. The two officers were also obliged to safeguard the security of the Prime Minister on his way back.<sup>875</sup>

While it is clear that at a strategic level, preventive measures for the protection of senior state officials were already addressed in the 1920s, the “interdepartmental guide for the organisation of official trips and the related security measures for rulers, heads of state and high-level persons” received on 2 March 1936 gives a broader picture of the actions to be taken.<sup>876</sup> This instruction was based on a report prepared by the Committee on the People’s Union on 23 January of the same year on the project to prevent and combat international terrorism, which included various

<sup>873</sup> *Instrukcija Politiskās apsardzes aģentūrai* (ENG: Instruction for the Political Security Department’s Agency). Rīga: Politiskās apsardzes izdevums, 1924, p. 21.

<sup>874</sup> Šķūtis – an obligation imposed on farmers to carry out transport functions with their carriages and horses; hence, a “šķūtnieks” is the one driving the cart. Under the Act on Post Horses adopted on 9 March 1921, officials were entitled to apply to a municipality and request, at a fixed fee, a horse-carriage and a driver (“šķūtnieks”) for the transportation or transfer of belongings.

<sup>875</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 146/2, p. 89.

<sup>876</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 297, p. 11–29.

preventive measures for the safety of senior officials of the country during their travel. Although the manual translated into Latvian refers to the safety concerns of officials when travelling in France, most likely the guidelines contained therein were applied, also with a view to the safety of the President of Latvia and other senior officials during visits abroad and in the territory of Latvia, in particular, in the light of recent attempted assassinations against Kārlis Ulmanis, in September 1919, on 11 April 1920 and 27 April 1921 respectively,<sup>877</sup> and various conspiracies in later years.<sup>878</sup> The President's safety and security issues became particularly topical whenever the President travelled. This is also confirmed to a certain extent by the Service's underlined phrases in the instructions received, which are briefly described in the following paragraphs. The instruction stated that "before organising a trip and its various stages, [...] one should seek to gather information in doubtful circles, which could reveal the organisation of an event or even an assassination in due time".<sup>879</sup> There is also a need to check "foreigners or doubtful elements, hotels, accommodation sites or restorations"<sup>880</sup>.<sup>881</sup> The roads (the widest possible roads shall be selected) and the route to be taken by the President of Latvia shall also be observed"<sup>882</sup>.

The instructions also highlight the so-called "general rehearsal of walk" or preventive preparations affecting the location of the convoy and other accompanying persons.<sup>883</sup> The annex to the instructions highlights issues relating to the choice of accommodation and cooperation with its owners (reporting suspicious visitors), and to provide for careful monitoring of the sites that the President plans to visit during his trips, such as settlements, roads, bridges, monuments and other objects. Besides, premises to be attended by the President must be inspected in advance (e.g. theatre hall) and staff of these premises should be checked. In terms of infrastructure, particular attention was paid to the existence of lighting and heating, and on the chosen route, to the network of fire-fighting posts and to the quality of roads. During the event, the surrounding public was expected to be observed not only by the involved police officers in uniforms, but also by Service officers dressed in civil clothes.<sup>884</sup>

The practical functioning of the instruction of 1936 is confirmed by the continued preventive action and the involvement of the Service, in particular for the safeguarding of K. Ulmanis. For example, in the 1937 Harvest Festival in Jelgava, where K. Ulmanis participated, "together with Order Police and Criminal Police officers, public order is safeguarded by all officers from Jelgava regional unit and 28

<sup>877</sup> Kārlis Ulmanis. Website of the President of Latvia. See: (<https://www.president.lv/lv/valsts-prezidents/bijusie-valsts-prezidenti/karlis-ulmanis>) [Viewed on 2 May 2019].

<sup>878</sup> Stranga, A. Nodaļas no vēstures (ENG: Chapters from History). *Lauku Avīze*. 5 September 1995.

<sup>879</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 297, p. 12.

<sup>880</sup> Restaurant.

<sup>881</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 297.

<sup>882</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 297, p. 15.

<sup>883</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 297, p. 17, 19, 20, 23.

<sup>884</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 297, p. 25–27.

officers from Riga regional unit”<sup>885</sup>. Documents on the visit of K. Ulmanis to Kurzeme and, in particular, the visit to Kuldīga from 29 to 30 May 1939<sup>886</sup> reveal a very detailed programme or agenda, which has been drawn up in cooperation with several state and local government institutions, including the hotel accommodation plan of K. Ulmanis and other delegation guests being drawn up; this plan included three watch posts, the duty schedule at the post by shifts, as well as the staff assigned to work at the hotel and the premises of the hotel service staff.

If provided by a specific bilateral arrangement, the Service was also entrusted with the protection of foreign diplomatic representatives. There are interesting examples of the security services of the USSR Representation and its staff, first of all the security of the authorised representative of the USSR. As far as it can be concluded, police officers were assigned to guard the Representation, but within the framework of the secrecy, the building was also monitored by appointed Service officers.<sup>887</sup>

Service officers observed the behaviour of those who went on their daily route along the Representation's building. For example, when accompanying the plenipotentiary representative of the USSR, two young people caught the attention of the Service officers, because they followed the representative and “acted disgracefully”. When examining the behaviour of these pupils, the case officer found that they were pupils of Riga Russian Secondary School.<sup>888</sup> In some cases, the reports contain remarks by the Service officers that the USSR's authorised representative avoided the security he was appointed. For example, on 30 November 1928, the Riga regional unit case officer reported to his superior: “In August this year, Mr Birznieks, director of the Legal-Administrative Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, notified by phone that the USSR Envoy Lorenz said his security was a burden for him. Mr Birznieks suggested that the security should not be lifted, but that it should be continued without the Envoy noticing it, and such was the order given to officials. On 29 November, Mr Birznieks told me again by telephone that the USSR Envoy had repeatedly said that his security was a burden. After the second remark by the USSR Envoy, the Minister of Foreign Affairs expressed the idea that the permanent security of the Envoy should be stopped, but security should be ensured in certain events.”<sup>889</sup>

Previously, the head of Riga regional unit reported to the Director V. Ozoliņš on cases where during 1928, I. Lorenz had avoided or had clear dissatisfaction with the escort by giving “a very hostile look to the officer” and had repeatedly gone on walks or been driven by taxi “accompanied by his person”.<sup>890</sup>

<sup>885</sup> *Vēsturiskais apskats par Iekšlietu ministrijas Politiskās pārvaldes Jelgavas rajona izveidošanos un darbību* (ENG: Historical Overview of the Establishment and Operation of the Political Department of Jelgava Regional Unit of the Ministry of the Interior). 1938. Latvijas Nacionālā arhīva bibliotēka, p. 74.

<sup>886</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/22, file 767, p. 86–89.

<sup>887</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/6, file 313.

<sup>888</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/6, file 313, p. 19.

<sup>889</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/6, file 313, p. 138.

<sup>890</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/6, file 313, p. 122.

The Service also co-operated with other public authorities in the development of a programme of visits by foreign public officials in response to preventive security measures. On 9 May 1925, the Elder of the State of Estonia, Jüri Jaakson, arrived in Latvia. 25 officers were seconded for the visit – 20 case officers and five team leaders.<sup>891</sup> All groups were assigned to specific posts according to the visit agenda. The first group was located in different sites at the railway station where the top officials of Estonia arrived. Members of the second group monitored the planned route by observing the junctions of Matisa, Ģertrūdes, Lāčplēša, Dzirnavu streets. The other groups went to their sites on Rainis Boulevard, on the junction of Krišjāņa Barona and Marijas streets, at the building of the University of Latvia, in the yard of the Hotel Believeue, and in the castle square. It should be noted that two posts were permanently located in the castle. The case officers were also appointed to be present at some ministries and on the bridges over the Daugava.<sup>892</sup>

A day later, from 13.00 to 14.00 o'clock, there was a military parade on the Esplanade, where the post at the cathedral behind the fence accommodated Group 1 – three officers at the greenery, and 2 officers at the corner of the church. In the evening, the “party organised by the government” at the Blackheads House was supervised by Group 2 and the head of Operational Unit, R. Štiglics. Krauze, the investigating officer of the Political Department, was appointed to guard J. Jaakson.

The plan of the visit shows that before the guests arrived in the concrete buildings where the reception or cultural event was envisaged – the Small Guild, Opera or the House of Blackheads – one of the Service groups was instructed to arrive earlier, to check the premises and remain at the posts during the whole event. Similarly, significant communication work was carried out by Service females – a total of 15 women who were specifically assigned on duty waiting at the phones, between 9 and 11 May, in order to forward any information if necessary.<sup>893</sup>

A similar wide range of preventive measures was also organised on 21 June 1926, awaiting the President of Finland, Lauri Kristian Relander, who arrived in Riga by ship. Five groups of officers were placed at the posts in accordance with the plan of the visit at certain times. For example, waiting for the arrival of the important guest, Group 1 was located between the castle and the River Daugava, Group 2 – from the customs garden to the Ministry of Finance on Valdemāra Street, Group 3 – from the riverside tram track to Valdemāra Street, Group 4 – on Valdemāra Street near the Ministry of Finance and also at the Hotel Pēterburga, and Group 5 – in Pils Square and inside the castle.<sup>894</sup> A separate detailed plan of security measures was drawn up on the next day of the visit. These examples of visits by top officials from Estonia and Finland in Latvia confirm the importance of the Service and active involvement in the implementation of security measures.

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<sup>891</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/6, file 220, p. 22.

<sup>892</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/6, file 220, pp. 22–30.

<sup>893</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/6, file 220, p. 32.

<sup>894</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/6, file 220, p. 44.

## 7.3.

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### International cooperation

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The functioning of the Service was not possible without international cooperation, in particular with neighbouring countries where threats to national security were of a similar nature. It should also be noted that Latvia was not isolated from events in Europe and the world, and these affected the Service agenda. This course of action would be worthy of a separate study, which is why the main points are summarised in brief below.

The biggest threat to the internal security in Latvia – communists, developed widespread agitation throughout Europe, often using the territory of Latvia as a bridgehead for the export of revolution. Already in January 1921, the Director of the Political Security Department, P. Martinsons, in order “to take energetic steps”, notified his subordinates that “based on credible information, there is a fourth communist point in Cēsis for supplying Germany with agitation literature”.<sup>895</sup>

Since the operation of the communists was not isolated in the Latvian territory, it was also necessary for the Service to obtain information on political developments and, in particular, on the activities of the communists outside the borders of the country. For example, in January 1923, the Political Security Department’s leadership reported to the Ministry of the Interior on Soviet Russia-Germany relations: “According to a reliable source informing on the local developments in Germany, a German resident, the conclusion of a war convention between Germany and Russia is expected soon.”<sup>896</sup> Although the acquisition of such specific information, which is specific to foreign intelligence, did not fall within the competence area of the Service, during the course of the investigation the officers of the Service also often faced such significant information. In particular, much intelligence about the events in Soviet Russia was received by the Service officers from the questioned refugees when they returned to Latvia. Based on this information, the officers drafted reports for the Ministries of the Interior and Foreign Affairs. For example, in December 1920, by gathering information from the records of interrogation of persons who entered Latvia, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was

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<sup>895</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/9, file 13, p. 34.

<sup>896</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 146/2, p. 14.

informed that the Soviet Russia, despite the provisions of the Latvian–Russian Peace Treaty, was obstructing Latvians from returning to Latvia.<sup>897</sup> The Service also had specific information on the activities of Latvian communists in the Soviet Russia at its disposal, as well as information on events in certain cities (e.g. the presence of warships in the port of Petrograd (St Petersburg)), and general information on the mood of the population. The Security Service was also aware of the manifestations of communist terror. For instance, on 8 December 1920, the Service reported that in Soviet Russia, “all those who disagree with the Communist reign are shot without investigation and trial, and, when the arrested are brought to the place of execution, “praps”<sup>898</sup> are put in their mouths prepared specifically for that purpose, and before murder they are stripped off their clothes”<sup>899</sup>.

Although it was not within the competence of the Service officers to gather information on foreign military intelligence, because it was the task of the Information Unit of the HQ of the Commander-in-Chief of the Latvian Army, it was often difficult in practice to separate military intelligence from other activities, mainly anti-governmental activities by communists. As has been stressed several times, the communists in Latvia were closely associated with a targeted hostile policy of the Soviet Russia against the newly established democratic Republic of Latvia. The Soviet secret service provided extensive support to the communists in Latvia. Therefore, the Latvian Security Service actively tried to counteract and detect the people (and their dangerous intentions) sent from the Soviet Russia into Latvia.<sup>900</sup>

The officers paid particular attention to political developments in neighbouring countries and followed the impact they had on the events in Latvia. Already on 12 December 1920, the Latvian diplomatic representative in Lithuania, Vilis Bandrēvičs, wrote: “In the light of the strong propaganda spread by the Bolsheviks in Lithuania, which the government is successfully following, the latter thinks that it would be highly important to coordinate its action in this question with the same in Latvia, why I am asked to turn to our government with a request, whether it would not find it possible and useful, that the representatives of authorities of both sides in charge of this question would hold a joint consultation.” A resolution of the Ministry of the Interior received four days later highlights: “For the Political Security Department. It must be written in the response, that such consultations are intended and agreed not only with the Lithuanian, but also with Estonian and Finnish officers.”<sup>901</sup> Cooperation was obviously successful in the future.

<sup>897</sup> LWA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 146/2, pp. 153–156.

<sup>898</sup> Meaning, “a prapis” – a cork, a plug, a wad.

<sup>899</sup> LWA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 8, p. 157.

<sup>900</sup> *20. gadsimta Latvijas vēsture. 2. daļa. Neatkarīgā valsts 1918–1940* (ENG: History of Latvia in the 20th Century. Part 2. Independent State 1918–1940). Rīga: Latvijas Universitātes Latvijas Vēstures institūts, 2003, p. 506.

<sup>901</sup> LWA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 939, p. 53.

On 24 February 1924, the special tasks officer of the Political Security Department, K. Alksnis, went on a mission to Tallinn, “to find out whether the liquidated Estonian Security Police communist organisation has any contacts with the Latvian communist and spy organisations”.<sup>902</sup> And in November 1928, the then Head of HUMINT went on a mission to Finland.<sup>903</sup> While in the Lithuanian context, and especially following the coup of 17 December 1926, Lithuanian political refugees who arrived in Riga were brought to the Service’s attention (most likely, cooperation regarding information exchange with their Lithuanian colleagues).<sup>904</sup>

Dr. hist. Ēriks Jēkabsons provides the most striking example of the international cooperation of Service officers in his monograph on the armed attack on the USSR diplomatic couriers on the train Riga–Moscow (near Ikšķīle Train Station) on 5 February 1926.<sup>905</sup> During the attack, one of the USSR’s couriers – Latvian Teodors Nets, – was killed, and the other – Estonian Johan Mahmastal – was injured. The two couriers were active and “experienced” communist activists.<sup>906</sup> This attack was widely discussed in Latvia and beyond. Two attackers also died. It was reported initially that the attack was of a criminal nature and committed for the purpose of looting, and, therefore, the Service was not called upon to perform the investigations. Such a report caused the frustration of the USSR, which even threatened a conflict between Latvia and the USSR, reinforced by the mysteries and politicisation of the event. Only later did the investigation involve the Service, which confirms the change of position of the Latvian authorities and increased attention to the attack that had taken place. The main task of the Service’s officers was to find out whether the two murdered attackers – Lithuanian citizens of Polish descent, the brothers Anton and Bronislaw Gabrilovich – had any partners in crime. In order to achieve this, the Security Service installed surveillance posts and setups, carried out several interrogations and searches, during which the potential evidence was confiscated and several suspects were temporarily arrested.<sup>907</sup> However, despite the extensive investigation of the case by various police forces, this attack case remained unsolved. This did not prevent the USSR from putting forward its “official” version – the attack was organised and financed

<sup>902</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/1, file 44, p. 179.

<sup>903</sup> LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/6, file 726, p. op. 32.

<sup>904</sup> See more: Feldentāle, E. *Lietuvas politisko bēgļu darbība Latvijā 20. gs. 20. gadu otrajā pusē* (ENG: Activities of Lithuanian Political Refugees in Latvia in the Second Half of the 1920s). Bachelor’s Thesis. Scient. supervisor Jēkabsons, Ē. Rīga: Latvijas Universitāte, 2015, pp. 64–73.

<sup>905</sup> Jēkabsons, Ē. *Uzbrukums Padomju Savienības diplomātiskajiem kurjeriem pie Ikšķīles 1926. gada 5. februārī* (ENG: Attack on the Soviet Union Diplomatic Couriers near Ikšķīle on 5 February 1926). Rīga: Zvaigzne, 2012, p. 158.

<sup>906</sup> Jēkabsons, Ē. *Uzbrukums Padomju Savienības diplomātiskajiem kurjeriem pie Ikšķīles 1926. gada 5. februārī* (ENG: Attack on the Soviet Union Diplomatic Couriers near Ikšķīle on 5 February 1926). Rīga: Zvaigzne, 2012, pp. 16–30.

<sup>907</sup> Jēkabsons, Ē. *Uzbrukums Padomju Savienības diplomātiskajiem kurjeriem pie Ikšķīles 1926. gada 5. februārī* (ENG: Attack on the Soviet Union Diplomatic Couriers near Ikšķīle on 5 February 1926). Rīga: Zvaigzne, 2012, pp. 95–104.

by the British Intelligence Service and was covered by the Latvian intelligence and security services.

The exchange of information between the counterintelligence and security services of different countries, in particular with neighbouring countries Estonia and Lithuania, as well as Finland and Poland, was particularly important throughout the interwar period. For example, cooperation with Polish intelligence services in the transmission of information (mainly military) already took place in 1920. It is known that the exchange of information was also taking place from the beginning of the 1920s between the Polish and Latvian counterintelligence and security services. As early as in May 1921, the Polish Intelligence Network unit, established and based in Riga, “*Ryga*”, was assisted in the tracing of the Soviet representative office by the Political Security Department led by V. Alps. The cooperation continued, for example, in 1927, with the technical employee of the Polish Consulate in Daugavpils, Stanislav Kalinowski, who was actually familiar with the Polish intelligence work against the USSR and Lithuania, and the Political Department.<sup>908</sup> It should be noted, however, that its intensity was largely influenced by the political relations between Latvia and Poland, which did not always run smoothly.

Cooperation between Latvian and Estonian counterintelligence and internal security services are characterised not only by business visits, but also by the exchange of information aimed at the common fight against the harmful activities of underground communists in both countries. For example, in April 1925, Johan Sooman, the chief of Estonian Political Police, reported on 7–9 Estonian communists who had arrived in Latvia aiming to organise the assassination of the Elder of the State of Estonia during his visit to Riga.<sup>909</sup> There was also cooperation on other exchanges of information on legislative practice on internal security or on changes to it and other issues related to the fields of competence. For example, the reply letter of 17 February 1932 to the Deputy Director of the Estonian Security Police Department, J. Sooman, confirms that the request by an Estonian colleague to send details of the Central Criminal Police Act was satisfied.<sup>910</sup> While, relations with Lithuanian colleagues, apart from this attack, include the interest of the Service officers in the “Klaipeda National Socialist-conspirators trial” of 1934,<sup>911</sup> when Nazi activists were arrested in a city, which was an issue of territorial arguments between Lithuania and Germany already from the beginning of 1920s. The Latvian and Lithuanian security services also successfully cooperated in the

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<sup>908</sup> Jēkabsons, Ē. *Latvijas un Polijas militāro izlūkdienestu sadarbība 1919.-1939. gadā* (ENG: Cooperation between Latvian and Polish Military Intelligence Services in 1919-1939). *Latvijas Kara muzeja gadagrāmata. Nr. 4* (ENG: Yearbook of the Latvian War Museum. No. 4). Rīga, 2003, pp. 111–134; p. 117, 120, 124.

<sup>909</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/22, file 940, p. 231.

<sup>910</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 189/1, p. 24.

<sup>911</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 939, p. 6.

search for any illegal activities of an international nature. For example, on 6 May 1940, the Lithuanian Security Service notified colleagues in Latvia about a British citizen in Lithuania, A. Williams, who was suspected of espionage and who was in correspondence with a British national living in Riga, Alfred Perseus Robert Dunham, of whose earlier offences the Service was already informed.<sup>912</sup>

The Lithuanian historian Arvydas Anušauskas describes the cooperation of Latvian and Lithuanian counterintelligence and security services during the interwar period as mutually active, in particular by coordinating the information available to the services and the measures adopted regarding the support provided by the USSR to illegal communist organisations located in the territories of both countries. A. Anušauskas also points out that in Latvia, the espionage by the USSR was expanded to a larger extent and that in 1939, as the military and political situation worldwide escalated, contacts between the Political Department of Latvia and Lithuania became even more intense.<sup>913</sup>

The successful international cooperation is also characterised by state awards granted to foreign colleagues, in particular the Order of the Three Stars. On 14 November 1934, the cover letter to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the award of the Order of Three Stars refers to both the Head of the Finnish Political Police and the Head of the Estonian Police Department, Friedrich Kuusekänd.<sup>914</sup> On 28 October 1935, the Minister of the Interior submitted a nomination requesting to award the Order of the Three Stars, Class 3, to the head of the Finnish Political Police, Esko Riekki. To justify the award, it is written that “Esko Riekki has for many years established close contact and joint cooperation with our police authorities, especially with the Political Department. He has provided comprehensive and detailed information on the movements of different types of criminal organisations in their own country, which are closely linked to the smooth functioning of the Political Department.”<sup>915</sup> The close contact with the Finnish security authorities has been demonstrated by the mutual exchange of information on the international network of communist activities since the mid-1920s.<sup>916</sup>

The same application was submitted to the Chapter of Orders and the Council of the Order of the Three Stars in November 1938, justifying the award of the order of Class 3 to the head of the Lithuanian Political Police, Felicijonas Bortkevičius.<sup>917</sup>

<sup>912</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 939, p. 33, 34.

<sup>913</sup> Anušauskas, A. *Lietuvos žvalgyba., 1918–1940*. Vilnius: Versus aureus, 2014, p. 127, 281.

<sup>914</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 879, p. 51.

<sup>915</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 879, p. 13.

<sup>916</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 146/2, p. 70.

<sup>917</sup> LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 879, p. 15.

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The functions of the Service implied the need for specific preventive actions, linked to the prevention of direct threats not only to the existing democratic system of the country, but also to the highest officials of the country who represent it. This required not only strategic and operational descriptions of actions and processes, but also the need for coordinated action with other national internal security structures.

The specifics of the Baltic region posed similar internal threats for the new countries, which were linked to the regime of neighbouring Soviet Russia and later the USSR and the desire to support anti-democratic, communistic and anti-Baltic groups within these countries. It also created the basis for close international cooperation between relevant security authorities to combat communist threats.

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# Conclusion

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As already mentioned in the introduction of this research, this is the first more extensive attempt in a single document to deal with the functioning of an institution that is important for national security and that is complex in its operation. Readers should treat the paragraphs below more as a summary or authors' reflections on the overall functioning of the Service, without claiming to depict a complete historic picture.

The Service started its work shortly after the founding of the state and worked until its independence was lost, covering more than 20 years, during which it experienced infrastructure and personnel turnover, changes in legislation and a number of other innovations introduced over time. However, the core activity of the Service remained unchanged – strengthening of the internal security of Latvia. The Service did not operate without contradictions and this does not allow for clear conclusions.

The Service history in Latvia could be roughly divided into three stages: (1) between August 1919 and May 1924, or from the establishment of the institution during the Latvian War of Independence (operating in very difficult circumstances and making a major contribution to strengthening the internal security of the country (by counteracting the underground communists in Latvia), also after the war ended) until the increased state of security was lifted in May 1924; (2) between May 1924 and 15 May 1934, when during this decade, the Service continued to safeguard national security and the democratic system while facing the various practical

difficulties and the struggles among the political elite, setting up and improving the structure of the Service; (3) between May 1934 and the Soviet occupation in June 1940: in the context of authoritarianism, continuing to counteract entities that posed security threats to the country, but at the same time becoming a very important tool for public monitoring.

During the interwar period, the Service successfully implemented counter-activities to various national anti-governmental groups, mainly the communist underground, which was continuously supported by the Soviet Russia (later the USSR) aiming to weaken the Latvian State and to convert an increasing share of Latvian society to the idea of Communism. However, there were also other threats to the internal security, which were determined by various internal contradictions and the complex history of relations between different Latvian society groups.

National security was essential for the newly created Republic of Latvia. After the end of the War of Independence, the first years of existence of the Republic of Latvia were harsh, but despite various difficulties, the country proved the strength and feasibility of its own independence. During the first years of the country's existence the Service also faced significant challenges which have also had an impact on its activities, such as the regular transfer of the institution from one building to another, the difficulties of financial and technical provision and, in particular, the lack of previous work experience in democratic public administration. However, during the first years of the independent Latvia, it was possible to establish a Service structure covering the territory of the country which was effective and able to anticipate and identify threats to the internal security of the country in due time. To a certain extent, one can even admire the attitude and commitment by the majority of Service officers performing their duties. However, as with any other public authority, the Service had a number of problems and challenges, created not only by external but also internal factors. For example, lack of adequate personnel, provision of resources (restrictions on electricity, lack of weapons, improper premises, etc.), and lack of experience, which undoubtedly affected the functioning of the institution.

The legal and regulatory framework governing the work of the Service was gradually improved and extended, as also shown by the constant remarks about the Service's activities by certain political forces (in particular Social Democrats). It should be stressed that the Service did not have an unambiguous image in the eyes of the public during interwar period. And this is only logical, since the specific nature of its activity constantly included a certain degree of secrecy and sensitive elements which gave rise to different interpretations (e.g. stories by those detained on arrest, searches, questioning, etc.) and speculation on motivation.

Operational activities of the Service and even more of the activities of Service officers in their free time, especially in the first years of its existence, are characterised by a variety of activities involving violations of discipline which were

treated with mixed feelings. One of the explanations for this situation is that not only the public authorities, but also its employees and the society as a whole, needed a transition period from war to peace. Many people had a military background, and they too, adapted not only to the order and requirements of peacetime, but also to the discipline norms needed for the functioning of the new institution. Besides, from day one of its operation, the Service, and in particular its leadership, were dragged into political (often also public) intrigues, which clearly affected not only the budget and the resource availability of the institution, but also its operations.

Overall, the main component of the Service was its officers, and their skills, commitment and determination to do their work largely defined the success of the Service. It was not for nothing that high requirements were imposed on the officers and their personal qualities were particularly valued. Work in such a specific institution was particularly complex; it took place under conditions of high stress and increased danger, but it was not always appreciated by the public and civil servants, which becomes particularly evident by the scarce resources available to officers. It also served as one of the most important communist weapons in the effort to lure the Service officers into illegal activities. However, many officers remained loyal to the Service and their career development within the Service can be traced over years, with one of the most striking examples being the last Director of the Security Service, Jānis Fridrihsons.

The operating conditions were largely dependent on the allocated funds coming from the state budget and its decision-makers. Thus, the Service was always in an uneasy situation, as it never fully managed to be free from the political mood and intrigue of the public elites in the interests of internal security. The leadership, in particular the directors of the Service, were trained, competent and bright persons who, despite various problems in the Service's operations, were able to maintain and manage the Service at an appropriate level of quality. To some extent, the fate of Voldemārs Ozoliņš, the Director of the Service, is a tragic example of the Service's dependence on the political mood of the power elite. Namely, the removal of V. Ozoliņš was not in the interests of internal security of the country, but the intention of Kārlis Ulmanis and those close to him to pursue an illegal coup and use the Service's resources in its implementation and later in strengthening the authoritarian regime.

Participation in the coup by the leadership and the officers of the Service and in the subsequent strengthening of the authoritarian regime puts the Service in an ambiguous position. Undoubtedly, the Service played a major role in maintaining the internal security of the country, which was one of the cornerstones for Latvia to be able to exist as an independent and autonomous country. However, participation in the coup was a gross violation of the Constitution of Latvia, the parliamentary democracy and the laws and operational instructions, which previously stipulated the functioning of the Security Service.

Under the authoritarian regime, the role of the Service in maintaining the internal security of the country increased, but at the same time there was politicisation of the Service at this stage of history. By destroying the state apparatus of parliamentary democracy, the authoritarian regime had created new opponents for itself, in a society whose identification and counteracting towards them was one of the tasks of the Service. During the authoritarian regime of Ulmanis, the Service carried out a large and, in comparison to the period until May 1934, broader public monitoring function, where any manifestation against the regime could be treated as potentially dangerous to the national security.

The Service was responsible not only for watching over the public but also for maintaining a public perception of the threat to the internal security of the country (and certainly there was such), which, in the form of politically unreliable persons and their activities, consistently required attention to be paid to all those citizens of the country who were in favour of political change in the country. Authoritarianism under the influence of national ideology called for the unity of society, but at the same time, in the construction of this sense of unity, to remain alert in order to identify potential threats not only to the internal security of the country, but also to the idea of unity and togetherness. Sometimes, the mere perpetuation of such suspicion could turn out to be comical, because reports prepared by the Service suspect even the slightest outbursts of emotion in public. The psychological features of the Service's rapporteurs (especially informants) were also revealed here, namely searching for some extraordinary news under the new regime, in particular, when diversity of opinions or even a critical interpretation of an event in society was severely restricted.

Finally, it should be stressed that this work reveals how many different operational aspects and issues of the Service between 1919 and the summer of 1940 require further in-depth research. The broad outlook for research could reveal new, forgotten and so far unknown pages in Latvia's history, thus creating a more complete picture not only of the Service's activities, but of the society of Latvia and socio-political developments in general.

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(ENG: Tukums Prison)

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File 311 Ieslodzītās Hildas Tīrumas personas lieta  
(ENG: Case of the prisoner Hilda Tīruma)

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(ENG: Ministry of the Interior, Secretariat)

**Description 1**

File 1894 Iekšlietu ministrijas iestāžu organizācijas, darbinieku novietnes un dokumentu cirkulācijas shēmas un darbinieku izpildāmo darbu apraksti (ENG: Organisation charts of the authorities of the Ministry of the Interior, staff placement and document circulation schemes and Descriptions of the work to be carried out by staff)

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**Description 14**

File 44 Lieta par V. Alpu (ENG: File on V. Alps)

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**Description 3**

File 524 Dažāda satura raksti  
(ENG: Various articles)

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File 1379 Ernests Āboltiņš

File 8107 Voldemārs Alps

**Description 6**

File 12089 Jānis Fridrihsons

**Description 7**

File 1384 Fricis Gailis

**Description 10**

File 2735 Jānis Kaktiņš

**Description 11**

File 23089 Jānis Liģeris

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Latvijas Iekšlietu ministrijas Drošības  
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**Description 1/1**

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File 45 Sarakste (ENG: Correspondence)

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File 531 Ierēdņu darbība. Ziņas par notikušām svinībām valstī (ENG: Activities of civil servants. Information on celebrations taken place in the country)

File 632/7 Slepēnā ziņotāja "Draugs" lieta (ENG: Case of the secret reporter "Draugs")

File 689 Baltkrievu organizācijas (ENG: Belarusian organisations)

File 742 Ziņas par latviešiem Amerikā (ENG: Information on Latvians in America)

File 767 Ziņojumi par valsts svētkiem (ENG: Reports on national holidays)

File 808 Dažāda satura raksti (ENG: Various articles)

File 896 Dažāda satura raksti (ENG: Various articles)

File 904 Dažāda satura raksti (ENG: Various articles)

File 940 Dažādi ziņojumi Iekšlietu ministrijai u. c. institūcijām (ENG: Various reports to the Ministry of the Interior and other institutions)

File 1686 Slepēnās palīdzē "Blondīne" lieta (ENG: Case of the informant "Blondīne")

File 1995 Dažāda satura raksti (ENG: Various articles)

#### Description 2

File 7368 Dokumenti par V. Alpu (ENG: Documents on V. Alps)

#### Fund 3273 Rīgas Centrālcietums (ENG: Riga Central Prison)

##### Description 1

File 2918 F. Dambes ieslodzītā personas lieta (ENG: Case of the prisoner F. Dambe)

File 2919 F. Dambes ieslodzītā personas lieta (ENG: Case of the prisoner F. Dambe)

File 8752 G. Pētersones ieslodzītā personas lieta (ENG: Case of the prisoner G. Pētersonne)

#### Fund 3277 Valmieras cietums (ENG: Valmiera Prison)

##### Description 1

File 274 A. Griekļa ieslodzītā personas lieta (ENG: Case of the prisoner A. Griekšis)

#### Fund 3503 Liepājas pilsētas komandantūra (ENG: Liepāja City Commandant's Office)

##### Description 23

File 100 Liepājas pilsētas komandantūras sarakste, 1919 (ENG: Correspondence of the Liepāja City Commandant's Office, 1919)

#### Fund 3725 Iekšlietu ministrijas Kārtības policijas departaments (ENG: Ministry of the Interior, Order Police Department)

##### Description 24

File 122 Pie dienesta pienākumu pildīšanas kritušo policijas darbinieku saraksti, 1919–1939 (ENG: Lists of police officers fallen while on duty, 1919 to 1939)

File 144 Akts par Valsts drošības departamenta likvidēšanu (ENG: On the liquidation of the State Security Department)

#### Fund 5213 Tautas labklājības ministrijas Sabiedriskās aizgādības departaments (ENG: Ministry of Civic Welfare, Department for Allowances)

##### Description 16

File 7623 Ā. Graikstes pensijas lieta (ENG: File of Ā. Graikste's pension)

#### Fund 5601 Armijas štāba personas lietu kolekcija (ENG: Personal file collection of the Army HQ)

##### Description 5

File 2358 O. Ivansonas dienesta gaitu saraksts (ENG: List of O. Ivanson's career steps)

File 3847 J. Liģera dienesta gaitu saraksts (ENG: List of J. Liģers' career steps)

File 982 A. Brodera dienesta gaitu saraksts (ENG: List of A. Broders' career steps)

##### Description 6

File 30 V. Alpa dienesta gaitu saraksts (ENG: List of V. Alps' career steps)

#### Fund 7432 Tiesu palātas prokurors (ENG: Prosecutor of the Judicial Chamber)

##### Description 1

File 11 Tiesu palātas prokurora sarakste ar Liepājas Apgabaltiesas prokuroru, 1919 (ENG: Correspondence of the Prosecutor of the Judicial Chamber with the Prosecutor of Liepāja Regional Court, 1919)

File 113 O. Ivansonas dienesta gaitu saraksts (ENG: List of O. Ivanson's career steps)

##### Description 3

File 8 Tiesu palātas prokurora sarakste ar Tieslietu ministriju, 1920 (ENG: Correspondence of the Prosecutor of the Judicial Chamber with the Ministry of Justice, 1920)

- File 17 Tiesu palātas prokurora sarakste ar Tieslietu ministriju, 1921  
(ENG: Correspondence of the Prosecutor of the Judicial Chamber with the Ministry of Justice, 1921)
- File 22 Sarakste ar Politisko apsardzi (ENG: Correspondence with the Political Security Department)
- File 31 Tiesu Palātas prokurora izziņa par Politiskās apsardzes provokāciju kratīšanas laikā (ENG: Report by the Prosecutor of the Judicial Chamber on provocation during the search by the Political Security Department)
- File 38 Tiesu Palātas prokurora sarakste (ENG: Correspondence documents of the prosecutor of the Judicial Chamber)
- File 51 Tiesu Palātas prokurora sarakste ar Tieslietu ministriju, 1927  
(ENG: correspondence of the Prosecutor of the Judicial Chamber with the Ministry of Justice, 1927)

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## LATVIA STATE ARCHIVE OF AUDIOVISUAL DOCUMENTS OF LATVIAN NATIONAL ARCHIVE

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### Fund 1 Apvienotais arhīva fonds (ENG: Joined Archive Fund)

- 116A99 Kārļa Ulmaņa pastaiga ar pavadoņiem Rīgas pils labiekārtošanas darbu laikā (ENG: Kārlis Ulmanis' walk with accompanying persons during the facilitation works of Riga Castle)

11133A124 Politpārvaldes ēka Alberta ielā 13  
(ENG: Political Department building at 13 Alberta Street)

10416 Latvijas policijas vadošo darbinieku grupa  
(ENG: Group of leading Latvian police employees)

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## LATVIAN STATE ARCHIVES

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**Fund 1986** Latvijas PSR Valsts drošības komitejas (VDK) par sevišķi bīstamiem pretvalstiskiem noziegumiem apsūdzēto personu krimināllietas (ENG: Latvian SSR National Security Committee (KGB) on criminal

cases of persons accused of particularly dangerous anti-governmental crimes)

### Description 1

File 9332 Nikolaja Roznieka lieta  
(ENG: File of Nikolajs Roznieks)

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<b>Alps Nadežda</b> (1895–1948)	Actress, wife of Voldemārs Alps, head of the Political Security Department.	126
<b>Alps Voldemārs</b> (1891–1964)	Officer of the Security Service, head of the Political Security Department (22 October 1920–7 March 1922).	22, 38, 72, 103, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 137, 138, 139, 154, 171, 215, 225, 226, 229, 235, 251, 293, 322
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<b>Amatnieks Mārtiņš</b>	Officer of the Security Service, case officer at the Daugavpils regional unit of Political Department.	236
<b>Andersons Edgars</b> (1920–1989)	Historian, translator.	94, 97, 114, 229
<b>Ansiņš Oto</b> (1895–?)	Member of the underground communists, employee at the illegal printing works “Spartaks” in Liepāja, in 1931 he was sentenced to five years’ forced labour for storing illegal literature and weapons.	218
<b>Ansons</b>	Officer of the Security Service, an agent of the State Security Department in Liepāja region.	235
<b>Anušauskas Arvydas</b> (1963)	Lithuanian historian.	252
<b>Aparnieks Artūrs</b> (1896–1968)	Officer in the Latvian Army.	222
<b>Aprāns Artūrs</b> (1907–1941)	Officer of the Security Service (1929–1940), head of the Political Department Riga regional unit (1938–1940).	298, 324, 327
<b>Arājs J.</b> (?–1920)	Officer of the Security Service, who was killed during his course of duty.	114
<b>Auniņš Rihards</b>	Officer of the Internal Intelligence Unit of the HQ of the Commander-in-Chief of the Latvian Army, later officer of the Security Service, head of Valmiera regional unit of the Political Department (1927).	120, 292
<b>Azains</b>	Fictive editor-publisher of Jēkabpils newspaper “Laika Vārds”.	172
<b>Ābers Benno</b> (1909–1990)	Lawyer, historian, teacher.	102
<b>Ābols<sup>1</sup></b>	Informant to the Security Service.	154
<b>Āboltiņš Ernests</b> (1884–1942)	Officer of the Security Service, head of the Political Security Department (3 July 1923–10 May 1924).	129, 143, 150, 155, 187, 213, 232, 233, 294
<b>Ārgalietis</b>	Author, his articles have been published in the newspaper “Latvis”.	96
<b>Āzis</b>	Informant to the Security Service.	154
<b>Babkovskis Vilis</b>	Member of the communist underground, manager of the illegal printing house “Spartaks” in Liepāja.	218, 219
<b>Balodis</b>	Informant to the Security Service.	154

<sup>1</sup> The underlined words are cover names by the individuals.

<b>Balodis Jānis</b> (1881–1965)	General in the Latvian Army, statesman.	207, 208
<b>Bandrēvičs Vilis</b> (1875–1945)	Diplomatic representative of the Republic of Latvia in Lithuania (1919–1922).	249
<b>Bastjānis Voldemārs</b> (1884–1975)	Politician, social democrat, member of the Latvian Social Democrat Workers Party.	131, 222
<b>Baštika Otilija</b>	Officer of the Security Service, junior mail censor at the Political Security Department (1920).	89, 163
<b>Böckmann Wilhelm</b> (1832–1902)	German architect.	61
<b>Beķers Voldemārs</b> (1881–1941)	Head of the Internal Intelligence Unit of the HQ of the Commander-in-Chief of the Latvian Army, captain, attorney in Riga.	30
<b>Benjamiņa Emilija</b> (1881–1941)	Latvian entrepreneur, publisher, public worker.	61
<b>Benjamiņš Antons</b> (1860–1939)	Latvian businessman, publisher.	61
<b>Bergs Arveds</b> (1875–1941)	Politician, Minister of Interior of the Republic of Latvia (1919–1921), lawyer, publicist.	40, 127, 196
<b>Bergs Fricis</b> (1900–1994)	Politician, member of the 4th Saeima (1932–1933), member of the Latvian Communist Party.	172
<b>Berģis Pēteris</b> (1882–1942)	Politician, Minister of Interior of the Republic of Latvia (1923), attorney.	43, 127, 205, 221
<b>Berķis Kārlis</b> (1879–1932)	Daugavpils Police Prefect.	243
<b>Bermond-Avalov Pavel</b> (1877–1973)	Commander-in-chief of the Western Volunteer Army of Russia.	29, 32, 34, 56, 116, 204
<b>Bernšteins</b>	Jewish teacher, immigrant from the Soviet Russia in 1920.	208
<b>Berovskis Augusts</b> (1912–?)	Recruit at 4th Valmiera Infantry Regiment, social democrat. Sentenced in 1934, pardoned in 1935, Latvian nationality withdrawn in 1938, lived in France.	207
<b>Bezhanov Grigory</b>	1st Secretary in Latvia (1928–1932) authorised by the USSR representative office.	180
<b>Bērziņš</b>	Informant to the Security Service.	154
<b>Bērziņš Aleksandrs</b> (1899–?)	Officer of the Security Service, senior case officer of the Political Department's Daugavpils regional unit.	107
<b>Bērziņš Alfrēds</b> (1899–1977)	Officer of the Security Service, head of the Operational Unit Unit at the beginning of the 1920s, Minister of Public Affairs of the Republic of Latvia (1937–1940).	46, 112, 146, 190, 222
<b>Bērziņš Kārlis</b> (1902–?)	Officer of the Security Service, case officer of the Political Department's Rēzekne regional unit.	107
<b>Bērziņš Kārlis</b> (1905–?)	Officer of the Security Service, agent at Riga Criminal Police (1919).	292
<b>Bērziņš Mārtiņš</b> (1874–1950)	Officer of the Security Service (1922–1934), photographer.	67, 296
<b>Bērzs Ādolfs, Džentelmens</b>	Member of the communist underground.	225, 226, 227
<b>Biksons Izers</b> (1911–?)	Member of the communist underground, in whose apartment the illegal printing works "Spartaks" was located; in 1932, he was sentenced to 4 years' forced labour.	310
<b>Birznieks Aleksandrs</b> (1882–1949)	Diplomat, director of the Legal-Administrative Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia.	246
<b>Birznieks Alfrēds</b> (1889–1942)	Politician, Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Latvia (1 September 1919–8 December 1919), attorney.	34, 63, 85, 145

<b>Blumfelds Paulis</b> (also Blūmfelds; 1893–post-1940)	Officer of the Security Service (1921–1940), head of Ventspils Site of the Political Security Department (1921).	93
<b>Blondīne</b>	Informant to the Security Service.	154, 320
<b>Bormanis Roberts</b> (1889–1921)	Officer of the Security Service, who was killed while on duty.	115
<b>Bortkevičius Felicijonas</b> (1897–1977)	Head of the Lithuanian National Security Police.	252, 324, 325
<b>Brastiņš Ernests</b> (1892–1942)	Publicist, painter, art theoretician, researcher of castle mounds, member of the organisation “Pērkoņkrusts”.	321
<b>Briedis Kārlis</b> (1888–post-1941)	Officer of the Security Service, head of the Political Department’s Liepāja regional unit.	120, 237, 298
<b>Briedis Kārlis</b> (1893–?)	Officer of the Security Service (1919–1926), head of the Political Department’s Daugavpils regional unit.	236
<b>Brigis Teodors</b>	Officer of the Security Service, head of the State Security Department in Pārdaugava regional unit.	85
<b>Broders Alberts</b> (1896–1941)	Lieutenant of the Latvian Army, awarded the Order of Lāčplēsis for intelligence operations at the back of the enemy during the Independence War.	154
<b>Bušs Oskars</b> (1864–1937)	Doctor, house owner in Riga.	61, 63
<b>Buzarova Antonija</b> (1893–1940)	Officer of the Security Service (1920–1939), desk officer.	88, 296
<b>Celmiņš Kārlis</b>	Officer of the Security Service, head of the State Security Department Registration Unit.	85
<b>Celms Jūlijs</b> (1879–1935)	Politician, social democrat, member of the Latvian Social Democrat Workers Party.	192
<b>Celīnieks</b>	Informant to the Security Service.	154
<b>Ceriņš Aleksandrs</b> (1880–1941)	Chief of Police School (1922–1931).	144, 242
<b>Cerīņu zieds</b>	Informant to the Security Service.	154
<b>Cielēns Fēlikss</b> (1888–1964)	Politician, social democrat, member of the Latvian Social Democrat Workers Party, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia (1926–1928).	45, 103
<b>Dadzis</b>	Informant to the Security Service.	154
<b>Dakša Matilde</b> (later Aizpure; 1900–?)	Prisoner, accused of participating in the communist underground.	170, 171, 182
<b>Dambe Fanija</b>	Sister of mercy.	141
<b>Alfred Perseus Robert Dunham</b>	British national suspected of espionage.	252
<b>Daugavietis</b>	Informant to the Security Service.	154
<b>Dāvuss Jānis</b> (1876–1925)	Case officer at the former Tsar time Riga Police Investigation Unit.	88
<b>Dey Donald</b>	American journalist, correspondent of the newspaper “Chicago Tribune”.	185
<b>Demidovs Nikolajs</b> (1888–1967)	Belarusian public figure in Latvia, informant to the Security Service on the activities and political mood of the Belarusian community.	203
<b>Dišlere Johanna</b>	Natural person.	141
<b>Djadja</b>	Informant to the Security Service.	154
<b>Doreda Anna</b> (1887–?)	Officer of the Security Service (1922–1939), chancellor officer, desk officer.	113
<b>Dūņa</b>	Informant to the Security Service.	154

<b>Eglītis Jānis</b> (1891–?)	Member of the communist underground, in 1937 sentenced to 2 years 6 months in the correctional facility.	313
<b>Eidelmanis</b>	Individual detained by the Security Service.	233
<b>Eisenstein Mikhail</b> (1867–1921)	Architect of Jewish descent, construction engineer.	63
<b>Ekšteins Valfrīds</b>	Officer of the Security Service, case officer at the Political Department.	118, 119
<b>Elbergs</b>	Sergeant in the 4th Valmiera Infantry Regiment, 1st Company.	207
<b>Elpers Arnolds</b> (1904–post 1941)	Economist, public servant.	102
<b>Ende Hermann</b> (1829–1907)	German architect.	61
<b>Feldbergs Rūdolfs</b>	Natural person.	119
<b>Ficners-Jarskis Stanislavs, Polis</b> (1896–1942)	Public figure, Director of the Polish Theatre, informant to the Security Service.	201
<b>Fimbauers Alfrēds</b> (1898–1936)	Officer of the Security Service, investigation officer of the Political Department.	111, 143
<b>Fimbauers Georgs</b>	Officer of the Security Service, senior case officer at the Political Department in Liepāja regional unit (1926).	226, 327
<b>Folkmanis Vilis, Draugs</b>	Informant to the Security Service.	222
<b>Fridrihsone Leonora</b> (1919–?)	Daughter of Jānis Fridrihsons, head of the Political Department.	300
<b>Fridrihsone Valentīna</b> (born Baranova; 1895–?)	Wife of Jānis Fridrihsons, head of the Political Department.	300
<b>Fridrihsons Jānis</b> <b>Fridrihs Valentīns</b> (since 1939 – Skrauja; 1892–1941)	Long-term officer of the Security Service, Head of the Political Department (1934–1940), Head of the Security Police Department (1939–1940).	46, 49, 50, 52, 88, 93, 94, 97, 98, 103, 114, 130, 131, 132, 133, 140, 141, 208, 238, 243, 256, 295, 300, 324, 325, 326, 327
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<b>Gabrilovich Bronislaw</b> (1906–1926)	On 5 February 1926, near Ikšķīle train station, on the train Riga–Moscow, carried out an armed attack on the diplomatic couriers of the USSR.	250
<b>Gaile Alīde</b> (1907–?)	Dressmaker, member of the communist underground, manager of the illegal printing house “Spartaks” in Liepāja, sentenced to 3 years’ forced labour in 1932.	219
<b>Gaile Anna</b>	Member of the communist underground.	218
<b>Gailis Fricis</b> (1911–1933)	Member of the communist underground, member of the illegal Latvian Communist Party Youth Union, agitator.	66, 118, 308
<b>Gaitnieks</b>	Informant to the Security Service.	154
<b>Ganšovs Vilhelms</b> (also Vilis; 1892–1942)	Social Democrat, deputy at Daugavpils City Council.	172
<b>Garozīšs Jānis</b>	Member of the Commission for the Liquidation of the State Security Department.	34
<b>Goltz Rüdiger von der</b> (1865–1946)	Commander of the 6th Reserve Corps of the German Army, ally of Bermondts in the battles of the Volunteer Army of Western Russia against the Latvian army during the War of Independence.	30
<b>Goldmanis Jānis</b> (1875–1955)	Statesman, Minister of Agriculture at the Latvian Provisional Government (1918–1919).	30
<b>Gorodins Jākobs</b>	Natural person, suspected of participation in the communist underground.	236

<b>Graikste Ādolfs</b> (1897–post-1940)	Officer of the Security Service (1921–1931), senior case officer at Liepāja regional unit.	115, 116, 117, 226
<b>Grantiņa Marija</b> (1892–?)	Head of the communist underground organisation in Ventspils and a courier.	216
<b>Grants</b>	Informant to the Security Service.	154
<b>Greste Veronika</b> (1912–?)	Freelance officer of the Security Service (1934–1936), typist in Riga and Jelgava regional units.	96
<b>Grīnpauks Jānis, Likais</b> (1900–?)	Member of the communist underground, manager of the Lejaskurzeme organisation of the Latvian Communist Party (1926), expelled from Latvia, returned in 1930 with false documents, re-expelled in 1938.	226
<b>Grīnvalds Teodors</b> (1889–1936)	Prefect of Riga City Police (from 1924).	324
<b>Grunsbērģis</b>	Recruit at the 4th Valmiera Infantry Regiment.	207
<b>Gulbis Vilis</b> (1890–1942)	Statesman, Minister of the Interior of the Republic of Latvia (1934–1938).	17
<b>Ikss</b>	Informant to the Security Service.	154
<b>Ikšels Kārlis</b> (1887–1961)	State official, head of the Export-Import Division at the Trade Department of the Ministry of Industry of the Republic of Latvia (1920).	37
<b>Inķis Jānis</b> (1872–1958)	Baptist theologian and pastor, at the beginning of the 1920s, he organised the Latvian exodus to Brazil, founder of the Latvian colony “Vārpa” in Brazil.	185
<b>Ivansons Otto</b> (1893–1937)	Security Service officer, Political Security Department's Investigation officer, head of the Political Security Department's Site at the refugee quarantine in Rēzekne (1921–1922), expert at the Forensics Institute.	71, 72, 94, 105, 113, 163, 295
<b>Jaakson Jūri</b> (1870–1942)	Elder of the State of Estonia (1923–1924).	247
<b>Jātnieks</b>	Member of the underground communist organisation led by Kārlis Kretulis during the War of Independence.	115
<b>Jēgers Paulis</b>	Investigating officer at the Internal Intelligence Unit of the HQ of the Commander-in-Chief of the Latvian Army for Riga Division (1920), Security Service Department officer (1920), senior case officer at the Political Security Department.	235
<b>Jēkabsons Ēriks</b> (1965)	Historian.	21, 45, 250
<b>Jefimovs</b>	Informant to the Security Service.	154
<b>Jezovitovs Konstantīns</b> (1893–1946)	Belarusian public figure in Latvia, whistle-blower to the Security Service on the activities and political mood of the Belarusian community.	203
<b>Yudenich Nikolai</b> (1862–1933)	General, he fought for the White Guard during the Russian Civil War.	141
<b>Kaimiņš Eduards</b> (1876–1959)	Special tasks officer of the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Latvia, Member of the Commission for the Liquidation of the State Security Department.	31, 34
<b>Kaktiņš Jānis</b> (1892–post-1941)	Security Service officer, deputy Director of the Political Security Department, Acting Director of the Political Security Department (March–July 1923).	77, 110, 128, 222, 235, 293, 294
<b>Kalējs</b>	Informant to the Security Service.	154
<b>Kalnberziņš Jānis</b> (1893–1986)	Communist, member of the Latvian Communist Party, politician of the Latvian SSR.	234
<b>Kalniņš O.</b>	Officer of the Security Service, head of the Political Department, Liepāja regional unit (since 1 March 1927).	120
<b>Kalniņš Bruno</b> (1899–1990)	Lawyer, member of the Latvian Social Democrat Workers Party, member of the Constitutional Assembly and deputy of the 1st–4th Saeima.	192

<b>Kalniņš Pauls</b> (1872–1945)	Speaker of the 1st–4th Saeima, Social Democrat, Member of the LSDSP.	192
<b>Kalvarijs Beinass</b> (1901–?)	Typesetter, communist underground member, was sentenced to 5 years' forced labour in 1927.	310
<b>Kalinowski Stanislav</b>	Technical employee at the Polish Consulate in Daugavpils.	251
<b>Kazakats Augusts Kārlis Ferdinants</b> (1880–?)	Served at the Ministry of the Interior of the Provisional Government of Latvia (1919), and was questioned by the Security Service about his activities during the Bermondts Affair.	32
<b>Kāns</b>	Natural person, campaigned for the exodus to Brazil in 1927.	185
<b>Kārlis</b>	Informant to the Security Service.	154
<b>Keglere Anna</b> (1897–?)	Officer of the Security Service (1920), junior case officer.	89
<b>Kesenfelda Eda</b> (also Ida, later Kozlovskā; 1902–?)	Member of the communist underground, sentenced to 5 years' forced labour in 1927, emigrated from Latvia in 1933, returned in 1937.	237
<b>Kirhenšteins Augusts</b> (1872–1963)	Scientist, microbiologist, politician, chairman of the Supreme Council of the Latvian SSR (1940–1952).	131
<b>Kolchak Alexander</b> (1874–1920)	Admiral, commander-in-chief of the White Guard Army in the Russian Civil War.	129
<b>Koreckis Pēteris</b> (1887–1929)	Lawyer of Russian origin and a politician during the interwar period in Latvia.	200
<b>Korti Vladimirs</b> (1900–1941)	Belarusian public figure in Latvia, Security Service's reporting agent on the functioning and political mood of the Belarus community.	203
<b>Kosiņskis Viktors</b> , see Steckēvičs Viktors.		179
<b>Kozlovskis Ādams Voldemārs, Ādolfs</b> (1904–?)	Locksmith, member of the underground communists, arrested in 1925, released against bail of 2000 Lats in 1926, sentenced to 3 years' forced labour in 1927.	151, 237
<b>Kraštinš Kārlis</b> , see Mērnīeks Hugo.		106, 108, 109
<b>Krauze Jūlijs</b> (also <b>Jūlijuss</b> ) <b>Edgars</b> (1898–?)	Officer of the Security Service (1920–1937), senior case officer.	57, 93, 94, 140, 141, 153, 159, 215, 216, 247, 296
<b>Kreišmanis Pāvils</b> (1885–1963)	Agronomist, rector of the Latvian University of Agriculture (1939–1940; 1941–1944).	102
<b>Kretulis Kārlis</b> (1889–1938)	Communist, employee of the State Security institutions of the USSR.	114, 139, 235
<b>Krieviņš Edgars</b> (1884–1971)	Diplomat, the Latvian Consul General in Berlin (1924–1932).	125
<b>Krūmiņa Marta</b>	Accountancy officer at the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Latvia (early 1920s).	205, 318
<b>Krūmiņš Arturs</b> (1879–1969)	Architect, head of the Commission for the Construction of Latvian cities (1936–1940).	102
<b>Krūmiņš Arturs</b> (1898–1922)	Officer of the Security Service (1921–1922), case officer.	106, 117, 297
<b>Krūze</b>	Officer of the Security Service.	51
<b>Kukļa Sora, Zāra Baševa</b> (1898–?)	Salesperson, member of the communist underground, was sentenced to 5 years' forced labour in 1927.	310
<b>Kummermanis Eduards</b>	Member of the underground communist organisation led by Kārlis Kretulis during the War of Independence.	115
<b>Kupše Jānis</b>	Member of the communist underground, manager of the illegal printing house "Spartaks" in Liepāja.	219
<b>Kurlis Pēteris</b> (1910–1942)	Member of the illegal Latvian Communist Party, whistle-blower recruited by the Security Service.	156

<b>Kurmīs</b>	Informant to the Security Service.	154
<b>Kuusekänd Friedrich</b> (1898–1942)	Head of the Estonian Police Department.	252
<b>Kuške Jēkabs</b> (1898–1927)	Officer of the Security Service (1922–1927), senior case officer in Riga, investigation officer, acting head of the Liepāja regional unit.	120, 296
<b>Kviesis Alberts</b> (1881–1944)	Politician, Minister of the Interior of the Republic of Latvia (18 June 1921 – 25 January 1923), President of the Republic of Latvia (1930–1936).	178, 205
<b>Ķimenis Kārlis</b> (1872–1921)	Officer of the Security Service, case officer at the Political Security Department, shot while on duty (1921).	114, 115, 297
<b>Ķiselis Jānis</b> (1897–1944)	Employee in interior and military entities of Latvia, chief of Riga Police Prefecture, station 8 (since 1931).	185
<b>Kūķis Krišs</b> (1874–1945)	Colonel of the Latvian Army.	75
<b>Laicēns Līnards</b> (1883–1938)	Writer and public figure, left-leaning politician.	139
<b>Lanka Andrejs</b> (1904–?)	Fisherman, member of the communist underground, manager of the illegal printing house "Spartaks" in Liepāja, arrested in 1930.	219
<b>Launags Antons</b> (1884–post 1960)	Ministry of the Industry of the Republic of Latvia, Director of the Trade Department (1919).	37
<b>Latkovskis Vikentijs</b> (1899–1983)	Teacher, agent of the Soviet intelligence service in Latvia.	50, 131, 132, 327
<b>Lāce Zelma</b> (1897–?)	Member of the communist underground, arrested (1922), imprisoned in Riga Term Prison, later deported to Soviet Russia within the procedure of prisoner exchange.	223
<b>Liberts Nikolajs</b> (1911–?)	Officer of the Security Service, senior case officer in Riga regional unit (1934–1940).	69
<b>Liepājnieks</b>	Informant to the Security Service.	154
<b>Līģeris-Līģeris Jānis</b> (1889–1942)	Officer of the Security Service, head of the State Security Department (3 September 1919–7 November 1919).	34, 85, 110, 122, 123, 124, 293
<b>Līģers Guņārs</b> (1931–?)	Son of Jānis Līģeris-Līģeris, repressed in 1940.	123, 124
<b>Linde</b>	Officer of the Security Service.	179
<b>Linde Arturs</b>	Officer of the Security Service, case officer.	179
<b>Līcītis Alfrēds,</b> <b>Anonims</b>	Informant to the Security Service, Secretary at the Riga Trade Union Central Office (1923).	222
<b>Lobahs Mihails</b>	Trader, house-owner.	62
<b>Lorenz Ivan</b> (1890–?)	USSR diplomat, authorised representative in Latvia (1927).	180, 246
<b>Lukstiņš Egons</b> (1899–1983)	Officer of the Security Service (1920–1922), head of the Operational Unit (1921–1922).	128, 231
<b>Lurje Leibs</b> (1907–?)	Member of the communist underground, travelled (fled) from Latvia to the USSR (1928).	236, 237
<b>Lurje Zamuels</b> (1904–?)	Member of the communist underground, placed in Daugavpils Prison (1929), released in 1930, travelled to the USSR.	236
<b>Luters Hermanis</b> (1891–1966)	Deputy to the Prefect of Riga (1925–1927), educational worker.	324
<b>Lebedinsky Andrey</b> (Лебединский)	Official of the Russian Empire government, house-owner in Riga.	63
<b>Mahmastal Johan</b> (1891–1942)	Diplomatic courier of the USSR.	250
<b>Maksis</b>	Informant to the Security Service.	154
<b>Marka</b>	Informant to the Security Service.	154

<b>Martinsons Gustavs</b>	Lieutenant, officer in special assignments for the Riga Gendarmerie Administration, officer of the State Security Department Investigating Unit.	110
<b>Martinsons Pēteris</b> (1886-?)	Officer of the Security Service, head of the Political Security Department (1922-1923).	42, 59, 94, 96, 105, 107, 113, 127, 128, 140, 150, 153, 156, 222, 248, 294
<b>Matvejs Pēteris</b> (1895-1945)	Officer of the Security Service (1920-1937), head of Liepāja regional unit, head of the Political Department's Vecgulgbene regional unit.	39, 100, 101, 111
<b>Mednis</b>	Latvian Army soldier, during the War of Independence he was engaged in intelligence at the back of the enemy.	154
<b>Meierovics Zigfrīds Anna</b> (1887-1925)	Politician, diplomat, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia (1921-1925).	244
<b>Melnais</b>	Informant to the Security Service.	154
<b>Mergins</b>	Officer of the Security Service, investigation officer of the Political Department's Liepāja regional unit (1933).	118
<b>Mergins Rodeons</b> (1888-1931)	Officer of the Security Service (1926-1931), investigation officer, head of Cēsis Site, head of Daugavpils regional unit.	117, 297
<b>Mērnīeks Hugo, Kārlis Krastiņš</b> (1896-?)	Officer of the Security Service (1923-1926), case officer.	106, 108, 109, 236
<b>Miesnieks</b>	Informant to the Security Service.	154
<b>Miķelsons Eduards</b>	Officer of the Security Service, case officer at the Political Department.	118
<b>Müller Friedrich Wilhelm</b> (1875-1921)	Metal artist, engraver.	112
<b>Misiņš Augusts</b> (1863-1940)	General in the Latvian Army.	30
<b>Molotonovs Leons</b>	Soldier of the 5th Cēsis Infantry Regiment.	207
<b>Mucenieks Jānis</b>	Commandant of the Soviet Russian embassy in Helsinki (early 1920s).	179
<b>Mussolini Benito</b> (1883-1945)	Italian Prime Minister and dictator (1922-1943/1945), one of the creators of fascist ideology.	144
<b>Nemo</b>	Informant to the Security Service.	154
<b>Nete Teodors</b> (1895-1926)	Diplomatic courier of the USSR.	250
<b>Niedra Andrievs</b> (1871-1942)	Pastor, public figure, politician, writer, head of the pro-German government in 1919.	30
<b>Niedre Ojārs</b> (1929-2009)	Historian.	131, 215
<b>Novickis Aleksandrs</b> (1888-1972)	Prelate, member of the board of the charity organisation of the Polish Catholic Church of Riga.	201
<b>Olga</b>	Informant to the Security Service.	154
<b>Otto Nadezhda</b>	Singer, Soviet Russian spy.	171
<b>Ozoliņa Aleksandra</b> (born Kostina, 1896-?)	Wife of Voldemārs Ozoliņš, head of the Political Department.	300
<b>Ozoliņa Larisa</b> (1921-?)	Daughter of Voldemārs Ozoliņš, head of the Political Department.	300
<b>Ozoliņa Olga</b>	Member of the communist underground.	115
<b>Ozoliņš Jānis</b> (1905-?)	Officer of the Security Service (since 1929), case officer.	299
<b>Ozoliņš Voldemārs</b> (1891-1942)	Officer of the Security Service, head of the Political Department (1924-1934).	100, 103, 107, 116, 129, 130, 133, 194, 246, 256, 294, 300, 324
<b>Ozols Jānis</b> (1883-1921)	Officer of the Security Service (1921), case officer at the Political Security Department.	114, 115
<b>Ozols Jānis</b> (1888-?)	Journalist, editor of the newspaper "Iekšlietu Ministrijas Vēstnesis" (1926-1932).	44

<b>Partizānis</b>	Informant to the Security Service.	154
<b>Petrevics Andrejs</b> (1883–1939)	Politician, social democrat.	152
<b>Pēkšēns Konstantīns</b> (1859–1928)	Latvian architect.	62, 288
<b>Pētersone Grieta</b> (1890–?)	Member of the underground communists, deported to Soviet Russia (1921).	160
<b>Plass Vilhelms</b>	Officer of the Security Service, investigation officer of the Political Department's Daugavpils regional unit.	236
<b>Polis</b>	Suspected of operating in the gang of Kārlis Kretulis.	201, 235
<b>Pone Indriķis</b> (1894–post-1940)	Nationalist, Chairman of the Latvian National Club.	194
<b>Potašņiks</b>	Officer of the Security Service, case officer in Rēzekne.	231
<b>Priede Antons</b>	Officer of the Security Service, case officer at the State Security Department.	119
<b>Priedīts</b>	Informant to the Security Service.	153, 154
<b>Pruhņiks Kazimirs</b> (1883–1968)	Polish teacher in Daugavpils district.	201
<b>Pukīte</b>	Informant to the Security Service.	154
<b>Puriņš Kārlis</b> (1888–1940)	Officer of the Security Service in Valmiera and Liepāja.	237
<b>Relander Lauri Kristian</b> (1883–1942)	President of Finland (1925–1931).	247
<b>Rempe Edgars</b> (1895–?)	Officer of the Security Service, deputy to the head of the Investigation Unit of the State Security Department.	85
<b>Rieka Alfrēds</b>	Employee in the Intelligence Unit of the HQ of the Commander-in-Chief of the Latvian Army, Riga Criminal Police Political Department.	87
<b>Riekki Esko</b> (1891–1973)	Head of the Central Investigation Police of Finland.	252
<b>Ripa</b>	Informant to the Security Service.	154
<b>Romanovs Jānis</b> (1893–?)	Officer of the Security Service, head of the State Security Department Investigation Unit.	85
<b>Ronis</b>	Informant to the Security Service.	154
<b>Roze</b>	Informant to the Security Service.	154
<b>Roznieks Nikolajs</b> (1901–post-1940)	Officer of the Security Service (1926–1940), head of the Liepāja regional unit (1938–1940).	327
<b>Rudevics Ansis</b> (1890–1974)	Politician, social democrat, member of the Latvian Social Democrat Workers Party.	233
<b>Saldavs Oļģerts</b> (1907–1960)	Art scientist, painter.	102
<b>Salnais Artūrs</b> (1904–post-1940)	Officer of the Security Service.	327
<b>Sams</b>	Informant to the Security Service.	154
<b>Saša</b>	Informant to the Security Service.	154
<b>Saulītis</b>	Officer of the Security Service, case officer.	178
<b>Sausais Jānis</b> (1890–?)	Officer of the Security Service (1921–1922), head of the Political Security Department's Daugavpils regional unit (from 1 March 1921).	105, 106
<b>Seglenieks Aleksandrs</b> (1893–1951)	Attorney and prosecutor's partner at the Judicial Chamber (1921).	90, 95
<b>Seskis Jānis</b> (1877–1943)	Diplomat, diplomatic representative of the Republic of Latvia in Switzerland, Bern (second half of 1920).	183
<b>Siliņš Kārlis</b> (1901–1926)	Officer of the Security Service (1925–1926), Political Department, guard officer.	117, 118, 298

<b>Simanoviča Vilhelmine</b> (1881–?)	Member of the communist underground, the Rural Military Court imposes permanent forced labour (1921), deported to Soviet Russia (1922).	115
<b>Sisenis</b>	Informant to the Security Service.	154
<b>Skujenieks Mārgers</b> (1886–1941)	Politician, Prime Minister of the Republic of Latvia (1926–1928; 1931–1933).	103, 194
<b>Skulme Uga</b> (1895–1963)	Artist.	139, 146
<b>Sliede</b>	Informant to the Security Service.	154
<b>Slimais</b>	Informant to the Security Service.	154
<b>Smilškalns Fricis</b> (1901–post-1940)	Officer of the Security Service, senior case officer at the Political Department.	118, 327
<b>Smirnov Nikolay</b>	Employee of the Soviet Union's embassy in Riga (1930).	180
<b>Soirio Jānis, Zeltiņš Mārtiņš</b> (1880–?)	Employee of the Soviet embassy in Riga (1923), charged with espionage for the benefit of Soviet Russia and organising a spy network, deported from Latvia (1923).	178, 179
<b>Sooman Johan</b> (1889–1942)	Deputy Director of the Estonian Security Police (early 1930s).	251
<b>Spiekītis</b>	Informant to the Security Service.	154
<b>Sprīngis Jānis</b> (1892–1959)	Artist, graphic artist.	291
<b>Sproģis Fricis</b> (1886–1938)	Deputy at Tukums Council, head of the Latvian Communist Party's Tukums underground organisation.	219
<b>Staprāns Sergejs</b> (1896–1951)	Head of the Control-Information Division of the Ministry of Defence of the Latvian Provisional Government.	23, 29, 30, 126
<b>Steckēvičs Viktors, Kosīnskis</b>	Head of Counter-intelligence in the Riga Office of Soviet Intelligence Centre in Riga (early 1920s).	179
<b>Stervena Emilija</b> (later Straume; 1898–?)	Officer of the Security Service (1920), typist.	96, 295
<b>Stiebris J.</b>	Officer of the Security Service.	185
<b>Stiere Johanna</b> (1900–?)	Officer of the Security Service (1920), typist.	96
<b>Streipa Jānis</b> (1892–1941)	Colonel of the Latvian Army, teacher.	102
<b>Heinrich Eduard Karl von Stryk</b> (1873–1938)	Baltic German politician, representative of Vidzeme nobility.	32
<b>Stučka Pēteris</b> (1865–1932)	Politician, lawyer, Chairman of the Government of the Latvian Socialist Soviet Republic (LSSR) and Head of the Foreign Affairs Secretariat, chairman of the Latvian Communist Party's Central Committee (1919).	13, 169
<b>Students Jūlijs Aleksandrs</b> (1898–1964)	Scientist, teacher, philosopher.	102
<b>Stukelis Eduards</b> (1881–1956)	Roman Catholic clergy, prelate.	202
<b>Supāns Jānis</b>	Officer of the Security Service, head of the State Security Department in Cēsis site.	85
<b>Š.</b>	Officer of the Security Service.	103
<b>Ščerbinskis Valters</b> (1969)	Historian.	21, 45, 47
<b>Šilde Ādolfs</b> (1907–1989)	Lawyer, publicist, historian, public figure, member of the organisation "Pērkoņkrusts".	51, 52, 142, 197, 230
<b>Šilinskis Jānis</b>	Officer of the Security Service, head of the State Security Department in Ventspils regional unit.	85

<b>Šmits Arvīds</b> (1895–1951)	Agronomist.	102
<b>Šmits Gustavs</b> (1857–1936)	Attorney in Jelgava, Jelgava City mayor (1919).	204
<b>Šneiders (?–?)</b>	Natural person, campaigned for exodus to Brazil in 1927.	185
<b>Schneider Otto</b>	German citizen, German police officer.	185
<b>Šnore Ansis</b>	Natural person, guest to the Hotel Riga.	119
<b>Šņoriņš</b>	Officer of the Security Service, agent of the State Security Department in Liepāja District.	235
<b>Šteimans Josifs</b> (1923–2011)	Soviet historian, professor.	221, 222
<b>Štiglics Roberts</b> (1894–1972)	Officer of the Security Service, long-term head of the Service Operational Unit.	52, 128, 222, 247, 295, 324, 327
<b>Štrohs Alfons</b> (1895–1920)	Officer of the Security Service, senior case officer at the Political Security Department.	114, 291
<b>Šulcs Pauls</b> (1866–1926)	Sworn attorney in Ventspils.	142
<b>Šulgina Nīna</b> (1900–?)	Typist at the Soviet Russian diplomatic representation in Riga (1922).	323
<b>Šustins Semjons</b> (1908–1978)	Employee of the State Security organs of the USSR, LSSR Deputy Commissioner for Home Affairs (1940–1941).	51
<b>Švanks Jānis</b> (1897–1988)	Civil engineer, public official.	102
<b>Švarcbaha Aleksandra</b>	Officer of the Security Service, Junior post censor in Liepāja (1920).	89
<b>Šveics</b>	Special tasks officer at the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Latvia, Member of the Commission for the Liquidation of the State Security Department (1919).	34
<b>Švēde</b>	Owner of the laundry and supporter of the communist underground.	138
<b>Švēde Andrejs</b> (1909–1941)	Member of the organisation "Pērkoņkrusts".	197
<b>Teidemanis Herberts</b> (1906–1978)	Officer of the Security Service, supporter of the German occupation power during the Second World War.	51, 52
<b>Tentelis Augusts</b> (1876–1942)	Historian, professor at the University of Latvia.	102, 299
<b>Tērauds Voldemārs</b> (1900–1940)	Officer of the Security Service, case officer of the Political Department's Daugavpils regional unit.	236
<b>Tillers</b>	Natural person.	232
<b>Timofejeva Anna</b>	Latvian living in Russia.	171
<b>Tīfentāls Gustavs</b> (1884–1963)	Chief of Riga Criminal Police (1919–1935), Member of the Commission for the Liquidation of the State Security Department (1919).	34, 324
<b>Tīruma Hilda</b>	Natural person.	141
<b>Traukmane Lote</b> (1902–?)	Member of the underground communists, arrested (1926).	225, 226
<b>Tumšais</b>	Informant to the Security Service.	154
<b>Ulmanis Kārlis</b> (1877–1942)	Statesman, one of the founding fathers of the Latvian State, the first Prime Minister of the Latvian Provisional Government and a multiple-times Prime Minister of Latvia, from 15 May 1934 – dictator of the authoritarian regime.	17, 27, 30, 42, 45, 46, 47, 50, 51, 76, 81, 102, 118, 121, 130, 131, 157, 175, 196, 198, 199, 200, 201, 207, 208, 210, 234, 245, 246, 256, 257, 326
<b>Ulpe Pēteris</b> (1881–1942)	Politician, Social Democrat, member of the Latvian Social Democrat Workers Party.	192
<b>Upe</b>	Informant to the Security Service.	154
<b>Upmāls</b>	Member of the Communist organisation led by Kārlis Kretulis.	115

<b>V-s</b>	Informant to the Security Service.	154
<b>Valters Miķelis</b> (1874–1968)	First Minister of the Interior of the Provisional Government of the Republic of Latvia (19 November 1918–31 August 1919), diplomat.	32, 141
<b>Vārpa Marta</b>	Member of the communist underground.	171
<b>Vasiļevskis Konstantīns</b> (1928–2013)	Member of the Daugavpils organisation “Sokol”.	51
<b>Vasiļevskis Sigismunds</b> (1902–1941)	Founder and chief of Daugavpils organisation “Sokol”.	51
<b>Vāgners Jānis</b> (1869–1955)	Lawyer.	102
<b>Vecvagars, A.</b>	Officer of the Security Service, head of State Security Department in Valmiera regional unit.	74
<b>Veidnieks Kornēlijs</b> (1899–1942)	Politician, Minister of the Interior of the Republic of Latvia (1939–1940).	131
<b>Vēliņš Herberts</b> (1898–1973)	Teacher and school administrator of six-grade primary school in Daugulī Parish of Valmiera district.	209
<b>Vilciņa Anna</b> (1893–?)	Natural person, accused of espionage for the benefit of Soviet Russia.	178
<b>Williams A.</b>	British national suspected of espionage.	252
<b>Vintars Jēkabs</b> (1901–post-1941)	Officer of the Security Service, head of the Political Department Riga regional unit (1930s).	126
<b>Vitolīņš Fricis</b> (1898–?)	Officer of the Security Service, head of State Security Department in Liepāja regional unit.	85, 235
<b>Vītols Jānis</b>	Officer of the Security Service, case officer of the Political Department’s Daugavpils regional unit.	236
<b>Zaķis</b>	First soldier in 4th Valmiera Infantry Regiment, 1st Company.	207
<b>Zaļaiskalns Oļģerts</b> (1905–1967)	Officer of the Security Service (1935–1937), case officer.	118
<b>Zauers Alvis</b>	Historian.	66
<b>Zālite Elīna</b> (1898–1955)	Latvian writer, poet.	139
<b>Zālītis Jānis</b> (1874–1919)	Politician, Minister of Defence of the Latvian Provisional Government.	30
<b>Zelma</b>	Individual detained by the Security Service.	231
<b>Zeltiņš Mārtiņš</b> , see Soirio Jānis.		178, 179
<b>Zemītis Arvīds</b> (1905–post-1940)	Officer of the Security Service.	327
<b>Zemzarītis</b>	Informant to the Security Service.	154
<b>Zēgals Jakovs</b>	Recruit in the 4th Valmiera Infantry Regiment.	207
<b>Ziemelis</b>	Officer of the Security Service, case officer in Rēzekne.	231
<b>Zilais</b>	Informant to the Security Service.	154
<b>Zommers-Zviedris</b> , by the real name – Jānis Sīlfs-Jaunzems (1891–1921)	Cashier of the illegal Latvian Communist Party Central Committee (1920).	114
<b>Zvaigznītis</b>	Informant to the Security Service.	154
<b>Zvejniece Elvira</b> (1899–?)	Natural person, suspected of being involved in the dissemination of communist proclamations, released due to a lack of evidence (1920).	160
<b>Zviedris</b>	Informant to the Security Service.	154
<b>Žeņa</b>	Informant to the Security Service.	154
<b>Žuks</b>	Informant to the Security Service.	154
<b>Žvinklis Arturs</b> (1964)	Historian.	50, 132

## Activities of the Security Service Service in photos

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282



Chest badge of the Security Service employees. 1920s.

*LVA, fund 3235, description 1/6, file 1254, p. 1a.*



Politikas Izpildības uzdevumi

akti ar personālu sastāvu  
no 1 janvāri 1922 g.  
pa apgabaliem un vienībām.

Politikas Izpildības darbināji

- Prezidents 1.  
Prezidents pol. 1.  
Jurisprudents 1.  
Nod. vadītāji 3.  
Raj. pakotņi 5.  
Seri. uzt. vienības 3.  
Sekretāri 1.  
Spēkst. cer. 13.  
Darbnieki 9.  
" " " " 1.  
Arhīva pakot. 1.  
Lenšoni 3.  
Mašīnmeist. 4.  
Kanal. cer. uzt. 4.  
" " " " 4.  
" " " " 4.  
Uprangi uzt. 42.  
Uprangi 43.  
Fotogrāfi 1.  
Sēdētāji 1.  
Kadrēnāri uzt. 2.  
Kadrēnāri 8.  
Sēdētāji 4.  
Apmācītāji 2.  
Kopā 162.

Reģenerācija  
1 uzt. uprangi

Zēģu punkts  
1 uprangi

Pakusa  
Prezidents 1.  
Jurispr. pakot. 1.  
nod. vadīt. 3.  
seri. uzt. cer. 1.  
fotogrāfi 9.  
darbnieki 8.  
Lenšoni 3.  
arkh. pakot. 1.  
uzt. uprangi 13.  
mašīnmeist. 3.  
uzt. nāvis uzt. 4.

Uzdevības rajonā  
1 raj. pakot. uzt.  
1 jīm. uzt. nāvis  
3 uzt. uprangi  
1 uprangi

Aspules punkts  
1 uprangi

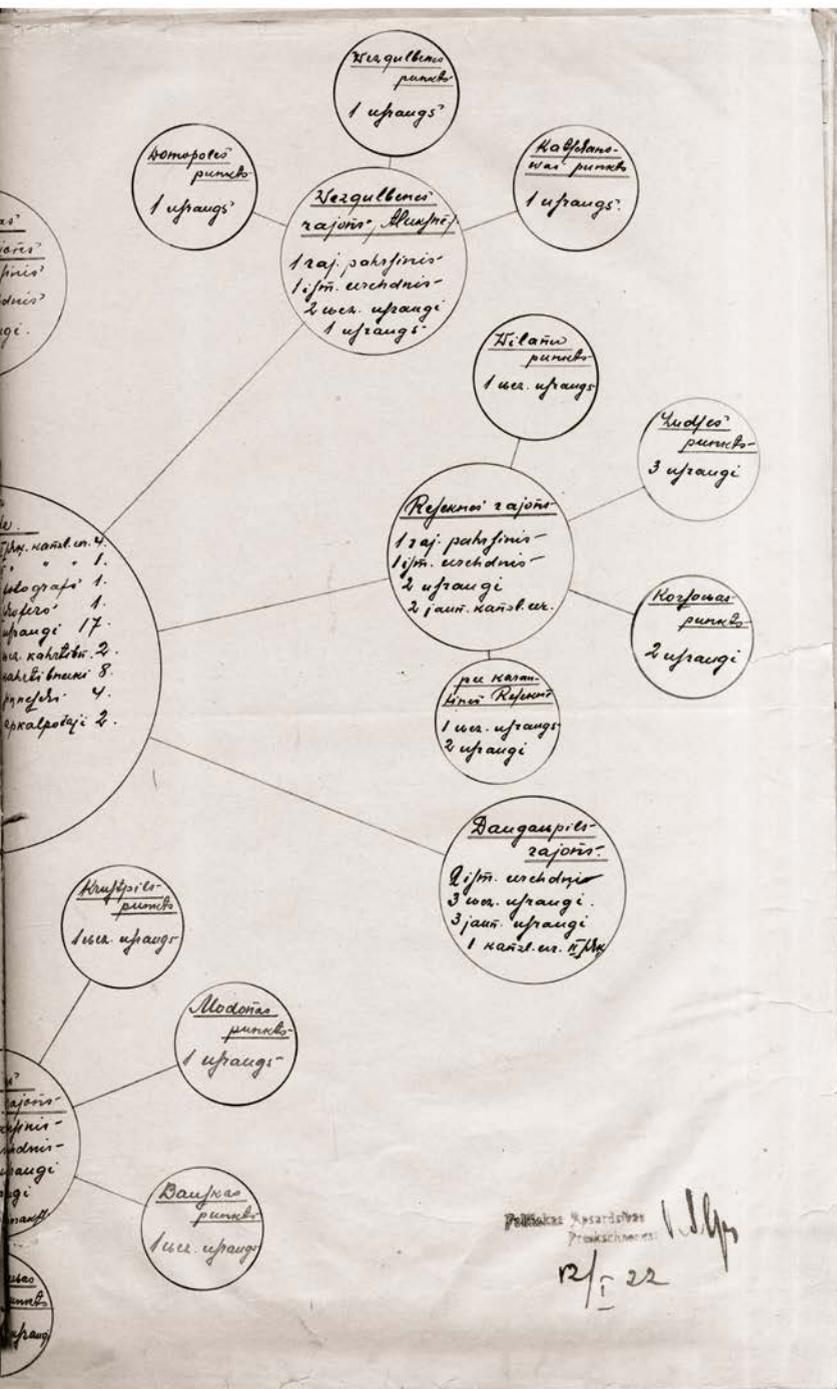
Kuldīga punkts  
1 uprangi

Ķentpils punkts  
1 uzt. uprangi

Tukuma punkts  
1 uzt. uprangi

Rīga  
1 raj. pakot. uzt.  
1 jīm. uzt. nāvis  
2 uzt. uprangi  
1 maš. meist.

Jelgava  
2 uzt. uprangi



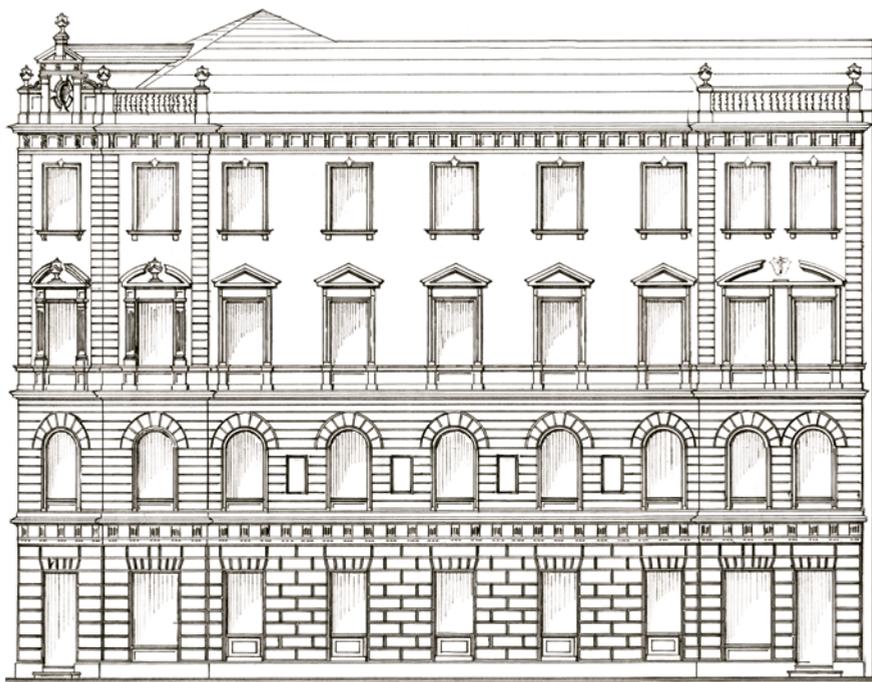
285

Political Security  
Department's  
structure, number  
of officers and  
position held in  
separate units.  
Riga, 1 January 1922.  
LVVA, fund 3235,  
description 1/2,  
file 896, p. 4, 4a.





*Faade zur Knigen-Strasse.*



9 Bazncas Street, Riga. The plan of the facade of the rental  
house designed by Konstantns Pkšns. Year 1897.

*LVA, fund 2761, description 3, file 2212, p. 12.*



Valmiera pastorate, which in the 1920s was home to Valmiera regional unit of the Political Security Department. Around 1910–1911.

*Valmiera Museum*



Main building of the Political Department of the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Latvia at 13 Alberta Street, decorated in honour of the 20th anniversary of the proclamation of the Republic of Latvia. 18 November 1938.

*LNA Latvia State Archive of Audiovisual Documents, fund 1, file 11133A124.*



The building at 5 Kungu Street, Liepāja, where from 1924 to 1927 Liepāja regional unit of the Political Department was located. Before – the consulate of Soviet Russia.

*LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/8, file 553, p. 26.*



The building at 2 Pulkveža Briēža Street, Jelgava, where from autumn 1925, Jelgava regional unit of the Security Service was located.

*Vēsturiskais apskats par Iekšlietu ministrijas Politiskās pārvaldes Jelgavas rajona izveidošanos un darbību (ENG: Historical overview of the establishment and operation of the Jelgava regional unit Political Department of the Ministry of the Interior). 1938., p. 11.*



Building at 1 Šaurā Street, Liepāja, where from May 1934, the Liepāja regional unit of the Political Department was located.

*LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/8, file 553, p. 78.*



The building at 7 Bisenieku Street (now Svētes Street), Jelgava, where in the 1930s, Jelgava regional unit of the Political Department was located.

*Vēsturiskais apskats par Iekšlietu ministrijas Politiskās pārvaldes Jelgavas rajona izveidošanos un darbību (ENG: Historical overview of the establishment and operation of the Jelgava regional unit Political Department of the Ministry of the Interior). 1938., p. 11.*



SUSPICIOUS

Statement by the Security Department:

“The Security Department will fight the elements harmful to the country, wherever they may come from.”

Agent of the Security Department:

“Hey! Aren’t you also a harmful element to the state?”

Cartoon by J. Sprīngis on the activities of the State Security Department.

*The newspaper “Skudra”, 4 September 1919.*

*No. 5, p. 8.*

291

**Gludinajums.**

---

**50,000 rbl.**

leelu atlihdzību īfneegs politiskās apšardzības pārvalde Rīgā tam, kurš ušrahdzis šaundarus, šas 27. aprill š. g. pē Mešotnes šolas pēdalijušēes ušbrukumā ministru pēšidentam.

Ušbruzeji bjušči 4 zilvēfi. 3 no teem — šareivju drehbēs, bet zeturtais — priwatdrehbēs, pē šam šinamš, ša pēšdejais tizis no guštitajeem eewainotš.

**Politiskās apšardzības pārvalde.**

Šukšis šam šinamš šinamš šinamš šinamš, Rīga, šilšons šil 194.

Advertisement by the Political Security Department on the search for the murderers of the case officer Alfons Štrohs. Riga, 1920.

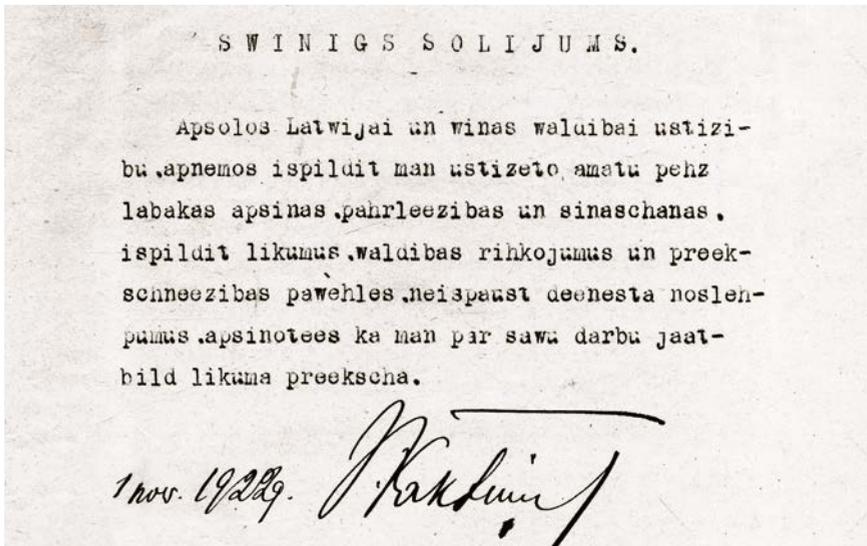
*LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 8, p. 124, 124 op.*



Duty pass of Rihards Auniņš, an employee of the Security Service, issued in 1920.  
 LVVA, fund 3235, description 1-2, file 465, p. 18.



Service ID card of Kārlis Bērziņš, agent in the Riga Criminal Police, issued in 1919. Previously,  
 K. Bērziņš worked in the State Security Department, but after its dissolution he joined  
 the Political Department of the Riga Criminal Police. From 1 October 1920, he served  
 in the Political Security Department, and was released from service on 8 April 1921.  
 LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 450, p. 29.



The solemn promise by Jānis Kaktiņš when taking the post at the Political Security Department. Year 1922.

LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 363, p. 79.

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Head of the State Security Department, Jānis Līģeris-Līģers. Passport photo. Year 1921.

LVA, fund 2996, description 11, file 23089.



Head of the Political Security Department, Voldemārs Alps. Passport photo. Year 1922.

LVA, fund 2996, description 1, file 8107.



Head of the Political Security Department,  
Pēteris Martinsons. Passport photo. Year 1920.  
*LVA, fund 2996, description 12, file 7845.*



Acting head of the Political  
Security Department, Jānis Kaktiņš.  
Passport photo. Year 1920.  
*LVA, fund 2996, description 10, file 2735.*



Head of the Political Security Department,  
Ernests Āboltiņš. Passport photo. Year 1925.  
*LVA, fund 2996, description 1, file 1379.*



Head of the Political Department, Voldemārs  
Ozoliņš. Passport photo. Year 1923.  
*LVA, fund 2996, description 14, file 8329.*



Long-term officer of the Security Service, head of the Political Department from 1934, Jānis Frīdrihs Valentīns Frīdrihsons (Skrauja). Passport photo. Year 1922.

*LVA, fund 2996, description 6, file 12089.*



Head of the Security Service Operational Unit, Roberts Štiglicis. Passport photo. Year 1920.

*LVA, fund 2996, description 17, file 47056.*



Head of the Political Security Department's Site at the refugee quarantine in Rēzekne, Otto Ivansons. Passport photo. Year 1921.

*LVA, fund 2996, description 8, file 5385.*



Officer of the Political Security Department's Site at the refugee quarantine in Rēzekne, Emīlija Stervena. Passport photo. Year 1921.

*LVA, fund 2996, description 17, file 48986.*



Officer of the Security Service, Jūlijs Krauze.  
Photo from the officer's file.

*LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 428, p. 4.*



Photographer at the Security Service, Mārtiņš  
Bērziņš. Photo from the employee's file.

*LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 624, p. 1.*



Long-term desk officer at the  
Security Service, Antonija Buzarova.  
Photo from the officer's file.

*LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 920, p. 66.*



Officer of the Security Service, Jēkabs Kuške.  
Photo from the officer's file.

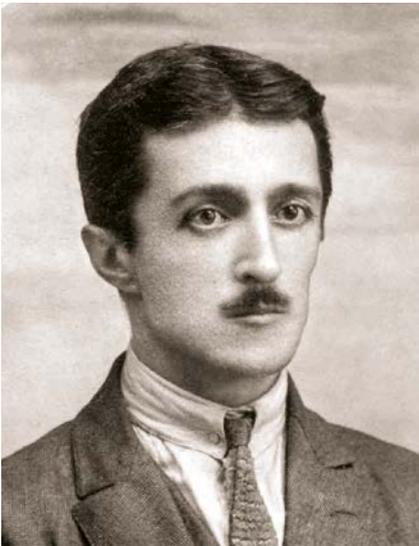
*LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 535, p. 1, 75.*



Case officer at the Security Service,  
Arturs Krūmiņš. Photo from the officer's file.  
*LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 599, p. 1, 14.*



Kārlis Ķīmenis, case officer at the Political  
Security Department. Photo from the officer's file.  
*LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 455, p. 22.*



Officer of the Security Service,  
Rodions Mergins. Photo from the officer's file.  
*LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 749, p. 1.*



Officer of the Security Service, Kārlis Alksnis.  
Photo from the officer's file.  
*LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 528, p. 1, 35.*



Kārlis Briedis, long-term security officer.  
Photo from the officer's file.

LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 394, p. 1, 133.



Security officer Artūrs Aprāns.  
Photo from the Service ID card. 1940.

LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 876a, p. 19.



Service ID card of the case officer at the Political Department, Kārlis Siliņš, issued in 1925.

LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 725, p. 11.



Football teams of the Political Police Department and Riga Prefecture. Year 1939.

Source: Timrots, H. *Pirmās bezdelīgas* (ENG: *The first swallows*). *Policija*, 1939, No. 1, p. 375.

Dienesta akts Nr. 506



*Jānis Ozoliņš* ministrijas

*Politiskā pārvalde* (iestāde, kas ved aprakstu)

*Ozoliņš* (uzvārds)

*Jānis* (vārds)

*Jānis* (tēva vārds)

### Dienesta gaitas apraksts

(uzdodot arī katrā nodaļumā atsevišķi, ar kādiem dokumentiem ierakstītās ziņas pierādītas).

1. Pavalstniecība. (Ja ārvalstnieks — ar kādu ministru kabineta lēmumu atļauts iestāties dienestā.)	<i>Latvijas.</i>
2. Dzimšanas vieta, gads, mēnesis un diena.	<i>Rīgas apg. Birnieku pagasts 1905. gada 11. jūnijā.</i>
3. Izglītība. Kad un kādās skolās beidzis vai apmeklējis un kādās aplocības ieguvis.	<i>Beidzis Valsts I. Vidusskolu Rīgā. Studē Latvijas Universitātē. Mat. Nr. 10900.</i>
4. Speciāli teoretiski vai praktiski sagatavotais. Kādu un ja izturējis pārbaudījumus — kad un kādus (arī cenzu komisijas atzinumi).	<i>/</i>
5. Attiecības pret kara kļūsmu, dienesta pakāpi, atvaļinājuma apliecības Nr., datums un no kā izdots.	<i>Kara dienestam atbilstoši jau mediju. Rīgas kara apg. izdots Nr. 3884 un 2. 26. 5. 1944.</i>
6. Ģimenes sastāvs: precējies, neprecējies, atvainis; sievas vārds, viņas agrākais uzvārds un kad laulāts. Katra bērna vārds, dzimšanas gads, mēnesis un diena.	<i>Neprecējies</i>
7. Kad un kādā valsts ārstu pārbaudījis veselības stāvokli iestājoties dienestā.	<i>13. maijā 1929. g. Dr. Kaurags.</i>
8. Kad iesniegts agrākais dienesta gaitas apraksts noroksts (ja bijis jau Latvijas dienestā).	<i>/</i>
9. Apmalvojumi.	

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Fragment of a description of service performance by the case officer at the Political Department, Jānis Ozoliņš (in service from 1929). Professor at the University of Latvia, Augusts Tentelis, provided the following characterisation of J. Ozoliņš, who wanted to be recruited: “Jānis Ozoliņš, a student at the University of Latvia, is already known to me as a diligent and reliable young man since his childhood days. I think you can trust him in civil terms too.”

LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 771, p. 1.



Voldemārs Ozoliņš with his wife Aleksandra Ozoliņa and daughter Larisa. Year 1922.

*LVA, fund 2996, description 14, file 8328.*

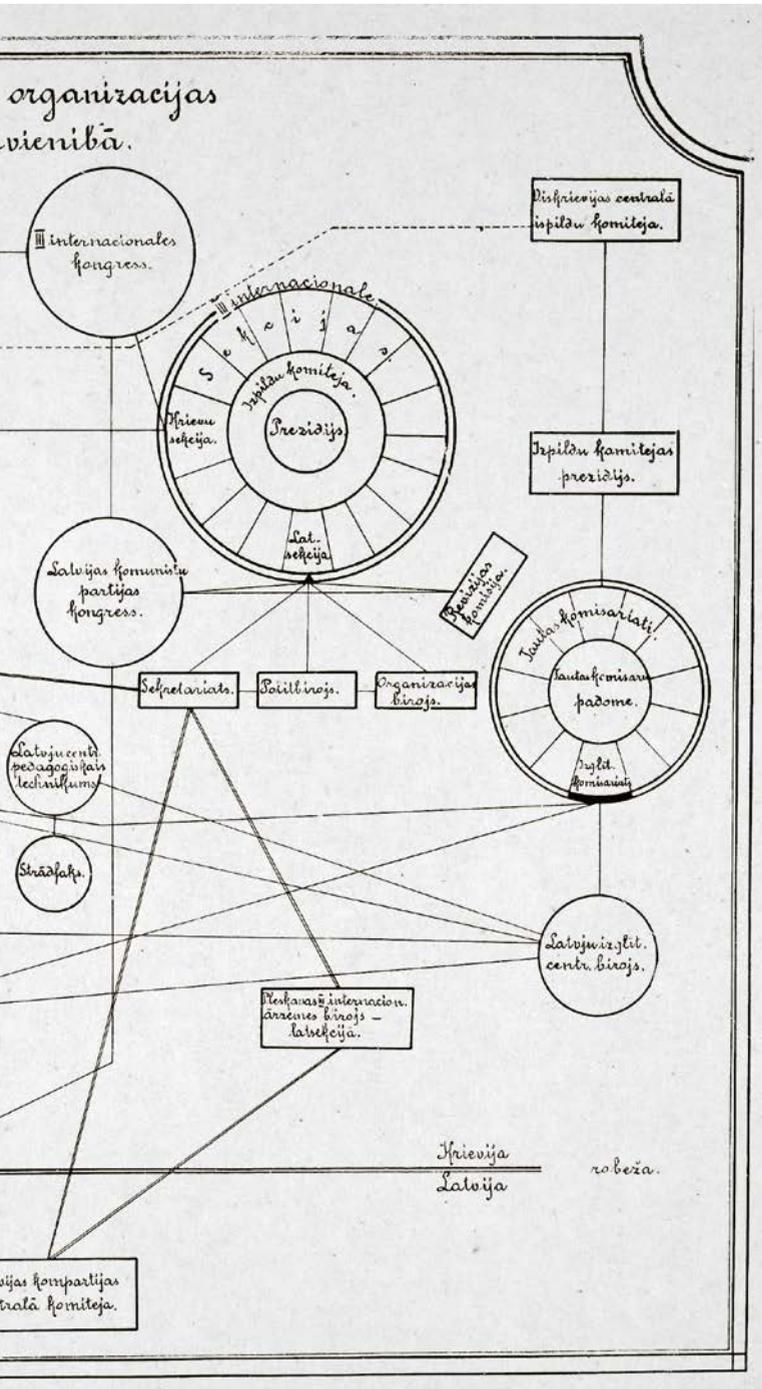


Head of the Political Department, Jānis Fridrihsons, with his wife Valentīna and daughter Leonora. Early 1920s.

*Collection of the Museum of Occupation.*







303

A scheme drawn up by the Security Service on the functioning of the Latvian Communist Organisation in the Soviet Union. 1920s.

LVA, fund 3235, description 1/6, file 1254, p. 1 op.



304

Exhibits confiscated by the Security Service – photocopies of identity cards.

LVA, fund 3235, description 1/6, file 1254, p. 22.

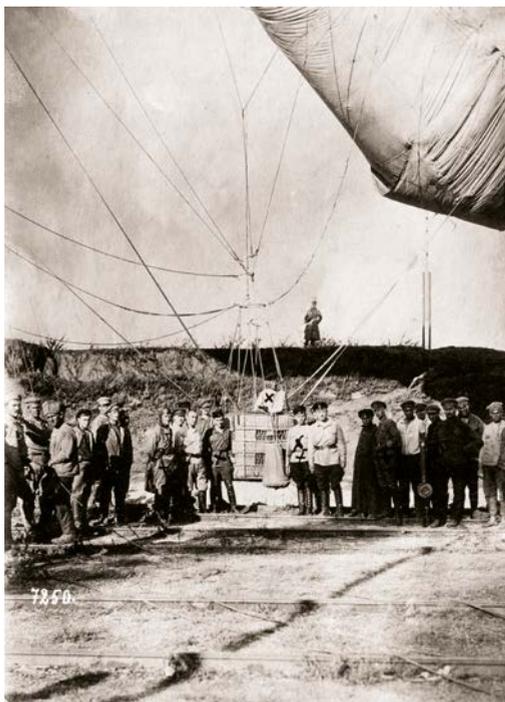


A fragment (cover and opening) from a photo album of the Security Service containing photographs seized during searches (1920–1924) from members of communist underground organisations.

LWA, fund 3235, description 1/6, file 1256.



306

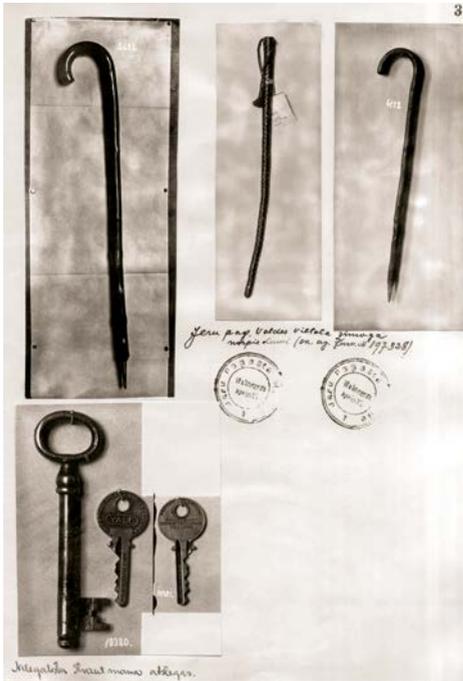


Staff of the Petrograd Aviation  
Park of the Soviet Union. Photos  
sent to the Agency by the Security  
Service's Vecgulbene regional unit,  
obtained with the help of a secret  
officer living in the Soviet Russia.  
First half of the 1920s.

*Communists-Russians have been marked  
with an "X", and Latvians - with "XX".*

*LVA, fund 3235, description 1/6,  
file 1255, p. 48 op., 49.*

*(The portraits were re-photographed  
and added to the file.)*



Evidence confiscated by the Security Service – picklocks, keys and stamp imprints of the false stamp of the Board of Jeru Parish. 1920s, 1930s.

LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/6, file 1254, p. 3.

307



Evidence confiscated by the Security Service – jacket with a double lining, which hides items required for underground operation.

LVVA, fund 3235, 1–6, 1254–op. 6.



The communist underground member, Fricis Gailis, who mysteriously died in 1933 in the premises of the Political Department. Passport photo. Year 1926.

*LVVA, fund 2996, description 7, file 1384.*



A photo shot by the Security Service depicting an inscription on the wall [in Latvian] “LAI DŽĪVO KOMJAUN[IEŠU] SAV[IENĪBA]!” (ENG: “Long live the Union of the Communist Youth”) in Riga, at Vidzemes šoseja 120. 1920s–1930s.

*LVVA, fund 3235, description 1/6, file 1254, p. 5.*



44 Turgus Street, Liepāja, where Security Service officers found the illegal printing house “Spartaks”. Year 1930.

*LVA, fund 3235, description 1/8, file 553, p. 49.*



Confiscated evidence – illegal literature and weapons – from the Liepāja printing house “Spartaks”. Year 1930.

*LVA, fund 3235, description 1/8, file 553, p. 50.*



310

Illegal, secret communist underground printing equipment discovered by the Security Service and workers at the printing house – Beinass Kalvarijs and Sora Kukļa. 1920s.

*LVA, fund 3235, description 1/6, file 1254, p. 3 op., 4.*



Photo from the photo album of the Political Department's Operational Unit. Printing house "Spartaks" of the Union of Communist Youth, as discovered on 13 February 1931, in Riga, at 54 Stabu Street, in the apartment of Izers Biksons.

*LVA, fund 3235, description 1/22, file 63/16, p. 13.*

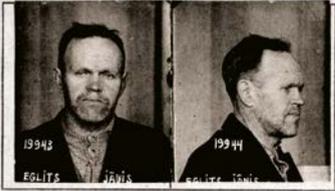




A cartoon in the newspaper "Intimā Rīga", captioned: "Officials-observers of the Political Department are said to be sitting among members of the organisation "Pērkoņkrusts" at the Congress Café."

Newspaper "Intimā Rīga". 19 January 1934, No. 5, p. 8.

*Eglitis, Jānis Reināds*  
Dzim. (kad un kur) *1891.g. 30. aprīlī.  
Mālpils pag.*  
Nodarbošanās *Vacarsaimniecībā*  
Dzīvo vieta *Limbates pag.  
Veckrastīnos.*



Paraksts: *Jānis Reināds Eglitis.*  
Pozīmes:  
augums *Maza*, mati *brūni-  
brūni*  
acis *zilas*; sev. pazīmes: *-*  
*Rēta kreisā vaipā*

Pēdējais ziņm. izziņots 1920.g.  
Zīdītājs, seštāvējis kom.part. L.K.P. *betlv*  
Valsts Drošības. 552 11 34  
*4. 11. 34*

*648of.*

no 1933g.; no 1934. g. rudenā sācis darbo-  
ties partijas Daugavas organizācijā, kur  
izpildījis organizatora palīgu pienākuma  
apgādājis organizācijas dalībniekus no R  
Rīgas ar kom.literatūru; organizējis nele-  
gāles kom.apspriedes.  
Kratīšanā atrasta kom.literatūra, kā arī  
nelegālists gadmanis-Mūcenieks.  
Atzietās un ir aprūpas.  
Rīgas rajona 1935.g. izziņa Nr.248/roc. *1935. 24. apr.*  
Rīgas App.T.prokuroramā (Izm. n. Nr.130631).  
Ar Pārvaldes palātu 1937.g. 10. aprīļa sprie-  
dumu pēc Sodul. lik. 41.p. sodīts ar 2g.  
6 mēn. pārmāc. namā ar Sodul. lik. 27.p.  
pārda. sekām. Spriedumu izd. 1937.  
7. jūnijā. (1937. g. 10. apr. lēm., Nr.2283).  
Līnās ar Pārvaldi. 1938.g. 13. I. Nr.23528/38.  
morāliskās Rejuma Afīzē. Hec. Pārvaldes izziņojums.

313

Card file of the Security Service on the communist underground member Jānis Eglitis.

LVA Political Police Administration card files.

14/20.19. Hess  
5

E. M.  
**Rigas Polizijas Walde.**  
Kriminalnodaļa.

**Orders № 287.**

Schi ordera ufrahditajam, Rigas Kriminalpolizijas uzraudzam  
Brizņukam ir teesiba iidarit kratischanu pee pilsoņa  
Brizdub, dlihwjoscha  
Armena eelā № 2, dlihw. \_\_\_\_\_, kā ari  
wajadlības gadījumā wiņa areftu.

Rigā, „16. decembris” 1919. g.

Rigas Kriminalpolizijas Preekschneeks: [Signature]  
Sekretars: [Signature]



314

Search warrant of the Political Department of the Riga Criminal Police. Riga, 16 December 1919.  
LVA, fund 3235, description 1/21, file 13, p. 20, 21.

20

*Нопрекинатошанос протоколс.*

1919 годъ 14 окт. ес Валксо Дрошкитас Департамента  
Леппаяс Района ишментелшанос есхедис, ишпекти-  
найс ашкелшâ стинелс, пур нам вишпш  
Клиис Шепона октис Сискинс,  
37 годус вез. парискигис, парежис  
аб Ксения 27 годус вез. ишпина  
Шинитис 6 годус вез. пелш аралс  
пермупит, пелш Кавлитас Крестс,  
жем Купас им ишментелшанос нар-  
шпавейс, пелшангис пур Шепхадорс  
Кас параша Валогомнас Губернас, лисс  
пелшвалрадос Леппаяс пилшклас пиниш

Лелиза Јенотелс:

1916 годâ 28 јулија денâ, кину есаункс рара денâшл мо  
Валволснас пилшклас, бет јан крелу рашу вангуагиса  
31 августâ јани парашâ годâ, гандрис виш ману  
вангуагисас латин валпая, модербојас пур јеморпилс  
абаксум. Леппаяс ебрауну мо валпаяс вангуагисас  
18 дејембери 1918 годâ јан јашпинис, бет мâtри ресекс  
ја Леппаяс пилшклас пиниш, а рурâ ари абрадос лисс  
Јелш аленай, рагад ес латина ману лешгуну, есехот  
им мани ашпублит ус ману ишпинити. Селнеус ес  
ненад не ишму бии, ари мено пар лелгуагисоме не пини  
мани ватрдис ишпелуш, ман нар всирак мо кинд.

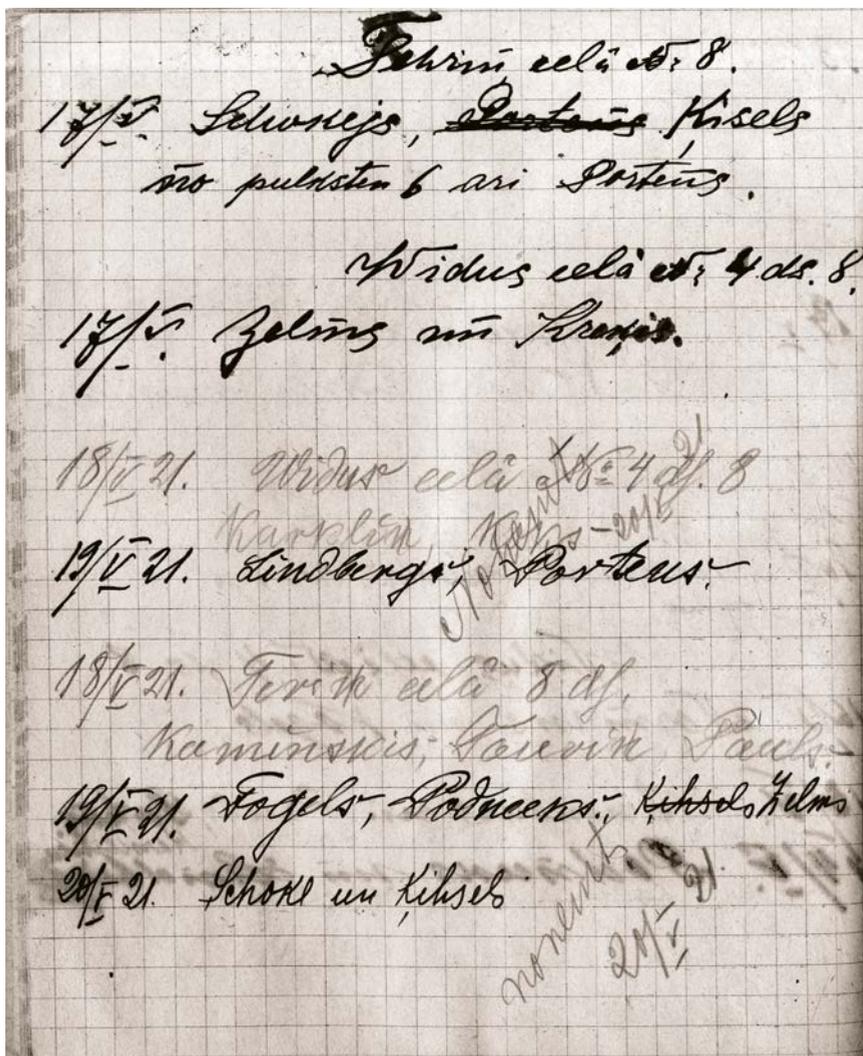
Кетимс Чухаров

*Нопрекинатошанос есхедис Шпана*

315

Interrogation protocol drawn up by the State Security Department  
investigation officer of Liepāja regional unit. Liepāja, 14 October 1919.

LVA, fund 3503, description 1, file 100, p. 70.



316

Page of the Political Security Department's book "Slazdu grāmata" (ENG: "Book on traps") with remarks of created hidden traps, shifts, and removal of traps. Year 1920.

LVA, fund 3235, description 1/6, file 320, p. 12.

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13

Politiskās Apsardzības

P. Slapeni.

..... rajons.

POLITISKAS APSARDZĪBAS PĒRĒKŠNĒKA

"...".....1921g.

Nr.....

S I N O J U M S Nr. 6...

par laiku no "..."..... līdz "...".....

- I. SĪNAS PAR SĒSPANAN KOMUNISTU PARTIJAS ORGANIZĀCIJAM.
  - a) Par organizācijas un apulzes;
  - b) par agitāciju un nelegālas literatūras izplatīšanu.
  - c) par sēspanam tipogrāfijām;
  - d) par aerotehu noliktāvam;
  - e) par teroristu un bandu darbību.
- II. PAR ARODPREEDRĪBU KUSTĪBU.
- III. PAR SOCIĀLDEMOKRĀTU - LĒĻINĒBU PARTIJAS DARBĪBU.
- IV. PAR ZITTAUTPĒRĒSCHU DARBĪBU.
  - a) nedalāmas Kresvijas pēskriteju darbību;
  - b) vahzu - Needristu grupu darbība;
  - c) polu organizāciju darbība.
- V. A H R S E H N E E K I.
- VI. B E H G L I.
  - a) beģļu sēpluhums (daudzums);
  - b) sēvēhrojāmakas pērcenas starp beģļiem (lēģlīnēku darbīnēki u z.)
- VII. D A C H A D A S S I N A S.

Politiskās apsardzības

..... rajona pahrainis:

D a r b w e d i s :

(Sinojums pēhz §§ un p.p. otra puse)

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Draft report form of the Political Security Department. Year 1921.

24.11.2000 Lepasa  
Koreslehti ministrium  
A. Koresa kuningam.  
Linojums:  
Ministry's kanceleja ~ gramatmediba vel  
arvannu strada eedue Marta Krūmiņa, eevemot  
atbildigu vatu, ka naturalijn leatu spārsim jeb  
vadištija. Vinos rīciba tā kaad atvoda wisun Koreslehti  
ministrijas eedim saraxsti, starp citeem ori Politiskas  
apsardzibas darbineru saraxsti.  
Mineta eednes, M. Krūmiņa vīrs bija sava  
sarka diri reises aretels un pret viņu tika no  
Politiskas apsardzibas evadita politiska rakstura  
ismerkšana. Šas reises ismerkšanu vajadzēja pār-  
traumēt un eednes M. Krūmiņa vīru atsvalinat uz  
Arovisa Koreslehti ministru A. Berga kunga rikojumu  
pamota, jo mineta eedne bija par to A. Berga  
kungu personigi luguse - motirējot saon lūgumu  
ar to, ka viņa vīrs nesot aktīvs komunistu  
darbiners bet strādājoš kooperatīvu sareņības valde  
(ari kooperatīva "Produkti") ka reņners darbovols.  
Nostāclēt leati" tadā gaismā viņa bija A. Berga  
kungu maldivajise un na ta pamota bija dots  
rikojums viņas vīru atsvalinat.

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Political Security Department's report to the Minister of the Interior on the civil  
servant Marta Krūmiņa, who is considered to be a politically unreliable person.

LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 896, p. 54.

Nemot so laktu turam mēs esam spēst  
godātus ministru kungs Jums pasāpēt sekam  
ceredus M. Krūmiņa vīrs nebūt nav nemams, ka  
veicams darbos kooperāciju sarecības nolok, bet ir  
aktīvs komunistu darbinēks, per tam lakti uz māsu  
mā ielētojs savas sevas dēvesta stāvokli, lai atsvālinā  
tas no pēlūta soda un pasulain strādā agrarajā  
virzēna. Cerēne Marta Krūmiņa turpinā saru  
darbu ~~lakti~~ ministrijās kandelija - gramotvārdi  
mā ielēto saru stāvokli, lai enerģēt. savam vīram  
rajodsīgos zīnos par ministrijās ceredum sastān -  
serisxi par Politiskos apsardzības darli. veicam.

Prārdētur šādū stāvokli, par pūnīgi nenorm  
lūdsam Jūs, godātus Ministru kungs vācēntes dot  
kojamū šādū stāvokli lūpvidēt un pārtēcinātes  
ka cerēne Marta Krūmiņa ir vācēntes tikt un net tā  
atrodas Valtis dēvesta, lai mēs vācēntes notraucēntes  
stāt, nebaidēntes no tam, ka mēs tēkam nodati  
mūsū emaielmerdem. - 61

Dasi Politiskos apsardzības darb

105  
P. slepeni.

Ie. M.  
Centrālās kriminālpolicijas  
politiskā pārvalde.

Daugavpils rajons.

**Agentūras lapiņa Nr. 25/94**

Ziņojums par Latvijas arodbiešību Krāslavas nodaļu partiju  
kustību.

Ziņas sniedza "Blondine"

Ziņas pieņēma Krāslavas punkts 14. jūnijā 1928 g. plkst. \_\_\_\_\_

Nē pēc kārtas	Ziņu saturs	Izsīrādāšana
	<p>No arodniekiem atdalījušās sporta sekcijas grupa 30 cilvēku, 10. jūnijā noturējusi sapulci Krāslavas žīdu bērnu dārzā "Māt' un bērns", Jaunā ielā Nr.3. Tācis nolēmts arodbiēdribā atpakaļ neiestāties, bet nodibināt patstāvīgu organizāciju, legalizējoties kādā no pastāvošām strādnieku sporta organizācijām, kā nodaļa /filiale/. Tā kā žīdu organizācijā "Māt' un bērns" pēc statūtiem esot paredzētā sporta sekcija, mēģinājuši pīvyie noties pie pēdējās, bet tas neizdevies, jo minētā bērnu organizācija nodibināta priekš mazgadīgiem bērniem un ir apolitiska. Pēc paziņojuma par to sapulcē, pēdējā nolēmusi griezties pie SSS galvenā valdes un Bruno KALNIŅA dēļ atdalījušos sportistu legalizēt Krāslavas SSS nodaļā,</p>	

Valsts tipogrāfija 368. 9. 25

320

105

bet izredzes uz pīvyieņošanas SSS esot ļoti vājas, jo Krāslavas arodnieku sastāvā palikušais žīds Izraēls ELCOFONS /bundists/ esot informējis B. KALNIŅU par atdalījušos sportistu komunistisko nokrāsu. Priekš sportistu legalizēšanas tikusi ievālēti četri pilnvarotie - Morduchs DĻINS, Morduchs HEIFCOŠ, Josifs SVERDLOVS un Jēkabs KRĒLS.

Rajona pārzinis: *R. Merginš*

Politiskā pārvaldes Priekšniekam.

Z i n ā š a n a l .

Politiskā pārvaldes  
Daugavpils rajona pārzinis: *R. Merginš*

"16 jūnijā 1928.g.  
Nr.25/II  
Daugavpīlī.

Report by the informant of Daugavpils regional unit, "Blondine". Daugavpils, 1928.

LWA, fund 3235, description 1/22, file 1686, p. 1.



4 ✓

## Kratīšanas protokols.

1936 g. 5. maijā es, Politiskās pārvaldes Rygas rajona  
Vec. unaupe Secovs, pamatojoties uz Policijas  
iekārtas 31., Likuma par Centrālo kriminālpoliciju 8. un Kriminālprocesa likuma 296. pantu un Politiskās pārvaldes  
Rygas rajona priekšnieka 1936 g. 5. maijā orderi № 1565  
piedaloties minētā rajona paraugu K. i. m. J. un J. J.  
pieaicināto liecinieku  
Dab. novsca S. J.

un izkratāmo telpu Voldemāra Alps  
klātbūtnē izdarīju kratīšanu Rygo. Dienvidpilsētas ielā  
nr. 49 pie Alps dāma mīta  
vip. 4. dzīvoklī, sastāvoša no koridorā

Kratīšana iesākta 1936 g. 5. maijā pulkst. 9<sup>10</sup> un pabeigta  
" 5. maijā pulkst. 9<sup>55</sup>

Pie kratīšanas tika atrasti un nogādāti m. Politiskās  
pārvaldes Rygas rajonā caursūtīšanai sēšos apstā-  
ka. Protokols uzlemts V. J.

Kratīšanu izdarīja: Alps  
Secovs

Krat. bija J. J.

Valsts Drošības 100 5 25

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A protocol on the search in the place of residence of the former Head of the Political Security Department, Voldemārs Alps, drawn up by the Political Department. 5 May 1936.

LVA, fund 3235, description 2, file 7368, p. 4.



A file of the Security Service on the typist Nina Šulgina-Rudina at Soviet Russia's embassy. LWA Political Police Department card files.



The register of persons at the attention of the Security Service in its original filing cabinet, which is nowadays held by the Latvian National Historical Archive. Year 2020.

Photos of the authors.



From the left: Riga Prefect, Teodors Grīnvalds; Head of Political Department, Voldemārs Ozoliņš; Head of Criminal Police Administration, Gustavs Tīfentāls; Deputy to the Prefect of Riga, Hermanis Luters. 1 May 1927.

*LNA Latvia State Archive of Audiovisual Documents, fund 1, file 10416P.*



Officials at the museum-exhibition in Riga, 13 Alberta Street, set up by the Political Department. In the foreground from the left: Head of the Political Department, Jānis Fridrihsons; Head of the Lithuanian Security Police, Felicijonas Bortkevičius; Head of the Operational Unit, Roberts Štiglics; and Head of the Political Department of Riga regional unit, Artūrs Aprāns. July 1936.

*Collection of the Museum of Occupation.*



A picture of officers at the entrance to the Political Department's building in Riga, at 13 Alberta Street. Second from left: Head of the Lithuanian Security Police, Felicijonas Bortkevičius. First from the right: Head of the Political Department, Jānis Fridrihsons. July 1936.

*Collection of the Museum of Occupation.*



The head of the Political Department, Jānis Fridrihsons, at his work desk. Riga, second half of the 1930s. *Collection of the Museum of Occupation.*



The head of the Political Department Jānis Fridrihsons resting. Second half of the 1930s. *Collection of the Museum of Occupation.*



During the facilitation works of Riga Castle, fish are let into the garden pool. In the centre: Former President Kārlis Ulmanis and Head of Political Department Jānis Fridrihsons. 5 May 1936. *LNA Latvia State Archive of Audiovisual Documents, fund 1, file 1160A99.*



Officers of the Political Department at the illegal printing works in Ziepniekkalns, at 2 Numurmuižas Street, established by underground communists. From the left: 1) Riga regional unit investigation officer Artūrs Salnais, 2) Operational Unit, Roberts Štiglics, 3) Senior case officer of Riga regional unit, Fricis Smilškalns, 4) Head of Riga regional unit, Artūrs Aprāns, 5) Head of the Political Department, Jānis Fridrihsons, 6) Head of Liepāja regional unit, Nikolajs Roznieks, 7) Senior case officer of Jelgava regional unit, Arvids Zemītis. Year 1938.

LVA, fund 1986, description 1, file 9332, p. 134.

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A Service ID card of Georgs Fimbauers, an officer of the Security Service, issued after the occupation of Latvia with the signature of Vikentijus Latkovskis. Year 1940.

LVA, fund 3235, description 1/2, file 876a, p. 115.





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