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Uldis Neiburgs

RESISTANCE MOVEMENT IN  
LATVIA DURING NAZI GERMAN  
OCCUPATION (1941–1945):  
RESEARCH PROBLEMS AND ACHIEVEMENTS



VALSTS  
PĒTĪJUMU PROGRAMMA  
NACIONĀLĀ  
IDENTITĀTE

**Uldis Neiburgs**

# **Resistance Movement in Latvia during Nazi German Occupation (1941–1945): Research Problems and Achievements**

The manuscript is based on reports: “Resistance Movement in Latvia during Nazi German Occupation (1941–1945): Main Tendencies and Problems of Research” (International Conference “*Stosunki Polski z Państwami Morza Bałtyckiego*”, Opole, Poland, 2008) and “Cooperation of Resistance Movements in Latvia and Its Neighboring Countries and Foreign Intelligence Services during Nazi-German Occupation (1941–1945)” (8th Conference of Baltic Studies in Europe “The Baltics As an Intersection of Civilizational Identities”, Kaunas, Lithuania, 2009). The first version is published in the Lithuanian: Neiburgs, U. (2008). Latvijas pasipriešinimo judėjimas vokiečių okupacijos laikotarpiu (1941–1945 m.): mokslinio tyrimo problemos ir laimėjimai. *Genocidas ir rezistencija*, 2 (24), 7–121.



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**Pretošanās kustība Latvijā nacistiskās Vācijas okupācijas laikā (1941– 1945): pētniecības problēmas un risinājumi**

Manuskripts ir balstīts uz referātiem “Resistance Movement in Latvia during Nazi German Occupation (1941–1945): Main Tendencies and Problems of Research” (Starptautiskā konference “Stosunki Polski z Panstwami Morza Bałtyckiego”, Opole, Polija, 2008) un “Cooperation of Resistance Movements in Latvia and Its Neighboring Countries and Foreign Intelligence Services during Nazi-German Occupation (1941–1945)” (8. Baltijas studiju konference Eiropā “The Baltics As an Intersection of Civilizational Identities”, Kauņa, Lietuva, 2009). Tā pirmā versija ir publicēta lietuviešu valodā: Neiburgs, U. (2008). Latvijos pasipriešinimo judėjimas vokiečių okupacijos laikotarpiu (1941–1945 m.): mokslinio tyrimo problemas ir laimėjimai. *Genocidas ir rezistencija*, 2 (24), 7–21.

Rakstā ir sniegts vispārējs pārskats par pretošanās kustību Latvijā nacistiskās Vācijas okupācijas laikā, tīpašu uzmanību pievēršot pretošanās kustības jēdzieniskajai izpratnei, tās dalībnieku loka noteikšanai un citiem teorētiskiem un praktiskiem jautājumiem. Pētījums arī rāda, ka pretošanās kustība nacistu okupētajā Latvijā sadarbojās ar līdzīgām pretošanās kustībām Lietuvā un Igaunijā. Cerot uz Rietumu sabiedroto – ASV un Lielbritānijas, kā arī Skandināvijas valstu atbalstu neatkarības atgūšanā, visas trīs Baltijas valstu pretošanās kustības uzturēja ciešus kontaktus ar bijušajiem šo valstu sūtņiem Stokholmā, kuri atradās sakaros ar ASV (OSS), Lielbritānijas (SIS) un Zviedrijas (C-byrån) izlūkdienestiem, piegādājot tiem informāciju par situāciju nacistu okupētajās Baltijas valstīs.

*Atslēgvārdi*: pretošanās kustība, nacistiskās Vācijas okupācija, sadarbība ar Lietuvas un Igaunijas pretošanās kustībām un Rietumu izlūkdienestiem

This article gives an overview of the resistance movement in Latvia during Nazi German occupation, focusing on conceptual understanding of the resistance movement, determining the range of its members and other theoretical and practical issues. The research also shows that the resistance movement in Nazi-occupied Latvian cooperated with similar resistance movements in Lithuania and Estonia. Hoping to encourage the support of the Western Allies – US, Great Britain – and the Scandinavian countries for the restoration of independence, all three Baltic resistance movements kept close contacts with former ambassadors of these countries in Stockholm, who in turn sought liaisons with American (OSS), British (SIS) and Swedish (C-byrån) intelligence services, supplying them information on the situation in the Nazi-occupied territory in the Baltics.

*Key Words*: Resistance Movement, Nazi German Occupation, Cooperation with Lithuanian and Estonian Resistance Movements and Western Intelligence Services

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## General Description of the Resistance Movement

Resistance in the Nazi-occupied Latvia is one of the unresolved problems in the history of this region during the Second World War.<sup>1</sup> Unlike their counterparts in the majority of Western European states, where the recovery of their national freedom could be achieved along with the defeat of Hitler's Germany, members of the Latvian resistance movement were forced to work under much more difficult conditions, when struggle against one occupant did not directly lead to the restoration of their sovereignty, this struggle taking place under the threat of the return of the other occupation rule. Thus the struggle for the restoration of Latvia's independence was targeted at the both occupants: the Communists and Nazis as attested both by the activities of the resistance movement as such as well as by the fact that the members of the resistance movement suffered repressions from the both occupation rules.<sup>2</sup>

In the situation when the weakening of the Nazi Germany's armed forces in their fight against the Soviet Union was not in the interests of the resistance movement, while a part of this movement did take part in military reconnaissance and the collection of weapons and ammunition, the majority of its members were engaged in the dissemination of oral and written information, hampering of the execution of the orders of the occupation rule, trying to use their positions in the interests of the Latvian people by consolidating public commitment to a free and independent state of Latvia. The origins of the resistance movement in the Nazi-occupied Latvia lie as far back as the illegal fight of Latvian patriots against the Soviet occupation regime in 1940–1941 and it did not come to an end with the

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<sup>1</sup> Rolmane, V. (1999) The Resistance in Latvia during the Nazi Occupation (July 1941-May 1945). In: Anušauskas, A. (ed.). *The Anti-Soviet Resistance in the Baltic States*. Vilnius: Du Ka. P. 131–148; Zunda, A. (2005). Resistance against Nazi German Occupation in Latvia: Positions in Historical Literature. In: Nollendorfs, V., Oberländer, E. (eds). *The Hidden and Forbidden History of Latvia under Soviet and Nazi Occupations 1940-1991 (Symposium of the Commission of the Historians of Latvia, Vol. 14)*. Riga: Institute of the History of Latvia. P. 148–158; Bleiere, D., Butulis, I., Feldmanis, I., Stranga, A., Zunda, A. (2006). *History of Latvia. The 20th Century*. Riga: Jumava P. 293–302.

<sup>2</sup> [Neparts, A.] (1952–1953). Pretestības kustība. In: Švābe, A. (ed.). *Latvju enciklopēdija*. Stokholma: Trīs zvaigznes. 3. sēj. 2010. lpp.

capitulation of Nazi Germany on 8th May 1945 either, persisting in an armed and later in a non-violent form throughout the entire post-war Soviet occupation period until the restoration of Latvia's independence. This form of the resistance movement proved to be very sustainable and continued also in the post-war years of the Soviet occupation and was of great importance also for the restoration of Latvia's independence half a century later.<sup>3</sup>

The resistance movement in the Nazi-occupied Latvia took also an expression of outwardly legal, but in fact secret activities against the occupation regime as many participants of the movement worked in different administrative, economic, military and other structures of the German occupation rule, at the same time as they were active in the resistance. Former member of the resistance movement Arturs Neparts (1921) has contributed a vivid description of this form of activity, writing that "resistance to Germans was undertaken and organized by many central Latvian institutions that were headed either directly by the members of the resistance or by their active supporters. The General Directorate for Education contributed most to the preservation of the Latvian spirit in the youth simultaneously as they maintained high educational standards for the conditions of war. Many school inspectors, teachers and students were active members of the resistance movement and the Directorate was aware of that. Thus besides issues purely concerning national education this centralized and coordinated apparatus that embraced entire Latvia was in touch with all aspects pertaining to Latvian interests and within the limits of its capability actively supported the establishment of resistance groups, their contacts and operation. The leading members of the resistance movement often consulted Director General for Justice regarding political issues and activities. Directorate General for Agriculture actively contributed to the preservation of our economic values".<sup>4</sup> I think that in the future Latvian historians should attribute much more attention to such expressions of resistance.

On the other hand the resistance movement in the Nazi-occupied Latvia took different non-organized and organized expressions. It constituted illegal activities of individuals and organizations that existed outside the

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<sup>3</sup> Neiburgs, U. (2000). Latviešu nacionālās pretošanās kustības preses izdevumi Latvijā vācu okupācijas laikā (1941–1945). *Latvijas Zinātņu Akadēmijas Vēstis*. 1/2, 43–58.

<sup>4</sup> Neparts, A. (1953). Pretestības kustība. [Milforda], Latvijas Okupācijas muzejs (LOM), Latviešu Pretestības kustības dalībnieku apvienības (LPKDA) arhīvs.

system of the occupation regime, involving miscellaneous social and political layers of society, including former politicians and members of the Saeima (Parliament) of the democratic Republic of Latvia and nationalist radical organization “Pērkonkrusts” (Thundercross).<sup>5</sup>

In the documents uncovered up to now one can find testimony about several resistance groups like the “*Latviešu Nacionālistu savienība*” (Latvian Nationalist Union), “*Brīvā Latvija*” (Free Latvia), “*Latvijas Vanagu organizācija*” (Latvian Hawks), “*Jaunpulki*” (New Regiments), “*Latvijas Sargi*” (Latvian Guards) and others.<sup>6</sup> There were many clandestine newspapers “*Latvija*” (Latvia), “*Tautas Balss*” (People’s Voice), “*Latviešu Ceļš*” (Latvian Way), “*Brīvā Latvija. Latvju Raksti*” (Free Latvia. Latvian Articles), “*Lāčplēsis*” (Beartearer), “*Par Latviju*” (For Latvia), which addressed the most unpopular decrees of the German occupation policy and condemned the collaboration of Latvians with the occupants.<sup>7</sup>

From the summer of 1943 on, former Latvian Ambassador in Stockholm, Voldemārs Salnais (1886–1948), became actively interested in the situation in Nazi-occupied Latvia and perceived the necessity to organize a centralized national resistance movement. At the same time, related activities in Latvia took place: Leonīds Siliņš (1916–2005), advance person of the Central Council of Latvia (CCL), crossed the Baltic on 22 July 1943 to establish contacts, and the CCL was formally established in Riga on 13 August 1943 by representatives of the four largest Latvian political parties – Latvian Social Democratic Workers Party, Farmers Union, Democratic Centre and Christian Farmers Party of Latvia.

The CCL supported the re-establishing of a democratic and independent Latvia on the principles of the constitution adopted in 1922. In March 1944, the CCL developed a political memorandum that was signed by 188 Latvian political and public figures, former ministers, members of parliament,

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<sup>5</sup> Waite, R. G. (2004). Some Aspects of Anti-German Sentiment in Latvia (1941–1944). Grām.: Ērglis, Dz. (ed.). *Latvija nacistiskās Vācijas okupācijas varā 1941–1945. (Latvijas Vēsturnieku komisijas raksti, 11. sēj.)* Rīga: Latvijas vēstures institūta apgāds. 154.–176. lpp.; Felder, B. M. (2004). “Die Spreu vom Weizen trennen...” Die Lettische Kartei - Pērkonkrusts im SD Lettland, 1941–1943. In: Strods, H. (ed.). *Latvijas Okupācijas muzeja gadagrāmata 2003. Varas patvaļā*. Rīga: Latvijas 50 gadu okupācijas muzeja fonds. 2004. 47.–68. lpp.

<sup>6</sup> Latvijas Valsts vēstures arhīvs (LVVA), P 69. fonds, 1.a apraksts, 26. lieta, P 82. f., 1. apr., 39. l., P 252. f., 1. apr., 26. l., P 1026. f., 1. apr., 7. l. u.c.; Bundesarchiv, Berlin (BArch), R 6/14, R 6/45, R 6/165, R 6/167, R6/306, R 58/223, R 90/4 etc.

<sup>7</sup> Latvijas Zinātņu akadēmijas arhīvs, 40. f., 5. apr., 1.–3. l.; Latvijas Valsts arhīvs (LVA), 1986. f., 1. apr., 25231. l., 1.apr., 62. l. u.c.

university professors, clergymen, lawyers etc<sup>8</sup>. This document was declaration of the efforts of the Latvian people against the policies of Nazis, and declaration of independence for the governments of the Western powers. These activities continued until the middle of 1944, when contacts between Latvian diplomats in the West and CCL reached their peak. They included information exchange, illegal boat traffic across the Baltic, etc.<sup>9</sup> The contacts diminished considerably after several CCL leaders, including Konstantīns Čakste (1901–1945), Bruno Kalniņš (1899–1990) and others, were arrested in Latvia.

At the time when one occupation rule in Latvia was being replaced by another, CCL turned out to be unable to form a capable-of-action provisional government of Latvia and to implement plans of the receipt of military assistance from abroad, thus it could not efficiently utilize the military potential of General Janis Kurelis' (1882–1954) group and other Latvian units for possible recovery of Latvia's independence either. After the Germans liquidated the core of the Kurelians in November of 1944, only soldiers in battalions under Lieutenant Roberts Rubenis (1917–1944) actively joined in the fight against them. The eight leading Kurelian officers were sentenced to death by an SS and police court in Liepāja on November 18, 1944. Over 1300 men were arrested and sent to concentration camps in Germany. With the defeat of the Kurelians the Germans dealt a significant blow to the national resistance movement.<sup>10</sup>

Assessing the work of the existing historiography in the research of the history of the resistance movement, one can to a large extent agree to historian Antonijs Zunda that "in the future more attention should be attributed to casting light on the activities of other resistance organizations and groups, intellectuals, rural population, university and school students, rather than focusing on the already well studied issues related to the Central Council of Latvia and Kurelis' unit. The efficiency of the resistance movement in the German-occupied Latvia should not be assessed based only on some quantitative or qualitative factors, such as the number of

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<sup>8</sup> Latvijas Centrālās padomes 1944. gada 17. marta memorands, Latvijas Kara muzejs (LKM), Inv. nr. 5-22742/1437-DK.

<sup>9</sup> Kangeris, K. (1985). *Die organisierte flucht aus dem Baltikum nach Schweden 1944. Von Amerikanern finanzierte Aktionen*. Paper presented at the 8<sup>th</sup> Conference on Baltic Studies in Scandinavia, Stockholm, June 7-11, 1985; Siliņš, L. (2000). *The Latvian Central Council and boats to Sweden*. Uppsala.

<sup>10</sup> Ērglis, Dz. (2003). *Latvijas Centrālās padomes vēstures nezināmās lappuses*. Rīga: Latvijas vēstures institūta apgāds. 61.–93. lpp.



distributed illegal leaflets, memoranda and newspapers or performed acts of sabotage or subversive activities. On the whole the importance of the resistance to occupants lies in the fact that it asserted the high moral standards of society and its commitment to democratic values”<sup>11</sup>

### **Cooperation with Resistance Movements in Neighboring Countries**

During the war, the Latvian national resistance movement maintained contact as much as possible with similar resistance movement groups and organizations in Estonia and Lithuania. Likewise, on certain occasions they also tried to establish relations with resistance group members from several other Nazi-occupied European nations. The cooperation between Baltic resistance movements under Nazi occupation, until now, partly due to a lack of historic sources, has been insufficiently studied on a professional level. It is discussed exclusively by distinguished Baltic authors Dzintars Ērglis and Arūnas Bubnys in their publications on this topic.<sup>12</sup>

The overall understanding of the dissemination of the resistance movement in Nazi-occupied Baltic States is also offered in the review “Situation in the Baltic States in March 1943 according to Finnish sources.” It was written by Latvian Ambassador to the United States Alfreds Bīlmanis (1887–1948) and published during the war. In it, he presents the following information: “The underground movement in all three Baltic States is increasing in scope. Also the number of illegal persons hiding in forests and elsewhere is increasing. The reason is that there is a good deal of doubt and suspicion as to whether the Germans by means of the legions and labor service are not trying to achieve the same results as the Bolsheviks did by means of mass deportations. This promotes both the underground movement and the rapid increase in the number of illegal persons. This underground movement, however, is by no means communistic, but is strictly national-patriotic. If there is a communist or so, they are very few in number and they are firmly acted against by the patriotic organizations.

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<sup>11</sup> Zunda, A. (2004). Pretošanās kustība vācu okupētajā Latvijā: nostādnes vēstures literatūrā. Grām.: Ērglis, Dz. (sast.). *Okupācijas režīmi Latvijā 1940.–1959. gadā (Latvijas Vēsturnieku komisijas raksti, 10. sēj.)*. Rīga: Latvijas vēstures institūta apgāds. 235. lpp.

<sup>12</sup> Ērglis, Dz. (1999). Latvijas Centrālās padomes un Lietuvas pretestības kustības sadarbība nacistiskās Vācijas okupācijas laikā (1943–1945). In: *Acta Baltica'99*. Kaunas: Aesti. P. 199–203; Bubnys, A. (2003). *Nazi Resistance Movement in Lithuania 1941-1944*. Vilnius: Vaga. P. 116–148.

Illegal newspapers appear which appeal to the nation to be unified and to sensibly and wisely oppose such decrees of the occupation authorities as might catastrophically reduce manpower. Underground patriotic organizations exist in all three Baltic States”.<sup>13</sup>

The fragmentary information currently published in historical literature regarding the cooperation between Baltic resistance movements can be supplemented by documents covering this subject found in German and Baltic archives. These documents would allow a more precise assessment of the significance and meaning of such international relations.<sup>14</sup>

Many historical sources testify that Latvian Social Democrats illegally maintained relationships with colleagues in the Baltic nations and Scandinavia. Lithuanian Social Democratic representative Pranas Brijunas traveled to Riga at least five times between 1942 and 1944, where he met with B. Kalniņš, and later with Pauls Grundulis.<sup>15</sup> In the fall of 1943, Lithuanian resistance movement officials P. Brijunas, Kipras Bielinis and Jeloveckis met with Latvian Social Democrats at “*Zilēni*” in the Platone district of Jelgava county.<sup>16</sup> Discussed at this meeting was jointly-prepared and later-distributed report “Workers of Baltic Nations under German and Russian Occupation.” This report stressed that the Baltic nations were like the grindstone between the USSR and Germany, and that a Western-Democratic war-win was their only hope of rescue.<sup>17</sup>

One of the most significant Baltic resistance movement memoranda was the December 1943 “Declaration in the Name of the People of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia”. This found its way to the Swedish Foreign Ministry and foreign embassies in Stockholm. In sending this document to the US State Department, US Ambassador in Stockholm, Hershel W. Johnson wrote on March 22, 1944: “The declaration reportedly emanates, not from Baltic exiles, but from circles active at present within Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Recent Baltic refugees arrivals in Sweden assert that these circles are grouped around the underground national resistance

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<sup>13</sup> *Latvia under German occupation: 1941–1943*. Washington, D.C.: The Press Bureau of the Latvian Legation, 1943. P. 111–112.

<sup>14</sup> BArch, R 6/165, S. 99-100, R 6/45, S. 1-12, 30-37; Lietuvos Ypatingasis archyvas (LYA), f. 3377, ap. 58, b. 268; LVA, 1986. f., 1. apr., 99. l., 2. apr., P-10448. l.

<sup>15</sup> LVA, 1986. f., 2. apr., P-10448. l., 1. sēj., 167. lp., 2. sēj., 347. lp.

<sup>16</sup> Ērglis, Dz. (1999). *Latvijas Centrālās padomes un Lietuvas pretestības kustības sadarbība nacistiskās Vācijas okupācijas laikā (1943–1945)*. 201. lpp.

<sup>17</sup> Kalniņš, B. (1956). *Latvijas Sociāldemokratijas piecdesmit gadi*. Stokholma: LSDSP Ārzemju Komiteja. 203. lpp.

organizations in each of the three countries and that these organizations have the support or, at least, the sympathies of the majorities of the Baltic populations which share the views set forth in the declaration [...] The refugees state, moreover, that it is generally believed in the Baltic countries that Germany has lost the war and will sooner or later have to relinquish its hold upon these countries, and that, consequently, the only country which at present constitutes a danger to their independence is the Soviet Union.”<sup>18</sup>

CCL history’s previously most valued texts usually emphasize CCL merit in the organization of cooperation between resistance movements in Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania. Historian Dz. Ērglis writes that regular contact existed between all three resistance organizations in the Baltic nations,<sup>19</sup> but does not assess the significance of these meetings at the time. Active CCL member L. Siliņš identifies in his writings only three meetings at which possibilities of cooperation were discussed: in January, March and April of 1944.<sup>20</sup>

Separate accounts in various documents provide information confirming the three meetings between Baltic resistance movement officials in Riga during the first half of 1944. According report Chief of Security Police and SD in Ostland a Latvian and Lithuanian resistance movement representative assembly convened on January 8th and 9th in Riga. There, CCL chairman K. Čakste, B. Kalniņš and former Minister Ludvigs Sēja (1885–1962), along with “Highest Committee for Lithuanian Liberation” chairman Professor Steponas Kairys, discussed questions of cooperation possibilities. Due to technical reasons representatives of Estonian resistance movement couldn’t arrive to the meeting.<sup>21</sup>

There were following issues discussed in the conference: 1) Mutual communication, 2) Characteristics of common political situation, 3) Latvian and Lithuanian behavior in case of possible Bolshevik invasion, 4) Attitude towards German occupation, 5) Possible common cooperation in the form of confederation. Latvian and Lithuanian representatives agreed that there must be close work and confederation between the neighboring countries. The participants of conference congratulated Baltic ambassadors for they

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<sup>18</sup> National Archives II, College Park, MD (NA), Record Group 226, Entry 16, Box. 817, 67897C.

<sup>19</sup> Ērglis, Dz. (2003). *Latvijas Centrālās padomes vēstures nezināmās lappuses*. 20. lpp.

<sup>20</sup> Andersons, E. Siliņš, L. u.c. (1994). *Latvijas Centrālā padome: Latviešu nacionālā pretestības kustība. 1943–1945*. Uppsala: LCP. 51. lpp.

<sup>21</sup> BArch, R 6/165, S. 99-100, R 6/45, S. 1-12.

cooperation abroad in order to restore sovereignty de facto and wished them even closer cooperation in future.<sup>22</sup>

According to historian A. Bubnys, the only more obvious result from the Riga Conference was publication of “*Baltija*” newsletter. The primary goal of the newsletter was to propagate a united struggle against an enemy, common to all the Baltic countries. Unfortunately, there was only time to publish a few issues before the Soviet reoccupation of the Baltics.<sup>23</sup>

Estonian SSR State Security Peoples Commissioner also clarified in January of 1945 that on March 15th 1944 in Riga, in the apartment of K. Čakste, “active nationalist and son of former Latvian president,” occurred an illegal meeting of Estonian and Latvian resistance group members. Participants in that meeting included “Republic of Estonia National Committee” representative Ernst Kull, as well as K. Čakste, B. Kalniņš and L. Sēja. Discussed was the coordination of “nationalistic constituent” activities in Baltic nations.<sup>24</sup>

The next meeting of Baltic resistance officials in Riga took place on April 15, 1944, where the following matters were discussed: 1) Exchange of information regarding political and economic conditions in Baltic States, 2) Military-political actual-state assessment, 3) Resistance movement activity coordination, 4) Formation of a confederation of Baltic nations.<sup>25</sup>

K. Čakste’s encoded report to CCL foreign delegation in Sweden says that the meeting’s participants expected a USSR attack on Baltic nations, and therefore planned “with weapons in hand, with all their strength under all circumstances to protect their country and to fight for restoration of their sovereignty against a united enemy, taking advantage of any outside help. At the right moment, for this nation will be established its government”.<sup>26</sup> The question about the concrete organization of the confederation of the Baltic States was postponed till there would be more decent circumstances.

Sadly, these intentions, under concrete historical circumstances were never meant to be realized. With that, the arrest of several Baltic resistance movement participants followed soon after. On their way home from

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<sup>22</sup> BArch, R 6/45, S. 30-37.

<sup>23</sup> Bubnys, A. (2003). *Nazi Resistance Movement in Lithuania, 1941–1944*. P. 128, 129.

<sup>24</sup> LYA, f. 3377, ap. 58, b. 268, l. 96-97.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Andersons, E. Siliņš, L. u.c. (1994). *Latvijas Centrālā padome: Latviešu nacionālā pretestības kustība. 1943–1945*. 76. lpp.

Finland, German security authorities succeeded in arresting Lithuanian courier Kazys Ambraziejus in Tallinn on April 21, 1944. They also intercepted material from the meetings in Riga that contained names of meeting participants and the content discussed. Two versions exist as to why German security authorities honed in on Baltic resistance movement officials. The first suggests that the Lithuanian courier, while drunk in Estonia attracted the attention of German authorities. The other suggests that an Estonian woman, after discovering her husband's involvement in the resistance movement, informed her lover – a German officer, who in turn alerted Nazi authorities.<sup>27</sup>

Chief of Security Police and SD in Ostland wrote in a report dated May 2, 1944, that the arrest of K. Ambraziejus, the Lithuanian Army's First Lieutenant in reserve, and several other espionage organization members took place on April 21, 1944. In Estonia, 100 were arrested and in Latvia, only six. There remains the possibility of subsequent arrests in all three states. There is talk of a group that as far as we know, had not formed a strict organization. At the head of this group were six individuals, supported by another six advisers. These leaders were members of intelligentsia. Certain facts suggest that the existence of illegal devices was also known among Estonian and Latvian self-government political circles. The organization kept contact with Estonian emigrant circles in Finland and Sweden. These emigrant groups themselves maintained contact further with Western countries. One of the goals of this group in Ostland was to lay the groundwork for the formation of armed units, in case the German front broke down in the North. The possibility of receiving arms from Sweden and Finland had already been considered.<sup>28</sup>

In the writings of former Latvian resistance movement members, specific contact with resistance members from Denmark is also mentioned, which certainly calls for more serious consideration.<sup>29</sup> It is possible that a significant role in maintaining relations was played by Social Democratic engineer Jānis Irbēns (1905–1962). During the German occupation, he visited Denmark and Sweden several times under the cover of scientific missions, where he met and exchanged information with prominent

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<sup>27</sup> Andersons, E. Siliņš, L. u.c. (1994). *Latvijas Centrālā padome: Latviešu nacionālā pretestības kustība. 1943–1945.* 76.–77. lpp.

<sup>28</sup> BArch, R 6/165, S. 99-100.

<sup>29</sup> Neparts, A. (1953). *Pretestības kustība.*

members of political circles.<sup>30</sup> Similarly, earlier studies confirm that episodically, illegal relations were forming with Polish resistance movement official Stanislavs Blazevics along with other Polish resistance participants.<sup>31</sup>

However, the resistance movement in Latvia did not manage to achieve their ultimate purpose – to restore the independence of the Baltic States. This was impossible in the political situation when two military powers, Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, controlled the territory of the Baltic States.

### **Contacts with Western Allies and Scandinavian Countries**

An important aspect to the study of resistance movement history in Latvia, and likewise in Estonia and Lithuania, is the involvement of its participants in the sharing of information regarding proceedings in Nazi occupied territory with the military intelligence and foreign ministries of various Western-European countries. In recent years, several texts have been written that document resistance movement involvement in establishing and maintaining contact with the West. These include Andrew Ezergailis' 2002 work "Stockholm Documents, The German Occupation of Latvia 1941–1945: What did America Know?",<sup>32</sup> published in Riga, the 2005 book by Thomas Remeikis "Lithuania Under German Occupation 1941–1945: Dispatches from US Legation in Stockholm",<sup>33</sup> distributed in Vilnius, and "Staying Loyal: Estonia's Government 1940–1992",<sup>34</sup> in which many war-time documents from Sweden and other foreign archives are published.

One of the important routes of information stretch through publicist Antanas Valiukėnas (1913–1946), who escaped Soviet occupation of Lithuania and was permitted to live in Germany during the war. The materials supplied to A. Valiukėnas were transmitted from Lithuania by

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<sup>30</sup> [Lorencs, K.] (2005). *Kāda cilvēka dzīve. Klāva Lorenca atmiņas*. Rīga: Zelta grauds. 388. lpp.

<sup>31</sup> Jēkabsons, Ē. (2004). Poļu nacionālā pretošanās kustība Latvijā vācu okupācijas laikā (1941–1944). Grām.: Ērglis, Dz. (ed.). *Okupācijas režīmi Latvijā 1940.–1959. gadā (Latvijas Vēsturnieku komisijas raksti, 10. sēj.)*. 266.–269. lpp.

<sup>32</sup> Ezergailis, A. (ed.). (2002). *Stockholm Documents. The German Occupation of Latvia. 1941–1945: What Did America Know? (Symposium of the Commission of the Historians of Latvia. Vol. 5)*. Riga: Publishers of the Historical Institute of Latvia.

<sup>33</sup> Remeikis, T. (ed.). (2005). *Lithuania under German Occupation 1941–1945. Despatches from US Legation in Stockholm*. Vilnius: Petro ofsetas.

<sup>34</sup> *Tōotan ustavaks jääda... Eesti Vabariigi valitsus 1940–1992*. Tartu, 2004.

reliable couriers, who had official positions in Lithuania and, as functionaries in German service, could freely travel to Germany. This information through various diplomatic channels, Swedish military attaché in Berlin colonel Carl H. Julin-Dannfelt included, was supplied former Lithuanian Ambassador in Stockholm Vytautas Gylys (1886–1959). A second major route traveled by various couriers was a direct transmittal of documents across the Baltic Sea. Most important role in this process was played by professor of University of Kaunas Algirdas Vokietaitis (1909–1994).<sup>35</sup>

In a similar fashion, illegally sent information by the Estonian and Latvian resistance movements was received by former Estonian Ambassadors in Helsinki and Stockholm Aleksander Warma (1890–1970) and Heinrich Laretei (1892–1973)<sup>36</sup> and former Latvian Ambassador in Stockholm V. Salnais.<sup>37</sup> All three Baltic resistance movements had close contacts with former ambassadors of these countries in Stockholm, who in turn sought liaison with British (SIS) and American (OSS) secret services, supplying them with information on the situation in the German occupied territory in the Baltic. It is not known if any political promises were made to the Baltic ambassadors in return for the information received, but it is evident today that in post-war conferences, the Western Allies for their part never once raised the question of sovereignty for the Baltic states on whom the ambassadors of the Baltic countries, whose activities in London and Washington were still legally recognized, had entrusted their hopes.<sup>38</sup>

At the same time, the common conception in contemporary Latvian historiography that the first valid information about the state of Nazi-occupied Latvia received in the West came after CCL activist L. Siliņš' 1943

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<sup>35</sup> Damušis, A. (1998). *Lithuania against Soviet and Nazi Aggression*. Chicago: The American Foundation for Lithuanian Research. P. 163–173; Remeikis, T. (ed.). (2005). *Lithuania under German Occupation 1941–1945. Despatches from US Legation in Stockholm*. P. 4–10.

<sup>36</sup> Uustalu, E. (1976). The National Committee of the Estonian Republic. *Journal of Baltic Studies*, 7, 210–217; Sarv, E. (2004). Eesti Vabariigi kontinuiteet 1940–1945. In: *Töötan ustavaks jääda... Eesti Vabariigi valitsus 1940–1992*. P. 15–25.

<sup>37</sup> Siliņš, L. (2001). *Nacistiskās Vācijas okupanti: Mūsu tautas lielās cerības un rūgtā vilšanās*. Rīga: Latvijas Universitātes žurnāla "Latvijas Vēsture" fonds. 111.–234. lpp.; Neiburgs, U. (2005). Latvijas Republikas diplomāti Rietumos un Latvijas Centrālā padome (1943–1944): politiskā nostāja, pretrunas un risinājumi. Grām.: Ērglis, Dz. (ed.). *Okupētā Latvija 20. gadsimta 40. gados (Latvijas Vēsturnieku komisijas raksti, 16. sēj.)*. Rīga: Latvijas vēstures institūta apgāds. 369.–392. lpp.

<sup>38</sup> Kangeris, K. (1998). The Former Soviet Union, Fascism and the Baltic Question: The Problem of Collaboration and War Criminals in the Baltic Countries. In: *Modern Europe after Fascism 1943–1980*. Vol. 1, New York: Columbia University Press. P. 739, 740.

arrival in Sweden is not completely accurate.<sup>39</sup> According to statements made shortly after World War II by former Latvian Navy submarine division Lieutenant Austris Ķīrsis (1915–1995), the three longest reports on conditions and events in occupied Latvia had been translated to Swedish by 1942. A. Ķīrsis suggests that the translation was done by someone from the illegal Latvian Nationalist Union (LNU), who was also linked to the resistance group formed in the Riga Port Police by Lieutenant Indriķis Ruckulis (1890–?). Connections were then forged with Swedish ship captains, and requests made to deliver the documents to the Swedish Foreign Ministry or to the British or American embassies in Stockholm.<sup>40</sup>

Although precise statements have not been determined as of yet that confirm the receipt of an LNU document in Sweden, the possibility seems relatively believable. Archive materials state, that both former Latvian Ambassador V. Salnais and Western diplomats in Stockholm had already by late 1942/early 1943 (long before CCL activity began) received information of the resistance movement and general conditions in Nazi-occupied Latvia.

So, in November 1942 in Stockholm a comprehensive report “One Year of the German Occupation in Latvia” by the former Latvian Ambassador in Stockholm V. Salnais appeared in public. There he described policy of the Nazi occupation, which caused increasing disappointment among Latvians.<sup>41</sup> Already from 1942, on a Baltic States Division of the Office of Strategic Services – OSS<sup>42</sup> operated under the auspices of the US Embassy in Stockholm. It obtained information both from legal sources, such as German radio broadcasts and press publications and later also through the resistance movement, which had established secret contacts from Latvia across the sea with Sweden. Latvian refugees who had fled to Sweden also served as a source of information. US Ambassador in Stockholm, H. W. Johnson noted in his March 3, 1943 message, that “At least two underground organizations publishing illegal newspapers and in general collaborating with each other in both Anti-Soviet and Anti-German activities, are operating in Latvia. Of these organizations, one was founded

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<sup>39</sup> Siliņš, L. (2001). *Nacistiskās Vācijas okupanti: Mūsu tautas lielās cerības un rūgtā vilšanās* 189., 190. lpp.

<sup>40</sup> Neiburgs, U. (2007). Latviešu Nacionālistu savienība un laikraksts “Tautas Balss” pretošanās kustībā nacistu okupētajā Latvijā (1941–1942). In: Strods, H. (ed.). *Latvijas Okupācijas muzeja gadagrāmata. 2006. Karš pēc kara 1944-1956*. Rīga: Latvijas Okupācijas muzeja biedrība. 28.–57. lpp.

<sup>41</sup> Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace Archives, Stanford) (HI), Voldemārs Salnais, Box. 1.

<sup>42</sup> Chalou, G.C. (ed.) (2002). *The Secrets War: The Office of Strategic Services in World War II*. Washington: National Archives and Record Administration.



during period of German occupation and the other during period of Soviet rule. Although it is not definitely known, it is assumed that there also is in existence a Communist organization”.<sup>43</sup>

Currently, known documents confirm also that Scandinavian Intelligence service – C–byrån showed interest in Nazi-occupied Latvia, and maintained relationships with Latvian resistance movement officials. Today, the war-time informant to Swedish intelligence is known to have been Gerhards Brēmanis – then an employee of the Latvian Land Self-Administrations Office of Education and Culture. G. Brēmanis regularly met with Swedish intelligence leader Captain Helmut Ternberg, who personally came to Riga on several occasions.<sup>44</sup>

Former leader of nationalist radical organization “*Pērkonkrusts*” Gustavs Celmiņš (1899–1968), whose wife was Finnish, also supplied powerful Finnish political circles with information. He did so with help from Finnish officers serving in the German Air Force, among them Major Atianen.<sup>45</sup> G. Celmiņš himself also wrote for the illegal newspaper “*Brīvā Latvija. Latvju Raksti*”, which was supported by sources of Swedish and Finnish origin as well.<sup>46</sup>

Similarly, Latvian Social Democrats maintained illegal contact not only with their colleagues in the other Baltic States, but also with various political circles in Scandinavia and Denmark. Some of these contacts included Finnish Social Democratic leader Vaino Tanner (1881–1966), Swedish newspaper “*Morgon Tidningen*” editor Richard Lindstrom (1894–1950) and Danish resistance movement official Poul Andersen (1922–2006).<sup>47</sup> Other historical accounts also show that many resistance movement members were kept in Nazi prisons and concentration camps based on suspicions of gathering information for British intelligence. Among those imprisoned were Valdis Puriņš<sup>48</sup>, Alberts Dullis (1911–1997),<sup>49</sup> and

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<sup>43</sup> NA, Record Group 59, Microfilm 1177, Roll. 16.

<sup>44</sup> Jansons, Ā. (2000, 29. maijs). Latvijas vēstures patiesība ir arhīvos [Intervija ar K. Kangeri]. *Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze*.

<sup>45</sup> LVVA, P 252. f., 1. apr., 26. l.; Kansallisarkisto, Helsinki, Gustaf Mannerheimin arkisto, Kirjeenvaihto, Gustavs Celmiņš.

<sup>46</sup> *Brīvā Latvija. Latvju Raksti*. 1943–1944. Nr. 1–13.

<sup>47</sup> Kalniņš, B. (1956). *Latvijas Sociāldemokrātijas piecdesmit gadi*. 202., 203. lpp.; [Lorencs, K.] (2005). *Kāda cilvēka dzīve. Klāva Lorenca atmiņas*. 388. lpp.

<sup>48</sup> Neparts, A. (1998). *Atmiņas par okupācijas laiku (1940–1945)*. Milforda, MI. LKM, Inv. Nr. 5-602-DK/p.

<sup>49</sup> BArch, R 58/223, S. 133, 134.

Alīda Niklase (1917–2000),<sup>50</sup> and their work as of now has practically never been studied.

Evidence of British Secret Intelligence Services – SIS relations with the CCL and information about the activity of General J. Kurelis' group appear in historical literature. British historian Tom Bower writes that British SIS contact person in Latvia during wartime was Dr. Valdemars Ģinters (1899–1979), but in Sweden it had close contacts with former Latvian Ambassador in Stockholm V. Salnais. British SIS representatives through Swedish naval officer captain Johannson transmitted to V. Salnais 50.000 Swedish crowns and supported in obtaining different documents and authorizations. The most important sources of information in Latvia were CCL member Pēteris Klibiķis and German Abwehr Lieutenant Ervin Haselmann.<sup>51</sup>

The documents also testified that Captain Kristaps Upelnieks (1891–1944), Chief of Staff of the General J. Kurelis group, believed that a situation similar to that in 1919 had emerged. Proclamation of the national independence of Latvia and formation of a provisional government was necessary, he believed, under which Latvian and German armed forces would continue their struggle in Kurzeme.<sup>52</sup> On 16 October 1944, the headquarters of the J. Kurelis group elaborated two plans of armed resistance. The first plan envisaged that the Kurelians would move over to Sweden in case of a fast evacuation of the German troops from Kurzeme. For this purpose, a base on the seacoast between Ventspils and Liepāja had to be established and defended against both the Germans and Russians to allow complete evacuation. Since the available forces were insufficient for an operation of such a scale, it was decided to join forces with units of the Latvian Legion and to carry out the operation together. The second plan was designed in case the efforts to establish a base failed. It envisaged the division of forces in smaller groups and hiding in the forests to await an opportune moment for rising against the Soviet forces.<sup>53</sup>

The leadership of CCL, with whom K. Upelnieks and other Kurelian staff officers were associated, neither supported nor rejected these plans. A telegram from CCL headquarters in Sweden said: "British representatives give instructions to defend Kurzeme until the arrival of the British and

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<sup>50</sup> LVVA, 293. f., 1. apr., 1557. l., 8. lp., 2438. l., 40. lp.; Sēja, L. (1955). *Nāves ēnas ielejā*. HI, Indulis Ronis, Box. 1.

<sup>51</sup> Bower, T. (1989). *The Red Web: MI6 and the KGB Master Coup*. London: Aurum Press. P. 43, 44.

<sup>52</sup> Dravnieks, A. (1951, 7. janv.). Kureliešu traģēdija. *Latvija*.

<sup>53</sup> LVA, 1986. f., 1. apr., 99. l., 2. sēj., 117. lp.

American navy in the Baltic Sea. The timing of the arrival of the navy in the Baltic Sea cannot be specified. Depending on circumstances and resources at your disposal, decide whether this can be accomplished and act accordingly. Should the local circumstances permit, the restoration of national sovereignty of Latvia must be declared.” Such uncertain circumstances had clearly resulted in a gathering in Kurzeme of those associated with radio that was organized by K. Upelnieks in 1944. He gave guidelines for the content of broadcast material, while emphasizing: “Do not send strategic messages if they will benefit the Russians or fall in their hands. If the English manage to stop the Russians, then yes. We won’t allow our throat to be slit. The English don’t have the power to stop Russian terror against Latvians.”<sup>54</sup>

In general Western secret services received many valuable documents on developments in Nazi-occupied territories from the Baltic resistance movements. It is attested also by the fact that the official publications on the history of OSS, issued after World War II, emphasize that “among the best intelligence materials found during the War there were those obtained in Stockholm from our contacts with representatives of the Baltic States.”<sup>55</sup> Irrespective of this, the USA and UK were not ready to give anything tangible in return, having acquiesced to the Baltic States remaining part of the USSR after World War II.

### **Status and Number of the Participants of the Resistance Movement**

For a long time after the war when under the conditions of the Soviet totalitarianism impartial research into the national resistance movement was impossible in Latvia, the identification and publication of the names of the members of the resistance movement was also undeservedly neglected.

In Soviet historiography, only a small portion of national resistance movement member names is mentioned. They are unfairly referred to “bourgeoisie nationalists,” “Nazi intelligence agents,” and “pseudo-

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<sup>54</sup> Andersons, E. Siliņš, L. u.c. (1994). *Latvijas Centrālā padome: Latviešu nacionālā pretestības kustība. 1943–1945.* 285.–292. lpp.

<sup>55</sup> U.S. War Department, SSU Unit. War Report of the OSS / Vol. 2, New York: Walker & Co, 1976, p. 261.

oppositionists,” among other names.<sup>56</sup> In the works of Soviet historians, the repression of national resistance movement members by German powers is also kept quiet, or else the amount of repression is consciously reduced. There are certain biased exceptions (for example, “national” general J. Kurelis, or “honorary prisoners” G. Celmiņš and B. Kalniņš). This treatment of German repression artificially contrasts a few nationalistic-minded resistance members with several thousand “Soviet patriots” that fought against the Nazis under communist rule.<sup>57</sup>

More in this field has been accomplished by the historical research in Latvian exile countries and especially in Latvia today, though the topic’s most important works also show marked differences. Some just estimate (in some cases- even exaggerate) the number of national resistance movement members and people repressed by the Nazis. Certain other publications, however, more precisely document concrete national resistance movement member names and their activity, as well as the repression they experienced from Nazi and Soviet regimes. Thus today apart from paying tribute to Haralds Biezais, Valentine Lasmane and L. Siliņš,<sup>58</sup> whose works, which were published only in 1990s, document the names of concrete members of the resistance movement, their activities during the war and the repressions of the occupation rule against them, we also have to acknowledge more recent studies that have joined them lately.

Historian Dz. Ērglis, having studied in detail the criminal cases of the State Security Committee of the Latvian SSR,<sup>59</sup> has identified the names of 144 activists and supporters of the Central Council of Latvia and 314 members of General J. Kurelis’ group, who all were repressed by the Soviet authorities after the Second World War.<sup>60</sup> Nevertheless, in the future we should recognize not only those who suffered Soviet repression, but all CCL participants (politicians, boaters, those who kept radio contact, sufferers of

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<sup>56</sup> Dzintars, J. (1968). Pret ko bija vērsta latviešu buržuāzijas “nacionālā opozīcija”. *Latvijas PSR Zinātņu Akadēmijas Vēstis*, 9, 3–12; Dzintars, J. (1982). Latviešu fašistiskā buržuāzija hitleriešu izlūkdienesta kalpībā. *Latvijas PSR Zinātņu Akadēmijas Vēstis*, 10, 52–69.

<sup>57</sup> Samsons, V. (1974). Aizvadīto trīs gadu desmitu devums latviešu tautas prehitleriskās cīņas vēstures izpētē. *Latvijas PSR Zinātņu Akadēmijas Vēstis*, 2, 3–23; Samsons, V. (1983). *Naida un maldu slīkšņā: Ieskats ekstrēmā latviešu nacionālisma uzskatu evolūcijā*. Rīga: Zinātne. 194.–207. lpp

<sup>58</sup> Biezais, H. (1991). *Kurelieši: Nacionālās pretestības liecinieki*. Itaka: Mežābele; Lasmane, V. (ed.). (1990). *Pāri jūrai 1944./45. g.* Stokholma: Memento; Andersons, E. Siliņš, L. u.c. (1994). *Latvijas Centrālā padome: Latviešu nacionālā pretestības kustība. 1943–1945*; Siliņš, L. (2001). *Nacistiskās Vācijas okupanti: Mūsu tautas lielās cerības un rūgtā vilšanās*.

<sup>59</sup> LVA, 1986. f., 1., 2. apr.

<sup>60</sup> Ērglis, Dz. (2003). *Latvijas Centrālās padomes vēstures nezināmās lappuses*. 175.–202. lpp.

Nazi repression). That would also allow us to more concretely determine each person's connection to the CCL. It is also worth comparing the proportion of CCL and other national resistance movement organization members in Nazi prisons and concentration camps.<sup>61</sup>

Historian U. Neiburgs, based on materials from the archive of the Association of the Members of the Latvian Resistance Movement, established in Detmold, West Germany in 1946,<sup>62</sup> that was only recently transferred to the Occupation Museum of Latvia, in the 21st Volume of the Historians' Commission of Latvia for the first time acquaints the broader public with the names of 234 members of the resistance movement and information about their participation in the resistance movement in the Nazi-occupied Latvia.<sup>63</sup> This work must certainly be continued aspiring towards as complete as possible an overview of the participants of the resistance movement in Latvia during the Second World War.

The topicality of this matter is asserted also by the adoption of the Law "On the Status of the Member of the National Resistance Movement" by the Saeima of the Republic of Latvia on 25th April 1996 that applies the status of the member of the national resistance movement to the residents of the Republic of Latvia: (1) who had taken part in armed and underground resistance struggle against the military formations and administration of the occupation regimes; (2) who had facilitated the armed and underground resistance struggle by granting the fighters material and other kind of assistance and thus placed their personal freedom and life at risk; (3) who had propagated the idea of the restoration of the independence of the Republic of Latvia by disseminating illegal press, proclamations or other publications as well as by openly opposing the occupation regime, its established order or ideology. According to the Law those persons who had taken part in the political repressions of the Communist or Nazi regimes or been convicted for deliberately committed grave crimes, do not qualify as

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<sup>61</sup> Neiburgs, U. (2003). Latvijas Centrālās padomes darbības izvērtējums [Rec. grām. Dz. Ērglis. Latvijas Centrālās padomes vēstures nezināmās lappuses"]. In: Strods, H. (ed.). *Latvijas Okupācijas muzeja gadagrāmata 2003. Pakta zona*. Rīga: Latvijas 50 gadu okupācijas muzeja fonds. 286.–298. lpp.

<sup>62</sup> LOM, LPKDA arhīvs.

<sup>63</sup> Neiburgs, U. (2007). Latviešu pretestības kustības dalībnieku apvienība (LPKDA) un tās dokumenti par pretošanās kustību nacistu okupētajā Latvijā (1941–1945). In: Vīksne, R. (ed.). *Latvijas vēsture 20. gadsimta 40.–90. gados (Latvijas Vēsturnieku komisijas raksti, 21. sēj.)*. Rīga: Latvijas vēstures institūta apgāds. 122.–170. lpp.

members of the national resistance movement, unless they have been rehabilitated.<sup>64</sup>

## Theoretical Aspects of the Resistance Movement

For the understanding of the activities of the resistance movement during the World War II, not only the practical, but also theoretical aspects of this topic are important.<sup>65</sup> Unlike the history of resistance movements in Western Europe, the historiography about the resistance movement in the Nazi-occupied Latvia during the World War II has not yet established clear-cut scholarly criteria. Only during the past decade, following the collapse of the Soviet totalitarian system and its ideologised historiography, has it become possible to approach this theme objectively and in terms of academic research.

The significance of research into the national resistance movement has also been stressed in several problem articles carried in different periodicals and these should be taken into consideration, when working out criteria for defining what the resistance movement was. Thus, for example, Kārlis Kangeris, a researcher from the Baltic Studies Department at Stockholm University, wrote: "Two ways by the population of an occupied territory of reacting to the occupying power are collaboration or resistance. If collaboration can take different forms, so resistance as well can manifest itself in different ways. It consists not only in taking part in conspiracy or in armed struggle. Preconditions for successful resistance are: unity of the people, sharing a common goal, having resistance control centers both within the occupied territory, and outside it, communications between the two centers, a financial base support (abroad) for operation, an infiltration base in the vicinity of the occupied country, existence of a benevolent (allied) country that supports the struggle against the occupational power."<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Likums par nacionālās pretošanās kustības dalībnieka statusu. *Latvijas Vēstnesis*. 1996. 10. maijs.

<sup>65</sup> Rings, W. (1979). *Kollaboration und Widerstand. Europa im Krieg 1939–1945*. Zürich: Ex Libris Verlag; Röhr, W. (1996). Okkupationspolitik und Widerstandskampf. In: *Europa unterm Hakenkreuz: Analysen, Quellen, Register. Band 8 (zugleich Ergänzungsband 2): Die Okkupationspolitik des deutschen Faschismus (1938-1945)*. Berlin. S. 173–220; Benz, W. (Hrsg.). (1996). *Anpassung–Kollaboration–Widerstand. Kollektive Reaktionen auf die Okkupation*. Berlin: Metropol; etc.

<sup>66</sup> Kangeris, K. (1999, 21. aug.). Divas okupācijas: pretošanās. *Diena*.

Already in early 1990s opinion was established in the research of Latvia's history about the resistance movement being heterogeneous, the national and Soviet resistance movement that operated in Latvia constituting its main directions, the latter excluding Communist saboteur and partisan groups that were transferred to Latvia across the front line from the rear districts of the USSR.<sup>67</sup> The Nazi Occupation regime in Latvia during the World War II met expressions of Polish and Jewish resistance as well, as testified by recent studies by historians Ēriks Jēkabsons<sup>68</sup> and Mārgers Vestermanis.<sup>69</sup> However lately the question has come to the foreground whether the definition of the resistance movement of Latvia should not be restricted to those directions of resistance that expressed readiness to fight against both occupants: the Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union for the restoration of Latvia's independence, thus excluding the local Communist underground from this category.<sup>70</sup>

In the author's opinion, a precise and justified scholarly definition must be based on the consideration of the following sets of questions: (1) What should be regarded as the primary characteristic of a resistance movement – resistance to the occupation regime as such or the goal that it wants to achieve? (2) How should short-range resistance activities without defined long-range political goals (sabotage of mobilization, hiding of Jews, war prisoners and other persecuted persons, economic sabotage, etc.) be defined? (3) From which moment on can various actions against the occupation authorities be designated as “resistance” and when as “resistance movement”? (4) What term is to be used to describe the activities of members of the Polish *Armia Krajowa* in Latvia during the war? Their goal was the restoration of Polish independence; some of them even aimed at annexing Latvian territories with Polish population to Poland. (5) How should one designate those left-leaning armed partisan units or

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<sup>67</sup> Virsis, M. (red.). (1990). *Latvijas vēstures apcerējumi: No 1940. gada līdz mūsdienām*. Rīga: Zvaigzne. 70. lpp.; Neiburgs, U., Ērglis, Dz. (2001). Nacionālā un padomju pretošanās kustība – kopīgais un atšķirīgais (1941–1945). In: Šneidere, I. (red.). *Totalitārie režīmi un to represijas Latvijā 1940.–1956. gadā (Latvijas Vēsturnieku komisijas raksti, 3. sēj.)*. Rīga: Latvijas vēstures institūta apgāds. 267.–329. lpp.

<sup>68</sup> Jēkabsons, Ē. (2004). Poļu nacionālā pretošanās kustība Latvijā vācu okupācijas laikā (1941–1944). 240.–276. lpp.

<sup>69</sup> Vestermanis, M. (2007). Pretdarbība holokaustam nacistu okupētajā Latvijā. In: Dribins, L. (ed.). *Mazākumtautības Latvijā. Vēsture un tagadne*. Rīga: FSI. 234.–248. lpp.

<sup>70</sup> Feldmanis, I. (2004). Latvija nacistiskās okupācijas varā (1941–1945). *Latvijas Vēsture*, 1, 91–104; Zunda, A. (2007). Nacionālā pretestības kustība nacistu okupācijas režīmam Latvijā (1941–1945). *Latvijas Vēsture*, 4, 65–73.

underground groups organized by local inhabitants (as distinct from those infiltrated in from the Soviet Union) with aims differing from groups fighting for Latvian independence?<sup>71</sup>

In order to find answers to these and other questions, careful and time-consuming work is required, researching and analyzing many wartime and post-war documents of the Nazi and Soviet occupation authorities and repressive institutions as well as those of the intelligence services and foreign affairs institutions of the allies and neutral states, that are scattered over many funds in the archives in Latvia, Russia, Germany, and other Western states,<sup>72</sup> as well as original materials of the resistance movement<sup>73</sup> and recollections of the members of the resistance movement<sup>74</sup> fixed in written or oral form in exile after the war or in Latvia after the restoration of independence. Only by following professional academic criteria and finding a balance between the theoretical and empiric side of history will it be possible to create a framework for investigating and interpreting a wide range of historical sources about the resistance movement in Nazi-occupied Latvia that is free from both historical stereotypes and today's political trends.

Therefore it is possible that the true historical character and essence of resistance movement in the Baltic states can best be revealed not by attempting to point out its individual characteristics as they appear from today's ideological interpretation, but rather by trying to interpret its diverse content and activities as far as possible from the point of view of the concrete historical situation at that time. Using this approach we may come to the understanding that neither of the former interpretations is quite precise, namely – neither the recent historiographic view that only those manifestations of resistance that were directed against both occupying powers for the restoration of independence can be designated as resistance movement in Latvia, nor the formerly held view about separate “national” and “Soviet” resistance movements. Both interpretations restrict the multiple spectrum of resistance to only one or

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<sup>71</sup> Neiburgs, U. (2007). *Pretošanās kustība nacistu okupētajās Baltijas valstīs (1941–1945): teorētiskās problēmas un praktiskie risinājumi*. Referāts Latvijas Vēsturnieku komisijas starptautiskajā konferencē “Baltija Otrā pasaules kara laikā (1939–1945)” Rīgā, 2007. gada 6.–7. novembrī.

<sup>72</sup> The National Archives, Kew, Richmond, Surrey, Foreign Office 370, 371, 490 etc.; NA, Record Group 59, 165, 226 etc.

<sup>73</sup> Latvijas Republikas Ārlietu ministrijas arhīvs, “Londonas arhīvs”, 225., 247. kaste u. c.; LVVA, 293. f., 1. apr., 537. l., 2. apr., 115. l., 3. apr., 78. l. u.c.

<sup>74</sup> HI, Voldemārs Salnais, Box. 1, Leonids Siliņš, Box. 1 etc.



two of its expressions. Therefore a redefinition of “resistance movement” is called for. There is room for research work to be carried on in the future.

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