

BACKGROUND OF ALFREDS BERZINS

As far as is known, Berzins was born in Latvia (Liepaja), at the turn of the century and has had a college education in that country. During world war I he was actively engaged in fighting for Latvia's independence. Due to his participation in the struggle for Latvian independence, he has made contacts with the leading figures in the other two Baltic states. These contacts have proven quite beneficial in his subsequent career as a Latvian government official and are still partially active today in the refugee struggles.

In the latter twenties, Berzins was elected as a representative to the Latvian Parliament (Saima) and served as a deputy in that body for several years, being affiliated with the "New Farmers" party.

In 1934 Berzins was named as Minister for Public Affairs and Public Relations and at the same time served as second in command to the Minister of Interior. Shortly before Latvia's occupation by the Soviets in 1940, Berzins was named Minister of the Interior. He was also the chief of the Aizsargi (Home Guards).

During the Russian occupation of the Baltic states, Berzins wife and children were deported to Russia and Berzins himself was forced to flee his residence and seek refuge in the woods of Latvia.

During the German occupation of Latvia, Berzins was arrested by the authorities and confined in a concentration camp for a period of 33 months. During his incarceration in the Sachsenhausen camp, he became very friendly with the Ukrainian underground leaders Stetsko and Bandero. As a result Berzins has been quite active in the ABN in Germany and represented Latvia in this organization.

Berzins has stayed aloof from all internal emigre political squabbles, yet has maintained contact with all groups and enjoys their respect and esteem, as he has been both a parliamentarian and an Ulmanist.

Having immigrated to the US in the latter part of 1950, Berzins had applied for a position with the Voice of America and later with the National Committee for a Free Europe. At the present time he is employed full time by the latter and on a part time, advisory level by the former.

Berzins has delivered many speeches and written many articles for publication during his career. The only ones available at present, however, are his book entitled: "I Saw Vishinski Bolshvize Latvia", published by the Latvian Legation Washington, D.C. and his speech delivered at the world congress of the ABN in Edinburgh, Scotland.

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