

INFORMATION REPORT INFORMATION REPORT

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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an 18-page report on general conditions in Latvia up to October 1956. Although this report contains much information which has already been reported, it may be of value as a summary of conditions with specific examples of significant activities useful for comprehension of day-to-day life in Latvia.

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GENERAL CONDITIONS IN LATVIA FROM SUMMER 1955 TO OCTOBER 1956

1. Although the population of Riga is usually given by official Soviet sources as 500,000, it is actually about 1,000,000. This assertion is based on statements of high officials of the Latvian Ministry of State Control, and on calculations of the Public Education Office of the Riga City Administration. At least half of the residents of Riga, including military, are of Russian origin. Latvians comprise ~~about 30 per cent~~ at most about 30 per cent of the population of Riga. the number of Latvians in Latvia as somewhat over 1,000,000. This is only a superficial estimate, and may perhaps be too low. Most of the Russians are in Riga and other large cities, such as Daugavpils, where a considerable number of Russians lived even before the Soviet occupation of Latvia, ^{and in} Liepaja, Ventspils, and Jelgava. In rural areas, the number of Russian residents is infinitesimal; they are found only in the machine-tractor stations, as well as in leading positions in kolkhozy and Soviet enterprises. A deliberate colonization of the country with Russians is not apparent as yet. The unusually large increase in Russians in the cities is perhaps less a colonization measure than a result of the rapid industrialization of the country. In Estonia, the number of Russians is noticeably smaller than in Latvia. Actually, only Tallinn and the oil shale area have a lot of Russians. Russians are seldom encountered in the smaller cities. No Russians were observed in Viljandi and Valga during visits to those cities. On the other hand, the number of Russians in Lithuania is considerably higher than in Latvia.

2. Concerning relations between Latvians and Russians, it is difficult to ^{re}strain oneself from saying that relations are hostile. Even after 12 years of Soviet occupation, no tolerable cohabitation has come about. The Latvians consider the Russians as intruders, every individual Russian, even when he doesn't belong to the ruling class. Even with little children this antagonism shows up; even in families where the relationship to the Russians, for understandable reasons, is never mentioned in conversation. The Russians consider themselves a master race, and behave accordingly--particularly the ordinary classes, are arrogant and insulting.

It appears that the relations between nationalities also disturb the 25X1

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authorities now. There are indications that ~~the~~ Russians in high positions are attempting to suppress nationalism among the masses and to hold down further penetration of Russian elements into the country.

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in 1956 a decree was issued to the effect that

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in entrance examinations for the institute, immigrants from other republics would be given as much difficulty as possible in their attempts to enter the institute. There are rumors that it is forbidden to register newly immigrated Russians with the Riga police. It should be noted that the registration with the police is not taken very seriously, and it is said that there are many residents of Riga who have not been registered. Rumors say that there are about a million people in Moscow who are not registered. There are also attempts to meet the Latvians halfway as far as language is concerned. Latvian officially takes precedence over Russian, but in actual practice it's a different matter. Without knowledge of Russian, a person can accomplish nothing in dealing with officials, as the Russians running the offices/understand no Latvian. There is an order that Russians employed in Latvia must learn Latvian but this order is simply ~~disregarded~~ *disregarded* by the Russians. Petitions and requests may be sent to governmental agencies in Latvian, even in Moscow and other Soviet cities, without objection, but the answers are always in Russian.

POPULAR SENTIMENT, RESISTANCE

3.

The Latvian segment of the population of Latvia lives in the ~~hope~~ ^{belief} that liberation from the Soviet yoke will come about some day. Only this hope makes the despair of the present bearable, ~~but~~ ^{but} ~~definite~~ ^{definite} resignation is now making itself ~~apparent~~ ^{apparent}. The years pass and nothing happens to nourish the hope for liberation. In addition, there is the clever Soviet propaganda. One is certain that this propaganda is a bunch of lies, but after constant reworking of the same themes, something always ~~remains~~ ^{remains} in ~~the~~ ^{one's} head, so there is now a noticeable dwindling of faith in Western assistance. One gradually loses the belief that the free world will make some move or at least help Latvia free itself from the Soviet yoke. To some extent, this is a result of Soviet propaganda, which presented the events in East Berlin in 1953 and Poznan in 1956 so that it appeared that the Western Powers, especially the US, had initiated the whole thing and then left the insurgents in the lurch.

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Such stories are believed, ^{which} ~~that~~ is not conducive to fixing confidence in the Western Powers. ~~to be expected~~ an increase in such feeling ~~is~~ is ^{will} ~~to be expected~~ in Latvia after the events in Hungary ~~Latvians~~ ^{Latvians} ~~bitterly~~ ^{25X1} assert that the Western Powers use military means when their economic interests are involved, but content themselves with expressions of sympathy when it is a matter of the struggle for freedom of a people.

4 The decreased confidence in the Western Powers has not resulted in abandonment of hope for liberation and bowing down to the oppressors. The feeling is that, if no aid is to be expected from the Western Powers, we must undertake to free ourselves, as soon as favorable conditions present themselves. In this regard too, there are no illusions. Such an uprising as that in Hungary is not now possible in Latvia, as conditions are much less favorable in Latvia. The potential force of such an uprising in Latvia would be the urban workers ~~and~~ who are most sharply in opposition to the Bolsheviks, ^[i.e., Communists] and the students. The ~~and~~ farmers count almost for nothing, as there are practically none but old persons, children, and women on the farms. Action by the workers could expect success only if whole plants revolt, but there are now a large number of Russian workers in all plants, and the relationship between the Russians and Latvians is such that the former would hardly support such an action by the Latvian workers. Besides, Latvia has no real army, for the so-called Latvian Division is so saturated with Russians that it ~~can~~ ^{can} hardly be considered a national unit.

5 There is nothing to indicate that the resistance movement ~~will~~ ^{has} become more active in Latvia. There are no doubt small resistance groups present in the country, but in the course of the past year they have not made an appearance. Partisan groups are still present here and there, especially in the ~~woods~~ woods of northern Latvia. However, they are only small, scattered groups whose days are numbered. The groups are practically meaningless, and nothing is heard about any sort of activity on their part. Neither is there ^{any} word of mopping-up actions by the police. In autumn 1955, ~~there were~~ ^{there were} ~~several~~ ^{several} ~~partisan groups~~ ^{partisan groups} ~~in~~ ⁱⁿ ~~the~~ ^{the} woods as partisans for a long time came out of the woods, both armed with pistols, and ~~they~~ turned themselves in by telephone to the local ^{police} office. They were disarmed, tried at the militia office and after a few days, ^{25X1} ~~released~~ ^{released}

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Both are said to work on a kolkhoz. The father of one of the partisans, who was providing them with food, was not ~~executed~~^{brought} to justice. That is not to say that partisans who surrender are not punished, but it did happen in this case. Until recently, partisans received a quibe summary trial, even when they had ~~invitations~~ invitations to give themselves up, without punishment.

the partisans in Dobeles had been invited to give themselves up, with guarantees that they would not be punished. When they gave themselves up, they were all executed.

FOREIGN RADIOTROADCASTS

6. Lately, there has been a ~~certain~~^{definite} decrease in the number of persons listening to foreign radio broadcasts. This decreased interest is the result of two things. First, the activity of the jammer is now more effective than it was formerly. Therefore, transmissions are received acceptably in Riga only during the night. Occasionally the transmissions of VOA about 2045 hours, as well as Tangiers, at the same time, are audible without interference. BBC is ~~best~~ best heard in morning on long wave. Listening at night is quite a bit more difficult than during the day. In the countryside jamming is not as effective, but since many places do not have electric current, battery radios are necessary. Such batteries are hard to ~~come by~~^{acquire}. Another reason for the lagging interest is the general dissatisfaction with programs of foreign broadcasts. The programs are severely criticized. The feeling is that, since listening entails so many difficulties, and also a certain amount of risk, a person would like to hear what really interests him, and that is, first of all, objective information on world events. The BBC broadcasts therefore are preferred.

7. No one cares to hear propaganda, as everyone feels that the Russians will take care of the job of making themselves unpopular. Neither does anyone care for church services, speeches, or declamations, but synopses of world events, and above all--news, ~~are~~^{is} desired. Also of interest would be a series of lectures concerning the earnings of various occupational groups ~~and~~ in the free world, and what can be purchased with those earnings. It would be desirable to introduce the transmissions with some sort of signal, such as a sign-off melody, in order to ~~give~~ allow time to tune in the set.

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Events in the Soviet Union and Satellites would also be of interest, as such news is withheld by Soviet newspapers. Now and then such news is received from travelers who have come from other parts of the USSR. In such a manner, residents of Riga were fairly well informed concerning events in Georgia in the spring of 1956. Travelers from Georgia described large student demonstrations, in which Stalin's picture was carried by the students. The unrest lasted for several days, and travel in and out of Georgia was halted for a few days.

THE PARTY

Lately, the recruitment of new Party members had noticeably decreased. On the other hand, Party instruction in Marxism-Leninism in various courses, Party schools, and night universities, which had been treated much lighter last year, than it was before, was again given increased attention. Instruction in the night universities and Party schools has been somewhat shortened, but the instruction has been intensified, and a close check is kept to see that all who must undergo instruction really do so. There have been no important personnel changes in the Party hierarchy in the past year. In Party circles, it is said that opposition sentiments are growing among younger Party members.

The opposition is directed against the present Party leadership, and particularly against the Party Secretary, Kalnberzins, who is accused of spinelessness and all-to-ready compliance with Moscow during the Stalin era. Kalnberzins is a rather uneducated man who cannot even write his own speeches, and appears to be losing his following for the most part. It is also known that a tense situation exists between him and Prime Minister Lacis; the latter is said to have suffered a good deal lately. He is said to have eye trouble and a bone disease, supposedly of syphilitic origin.

DESTALINIZATION

Just a few days after the close of the 20th Party Congress in Moscow, rumors circulated in Riga that Khrushchev had made a speech toward the end of the congress, after many delegates had left Moscow, in which he attacked Stalin and his policies. A high Party official stated that the Central Committee of the Latvian Party had received the complete mimeographed text of the Khrushchev speech. It was kept secret and deposited in the Central Committee safe. Party members were loaned the document only when they signed for it, and then priority was given

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to Party functionaries who had to explain the new Party line at the plant assemblies and meetings which were quickly called together. The dethroning of Stalin was met with general jubilation, only a few Russians being upset. The removal of Stalin's portraits was undertaken at first with enthusiasm and publicly. In some troop units in Riga, the pictures were taken out of the barracks and piled up. In some kolkhozy the pictures were carried by a procession of all the kolkhozniki to the nearest river and thrown in. After about a month, the tempo of portrait removal ~~decreased~~ let up, and the pictures disappeared in a less conspicuous manner. On the corner of Gorkiela-Kirov^a iela, opposite the HQ of the Baltic ^{military district} is an empty square, where ~~houses~~ houses damaged ^{during} the war stood formerly, on which larger-than-life-size portraits of Stalin and Lenin had been erected. Every spring these pictures were taken down to be refurbished. In spring 1956, this was done, but when the pictures were put back up, Stalin's picture was replaced with that of Karl Marx. Stalin's picture is still seen in some official offices.

10. Zhukov is undoubtedly the most popular of the present leading Soviet figures. Among Russians in Latvia, Bulganin and Khrushchev also enjoy a ^{general} ~~ver-~~tain popularity, as the ~~prev~~ view is that they represent a moderate policy, in contrast with the other Party presidium members, who are said to stand for a ^{more} aggressive, Stalinist line.

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 the Central Committee of the Latvian Party regularly receives detailed reports of the sessions of the Central Committee ^{and} ~~(CPSU)~~ the USSR Council of Ministers, in which all debates, as well as personal ~~arguments~~ squabbles of the participants, are reported fully.

11. In the basement of the house in which the CC/CPLatvia meets, on Gorkiela, ^{Central Committee} a movie projection room has been established. ^{7 of} members of the ~~are~~ are shown films there which are not made available to the general public.

Automobile license numbers of the Party elite have been changed this year. Instead of the two zeroes which stood in front of the number previously, ^{the} ~~are~~ ^{first two digits are now} ~~the~~ numbers "99". The basis of the change is said to be the fact that ^{are} people were shocked to see the two zeroes which generally used to identify toilets on the front of a license number.

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12.

The let-up in police terror which followed the fall of Beriya, is still in effect. There are no signs at present that the reins will be tightened. Gradually people are becoming accustomed to existence as it was somewhat earlier, and especially the Russians are now beginning to speak more freely, and to make criticisms. Latvians are generally more cautious, and still don't trust the peaceful conditions ~~entirely~~ entirely, as they are aware that a return to the old state of affairs can happen any minute. There are even some Latvians who have taken a milder attitude toward the Russians. More and more, one hears the address begin with "Mr." or "Mrs.", as well as the "Comrade" which was been in use previously. In a restaurant, a man who had to wait too long for service pounded on the table and shouted, "I was an SS man, how long must I wait here without any action being taken against him. for service?" ~~That is surely an~~ That is surely an exceptional case; on the other hand, one often hears Russian veterans stating their dissatisfaction publicly, e.g., "I am a veteran and have several medals, but what good does ~~that~~ my heroism do me if my wife and children have to go hungry?"

13.

The reduction in personnel of the KGB and MVD continues. The KGB is not as busy as it was formerly, as the KGB building at Lenin^a iela and Stalin^a iela never has a lighted window after 1800 hours, although only a couple of years ago the windows were lighted well into the night. It is also striking that one never sees Jews in KGB uniforms anymore, though there were many of them previously. Possibly they are to be found among the plainclothesmen, since the latter are not identifiable. It would not be possible to say whether the Jews were released from service or left it of their own volition. A noticeable decrease in militia personnel also is apparent. In the countryside a militiaman is seldom seen, although they are surely present. It is said that the number of militiamen in cities will be reduced, and that all of them will be required to have a middle-school education.

14.

Formerly every plant and factory was guarded by a special guard force. This force has been replaced entirely by the militia. The plants pay the militia a certain sum to guard the factories. The militia guards wear militia uniforms. This measure is a result of the desire of official policy to see

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 that all militiamen discharged ^{during the} ~~for~~ reduction in force are provided jobs.

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A result is a significant increase in the number of guard personnel. The Radio Factory i/n Popov (Radiotekhnika formerly) was guarded by (20) persons previously, and the present militia guard employs about twice that number.

Apparently the purging of the security forces of unsuitable elements is continuing. ^{the} In winter of 1955-56, a truckload of uniformed security police was observed going into the railroad station in Riga; they were under guard and shipped out of Riga.

DEPORTATION AND RETURNEES FROM DEPORTATION

16. No mass deportations have been carried out for ~~■~~ years, and occasional arrests of individuals, which still occur, are rather rare. At least little is now heard about such things. On the other hand, return of deportees who left in 1941 and afterward is continuing. In relation to the thousands who were deported, the number of returnees is slight, but one is continually meeting individual deportees who have just returned. It appears that there are not as many amnestied returnees now, as there are individuals who have been released because special investigative commissions have found that they were illegally sentenced. It also happens sometimes that both reasons for release—amnesty and acquittals, or review, are used. The previous social democratic ~~representative~~ F. Mendels, had part of his sentence cancelled as illegal (possession of K. Kautski's works), and the rest amnestied. Among the other returnees are other well-known persons, such as the wife of the former Minister of Propaganda, A. Berzins [redacted] the former chief of police of Liepaja, Saberts, and others. Rumors have been heard in Riga to the effect that the former Minister of ~~War~~, War, Balodis, did not die in the summer of 1956, but is ^{not located} living free in the city of Vladimir. The former Foreign Minister, V. Munters, and his wife, are also living there. ^{up} Tho, Balodis and Munters receive pensions of 500 rubles per month, they may not ~~visit~~ Latvia and can visit Latvia for only (4) weeks annually, which both did in summer 1956.

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17. [redacted] rumors to the effect that everyone in Latvia avoided the returnees, in order not to attract suspicion to themselves. Such is in no way

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the case. Neither is there any rule against employing returnees in plants and factories; it is expressly forbidden for plants and factories to refuse to hire individuals ~~having~~ ^{who} having been deported.

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In any case, some other basis ~~is~~ always given for refusal to hire an individual. The stamping of passes of returnees differs in various camps. In some camps, ~~there is~~ a notation is made in the pass regarding the time served in a camp, and in others, no notation is made. There are also cases in which returnees visit Latvia and then go back to the place to which they were deported having established a place for themselves there, and having little chance of acquiring employment in Latvia.

CRIMES

19. The insecurity of the streets of Riga/during the past summer, ~~was~~ where robberies, mostly by boys, took place every day, is not quite as bad as it was. This improvement is ^{attributable} ~~due~~ to patrols--a militiman with two soldiers armed with submachine guns--which were ~~initiated~~ ^{re}initiated in summer 1956. However, it is said that the patrols are forbidden to use the weapons. The number of other violations of personal property rights, such as theft and embezzlement, have increased rather than decreased.

GUARDS

20. The guarding of bridges in Riga by members of the border troops still goes on. The same holds for guarding of the power plant, Kegums. However, the railroad bridges outside Riga which were guarded previously, were not guarded in summer 1956. Control of documents in the streets also has let up somewhat. In traffic violations, in the streets or in cars, document control takes place, but a person can carry large ~~amounts~~ ^{suitcases} through the streets without being stopped, although this was not the case during the summer.

NEW BUILDING FOR THE KGB

Opposite the KGB building on Stalin iela in Riga, is a large, five-story building almost completed. It was built for the KGB, and is supposed to be living quarters for the KGB workers.

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AUTOMOBILE TRANSPORTATION

23. The automobile inspection system under the MVD is one of the most corrupt institutions in Latvia. Since 1955 an extensive reform program has been going on, on the higher level as well as the technical level. The chief of auto inspection was replaced with a less-corrupt official. There is now an emphasis on employment of specialists, and it is planned to institute a requirement that all inspectors have college education. Although the reform cannot be considered completed, conditions in the auto inspection system have already improved considerably. For example, it is now practically impossible to get a driver's license by bribing the officials. However, one can still get a certificate of ~~the~~ technical examination of ~~an~~ an auto for 100 rubles, without presenting the vehicle.

24. The technical examination, which still takes place once a year, has been made a good deal stiffer. Examiners no longer are satisfied with a cursory look at a vehicle, ^{now} the slightest defect, such as noting/missing windshield wipers or chipped paint as bases for refusing to approve a vehicle. They now get into the car and drive a few kilometers to see how the vehicle functions. Examination by auto inspectors also takes place on roads and highways, much more frequently this year than in ~~the~~ previous years. The inspectors are not limited to certain places, but are found almost anyplace.

(Last year there was initiated an official but unpublished decree that every car owner must set aside a fuel reserve sufficient for filling ~~the~~ a car tank once. This decree is said to have been issued ~~on~~ on orders ~~of~~ of the military.

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25. There has been a considerable decrease in the number of automobiles at the disposition of officials; Only the ministers, no longer vice ministers and department heads, as before, and directors of very large concerns are provided official automobiles. The right of a factory director to an official car depends on the number of workers in the plant, and there must be at least a few thousand workers, probably 5,000. The director of the Popov radio factory, which has less than 5,000 workers, has no official car. The chief reason for this measure is the lack of chauffeurs, but the extremely large volume of use of official vehicles for personal purposes may also be a factor. Previously, official vehicles ^{from Riga} could be seen in fairly large numbers in the kolkhoz markets of Riga and provincial towns--wives of directors doing their marketing.

26. The quota of cars for sale in Riga is still the same, 600 Moskvich and 250 Pobeda annually, and the number of people on the list of prospective buyers increases every year. It is not surprising, as the Zavod malokitraznykh avtomobiley in Moscow, which produces the Moskvich, never exceeds 130 cars per day. The new Moskvich model costs 15,000 rubles, compared with 9,000 before, and improvements on the car are not of a nature to justify such a price rise. The cost price of the new Moskvich is said to be 30,000 rubles, while the ~~new~~ old model could be produced for 4,000 rubles.

The new Pobeda costs 20,000 rubles, compared with the previous 16,000 and is supposed to be replaced by a new car called the Volga.

ECONOMIC MATTERS

27. In summer 1956, rumors spread around Riga to the effect that economic conditions in the USSR had become notably worse, and a real ~~danger~~ danger of inflation was in the offing. This was attributed to the increased purchasing power of the population and decrease in availability of consumer goods. Such rumors also spread among Party members.

In 1955-1956 there were signs of unemployment becoming apparent in Latvia. The price of private labor tended to decline. Previously, a construction worker who did odd jobs after working hours, and during his vacation, received 50 rubles per day, but ~~now~~ such workers now receive 30 rubles per day. On the Basteberg in Riga is a bulletin board, in the open square, on which information regarding the labor market is given: the board previously was full of

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 work offers and there was seldom anyone standing around the board. Nowadays
 there are few openings posted on the board, and there is always a group of
 people standing around it.

AGRICULTURE

28. The grain harvest was average in Latvia this year. The cold, wet summer was disastrous as far as ^{the fodder} ~~the~~ harvest was concerned. Large quantities of hay rotted in the fields, because they could not be covered. As fodder Soviet production in Latvia, even under favorable weather conditions, has never reached the required level, a decrease in the cattle population can be expected during this winter. Another factor having an unfavorable effect on cattle population is the new decree on increased taxation of milk cows kept in cities, as many owners of cows now plan to dispose of their animals. These city cows are among the best kept in Latvia. Kolkhoz cattle are generally in much poorer condition and deliver much less milk than city cows. The forced cultivation of maize carried out in Latvia in 1955 was a complete failure, in spite of the hot summer, and the harvest was far below expectations. This year cultivation was not forced, and the area under cultivation decreased sharply.

29. A ^{was} ~~the~~ decree, enacted last year, ^{which gave} ~~gave~~ the kolkhoz administrations the right to pay out their members advances on their ~~right~~ shares of the proceeds (The proceeds were previously paid out only once a year, at the end of the fiscal year) and to decide ^{to whom} and how much land is to go to private owners. The intention of this decree was to arouse the interest of kolkhozniki in the prosperity of the economy, and to make them perceptibly dependable on the administration. Previously it was true that the administration had no real method of forcing the kolkhozniki to work. Who did not work received no portion of the profits. As the large majority of kolkhozy ^y ~~functioned~~ miserably, the profits were slight and ~~didn't~~ didn't inspire anyone to work. A vicious circle came into being--since ^{no} ~~no~~ one worked, or worked only a little, profits were low, and since profits were poor, no one was encouraged to work. As far as can be determined, the purpose of the decree has been achieved. Although modest, some improvement in the position of collective economy is to be noted here and there. Whether it will last, and extend to all kolkhozy, remains to be seen. Signs of improvement are noticeable here and there, but the situation in general is ^{as bad as before.} ~~as bad as before.~~

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MOVEMENT TO THE NEW LANDS AREA

30. The transport of workers from Latvia to the ^{Virgin}New Lands Area in Kazakhstan and West Siberia, as well as coal mines of the Ukraine and construction work in East Siberia, has increased sharply this year. Mostly it is volunteers who take up this work, and predominantly Russians. It is generally said in drive Riga that the ~~movement~~ is directed mainly toward the Russians. Party and Komsomol members are directed to the work by their organizations, more or less under compulsion. It is said to be possible to get out of such an assignment, though with difficulties. Upon departure, passports are picked up, but there have been a number of individuals who were able to return to Latvia soon.

(The volunteers are individuals who find it advisable for one reason or another to change their place of residence, or those to whom the relatively freer and less restricted life in the ^{Virgin}New Lands sounds better than life at home, and these make up the majority of the volunteers. Some take off for the unknown purely for the adventure.

31. The harvest in the ^{Virgin}New Lands is said to have been quite good last year. However, a lot of it is said to have been lost because of lack of transport. This year the harvest is supposed to be even better, and it is asserted that transport facilities are in a better position to handle the job. It is not impossible that they ~~will handle the job successfully.~~

(Exploitation of workers continues undiminished in industry. Norms are generally reviewed every year, and always raised. Last winter norms were raised twice at the Popov Radio Factory. Stakhanovite is an outdated term which has been replaced with the phrase "pirmrindnieks", or first-class worker. The new designation is applied to persons who work not only more than the others, ~~but~~ from the standpoint of norms, but also better. The pirmrindnieki have the right to deliver their work without submitting it to technical examination.

STATE LOAN

The state ²loan requirement has been raised somewhat this year. The lowest norms, three weeks' wages, may be paid only by those persons earning no more than 400 rubles monthly. The new pension law has received general acceptance.

BRIDGE CONSTRUCTION~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

The construction of the new bridge over the Daugava, to replace the ponton

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bridge is well under way. All stanchions but one are finished, and the roadway is under construction from the left bank. The pontoon bridge, which has been moved slightly northward, will be taken apart after the new bridge is completed, and set up in two other places as bridges, first, from the right bank of the Daugava, somewhere in the Moscow Suburb, to Zakušala, and from there to the left bank, at the end of Oskara iela, and second, from Tvaikumiela to Kundzin-sala. There is also something in the wind about building a bridge across the Daugava north of the Gorki^{ja iela} Bridge, to end at the cement factory on the left bank.

The question of whether or not the Gorki^{ja iela} Bridge, which is too narrow and weak for traffic, will be left up after completion of the new bridge, is not known. It appears that this question has not been decided. A new, massive railroad bridge has been built over the Ingā River near the Rigas Audums Factory, in order to carry the Riga-Valka railroad line over the river. This branch leads to the new thermal electric power station and serves to supply the station with peat from the ~~Latvian~~ Zeda Peat Plant at Valka.

The construction of a concrete bridge over the Lielupe River at Kalnciems, at the point where the highway from Kalnciems touches on the Lielupe, is said to be under way already.

OTHER CONSTRUCTION

The extension of the diesel factory continues, and a number of workshops have been added. The construction of the power plant on the Daugava at Plavinas is also said to have begun. At least, the investigative work has been done. It has been decided to build a new bus station in Riga near the kolkhoz skyscraper but no work has been done on it as yet. On the Morison Mountain in Baldone an astronomical observatory will be built for the Academy of Sciences.

COMMUNICATIONS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES

In summer 1956, excursions to foreign countries were undertaken from the Soviet Union for the first time, and a few Latvians took part. These trips were publicized widely, just as tourism in general is publicized now. The excursions were organized by Inturist, and anyone wishing to take part had to apply there. After a short time, an answer was received saying whether or not a person was allowed to go. It is not true that only Communists were given

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permission to go. [redacted] several non-Com unists [redacted] received permis-
sion to go on the trips. [redacted]

only more prominent personalities received permission to go on the European
[redacted] tours [redacted] marine 25X1
[redacted] in summer 1956. For example, the famous Latvian/painter, Ed.
was refused permission to take 25X1
Kalnins, [redacted] the European trip; he is not a Party member, but he has always
stood on a good footing with the Communists [redacted]

[redacted] are [redacted]
The trips [redacted] not expensive--the European tour
cost [redacted] only 1400 rubles per person. Participants had to take special courses
in deportment and equip themselves for the trip according to the instructions
of the bureau (Inturist), which cost more than the whole trip did. [redacted]

[redacted] It is said that the Russian women dressed up in long silk dresses and silver
fox furs created quite a stir in the streets of Paris. Latvia is not quite
as tightly sealed [redacted] off from abroad, and it is now admitted fairly
often that even the capitalistic countries have made many advances, which the
Soviet Union is obliged to recognize. Foreign technical journals are displayed
now in libraries--e.g., in the library of the Academy of Sciences in Riga.

for
It is also permitted for individuals to subscribe to foreign journals, [redacted]
the time being only
[redacted] those of Satellite countries. [redacted] Both scientific and ~~fix~~ belles
lettres works from East Germany are now sold in Riga, and are very popular, as
they are less colorless and more interesting than the native product. [redacted]

[redacted] Russian
[redacted] medical journals are not seen too often in Latvia. 25X1

There is a large demand in Riga for foreign fashion magazines, which cannot
be purchased there, and are acquired only from private parcels received from
abroad. An individual having a foreign fashion magazine was trying to make a
long distance call in Riga in summer 1956. With the thought of speeding up
thw service and going ahead of others who were waiting to make calls, he let
one of the operators look at it. The result was that all the operators gather
ed around the magazine and started copying the patterns, so no one could get
a call placed for an hour.

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MISCELLANEOUS

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[Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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MISCELLANEOUS

directory telephone
 For the first time in a long time, a [redacted] of/subscribers was published in 1956. in Riga. It differs from previous telephone books in that a number of telephone numbers previously considered secret were published. E.g., the numbers of the serum station and the Sobering-up station were considered secret; the sobering-up station is located near the kolkhoz market, and only persons found falling-down drunk in the streets are admitted there. Treatment there costs 40 rubles per day.

In the Daugava and the outlet of the Lielupe into Riga Bay, navigation directions and lights were placed this year—they were not there last year.

In Meza Parks, or the Park of Culture and Rest, a children's railway has been built. It is a true copy of the real thing, with station buildings, and is said to have cost 3 million rubles.

LIVING EXPENSES

Apart from scarce items which one either does without, or ~~gets~~ gets seldom, expensively, and in very poor quality, e.g, wool material, shoes, and the stockings, ~~the~~ commodity situation in Latvia can be considered bearable.

The relatively favorable situation which existed during Malenkov's rule has not returned. since. The dominant trait in the commodity supply is the irregular delivery. At times a certain commodity, sugar, for example, is available in abundance, and then there suddenly is no sugar to be had for a while. In October 1956, there was little bread to be had; in the countryside, the bread problem was especially bad, as bread was ordered from the city, and milk delivery also ~~has~~ has fallen down, while milk was readily available during the summer --sugar has vanished from the market, sausages are few and far between. In summer the supply situation was rather tolerable, but in October it became a good deal worse.

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Cheap, poor-quality wool materials, are available. So are shoes in the higher price range—350 for men, 450 for ladies, which are rather good. The chronic lack of construction materials worsened considerably over the last year, and cement is practically ~~impossible to obtain~~ impossible to obtain. This is reflected in the black market, and the prices demanded by truck drivers for building materials

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[Redacted] higher than last year. The demand for building materials is

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for which one is given land by the city administration. Materials supplied by truck drivers are all stolen.

PRICES

Item:	Official:	Black market:
Eggs	56 k. each	1.5-2 r each
Sugar	7-10 r/kg	13-16 r/kg
Rye bread	2-3 r/kg	
White bread	3-6 r/kg (hard to get)	
Salt	1-2 r/kg	
Cream of wheat	7 r/kg	
Rice	10 r/kg	
Sausage	12-28 r/kg	
Chocolate candy	30-80 r/kg	
Wool material	100-500 r/meter	
Chinese silk	60-80 r/m	
Cement		300-400 r/ton
Boards	550 r/cub m	400-500 r/cu m
Electric washing machine	1200 r (Cost only 800 r at first, the went down to 600 r)	
TV	800-2200 r	
Gasoline	1 r/liter	50 k/1
Taxi ride ride	1.5 r/km	1 r/km
Bus (purchased by city)	500,000	
Asphaltinfj of roads	100,000-200,000 r/km	

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