

GR ^{SR/S}

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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SECURITY INFORMATION

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(FOR KEY SEE REVERSE)

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Riga
1. a. The Central Market of Riga consisted of four parallel halls. The third hall, accounting from the railroad station, was not open. Produce was not sold there. Source said this hall was sequestered, but did not know for what purpose or what there was in this hall. The Children's Hospital at Pardaugava, Tornakalns, across the river on Yelgava Street, the main street leading from Riga to Yelgava, was still in use. One could reach the hospital from the Riga railroad station by streetcar No. 7, whose terminus was close behind the hospital. The former nerve hospital of Dr. Senfelds, which was a little behind Children's Hospital in the direction of Yelgava, on the same side of the street, ~~at all dealt with nervous disorders.~~ There were separate sections for Latvians and Soviets. Source was told there was an International Red Cross office at Riga, near the railroad station. The names of the streets were in Latvian, or Latvian and Russian. In the Central Market food was sold in three halls: in the first (counting from the railroad station), meat; in the second, bread, flour, corn, gin, liquor, and tobacco; the fourth, milk, butter, cream, curds, honey, and poultry. The third hall was closed. Each stall had a board with the name of the seller. The prices were sometimes more moderate here than in the country; e.g., the price for butter at Talsi was 25 rubles in a shop, but at the Central Market in Riga only 19 - 20 rubles.

b. On the Central Market in Riga several prices were lower than in the country; some prices on the Central Market in Riga were:

<u>Article</u>	<u>Unit</u>	<u>Price in rubles</u>
Fork	kg	40-50
Beef	kg	30-40
Bacon	kg	up to 60
Hay	4 kg	7

Prices in Riga in 1951:

Shoes, ladies', leather	pair	400
Half-boots, ladies', leather	pair	200

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<u>Article</u>	<u>Unit</u>	<u>Price in rubles</u>
Smoked eels	kg	90
Chocolate	bar	3-4
Vodka	$\frac{1}{2}$ liter	25
Beer	bottle	5
Cigarette tobacco, good (in Ukri, spring '51)	gram	3.20
Cigarettes, "Moskva"	10	1
Papirosi, "Kazbek"	25	2 $\frac{1}{2}$ -3
Radio	one	400-1800
Kerosene, for lighting purposes (in Upesgriva)	1 liter	1.20
Pictures, passport (Talsi in fall 1950)	3	6
A dove, alive (Riga 1947)	one	50
A rabbit, Angora (Riga 1947)	one	50

Yellow, metal coins in circulation were 1, 2, 5, and 10 kopeks. The 2- and 5-kopek pieces were as large as a quarter.

c. Blackmarketing in yeast was very profitable. An acquaintance of the source carried on a blackmarket in laundry in Riga. The big blackmarket dealers could live very well, some of them having their own cars. The kolkhozniki were allowed to sell their produce at the Central Market without any restriction or permission of the administration of the kolkhoz. As an example, source mentioned a friend from Tornakalns who in 1950 sold at the Central Market 10 pounds of hay for 7 rubles without a permit. The kolkhozniki had to pay only standing fees of eight rubles per day for a man and horse. The teams of horses had to stand in an open space between Central Market and the Daugava River. Source believes every kolkhoznik was allowed to sell freely the produce of his $\frac{1}{2}$ hectare. Whether or not he had delivered to the State the required amount of produce was his private business.

2. The following are examples of wages which were paid in and near Riga:

<u>Occupation</u>	<u>City</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Rubles per month</u>
Woodcutter, German PW	Upesgriva	1947	400-500
Chief nurse, City Hospital	Talsi	1947-48	350
Nurse, City Hospital	Talsi	1947-48	250
Physician	Talsi	1947-48	700
Truckdriver, at a factory	Riga	1950	400-500
Night-watchman, a woman house guard	Riga	1950 (end)	200
Night-watchman, shop guard	Riga	1951 (spring)	250
Manager, milk-reception point	Upesgriva	1951 (May)	400

3. In large apartment houses in Riga the housebook was kept by the janitor. When a new inhabitant came to live in the house, the janitor went to the militia office with the housebook and registered the new tenant. The tenant did not have to go personally. Houses usually were checked by three militiamen, who examined personal documents. Checks usually occurred at night and were infrequent. One person known to source had been an SS man and had to report monthly to the militia. In June 1949 source was warned not to go on the streets on a certain day because there would be document inspection throughout the city. Source heard that such inspections occurred in Riga about once a year.
4. During the rush hours the streetcars and streets were crowded. People in Riga were well dressed, especially on Sunday; good shoes and coats were observed. During the summer women didn't wear hats; in the winter they wore scarfs. Many women wore leather boots in the winter. Men wore their hair long, and seldom did one see men with heads shaved as in the Soviet Army. Beards were rare, but mustaches and sideburns were common. There were many pickpockets in Riga, most of whom were 13-14-year-old boys, both Latvian and Soviet, joined in bands. They were very clever and often stole pocketbooks, took the money, and then destroyed the documents.
5. In summer 1947 several German films were shown in Riga, including Die Goldene Stadt, and Die Frau Meiner Traume. Movie theaters were overcrowded because people did not like the Soviet propaganda films and didn't attend movie theaters often. This situation did not please the Soviets, who prohibited the showing of German films thereafter. Rigas Jurmala

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and Kemere, health resorts on the seashore near Riga, were full of Soviets and Jews in 1951.

6. Streetcars started to run at 0600 in the morning. The cars were painted a light yellow with one broad, green stripe running down the middle. They had green roofs, and a green stripe also ran along the lower edge. There was a sign on the front of the first car with the number of the line, but not the destination. There were usually two cars hooked together. The cars were often over-crowded, particularly at 1700 hours, at which time many people got off work. The conductors were both Latvian and Soviet, and were of both sexes. They walked the length of the car collecting fares instead of being posted in one place. They wore dark-gray uniforms with blue lapels. Streetcar No. 3 ran from the railroad station along Marijas and Stabu ielas. The last stop was behind a church that stood at a street intersection, Pavila Church. No. 7 ran from the Central Market, where it turned, along the Daugava River, over the ponton bridge, where it turned left before reaching the Uzvaras Square. It then crossed the railroad track through an underpass and turned into Jelgava iela between Children's Hospital and the former nerve clinic. Source pointed out this nerve clinic on the map and identified the terminal as being at the intersection of Jelgavas and Gimnastikas ielas. No. 8 ran from Central Market over the ponton bridge and then to the right of Uzvaras Square. Source did not know the rest of the route, except that the terminal was at the Zaslauka railroad station. Both Nos. 7 and 8 were still running in the spring of 1951. No. 9 also left from the Central Market, crossed the ponton bridge, turned right before reaching the Uzvaras Square, and proceeded along the Slokas iela in the direction of Spilve airport. Source did not know where the terminal was. No. 10 went from the Tornakalns railroad station, where it connected with line No. 7, to Bisumuiza. This line did not go over the ponton bridge into the center of town. No. 12 did not go to the center of town either, but connected with line No. 3 behind Pavila Church. Lines Nos. 1 and 6 crossed the bridge that crosses the railroad tracks, passing the VEF factory. Lines Nos. 1, 2, 3, and 6, and line A went to Padomju bulvaris, past the Freedom Monument. Line A went out from the railroad station to the wooden bridge near Valdemara iela. Source did not know whether or not the line went further.
7. The bus from Engure (N57-09, E23-13) to Riga traveled along the coast. The bus seated about 20 people. The terminal in Riga was the Autoosta, not far from the railroad station. The bus left Engure at 0800 in the morning and arrived in Riga at 2000. The fare was 25 rubles. The tickets were sold by the driver, who also had to take down the names of all of the passengers on a list, since a check was made on the way as to whether the driver had collected fares from all of the passengers.
8. The upper station was Rigas Jurmala Station; there were ticket windows in both the upper and lower stations. In the summer tickets could also be bought from the street at windows which opened onto the street from the stations, both the Riga and Rigas Jurmala stations. Trains left for Koknese, Ogre, Valmiera, Moscow, and Leningrad from the lower station, Riga I. Trains for Rigas Jurmala, Ventspils, and Jelgava left from the upper station. There were many Soviet Red Cross women at the Riga station. They were not in uniform but wore armbands with red crosses. On the Riga-Ventspils run one had to have a reserved-seat ticket in addition to his travel ticket. There was an extra charge of 2-3 rubles for this card, but source does not know whether it was required only on the Riga-Ventspils run or required generally. On the Stende-Riga run the train left Stende at 0130 and arrived at Riga at 0530. The train from Riga arrived at Stende at 2400, one train a day making this run. Fare Stende-Riga was 21.50 rubles. A railroad of normal gauge ran from Stende to Ventspils. Documents were needed only when one traveled from Stende to Ventspils via Dundaga, since there was a restricted area around Dundaga. The fare from Stende to Ventspils was about 19 rubles. There was a narrow-gauge railroad between Stende and Mersrags. A ticket cost 12 rubles from Stende to Mersrags, or 9 rubles from Talsi to Mersrags. The train left Stende at 2030, arriving Talsi at 2115 and Mersrags at 0100. On the return trip, it left Mersrags at 0200, arriving Talsi at 0530 and Stende at 0630. Trains left Riga for Koknese from Riga I station. Fare to Jungava was 4 rubles 55 kopeks, and to Koknese, 12 rubles. Only tickets were checked on the trains. Documents were checked only when a criminal or other wanted person was being looked for. All of the seats had numbers. When the trains were overcrowded, usually on holidays, it was necessary to buy a reserved-seat ticket. Otherwise the latter were used only for long trips, e.g., Riga-Ventspils, Riga-Leningrad. There were second- and third-class cars; second-class passengers were almost all Soviets. There were signs on most trains indicating the destination.

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9. There was a restricted military airfield at Pardaugava, at Spilve. Source drove along the highway in a truck and observed planes of various sizes. A sawmill was located to the right of the airport. To this sawmill came tree trunks from Upesgriva. The factory could be reached by a road passing the Spilve airport. The street went just along the east side of the airport, and the factory was situated behind the airport to the right. One of the factory's managers was the Jew Ginjen (fnu), who also supervised the woodcutting in Upesgriva. The working hours of most offices and factories were 0700-1700.
10. An acquaintance of source who lived in Riga-Tornakalns owned a radio set with which he listened to foreign broadcasts. Source heard the following stations there: Leipzig, Northwest German Radio, and the Southwest German Radio. It was possible to buy spare parts for radios in Riga. A radio cost from 400 to 800 rubles.
11. Riga was divided into postal zones. For example, a friend of source who lived in the suburb of Tornakalns was in postal zone Riga 4.
- Talsi
12. In autumn 1947 source was admitted to the Talsi (N-57-15, E22-35) hospital, (b)(1) seriously injured a finger while threshing. The hospital was at Slimniskas iel(b)(3)tele- phone Talsi 49, near the gymnasium. At this time the director was Rugens (fnu). He had fled to Germany in 1944-1945 and was sent back to Latvia by the Soviets. He was director of the hospital before the war. He employed Germans who were without documents but eventually had to comply with NKVD orders and let them go, after three months. The NKVD opposed employment of Germans at the hospital. The doctors had private quarters; the nurses lived at the hospital. The nurses earned 250 rubles, doctors ca 700 rubles a month. Pay-days were bimonthly.
13. In 1947 a pastor was arrested in Talsi and sentenced to 25 years of compulsory labor. Source does not know the motive behind the arrest, or the name of the pastor. (b)(1)lls that he was a young man, and that his wife and children remained in Talsi. In March (b)(3), a family, consisting of husband, wife, and five children, including a six-week-old baby and a child of two, was sent to Siberia. The family was deported because the father was a member of a partisan group fighting against the Communists after the capitulation. His wife worked as a nurse in the hospital at Talsi. She brought food to him in the woods and persuaded him to return to their home. He reported to the MVD and told all he knew about the partisans who remained in the forest, all of whom were seized. The husband was promised amnesty, but this promise was not kept. A letter from the oldest child reported that the family's luggage was stolen en route to Siberia, and that the baby had died. After arrival in Siberia, the two-year-old child and the grandfather died, and the grandmother became very sick.
14. In 1950 partisans were said to have entered Talsi and looted a store. This event was discussed far and wide, even in Ugunciems and Valgaciems. Early in 1951 partisans robbed the store at Valdgale (N57-17, E22-34), about five km north of Talsi. They distributed part of the goods to the people who were in the store at the time making purchases. The greater portion of the goods was loaded on a truck and disappeared into the woods. The store manager was thereupon arrested by the NKVD and deported.

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16. The central telephone office was in the post office; it was the only telephone office in Talsi. Five or six operators worked in this building. On the wall was a telephone book with all the telephone numbers for Latvia in it. The MVD building was located in Padomju iela in the middle of the city, across the lake from the railroad station. The prison was in the same building. The judge for the town of Talsi lived in the neighborhood of the hospital. The gymnasium was located in its former place in the park.

Upesgriva

17. In the village Upesgriva there was no central telephone office, but there was one in Ugunciems, about three km west of Upesgriva (N57-23, E23-00). There was a telephone in Upesgriva itself, in the fishermen's artel store. In the fall of 1950 source telephoned from Stende to Upesgriva and spoke on the aforementioned telephone. The connection was made through Talsi. Source placed the call in Latvian and spoke in German. Source does not remember the exact cost of the call but thinks it was about two rubles, (b)(1) paid at the counter. As in Ugunciems and Talsi, there were some telephone books in the mail office at Stende. They were in Latvian and contained the numbers of all the subscribers in Latvia. The telephone book did not have to be requested at the counter, for it hung on the wall in the office. Source does not know if it was possible to telephone abroad.
18. A fisherman known to source was called into the army in April 1949. He was 18 years old. He had to do his service with the infantry - service time, three years. His training unit was at Ufa, USSR. There were several Latvians with him. In spring 1951 he wrote that his unit was to be transferred to the neighborhood of Korea. Being a soldier, his letters were sent free of postage. A woman had a child by him and received 50 rubles per month for the child, because the father was a Soviet soldier. The Latvian youths in Upesgriva who had to serve with the Soviet Army told source that in case of a war they did not intend to fight for the Communist regime, but would seize the first opportunity to run to the Western armies. However, it would be difficult to fulfill this intention if the Latvians should be put among Soviets, e.g., one Latvian among ten Soviets.
19. There was only one istribitel in Upesgriva. He was Latvian. He carried a carbine, and source asserts that the istribiteli had light-blue uniforms, but they usually wore civilian clothes. There was no militia in Upesgriva, only a sole militiaman in Mersrags (N57-21, E23-07). About every six months there was a passport check in the village, carried out by four men: an NKVD man, a militiaman (the one from Mersrags), an istribitel (the one from Upesgriva), and a superior militia official from Talsi, since Talsi was the seat of the rayon militia office.
20. In March 1949, during the great deportations, three families from Upesgriva were dragged off to the USSR. One of the families was named Balodis. The Balodis children, believed to be two in number, were separated from the mother and remained in Upesgriva. Many Latvians fled in 1944 from Latvia to Germany. After the capitulation the Soviets sent all of them back from Germany. These people didn't get Soviet citizenship, but were considered stateless. Many of these people had to remain in the Bauska area, so many of them worked in the tobacco factory in Bauska and also in the tobacco kolkhoz.
21. In the village of Upesgriva there were no kolkhozy, only fishermen's artels. Each inhabitant could keep one cow. For each cow, 310 liters of milk had to be delivered yearly to the Aboli farm, where it was weighed, recorded, and tested. Every two days it was taken by wagon to the dairy at Vandzene (N57-20, E22-48). The executive committee or selsoviet of Upesgriva was at Ugunciems. The chairman was Valters, junior. The grammar school, too, was at Ugunciems. It is believed that there were seven grades. There was a fish cannery at Upesgriva. The post office and the store were on the Knagi farm. Valters was postmaster. There was no electric lighting in Upesgriva, but the first lines were put in in 1951.
22. Most inhabitants of Upesgriva belonged to the fishing artel. The name of the artel is unknown. The artel included fishermen from Valgaciems, Upesgriva, Mersrags, and Berzciems. Headquarters was at Mersrags. There was a fish cannery at Upesgriva, where the fish were

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canned and taken by truck to Mersrags. There were about 40 fishermen at Upesgriva. The brigadier of the artel at Upesgriva was Ernest Menca, 37, living on the Kaleji farm. Upesgriva fishermen were Latvians of different ages. Any inhabitant who wished to could become a member of the artel. All fishing boats belonged to the artel; there were no private boats. In Upesgriva there were about 20 motorboats and two or three rowboats. The rowboats were about eight meters long and two meters wide. Motorboats were larger and had a six-to eight-man crew. The motor was small and round. Speed is unknown. Three men rode in each rowboat.

23. The following kinds of fish were caught: sprats (bretlinas) - taken mainly in winter, salted, and also used as source of cooking oil; small herring (renge); smelt (salakas); flounder (mencas); elvers (luchi); and eels (yusi), which were taken between 0200-0300 hours in the summer. In the Skede River, which enters the sea near Upesgriva, there were also river lampreys. It was forbidden to catch these, but it was done illegally at night. An average catch per day was 150-300 kg per boat. In the summer, fishing was done between 0500-0600. In the evening one usually put to sea for about three hours, threw the nets out, and took them in in the morning. Each of the three-man crews generally used four nets. On shore, women took the fish from the nets; people who did this work were called purgas laudis in Latvian, and received 10% of the day's catch for their work. The fish were weighed at the factory and each fisherman's catch credited to his account. Wages were paid monthly in Mersrags. All fish had to be delivered; the fisherman could keep nothing. The stipulated norms were very high; exactly how high source does not know. If a fisherman did not achieve the norm, he received no wage. If one exceeded it, he received money premiums, which were paid at the end of the year. For example, the brigadier, a capable fisherman, received a premium of 200-500 rubles each year. In general, wages were very low and fishermen were poor people. In order to make out somehow, they sold fish on the black market, against the law. For a dozen sprats the price in the black market in Talsi and Stende was two-eight rubles; for a pair of elvers, two-three rubles. If a fisherman was caught selling on the black market he was punished, the first time by 100-ruble fine, the second time by confiscation of his month's catch, the third time by three years' imprisonment. Source did not hear that the boats had to have a license before they could go to sea. It is believed that the brigadier made the regulations on the spot and had nothing to do with the NKVD. In addition to his passport, each fisherman on the sea had to have his artel membership card. These documents were carried in order to identify oneself in case one was driven off course somewhere along the coast in a storm. The method of assigning fishing areas is not known. It is believed that each fishermen's village operated in the area lying between two neighboring villages. Single boats never went out to sea alone. It is thought that this was done, not to watch the boats, but to prevent one of them from disappearing in a storm. Fishing was done near the coast; it is not known how far out the boat might go. No fishing was done in the Baltic by Upesgriva, because other villages fished there, and the fuel was inadequate for such a long trip. Each boat received one can of gasoline, about 20 liters per day, issued by the factory. It was enough for their daily trip and some was left over, so that the fishermen could sell it on the black market. In Mersrags, gasoline was handled by the ton. One crew always used the same boat. Only artel members could go to sea to fish; relatives and friends could not be taken along. The brigadier was held responsible for enforcement of the rule, but this rule was not always strictly observed. If a boat disappeared in a storm, the other boats went looking for it, but no patrol boats went. As far as is known, fishermen on the west coast of Kurzeme were watched no more strictly than others. The fishing artel had a store at Upesgriva, which was the only store in town. In this store the fishermen received special consideration in the purchase of scarce goods, such as sugar. Trucks were stopped at Sloka on the way between Upesgriva and Riga. There was no roadblock at this control point. The militia simply went up to the trucks to check on whether fish was being brought to Riga for sale on the black market.
24. The young people in Upesgriva sang a great deal. They had a glee club. The songs were usually very sentimental, sung to the tune of Russian romantic songs, but with Latvian words. These songs frequently referred to the lost homeland and the poverty which had come over Latvia with the Soviets; some songs were forbidden, especially old melodies with new themes which obviously came from the deportations and the prisoners-of-war. An old Latvian song, Dzintra, was still sung, also Lakatins Zilais. Many songs with patriotic themes were forbidden, for instance Svelka Dzintene. Young people drank a great deal, even women and girls.
25. A man who lived in Upesgriva had a radio with which he was able to get programs from abroad. Source heard programs from West Germany and British programs in the German language on this set. It was possible to receive foreign broadcasts better here than in Riga. The set was operated by a battery, which was charged with a windmill generator. Spare parts for the radio could not be obtained in Talsi, but had to be bought in Riga.

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26. In 1947 there were located in Upesgriva, in the houses of the fishermen, about 50 PWs, ethnic Germans from the Ukraine, who had fought in the German army. They were sentenced to forest work, but were not guarded, although they had been separated from their families and were not allowed to return to their homeland. They had to cut wood and transport it. At the seashore near Upesgriva the logs were bound into rafts. Part of the logs was transferred by truck to Riga, where they were processed at a factory at Riga-Pārdaugava. The PW woodcutters received good wages, about 400-500 rubles per month. In eight days of loading the logs on trucks, source earned 60 rubles. In autumn 1950 this group was transferred to Melnsils (N57-39, E22-34), near Upesgriva, because the designated area of woods had been cut down. A few of the workers were then released, and were allowed to go home. The most diligent ones had been released earlier.

Miscellaneous Areas

27. In summer 1947 the highway was closed by the Soviet Navy to all traffic between Pavilosta (N56-53, E21-11) and Ventspils. In Ventspils only the streets around the harbor were restricted. Source heard that Lepaya itself was not restricted, only the harbor area. Source had heard no information to the effect that the west coast of Kurzeme was restricted and the inhabitants driven out of the coastal area. At least the farms around Grāvina (N56-32, E21-10) and north of there were inhabited during the summer of 1947.
28. There was an NKVD unit in Mersrags in 1951. The uniforms were gray-brown and the caps were blue with a broad, red rim. Shoulderboards were yellow for officers and blue and red for non-coms and privates.
29. On the coast at Mersrags was an observation tower, between the trees and somewhat higher than the trees. There was no searchlight. During the day there was one man on duty, with a telescope. Similar units and towers were at Gipka, Roja, Berzciems, Engure, and farther along the coast toward Riga. From Upesgriva to Riga stood five or six of them, along the coast. The NKVD personnel lived in requisitioned houses, and were often drunk on samagonka, which was the name they gave to all alcoholic beverages.
30. There was a lighthouse at Mersrags which flashed red and green lights alternately, each of 30 seconds' duration. Only Soviets worked in the lighthouse. Though its white color made it hard to see during the day, at night it could be seen from as far away as Upesgriva.
31. Source heard from many Latvians that there were partisans of many nationalities in the forests of Kurzeme, including Latvians and Soviets who had been captured by the Germans during the war, and therefore feared that they would be treated as traitors by the Soviets. There were also Germans, chiefly escaped PWs, and Lithuanians. In autumn 1949 the NKVD captured a 35-37-man partisan group through the aid of an informer. The partisans were located in a forest between Mersrags and Upesgriva. All the men were eating in the bunker at the time of the raid and no sentry had been posted. The NKVD took them completely by surprise and captured them without a fight. When source went to Latvia in summer 1947 she and other Germans went to north Kurzeme, as they had heard that there were partisans there, Germans among them, among whom they wished to stay. As source's party traveled from Ventspils to Dundaga by truck, they observed a roadblock three or four km out of Dundaga, where the Soviets were stopping vehicles. Later source learned that the area around Dundaga was restricted because of partisan activity. In summer 1947, source also went from Ventspils to Melnsils (N57-39, E22-34). About three or four km west of Dundaga there was a checkpoint and roadblock. As it was already dark, and the NKVD personnel were at the moment examining another truck along the side of the road, source's party was able to pass the checkpoint without being stopped. Source did not know the borders or extent of the restricted area. From Stende to Ventspils, on the Riga-Ventspils line, one could travel with an ordinary passport. Source had not heard that the Soviets were building rocket-launching platforms in this area. However, the Soviets transported construction materials from Stende toward Dundaga in 1947. It was said that the NKVD sent false partisans into the woods to pinpoint the genuine partisans, who usually lived in the woods. When source went from Lithuania to Latvia

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in 1947, [redacted] there were two kinds of partisans in the woc (b)(1) Latvian partisans, among whom were many Germans, which were supported by the Latvian (b)(3) population, and Soviet partisans, who were more bandits than partisans, since they robbed and killed people who were not sympathetic to communism. Source was warned to watch out for these.

32. Located in Vandzene were two starch factories, a brewery, in a large building, a dairy, a sawmill, a school, a pharmacy, a dispensary, a store, and a house of culture, featuring dancing every Sunday.
33. Postage for a domestic letter was 20 kopeks. A letter to West Germany cost 40 kopeks; to the Soviet Union, 80 kopeks. Soviet soldiers were allowed to send their mail postage-free. If the mail was censored, it was not apparent to the public. Nonetheless, people thought that letters were censored in secret and were therefore careful in what they wrote. A Latvian youth who was sentenced to one year of prison for rowdiness, which he served in the USSR, wrote his parents in 1949 that his letters were being censored. It took two days usually for a letter to go from one place to another within Latvia; for instance from Upesgriva to Riga. It was often impossible to buy envelopes, in Riga as well as in the provinces. In that case people used to make envelopes themselves. When envelopes were available at all, they were available in quantities.
1. Washington Comment. It will be noted that source refers to the NKVD throughout this report, although the NKVD became the MVD in 1946. In the Baltic countries, the MVD is still referred to as the "NKVD" or "Cheka", and the distinction between the MVD and the MGB is not always made.

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