

Aug 18, 1947

REVIEW OF A MEMORANDUM ON LATVIAN EMIGRANTS.

A certain typed pamphlet under the title "Memorandum über die lettische Emigration" is being circulated in New York. The above pamphlet is written in German, without signature; however, the names of the Foreign Committee of the Latvian Social-Democratic Party and of the Foreign Agency of the Latvian Confederation of Free Trade Unions are typed on it. The memorandum is dated Stockholm, August 25th, 1951.

Paying attention to the fact, that this article is distributed through a private person among the circles of the Committee for a Free Europe, we regret to be compelled to examine it in order to give the true facts and correct explanations concerning the erroneous, purposely perverted and completely wrong information given by this memorandum.

It is evident from the memorandum, that its ^{authors} anonymous have tried to rehabilitate Mr. Bruno Kalnins, using accusations against the Latvian outstanding personalities leading the emigrants social and political life, as the most effective remedy.

It is true that Mr. Kalnins has few adherents among Latvian political emigrants. That is the reason why the authors of the memorandum attributed their accusations against all Latvian political emigrants in the USA. The section 2 of the memorandum says in this connection:

* The absurd reports concerning Kalnins are mostly made by his political enemies, who persecuted him during the dictatorship of Ulmanis and during the Nazi occupation, and who are now trying to compromise him in order to protect themselves in the American instances. It is deplorable that there is a large number of such

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among the Latvian DP's who immigrated to America".

A politician who was active for many years can reasonably get worried about his localness, especially if he cannot or does not want to find the explanation of his personal and political errors. But it does not give even the minimal right to try to depict the people, whose mentality is different, as enemies of the democracy to the American people and authorities who understand the tragedy of the Latvian people. That notion can provoke the sharpest condemnation from the point of view of the fusion of the emigrants and the organization of the fight against the Bolsheviks.

It is pointed out in the memorandum that the Latvian Consultative Panel should consist only of the foreign delegations of the former Latvian political parties. But it is only the party of Social-Democrats which has revived its political activity in exile in the sense of a political party. If we accept this principle, the others who composed the majority in Latvia and are composing it in exile too, would have been excluded. Further, it is said that the Social-Democrats and Liberals obtained nearly half of the votes in the last Parliament elections in 1931. The Liberal party never took part in the elections to Latvian Parliament. It was established only in the exile, which fact does not enable us practically to estimate its political weight and importance. Taking into consideration that among the leaders of this party who have established in the exile, are the leading personalities of the former Democratic Center, we can accept that the authors of the pamphlet mean the latter party. In this case the mathematical result would be 21 social-democrats and 6 members of the democratic center, or together 27. Could this figure be regarded as half of a hundred?

The memorandum says, that the Latvian Consultative Panel is composed of extremists. As such are mentioned A. Bernins, A. Klive, E. Freivalds and Mr. Abers. It is said, that A. Bernins is one of the leaders of the "fascist" coup d'etat of May 15th, 1934. Further the memorandum says, that A. Bernins is responsible for the establishing of a

concentration camp in Liepaja. By this often repeated assertion the authors of the memorandum try to convince those who do not know the circumstances, that in Latvia, in the period from May 15th, 1934 till the Bolshevik occupation, existed concentration camps approximately modelled like Hitler's or Stalin's concentration camps. In fact, in Latvia never existed concentration camps. After the suspension of the activity of the Parliament the most active members of the extreme right and left wings were isolated for some months in the barracks of the garrison of Liepaja in order to protect the country against a possible disorder which Moscow as well as Berlin wanted to create. Already at the end of 1934 this isolated group was liberated. The liberation took place gradually, beginning with the month of June.

On the contrary, it is true that during the rule of Ulmanis the number of the political prisoners was smaller than in 1933 under the Parliament's government. This fact has been proved by the International Statistics (Please consult the " Das Statistische Jahrbuch 1938 "). Because of the state of war introduced then, the persons isolated in the garrison barracks of Liepaja were under the administration of the War Department. It is completely wrong and groundless to try to make A. Berzins responsible for this transient isolation inflicted by the memorandum in a concentration camp.

Mr. B. Kalvins who sistematically attacks Mr. Berzins and charges him with the burden of all possible and impossible "fascist" sins, forgets however to say, for the sake of fairness and objectivity, that the said Berzins was imprisoned by the Hitler's Gestapo in the solitary confinement of the concentration camp at Sachsenhausen for 2 1/2 months, after he escaped from the Bolsheviks. Equally, he forgets the fact that the whole family of Berzins was deported by the Bolsheviks or partially liquidated in Latvia in 1940.

Branding in the memorandum the temporary government of Ulmanis as fascist, Bruno Kalvins declares the government of Ulmanis to be a semi-fascist in an another article under the title " Under two occupational regimes " published in " Latvju Zinas " for Latvian readers (See annex No. 1). In the same article Br. Kalvins tells a little of

truth about the government so extremely detested by him. Speaking about the Russian occupation, he says: "The Latvian social laws, which excelled by their progressive character, were abolished and the standard of life of the laborers sharply aggravated. The real wages decreased up to a third of what they were during the period of the independent Latvia". Consequently, using the words of Bruno Kalnins, the "fascist" or "semi-fascist" government of Ulmanis excelled by its progressive social legislation. (See the annex No. 1.) And who was the supervisor of those progressive laws in the government of Ulmanis? Alfreds Berains—the so called "fascist" in the opinion of Mr. Bruno Kalnins.

B. Freivalds, another "extremist and fascist No. 2", was hardly 21 years old on May 15th, 1934. Likewise, in the following years he did not have any leading position in the Riga broadcasting station.

"Prejudices against Mr. Bruno Kalnins".

The opinion, that Bruno Kalnins is the representative of the extreme left wing of the Latvian political exiles, is unfounded, says the memorandum. It is possible that Mr. B. Kalnins has some reasons to conceal his belonging to the Latvian group of emigrants who are on the extreme left wing. This is an incontestable fact that the political activity of Mr. B. Kalnins and the program published in the bulletin of the Foreign Committee of the Social-Democratic party concerning the nationalization of the largest enterprises and estates, places him in the most extreme left wing.

It is said that B. Kalnins was unlawfully arrested by the government of Ulmanis because he had in mind to defend the democratic constitution with the help of the worker's self-defense organization. It is true, that B. Kalnins was arrested, but not for the defense of the democratic constitution, but for the installation of an illegal arsenal in his apartments, which consisted of a considerable number of rifles and pistols and all the necessary ammunition. Just those private defenders of the "democracy" with their private armies were the same who compelled the Prime Minister Ulmanis and General Balodis, the Chief Commander during the war of liberation, to suspend the Parliament in order

to defend the country against an eventual coup d'état inspired by Moscow and Berlin.

"The political attitude of Mr. B. Kalnins".

This section is to be considered as one of the unhappiest and the most illogical from the point of view of the defense for Mr. B. Kalnins. It is said that Bruno Kalnins was condemned to death by communists in 1932. Further it is said that the Soviet newspaper in Sweden named B. Kalnins in 1951 as a right-wing socialist and murderer of the Latvian people, etc. Now arises the question how could be explained this fact, that B. Kalnins, being aware of the communists' hostile attitude towards him and being aware of the sentence of death imposed upon him, returned very hastily to Latvia in the beginning of the month of July, 1940, shortly after the Soviet Union occupied Latvia. Furthermore, how could be explained as another circumstance, that the communist occupants who murdered without trial thousands of Latvians of the different social classes, did not execute Bruno Kalnins in conformity to the sentence of death previously imposed upon him, but promoted Mr. B. Kalnins to General and trusted him with the official duty of the political leader of the army - the most important function from the point of view of an occupant? Later on, when the remnants of the Latvian army which was renamed into "People's Army", were completely liquidated in September 1940, Bruno Kalnins was appointed to the lecturer with the lecturing desk for Marxism-Leninism of the University of Soviet Latvia. Also this proceeding made by the Bolshevik occupants could not be explained otherwise, as a special confidence showed towards Mr. Kalnins. One should have the mentality of a little child in order not to get perplexed while examining these naive and contradictory assertions: - the Bolsheviks condemn Bruno Kalnins to death when they are not able to carry out this sentence. They mark him as a people's hangman when he is beyond the power of the communists. But the Bolsheviks give Bruno Kalnins confidential functions when he is under their power.

It is a great exaggeration to designate Mr. Kalnins as one of the promoters of Latvia, if we do not want to say more. He was approximately 19 years old on November

18th, 1918, when Latvia was proclaimed as an independent state. Equally, that is something new for the veterans of the liberation war that Bruno Kalnins had presumably fought against the Bolsheviks. The whole war time he was in safety behind the front lines.

Mr. Kalnins' role in July, 1940.

The memorandum says that the title "Political Commissar" is not correct. Formally -yes, but not substantially. The official title for Bruno Kalnins' position was "The Political Leader of People's Army". This institution of the political leaders did not exist in the army of the Republic of Latvia. In the beginning of the month of July, 1940, there was promulgated the law concerning the political leaders of the army. The law provided that the historical changes and the wide democratization of the administration of the state demand an immediate and radical democratization of the Latvian army. For this purpose had been created in the Latvian army the functions of the political leaders. Their duties were: the explanation of the laws and instructions issued by the new government to soldiers, the education of the soldiers in the spirit of the changes which occurred, the furtherance of the discipline and the organization of the military press. This function was created accordingly to Soviet standards, as having the same commission as the political commissars in the Red Army, by the government obedient to Moscow, which was established by Wyshinsky after the occupation of Latvia by Bolsheviks. Therefore it is not important whether the title was "The Political Commissar" or "The Political Leader". The new commander of the army invited all soldiers and officers in his broadcasted speech to grant their largest confidence and loyalty towards the political leaders, because the latter ones have to educate the army in the spirit of the democracy and of the friendship with the USSR. A certain political leader of the army declared in the recently elected Sasina (Parliament) that all soldiers of the army were convinced that the recently elected representatives of the people will comply with the desire of all soldiers to incorporate the Latvian State into the USSR.

We have not gathered any materials concerning the activities of Mr. B. Kalnins. But it is completely clear from those few proofs given by the then published Bolshevik newspapers in Latvia, that Bruno Kalnins also performed the duties of the "political leader"

after Latvia was incorporated into the Soviet Union what happened on August 6th, 1940. The annex No. 2 shows that B. Kalnins worked in Soviet Latvia in the military units of "People's Army" in order "to educate the soldiers, officers and non commissioned officers in the spirit of Soviet patriotism and love for country and in the constant readiness to carry out each order of the Soviet Government". Therefore the assertion, that Bruno Kalnins worked only with the Staff of the Latvian National Army, is completely wrong. Completely grotesque is the presumption that Bruno Kalnins—an old and experienced politician—could believe that the Bolshevik occupation was no occupation, because Ulmanis still was the President of Latvia and even sanctioned the government of Kirshensteins. Why it is necessary to the authors of the pamphlet to picture Mr. Bruno Kalnins as a naive person who cannot understand that a country, occupied by an alien power, and which completely depends upon the occupational power including the President of the Latvian Republic who is detained as a prisoner in the Castle of Riga — is not more a free country? Equally, all what had been done by the President Ulmanis after May 1940, was illegal in the opinion of Mr. Bruno Kalnins. However, he considers as legal his appointment to the political leader of the army and his promotion from the rank of Lieutenant of reserve to the rank of General, what was done by the same illegal President. When Mr. Kalnins returned to Latvia in the beginning of the month of July, 1940, the staff of the army, i. e. the Generals ^Bberkis, Rosensteins, Hartmanis and other were already dismissed. Thus, there is no reason to declare that the Staff of the Latvian Army invited him to occupy the position of army's political leader. It has been done by the staff of another army which was approbated by Mr. Wyshinsky. It is said, that Mr. Kalnins was known as a persevering political leader and that ~~the~~ politicians and the staff of the army hoped then that he would be able to defend in the most effective manner the interests of the National Army against the Soviet-occupants. One might accept that these hopes existed in that period of despair. But these hopes turned out to be wrong. As the annexes No. 2, 3.

and 4 show, Bruno Kalnins eagerly tried to bolshevize the Latvian soldiers. But that is not all. In the duties of the political leader of the army were included also the control of the political reliability of the soldiers and especially of the officers. Several army officers of the Republic of Latvia, who were tortured by the NKVD, deposited in the Latvian Legation in London their statements under oath, that they have been denounced as "Ulmanites" and fascists in the NKVD by Bruno Kalnins like many other officers. We have requested the certified copies of these statements and hope to be able to despatch them separately in a few days. The gentleman holding a cigarette (annex No. 3) is NKVD Colonel Bartsunas who is now appointed to the Chief of the NKVD in Lithuania.

The activities of Mr. Bruno Kalnins during the period 1941-1945.

It is true that Mr. Bruno Kalnins together with his father Dr. Paul Kalnins took part as the representatives of the Social-Democratic Party in the organization of the underground movement against German occupants. Equally, it is true that B. Kalnins was arrested by the Gestapo in 1944 and put into the concentration camp at Stutthof. But this action does not, however, change and diminish the mainpoint of those facts which were connected with his collaboration with the communists in 1940 during the first occupation. Mr. Kalnins admits himself in his article, that " Under such circumstances the Latvian Party of the Social-Democrats decided to propose to its members to collaborate with the new government. It seemed that this was the only way to preserve the independence of the country, getting the assistance from the Russians in case of war with Hitler". The collaboration cited in the quotation marks is meant as the collaboration with the government of Kirchnersteins, approved by Mr. Wyshinsky.

" The attacks of the Communists against Mr. Kalnins. "

We do not assure, that Mr. Kalnins is not attacked by Communists. But we cannot make any conclusions from these charges. We already pointed out the fact mentioned in the memorandum that the Bolsheviks condemned Bruno Kalnins in absentia to death and then appointed him to a position which probably was the most confidential in then by Bolsheviks occupied Latvia. We know that there exist some indications from Moscow, that the fusion of all

anti-bolshevist political refugees should be disturbed by all means. Disregarding the solemn declaration of all the political parties including that of the Social-Democrats, which joined the Latvian Central Council, not to fight among themselves till the liberation of Latvia, Mr. Bruno Kalnins consequently hindered every effort to get along. The memorandum, assuming that it was not written by Mr. Kalnins himself, but in any case by one of the closest of his adherents, is a classic example of Mr. Kalnins' intolerance and of his intention to provoke a disturbance. The attacks against the individual politicians whom he dislikes, or political parties and, at last, against the whole mass of the Latvian refugees, prove it.

The actual position of Mr. Kalnins.

It is not true that Mr. B. Kalnins unites and leads all the Social-Democrats in the exile. Three years ago the group of the Social-Democrats who stayed in Sweden and whose leader was Mr. B. Kalnins decided that the Social-Democrats who stayed in Germany, had to discontinue the membership of the Latvian National Council. The latter did not obey Mr. Kalnins. Equally, the mentioned case of Cielens proves that Mr. Kalnins is entitled to represent only one group, but not all the Social-Democrats who live in exile. Besides it, the Social-Democrats had never been the only representatives of the workers. In Latvia were active also the "Christian Workers' Union" and the "Union of the Railway Workers". The memorandum affirms that Mr. Kalnins is the representative of workers even from Latvia. Who could give him credentials from a country which, as it is notoriously known, is under the ruthless terror of Russians?

New York

October 29th, 1951.

TRANSLATION

PRO MEMORIA

Those compatriots who got compromised during Bolshevist and German occupations by performing important functions have been timely requested by the Latvian Minister Plenipotentiary in Washington through Mr. J. Feldmanis-Latvian Minister Plenipotentiary in Geneva, to withhold themselves from occupying public positions in the refugee committees in order to further the fusion of the refugees and also to confirm the repulsive attitude of the Latvian people towards Bolshevism and Nazism, as well as towards those compatriots who acted as collaborationists. The point of view of the Latvian Minister in Washington is, that the question concerning the incrimination of the former collaborationists should be decided by the Court in the Independent Latvia.

Unfortunately, it occurred that the persons who had leading positions under German and Bolshevist occupations, occupied important social positions during the exile period. The Latvian democratic intellectuals have objections especially against Mr. A. Valdmans-former Director General who was in the result of some machinations elected to President of the Latvian Central Council in Germany. There are sufficient proofs that A. Valdmans was a collaborationist: 1/ The memorandum presented to the representative of the German occupational power in Riga on July 11th, 1940, which was signed by Mr. Valdmans himself, by Mr. Gustavs Celmins and by Colonel V. Deglavs. 2/ The fact that A. Valdmans was not compelled to occupy the position of the Director General of Justice but did it voluntarily, and 3/ The memorandum handed over to the Commissar of "Ostland" by Mr. Valdmans himself in which he proposed the military union with Germany under German protectorate, etc. The fact that Mr. A. Valdmans, as well as Mr. Gustavs Celmins were later on disfavored by Germans and acted then against Germans, does not change the circumstances. It is possible that they both, as well as others, became now Latvian patriots and democrats, but they should not henceforth, on behalf of the interests of Latvia and of the fusion of the refugees, perform any social functions.

The above concerns those compatriots also who performed important duties under Bol-

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unist occupation, as e.i. Mr. Bruno Kalnins, who, as it results from the attached photostatic copies, was the political leader of the People's Army even after the annexation of Latvia and who led the call of the communist youth.

The attached photocopy came only recently at the disposal of the Minister in Washington. Equally, only later the Minister learned that : 1/ Mr. Bruno Kalnins was the Charge d'Affaires of the left government of Spain in Helsinki and apparently became citizen of Spain and 2/ took part in the secret conference of Latvian Socialists and Communists in Stockholm in summer 1939, where he accepted the common tactics which were used under Kirchenstein when the Latvian Social-Democrats fraternized with the Communists and many of them of the Latvian Social-Democrats performed important duties not only in the government of Kirchenstein but after the annexation of Latvia, too. One part of the Latvian Social-Democrats was disfavored after it by Communists, as e.i. Bruno Kalnins who was dismissed and accused his duties as the lecturer of the Latvian University.

It is completely understandable that the Latvian democratic intellectuals have objections also against the participation of Bruno Kalnins in the leading positions in the refugee's organizations because of the same reason used against A. Valdemars. As is mentioned above the interests of Latvia demand that those compatriots give up the social functions and do not hinder the Latvian refugees to attain the aim they seek.
Washington, August 18th, 1947.

Annex: 1 photostatic copy.

Signed: Dr. A. Valdemars.

Found in Latvian Charge
d'Affaires in Washington
Not deceased.