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The Activities of “Russian Monarchists” in the Documentation of the Latvian Political Police Department (1920–1940): specific Characteristics of the Source

The archive of the Latvian Political Police is a unique source on interwar European history, held in the Latvian State Historical Archives of the National Archives of Latvia, Collection 3235. Information in this collection reflects significant political events, organizations, political movements, groups, individuals, ethnic minorities and other aspects of interwar Latvian society. The source contains a diverse range of important and unique information, thus providing an invaluable contribution to studies of Latvian, Baltic and European history. Nevertheless, this source has a variety of special characteristics; it displays a rather high level of subjectivity; and there are other important aspects which need to be taken into consideration¹.

This article has two objectives: first, to give a brief insight into the Russian anti-Bolshevik movement in interwar Latvia; second, to describe the specific characteristics of the Latvian Political Police archive with regard to the “Russian monarchist” context.

After the fall of the Russian Empire and the foundation of an independent Latvian state, the newborn Republic of Latvia needed to build itself up in extremely complicated circumstances, notably the ongoing Russian Civil War and the Latvian War of Independence. During the War of Independence in 1919–1920, in the early days of the Latvian

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Army, a counterintelligence service was established². In fact, at the beginning there were two substructures with similar tasks: the Counterintelligence Service under the supervision of the Latvian Army and the Political Security Service of the Ministry of the Interior, the latter founded on 1 September 1920³. In 1924 and 1939 fundamental restructuring of the Ministry of the Interior took place, also affecting the Political Security Service. It was renamed several times and finally given the name *Political Police Department* (widely known as the Political Department or Political Police), directed by Jānis Fridihsons⁴.

The main strategy of the Political Department was the prevention of harmful activities which could potentially affect the security of the Latvian state⁵. The Political Department consisted of the Investigation Section, Agency Service and Secretariat. Geographically, it was divided into seven regions (Riga, Jelgava, Liepāja, Valmiera, Gulbene, Rēzekne and Daugavpils), which were further subdivided along the lines of counties. The tasks of the Political Police included prevention of harmful activities by organizations and individuals, such as communists, German national socialists, Russian monarchists, Latvian radical nationalists, as well as Jewish, Polish, Belarusian and other political and radical organizations defined as constituting a danger to state security⁶. After the coup d'état of Kārlis Ulmanis, staged on 15 May 1934, the new direction of national policy caused dissatisfaction among ethnic minorities in Latvia. Consequently, these became subject to greater attention from the Political Police Department, intensifying supervision and attitude monitoring, with potential elimination of suspicious groups and organizations.

To provide a historical context, it should be noted that Russians constituted the largest ethnic minority in interwar Latvia. Russians have lived in present-day Latvia already since the early Middle Ages, and the volume of the Russian diaspora significantly increased after the schism of the Russian Orthodox Church, in the second half of the 17th century. Persecuted by the Russian government, Old Believers moved to the neighbouring lands, such as the territory of the present Baltic countries, ruled at the time by Sweden and Poland. After the Great Northern War, Russians held a dominant status in Latvia for almost 200 years as the main ethnic group of the Russian Empire⁷. After the collapse of the empire, the Russians in Latvia automatically became a national minority, which in the 1930s constituted 206 499 people, or 10,59 % of Latvia's total population⁸. Due to specific historical and other characteristic, its social, political and other activities in the Republic of Latvia were monitored by the Latvian Political Police Department. Among other aspects of the minority, particular significance was given to the so called "Russian monarchist" issue, which is reflected in the documentation of the Political Police archive, stored in the Latvian State Historical Archives, Collection 3235, Inventories 1/1–1/24.

The "Russian monarchist" context was directly linked to the international phenomenon of Russian emigration resulting from the Bolshevik coup d'état of 1917 and the ensuing Civil War and Red Terror in Russia. During the years that followed, around 1,5–2 million former residents of the Russian Empire left their homeland and settled in more than 40 countries around the world⁹. Such a huge flow of emigrants had not been experienced in the European context since the Migration

Age. In fact, it continued throughout the 1920s and declined only at the end of the decade due to the "iron curtain" policy of the Soviet government.

In social terms, the émigré contingent mainly consisted of intellectuals, clergy, aristocrats, entrepreneurs, military émigrés and other groups. In the beginning, it was mainly people from the civil population who went abroad, but due to the changing political situation and as a result of the defeat of the White Armies in the Russian Civil War, the character of emigration changed, with greater numbers of military émigrés going into exile.

Despite having lost the Russian Civil War, the officers of the former White Armies considered emigration as a retreat or similar tactical manoeuvre, rather than as a defeat¹⁰. Accordingly, there were very high hopes and expectations for a "spring war campaign" as a repeated invasion into Soviet Russia¹¹. Naturally, the expected invasion could be possible only with the help of the former Entente allies — France and Britain, who were not interested in a war with such vague prospects. Moreover, in 1924 both countries established economic relations with Soviet Russia as a move essential for their exhausted economies¹². This act was very painful for the Russian émigrés, but they did not give up hope of a military invasion in the future. This is why in 1924 the Russian army commander General Piotr Wrangel decided to unite all Russian military émigrés in one organization for strategic mobilization in the future. Such an organization was indeed founded, named *Русский Общевоинский Союз* (*Russkij Obshhevoinskij Sojuz*, Russian All-Military Union, ROVS)¹³. In 1920s and 30s, ROVS included around 100 000 participants, with departments established in all countries where Russian military émigrés had settled¹⁴.

Due to the lack of allied support and the impossibility of direct intervention in the Soviet Union, in the second half of the decade the leadership of ROVS refocused its strategic vector in other directions, including terrorist activities against the USSR. ROVS was the largest anti-Bolshevik union; however, starting from the beginning of the 1920s, other anti-Bolshevik organizations had also been founded. Directed from the centers of Russian emigration, such as Paris, Berlin and Belgrade, branches of such organizations existed in almost all countries where Russian émigrés had settled, including Latvia. In most cases, these organizations were run by former officers of the Russian Imperial Army, who had fought the Bolsheviks during the Russian Civil War. The organizations had different programmes and political views, but were united by their main aim: destruction of the Bolshevik dictatorship and the recovery of Russia.

As regards the context of the Baltic States, the largest wave of Russian emigration reached the newly established republics in 1919–1920, after the defeat of the Russian North-Western Army. In general, the émigrés spent only a short period of time in Latvia, their ultimate destinations being the main centers of the Russian exiles, such as Paris, Berlin, Belgrade, etc. The flow did not stop until the second half of the 1920s, but was much larger at the beginning of the decade. It is hard to ascertain the precise number of Russian émigrés who lived in Latvia during that period.

The census of 1925 recorded 25 427¹⁵ "Nansen passport owners"¹⁶, while the information of the Political Police Department indicated about 33 000¹⁷ Russian

exiles living in Latvia at the end of the decade. The censuses held in 1930 and 1935 recorded 15 643 and 12 444 “Nansen passport owners”, respectively, in Latvia¹⁸. The numbers fell not only due to emigration by the exiles, but also as the result of naturalization: Latvian citizenship was quite easy to obtain, and was widely adopted by those émigrés who had decided to stay in Latvia¹⁹.

As mentioned above, Latvia was one of the countries where the cultural and social phenomenon known as “Foreign Russia”²⁰ occurred, but in relation to the anti-Bolshevik movement Latvia had its own political peculiarities. In accordance with the peace treaty with Soviet Russia (signed on 11 August 1920), anti-Bolshevik organizations and their activities were officially forbidden in Latvia, as organizations hostile towards Soviet Russia²¹. Therefore, ROVS and other anti-Bolshevik organizations acted illegally or under the cover of legal organizations. Due to the important political issue of their ideology and activity, all of these organizations, their members and people linked with them were constantly monitored by agents of the Political Department. The documents in the Political Police collection show that the most important of these organizations were *Союз Верных* (*Soyuz Vernikh*, Union of Faithful), the previously mentioned *Русский Общевоинский Союз*, *Братство Русской Правды* (*Bratstvo Russkoj Pravdy*, Brotherhood of the Russian Truth, BRP), *Национально-Трудовой Союз Нового Поколения* (*Nacional'no-Trudovoj Sojuz Novogo Pokolenija*, National Labour Union of the New Generation, NTSNP/NTS) and others²².

As mentioned above, the documentation in the Political Police collection has a number of specific characteristics which need to be taken into account. For example, all Russian anti-Bolshevik organizations and people linked with them are deemed “Russian monarchists”. In fact, this definition is not objective, since an ideology of monarchism, aiming to restore monarchical power²³, was declared only by a few anti-Bolshevik organizations. Even during the Civil War, the White movement mainly adhered to the so-called “undefined” concept of the future Russian political system. Their general aim was the destruction of Bolshevik dictatorship, but the future Russian political system had to be defined by a popularly elected Constituent Assembly²⁴. Anti-Bolshevik organizations led by former White Army officers held to a similar ideology. It seems that the Political Police did not distinguish such particular characteristics, and thus all the organizations, groups and people who hated the Communists and dreamt of destroying the Soviet Union were automatically designated as “monarchists”. In fact, all the émigrés who left Russia due to the Red Terror were branded “monarchists”. It is interesting to note that former Russian émigrés, despite the stabilization of the Soviet system during the interwar period, generally maintained the hope of the fall of the Communist dictatorship.

As mentioned above, the Political Police collection is highly valuable as an additional source in the study of political processes taking place in interwar Latvia. Some of these were linked to the “Russian monarchist” issue and were accordingly reflected in the Political Police documentation.

The first of these was the international crisis between the Republic of Latvia and Soviet Russia in September — October 1920. After the peace treaty was concluded on 11 August 1920, the aim of Soviet diplomacy and the secret service was to prevent a possible alliance between Latvia and Poland²⁵. The Soviet side, in collaboration with

Latvian Social Democrats, tried to overthrow the Constitutional Assembly of Latvia²⁶ by imputing the fact of governmental support for the White Army recruiting bureau in Riga. Such an office did indeed exist in Riga, recruiting and sending soldiers to the Russian Army (Vrangel's army) fighting the Red Army in Crimea and Poland²⁷. But it was not supported by the Latvian government. In fact, the Latvian government was intending to expel the unemployed Russian military immigrants, who had mainly arrived in Latvia after the defeat of the North-Western Army in 1919²⁸. As is known, at that time the Russian Army was surrounded by the Red Army, at least five times outnumbering it, and its defeat was just a question of months²⁹. Furthermore, only around 300 soldiers and officers were recruited via the bureau in Riga, and surely they could not affect the result of the military campaign in Crimea and Poland.

The diplomatic mission of Soviet Russia, led by Yakub Ganecky, emphasized the great significance of economic ties between Latvia and Soviet Russia, which could be created if the Latvian government were to act as follows:

1) interrupt diplomatic communication with Poland concerning possible military alliance formation;

2) eliminate all the activities of the White Russian émigrés (which they likewise called "Russian monarchists"), followed by expulsion of activists hostile towards Soviet Russia;

3) ban those mass media that criticized the regime, diplomacy and politics of Soviet Russia and emphasized a hostile attitude towards the Soviets³⁰.

The escalation of the conflict was supported by *Latvijas Sociāldemokrātiskā strādnieku partija* (Latvian Social Democratic Workers Party, LSDSP), which cooperated with the embassy of Soviet Russia. This cooperation had two aims:

- 1) the resignation of General Pēteris Radziņš, head of the Latvian General Staff;
- 2) the fall of the Latvian government, initiated by the LSDSP.

As a result, Radziņš retired, but the government did not fall. Thus, interest from the Soviet embassy towards cooperation with the LSDSP drastically decreased. At that time, in November 1920, the Russian Army retreated, evacuating Crimea, and so the central point of the conflict disappeared³¹. With regard to the "Russian monarchists", some of the former White officers of the North-Western Army serving in Latvian Army³² were arrested and expelled on account of their strongly expressed monarchist views and suspicious contacts with the anti-Bolshevik organizations³³. The Political Department conducted several searches at the homes of other suspects, but it seems they were tipped off before the searches, and no evidence was found³⁴. As the Political Police was acting on the instructions of the Ministry of the Interior, the results of these activities indicate the conclusion that all of the processes involving arrest and deportation of "Russian monarchists" were being undertaken perfunctorily and demonstratively in order to relieve the conflict.

These activities with respect to the "Russian monarchist" issue are well documented and information is held in the archive of the Political Department. As regards the above-described political context, the documented information treats the activities of the Political Police in a quite subjective way, depicting the "monarchists" as people hostile towards the security of the state. Owing to the

Soviet regime's specific approach to geopolitics, this was, unfortunately, not the last episode of political tension between Latvia and Soviet Russia.

The next crisis relating to the "Russian monarchist" context occurred in 1932, during the process of extending the Latvian — USSR trading agreement. Latvia suffered badly during the Great Depression, and so extending the agreement was crucially important for the Latvian economy. This was appreciated by the Soviet government too, and it tried to achieve previously unfulfilled political tasks by blackmailing the Latvian side with suspension of the trading agreement³⁵. Extension of the agreement was halted and political claims advanced, some of them relating to the "Russian monarchist" issue. The Soviets claimed that the Latvians were allowing large-scale anti-Soviet activities by the "Russian monarchists" in Latvia, transgressing the conditions of the peace treaty³⁶. At that time the international community had been shocked by another event, which happened in France: the President of France Paul Doumer had been killed by an insane Russian émigré named Pavel Gorgulov. This event was described in the Soviet press as an international conspiracy by the Russian émigrés against the USSR. Being one of the countries where Russian émigrés lived, Latvia was mentioned as well. Such an assassination was a "godsend" for Soviet diplomacy, and one more reason to claim that Latvia was providing a refuge (or even one of the bases) for illegal White Russian terrorists targeting the USSR³⁷. Accordingly, an information and political campaign was conducted against Latvia, as a "den of the White Russian terrorists", supported by the local Social Democrats and the illegal Communist Party of Latvia. On 13 May 1932, an additional confidential memorandum describing anti-Bolshevik organizations and 20 people linked to them (mostly former White officers claimed to be "White terrorists") was sent by the Soviet embassy to the Ministry of the Interior of Latvia³⁸. It demanded that the leaders of the anti-Bolshevik movement be deported from the country, and that the corresponding organizations be banned. Besides this, the Soviets demanded that the Russian newspaper *Сегодня* (*Segodnya*, "Today") be closed down. *Segodnya* was not only the largest publishing house, with a newspaper of the same name, in Latvia; it was also a respectable, major newspaper in the general international Russian context³⁹. The newspaper voiced anti-Soviet views and had a large network of correspondents in all countries of Europe, as well as secret agents in the USSR. It widely reflected and analyzed all the processes taking place in the Soviet Union, providing mostly objective information, in contrast to official Soviet propaganda, which caused awkward situations for the Soviets in Europe. Despite its anti-Bolshevik attitude, *Segodnya* did not support monarchist ideology, and was an outspokenly democratic periodical. Nevertheless, the Soviet side called it chauvinistic, linking it to the press of the "Black Hundreds" movement⁴⁰.

To catalyze further activity on the part of the Latvian government (in accordance with the mentioned claims set out by the Soviet embassy), the Soviet side decided to blackmail the government by decreasing transit trade via Latvia. As a result, the Political Police arrested people linked with illegal organizations, searched their homes and banned the anti-Bolshevik organization *Bratstvo Russkoj Pravdy*⁴¹. Five people were deported from Latvia at the beginning of 1933, but were allowed to return five months later⁴². The arrests and prosecution did not affect the publishing

house or *Segodnya*, thus confirming the democratic basis of the Latvian state. As a result, the trading agreement with the USSR was not suspended.

In times of heightened international tension, as described above, the Latvian Political Police Department gave greater attention to monitoring Russian organizations, especially those in which Russian émigrés participated. In the frame of its investigations, the Political Department emphasized how it was giving attention to different aspects of expressions relating to the “Russian monarchist” context, conducting its activities on a much larger scale than simply interrogation and information-gathering on specific individuals or groups linked to the “monarchist” issue. Agents of the Latvian Political Police Department analyzed the situation in comparison with manifestations of Russian monarchist activity in Europe, where such organizations were acting legally. The agents of the Political Department analyzed the newspapers published in Paris, Berlin and other “capitals” of Foreign Russia, focusing attention on gatherings of the political émigrés, such as congresses of the Russian monarchists held in Bad Reichenhall (where representatives from Latvia participated as well) and other such activities⁴³. Thus, the documentation of the Political Department archive reflects not just the characteristics of the political situation in Latvia, but also international political manifestations on various scales by the Russian émigrés during the interwar period. There is no doubt this is reflected in a quite subjective way, adjusting information to the needs of the particular issue or the political context. For example, such is the depiction of the well-known newspaper *Слово* (*Slovo*, “The Word”) — described as a newspaper of the “monarchist émigrés”. In the agents’ reports, its monarchist context is asserted by citing the fact that the newspaper publicized the political programme of General Vrangel, carried a major obituary after his death in 1928 and called for fund-raising in Latvia for a monument to the general in Belgrade. In fact, the initiators of the international fund-raising effort were the Russian émigré organizations in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, and *Slovo* was simply responding to the call, joining the initiative locally⁴⁴. Despite the described subjectivity, it should be noted that in the same report the agent underlines that the newspaper is loyal towards the Latvian state, which, in his opinion, is something quite unusual for the monarchist press⁴⁵. According to analysis conducted by present-day researchers, *Slovo* was an apolitical newspaper, never declared itself as an émigré publication and was loyal to the Latvian state, respecting its values⁴⁶.

As mentioned above, the “Russian monarchist” issue was one of the topical questions during the 1920s and 1930s, constantly monitored by the Latvian Political Police Department. In fact, the Political Department was well informed about large-scale activities of this kind. The Political Police monitored all the international activities potentially linked with local anti-Bolsheviks, such as political programs of the Russian Monarchist Party in France⁴⁷, cases regarding the appearance of Russian fascists from Latvia in the United Kingdom⁴⁸, the postal correspondence between local and international anti-Bolsheviks (depicting the situation of Latvian statehood through the prism of Russian chauvinism or even that of the “Black Hundreds”)⁴⁹, as well as reports reflecting the “Russian monarchist” situation⁵⁰. Naturally, all the

materials concerning the activities of notable anti-Bolshevik organizations were documented in detail as well⁵¹.

Despite the emphasized focus of attention on the “Russian monarchists”, it was incomparably less intensive than the activities of monitoring and prevention of harmful actions by the communists and related movements, as proven by the quantity of the files regarding the two issues. The regular reports by the chief of the Political Police Pēteris Martinsons to the Minister of the Interior prove this fact as well. These reports depicting the situation were compiled several times a month, mainly concerning the activities of the communists, social democrats, trade unions and ethnic minorities. The situation regarding Russian anti-Bolshevik activities (referred to as adherents of “The Mighty and Indivisible”) is described in the section on ethnic minorities, taking up only about 5% of the total length of the reports⁵². This leads to the conclusion that the Latvian Political Police Department was aware how low the potential hostility of the anti-Bolsheviks towards the Latvian state really was, despite the officially declared position depicting these activities as “harmful to state security”.

After the coup d'état staged by Kārlis Ulmanis in 1934, there were major changes in almost all segments of Latvian political, economic, cultural and social life. All political parties, organizations and the press linked with them were banned. Reforms affected not only political but also social, sporting, cultural and religious organizations, many of which were banned. The new regime and its national policy affected Latvia's major ethnic minorities, such as the Russians, Jews, Germans, Poles, Belarusians and others. In the context of the Russian organizations, before 1934 about 150 registered organizations were active in Latvia⁵³, whereas by the beginning of the 1940 only 58 organizations were left⁵⁴.

These processes (of monitoring, closure, liquidation, etc.) were carried out by the Latvian Political Police Department, as described in its documentation. There is no doubt this was the peak period of the Political Police's activities since the time it was founded. Regarding the “Russian monarchist” issue, its significance was transformed and interpreted in a different way, especially in comparison with the period of parliamentary rule, when it had been monitored by the Political Department in order to prevent anti-Bolshevik activities by these organizations impinging on the provisions of the peace treaty. After 15 May 1934, “Russian monarchism” was sometimes utilized as a pretext to ban organizations considered undesirable by the government.

A vivid example of such actions was the process lead to the banning of the organization *Русское студенческое православное единение* (Russian Orthodox Student Union, RSPE). The RSPE was a branch of the international *Русское студенческое христианское движение* (Russian Christian Student Christian Movement, RSHD), led by Russian academic and intellectual émigrés. This was an absolutely apolitical movement, a cultural and religious-educational organization, active in education of the Russian youth based on Orthodox Christian teaching⁵⁵. Loyal to the traditions of the Orthodox Church, they felt and believed in a kind of responsibility to change the materialistic and increasingly atheistic attitude of the Russian youth in exile. In such way the movement supplemented the mission of Foreign Russia

by upholding the Russian identity, roots, traditions and spiritual aspects (such as Orthodox Church teachings) and passing this heritage to the Russian youth for the future resurrection of the homeland, after the collapse of the Soviet regime⁵⁶. The movement grew out of a student discussion group in Berlin in 1921, which was followed by other discussion groups in Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria and Serbia. Thus, in 1923 representatives of these groups came together and decided to found such a movement, which grew rapidly. In the 1930s the movement was operating through more than thirty organizations in Europe. The largest center was in Paris⁵⁷.

Many outstanding Russian intellectuals, philosophers, historians, priests, writers and academics participated in RSHD, such as Semyon Frank, Ivan Ilyin, Nikolay Afanasyev, Dmitry Merezhkovsky, Sergiy Bulgakov, nun Marija (Skobcova) (also known as Mother Maria), Lev Zander, Lev Liperovsky, Nikolay Zernov and many others. Some of them often visited Latvia as speakers in public lectures, conferences and educational meetings, arranged by RSPE in the cities with a large Russian population. Naturally, as typically representatives of Foreign Russia, who had lost everything in the flames and cruelty of the Civil War, they manifested an implacable attitude towards the Soviets, especially regarding their politics of atheism and the Red Terror. The RSPE was banned on 8 November 1934. A search conducted by the Latvian Political Police Department took place in their headquarters in Riga, and several dozen participants were arrested⁵⁸. The official accusations were: "activities harmful to state security", "Russification", and "monarchism"⁵⁹. An additional accusation was suspected involvement of the participants in the murder of Jānis (Pommers), Archbishop of the Latvian Orthodox Church. According to the memoirs of people who had been arrested, the preposterous context of these accusations was indirectly proved by the police officers, who obliquely admitted it during the interrogations⁶⁰. It seems the main reason for the ban was the international character of the organization and its uncontrollable connection with the center abroad, led by the Russian émigrés, which was undesirable for the government⁶¹.

During the second half of the 1930s, in accordance with the national policy of the political regime, besides the above-mentioned political, social, cultural and other manifestations, the Political Police institution supervised all ethnic minorities, carrying out regular monitoring of their political character. In the case of the Russian minority, the work was carried out solely by the agent Vladimir Korti⁶², who was undoubtedly very competent in this task and seems to have had a wide range of contacts and agents in the groups where secret monitoring was carried out. Accordingly, Korti undertook extensive monitoring of different organizations, such as the *Sokol* movement organizations, Russian student corps (fraternities), Russian cultural organizations, organizations of the Russian military veterans (as he had served in the North-Western Russian Army during the Civil War and was well-known in this community) and others, focusing attention on the illegal manifestations of the "Russian monarchists"⁶³. The agent provided detailed reports, depicting the situation of Russian society in Latvia and in the international context as well⁶⁴. His reports reflect the diverse social and political moods of the Russian ethnic minority as well as the character of the "Russian monarchist" issue. Despite the highly politicized nature of institutional activity under the regime of Kārlis Ulmanis, Korti's reports are

very useful and quite objective, which is proven by comparing them with alternatives sources.

As regards the general trend in reports by other agents, they are rather subjective and often contain personal opinions. For this reason they should be carefully filtered by critical analysis, considering such issues as: the position of the agent, their experience, education, personal political views and preferences, relationships with superiors, career ambitions, etc.

An additional valuable source in the documentation of the Latvian Political Police Department is the card catalogue stored in the Latvian State Historical Archives. This record was created for the internal needs of the Political Police, indicating the main data and significant biographical events of particular individuals who had aroused the "interest" of the institution for some reason. The content of this collection could be useful as a valuable supplementary source of information in conjunction with other documentation in the archive.

Conclusions. On account of their political and international context, anti-Bolshevik organizations in Latvia sometimes became an object of political negotiations between the governments of Latvia and Soviet Russia, later the USSR. Analysis of the Political Department Collection indicates that the Political Police were excellently informed about the activities of the Russian anti-Bolshevik movement in Latvia and were able to interrupt them immediately. Moreover, it seems that they appreciated the rather low potential of the organizations, mainly due to financial aspects and other internal problems. Accordingly, the institution did not take steps to ban all the organizations and the people involved in them, and took radical action only in situations of heightened international tension, or when pressed by the Ministry of the Interior. With regard to other issues, such as the activities of the illegal Communist Party of Latvia and related groups, the Political Police acted much more vigorously, realizing their potential and the force behind them.

A special attitude towards the "Russian monarchists" could be explained by the fact that the Intelligence Service and the Political Department were cooperating with these organizations, covering for them, and arranging the transfer of documents and safe illegal passage across the border with the Soviet Union. For their part, anti-Bolsheviks provided necessary information for the state security institutions. Except for the distinctive features mentioned above, the Political Department had the typical characteristics of a governmental institution, attracting the attention of the Ministry of the Interior by a high level of activity when there was a need to display it. Sometimes, such searching and elimination of "enemies of the state" reached a preposterous level, affecting absolutely apolitical organizations and movements.

Since it provides an impressive amount of documentation, reflecting a wide range of social and political activities in interwar Latvian society, the Political Department collection is a highly valuable historical source, useful for relevant studies in Latvian, Baltic and European history. Despite this, the information is often quite subjective, with many specific characteristics. In the context of the Russian anti-Bolshevik movement, a number of such characteristics need to be taken into account, such as: the meaning of "Russian monarchists" in the interpretations of the Political Police Department, the internal and international political context, the

discourse on the international Russian émigré community, the subjectivity of the agents' reports and the highly politicized nature of institutional activity under the regime of Kārlis Ulmanis. Regarding the mentioned factors, a careful examination and critical analysis is required, based on comparing appropriate sources from the specific period of time.

In general the documentation of the Political Department plays an important role in studies of the Russian minority, reflecting its activities from the special perspective of the security agency. In order to avoid the subjectivity introduced due to pressure on the Political Department from the Ministry of the Interior, as well as due to other aspects, this information needs to be analyzed by critical methods, comparing it against other sources or studies regarding the particular political processes concerned.

¹ Zhuravlev S. V. *Sudebno-sledstvennaia i tiuremno-lagernaia dokumentatsiia. Istochnikovedenie noveishei istorii Rossii. Teoriia, metodologīia i praktika* (Moscow, 2004), pp.199–200.

² Niedre O., Feldmanis I., Zālīte I., Bergmanis A., Ābola Z. *Latvijas izlūkdienesti 1919–1940. 664 likteņi*. (Rīga, 2001), 8–9. lpp.

³ Stranga A. *Latvijas — padomju Krievijas miera līgums 1920. gada 11. augustā. Latvijas — padomju Krievijas attiecības 1919–1925. gadā* (Rīga, 2000), 83. lpp.

⁴ Jānis Frīdrihs Valentīns Frīdrihsons (*Skrauja*) (07.09.1892–11.08.1941). Director of the Latvian Political Police Department from 2 April 1934. Supported and actively participated in the coup d'état staged by Kārlis Ulmanis on 15 May 1934. In 1939, in the national context of the K. Ulmanis regime, changed his surname to Skrauja. On 22 June 1940 dismissed by the Soviet occupation forces. Arrested on 21 September 1940. During interrogation by the NKVD provided a large volume of secret information concerning the activities of the Political Department. Died in Astrakhan prison in 1941. See: Frīdrihsons Jānis Frīdrihs Valentīns. Available at: <https://www.letonika.lv/groups/default.aspx?r=89&q=Latvija&id=1367422&g=1> (accessed: 15.06.2018).

⁵ Butulis I., Feldmanis I., Jēkabsons Ē., Lipša I., Stranga A., Taurēns J., Zunda A. *15. Maija Latvija* (Rīga, 2017), 236. lpp.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Feigmane T. *Russkie v dovoennoi Latvii* (Rīga, 2000), pp. 3–7.

⁸ Salnītis V. *Ceturtdā Tautas Skaitīšana Latvijā* (Rīga, 1935), 292. lpp.

⁹ Bocharova Z. S. *Rossiiskoe zarubezh'e 1920–1930-kh gg. kak fenomen otechestvennoi istorii. Uchebnoe posobie* (Moscow, 2011), p. 57.

¹⁰ Raev M. *Rossia za rubezhom: Istoriia kul'tury russkoi emigratsii. 1919–1939* (Moscow, 1994), p. 28.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Basik I. I., Avdeev V. A., Alekseev Iu. A., Zhadobin A. T., Zdanovich A. A., Karpov V. N., Markovchin V. V., Muranov V. I. *Russian military emigration of 1920s–1940s*, vol. 4: *At the origins of "Russkiy obshhevoinskiy souz" 1924* (Moscow, 2007), p. 8–9.

¹³ Ibid., p. 9–10.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 5.

¹⁵ Salnītis V. *Ceturtdā tautas skaitīšana. Marģera Skujnieka redakcijā* (Rīga, 1936), 31. lpp.

¹⁶ Nansen passports — stateless people's passports issued to stateless refugees by the League of Nations, recognized internationally from 1922 until 1938. They became known as "Nansen passports" after the originator, politician and polar explorer Fridtjof Nansen. Nansen passport owners were allowed to work legally in most European countries. In the context of Russian émigrés, Nansen passports became vitally important after the declaration of the government of Soviet Russia in 1921, which revoked citizenship for all Russian émigrés.

¹⁷ Latvijas Valsts vēstures arhīvs (Latvian State Historical Archives, LVVA), 3235 f., 1/22. a, 687. l., 19. lp.

¹⁸ Salnītis V. *Ceturtais tautas skaitīšana*.

¹⁹ Under the Law on Citizenship, Latvian citizenship could be obtained by people born in Latvia (or whose family had lived in Latvia until 1914), or who had lived in Latvia for five years since 1919. See: Gavrilin A. V. 'Russian emigrants in interwar Latvia: legal status and attempts at self-organization', *Rossii i Latvii v potoke istorii. 2-i poloviny XIX — 1-i poloviny XX v. Sbornik statei* (Moscow, 2015).

²⁰ Foreign Russia (also known as "Russia abroad" or "Russia out of Russia"). As the result of the Bolshevik coup d'état and due to the class struggle ideology of Bolshevism, there was a huge wave of emigration by Russian intelligentsia (intellectuals, aristocracy, physicians, academics, students, entrepreneurs, clergy, army and naval officers, etc.), soon settling worldwide. In terms of its social, intellectual and cultural manifestations, this kind of emigration was unique, never having been experienced before. The Russian émigré community (its active cultural and intellectual section) defined the mission of upholding and developing Russian culture abroad for re-export to the motherland after the collapse of Bolshevism. Against all odds, extensive cultural, educational (primary, secondary and higher education) and other activities took place worldwide, in countries where large groups of Russian emigrants had settled. During the interwar period a large global cultural phenomenon took place, referred to as Foreign Russia. As the largest Russian community lived in France, Paris was the "capital" of Foreign Russia. Nevertheless, manifestations of the phenomenon were also seen in other countries where a large Russian community lived, including Latvia. See: Huntington W. C. *The Homesick Million. Russia out of Russia* (Boston, 1930).

²¹ Section IV, Article 2 of the peace treaty prohibited the organization and activity of any groups and organizations aiming to overthrow the government of the other party to the treaty. Miera līgums starp Latviju un Krieviju. Available at: <http://www.mfa.gov.lv/stpetersburg/sadarbiba-ar-krievijas-federaciju/miera-ligums-starp-latviju-un-krieviju> (accessed: 27.06.2018).

²² LVVA, 3235 f., 1/22., 104. lp.

²³ *Latviešu konversācijas vārdnīca XIV* (Rīga, 1936), 27650. vārds, 865. lpp.

²⁴ See: Basik I. I. et al. *Russian military emigration of 1920s–1940s*, vol. 4.

²⁵ Stranga A. *Latvijas — padomju Krievijas miera līgums 1920. gada 11. augustā*. 84. lpp.

²⁶ The Constitutional Assembly of Latvia was popularly elected on 1 May 1920 and ruled the Republic of Latvia until 7 November 1922, when the First Saeima (parliament of Latvia) was elected.

²⁷ Stranga A. *Latvijas — padomju Krievijas miera līgums 1920. gada 11. augustā*. 84. lpp.

²⁸ Ibid. 86. lpp.

²⁹ Tsvetkov V. Zh. 'General-leitenant baron P. N. Vrangel', *Beloe dvizhenie*, vol. 1 (Moscow, 2017), pp. 669–670.

³⁰ Stranga A. *Latvijas — padomju Krievijas miera līgums 1920. gada 11. augustā*. 85. lpp.

³¹ Ibid. 87–89. lpp.

³² General Boris Malyavin, General Piotr Shnabel, General Potapov, Colonel Aleksey Danilov, Colonel Andrey Schurovsky, Lieutenant Colonel Vasily Sergeev. LVVA, 3235 f., 1/4 a., 2. l., 28., 30., 31., 41. lp.

³³ Stranga A. *Latvijas — padomju Krievijas miera līgums 1920. gada 11. augustā*. 87–89. lpp.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Stranga A. 'Torgovlia, politika, otnosheniia Latvii s SSSR v 1932 godu i gazeta Segodnia', *Stanford Slavic Studies. Sbornik statei*, ed. I. Belobrovtssev (Stanford, 2012), p. 228.

³⁶ It is interesting to note that during the 1920s and 30s the Communist Party of Latvia acted legally in USSR, published a legal newspaper *Komunāru Cīņa* ("Communist Struggle") and was financially supported by the Soviet government.

³⁷ Stranga A. 'Torgovlia, politika, otnosheniia Latvii s SSSR v 1932 godu i gazeta Segodnia', p. 231.

³⁸ LVVA, 3235 f., 1/22 a., 687. l., 2–5. lp.

³⁹ Abyzov Yu. *20 let russkoi nezavisimoi Latvii*. Available at: <http://www.russkije.lv/ru/pub/read/rus-in-latvia-edition2/abizov-rus-latvii-2.html> (accessed: 27.06.2018).

⁴⁰ It is curious to note that the owners and editors of *Segodnya*, and some of the journalists were Jews; thus, claims depicting the newspaper as "Black Hundred" press were ridiculous.

⁴¹ *Братство Русской Правды (Brotherhood of the Russian Truth)* — an international anti-Bolshevik organization. Founded in 1921 in Berlin. In Latvia it was directed by Anatoly Liven. Its main objectives were anti-Bolshevik terrorist activity and propaganda in the USSR.

⁴² LVVA, 3235 f., 1/1 a., 411. l. 25–30. lp.

⁴³ LVVA, 3235 f., 1/22 a., 104. l. 19–20., 51–54. lp.

⁴⁴ LVVA, 3235 f., 1/22 a., 687/1. l. 19–20. lp.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Russkie v Latvii. Istorii i sovremennost'*, iss 2. 20 let russkoi pečati v nezavisimoi Latvii. Available at: <http://www.russkije.lv/ru/pub/read/rus-in-latvia-edition2/abizov-rus-latvii-2.html> (accessed: 27.06.2018).

⁴⁷ LVVA, 3235., 1/22 a., 687/1. l. 23–33. lp.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* 119 lp.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* 51–52. lp.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* 53–56. lp.

⁵¹ See: Братство Русской Правды: LVVA, 3235 f., 1/1 a., 411. l.; LVVA, 3235 f., 1/22 a., 687/1. l.; Союз Верных: LVVA, 3235 f., 2 a., 1954. l.; Братья Фехнер: LVVA, 3235 f., 1/22 a., 687. l.; НТЧП: *Ibid.*; “Союз Младоросов”: *Ibid.*

⁵² See: LVVA 3235 f., 1/2 a., 896. l., 22–31, 31–33, 41–43. lp and other material in this file.

⁵³ Gavrilin A. V. ‘Russkie emigranty v mezhoennoi Latvii: pravovoi status i popytki samoorganizatsii’, *Rossia i Latvii v potoke istorii. 2-i poloviny XIX — 1-i poloviny XX v. Sbornik statei* (Moscow, 2015), p.250.

⁵⁴ Feigmane T. *Russkie v dovoennoi Latvii*, p.175.

⁵⁵ Huntington W. C. *The Homesick Million. Russia out of Russia* (Boston, 1930), pp. 146–147.

⁵⁶ In other words, its aim was “The Struggle for the Soul of Russian Youth”, as in the title of a leaflet issued by the organization.

⁵⁷ Huntington W. C. *The Homesick Million. Russia out of Russia*, pp.147–148.

⁵⁸ Pliukhanov B. V. *RSKhd v Estonii i Latvii* (Paris, 1993), pp.202, 207.

⁵⁹ LVVA, 3235 f., 1/22 a., 687/1. l., 327. lp.

⁶⁰ Pliukhanov B. V. *RSKhd v Estonii i Latvii*, pp.202, 208.

⁶¹ LVVA, 3235 f., 1/22 a., 687/1. l., 328–330. lp.

⁶² *Vladmir Korti* (02.03.1900–11.02.1942). Born in Riga, raised in the family of Russian teacher and private school owner Alexander Korti. At the beginning of 1919, when the Red Army invaded Latvia, he served in its ranks. After the defeat of Red Army, he was captured by the squad of Anatoly Liven. From June to November 1919 he served in the squad of Anatoly Liven in the North-Western Army. After the defeat of the North-Western Army he came to Latvia and worked as a teacher in Daugavpils. Participated in the illegal Belarusian organization *Bat'kovshina* and arrested by the Political Police in 1924. Acquitted in 1925. According to information from NKVD interrogations, in 1925 Korti worked for the Polish intelligence service. In 1926–1927 he served in the Latvian Army. In 1930 took up work in the editorial office of the newspaper *Segodnya*. From 1930 until 1932 he worked for the intelligence service of the USSR, which discontinued cooperation with him due to the false and provocative information he was providing about the Russian anti-Bolsheviks. In 1933–1940 he worked for the Latvian Political Police Department as an agent monitoring the Russian and Belarusian ethnic minorities and anti-Bolsheviks, and was chief referent of the Russian and Belarusian periodicals. Arrested on 7 September 1940. Sentenced to death and shot on 11 February 1942 in Soviet Union. See: LVA, 1986. f., 1. apr., 36628. l.

⁶³ *Ibid.* 153, 191, 226, 270, 271, 290, 291, 298, 443. lp.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.* 446–448. lp.

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Abstract: The article briefly presents the activities of Russian anti-Bolshevik organizations in 1920–1940 as reflected in the documentation of the Latvian Political Police Department (Latvian State Historical Archive, Collection 3235). Because of the sizeable Russian ethnic minority and White émigré community (those who settled in Latvia after the Russian Revolution and the ensuing Civil War), a significant anti-Bolshevik movement existed in the Republic of Latvia during the interwar period. In most cases, these organizations were branches of the international anti-Bolshevik movement, led by former officers of the Russian Imperial Army, who had fought against the Bolsheviks during the Civil War. The organizations had different programs and political views, but were united by their main aim: the destruction of the Bolshevik dictatorship and the recovery of Russia. Despite the European character of the Republic of Latvia, these organizations operated in a different way compared to branches in other European countries. In documentation of the Latvian Political Police Department, anti-Bolshevik organizations were viewed and interpreted in a special (often quite subjective) way, due to several local characteristics. These peculiar properties (which need to be taken into account to achieve objectivity) are also examined in the article.

Keywords: Latvian political police department, interwar Latvia, anti-bolshevik organizations, monarchism, White movement.

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