Map of the election districts of the Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic for the elections of the Union Council and the Council of Nationalities, 1940. National Library of Latvia, Riga, map collection, ref. no. KtL2-1-17

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HOW SOVIET "LEGITIMACY" WAS MADE: 1940 "ELECTIONS" IN OCCUPIED LATVIA

Abstract
The Soviet occupation of Latvia in 1940 was "legitimized" by "People's Saeima" which was "elected" on July 14–15, 1940. A significant role in these "elections" was carried out by The Communist Party of Latvia, which at that time was a branch of Comintern and therefore acted as a Soviet agency in Latvia. Some two dozens of candidates for MP of the "Working People's Bloc" (which was openly backed by USSR officials) were at the same time members of various electoral commissions. "People's Government", which was appointed after the occupation of Latvia, Central Election Commission, local communists and their supporters were just executors in these "elections". The real "master of puppets" who supervised whole process was Deputy Chairman of the Soviet government Andrey Vyshinsky and some other Soviet officials. These "elections" had nothing to do with elections in the common, democratic sense of that word. In fact, it was an affair of misleading, intimidation and fraud on a large scale. These events had grave consequences for Latvia – the loss of independence and establishment of extremely repressive regime in all three Baltic states.

Keywords: 1940, Communist Party, "elections", Latvia, occupation, Soviet Union, "Working People's Bloc"

In June 2020, on the internet there appeared an article "The Real Lessons of the 75th Anniversary of World War II", compiled by the Russian President Vladimir Putin. Among other World War II issues raised in this article, there is a fairly misleading passage regarding the Baltic States:

> "The accession [of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia] to the USSR was implemented on a contractual basis, with the consent of the elected authorities. This was in line with the international and state law of that time" (Putin 2020).

As such a things are authorized by the sitting President of state, it is clear that these are not just some abstract reflections on historical events, but such interpretation is a part of the state policy. So it makes sense to have a closer look on what happened back there in the summer of 1940, and how it is relevant to the cited quotation above.

First of all, we have to remember that a trigger for all political changes in the Baltic States in 1940 was the Treaty of Non-Aggression between Germany and the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics with its secret protocols, signed on August 23, 1939 (the so-called "Molotov – Ribbentrop Pact"). A direct consequence of this treaty was the German aggression and, 17 days later, also the Soviet Union's aggression against Poland. As Poland's military resistance was crushed by the end of September 1939, the German-Soviet Boundary and Friendship Treaty was signed on September 28, 1939. According to both treaties, the Baltic States were included in the Soviet Union's "sphere of interests" without any consent from Estonian, Latvian or Lithuanian authorities.

At the same time, in late September – October 1939, the Soviet Union had launched its diplomatic pressure on the Baltic States in order to establish the Red Army and naval military bases in the territories of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. As the Soviet leadership backed its demands for these bases to the Baltic officials with intimidations of immediate military aggression, the governments of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania agreed to the Soviet ultimatum. In effect, on September 28, October 5 and October 10, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, respectively, signed mutual assistance treaties with the Soviet Union. Soon after that, the Soviet military bases were established in all three Baltic States. (Bleiere, Butulis, Feldmanis, Stranga and Zunda 2008, 111–131).

In fact, the installation of these Soviet military bases was a prelude to the occupation of the Baltic States. All three Baltic States declared their neutrality in 1938. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were fairly small

countries in comparison to Germany or the USSR. Even authoritarian regimes, which were by that time established in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, were pretty "soft" in their ideological and political consequences as compared to the hateful ideologies and bloody practices of the communist or national-socialist regimes in the USSR or Germany, respectively. Thus, none of the Baltic States, separately or together, provided any significant threat for Germany or the Soviet Union. There was not any real and non-aggressive necessity for the Soviet military bases in the Baltic countries. In any case, all these mutual assistance treaties included articles that sovereignty of the parties shall not be affected by these treaties. Therefore, occupation of the Baltic States in June 1940, was a direct violation of these mutual assistance treaties by the Soviet Union. Regarding the international law of that time, the Latvian lawyer, Veronika Sajadova, several years ago, made a comprehensive expertise and analysis of the principles of international law, international treaties (especially those between Latvia and the USSR) and other related issues in her doctoral thesis which has been published recently. It is impossible to summarize the whole content of a book within several pages. Therefore, only the main conclusions are given below:

Kārlis Ulmanis (1877–1942), Latvian Prime Minister (1918–1921, 1925–1926, 1931, 1934–1940), and president of Latvia (1936–1940), exiled and imprisoned in the Soviet Union (1940–1942), died in prison in Krasnovodsk (Soviet Turkmenistan). National Digital Archives, Warsaw, Poland, collection Koncern Ilustrowany Kurier Codzienny – Archiwum Ilustracji, ref. no. 3/1/0/17/9631

> "[when] occupying and annexing Latvia, the USSR acted in conflict with its own and Latvian municipal law, international law and the general principles of law, namely either it did not meet its requirements, or fulfilled them contrary to the principle of good faith. At the same time it has been proved that the occupation of Latvia by the USSR shall be qualified as illegal because it was contrary to international law." (Sajadova 2016, 122–123, 315–317, 326).

In short, it had nothing to do with the "line with international and national law of that time".

However, as legal aspects are basically the scope of lawyers, historical events and consequences ensuing from them make it also possible for us to draw some conclusions on the legality of these events. Thus, from the historical point of view, it is much more interesting to pay attention to how this "consent of the elected authorities" in the "accession" of Baltic states to the USSR. In this article I'm going to

Andrey Vyshinski, attending the UN session (1946–1948). National Digital Archives, Warsaw, Poland, collection Socjalistyczna Agencja Prasowa, ref. no. 3/3/0/1/209

describe some of these events in Latvia, but similar processes also took place in Estonia and Lithuania, in the summer of 1940.

Three days after the Red Army's invasion in Latvia, a new government was formed on June 20, 1940. Later, in the communist propaganda it was labelled as the "People's Government". Formally, this "People's Government" was approved by the sitting President of Latvia Kārlis Ulmanis but, in fact, it was approved by Deputy Chairman of the Soviet government Andrey Vyshinsky, who was sent to Latvia by Stalin in order to supervise Latvia's occupation and incorporation into the Soviet Union. Here is a description of Ulmanis and Vishinsky's roles in formation of the "People's Government", written by the former Latvian social-democrat Klāvs Lorencs, who had close ties with the Communist Party of Latvia in 1940, and who had some knowledge on how things had developed that summer:

> "When Vyshinsky visited Ulmanis with a list of new Cabinet members, Ulmanis cowardly asked if he can introduce any corrections to the Cabinet staff, Vyshinsky had replied, that it was impossible, because it had already been agreed upon with Moscow." (Lorencs 2005, 321).

In other words, the "People's Government" itself did not represent the will of the Latvian people, but the will of the foreign country's – Soviet Union's leadership. Incidentally, Lorencs was a very harsh critic of Ulmanis regime, so he had no motivation to describe Ulmanis in more favourable light than necessary.

The key event to "legalize" the occupation of Latvia were the "elections" held simultaneously in all three Baltic States, on July 14–15, 1940. Officially, the decision on the "elections" in Latvia was made by the "People's Government" on July 4, 1940 (*Latvijas okupācija un aneksija* 1995, 436–437).

Obviously, the "People's Government's" decision on the "elections" was made just after the instructions from Moscow. Published records on the visitors of the Stalin's office in the Kremlin reveal that on June 28, 1940, Stalin's office, along with other members of the top Soviet leadership (Beria, Bulganin, Kaganovich, Molotov, and others), was attended by Zhdanov (he supervised the occupation of Estonia), Dekanozov (he supervised the occupation of Lithuania) and Vyshinsky

(*Posetiteli* 1996, 21). As all these three Soviet officials (Dekanozov, Vyshinsky and Zhdanov) had spent most of the summer of 1940 in their respective Baltic States, and June 28 is the only date of that summer when all three of them simultaneously visited Stalin, it is clear that this meeting in the Kremlin was made in order to discuss some very important issues regarding the Baltic States. The preparations for these "elections" in the Baltic States had started soon after the three officials returned to Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Therefore, it is highly likely that the real decision on the "elections" was made exactly on June 28, 1940, and the "People's Government's" actions regarding these "elections" was just the implementation of a plan approved at this meeting.

The "People's Government" in Latvia was not a puppet just for the Soviet government. It rapidly became a puppet also for the local Communist Party's leadership. From the documents we know that the organization of elections was discussed by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Latvia (CPL) already on July 2, 1940, i.e. at least two days before that same issue was discussed in the "People's Government" (*Latvijas okupācija un aneksija* 1995, 427). Moreover, if the "People's Government" on July 4 made a decision to hold the elections and adopted a new Act on Saeima Elections (Likums 1940), as well as appointed the Central Election Commission, then leadership of the CPL on that very same day already decided that it was necessary to form a "Working People's Bloc" as the only candidates' list to be allowed for the elections (*Latvijas okupācija un aneksija* 1995, 436–441). Hence, we can pinpoint a crucial fact: the decision on the "elections" was not even made public yet, but the local communist leadership had already decided that there would be no alternative lists in these "elections".

It should be noted that in 1920s – 1930s the Communist Party of Latvia could not be considered as a political party in the common sense of that term. At that time, the CPL was a branch of the Comintern and CPL activities were completely dependent on Moscow. Comintern supplied the Communist Party of Latvia with money, coordinated and directed its activities. Moreover, some of the CPL leaders (Jānis Kalnbērziņš, Žanis Spure, and others) were the citizens of the Soviet Union, so they were not even Latvian citizens (Gore, Stranga 1992, 202–205). In fact, the Communist Party of Latvia fulfilled the functions of the USSR agency in Latvia.

As mentioned above, on July 4, 1940, the "People's Government" appointed the Central Election Commission and the next day these news was published in newspapers. The press release names

8 persons appointed as members of the Central Election Commission representing various state institutions, trade unions, and just two of them were members of the Communist Party of Latvia – one was the former social-democrat Ansis Buševics, another was Arnolds Deglavs (a few days later he was replaced by another communist – Kārlis Gailis) (see *Centrālās vēlēšanu komisijas sastāvs*; *Iecelta Centrālā vēlēšanu komisija*). What was not published in these newspapers: the "representatives of trade unions", Kārlis Šics and Jēkabs Vecvagars, both were virtually the members of the Communist Party (see Communist Party files on Šics and Vecvagars). Moreover, Oskars Gulbis (head of Propaganda Division of the Ministry of Social Affairs) and Ansis Leja (director of the Municipal Department of the Ministry of Interior), who officially represented state institutions (both was appointed to their respective positions by the "People's Government"), were the activists of a "leftist" and "revolutionary" organizations and had close ties with the Communist Party (see the Communist Party and Comintern files on Gulbis and Leja). As a result, as we can see, the Central Election Commission from the very beginning was controlled by people loyal to the Soviet Union. Just two members of the Central Election Commission were neutral in reality – the representative of the Ministry of Justice, Aleksandrs Menģelsons, and the representative of the Central Statistics Office, Aleksandrs Maldups. Both were arrested in June 1941 and deported to Siberia … (see NKVD files on Menģelsons and on Maldups).

A number of communists were also appointed to the critical positions of the electoral commissions of regions and districts. There were several levels of electoral commissions in 1940 in Latvia. The primary level was the election commission for each poll. The next level up was the election commission of the district (each district had its own electoral commission). For elections Latvia was divided in 5 electoral regions (Rīga, Kurzeme, Latgale, Vidzeme and Zemgale). Each region consisted of several districts and had its own electoral commission. On the top there was the Central Election Commission which was responsible for elections in all of Latvia's territory and it approved final results of elections. In 1940, the heads of all five regional electoral commissions (Arvīds Kalniņš, Roberts Neilands, Kārlis Plāters, Pēteris Plēsums and Jānis Pupurs), as well as some other members of these commissions, were communists and Comintern agents in Latvia (for example, see the Communist Party and Comintern files on Kalniņš, Neilands, Plāters, Plēsums and Pupurs). A similar situation situation was also in the electoral commissions of districts.

Yet another fact is even more characteristic for the "elections" of 1940. Four members of the Central Election Commission themselves were MP candidates of the "Latvian Working People's Bloc" in these "elections" – the chairman of the commission, Ansis Buševics, the secretary of the commission, Arnolds Deglavs (on July 9 he was replaced by another communist Kārlis Gailis), as well as the above-mentioned Kārlis Šics and Ansis Leja. Chairs of all five regional electoral commissions as well as some other members of various local electoral commissions were also MP candidates of the "Latvian Working People's Bloc". All of them were members of the CPL or the so-called "revolutionary" organizations. All in all, at least 24 out of 100 (i.e., nearly quarter) MP candidates of the "Latvian Working People's Bloc" were at the same time members of various electoral commissions.

But even this was not whole story. It is known that some members of the "People's Government" (Pēteris Blaus, general Roberts Dambītis, Vilis Lācis and Vikentijs Latkovskis) as well as the newly appointed Latvian Army Commander, general Roberts Kļaviņš, all of whom were MP candidates of the "Latvian Working People's Bloc", had ties with the Soviet secret services (Bleiere, Butulis, Feldmanis, Stranga and Zunda 2008, 127, 185-186, 197; see also NKVD file on agent "Smeliy" 1940).

These people themselves had organized the "elections", they were MP candidates in these "elections", they declared "invalid" all alternative lists of candidates, and did not approve them for the "elections", they supervised vote counting, they became MPs in the so-called "People's Saeima" (this label was used by the communist propaganda for "parliament" which was "elected" in 1940), and, at the end, the same people declared the installation of the "Soviet power" in Latvia…

According to the Act on Saeima Elections adopted by the "People's Government", lists of MP candidates had to be submitted to the Central Election Commission until July 10, i.e., no more than 5 days since the information on "elections" appeared in public press. Clearly, it was impossible to prepare serious list of candidates for the real elections in such a limited time. Even representatives of the "Latvian Working People's Bloc" themselves turned to dubious methods to do all on time. For example, the Act on Saeima Elections prescribed that for each electoral region there must be submitted a separate list of candidates and each such list must be signed by not fewer than 100 voters (*Likums* 1940). As Latvia was divided into 5 electoral regions, if some party was going to submit candidate lists for all five regions, this required a collection of at least 500 signatures. Obviously, it was impossible for the "Latvian Working People's Bloc" to find 500 voters

who wanted to support their MP candidates, because the candidate list of this bloc for the Kurzeme region was signed by three persons (Ieva Paldiņa, Kārlis Paldiņš and Kārlis-Žanis Prieže) who themselves were the "Latvian Working People's Bloc" candidates at that same list (also, all three of them were members of Communist party; see Communist Party and Comintern files on Paldiņa, Paldiņš and Prieže). Another seven persons who signed as voters of the "Latvian Working People's Bloc" candidates list for the Kurzeme region were the candidates of this bloc in other electoral regions (see "Latvian Working People's Bloc" list for Kurzeme: *Latvijas darba tautas bloks … Kurzemes*). But the member of the Central Election Commission, Vecvagars, had signed as a voter of the "Latvian Working People's Bloc" candidates list for the Latgale region and he himself submitted this list to the Central Election Commission. This is not a complete account of dishonest methods which were utilized by the "Latvian Working People's Bloc" in the "elections" of 1940, but such affairs clearly show that there was no major support for this bloc, and it eventually won these "elections" just because the Red Army and Soviet officials stood behind it.

Apparently, it was even harder for independent candidates to collect 100 voter signatures, to settle other formalities and submit all the necessary documents to the Central Election Commission. And yet, there were people who managed to do this. Until July 10, there were submitted another 12 lists of candidates to the Central Election Commission, but this commission rejected them all as "invalid" due to various formal considerations (see Report of the Central Election Commission: *Centrālās vēlēšanu komisijas ziņojums Saeimai*).

It should be pointed out that the "People's Government", the Central Election Commission and the Communist Party of Latvia may be mentioned as merely organizers of these "elections" in the sense that they implemented practical and technical preparations for the "elections". The real "master of puppets" of all these activities in Latvia was Andrey Vyshinsky. Here is another excerpt from the account on Vyshinsky's role in the "elections" of 1940, written by Klāvs Lorencs, who was a close friend of the chairman of the Central Election Commission Ansis Buševics:

> "When it became known that the second list [of candidates] will be submitted to the [Election] Commission and that the commission is going to consider it for registration, A. Vyshinsky interfered as if he were Zeus playing with thunder and lightning. An alarm was raised in the Central Committee of the Communist Party [of Latvia], the

> whole government apparatus was put on stand, a Presidium of the Central Election Commission was called before harsh judgement. Arnods Deglavs was dropped from the [commission's] secretary position and temporarily expelled from the [Communist] party; a stern reprimand was delivered to A[nsis] Buševics, and a new task was set – to immediately prepare «legitimate and legally justified» rejection of the second list of candidates" (Lorencs 2005, 331).

Given this, there is no doubt who was the real instigator of these "elections".

Preparations for the "elections" happened in a hurry not just for candidates, but even for the organizers themselves. At times the situation was literarily absurd. For instance, the "People's Government" appointed as a member of the Election Commission for the Kuldīga district a Pauls Kostenieks, but when the local Election Commission was convened, it appeared that such a person is unknown, there was nobody in Kuldīga with that name. The situation was solved pretty easy. The rest of the commission decided that the name "Pauls Kostenieks" is similar to that of a local communist, Pauls Kapenieks, which was enough to introduce this Kapenieks into the commission (see Minutes of the Election Commission for the Kuldīga district: *Kuldīgas apriņķa vēlēšanu komisijas protokols*). Other documents reveal that there was different information for various state institutions on the issue who is the chair in which election commission (see Lists of staff of electoral commissions: *Apriņķu vēlēšanu komisijas*; *Apriņķu vēlēšanu komisiju priekšsēdētāji*).

A significant part of the preparations for these "elections" were full-scale scale propaganda actions combined with the intimidation of voters. Various newspapers published articles on the "elections". The authors of these articles insisted that it was not necessary to look for well-known and popular names in the "Working People's Bloc" lists of candidates, because most of them had worked "deep underground", they were just "good specialists" and "they all [were the] real sons of working people" (see "Working People's Bloc" propaganda articles from 1940: "Par mieru, par maizi, par tautas brīvību"; "Par labākiem darba un dzīves apstākļiem"; "Labākie no darba tautas.")

In opposition to this, some Latvian public persons and politicians (general and the former Minister of War, Jānis Balodis; one of the Founding Fathers of the Republic of Latvia, the former Minister of Education and Minister of Justice Atis Ķeniņš, the former MP and writer Kārlis Skalbe, the former Prime Minister Voldemārs Zāmuels, and others) made attempt to organize alternative list of candidates. As they

all were well-known personalities in Latvia, it was clear, that in equal, competitive elections this alternative list with such names would have a huge advantage over those mostly unknown communists (with just few popular figures, like the former MP Ansis Buševics, the writer Vilis Lācis) from the "Working People's Bloc". Hence, after Vyshinsky's "thunder and lightning", this alternative attempt was smashed out. Some of them were later arrested and spent years in Gulag (Bleiere, Butulis, Feldmanis, Stranga and Zunda 2008, 192–193; Gore, Stranga 1992, 210–212; Niedre 1989). In the days before the "elections", newspapers, mostly the communist press, labelled as any possible alternative candidates for the "elections", as "enemies of the people", breachers of the "working people's unity", "supporters of the old order", "slanderers and provocateurs", and, in fact, anybody who was going to refuse to vote for the "Working People's Bloc". In fact, this was already direct bullying.

However, the "elections" took place on July 14–15, 1940. There were no independent observers in the polls. Instead, documents reveal there were various Red Army officers, Soviet (probably Comintern) officials or Communist party representatives who controlled the polls (Gore, Stranga 1992, 219).

Fraud and violations of the Act on Saeima Elections were also a part of these "elections". Here are just a few examples. As we examine the originals of the "Latvian Working People's Bloc" lists of MP candidates for Kurzeme and Zemgale electoral regions, we can see that on the list of candidates for the Kurzeme region the name of Jāzeps Kandovskis is replaced with the name of Sīmanis Simanovičs, but on the list of the candidates for the Zemgale region Arnolds Deglavs is replaced with Fricis Deglavs (his real family name was Deklavs) (see "Latvian Working People's Bloc" lists for Kurzeme and Zemgale: *Latvijas darba tautas bloks … Kurzemes* ; *Latvijas darba tautas bloks … Zemgales*). Such replacements were in direct violation of Article 17 of the Act on Saeima Elections (*Likums* 1940). There must be no corrections on the lists of candidates, as it was stated in Article 17. Moreover, this was not just a formal violation of the Act, which, by the way, was adopted by the "People's Government" (so representatives of the new order violated their own law). Until July 12, 1940, in all publications of the "Latvian Working People's Bloc", the lists of candidates in all newspapers still included the names of Jāzeps Kandovskis and Arnolds Deglavs, while in reality two other persons were the MP candidates in these "elections". Although none of these names were well-known to the wide public, and apparently this was the reason why nobody noticed this replacement, it was directly misleading voters.

Пролетарии всех стран, соединяйтесь!

Всесоюзная Коммунистическая Партия (большевиков)

ПРАВДА

Орган Центрального Комитета и МК ВКП(б).

№ 217 (8263) | Вторник, 6 августа 1940 г. | ЦЕНА 15 КОП.

Вчера Верховный Совет СССР единогласно утвердил Закон о принятии Латвийской Советской Социалистической Республики в Союз Советских Социалистических Республик.

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о совместном заседании Совета Союза и Совета Национальностей 5 августа 1940 года

Исторический день в Латвии

Всенародный праздник в Литовской ССР

Привет пятнадцатой союзной!

О ЗАСЕДАНИИ СЕДЬМОЙ СЕССИИ ВЕРХОВНОГО СОВЕТА СССР

The first page of *Pravda* announcing the incorporation of Latvia to the Soviet Union on 5 August, 1940. On the photo, Augusts Kirhenšteins is addressing the Supreme Council of the Soviet Union. *Pravda* 6 August 1940, no. 217 (8263), N.A. Nekrasov Library

Consider another example. While examining the minutes of the Election poll № 20 in Riga, we can see that the election ballots were delivered to 9763 voters in this poll, but the number of votes for the "Latvian Working People's Bloc" in the same poll was 9775 (see *Rīgas vēlēšanu apgabala*). Hence, according to this document, the number of votes for the "Latvian Working People's Bloc" was bigger than the number of the voters in this poll. Such figures in an official document are direct evidence on the election fraud, but no electoral commission, or any official paid any attention to this fact in 1940.

This article does not contain a complete account of the misleading, intimidation, fraud and other dubious actions that took place in the 1940 "elections" in Latvia. However, even these examples, described here, should be enough to understand what kind of "legitimacy" was provided in the "accession" of Latvia into the USSR. Thus, the official outcome of the "elections" – 97,8% of votes for the "Latvian Working People's Bloc" (see Report of the Central Election Commission of 1940: *Centrālās vēlēšanu komisijas*) is the same myth as any other "election" results in the Soviet Union until late 1980s.

There is another issue that must be taken into account regarding the "legitimacy" of "accession" of Latvia to the USSR, even if someone were to ignore all the above-mentioned reasons. Article 77 of the Latvian Satversme (Constitution), which formally was still in force in 1940, contained a clause that if the Saeima amended articles 1, 2, 3 and 6 of the Satversme (these articles declared independency, sovereign power and territorial integrity of Latvia), such amendments, in order to come into force as law, shall be submitted to a national referendum. No referendum was carried out in 1940 in Latvia. Hence, the "People's Saeima's" declaration on the establishment of the Soviet power in Latvia as well as the demand to incorporate Latvia into the Soviet Union was legally invalid without such referendum.

Some Conclusions

The facts outlined in this article clearly show that the "elections" of 1940 were some kind of farce or a scandal on a grand scale, but it had nothing to do with equal, competitive, democratic elections in the common sense of that term.

Some can say that most of the facts presented in this article reveal that it was the local Latvian communists and officials who performed all the events regarding the "elections" of 1940, and therefore Soviet

authorities cannot be accountable for that. Though none of these Latvians and local communists, who carried out the "elections" of 1940, held an office before June 1940, and none of them would have been capable of getting any position in late June – early July 1940 if it were not for the Red Army, the Soviet embassy or Andrey Vyshinsky behind them.

One of the moments in these "elections" is a very limited time frame. The "People's Government" passed the decision on the "elections", and adopted the Act on Saeima Elections on July 4. Eleven days later, by the evening of July 15, the "elections" were already over. The events unfolded in such a hurry that practically nobody realized what was going on. Apparently, it was a deliberate decision to push events on such a high speed to minimize any possibility of resistance. While people were wondering what was going on, all of a sudden everything was over and Latvia lost its independence.

In conclusion I would like to point out that the historical facts and reflections outlined in this article could give more insight into the origins of some events that happened in Europe only a few years ago. At first sight, it would seem incomparable, but the occupation of the Baltic States in 1940 was followed the same pattern that was used by Russia in Crimea in 2014. Consider the following facts. First, in 1939, the USSR established its military bases in the Baltic States; in Crimea, in 2014, the Russian military bases remained since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Second, the Red Army invaded the Baltic States (June 1940); in Crimea there appeared the so-called "little green men" (February 2014). Third, the imitation of the "elections" in a very limited timeframe was organized in the Baltic States (July 1940); a dubious referendum was organized in Crimea also within a very limited timeframe (March 2014). Fourth, the Baltic States were incorporated into the USSR (August 1940); Crimea was incorporated into the Russian Federation (March 2014). Naturally, these events took place at different times, the technical means were different, people were different, and lot of other nuances were different, yet the pattern of the actions (setting of military bases – military invasion – imitation of a popular vote – incorporation to the other state) was exactly the same.

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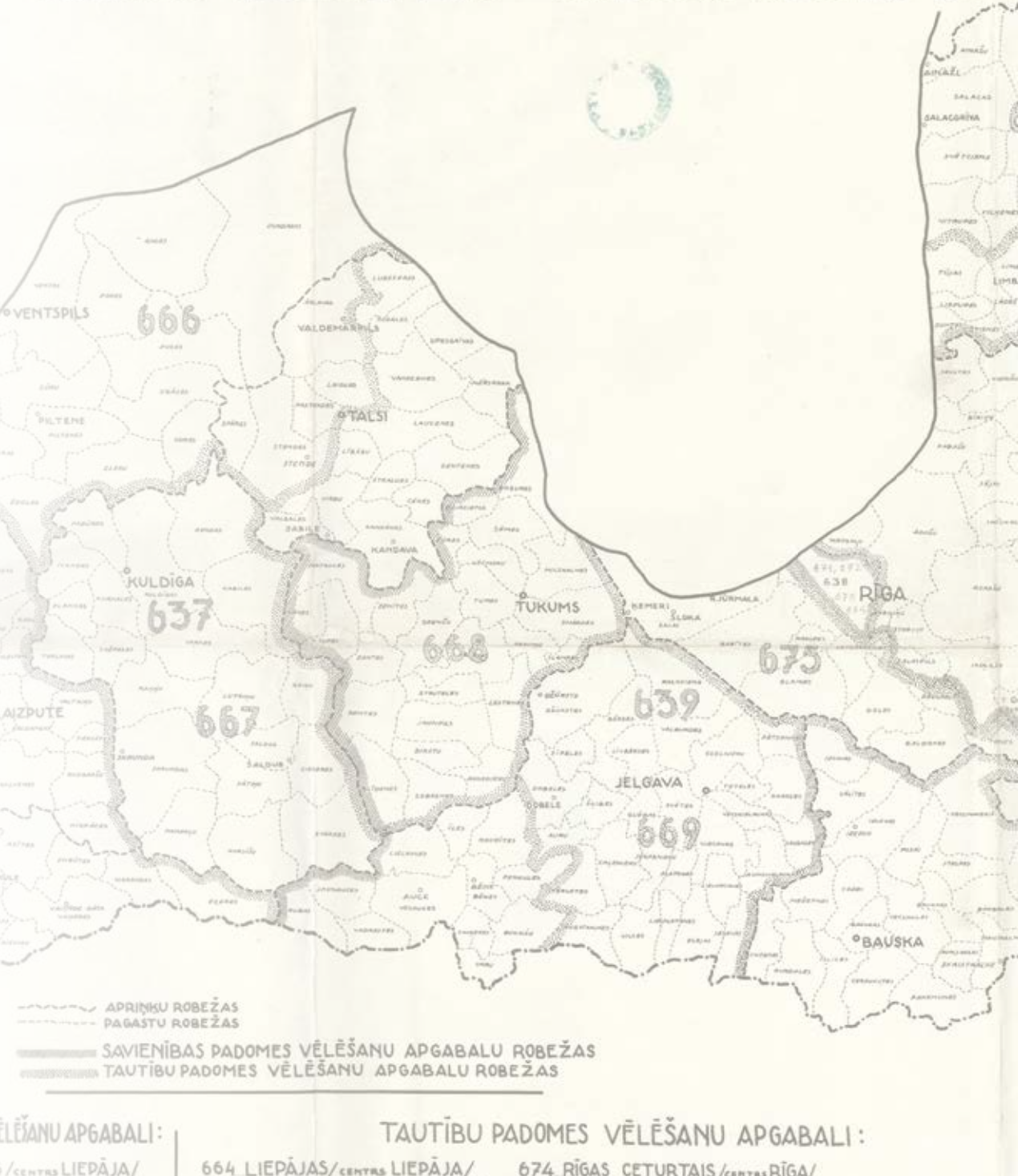
LATVIJAS P.S.R.

VĒLĒŠANU APGABALI PSRS – SAVIENĪBAS PADOMES UN



ĒLĒŠANU APGABALI:

/CENTRS LIEPĀJA/
ĒTAS/CENTRS RĪGA/
KU/ CENTRS RĪGA/
S/CENTRS VALMIERA/
/CENTRS MADONA/
S/CENTRS DAUGAVPILS/
/CENTRS RĒZEKNE/

TAUTĪBU PADOMES VĒLĒŠANU APGABALI:

664 LIEPĀJAS/CENTRS LIEPĀJA/
665 AIZPUTES/CENTRS AIZPUTE/
666 VENTSPILS/CENTRS VENTSPILS/
667 KULDĪGAS/CENTRS KULDĪGA/
668 TUKUMA/CENTRS TUKUMS/
669 JELGAVA/CENTRS JELGAVA/
670 BAUSKAS/CENTRS BAUSKA/
671 RĪGAS PIRMAIS/CENTRS RĪGA/
672 RĪGAS OTRAIS/CENTRS RĪGA/
674 RĪGAS CETURTAIS/CENTRS RĪGA/
675 RĪGAS PIEKTAIS/CENTRS RĪGA/
676 RĪGAS LAUKU/ CENTRS RĪGA/
677 CĒSU / CENTRS CĒSIS/
678 VALMIERAS/CENTRS VALMIERA/
679 VALKAS / CENTRS VALKA/
680 MADONAS / CENTRS MADONA/
681 KRUSTPILS/CENTRS KRUSTPILS/
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685 RĒZEKNES
686 LUDZAS
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688 ABRENES/