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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

FOR COORDINATION WITH FBI

Copy to:

Report of: RALPH F. MILLER Office: New York, New York
Date: 1/26/61

Field Office File No.: 105-40094 Bureau File No.: 105-89630

Title: LATVIAN ACTIVITIES IN THE
NEW YORK DIVISION

Character: INTERNAL SECURITY-R-LATVIA

Synopsis: Reverend RICHARD ZARINS advised Latvian Lutheran Church has 3,000 people in the NY area but no church building of own. Reverend ZARINS and ADOLF BLODNIKES, Chairman of Latvian New Farmers and Smallholders Party, advised no Latvian community as such, but activities primarily in organizations and church. Information regarding Latvian New Farmers and Smallholders Party and Committee for a Free Latvia, in which BLODNIKES active, set out. VILIS HAZNERS, Chairman of Committee for a Free Latvia, advised largest Latvian organizations in US are American Latvian Association and Daugavas Vanagi. American Latvian Association is parent body for most Latvian organizations in US. Daugavas Vanagi is Latvian veteran organization. HAZNERS advised Council of Latvian Organizations in NY is the central body for Latvian organizations in NY and about 30 to 32 Latvian organizations belong to it. TEODORS PETERSONS is head of the Council of Latvian Organizations in NY.

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DETAILS:

On November 30, 1960, Reverend RICHARD ZARINS,
Reverend of the Latvian Lutheran Church, 554 Second Street,

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graduated in 1938 with a degree in Theology and from 1938 to 1944 was an Assistant Pastor at the Cathedral at Riga. When the Russians took over Latvia Reverend ZARINS went to Sweden where he remained until 1947 when he was sent to the United States to be the Pastor of the Latvian Lutheran Church in New York. He stated that a year or two after he arrived in the United States, the Displaced Persons Act was passed and a large number of Latvians came to the United States so that he now has 3,000 "souls" here.

Reverend ZARINS stated the church as yet has no building of its own and has only the house at 564 Second Avenue in Brooklyn. Services are held at the Swedish Lutheran Church.

Reverend ZARINS stated that there is no Latvian community as such in the New York area although there are small concentrations of Latvians in various sections such as at Flatbush Avenue and Clarkson Street in Brooklyn, Postal Zone 58 in Bronx, and in Babylon and Brentwood on Long Island. Reverend ZARINS stated that activity among Latvians is confined primarily to organizations and the church. In one sense, the church is a focal point for the community. The Latvian Benevolent Society appears to be about the largest active organization although there are other Latvian organizations. Occasionally functions are held at the Yorkville Center but the Latvians are only one of many groups that meet there.

He advised he had not noted any specific efforts by the Soviets to penetrate the Latvian community although he felt such efforts were possibly being made.

On December 2, 1960, ALEXANDER OZOLINS, 278 17th Street, Brooklyn, New York, Building Manager, Hudson Guild, 436 West 27th Street, New York City, advised that he was Chairman of the New Farmers and Smallholders Party of Latvia which is affiliated with the International Peasants Union, which, in turn, is active in the Free Europe Committee. He stated that the New Farmers and Smallholders Party of Latvia has a limited membership and in its present form exists primarily as a political name which is connected with the International Peasants

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He advised the Latvians are scattered throughout New York City and have no particular meeting places, restaurants, etc. He felt the most active Latvian organizations were probably the university fraternity groups.

On January 13, 1961, ADOLF BLODNIKES, Committee for a Free Latvia, 70 Fifth Avenue, New York City, advised that the largest and most active Latvian organizations in the United States were the American Latvian Association under the leadership of Professor PETER LEJINS and Daugavas Vanagi which has about 40 branches and a membership of about 18,000 Latvian veterans, which organizations are anti-Communist.

BLODNIKES advised there was no Latvian community in New York except as existed in the Latvian organizations and the Latvian Lutheran Church.

BLODNIKES stated he did not know of any attempts or successful efforts of the Soviets to penetrate Latvian organizations.

BLODNIKES said he was the Chairman of the Latvian New Farmers and Smallholders Party, which he had helped establish originally. He indicated the organization is not active to a great extent in the United States. He is associated with and a former chairman of the Committee for a Free Latvia and is a member of the Assembly for Captive European Nations.

He is the former Prime Minister of Latvia and came to the United States in 1951. In his book "The Undeclared Nation" published by Robert Speller and Sons, Publishers, Inc., in 1960, BLODNIKES notes that the Committee for a Free Latvia was established in New York in July, 1951, due to the efforts of the late J. FELDMANES, at that time, Latvian Envoy in Washington and the "benevolence" of the Free Europe Committee.

With reference to the Committee for a Free Latvia, BLODNIKES writes:

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The by-laws of the Committee for a Free Latvia stipulate that its purpose is to promote the liberation of Latvia, to aid and assist wherever possible Latvian exiles abroad, and to render in good faith, whenever called upon, every appropriate aid and advice to the Free Europe Committee in furtherance of its aims towards the liberation of the Latvian nation.

Members of the Committee for a Free Latvia for several years performing the great and important task on behalf of Latvia's and her peoples' liberation, and all of them Latvian politicians, public men and cultural workers well-known in my homeland prior to its occupation, are the following: ALFRED HERZINS, former Minister of Public Affairs, and member of Latvian Parliament, KARLIS DZILLEJA, social and cultural worker, well-known author and Secretary General of the Latvian Social Democratic Party, VILIS HAZNERS, Latvian Army career officer, member of the Latvian General Staff, veteran of the Latvian Legion's War against Communism, military writer and editor, cofounder of the large Association of Latvian Veterans Daugavas Vanagi (Falcons of Daugavas River); ADOLEFS KLIVE, member of the Latvian Parliament and Governor of the Latvian State Bank for many years; Dr. VILIS MASENS, jurist and diplomat, and PAULS RAMANS, jurist and office manager of the committee. Mention must be made of the services of the four former members of the Committee: Dr. RUDOLFS DRILLIS, Dr. HENNO ABERS, EVALDS FREIVALDS and ONUFRIJ RANCANS. Advisers: Dr. P. STARCS, Dr. I. VOLMARS, A. RUMPETERS, M.L., Rev. D. MURNIEKS and Rev. R. ZARINS.

The scope of the Committee for a Free Latvia's activities is wide. It includes gathering and examining of information and data pertaining to the Communist-occupied Latvia and submitting of this checked material to the proper institutions in this country, to press, governments and parliaments of the free countries, Assembly of Captive European Nations in New York and the leading Latvian centers in the free world. Also delivering of lectures and speeches on various occasions belongs to the duties of the Committee, like many memos to international institutions and letters to the newspaper editors. One should not forget to mention also the information which we are broadcasting to our

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an courier about the true nature of political events, about the free world's longing for a genuine and lasting peace and the standards of living in the free world which are out of any proportion to those existing behind the Iron Curtain. We also tell them about the vigorous breath of freedom in this country which strengthens the hope of all subjugated nations including Latvians.

"We are all serving the great aim of liberation of Latvia and her people from the Communist yoke with our whole heart and mind."

BLODNIIEKS also writes that in continuing its activities in exile, his party, the Latvian New Farmers and Smallholders Party, recognizes as its ideological foundation the program adapted at the time of Latvia's independence and it recognizes the validity of the Latvian constitution as the supreme law of the republic. He states that the struggle for the liberation of Latvia is the party's basic task in exile.

BLODNIIEKS notes that the party is represented in the International Peasants Union. He states:

"Many members of the Latvian Smallholders Party having responsible offices are performing important social duties despite the fact that they have to earn their living and thus have to work during their spare time, very often making extensive trips at their own expense. To this effect I would like, first of all, to mention with gratitude Mr. ALEXANDER OZOLINS, my deputy in the Party's Central Board and the Authorized Representative of the Party in the United States, who has the keen judgment of an analyst and a dynamic and cordial mind. Likewise, I cannot avoid to express my gratitude to members of the Central Board - Messrs. A. DZIRKALIS, K. MANTINIIEKS, Dr. A. MUKLENBACHS, K. PETERSONS, K. KALVINS, V. KANKLINS, and E. MEDNIS, all of them duly carrying their burden of work."

On January 17, 1961, VILIS HAZNERS, Chairman of the Committee for a Free Latvia, 9th floor, 70 5th Avenue, New York City, advised he has been in the United States since 1956. He was a career officer in the Latvian Army.

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HAZNERS advised there are approximately 120,000 Latvians now outside of the Soviet Union with the largest concentrations in Europe, Australia, Canada, and the United States. He advised there were about 29,000 in Australia and 16,000 in Canada.

HAZNERS estimated there were about 9,000 to 12,000 Latvians in the New York area with the largest concentrations in Bayshore, Brooklyn, and the Bronx. He advised there was no community of Latvians as such. He said the Latvians had their most active contacts, social and political, through their membership in various Latvian clubs and organizations. He estimated there were over 100 Latvian organizations in the United States, the biggest of which is the American Latvian Association.

HAZNERS advised that Professor PETER LEJINS is the Chairman of the American Latvian Association and ERNESTO ALBATS is the Secretary-General of the organization, whose offices are located at 7027 Kanyon Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. HAZNERS stated both Professor LEJINS and ALBATS are extremely reliable men. This organization is the parent body for most of the Latvian organizations in the United States.

American Latvian Association in turn is affiliated with the Latvian World Federation of which Professor LEJINS is the head. Among other groups affiliated with the Latvian World Federation are the Latvian Federation of Canada and the Latvian Federation of Australia.

HAZNERS stated the second largest and most active Latvian organization in the United States is the Daugavas Vanagi, a Latvian Veteran Organization. It has about 55 branches and AUGUST VANAGS, 3713 N.W. Kedvale Avenue, Chicago, Illinois, is Chairman of the organization. HAZNERS is the Vice President of Daugavas Vanagi. He advised that the majority of heads of the branches are former career Latvian Army officers. This is an anti-Communist organization.

Mr. A. VALTERS is Chairman of the New York branch of the Daugavas Vanagi. He is reliable according to HAZNERS.

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HAZNERS stated that the Council of Latvian Organizations in New York is the central body for Latvian organizations in the New York area and about 30 or 32 organizations belong to it. It is anti-Communist in character. TEODORS PETERSONS, a lawyer, is the head of the organization and he is reliable.

HAZNERS advised that the Communist-inclined Latvians are generally found only among the old immigration whereas almost all Latvian emigres since 1939-40 are anti-Communist. HAZNERS stated that as far as he can determine Amerika Latvietis, a Latvian language newspaper in Boston, is the center of Communist influence among Latvians in the United States and the newspaper appears to be pro-Communist in its news and outlook.

In New York the Latvian Union or Unity Club on Lexington Avenue appears to be the only leftist-inclined Latvian organization in New York. HAZNERS had no particular knowledge of the organization, its members or its activity.