

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

COUNTRY USSR (Baltic SSRs)

SUBJECT Conditions in the Baltic Area of the USSR
July 1953

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1. Transient Housing

In Bauska and Riga it was possible to stay at the iebraucama vieta for five rubles per person; a room in a hotel cost ten to twelve rubles a night. There was a 100-ruble fine for giving lodgings to German refugees.

2. Prices in Restaurants

Restaurants in Riga were State-owned and had numbers. Usually there are uniformed waitresses and meals are paid for when served, generally without tips. Often there is radio music. The following prices were charged in 1951:

Hamburger	1.20-2.00 rubles
Beef and potatoes	3.20 rubles
Pork chop	5.00 rubles
Small glass of cognac	1.75-1.80 rubles
Bottle of champagne	105 rubles

3. Food prices

Generally, prices dropped after 1948, but by 1950 they climbed again because of the decrease in production of food following kolhozization. In Lithuania prices were the lowest, although they were approximately the same as in Latvia, but Estonia food was more expensive, and in Leningrad it was much more expensive than in Riga. Several items were scarce, i.e., sugar; at the same time candy and chocolate were available in abundance. It was striking that luxury items such as tobacco, candy and liquor were available in abundance and comparatively cheap, whereas meat and bread were already scarce in 1949. (...) Usually the best food could be bought only on the market, not in the shops, since the market, prices were higher due to the scarcity of the food items, and changed according to demand and supply. Poor-quality bread in the shops cost 3.20 rubles per one kg, but the farmers bread on the market cost up to 9 rubles per one kg. (...) The price in winter 1950/1951 for cheese on the market in Riga was 45 rubles per kg., and a bar of chocolate cost 23 rubles and higher. The cheapest sausage, which one would buy only if there was absolutely nothing else to eat, cost 7 rubles for 500 grams in 1950/1951, on the market in Riga. (...)

4. Watches and Clocks

Though people had watches and there were shops selling watches and repairing them in Riga, spare parts were very scarce and usually people were not able to repair a watch or were afraid to

take their watches for repair, since a watchmaker might take spare parts of one watch to repair a watch of a friend or a VIP. Though there were many wrist watches in the shops, German and Soviet make (such as the Pobeda, a good 15-jewel watch for 450 or 500 rubles), alarm clocks were scarce.

5. Wages

The following wages were paid in Lithuania in 1951:

<u>Position</u>	<u>Wage (in rubles) per month</u>
Unskilled worker (factory)	300 to 400
Railroad worker (unskilled)	300
Railroad conductor, a woman	180
Locksmith	500
Tractor driver (if fulfilling norm)	700
Manager of the electric apparatus in a factory	700
Teacher of elementary school	500 and expenses for one cow
Director of elementary school	700 and expenses for one cow (or 800 rubles)
Barber, in artel up	300 and percentage, together to 400 rubles

Fisherman lived better than most workers, though the situation was worse after 1947, when they had to start delivering all their catch to the State and received a bonus for the surplus over the norm.

6. Medical conditions

A hospital about ten km from Tallinn. The doctor was a Russian woman. There were more Russians than Estonians working in the hospital. Aspirin was not available in Tallinn, but cotton wadding and adhesive tape could be purchased. The latter costing one ruble.

7. Deportations

1949 deportees went to Osmk, Tomsk and Kazakkhstan. (...) They had been encouraged to take all their possessions, which were taken from them on the way. There were no more monks in the Skaistkalne monastery, near Bauska. Part of the monastery had been burned, and a school for agricultural inspectors was established in the intact section. Much land was not cultivated because of the deportations.

8. Railroad Transportation

A railroad ticket from Panevezys to Panemune cost 26.90 rubles, from Panevezys to Moscow, 107 rubles. The railroad militia accompanying the train wore curved swords, and the trip took four hours. The third-class cars had shelves above the seats which were used to sleep on.

9. Resistance

Up to 1948 partisan activity was fairly vigorous, especially in Lithuania, but activity decreased in 1949, and partisans began operating in smaller bands. The istrebiteli fought partisans; there were 14-16 istrebiteli in Kazaikiski (not located). The chief of this unit had a 70-shot submachine gun; the others had carbines and pistols. They wore no uniforms and received 350 rubles a month; they always looted when searching houses. A German girl boasted that she received 300 rubles for each person she denounced. A number of Germans were forced to become informers for the MVD after they were caught contacting partisans, etc.

10. Military Activities

Along the Latvian coast military installations only at Salacgriva. There was observation tower manned by the Soviet navy, and there were gunboats outside the fishing harbour. In the harbour were smaller naval units and about a half-kilometer inland was a large farmhouse occupied by 50 or 60 Soviet sailors. It seemed to be a navy school. In the Bauska-Skaistkalne road was being made ready for military transports. The road was surfaced with stone chips, not the usual gravel surface. In autumn 1950 army units were stationed on farms around Bauska and Rundale, and a doctor's office was taken over to be as a dispensary. In spring 1951 many units moved through Panevezys toward Kaunas and Siauliai, and it was said that Kaliningrad was being made into a fortress. Many Lithuanian draftees were sent to Kaliningrad in 1951, and some went to the USSR.