

Except from the Second book by Anna Žīgure

“Latvian Police History”

On November 19, 1918 was appointed the new state's first Minister of the Interior – Miķelis Valters. R. Benušs and A. Bisenieks were assigned as his companions and another assistant's spot was reserved for a representative from Latgale.

As a matter of fact, Miķelis Valters was the only professional politician with the appropriate education in the Provisional Government of Latvia, and was highly appraised by foreign politicians. However, the newly appointed Minister of the Interior had to perform a very difficult task – to out of thin air create forces that would ensure peace and order in a country, which, in fact, existed only on paper and whose territory was torn apart by the armed forces of two countries. He could not employ the old Imperial Russian police and gendarmerie, since, especially after the activities of the *Black Hundreds*, they had jeopardized themselves in the eyes of the Latvian people. An entirely new police had to be created. The direct control of police organization was entrusted to J. Ieva, a former chief of police of the Peterhof district in Petrograd province, who at that time was in Tukums. On November 20, J. Ieva arrived to 87/89 Dzirnava Street, Rīga - the headquarters of the Provisional Government. After receiving a small sum of money, J. Ieva visited the nearby shops, bought a variety of office supplies and set about forming the Police Chancellery. The division that would deal with the formation of the police was named the Internal Security Division, and on November 23, 1918 J. Ieva was appointed as its chief.

According to the “Provisional Regulations on the Organization of Internal Security” for the sake of successful performance of police duties, Latvia was divided in 23 separate police units. Towns, villages and small rural districts were subjected to 17 district chiefs, while the bigger cities – Rīga, Liepāja, Daugavpils, Jelgava and Venstpils, subjected to city prefects. It was established that the Ministry of the Interior assigns 1 or 2 assistants to each district chief and special police chiefs in towns and villages. Each special police chief takes responsibility for their actions before the district chiefs, but the district chief appoints one senior law enforcement officer and a number (depends on the size of the rural district) of junior law enforcement officers to each small rural district; city prefects appoint responsible and loyal station chiefs and other subordinate police officers and staff. Under these regulations, the local authorities have to participate in the maintenance of the police by granting the police officers apartments, an office building and other workspaces and providing them with electricity and heating. All other expanses (salaries, etc.) are covered by government finances.

In time with the development of core principles of police work, were also appointed the first police chiefs. On December 2, as the first, was appointed the Riga District Chief Prūsis.

FIRST DAYS OF THE POLICE

On December 1, 1918 due to the fast-approaching Russian army, Kārlis Ulmanis and Augusts Vinnigs began negotiations on the cooperation between the German troops and the new government, and the protection of the state.

On the same day, an English squadron, led by Admiral Sir Edwyn Alexander-Sinclair, arrived in Liepāja. The Admiral promised support of the English military to the representative of the Latvian government Andrejs Bērziņš. The next day, the squadron sailed further – to Estonia.

December 2, marked the begging of the first session of the People's Council, which lasted until December 6. The establishment of police continued as well.

On December 4, Kārlis Ulmanis and Kārlis Puriņš left for Tallin to wait for the English fleet, which after taking casualties in the mine fields in Tallin, did not arrive. On said day, the Secretary of the Latvian Social Democratic Central Committee in Latvia, J. Šilfs – Jaunzems received two letters from Moscow, requesting to convene a meeting of the LSD Central Committee and to draw up a Soviet government, and elect Pēteris Stučka as its leader.

On December 5, 1918 the LSD Central Committee sent a reply letter to Moscow, which held all the names of the hastily made Latvian Soviet government. Many officials of the new government were not even informed of being assigned in the government.

On the same day, the People's Council adopted "Temporary Regulations on the Internal Security Organization".