

**"My mind is made up. Don't confuse me with the facts"  
(The end of one historical falsification)**



21.6.1940. The blue-black-white tricolor, taken down from the mast, lies at the feet of the coup d'État participants at the top of the Tall Hermann tower.

(All the photos are from the Estonian national archives photos data base)

Who were these men in the picture, who posed so proudly in front of the photographer's? In the literature (and also on the Internet) we find several versions.

**1. Boris Pshenichnikov, Hermann Gutkin and Leo Aisenstadt**

"Estonia 1940-1945" Reports of the Estonian International Commission for the Investigation of Crimes Against Humanity. Tallinn, 2005. Lk. 52-53

*"At 18:45 the blue, black and white flag was lowered from Pikk Hermann tower, and was replaced with the red flag of the Worker's Sport Union. Boris Pshenichnikov, Hermann Gutkin and Leo Aisenstadt are named as the ones who swapped the flags"<sup>1</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> Ilmoitus, Koskee: Viron oloja (Information on the Estonian situation), SKA EK-Valpo XXIX 18. 2951., Ilmoitusnumero 1259, 15. VII 1940 a. o.

In the mentioned document (in Finnish): "*Varakkaitten viroilaisten juutalaisten pojat (m.m. Gutkin, Aisenstat ja Feigelsohn) häärivät nyt hyvinä ystävinä kommunistien kanssa. Olivatpa kaksi ensiksimmäintä 21.6. vetäneet Toompean linnaan punaisen lipun*"<sup>2 3</sup>.

## 2. Viktor Feigin

Kultuur ja Elu 3/2003

*„Kui vaadata asja eestlaste seisukohalt, siis algas juudi rahvusest bolševike kuritegevus Eestis juba 1940-1941. aastal. Eesti rahvuslipu mahavõtjaks Pika Hermanni tornist 1940.a. oli juut Viktor Feigin“.*<sup>4 5</sup>

## 3. Hermann Gutkin ja Viktor Feigin

Jüri Lina „Skorpion märgi all“

*“The men who lowered the Estonian flag from the tower of Tall Hermann and raised the Red banner on the 17th of June<sup>6</sup> were the 25-year old Herman Gutkin,<sup>7</sup> son of a rich Jewish merchant, Heinrich Gutkin, and the merchant Viktor Feigin. (Chicago Tribune, 24th of June 1940.) Both were members of Licht<sup>8</sup>.*

*The correspondent of the Chicago Tribune, Donald Day, had reported events in the Baltic states for 22 years. His impartial reports are very interesting. He related how the extremist Jews, led by Herman Gutkin, marched through Tallinn to the Soviet Embassy, where the Jews tore up the Estonian flag. That event is confirmed by at least one photograph<sup>9</sup>. Donald Day pointed out in his memoirs that the editor had deleted the words "the Jews" from his text as it was printed in the newspaper.<sup>10</sup>”*

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<sup>2</sup> The sons of the wealthy Estonian Jews (among them, Gutkin, Aisenstat and Feigelsohn), revolve around communists like good friends. After all, the two first mentioned hoisted the red flag of the Toompea tower.

<sup>3</sup> I've never heard of a wealthy Jew named Feigelsohn in Estonia. [M.R.]

<sup>4</sup> KE “Mis riik see on, kus ühel pojalt on obelisk lilledes, teisel mutta trambitud haud?” (What country is it where one son has an obelisk with flowers when the other has a tomb trampled in mud?), “Kultuur ja Elu” 3/2003

<sup>5</sup> The source of information is not shown. [M.R.]

<sup>6</sup> In reality on the 21<sup>st</sup> of June 1940. The Chicago Tribune article talks about the event taking place on Wednesday. 21th of June 1940 was Friday. So both “witnesses” are wrong.“ [M.R.]

<sup>7</sup> In fact, 21 years old. (1919-1942)

<sup>8</sup> The 24th of June 1940 article describes the situation in **Riga** and does not mention at all the events in Estonia. (Chicago Daily Tribune. 24.6.1940. “Balts sing, but ponder fate at the same time. “) The 24<sup>th</sup> of **July** 1940 article „Red guard chief named head of Estonian Y.M.C.A.“ does mention Hermann **Gutkin**, but has no mentioning of Viktor Feigin, thus J. Lina has no source of information about Feigin. [M.R.]

<sup>9</sup> As we will see later, that photograph has neither Gutkin, nor Feigin on it. [M.R.]

<sup>10</sup> Again, the mentioned Chicago Tribune article describes the events in Riga and not in Tallinn. It says: „My report of the riot was published under the headline: RIGA REDS BATTLE POLICE. TEN SLAIN AS SOVIETS OCCUPY LATVIA. I had emphasized in my report that it was the Jews and not the Latvians who had welcomed the Red Army tanks in Riga, that it was the Jews who attacked the Latvian police, that it was the Jews who had been arrested for rioting. But the word “Jew” did not once appear in the story“.

It should be clear now why J. Lina chose that source of information [M.R.].

Now let's look at pictures of Aisenstadt and Feigin.



Leo Aisenstadt



Viktor Feigin



Hermann Gutkin in 1937<sup>11</sup>

I don't have a picture of Hermann Gutkin, but we can read his description from the memoirs of M. Scheer "Endise Noorsotsialisti mälestustest" (From the memoirs of a former young socialist). (The manuscript from year 1964). The full text can be read from here <http://www.eia.pri.ee/stories/Scheer.pdf> (in Estonian)

*"[Hermann Gutkin] was the son of a well-known rich businessman and house owner. He grew up and studied in Paris. There he became a member of the French Communist Youth Association. After graduating from high school, he returned to his homeland .*

*On 21st of June 1940 Gutkin was serving his time in the Estonian bourgeois army. He was among the first soldiers who went over to the working people side. Few days later the Hitler's agents in Tallinn dissolved rumors that Hermann Gutkin was the one who brought down the blue-black-white Estonian flag from the Tall Hermann tower, trampled on it and spit. The aim of this rumor was clear: to spread the idea that the June coup was not done by Estonian working people, but was "the Jews and the Russians made."*

*Gutkin was a very chubby guy. A few days later, when I was talking to him about the rumors, I said jokingly: "people are saying that the fat Hermann brought down the flag from the Tall Hermann."*

*Gutkin fell near Velikije-Luki . The bullet was shot from behind his back. Very possible that he fell due to rumors created around his name. Our literature says a lot about sergeant Lumiste who brought down the fascist flag in 1944, but there is no single word about who did it on June 21, 1940. But this legend about Gutkin I continue to hear even now.*

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<sup>11</sup> I got this picture already after publishing this article [MR]

*To my knowledge, these were the members of the Working-class Sport Union who raised the red flag on Tall Hermann tower. I think that historians should clarify all this, and publish the results in some widespread publication. It would be a blow to the propaganda of the bourgeois nationalists". [End of quote ]*

We don't see „a chubby guy” on the photo !

The answer is found in the photo data base of the State archives:

Content description	Mahavõetud sinimustvalge lipp ja mahavõtjad 21.06.1940.a.
Place of event	Tallinn, Toompea
Time of event	21.06.1940
Author (last name)	
Studio	
Persons on photo	Rida 1 (vasakult): 1. Edgar Petree, 2. Karl Leesik, 4. Aleksander Resev.

Contents description: The people who brought down the blue-black-white flag on 21.06.1940 with the flag.

Persons on photo: First row (from left): 1. Edgar Petree, 2. Karl Leesik, 4. Aleksander Resev.

The link to that picture is here:

<http://www.ra.ee/fotis/index.php?type=2&id=379092>

Even more specifically is written under that photo in the book «FAATUM. Eesti tee hävingule»

Riigikontrolör Karl Soonpää päevik Eesti Vabariigi saatuseaastatest 1939–1940.

Eluloo koostanud ja päeviku kommenteerinud Küllö Arjakas.

Tallinn 2009:

“The blue-black-white tricolor, taken down from the mast, lies at the feet of the coup d'État participants at the top of the Tall Hermann tower. From left: Metal worker Edgar Petree, Karl Leesik, unknown person, Aleksander Resev and an unknown person. Even the workers of pictures division of the former Institute of the party history were unable to identify the unknown persons. This picture is not known to have been published in Soviet time.”



AJALOOMUUSEUM

Mastist maha võetud sinimustvalge lipp juunipörajate jalge ees Pika Hermanni tornis. Vasakult: metallitöoline Edgar Petree, Karl Leesik, tundmatu isik, Aleksander Resev ja tundmatu isik. Tundmatuid ei õnnestunud kindlaks teha isegi omaaegse EKP Keskkomitee Partei Ajaloo Instituudi fotoarhiivi töötajatel. Nõukogude ajal seda pilti teadaolevalt ei avaldatud.



Edgar Petree („Politsei“, 7/2000)



Karl Leesik



Aleksander Resev

Mark Rybak. 2013.