

LATVIJAS VĒSTURES INSTITŪTA ŽURNĀLS

Anita Čerpinska. Women in the Families of Riga Trade Assistant Professions in the Course of Three Generations in the 18th Century and the First Half of the 19th Century: the Case Study of Tomass Sēlis' Family ● *Kristīne Ante.* The Religious and Socio-Political Context for the Establishment of the First Baptist Parishes in Courland ● *Kaspars Zellis.* World War I and Latvian Riflemen in the Collective Memory of Latvia ● *Ilze Boldāne-Zeļenkova.* The Invented Traditions: the Calendar of Festive Days and Family Customs in the Latvian SSR ● *Mārtiņš Mintauris.* Protection of Architectural Heritage in the Latvian SSR (1945–1991): Ideological, Cultural and Political Aspects ● *Īsziņas* ● *Recenzijas* ● *In memoriam*

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ZINĀTNISKIE RAKSTI

WOMEN IN THE FAMILIES OF RIGA TRADE ASSISTANT PROFESSIONS IN THE COURSE OF THREE GENERATIONS IN THE 18TH CENTURY AND THE FIRST HALF OF THE 19TH CENTURY: THE CASE STUDY OF TOMASS SĒLIS' FAMILY

Anita Čerpinska

Dr. hist., researcher, Institute of History of Latvia, University of Latvia.
Research interests: Riga Trade Assistant Professions in the 18th and 19th century.

The article is focused on the women of one family – the mother, wife and daughter of the elterman of boaters Tomass Sēlis – over three generations, attempting to reveal the fate of women in the context of the trade assistant professions in Riga in economically favourable and unfavourable circumstances for the boaters. The article reveals the consolidated environment that was established by the families of trade assistant professions in Riga to strengthen mutual kinship ties in a certain part of the city. The article also illustrates the diversity in terms of property, the terms and conditions of marriage contracts, as well as the circumstances of widows and orphans in such families. The article is based on the materials of Riga court proceedings.

Key words: Anna Sēle, Marija Magdalēna Sēle, Anna Ģertrūde Sēle, boaters, Mūkusalā.

INTRODUCTION

In the history of Riga, trade assistant professions were taken by those groups of people who were united in terms of their trade and who were engaged in the transportation, processing, weighing and assessment of trade goods, namely, liggers¹, salt carriers, wine carriers, hemp swinglers, hemp sowers, salt and grain

measurers, mast and oak graders, anchor handlers, harbour pilots, cabmen and boaters (also called ferryman, ger. Übersetzer). Some sources refer to these trades as Latvian professions, although the ethnic composition among these groups was not homogeneous. To some extent, it would be correct to add the profession of fishermen to this group, too, because many family members working in the trade assistant professions were related to the profession of fishermen and were involved in fishing in the course of their lives.

The members of the profession were often united by family ties and many of them belonged to St. John's Latvian parish. From the most ancient maps and the lists of population, it can be concluded that the inhabitants involved in the processing or transportation of goods along the Daugava, as well as those engaged in fishing traditionally lived in the vicinity of the Daugava, on the islands, as well as on the left bank of the Daugava (the so-called Pārdaugava) near the river.² The inhabitants of Pārdaugava from generation to generation were buried at the cemeteries of St. John's parish in Torņkalns and Āgenskalns (currently Mārtiņa cemetery). Since these people belonged to one parish, lived in one locality and worked in related professions, they can be considered a community of Riga with a sense of group awareness taking a particular place among the inhabitants of the city. Although they were united in their trade, they did not belong to the Small Guild and differed from the craftsmen's guilds both in terms of their profession and the regulations; however, they never equated themselves with regular labourers. The difference from the latter was manifested in the fact that they belonged to one profession, they swore an oath and carried out certain work for the sake of the city. As any community, the members of trade assistant professions did not form a homogeneous group. Both among the professions and within the limits of one profession there were differences in terms of the property and social status of the brethren. Historian Meta Taube has distinguished the mast graders as the most prosperous and self-confident group among the other professions.³

A few words must be said about the trade assistant professions and their belonging to the social groups in the city. Up to the end of the 18th century only burghers were considered eligible citizens of Riga. They were the traders of the Big Guild and the craftsmen of the Small Guild, constituting approximately 20% of the total population of Riga. The rest of the inhabitants constituted a cluster of non-burghers and they were called either *Beisassen* or *Beiwohner*.⁴ However, in the first half of the 19th century the law stipulated that the citizens in the Baltic cities could be divided as follows: 1) honourable citizens, 2) traders belonging to the guilds, 3) literati, 4) petit bourgeoisie (*meshchane ili posadskie*), 5) the craftsmen of guilds, 6) the free men, servants and labourers. The burghers of the City of Riga (*grazhdane*) were still the members of the guilds and the law only prescribed principles according to which one could receive the status of burgher. Other groups of citizens were not defined in such detail.⁵

The attempts of the well-off part of the non-burghers, including the mast graders, to obtain the rights of burghers in the mid-18th century were met with resistance by the traders, because non-burghers proved themselves in trade and wanted to extend their opportunities to do business in Pārdaugava (the left bank of the Daugava).⁶ The strictly regulated trade system of Riga, on the one hand ensured the income of the mediators and traders of Riga export goods, because only the members of the Big Guild could buy the goods in wholesale from the suppliers of Central Russia and sell them to foreign companies; on the other hand, the system also determined mandatory sorting, weighing, packing and shipping of all export goods, which ensured income to the trade assistant professions. These rules granted the quality of the export goods, yet at the same time raised the costs and time resources, as well as encumbered the circulation of goods, therefore in the first half of the 19th century more and more traders stood for the annulment of restrictions.⁷ Both the Riga trade regulations of 1765 and the tradition-bound division of citizens were outdated and in the late 18th century did not correspond to

the development tendencies of trade and urban community, yet changes took place very gradually.⁸

Overall, there were no restrictions in terms of the number of members stipulated in the regulations of assistant professions. It changed depending on the economic situation and the number of goods imported in Riga, therefore there could be a great degree of fluctuations in the periods when trade flourished or was on the decline.⁹ With this order in force, personal and kindred contacts were crucial to get a job in one of the professions, because the enrolment of new members could happen only with the acceptance of other members in the profession. A profession could be “inherited” by a son from a father, but one could also get the job by marrying into a family, for example, by marrying a daughter or a widow of the profession brethren. Consequently, the women from families involved in trade assistant professions played a certain role in the continuity of the profession. There are many cases when a widow got married for the second or the third time, consequently giving rise to continuous conflicts regarding inheritance since each marriage was usually blessed with children.

This article is focused on the family of a long-term elterman¹⁰ of boaters, Tomass Sēlis (1763–1830), in Riga, drawing special attention to women over three generations – his mother, wife and daughter. The author hopes to reveal the fates of women in the framework of one family in the second half of the 18th century and the first half of the 19th century, which was a period of gradual change both in the history of assistant professions and the entire history of Riga.

In the respective period of time the society and trade of Riga, which was the basis of Riga's economy, experienced significant changes. With previous restrictions in trade and craftsmanship withdrawn, the classes of bourgeoisie and labourers characteristic of the second half of the 19th century in the industrial cities of Europe were established. In historiography, the members of trade assistant professions are referred to as “the representatives of the emerging Latvian bourgeoisie”.¹¹ If in the mid-18th century most

of the well-off and ambitious part of this bourgeoisie constituted mast graders, in the late 18th century boaters were those who took Riga Town Council to the courts in St. Petersburg demanding the rights of burghers. Tomass Sēlis was also among them. The traders justified their reluctance to give rights to the boaters based not only on their humble origins and lack of knowledge in the matters of trade, but also on their excessive arrogance and vanity, which they had obtained along with their prosperity.¹² Despite the “arrogance” of Tomass Sēlis, he, contrary to other rebellious boaters, held a management position. Taking the position of elterman for decades was an exception and not a common practice in the trade assistant professions. Due to all the previously mentioned circumstances, it is essential to examine the origins of Tomass Sēlis and what happened with his “legacy”, because the historiography reveals other prosperous members of the trade assistant professions both in relation to further accumulation of wealth and pauperization within the same or the next generation.¹³

In the more recent history the fate of a woman to a great extent was determined by the social class she belonged to, although no group was homogeneous,¹⁴ whereas the family history cannot be analysed without the socio-political and economic context.¹⁵ In the families of trade assistant professions at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries several groups of belonging overlapped. Belonging to the closed groups of professions made them similar to the craftsmen in guilds whose lives were regulated by the rules of the craft. Belonging to the inhabitants of Pārdaugava put them among the rural dwellers of Riga, because in this suburb the dwelling houses were located in comparatively big properties of land and meadows, which the inhabitants cultivated. Belonging to the “emerging bourgeoisie” manifested changes in lifestyle and world perception, because from closed craftsmanship they moved to free and unrestricted entrepreneurship.

In the historiography of Latvian history so far, the researchers have focused on assistant professions mostly in relation to their professional activities.¹⁶ Even in works that have been dedicated

to certain families, women are mostly briefly mentioned and the greatest attention is drawn to the legal or economic activities of men of the respective families.¹⁷ While in other countries there are discussions on what and how should be studied in relation to the women in history, in Latvia we can mention only some works in the last decades where the woman of recent history (up to the mid-19th century) has attracted scholars' attention as a self-sufficient object of research, unrelated to the studies of biographies.¹⁸

It must be noted that there is a completely different situation in terms of research sources on the women belonging to the upper classes of Baltic Germans, because thanks to the status and education level the female representatives of the Baltic German nobility have left personal sources such as letters, memories and diaries, whereas such personal documents of women of lower social classes, even if they did exist, have not reached scholars. When working on the fate of women belonging to the family of trade assistant professions in the respective time period, a scholar has no other choice but to work merely with archive materials where women play only a secondary role. Of course, materials from church records, soul revisions (the taxpayer accounting by taxpayer groups) and various courts of Riga provide considerable information regarding crucial turns in the lives of women; however, this material is often fragmented and nearly never provides any evidence on the world's perception of the woman, her motivation or self-identity. The second half of the 19th century offers a completely different range of sources and the role of a woman in society over this period undergoes a change of paradigms.¹⁹

This article has been written on the basis of the historical materials available at the National Archives of Latvia. The data on baptizing, marriage and burial have been obtained from the church records of St John's parish (Fund 1428). This data reveals the number of children in families, the age of marriage, the number of repeated marriages, child mortality, and the duration of life, as well as godparents, who often are neglected by research even though studies have proven that the ties of "spiritual kinship" both on the religious and social level did not lose their

significance in the period.²⁰ Not all church records have been preserved from the first half of the 18th century, therefore the family tree cannot be reconstructed in its entirety. Data on the number and age of the people living in the households can be obtained from the materials of soul revisions, which can be found at the Funds of the Riga Tax Administration (Fund 1394), the list of Livland revisions (Fund 199) and the crown treasury office of the Livland province (Fund 77). It must be noted that the accuracy of the soul revision data can be varied. Knowing someone's age according to the church records, it can be seen that for certain people the age has been indicated correctly, for others – approximately, and for some – very inaccurately. However, there are cases when there are no other options but to follow the data of revisions. Crucial information provided by the materials of revisions concerns the places where people had lived earlier and where they migrated, as well as additional data on family ties and if they belonged to certain categories of taxpayer. It is possible to draw conclusions about the land property, buildings and the paid taxes according to the materials of the Board of the Treasury (Fund 1390 and 1392), where the plans of building sites can also be found.

In addition to these data, the materials of Riga courts have also been used. The Fund on Custody Court (1380) has the heritage-related information, the signed marriage contracts, last wills and the custody of juveniles. *Landvögtey* (Fund 1379) was responsible for hearing civil claims, therefore disputes related to real property, payment of debts, and questions regarding construction also appear there, whereas the court of professions and *Kämmerei* (Fund 1382) worked on those cases which were related to the professional activities of trade assistant professions, including the appointment to a certain post and disputes among the members of one profession or among the profession and traders. It is essential to note that the less a person happened to be in conflict situations, the less his name appears in court materials, and vice versa.

ANNA, THE MOTHER OF TOMASS SĒLIS

Anna Lau (*Lau*, also *Laue*, *Lauw*, 1729–1792) came from the family of the labourers Jānis and Dārta, who lived in Jurgāmuīža (Jurgenshoff), which was also called Zunda (Sunde). In the 18th century it was a place mostly inhabited by boaters, mast graders, hemp swinglers and fishermen, and nearly all the inhabitants counted themselves as Latvian in the soul revision.²¹

Anna Lau's record of baptism provides evidence that her godparents were several members of boater families.²² Anna was the fifth child in Jānis's family. Before her, there were four boys born, but after Anna another girl Trīne (1732–1785) was born. From the second wife Marija, Jānis had two more children. Most of the godparents were family members of boater families, sometimes of fishermen or salt carrier families.²³ Perhaps, the father of Anna worked on some boat for boaters. Because there are no burial records regarding the time period before 1770, it cannot be known for sure how many of Jānis' children reached the age of maturity and how big Anna's family was.

Due to the lack of lists of spouses from St. John's parish, it cannot be specified at what age Anna got married, yet it can be seen that in 1761, when Anna was 32 years old, her firstborn was baptized. Anna's husband – Niklass Sēlis (*Sehl*, also *Seel*, *Sehle*, [around 1726] –1803) had sworn an oath of a hemp swingler a year earlier, that is, in 1760.²⁴ It can be suggested that similarly to other craftsmen in the period, Niklass Sēlis got married around the time he became an eligible member of trade and could afford to have a family and be the breadwinner.²⁵

There is very controversial information regarding the date of birth of Niklass, because none of the Riga parishes have any records on his baptising. The age mentioned in the soul revisions of 1782 and 1795 (40 and 74 respectively) allowed him to become 34 years older within a 13 year period, providing evidence of the inaccurate data, whereas Anna's data have been recorded accurately.²⁶ According to the burial records, Niklass died in the beginning of 1803 at the age of 76, which suggests he was born

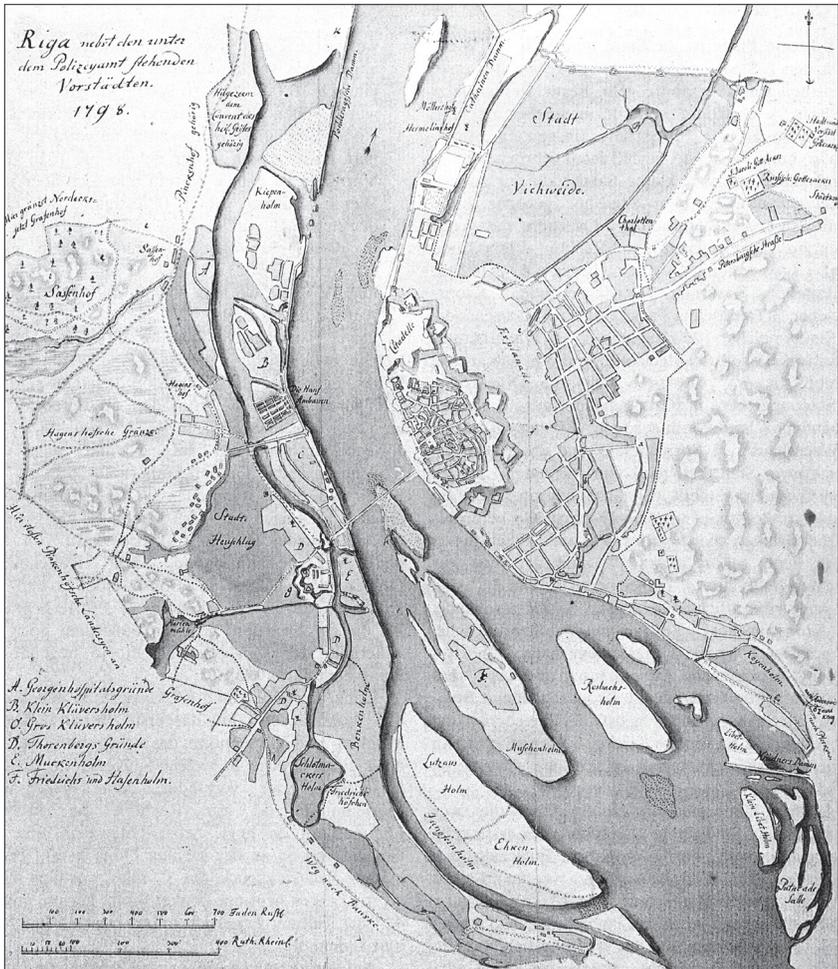


Image: Riga with the suburbs under control of the police, 1798.
 In: Teodors Zeids (ed., 1996). *Johans Kristofs Broce. Zīmējumi un apraksti.*
 Vol. 2. Riga: Zinātne, p. 39

around the turn of 1726 and 1727 and was just a few years older than his wife Anna.²⁷

300 trade brethren worked in the profession of hemp swinglers in the beginning of the 18th century, whereas in 1718 (after the Great Northern War and plague) the number had decreased

to 36, while at the end of the century – there were approximately 60 brethren.²⁸ Those who worked in the profession processed the hemp before exporting and participated in the transportation, loading and unloading of goods. Over his active work years, Niklass also worked as a lighter for a short period of time, engaged in the transportation and measuring of grain, flax and hemp seeds and preparing them for export.²⁹

Niklass Sēlis lived in Zunda with his family, together with a maidservant and servant. Between the age of 32 and 45, Anna gave birth to eight children: 5 boys and 3 girls.³⁰ Six of the children had a hemp swingler named Reinholds Sausiņš (*Sausiņ*) or his wife Anna as godparents, while four of them had either the fisherman Jānis Dāle (*Dahl*) or his wife Anna, who were the neighbours of the Sēlis family. Mostly there were family members of hemp swinglers chosen as godparents, rarely boaters or fishermen. The godfather of the second son Tomass was an export trader, freemason and the owner of a manor in Pārdaugava (Tomass Cukerbekers (Zuckerbecker, 1730–1795).

Anna's family had a close relationship with Anna's sister Trīne, who initially worked as a maidservant for one of the senior hemp swinglers but later got married to the oak grader Mārtiņš Krūmiņš (*Kruming*). There was a half-year period when the entire Krūmiņš family moved to the house of the Sēlis family, because their own house had suffered during a spring flood.³¹ After the death of Mārtiņš Krūmiņš, Trīne got married again – in 1780 to the oak grader Frīdrihs Klange (*Klange*).³² The relationship was complicated, because Niklass Sēlis once had to give a testimony against the brother-in-law.³³

All three daughters of Anna and Niklass died in early childhood, but five sons reached the age of maturity. The oldest son, Jānis, similarly to his father, worked as a hemp swingler; however, he was made redundant due to negligence at work and died at a comparatively young age – 30 years old.³⁴ Niklass sent all the other sons at an early age to work as assistants for boaters. Perhaps over the trade season there was a higher demand for extra

labour than for hemp swinglers. It must be noted that fate was not favourable to the sons of the Sēlis family. Before burying the oldest son, Anna had to say goodbye to her son Reinholds, who was only 19 years old at the time of his death. After Anna's death, her son Ansis drowned (in 1795).³⁵

Anna Sēle died in 1792, at the age of 63. After two years Niklass got married again, to Hedviga Ziemele (*Seemel*), born Ozoliņa – the widow of a labourer who at that time was in her forties. When entering into marriage, Niklass stipulated that after his death three sons would inherit 200 thalers. Niklass and Hedviga had a daughter, Anna Kristīna (1796) – the last offspring of Niklass Sēlis, whose fate is unknown due to a lack of sources.³⁶

Apparently, the range of materials on Anna Sēle is not very extensive. She came from a labourer's family close to the Riga trade assistant professions, lived in nearby Pārdaugava and married someone from the neighbourhood. A long period in her marriage was spent in pregnancy and raising children, but out of eight children only two sons led independent lives. In the household of Niklass and Anna five sons grew up, but apart from Anna there was one more maid and servant in the house, which means that three persons were responsible for managing the food and house for 9 persons. Their family can be defined as a regular family among the representatives of the trade assistant professions, because it did not stand out with prosperity (most of the members of trade assistant professions had a servant or a maid), nor was there a connection with the richest and most influential families of the trade members.

When Anna died, her youngest son was 18 years old. After her death, Niklass lived as a widower for two years and then married once again to another widow and signed a marriage contract with her to secure the children from the first marriage part of the inheritance that they were entitled to.

MARIJA MAGDALĒNA, THE WIFE OF
TOMASS SĒLIS

In November 1788 boater Tomass Sēlis (1763–1831) got married to the widow of fisherman Mārtiņš Ranks (*Ranck*, 1749–1785), named Marija Magdalēna, born Ozoliņa (sometimes referred to as *Helena Osoliņ*, also *Osoling*, 1761–1833). At the time of marriage, she was 27 years old and had been a widow for three years. She came from the family of the fisherman Jēkabs Ozoliņš ([around 1722]–1791) and his wife Madlēna, born Rinka. For her mother it was the second marriage, from her first marriage with the fisherman from Mūkusala, Niklass Ogļmaiss (*Ogelmais*, ?–1759), there were two step-daughters.³⁷ Entering into marriage with Jēkabs Ozoliņš, Madlēna Rinka signed a marriage contract with him where she stipulated a certain part of the inheritance to the daughters from the first marriage:

- 1) For each of them 15 Albert thalers, when they get married, apart from the dowry;
- 2) A garden owned by the Ogļmaiss family in Pārdaugava to the daughter, who gets married first; as a result, the other sister has the right to request 15 Albert thalers from her;
- 3) The salmon catch parts owned by Niklass Ogļmaiss as a fisherman.

The new fiancé meanwhile, promised to bring up the children as his own.³⁸

It is unknown when the mother of Marija Magdalēna died, but in 1770 her father got married again to Grēta Krastiņa (*Krasting*, 1743–1784), the daughter of the fisherman Indriķis Krastiņš and his wife Grēta Krastiņa, born Ogļmaisa. When entering into marriage, Jēkabs Ozoliņš signed a contract which intended to allocate the descendants of the Ogļmaiss family 110 thalers as an inheritance, the salmon catch parts inherited from their father as a fisherman, and a garden which would constitute the entire inheritance part and was stipulated as an inheritance in the first marriage contract, whereas Helēna had the right for 15 thalers. The fiancée Grēta Krastiņa, in the name of love for her fiancé, agreed to raise his daughter Helēna as her own child.³⁹

In the marriage of Jēkabs Ozoliņš and Grēta, three children were born – Margarēta Elizabete (1771–1772), Elizabete Margarēta (1775–?) and Jēkabs Heinrihs (1777–1793). The family members of fishermen and boaters were invited as the godparents of the children. The godmother of Marija Magdalēna was Magdalēna Brasa (*Bras*), the wife of a boater.

Fishermen in Riga were united in one profession, which had the monopoly rights for fishing in a certain section of the Dau-gava next to Riga and for selling the fish at the Riga market. This profession was taken by between 50 and 100 members over various periods of time, who actively guarded their rights to prevent peasants from the surrounding manors trying to earn some additional income by fishing. The post had its own regulations, procedure of enrolment and it took care of the widows and orphans of the members. There were families, for example, the Ranks family, the Nariņš and the Rungainis families, who over several generations through the centuries were engaged in fishing. The sons of these families were a regular addition to the rows of boaters and mast graders, since from childhood they were familiar with work on the river and boats. Jēkabs Ozoliņš “bought himself into” the profession of fishermen in 1760, later he was elected as the assessor of the profession and the senior of the profession.⁴⁰

The family of Jēkabs Ozoliņš lived in Mūkusalā, which in comparison to others was a rather small island of the Daugava with only a dozen plots of land.⁴¹ The second wife Grēta died after 14 years of marriage and Jēkabs Ozoliņš became a widower again.

At the age of 21, Marija Magdalēna got married to the sixth son of fisherman Sīmanis Ranks (1714–1785), called Mārtiņš. He was from a rather prosperous family of fishermen and boaters. Their marriage did not last long, because after a few years Mārtiņš died at the age of 35 without leaving any heirs.⁴²

In 1791, after the death of Marija Magdalēna's father, the Custody Court of Riga started to work on the distribution of his property among the heirs. Marija Magdalēna was represented at

the court by her husband Tomass Sēlis, her stepsister and step-brother by their guardians in the boaters' profession.⁴³ Pursuant to the rights of Livonian cities, when inheriting their parents' property it was divided in equal parts among all the children.⁴⁴ All the belongings of Jēkabs Ozoliņš were announced as available in auction. An old wooden house with a shingle roof in Mūkusala with one room, chamber, kitchen and laundry room was the most valuable property. There was a stable, a shed and a big garden in the backyard. This property was valued at 160 Albert thalers, but Tomass Sēlis "because of his love towards the relatives of the wife", was willing to pay 165 Albert thalers, which after covering the funeral of Jēkabs Ozoliņš and court expenses were equally distributed among Marija Magdalēna, Jēkabs and Margarēta. Following the death of Jēkabs, his part of the property was distributed between the sisters.⁴⁵ Some gold and silver-ware, as well as most of the furniture were bought by other fishermen and boaters. One of the most active buyers of jewelry and other things of Jēkabs Ozoliņš, including a fisherman's boat, was the nephew of his second wife, also a boater, Georgs Dāvids Ranks (1765–1836). Tomass Sēlis bought only an old brown horse, two cows, some wicker chairs, two old wooden chests, a bed, table-cloths, fire extinguishing tools, a prayer book and a damaged Latvian Bible; however, he was not interested in text books in Latvian and literature on the subject of religion in German.⁴⁶ The household objects sold at the auction provide an idea of the living conditions and property of Tomass' father-in-law, which was modest taking into account how many things were marked as old or damaged by the officials of the Custody Court.

With the obtained property the Sēlis couple started their own lives in Mūkusala, where they lived until their deaths.⁴⁷ It must be noted that Tomass did not have to pay for the property the entire sum of the bid, because it was decreased by subtracting the inheritance of Marija Magdalēna. The money collected at the auction was divided by the Custody Court among the three children of Jēkabs Ozoliņš.

Having settled down at Mūkusalā, four children were born at the family of Tomass and Marija Magdalēna. The first child was named after Tomass' father Niklass (1793–1798), but he died prematurely, not reaching the age of 6. Later on, every two years the Sēlis family had an addition and thus Johans Jēkabs was born (1795–1821), followed by Margarēta (1797–1797) and Anna Ģertrūde (1798–1848), but only one son and one daughter reached the age of maturity. Mostly, the family members of boaters and fishermen were asked to be the godparents of the children, most of them were from the Ranks and Nariņš families.⁴⁸

The profession of boaters emerged in Riga in the first half of the 17th century as a union of passenger and cargo carriers from one bank of the Daugava to another, but in the 18th century they were mostly engaged in transporting goods from and to the trade ships, which could not moor to the city. Profession-related regulations and fares approved by the City Council were applied to the trade. A candidate who applied to the vacancy of a boater had to be free, able to write and read and experienced in work on water. Several people worked on each boat, but the boater was responsible for the successful implementation of duties. If there were any arguments, the traders usually sued the owner of the boat – the boater. The brethren of boaters chose their steersmen and labourers on their boats and paid their wages, therefore within the profession they acted as small entrepreneurs, especially those who had several boats.

Tomass Sēlis was 17 years old when having bought a boat, he took the position and swore an oath of a boater in the Latvian language. The management of the profession characterized him as a decent and careful person.⁴⁹ In 1788, when Tomass got married to Marija Magdalēna, he was elected as one of the senior boaters in the profession. Despite that, he was too poor to ensure that his boat was reconstructed in accordance with the requirements of the traders in terms of covering the goods.⁵⁰ After a few years, Tomass was elected as the elterman, although he was not even 30 years old. Such an early involvement not only in the profession of the boaters, but also in the management position let

Tomass acquire the necessary skills to gradually improve the living conditions of his family. Despite the fact that the election of elterman took place every three years, Tomass, with a little break between 1798 and 1799, worked in this position until his death, and in the documents of court proceedings there are no complaints against him as an elterman.

Historian Melita Svarāne points out that in the 1780s and 1790s the wellbeing of boaters increased.⁵¹ This was caused by the stable increase of exports from Riga, which is also evidenced by the number of incoming ships, the amount of exported goods and the indicators of export value.⁵² Consequently, the boaters could not complain about a lack of work.

In 1795, Tomass Sēlis owned two land plots in Mūkusalā, one of which was his family's household. The family of Tomass Sēlis was joined by the brother of Tomass Sēlis and his seven year old stepdaughter Ģertrūde Salmiņa (*Salming*).⁵³ Official custody was not arranged at the Custody Court, therefore it cannot be known how the girl happened to be in the family of Sēlis and what her future fate was, except the fact that in 1806 she features as the maid of the Sēlis family.⁵⁴ The household also included two maids and three servants, who, perhaps, worked not only at the house, but also on the boats of Tomass. The second property was the home for a tavern managed by people who were paid by the Sēlis family. There were quite a few people working in the trade assistant professions who had taverns in Pārdaugava. These were the places where newcomers from Courland socialized, waiting for the possibility to get to the right bank of the Daugava or sell their goods without entering the city. The tavern ensured additional income not only to the Sēlis family, but also to their descendants.⁵⁵ Judging from the size of the household and the amount of properties and boats, at that time the Sēlis family was an averagely prosperous boater's family if compared to other families such as the Dāle, Dumpis, Ranks, Šlunis or Rungainis.

The increase of Tomass Sēlis' prosperity over this period of time was also attested by the fact that he worked on three boats, of which one was named *Helēna* (only three other boaters had

three boats). Sēlis also increased his family property in the beginning of the 19th century, buying several land plots, or parts of them, from neighbours.

In 1806, in the household of Tomass Sēlis, apart from the wife and two children, there was also a servant boy, three maids and a servant registered. There were also nine other servants named, who perhaps were not employed at the household but as labourers assisting with the boats of Tomass Sēlis. The entire household had risen to 26 people, if counting the relatives of the servants (excluding the people from the tavern).⁵⁶ The households of other boaters and fishermen also used to have a rather large number of servants, although it was not very common. In terms of the size of the household, Tomass Sēlis could be compared to the rich Ranks family, while other boaters maintained a small amount of servants and let out their free rooms to tenants. In 1811, there were two servants, four teenage trainees and nine servants recorded at Tomass Sēlis's house: two were disabled, one weak-minded, and one physically weak.⁵⁷ Unfortunately, women were not included in this revision.

In 1816 Tomas Sēlis was the second biggest land owner in Mūkusalā. There were seven buildings in his property, including the tavern and the household buildings.⁵⁸ He organised the transportation with 2 boardings and 5 boats with a total hoisting capacity of 360 t. Bigger capacity was possible only by two boaters. However, in the 1816 soul revision three stepdaughters were recorded in the family of Sēlis – the 16 year old Marija Elizabete Peša (*Poesch*), the 12 year old Margarēta Strazdiņa and the six year old Helēna Medne. All of them were registered as the daughters of boaters. In this household nine more persons belonging to the profession of boaters were mentioned, including all the abovementioned surnames, four apprentices and 10 servants and maidservants. Overall, the Sēlis household included 34 people, excluding the staff at the tavern.

The above mentioned girls were from the professional environment of Tomass Sēlis, but due to certain circumstances were taken under the care of the elterman's family. Taking into account

that the Sēlis family was quite prosperous at the time, but contrary to many other families did not have 5–8 children, they apparently fostered children from the families of the trade brethren. Tomass included the boys in the profession of boaters as apprentices, but the girls remained under the guardianship of his wife, Marija Magdalēna. Regarding the girls, Margarēta Strazdiņa came from the steersman Mihaels Strazdiņš' family. After he drowned in 1803, his widow Anna lived at the household of Sēlis together with her three daughters. Later, Margarēta got married to one of Tomass Sēlis's labourers and lived at the same household with her husband and three daughters after the death of Tomass and Marija Magdalēna. Helēna Medne was from the steersman Mārtiņš Mednis' family and Marija Magdalēna Sēle was her godmother. At the time when she was registered as a stepdaughter at the household of Tomass Sēlis, her father worked there as well. Marija Elizabete Peša was from the boater Heinrihs Pešs' family and after her father's death in 1813 became an orphan together with her two youngest brothers. While Marija Elizabete counted as part of the Sēlis family, both her brothers were registered as the assistant boaters of Tomass Sēlis.⁵⁹ It must be noted that the foster children were also registered in other well-off families of boaters, but it was not a very common tradition. In order to provide a broader opinion on the socio-communicative space of Marija Magdalēna Sēle, it can be mentioned that from 1791 to 1816, namely, within a period of 25 years, she was asked to be a godmother in her parish for 27 children from 21 families. Of those, 12 children were named after her. Marija Magdalēna was chosen as a godmother by 10 boaters (Georgs Dāle asked her three times), whereas fishermen Andrejs Rungainis and Andrejs Krastiņš, as well as hemp swingler Kārlis Krūze (*Kruse*) chose her as a godmother for two of their children. The names and the professions have been mentioned in this article several times, giving another reason to believe that by choosing godparents the families strengthened their mutual relationship and friendship, as well as the relationship among neighbours and professions, although it is impossible to say which factor was the crucial one. The

women of the Ranks and Dālis families were asked to be godmothers as often as Marija Magdalēna Sēle, further evidence this position was offered to the wives of influential and rich boaters.

It can also be mentioned that Tomass – the husband of Marija Magdalēna – received several awards over his lifetime and filled his duties in a complicated period of time while trying to find a compromise among the interests of the city, traders and profession, and even spending a certain period of time in prison.⁶⁰ The views of Tomass Sēlis in the beginning of the early 19th century were not the standardized views of a manager protecting monopoly rights who would have to take care of a “secured livelihood” of all trade members, because he declared that:

- 1) A free man cannot be turned into a slave and forced to work without any pay doing humiliating jobs, freedom is only one and it is stipulated by the state law;
- 2) One can live only on profit and the boaters should be paid for their work;
- 3) All people are capable of and have the courage for growth, if only they are not oppressed;
- 4) Each person must be allowed to earn according to his skills and diligence, those who are lazy and slow should not be given any work out of pity.⁶¹

Historian Melita Svarāne is of the opinion that such views “declared the ideology of the emerging bourgeoisie, demanding the right to act as one pleases with their property and profit”.⁶² In the position that the elterman took, one can notice the impact of Enlightenment ideas, yet it cannot be known how he obtained such a worldview and to what extent it influenced the household of the Sēlis family.

Several labourers working on the boats of Tomass Sēlis and people living at his household died at a very young age, and the elterman’s family was not protected from this either. Johans Jēkabs, the son of Marija Magdalēna, continued his father’s profession and started to work as a boater, but died from an unknown disease at the age of 25. After a few years, Marija Magdalēna parted from the last man of the family – her husband

Tomass, who died at the age of 66. In the newspaper of Riga the following funeral notice could be read:

“After a brief sickness, the God took my beloved husband Tomass Sēlis on the 8th day of this month at the age of 66. Anyone who knew him in the profession where he worked as an elterman for 41 years, was a witness to our very, very happy life together, which lasted for 42 years and will be able to understand the burden of grief caused by his loss, especially to me and my children, and will not decline the comfort to participate in his burial, which will take place on 13th August, at 3pm in the afternoon from my apartment in Mūkusalā. I kindly ask to commiserate.

*Riga, 12 August 1830, Marija Magdalēna, the widow of Sēlis, born Ozoliņa”.*⁶³

The wife of Tomass was a widow for three years. Pursuant to the rights in Livonian cities, upon the death of one of the spouses, in this case the husband, the widow and the children received joint ownership of the property, which the widow was entitled to manage and use even after the children came of age, up to the moment she died, married again or the heirs decided voluntarily that they wanted to divide the property.⁶⁴ Because Marija Magdalēna did not have any adult sons, she owned the entire property of Sēlis, including the boats of the boaters. Traditionally, widows were assisted by counsellors to supervise the boat operations and if necessary, to solve work related problems in the profession of boaters either within the profession itself or at court, but there is no evidence that Marija Magdalēna had such counsellors, which could mean that her boats were managed by her son-in-law.⁶⁵

Not long before her death Marija Magdalēna wrote her last will. It says that at the moment of writing the will, Marija Magdalēna was physically weak. The witnesses also testified that she was sick and bedridden. The will indicates that the 42 year long marriage with Tomass was a happy one and the property to be passed on for the inheritance was earned by themselves. The entire property – land plots, boats, one boarding (a small ship), silverware, clothing, linen, furniture, household objects, vehicles,

cash and debt claims – was passed to her only daughter Anna Ģertrūde, married as Sproģe (*Sprohge*), and in the event of her daughter's death, to her husband, the elterman of boaters Michaels Georgs Sproģis, if there were no children born in their family. If Anna Ģertrūde had children, they would become the heirs, but until they came of age the inherited property would be managed by Marija's son-in-law. Small sums were allocated to the charity establishments in Riga. Marija Magdalēna had signed with three crosses, which in her case was not a sign of illiteracy, but physical weakness, since she had signed her father's inheritance documents properly.⁶⁶ Such a formulation in the will protected the potential grandchildren of Marija Magdalēna from the necessity of dividing the mother's property with Mihaels Sproģis. In the case of Anna Ģertrūde, Mihaels as a widower could have claimed half or even two thirds of the property if they'd had one child,⁶⁷ but the will prevented such an outcome.

Marija Magdalēna died at the age of 58. After her death, the town council announced a six month period to claim the inheritance of Sēlis, but no one applied, therefore the property could be divided according to the last will of Marija Magdalēna.⁶⁸

Marija Magdalēna was from a family of fishermen, where she grew up together with her stepsisters and stepbrother. Married into the Rank family, she soon became a widow and married again – to the boater Tomass Sēlis. After the death of her father, she returned to her childhood house as the manager of the house and as a result of the successful work operations of her husband became a rich woman in her socio-economic group. Her husband was the elterman of boaters for several decades and worked on several boats, therefore the household management was something that Marija Magdalēna took care of. She had several servants and maids at her disposal. This also corresponds to the ideas about women's duties in the respective time period and place.⁶⁹ Along with a decent lifestyle, which was required from the Sēlis family by their belonging to the profession and which could not be ignored if they were to keep their high rank in the profession, the family had certain confidence and pride in their achievements.

From her four children, only two became adults, and only the daughter established an independent life. The children of several boaters – the colleagues of Tomass – were fostered by the Sēlis family. Becoming a widow, Marija Magdalēna was one of the few women from the families of trade assistant professions who had written a final will in which she left everything to her only daughter or her daughter's children.

ANNA ĢERTRŪDE, THE DAUGHTER OF TOMASS SĒLIS

Anna Ģertrūde (1798–1848) grew up at the house of Tomass Sēlis and Marija Magdalēna Sēle in Mūkusalā together with her brother and several fostered daughters of boaters. In 1824, at the age of 26, Anna Ģertrūde got married to the boater Mihaels Georgs Sproģis (*Sproģe, Sprohje*, [1795]–1848). He was from the family of anchor handler Juris (1772–1819) and Katrīna Sproģe, and grew up with three siblings in the small land plot of his father in Mūkusalā. Two of his brothers died during their infancy.⁷⁰ The profession of anchor handler was a comparatively small profession (12–25 members). In the trade season they steered the rafts and barges coming from the inner regions of Russia to get them to the city, where they were moored at the banks or islands.

After the death of the mother-in-law, the family of Sproģis inherited the entire property of Tomass Sēlis, which was assessed by Mihaels Georgs:

- 1) A house and other buildings – 1500 silver roubles;
- 2) Silverware – 200 roubles;
- 3) A boarding – 1000 roubles;
- 4) 6 boats – 1500 roubles;
- 5) An oak dugout – 100 roubles;
- 6) Cows, horses and vehicles – 200 roubles;
- 7) Furniture – 150 roubles.⁷¹

Thus, the total sum of the inheritance exceeded 4000 silver roubles. Mihaels Georgs took over the profession of his father-in-law and became an elterman of boaters.⁷² The profession of

boaters was not as profitable as earlier, because the professions based on monopoly experienced a crisis and the traders wanted to transport their own goods. Already in 1820 only 12 boaters remained in their positions, and the transportation of goods was often implemented by individually employed persons, showing that in the 1830s the position of a boater had become an economically decaying group of petit bourgeoisie.⁷³ Also, the Daugava was deepened and some trade ships could reach the port now. Thus, the number of boaters and the total load capacity of their boats gradually decreased.⁷⁴ In the 1830s, Mihaels Georgs became an owner of several schooners. It is unknown whether these ships brought the expected profit to Sproģis. For some reason, in 1840 Sproģis sold the boarding *Helēna* inherited from his father-in-law, a grand piano, five wall mirrors and other furniture. Perhaps, several debt claims from 1840 where Michaels Georgs was involved as the respondent were the reason for selling the property for more than 2600 silver roubles.⁷⁵ On the other hand, in a dispute among several boaters in 1841 it was indicated that Mihaels Georgs was imprisoned due to the complicated financial situation and debts.⁷⁶ As noted by the historian Reinhard Sieder, the people who were raised according to the outdated ideas about trade masters lacked the skills to readjust to the development of an industry oriented to capitalistic needs.⁷⁷ Perhaps Mihaels Georgs also lacked such skills and he could not ensure the workload for his ships in the circumstances of free competition if within 7 years from the moment he received his wife's inheritance he was so badly indebted. Not only him, but also Johans Dāvids (1807–1859), who came from the well-off Ranks family and who was trying to fulfil the duties of a boater for too long, was rather poor at the end of his life.⁷⁸

It is difficult to draw any conclusions about the character of Mihaels Georgs. There was only one unusual comment provided by Captain Karstens Šrēders (*Schröder*) in court proceedings, saying that the duplicity of Sproģis was also revealed by his nationality. Surely, this is not an objective verdict about a person, but evidence of the arguments used in court proceedings against each other.⁷⁹

Mihaels Georgs and Anna Ģertrūde lived at the house No 8/9 of Tomass Sēlis on Mūkusala until 1845, when it was sold, and they became the tenants in the same house. They had taken under their guardianship the children of Mihaels Georgs' sister, Katrīna: Tomass and Anna Ģertrūde, who had Tomass Sēlis as her godfather. Katrīna got married to the previously mentioned boater Tomass Pešs ([1794]–1831), who was registered at the household of Tomass Sēlis and worked for a long period of time as his assistant, but they both died a few years after the children were born.

Mihaels and Anna had three children – Georgs (1839–?) and twins Marija Elizabete and Hedviga Helēna (1840). The girls were born prematurely and Hedviga died a few days after birth.⁸⁰ Like several rich representatives of trade assistant professions, Mihaels Georgs, too, chose to baptise his children at St. Peter's parish. The families of old burger traders belonged to this parish, but Sproģis still continued burying of his family members in Āgenskalns.

The cemetery was also a burial place for Mihaels Georgs and Anna Ģertrūde, when they got sick in July 1848 and died of cholera, which was raging through the entire country. Although there were nine hospitals of cholera working in Riga, 6990 people got sick between June and November, and out of these, 2229 people died.⁸¹ A special committee was established in the Baltics which took care of several hundred widows and orphans of cholera. The daughter of Mihaels Georgs's sister, Anna Ģertrūde, took care of the children of Sproģis, who at the time were 8 and 7 years old. Anna Ģertrūde herself grew up at the family of Sproģis after the death of her parents. She, together with her husband Johans Jēkabsons, called also Šulcs (*Jacobsohn*, gen. *Schultz*, ?–1850), lived in the old house of Sproģis in Mūkusala No 1. The Custody Court nominated anchor handler Maksimiliāns Roze (*Rose*)⁸² and Johans Jēkabsons, who announced themselves as close family friends, the official guardians of the under-age children. After the death of Johans Jēkabsons, it was the boater Tomass Balks, whose father had worked for Tomass Sēlis and who also lived in Mūkusala, that became the children's guardian.

Later, Georgs lived with Ameliāns Roze in Zaķusala. Both children received home schooling.⁸³

The entire property of the deceased, including furniture, clothing, linen, the piano and the violin, was sold by the Custody Court at the auction. At the end of their lives, the household objects of the Sproģis family consisted of a polished bureau, a polished bed and a chest of drawers, an oak wardrobe and a convertible table, a wall clock, eight pictures and two kitchen sideboards. In the shed, there were other pieces of furniture and clothing, which most likely could not be placed in the new apartment. The list also mentions old books, but their titles have not been indicated. Also, the court sold by auction two boats and anchors of Mihaels Georgs.⁸⁴

When the Custody Court announced that the creditors of the Sproģis family could apply, it turned out that Mihaels Georgs owed the Riga Tax Administration 144 roubles in tax from the time period 1839 to 1848. Some boaters, who had unpaid salaries, also applied, but the biggest amount of claims were constituted by the holders of obligations and exchange bills, whom Mihaels Georgs owed money. The total sum of debt exceeded 1400 silver roubles, but the sum obtained from the property auction of the deceased made only 149,13 roubles after the deduction of court tax (from which 103,57 roubles constituted the sum of the household).⁸⁵ It must be taken into account that the number of participants at the auction during the cholera epidemic and thus the obtained sums could be rather small in comparison to the market value of the objects. The most valuable objects were the piano, the polished bureau, a black satin coat and a black jacket for men. Thus, Sproģis only left the debt to his children, and the guardians tried to reach an agreement for decreasing the sum.⁸⁶ One of the witnesses at court noted that at the end of his life Mihaels Georgs was poor and unemployed. Only in 1851 the court concluded the inheritance case of Sproģis and divided the sum among the plaintiffs.⁸⁷

Anna Ģertrūde was from the prosperous family of the elterman of boaters Tomass Sēlis and became the only heiress of the

property after the death of her mother. She got married to the boater Mihaels Georgs Sproģis, who was also raised in Mūkusala. There were two children of their own and two adopted from the sister-in-law. Due to the crisis in the profession of boaters, the Sproģis family went bankrupt and lost their house. Anna Ģertrūde and her husband were the victims of the 1848 cholera epidemic. Her daughter was raised in the family of her husband's sister's daughter, whereas her son was adopted by the family of an anchor handler.

CONCLUSION

In the given time period, the course of life of a woman was determined by legal and socially accepted restrictions, which influenced her everyday life and fate overall. This does not mean that a woman must be viewed as a passive object of history who was always under the control of a man. Sex and the socio-economic group a girl was born into determined her status and range of activities to a great extent, yet it did not turn her into an element devoid of any personality.⁸⁸

The life of a woman mostly must be viewed through the prism of her family. In the beginning it is her father's family and later – her husband's. The example of the Sēlis family shows that girls born into the families of assistant professions or fishermen in Pārdaugava grew up in this community, got married, raised their children and were buried there. Their space of social mobility over the course of three generations (a church, cemetery, father's house, husband's house) consisted of a plot of land stretching across around 9 kilometres on both banks of the Daugava.

Over the course of all three generations, the family of Sēlis – Sproģis was closely related to the profession of boaters and fishermen. The choice of the "other half" could be one of the reasons to enter into the profession, or it could have been to gain some other benefit. The age of marriage for girls was in the range of 23–30 years old. There are no studies which would allow this age to be compared with general tendencies of the time in wider society,

but it is obvious that the average indicators in the Baltic German society and German countries are similar in the second half of the 19th century.⁸⁹ In the example of Jēkabs Ozoliņš, the father of Marija Magdalēna Sēle, repeated marriages to widowed spouses occurred. To escape the subsequent conflicts of inheritance, marriage contracts were signed where the widowed spouse, including a woman, could perform as the initiator of the marriage contract. There are quite a few studies confirming that a widow with a property attracted the attention of property-less men and that this phenomenon was characteristic in various periods of time, although in the 18th and 19th century remarriages of widows happened less frequently than in the previous centuries.⁹⁰ In the framework of the given family, remarriages were frequent, yet it is impossible to mention the reasons why the respective people were eager to enter into marriage again. In the only two documents which Marija Magdalēna Sēle had signed as an author – the last will and the funeral notice of her husband – it was indicated that their marriage was happy. Although the public status of both sources and the relative meaning of “happiness” must be taken into account, it cannot be ruled out that at the end of her life Marija Magdalēna really considered her marriage successful. As noted by researchers, the quality of marriage has raised a lot of debates among historians, because the contradictory evidence of the sources does not allow any overall conclusions to be drawn.⁹¹

The sources that have been preserved from that period of time do not provide any information on the mutual relationship among these people. Usually, children grew up in rather big families, although Tomass Sēlis and Mihaels Georgs Sproģis did not have many children of their own when compared to other families of that time, and they were born after several years of marriage. Thus, Marija Magdalēna and her daughter Anna did not spend a lot of their mature years in pregnancy, caring after infants, which regulated the lives of women in the respective period of time to a great extent.⁹² In the example of the Sēlis – Sproģis family, the co-habitation of several generations within one household can be observed. In the family of Niklass Sēlis a

grown-up single son lived; in the family of Tomass Sēlis, a single younger brother; in the family of Mihails Georgs Sproģis, the children of the deceased sister. This only reveals a few of the possible models of co-habitation at the time. Since the women of the Sēlis-Sproģis families were not involved in the court proceedings between the members of family or neighbours, nothing can be said about their status within their community or the opinions of the residents of Pārdaugava in terms of this family. Neither is it possible to reconstruct their daily activities, except the fact that somebody played music in the family. Because the wife of a boater or any other service provider could not get involved in the activities related to her husband's work, as opposed to the wives of fishermen, who could sell the fish in the market, their everyday lives were focused on the maintenance of their households. Depending on the prosperity of the family and the number of servants, as well as the number of children and their age (little children had to be looked after, bigger children could be helpful themselves), the women of these families were responsible for cleanness, water supplies, cooking, market visits, livestock, gardening and other household-related activities. Also, according to the available sources, it is impossible to tell whether the women of the Sēlis-Sproģis family were involved in contributing towards the family budget.

As it can be seen in the case of Marija Magdalēna, the inheritance of her father was used as the foundation for the household of Tomass Sēlis, which could only increase under the favourable circumstances of the profession of boaters. He belonged to the management of the trade assistant profession protecting monopoly rights; however, his lifestyle and world perception made him closer to an entrepreneur providing transportation services. Over his lifetime, he managed to balance both roles. Whereas Mihaels Georgs Sproģis got married to the only daughter of a rich elderman of boaters, which traditionally ensured the capital for starting one's own economic activities, yet in his case was unsuccessful. Thus, it can be concluded that the fate and wellbeing of a woman to a great extent depended on the success of her father

and later her husband. The man of one generation, Tomass Sēlis, knew how to use the favourable economic circumstances. Starting out as the owner of a partially equipped boat and a small wooden house with one room, he went on to become one of the richest members in a trade assistant profession and held the management position in the circumstances of crisis. Along with Tomass, his wife Marija Magdalēna went her humble beginnings as a fisherman's daughter to become the household manager of a substantial property. The man of another generation – Mihaels Georgs Sproģis – inherited the property, but lost it all in a short period of time, failing to adjust to the new trends in the business environment. Along with Mihaels Georgs, his wife Anna Gertrūde turned from a rich elterman's daughter into the wife of a bankrupt boater.

Only thanks to the materials of several revisions is it possible to have an insight into the structure of the household of Tomass Sēlis, which reveals the social care model of the time. Several daughters of boaters were fostered by the family of Tomass due to the fact that some misfortune had happened to their parents. The boys were included in the profession of boaters and were taught to work on boats. Those who were not capable of fulfilling the duties of the profession were left at home to work in the household. Of course, it cannot be ascertained what role the wife of Tomass Marija Magdalēna played in the establishment of such a model. However, the niece, who grew up in the family of Mihaels Georgs Sproģis, later took on responsibility for the daughter of Mihaels Georgs, who had been orphaned. This shows that family ties were crucial when relatives were struck by misfortune.

Of course, the fate of the women of the Sēlis family does not allow any overall conclusions to be drawn about the lives of all women in the families of trade assistant professions, yet it does present an insight into the lives of these three women and the opportunity to see how they evolved in the respective time and space and interacted with the surrounding people and events.

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SIEVIETES RĪGAS TIRDZNICĪBAS PALĪGAMATU DZIMTĀS 18. GADSIMTĀ UN 19. GADSIMTA PIRMAJĀ PUSĒ: TOMASA SĒĻA ĢIMENES PIEMĒRS

Anita Čerpinska

Dr. hist., Latvijas Universitātes Latvijas vēstures institūts. Zinātniskās intereses: Rīgas tirdzniecības palīgamati 18.–19. gadsimtā.

Raksts veltīts Rīgas pārcēlāju amata eltermaņa Tomasa Sēļa ģimenes trīs paaudžu sievietēm – mātei, sievai un meitai, mēģinot uz viņu piemēra parādīt dažādos sieviešu likteņus Rīgas tirdzniecības palīgamatu vēstures kontekstā pārcēlājiem labvēlīgos un nelabvēlīgos ekonomiskajos apstākļos. Parādīts, cik konsolidētu vidi veidoja Rīgas tirdzniecības palīgamatu dzimtas, kuras savstarpēji saradojās un dzīvoja konkrētā Rīgas daļā, aprakstīta arī dažādā sieviešu mantiskā situācija, laulības līgumu slēgšanas apstākļi, atraitņu un bāreņu stāvoklis šādās ģimenēs. Raksta tapšanā izmantoti dažādu Rīgas tiesu materiāli.

Atslēgas vārdi: Anna Sēle, Marija Magdalēna Sēle, Anna Ģertrūde Sēle, pārcēlāji, Mūkusalā.

Kopsavilkums

Raksta centrālā vieta atvēlēta ilggadējā Rīgas pārcēlāju eltermaņa (vadošais administratīvais amats palīgamatu iekšienē) Tomasa Sēļa (1763–1830) ģimenei, fokusējoties uz triju paaudžu sievietēm – viņa māti, sievu un meitu, lai parādītu dažādos sieviešu likteņus dzimtas vēstures ietvaros 18. gadsimta otrajā pusē un 19. gadsimta pirmajā pusē, kas ir pakāpenisku pārmaiņu laiks gan palīgamatu, gan visas Rīgas vēsturē.

Par tirdzniecības palīgamatiem Rīgas vēsturē sauc amatos apvienotas cilvēku grupas, kuras nodarbojās ar tirdzniecības preču transportu, apstrādi, svēršanu un vērtēšanu. Ar preču pārvadāšanu pa Daugavu vai apstrādi, kā arī zvejā nodarbinātie tradicionāli apmetās Daugavas tuvumā, uz salām un Daugavas kreisajā krasā netālu no upes. Amatu locekļus bieži apvienoja ģimeniskas saites, un liela viņu daļa piederēja pie Sv. Jāņa latviešu draudzes. Tā kā šie cilvēki piederēja vienai draudzei, dzīvoja vienā apvidū un strādāja radniecīgos amatos, viņus var uzskatīt par Rīgas sabiedrībai piederošu iedzīvotāju kopu ar savu grupas apziņu un savdabīgu vietu Rīgas iedzīvotāju vidū. Raksts tapis, balstoties uz Latvijas Valsts vēstures arhīva materiāliem – baznīcu grāmatām, dvēseļu revīziju sarakstiem, nodokļu pārvaldes datiem un dažādu Rīgas tiesu materiāliem.

Avotu materiāls par Tomasa Sēļa māti Annu Sēli, dzimušu Lau (1729–1792), nav diez ko plašs. Viņa nāca no Rīgas tirdzniecības palīgamatiem pietuvinātas strādnieku ģimenes, dzīvoja tuvajā Pārdaugavā un ieprecējās turpat kaimiņos. Ilgs laiks viņas laulības dzīvē pagāja grūtniecības un bērnu audzināšanas zīmē, bet no astoņiem bērniem savu patstāvīgu dzīvi ārpus vecāku mājas nodibināja tikai divi dēli. Kad Anna nomira, viņas jaunākajam dēlam bija 18 gadi. Pēc Annas nāves viņas vīrs Niklass nodzīvoja atraitņos divus gadus un tad apprecējās vēlreiz arī ar atraitni un slēdza ar viņu vienošanos, lai nodrošinātu bērniem no pirmās laulības pienākošos mantojuma daļu.

Tomasa Sēļa sieva Marija Magdalēna, dzimusi Ozoliņa (1761–1833), nāca no Mūkusalā dzīvojošas zvejnieku ģimenes, kurā auga kopā ar pusmāsām un pusbrāli. Lai gan viņas tēvu nevar uzskatīt par bagātu Rīgas zvejnieku amata pārstāvi, tomēr viņa ģimenē bija slēgti vairāki laulības līgumi. Par Mariju Magdalēnu avotu materiāls ir daudz plašāks nekā par iepriekšējo paudzi. 21 gada vecumā ieprecējusies zvejnieku Ranku dzimtā, viņa drīz kļuva par atraitni un apprecējās otrreiz – ar pārcēlāju Tomasu Sēli. Pēc tēva nāves viņa atgriezās bērnības mājā jau kā mājas saimniece un veiksmīgas vīra saimniekošanas rezultātā kļuva par savam sabiedrības slānim bagātu sievieti. Viņas vīrs vairākus gadu desmitus pildīja pārcēlāju amata eltermaņa pienākumus un strādāja ar vairākām laivām, tādēļ saimniekošana īpašumā visdrīzāk palika sievas ziņā. Marijas Magdalēnas rīcībā gan bija vairāki kalpi un kalpones. No četriem bērniem pieauga divi, bet patstāvīgu dzīvi nodibināja tikai meita. Sēļu ģimenē tika pieņemti audzināšanā vairāku pārcēlāju – Tomasa darba kolēģu – bērni. Palikusi atraitne, Marija Magdalēna ir viena no nedaudzām palīgamatu ģimeņu sievietēm, kas kā liecību par sevi atstājusi testamentu, kurā visu novēlējusi savai vienīgajai meitai vai viņas pēctečiem.

Tomasa Sēļa meita Anna Ģertrūde (1798–1848) nāca no pārtikušā pārcēlāju eltermaņa ģimenes un kļuva par vienīgo viņa īpašuma mantinieci pēc mātes nāves, jo viņas abi brāļi un māsa bija miruši. Anna Ģertrūde 26 gadu vecumā apprecējās ar pārcēlāju Mihaelu Georgu Sproģi ([1795]–1848), kurš arīdzan bija uzaudzis Mūkusalā un nāca no enkurnieku dzimtas. Annas Ģertrūdes ģimenē auga divi pašas bērni un divi pieņemti vīramāsas bērni. Pārcēlāju amata krīzes vai kādu avotos neidentificējamu apstākļu dēļ Sproģi izputēja, zaudēja māju un iestīga parādos. Anna Ģertrūde un viņas vīrs kļuva par upuriem 1848. gada holeras epidēmijai. Visu viņu īpašumu tiesa izpārdeva ūtrupē, bet ienākumi sedza tikai nelielu daļu Sproģu atstāto parādu. Annas Ģertrūdes meita Marija

Elizabete uzauga vīra sievas meitas ģimenē, kamēr dēlu Georgu pieņēma kāda enkurnieku ģimene.

Visu trīs paaudžu garumā Sēļu – Sproģu ģimene bija cieši saistīta ar pārcēlāju un zvejnieku amatu. Kā redzams Marijas Magdalēnas gadījumā, tieši viņas tēva mantojums kļuva par pamatu Tomasa Sēļa saimniecības izveidošanai, kas labvēlīgos pārcēlāju amata darbības apstākļos varēja palielināties. Savukārt Mihaels Georgs Sproģis apprecēja bagāta pārcēlāju eltermaņa vienīgo meitu, kas viņam nodrošināja mantību savas saimnieciskās darbības uzsākšanai, kas tomēr bija visai neveiksmīga. Līdz ar to ir redzams, ka sievietes liktenis un labklājība lielā mērā bija atkarīga no tēva un vēlāk vīra panākumiem.

Protams, Sēļu ģimenes sieviešu liktenis neļauj izdarīt vispārinājumus par visu tirdzniecības palīgamatu ģimeņu sieviešu dzīvi, tomēr tas ļauj ielūkoties šo trīs paaudžu sieviešu dzīvēs un redzēt, kā tās veidojās attiecīgajā laikā un telpā un mijiedarbojās ar apkārtējiem cilvēkiem un notikumiem.

THE RELIGIOUS AND SOCIO-POLITICAL CONTEXT FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FIRST BAPTIST PARISHES IN COURLAND

Kristīne Ante

Dr. hist., doc. The Faculty of Arts of Charles University, Institute of East European Studies, Department of Baltistics. Research interests: Religious and socio-economic situation in the Baltic provinces of the Russian Empire, the activities of various Christian movements (sects) in the 19th–early 20th centuries.

In the 1860s Courland had become one of the first and the most significant centres of the movement of Baptism in the Russian Empire. The article provides an overview of the Baptist activities in Courland up to 1879, namely, up to the moment they were legally acknowledged. The author also examines the facilitating factors and the obstacles regarding the dissemination of the new religious movement. The author questions, whether the establishment of the first Baptist parishes in Courland can be related to their religious faith, dissatisfaction with their social status or the political protest against the monopoly of the Ev. Lutheran Church in the Baltic Provinces of the Russian Empire.

Key words: Ev. Lutherans, Baptists, sects, the Baltic Provinces, denominational politics.

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays Latvia considers itself a multi-confessional country where there is successful ecumenical cooperation between various Christian parishes, however, the situation has not always been like this. During Tsarist Russia the Orthodox Church enjoyed a privileged position because it was defined by law as the “leading and governing church” of the Empire whose rights deserved special protection. In the Baltic Provinces (Courland,

Livland and Estonia) it was the Ev. Lutheran Church which had enjoyed actual monopoly rights regarding religious matters since the Reformation. In 1918, when the independent Republic of Latvia was founded, the church was separated from the state but it maintained its authority in society. It defended the idea of the Christian ideal and the necessity of upholding moral values, as well as expressing its opinion regarding other current topical matters in society. First and foremost however, the Ev. Lutheran church represented a part of the cultural historical heritage of Latvia.

Although looking from outside it could seem that the three Baltic countries are very similar, this is not the case. Of course, there are certain similarities among them, but there are also many differences. While Latvians and Lithuanians are united by belonging to the same group of Baltic languages, Latvians and Estonians are united by the common historical experience of belonging to the same state structure, namely, the Livonian Confederation or *Terra Mariana*. There are not only differences between the Baltic countries, but within each country as well. For example, there are differences between the cultural historical regions of Latvia, i.e. Livland, Courland, Semigallia (also Semigalia) and Letgallia, formerly Inflanty (in Polish). The last of them, because of its long-term subordination to Rzeczpospolita and later administrative subordination to the Province of Vitebsk, has undergone a different historical development, and its affiliation to the Roman Catholic Church presents the most visible sign of this.

In the Provinces of Courland and Livland most people were Lutherans. The Orthodox Church accounted for the next biggest group of believers and their parishes were formed not only by Russians serving in the Russian army or administration, but also Latvians who left their original parishes in the 1840s and converted. The number of Orthodox believers also increased during the Soviet occupation when a high number of Russian-speaking people came to Latvia from other USSR republics. Due to the above mentioned reasons Latvia is the Baltic country where there is the biggest confessional diversity. This is also the main reason

why “Taizē”, an ecumenical community well known in Western Europe, chose Riga as the venue for its annual New Year meeting in 2016 (this was the first time the meeting had been held in Eastern Europe).

What is the role of the Courland Baptists in this confessional puzzle and why could they present an interesting and important subject for research? How do the historical sources I’ve proposed and analysed fit into the modern discussion about confessional policy in Tsarist Russia?

Nowadays, Baptists are one of the traditional confessions in Latvia and nobody views them as being foreign, exotic or dangerous. However, this attitude took a long time to form. The first Baptists appeared in Courland as early as the middle of the 19th century, meaning Courland was among the first centres of the Baptist movement in the whole Russian Empire. To a great extent, this was due to the geographic location, in particular, the relative closeness to Hamburg and Memel (modern day *Klaipėda*, Lithuania), which were the first Baptist parishes in Prussia. Thus, there was a certain exchange of ideas and people (mainly residents of cities) between these territories. The second most important Baptist centre was located in the former German colonies, in particular in Volhynia, and the third, which was created later (in the 1870s), in St. Petersburg among the most educated and upper class people. The movement became known as Pashkovism and Radstockism.¹

The emergence of new religious movements in society presented a threat to the existing religious institutions of the time. Pastors of the Courland Ev. Lutheran church were particularly harsh against the first Baptists and did everything they could in order to prevent the dissemination of Baptist ideas in the Baltic Provinces by using their authority and monopoly rights. The secular state authorities of the Province of Volhynia did not view the new movement with the same degree of suspicion, their attitude was rather neutral. Initially, this movement did not interfere with the interests of the Orthodox Church because it spread among the German colonists and Lutheran peasants. Therefore,

it was the viewpoint of the Courland Ev. Lutheran church which was decisive in determining whether and when Baptists would be allowed to act freely in the Russian Empire.

Within the context of the history of the Baptist movement, it is often stated that Baptism is a foreign movement for Russia and therefore automatically dangerous (at that time it was disdainfully referred to as the “Baptists sect”), brought to the country by foreign missionaries. This particular fact provided the grounds for turning against foreigners (the ones who had any relations abroad, in particular, with Germany) whenever Russia felt any threat. Thus, the Russian Empire felt threatened in the 1870s when there was a merging of German lands, as it was believed that the German Empire could wish to merge neighboring territories which were close to it in terms of history and culture, like the Baltic Provinces. The fear of Germans residing in the Empire intensified shortly before World War I when there was a hysterical turning against the German colonists who for several generations had been residing in Volhynia and were all viewed as German spies and agents².

Within this context, Courland Baptist parishes are unique because they were not formed only among the German residents. The main part of them consisted of Latvian and Liv peasants and city residents. **In this publication I would like to propose answers to the questions:** What contributed to the spreading of Baptism in this region? Should the popularity of this movement be explained based on political, social or religious causes? What role did the German factor, the Ev. Lutheran Church and the Russian Empire administration play in the matter of the recognition of Baptist parishes?

THE RESEARCH BASIS

Similar to many other new religious movements, the Baptists acted outside the law in the beginning by holding their meetings at private houses or outside away from towns and villages. They had to be as cautious as possible in order not to be caught and

accused of engaging in illegal activities. Therefore, the initial information about the activities of Baptists in Courland mainly consists of external data (data from police officers, Lutheran pastors). The sources created by the Baptists themselves mainly consist of the memories of first hand witnesses but were composed later, i.e. several decades after the events, moreover, access to them is restricted as they are stored in the archives of Baptist parishes or the personal archives of pastors.

Unpublished sources about Baptists are scattered in archives of various countries: the Russian State Historical Archive (*Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi istoričeskii arhiv*, abbreviated as the RGIA), the State Archive of the Russian Federation (*Gosudarstvennii arhiv Rossiiskoi Federacii*, abbreviated as the GARF), as well as the State History Archive of the National Archives of Latvia (*Latvijas Nacionālā arhīva Latvijas Valsts vēstures arhīvs*, abbreviated as the LNA LVVA). The first group consists of the documents of the Ev. Lutheran Church: reports of the Russian Ev. Lutheran General Consistory, protocols of the Ev. Lutheran Consistory Synod of Courland, as well as the complaints by the pastors of Lutheran parishes addressed to the Ministry of the Interior regarding the activities of Baptists. The other groups consist of the documents of secular power, namely the reports of the governor of Courland and the documents of the Third Section of His Majesty's Own Chancery or the Secret Police/Gendarmerie.

The annual reports of the Russian Ev. Lutheran General Consistory at the RGIA are available for the years 1864 to 1896.³ These reports are valuable due to the fact that they reveal the opinion and attitude of the General Consistory regarding various changes taking place in society, as well as towards Baptists. Of course, one must take into account that these reports were useful for the General Consistory to emphasize the positive role of the Church, because it ensured order and peace, and encouraged obedience to authority, put simply, the Church was the guarantor of safety and stability in the country.

The Ev. Lutheran Consistory Synods of Courland were also a platform for discussing current problems related to various new

religious movements. Because the protocols of synods entail the entire second half of the 19th century, they provide crucial information about the number of followers of the initially banned religious movements.⁴ The provided information regarding the “harmful impact” of the new Christian movements should be evaluated cautiously. In particular, one must compare it with the data provided in other historical sources. It must be noted that the protocols of synods are valuable also because they reveal the scope of knowledge (awareness) of Lutheran clergymen about certain phenomena. They allow an understanding of the motivation behind the Lutheran clergymen’s actions, while the detailed description of the discussed questions provides an opportunity to become acquainted with the diversity of opinions before a final decision was taken.

The documents of the Department of Religious Affairs of Foreign Confessions of the Ministry of the Interior help trace the activities of Baptists in the entire Russian Empire.⁵ In the course of studying the files one can acquire a rather complete view regarding the opinions that the governors general of the Baltic and Volhynia, as well as of Courland and elsewhere held regarding the possibilities of regulating the Baptism movement. A significant aspect, which must be taken into account when working with these documents, is that mostly their authors were the representatives of authorities, therefore, the new religious movements were evaluated according to the law. The “harmfulness” or “harmlessness” of each individual “sect” was assessed on the basis of each individual official’s knowledge and understanding.

The reports of the Governor of Courland provide a general overview of the province. The governor was interested in the life of Christian parishes mostly as regards the “people’s virtue”, namely, whether there was direct or indirect incitement to hatred against the state authority or whether the representatives of one religious denomination were incited to hatred against the believers belonging to another religious denomination. Changes of denomination without “grounded” reasons were not welcomed either. Due to the restricted amount of documents, reports on the

territory governed by the governor generally only provide information concerning the number of believers per denomination and their breakdown in various cities and districts.⁶

The Third Section of His Majesty's Own Chancery or the Gendarmerie dealt with the political investigation. Its task was to oversee the work of public administration institutions and to follow the processes in political and public life. The reports of gendarmes recorded the overall public mood, politically suspicious persons and their activities, and verified the gossip circulating in public and as well as tracing its origins.⁷

THE RESEARCH FIELD

For a long time the history of Baptists has been a comparatively marginal topic of research. Representatives of other confessions (Lutherans or Orthodox) who had a subjective viewpoint regarding Baptists as ideological opponents from whom the members of their parishes should be protected were the first to describe the Baptist faith. They composed various polemic writings where Baptists were described as undereducated, fanatic people providing too free interpretation of the Holy Writings. However, the Baptist authors emphasized that they were the true witnesses of Christ, true Christians (because they had assumed their belief being adults at their free will and not just via formal rebaptism at childhood) who had been unfairly suffering due to their belief.⁸ Irrespective of numerous persecutions they had remained loyal to their belief, and this they believed attested the correctness and strictness of their belief.

In the Soviet period Baptism was studied one-sidedly, since the results of such studies were often used for ideological purposes. The movement was interpreted merely as a manifestation of social protest aimed at overthrowing the autocracy and standing for the equality of the society. The religious aspect of the movement was neglected or completely ignored. In the framework of the anti-religious propaganda, Baptism was tendentiously described in order to prove its negative impact on youth.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the interest in the history of Russia experienced a boom. Slavic studies became very popular in many Western universities, good knowledge of Russian allowed them to work with the materials of libraries and archives of the Russian Federation. An essential turning point or change of the paradigm in the understanding of the history of Russia was brought by Swiss historian Andreas Kappeler (1943), in his monograph “The Russian Empire: a multiethnic history”, which has been published several times in German, Russian and English.⁹ He proposed looking at Russia not from the position of the center (Moscow and St. Petersburg), but from the bottom or periphery. This viewpoint revealed the country from quite a different perspective, i.e. as a multinational country, as a country where there were many more regional differences than had been deemed until then. Every region has its own historical tradition, a different ethnic and social structure, therefore, implementation of state policy in each of them could differ.

Several studies devoted to the confessional policy of the Russian Empire have also been published during the last two decades. Particularly extensive discussions have emerged regarding the confessional and national policy of the Empire in the so called North West region (Th. R. Weeks¹⁰, D. Staliunas¹¹, N. Dolbilov¹²). Researchers have also examined questions about the relationship between the center and the periphery, the Russian nation as the titular nation of the Empire and Orthodoxy as the leading faith in the Empire and other nations and denominations.

Within the context of the history of Courland Baptists, it is important to first note the studies published in Latvia. The history of Baptism in the Baltic provinces and nowadays in Latvia has mostly been a subject of interest to the Baptists themselves. The authors of the two most important monographs are pastors of Baptist parishes. One of them was Janis Riss (*Jānis Rīss*, 1883–1953), a pastor with a Master’s degree in history, whose work *Latviešu baptistu draudžu izcelšanās un viņu tālākā attīstība. Vēstures materiāli* (The Origins of Latvian Baptist Parishes and their Further Development) was published for the first time in 1913¹³ (the

Baltic Pastoral Institute republished it in 2016¹⁴). The other author was Janis Tervits (*Jānis Tervits*, 1936–2002), the Baptist Bishop Emeritus, whose work *Latvijas baptistu vēsture. Faktu mozaika* (The History of Latvian Baptists. A Mosaic of Facts) was published in 1999.¹⁵

Both works present materials abundant with facts, yet they cannot be regarded as taking a scholarly approach. In the case of J. Tervits, the work completely corresponds to its title – it is a mosaic of facts or a good manual for all those readers who would like to find information about the foundation of certain parishes, their servants, etc., but its major drawback is the overly fragmented structure and the absence of scientific apparatus. The author has mostly used his personal archive, which is not accessible to other researchers. The history of Baptism nowadays is continued by Olegs Jermolajevs (*Oļegs Jermolājevs* (1978))¹⁶, a doctoral researcher of the University of Daugavpils and the pastor of Cesis (Cēsis) Baptist Parish. Recently Prof. Valdis Teraudkalns (*Valdis Tēraudkalns*) from the Faculty of Theology, University of Latvia has written an article about the self-image of Latvian Baptists.¹⁷

Researchers most often view the history of the Baptist movement in the context of the freedom of conscience. The latest and most essential work which has been written on this topic, is the monograph “The Tsar’s Foreign Faiths. Toleration and the Fate of Religious Freedom in Imperial Russia”¹⁸ published in 2014 in Oxford, whose author is Professor Paul W. Werth from the University of Nevada. This work provides an overview of the above mentioned issues and the policy implemented by the state authorities not only in relation to Christian denominations, but also to other religions. Also the work by Heather J. Coleman (associate professor University of Alberta, Canada) “Russian Baptists and Spiritual Revolution, 1905–1929”¹⁹ published in 2005 is important. It reveals the difficulties of formation of Baptist parishes among peasants in the territory of what is now Ukraine and Georgia.

Within the context of my article the publication by P. W. Werth “Schism Once Removed: Sects, State Authority, and

Meanings of Religious Toleration in Imperial Russia”²⁰ published in 2004 is worth discussing. He compares the central government policies of the Empire in three different regions and on three “foreign confessions”²¹: in the Baltic Provinces, in Armenia and in the Kingdom of Poland. By opposing Robert Crews²², who describes relations between the state and the so-called “foreign confessions” in a too simplified way and “construes non-Orthodox religiosity as a refuge from the government’s intrusion”²³, Werth states that “the state’s attitude towards the ‘orthodoxy’ of foreign confessions was more ambivalent than Crews’ account allows, especially when we move beyond the reign of Nicholas I (1825–1855).”²⁴ He concludes that, although the state policy was generally uncertain and inconsistent (actions exhibited uncertainty and inconsistency), still in some cases it was politically beneficial for it to support schisms (i.e. to recognise their right to independent existence) for the purpose of weakening the positions of Ev. Lutherans or Roman Catholics. The state interests could have also been based on pure practical consideration, as it was much easier to control recognised religious movements; by subjecting them to the state laws they were alienated from their religious centres abroad at the same time.

One can agree to most statements expressed by P. W. Werth about the interaction of the state power and the Ev. Lutheran church, however, certain aspects deserve discussing. For example, by describing the thinking of the Ev. Lutheran church, P. W. Werth refers to the publications by the Orthodox Priest Jakob Lindenberg (1840–1898)²⁵. I think that this author should be viewed with criticism because he is not neutral in his discussion when he represents the Orthodox Church. Moreover, J. Lindenberg sees the local residents of the Baltic Provinces merely as passive chess-pieces who can be easily moved as required. In the introduction of his work “Protestant Sects” he writes that “the level of religiousness of Latvians and Estonians is miserably low, they do not have particular religious feeling. Without seeing any escape from this terrible situation, they are prepared to jump on any new teaching which would just allow them to find the truth

in it.”²⁶ This is presented as the main reason why “sects” gain acceptance so fast in the Baltic Provinces. Unfortunately, this too simplified view on Latvian religiousness is widespread in the works of historians up to now. The Reformation has “turned the light on” in the souls of obscurant Catholics and local residents have not become true Christians even after a couple of centuries have passed, therefore they join either the Herrnhuters or the Orthodox or the Baptists.

J. Lindenberg mentions another interesting example: in Haapsalu (Province of Estonia) Lutheran pastors who had not succeeded in stopping the increasing willingness of peasants to convert to the Orthodox Church invited a Baptist preacher to visit them. Their idea was quite simple, i.e. they thought it was better that peasants would join the Baptists and not the Orthodox Church because they would be able to leave the Baptists parish later in a simple way which would not be possible in the case of the Orthodox.²⁷ Although looking from the formal point of view the pastors were right, still it would be hard to imagine the motivation of Baptists for returning to the parish. Baptists were not moderate believers; they criticised the Lutheran church in all aspects (its tolerance towards drinking, insufficient punishing of open sinners, and its close links with the local nobility).

The analysis of the change of attitude of the Ev. Lutheran church as proposed by P. W. Werth is very valuable. He states that the Ev. Lutheran church, which had treated Herrnhuters in a clearly hostile way in the 18th century, upon feeling a threat by the Orthodox Church in the 1860s, changed its attitude to be much more tolerant towards movements previously totally unacceptable to it. It wanted to merge all its forces in order to fight the Orthodox Church, which was viewed as the greater evil. Lutheran pastors had also started appreciating the contribution by the Herrnhuters to the religious life of Latvians. They admitted that believers had started reading the Words of God much more decently, they had abandoned their previous bad habits and had become model believers. Thus, the Ev. Lutheran church was able to change its viewpoint regarding schisms depending on the

political situation.²⁸ It should be noted in this regard that this change of attitude and approximation to schisms could only happen in relation to the movements who maintained formal links to the Lutheran church.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The second half of the 19th century is an important period in the history of the Russian Empire. The preceding repressive regime created by the Tsar Nikolay I (1825–1855), who hoped to protect Russia against the processes ongoing in Europe by means of imposing strict prohibitions, turned out to be inefficient long-term. Following the defeat of Russia in the Crimean War (1853–1856), it was clear that essential reforms were needed in all the areas of state life. These were commenced as soon as the Emperor Alexander II came to power (1855). The scope of these reforms was hard to imagine. They impacted society, the economy, the military, the judicial system and many other areas. Just a few of the most important reforms included the following: cancellation of serfdom, restriction of censorship, permission to form unions, and reform of education, town administration and the court system. The initiated reforms impacted the existing order of society. They provided certain hope for a person or a group to be free to express their own opinion. This situation did not last long, because as early as the 1870s the policies of Alexander II became more cautious, and in the 1880s after his assassination, the next Tsar, Alexander III (1881–1894), resumed the previous, strict policies.

The second half of the 19th century was also a period of great change in the Baltic Provinces. The cancellation of serfdom had taken place there several decades earlier than in the rest of the Empire (in 1816 in the Province of Estonia, in 1817 in the Province of Courland and in 1819 in Vidzeme), however, it was actually implemented only around the 1860s when peasants bought their farms. Along with economic independence, their national spirits rose and the first Latvian intellectuals were born. Finally,

the Latvian peasants had a chance to be more mobile, to change their place of residence, to send their children to higher schools. There was also a certain flexibility in the national policy of religion. For example, in 1865 the parents of mixed marriages where one of the spouses was Orthodox and the other was Lutheran had the possibility to choose whether their child would be baptized as Orthodox or as Lutheran.²⁹ This exceptional condition was only applied in relation to the Baltic Provinces.

THE EMERGENCE OF BAPTISM

The movement of Baptism is one of the new religious denominations which separated from the Ev. Lutheran Church. The Baptists wanted to restore the ideals of the first Christian parishes, emphasizing the free choice of an individual to accept and confirm their faith. The parish in Hamburg founded by Johann Gerhard Oncken (1800–1884) in 1834 is considered to be the first community of Baptism in Europe.³⁰ In Germany, this new religious movement became especially popular in the 1850s. The missionaries started disseminating the ideas of Baptism, establishing local centres in other countries too. In the Russian Empire such centres were located in the Provinces of Courland and Volhynia.

However, initially the new movement lacked centralization, therefore the development of parishes and opinions about certain issues of faith could differ. This gave rise to a situation where not all Baptists had a clear understanding of their doctrine and the accurate name of the movement. When Baptism was introduced in the Russian Empire, the state authorities also had to become acquainted with its theology and to establish their attitude towards this movement.

There are two versions of the origins of Baptism in the territory of Latvia. The first theory states that Baptism originated among those inhabitants of Courland who “were invited (or summoned) by God” and only later they met the preachers of Baptism from elsewhere. The supporters of the second theory are of

the opinion that the disseminators of Baptism were foreign citizens who lived in Liepaja (*Libau*), Riga (*Riga*) and other cities. In both cases the Crimean War (1853–1856) and its consequences are referred to as an important event. In the first case it is stated that because of the decline of the volume of cargo at the port many residents of Liepaja lost their jobs and several families from the city moved temporarily to Memel. In the second case references are provided that the economic situation was better in Liepaja than in Memel after the war and, therefore, several families of craftsmen and workers moved from Prussia to Liepaja.

The first version is represented by Latvian historians of Baptism: the Bishop of the Latvian Baptists and historian Janis Tervits (*Jānis Tervits*, 1936–2002)³¹ and the Priest, Director of Riga Baptists Theological Seminary Janis Riss (*Jānis Rīss*, 1883–1953)³². They both have emphasized the contribution of A. Hamburger, the teacher at Ziras School in Ventspils district, in facilitating the piety of local inhabitants. A. Hamburger worked at Ziras School from 1847 to 1849. Apart from his responsibilities as a teacher, he was also engaged in popularizing the basic values of Christianity among school children and their parents. This community of people in Ziras not only gathered to worship, but also discussed such issues as the necessity of reading the Bible, celebration of Sunday, refraining from alcohol, etc. Among the pupils of A. Hamburger were E. Eglītis (*E. Eglītis*), J. Jankovskis (*J. Jankovskis*), J. Zirnieks (*J. Zirnieks*), as well as parents K. Berzins (*K. Bērziņš*), J. Dravnieks (*J. Dravnieks*) and others, who later became the continuators of work related to Baptism in Latvia.³³

The second version is represented by a German historian of Baptism, Otto Ekelmann³⁴. The supporters of this theory are of the opinion that an important impulse for the dissemination of the movement's ideas was the fact that some members of the German Baptist parish in Memel moved to and settled down in Riga and Liepaja straight after the Crimean War (1853–1856). O. Ekelmann regards these people as pioneers of missionary work, and he relates the origins of all Baptist movements in the territory of Latvia (not only on the Courland coast, but also in

Riga, Jelgava and later in Vidzeme) to the success of the Memel parish mission. Although there is no evidence that these members of the parish would have arrived in Courland with a mission to disseminate the ideas of Baptism among local inhabitants, it is possible that these foreign citizens – the Baptists – did not hide their faith from others and were active in the popularization of Baptist ideas. That was also how they attracted the attention of state authorities.

It seems that both versions have a grain of truth. Among Latvians there were groups of people who wanted to promote piety. However, it is arguable to what extent the members of these pious communities were informed about the basics of Baptism and followed its postulates. A certain role was also played by the fact that several German craftsmen moved from Prussia to Courland who had already become familiar with Baptism and attracted the attention of other Christians with their opinion and active position.

The first official information about the Baptists in Courland appeared around 1858, when a Baptist rope maker (?) Brandman (also spelled like “Brandtman”, “Brantman”. In the archive documents in Russian: “Brandman”) from Memel moved to Grobina (*Grobin*)³⁵. The following year he was joined by some inhabitants of this area. According to the data gathered by the Governor General, there were 14 followers in 1859, most of them foreigners.³⁶ The local state authorities of the Province of Courland turned against the Baptists because they organised secret meetings. The Lutheran pastors tried to return the backsliders “to the lap of the Church”, believing that the dissemination of this movement could be stopped by deporting the key preacher from the country or imprisoning him.³⁷ On 24th November 1860, the Governor of Courland Johann von Brevern (1858–1868) asked permission from the Governor General to deport Brandman from the country in order to prevent further dissemination of the “sect”. Permission was granted and in the beginning of the next year Brandman was forced to leave Courland and return to Prussia.³⁸

In 1861 the General Consistory of Ev. Lutheran Church sent a letter to the Minister of the Interior, where it was noted that the presence of the Memel parish preachers in Courland was not preferable. According to the Baptist tradition, public worship could be led by any member of the parish, therefore a preacher coming from abroad was unnecessary. It was also stated that the Russian government had no grounds for letting the Baptists spread in the Empire, because they violated the law which prohibited enticing the members of other parishes. Besides, it was emphasised that this “sect” was harmful, because according to their preaching one must obey God more than a man. It was feared that this belief would encourage people to disobey state authorities.³⁹

After becoming acquainted with the 1860 annual report submitted by the governor of Courland, J. Brevern, the Minister of the Interior, initiated extensive investigation of the movement with the help of general governor A. Suvorov. In this investigation it was found out that the ideas of Baptism in the districts of Aizpute (*Hasenpoth*) and Ventspils (*Windau*) were actually disseminated by the Prussian preacher Brandman and some accomplices.⁴⁰ In order to prevent further dissemination of the “sect”, in early 1861 Brandman was deported to Prussia.⁴¹ At this stage local pastors and noblemen played the most important role because they saw too much potential for free-thinking and the willingness to organise themselves among Baptists, which they viewed as unnecessary, as well as criticism of church procedures which had existed for centuries.

THE GROWTH OF THE MOVEMENT

The deportation of one person could not prevent Baptism from spreading roots in Courland, because the movement already had many followers. They secretly crossed the border in order to confirm their faith and would be biblically immersed or rebaptized. Initially this was done by land, later by the sea. In 1860 and 1861 three so-called Memel trips were organized, during which

the inhabitants of Courland were rebaptized and accepted into the Memel Baptist parish. The first trip took place on 2nd September 1860 with nine Latvians and two Germans participating in it. A second trip took place on 11th June 1861, when 15 people were rebaptized, and a third trip – on 20th June 1861.⁴² In August 1861, the Memel parish authorized A. Gertner not only to lead the new parish in Courland, but also to baptize and to distribute the communion. On 22nd September 1861 in Ziras, the first biblical immersion or baptism took place in the territory of Latvia.⁴³

Over the following years the number of Baptists continued to grow. In 1861 for example, the number of backsliding parish members of the Ev. Lutheran Church (Baptist followers) in the districts of the province of Courland was the following: Aizpute – 18, Kuldīga – 14, Ventspils – 177 and in cities and towns: Liepāja – 41, Grobina – 4, making a total of 268 believers.⁴⁴ As it was indicated in the 1861 report of the Governor of Courland J. Brevern, the activities of Baptists were secret, it can therefore be assumed that the number of followers was actually much higher.⁴⁵ The data attest that the highest number of Baptists was in Ventspils district. Perhaps this is due to the fact that Ventspils was the earliest founded parish – in 1861.⁴⁶

In May 1860, the Ev. Lutheran Consistory of Courland received a letter from the pastor of Priekule (*Preekuln*) parish, A. Hesselberg, who reported that “sectarians” had appeared in his parish calling themselves “Baptists”. A. Hesselberg reasoned that people wanted to join them due to the fact that they felt politically and economically oppressed. The Baptist preachers welcomed them very warmly and “talk[ed] about a spiritual awakening”. Meetings every Sunday were widely attended (the number is given, namely, around 1000 people)⁴⁷. It was stated that the Baptist preachers were engaged in proselytism. After a successful preacher’s sermon at the Holy Trinity Festival they obtained several hundred followers. They were mostly from other parishes, and only 20 from Priekule. They were baptized at Priekule marsh. “All means used to convince them to wait humbly until they will be recognized have not been productive. I turned to nearly every

member of the parish, but without any results, because they want to adopt Baptism with a nearly Satanic will.”⁴⁸

The pastor of Priekule also noticed that people of moderate means were among those who joined Baptism. He noted that the Baptists did not succeed in inhabiting the branch of Priekule in Asieten or Bagge Assieten, “because there was greater order and wealth”⁴⁹. The saddest fact was that all these meetings were organized during times of Lutheran public worship, making it disturbing for those members of his tiny parish who had not surrendered to the temptation of Baptism.

According to the statistical data of 1863⁵⁰, it can be seen that there were 685 Baptists in the Province of Courland. In comparison to 1862, their number had increased by 315 people. In 1865 the number of Baptists reached 722⁵¹, and by 1867 the number of Baptists had already reached 1320.⁵²

BAPTISM AS AN EXPRESSION OF SOCIAL PROTEST

Although in the literature on the history of Baptism the greatest emphasis is put on the peasants' inner quest for truth, some events occurring in the beginning of the Baptist movement in its core centres should be mentioned. In the 1860s, the protest movement of peasants erupted, especially in Courland. The peasants were not satisfied with agrarian circumstances and wanted to have their own land plots.⁵³ Up to the 1860s, there would not be a single peasant in Courland who owned land, despite the fact that pursuant to the 1817 law they were given rights to obtain real estate. At the time, when land was being sold to the peasants in the other two Baltic Provinces, Courland was the only province in the entire Empire where only the noblemen were considered landowners. Therefore, in 1863 the noblemen of Courland were forced to resign their monopoly rights to the land (to avoid the government interfering). They achieved the right to ask the highest possible price for their land, meaning the terms and conditions for the contracts of sale elaborated by the noblemen

in Courland, especially in private manors, were among the most difficult in the Russian Empire.⁵⁴

In the 1860s, the peasant households were destroyed, as attested by the report prepared by the Governor of Courland to the Ministry of the Interior: “[...] if the number of buildings in the private and knighthood manors, as well as those in the cities and belonging judges and pastors in Courland was 13,943 in 1861, then in 1865 it was 12,508.”⁵⁵ As indicated by the historian of agrarian issues Austra Mierina (*Austra Mieriņa*), several emigration waves of peasants also attest to the fact that they were not satisfied with the land situation. The most extensive emigration can be dated to 1864/1865. The emigration movement had two core centres – in Ilukste (*Illuxt*) and Ventspils districts, however it also took place in other districts. The peasants migrated mostly to two destinations – the Kingdom of Poland and the Province of Novgorod. In spring 1865, around 3000 people had fled from 6 districts of Courland. From those, nearly two thirds were peasants from Ventspils district, whereas in 1867 peasants from the districts of Grobina and Aizpute started to migrate to the Province of Kaunas. The emigration was based on the rumour that the land at these destinations was given at reduced tariffs, nearly for free.⁵⁶ In such a socially and economically unstable situation, when the dissatisfaction of peasants regarding the arbitrariness of noblemen grew, the preachers of a new movement who offered a certain alternative to the unity of the state and the Church could be received rather responsively.

THE KEY OBJECTIONS OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH

In 1864, the Ev. Lutheran Synod of Courland prepared a short brochure in Latvian.⁵⁷ It detailed the history of Baptism, as well as the characteristic features of its doctrine. The brochure was intended for the members of Lutheran parishes. In the introduction it was noted that many Baptists still did not know the postulates of their faith, since “they pick up [their ideas] in darkness

and in their hazy enthusiasm they think that they have found the path of blessing”⁵⁸.

The author of this work introduced the readership to those branches of Christianity mentioned by John Wyclif/Wicliffe (1324–1384) and Thomas Münzer (1490–1525)⁵⁹ which had expressed ideas about the equality of people and were against the christening of children before Baptism. The attitude towards these branches of Christianity was rather unmistakable – they did not accept baptism of children, they resigned the positions of priests, they were against any interventions by the state in the Church’s affairs, and they “so to speak, wanted to break all the tops and lift out all the roots from the ground, to achieve equality in all aspects of life, as it should be in the Kingdom of Heaven”⁶⁰. These “half-mad rebaptized [followers of Baptism]”⁶¹ could be blamed for “public disorder and murders”⁶². It was also noted that Baptists lacked consistency: in some places they were forbidden to swear an oath, to be recruited into an army and to take positions at courts. In addition, “they expelled an obvious sinner from the parish without any mercy, whereas in other places they tolerated the faults of their parish members”⁶³. Finally, the author of the brochure concludes that “in the Baptist parishes there are as many pious and honest people as in many others, and they could be gladly treated as brothers. Yet, there are also as many sulky, arrogant and sinful people among their audiences as in any other. Besides, they expel anybody who is not hiding their sins”⁶⁴. However, as stated by the author, among the Baptists there were also many members, who “pick up [their ideas] in darkness and bring great trouble in some places”⁶⁵. It was hardly believable that any harmony and peace could be reached with such people if they pretended that they were “missionaries among the Pagans, and would not stop with their coax and deceitful actions, hiding behind the name of God [and saying] that one must listen to God more than to people”⁶⁶.

It is not known how widely this brochure was distributed, however, it is clear that it could have definitely been read aloud from the pulpit during sermons. It has to be admitted that dis-

semination of various rumours was a usual phenomenon in the society of that period, moreover, the more actively they were denied by the local Lutheran pastor, the more suspicious it seemed. This even caused a contrary effect, as happened in the 1890s in the settlements inhabited by Latvians and Livs, when many Lutherans wanted to change to the Orthodox Church because they believed rumours that noblemen had hidden from them the fact that those who changed to the Orthodox Church would be able to get land either free or with relieved conditions. The persuasive abilities and activities of the Baptists everywhere where they were active could present a serious threat to the Lutheran parishes. In the first half of the 20th century it is possible to find warnings in publications of periodicals of all the confessions or in special annexes stating that Baptists are actually “wolves in sheep’s clothing (in sheep’s skin)” whose teaching may seem enticing at first glance, but is still harmful to one’s soul and misleading.

An official of the Gendarmerie of Courland, when visiting Liepaja in 1865, had gathered information about the activities of Baptists. He reported to the Third Section of His Imperial Majesty’s Own Chancery that “the sectarians gathered for meetings in secret, their public worships were not properly organized, the representatives were chosen by the community, and they were uneducated people”⁶⁷. The followers of Baptists were mostly peasants who translated the Holy Scripture “at ease” and who strictly disclaimed the dogmas of the Lutheran Church. Since they felt enormous hatred against the Lutheran Church and its clergy, the Lutheran pastors had to go through extreme hardship in order to find out the postulates of the Baptists’ doctrine. The key postulate of Baptists determined that an individual had to be baptized when he/she reached adult age (when they could be aware of baptism) and only on those occasions when the “Holy Spirit had addressed” them and they had felt the necessity for this Sacrament.⁶⁸

In the early 1860s Baptists were viewed as a threat to the Lutheran parishes because their followers did not attend the Church anymore and instead gathered in the backyards of ordinary

peasant houses to hold their public worships. The Name of God was preached by people without a theological education. Such a tendency could bother not only the Lutheran pastors, but also the state authorities, because an educated priest was accredited and tested by the consistory both in terms of his theological knowledge and his faithfulness to the state authorities, thus he was legitimate and his actions could be foreseen. However, the first preachers of Baptism were mostly foreign citizens and therefore could not be considered as trustworthy to Russia. They could preach only in secret and as a result their gatherings often took place at night and in completely unsuitable places, for example, in a forest. This meant the police could not follow their actions.

The Dean of Grobina Emil von Launitz (Dean of Grobina from 1850 to 1882) was the most passionate opponent of Baptists in Courland in the second half of the 19th century. In late 1865 he sent a letter to the governor of Courland the Minister of the Interior also read this letter) where he scrupulously described all the harm and evil that he and the priests subordinated to him saw in Baptism. “The Baptists dare to accuse the Church in the rudest way imaginable. They call the Church the house of Satan (*dom djavola*) and the priests – the priests of Satan. They act with no fear against the instructions of the police. The fact that the police calls them to justice is not productive in any way and it only facilitates further dissemination of Baptism, because they don’t worry about violations of law or punishment, they only look for some martyrdom”⁶⁹. The Dean of Grobina von Launic was of the opinion that this movement “brought and supported from abroad” gave rise to several forms of harm. First of all, the children of Baptists were not baptized and their names were not written in the book of the Church. Thus, if there was a need for new recruits, it would be difficult to determine their age. Second, the marriages of Baptists were not lawful, therefore children born in such marriages would be considered as illegitimate, which could cause problems in relation to questions of heritage. Third, persons who arbitrarily had taken the positions of preachers or teachers were not tested in any manner to check their suitability

for the post. Likewise, there was no information about their moral virtues which could guarantee to the government that no harmful and destructive theories endangering “public order and peace”⁷⁰ were disseminated among rural citizens.

However, the main emphasis by the Dean of Grobina lay in the fact that to a certain degree Baptism was a political movement, because Baptists expanded their activities in all those places where rural citizens were dissatisfied with their current situation. This is what happened in Virga (*Wirgen*) and Turlava (*Turlau*). “In those places where citizens were struggling, Baptists arrived and presented their condolences regarding the suffering of innocent people, in an attempt to gain their trust and goodwill. Whenever they had an opportunity, they preached that people should listen to God more than to authorities. It was also certain proof that they only intended to be compliant with law insofar as they agreed to its content.”⁷¹

In 1866, the Ev. Lutheran Consistory of Courland stated that “the Baptists with their unlawful actions had not brought only harm. This harm, as it seemed previously, had to some extent only helped [to ensure that] the life of Church was revived, the inner need had forced the preachers and parishes to study the Word of God more properly”⁷². Yet, it was also noted that “along with the Baptists, people were losing the habit of following the order of law. Since the time, when in 1865 the general governor of the Baltics issued a ban preventing the police from using force against the Baptists, people had been of the opinion that as soon as they became Baptists, they could do all the things that others were prohibited to.”⁷³

Maintaining the existing order, of course, was one of the key tasks of the upper classes and clergy, therefore it is possible that their verdict of the Baptists as a cover for all the unlawful actions of peasants is exaggerated, however, the unsolved legal status of Baptists forced them to act outside the law.

Even in the 1870s, the Ev. Lutheran Church was of the opinion that Baptism could eventually die out. In 1871 the General Consistory noted that “Baptism had led Lutherans to a better

understanding of the Word of God and attachment to the Church. Because Baptism was nothing new, the movement had started weakening. Conversion to Baptism was scarce. [...] many followers of Baptism were returning.”⁷⁴ In 1872, the Consistory was of the opinion that the number of Baptists in many places was decreasing.⁷⁵

Judging only from the reports of the Ev. Lutheran General Consistory, the greatest increase of Baptists could be observed until 1879, namely, while their actions were not legitimized in the Empire. It was considered that the followers of these parishes were moved by the ardour and passion that the Baptists showed while suffering all kinds of punitive measures from the local authorities. For example, in the 1879 report it was noted that “the number of Baptists was not increasing from the moment the government legitimized them. The movement had become weaker”⁷⁶. Also, in the reports of the following years (1881⁷⁷, 1882⁷⁸, 1883⁷⁹, 1884⁸⁰) it was mentioned that Baptism was not as successful as it used to be. In 1883 it was stated that in the districts of Kuldīga and Grobiņa there were cases when the Baptists expressed their wish to return to the Lutheran parishes.⁸¹

It is possible that after 1879 the Ev. Lutheran Church in Courland felt safer than before, because the activities of Baptists were regulated by law. Their parishes were led by preachers who had been approved by the authorities of the province and they were not “accidental” anymore. The Church also started to realize that the members of its parishes were not so much jeopardized by some religious movement as the ever-increasing lack of faith among the people. Already in 1871, the first complaints emerged. According to the report provided by the consistory of Courland: “Performance of external rituals is better in Latvian than in German parishes. It can be explained with the power of habit, which is also beneficial and fruitful. However, the parishes are different. There is silence and peace in rural parishes during the public worship. Also, the private worships must be positively valued. Unfortunately, in many places indifference towards the Word of God and materialism have emerged. Overstepping the

limits of sacredness, drinking and filthiness increases. It is also facilitated by the cohabitation of the bride and groom before marriage. The number of crimes related to the freedom of choice in terms of the place of residence, weakness of the local municipality and total lack of local supervising and control is also growing.”⁸²

There are no grounds for defining Baptism in the late 19th century as declining, since the data reveal the opposite: there were only 3 Baptist parishes up to 1875⁸³, while in the time period from 1876 to 1890, 26 new parishes emerged in the territory of Latvia.⁸⁴ It must be noted that the Lutheran General Consistory pointed out in an 1888 report that the Baptists had built new churches in Jekabpils (*Jacobstadt*), Jaunjelgava (*Friedrichstadt*), Saldus (*Frauenburg*) and Talsi (*Talsen*); however, in these places the new churches did not result in an increase in the number of their followers.⁸⁵

The activities of the Baptist parishes in Courland and the increase of their number were positively affected by the connections with Prussia, later Germany, and different Baptist organizations abroad. J. Tervits has noted that in the 1860s–1870s the Baptists residing in the territory of Courland and Livland received not only moral and legal assistance from German parishes, but also material support. In May 1868, German Baptists sent cash benefit in the amount of 80 roubles to their Latvian brothers in faith. Due to crop failure in the same year, Memel parish granted a large sum of money to the Baptists. In further years, too, German Baptists provided material support on several occasions.⁸⁶

THE INTERNAL PROBLEMS OF BAPTIST PARISHES

The numerous mutual disagreements and conflicts must be mentioned as an unfavourable factor for the development of Baptist parishes. Often these clashes resulted in the exclusion of ideological opponents and the redistribution of the parish assets. The most harmful effect of these conflicts was suffered by Riga

Sakuma parish (*sākums* – a “beginning” in Latvian), which “had a lot of grief not only due to [the actions of] the former pastor J. Rumbergs, but also the new pastor E. Vasmanis, whose ill-judged decisions in financial matters led to the circumstances that Riga Sakuma parish lost its church and in 1887–1888 the parish split, by 1890 it ceased to exist”⁸⁷. A similar situation could be observed in Ventspils, where a group which in 1887 had organized Ventspils Otrā (*otrā* – “the second” in Latvian) or Janis parish, separated from Ventspils parish. The chaos in the union of parishes was taken advantage of by the members of Velda parish, some of them organizing independent parishes in Bata and Ulmale. Conflicts and separations were also taking place in Jelgava, Saka and other parishes.⁸⁸

Although the Baptist metrical records were documented by the local police, the data are not included in the official statistics. Therefore, the actual increase of the number of Baptists can be only established by using certain historical sources (see Table 1 below). The total number of Baptists in the Province of Courland in 1878 was 3632. The greatest number was in the district of Ventspils (997) and in the city of Ventspils (430). The second biggest centre of Baptists was Liepaja with 230 followers.

Table 1

INFORMATION ON THE NUMBER OF BAPTISTS IN THE
PROVINCE OF COURLAND IN 187889

Districts	Bauska	Dobele	Ventspils	Kuldīga	Aizpute	Grobina
Adults	7	19	618	204	516	636
Children	1	15	379	45	145	257
Total	8	34	997	249	661	893

Town	Bauska	Ventspils	Kuldīga	Piltene	Aizpute	Grobina	Liepaja
Adults	7	265	18	8	48	4	183
Children	9	165	8	5	18	5	47
Total	16	430	26	13	66	9	230

In order for the pastors of Lutheran parishes to have accurate information about those who had decided to join the Baptists, the Governor of Courland published a circular in 1893, according to which the converts had to receive a special notice from the Lutheran pastor saying that he had been informed about their withdrawal from the parish before rebaptism.⁹⁰ Of course, it was an opportunity to persuade the respective member of the parish not to leave the Lutheran Church. Even in 1899 the Baptist preachers wrote complaints to the administration of the province regarding the Lutheran pastors being late with their references.⁹¹ The Ev. Lutheran Consistory of Courland on the other hand, when referring to the complaints of priests, tried to bring criminal charges in local courts against those Baptist preachers who had rebaptized Lutherans without the respective notice. As it can be seen from the correspondence between the interested parties when the preacher of Grobina was accused, the authorities of the province, being aware of the mutual dislike between both religious groups, did not hurry to side with the Lutherans. They noted that the priests had to acknowledge that on many occasions⁹² their rejections corresponded to the letter and not to the spirit of the law.⁹³

In general, the number of members of Baptist parishes in the 1890s was stable. It is crucial that the increase of the believers following this movement did not happen “automatically” as it could be observed with some other religious denominations, because the members of Baptist parishes were requested to confirm their faith when they were old enough to realise it. They were also requested to give up various habits, for example, using alcohol, being only partially devoted to faith issues, adultery, even dancing.⁹⁴

To some extent Baptist preachers filled those “gaps” which emerged due to the fact that the life in Lutheran parishes had weakened or the church was located too far from the believers’ place of residence. The Baptist preachers satisfied the wishes of Christians thirsting for the “spiritual food”. The Consistory of Courland noted that “the individual wandering Baptist preachers

were especially dangerous for Lutheran parishes, since they traveled to the places where the spiritual needs of residents were not and could not be fully satisfied⁹⁵. According to the data of the Ev. Lutheran General Consistory, in 1896 there were 5 thousand Baptists in the Province of Courland.⁹⁶ However, there were still those Baptists who did not consider it necessary to report to the police about their faith, therefore, it is difficult to tell the actual number. It is also known that in 1896 there were 70 Lutherans who expressed a wish to join the Baptist parish, and 54 Baptists wanted to return to their previous Lutheran parish.⁹⁷

THE LEGAL STATUS OF BAPTISTS IN THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE

Already from the 18th century the Russian Empire was challenged by the new term “religious tolerance”. This tolerance was rooted not only in the philosophy of the Enlightenment Age, but also in the policy of Empress Catherine the Great. As the territory of the Empire was expanding, the tsar’s citizens were people of diverse nationalities and religions. As long as they lived in peace and harmony, as well as contributed to the economic growth of the country, they were not considered a threat. As stated by prof. P. W. Werth: “By the early 19th century, then, imperial Russia had an established tradition of toleration that was based on the imperatives of empire-building, the maintenance of social stability, and the promotion of the country’s modernization. It involved acceptance of non-Orthodox religions in Russia, but great hostility towards heterodox proselytism.”⁹⁸ It should be emphasized, that the content of religious tolerance in early 19th century Russia was not specified. Since there were no definitions and clarifications provided for this term, the state authorities were not restricted from interpreting it freely, reviewing each case individually.⁹⁹

The question of Baptism is a vivid example. Very shortly after Baptists emerged, the Department of Religious Cases of Foreign Denominations of the Ministry of the Interior received informa-

tion about the activities of this movement's followers. If the reports from the Province of Courland were only negative, the information from the Province of Volhynia was positive or neutral.¹⁰⁰ The first Baptists (around 200 families) arrived around 1859 from the territories inhabited by the Polish people.¹⁰¹ The Baptists usually chose the most respectable and educated persons as the representatives of their parishes, and, of course, as the individuals to give speeches in public. It was also noted that one could become the elder of the parish only on those occasions when other elders agreed that the respective person was decent enough, and they had tested the candidate's knowledge in theology. This information completely contradicts the information provided by the Lutheran pastors in Courland, who tried to persuade everyone that Baptist preachers were "the darkest people with a bad reputation". Pursuant to the information available to the General Governor of Volhynia, there was no official test for Baptist preachers, yet usually they were people who had graduated from the Hamburg School of Missionaries.¹⁰² Finally, it was emphasized that the Baptist community in the Province of Volhynia was known for Christian reconciliation, love towards the nearest and obedience to authorities. They stood out with a reserved way of life. There was not a single complaint that would provide evidence on arbitrary actions of Baptists or invasion of other persons. They solved all their disputes within their community, meaning those who did not comply with the decisions of the majority were excluded from the parish. All their members were "common people". If there was a need to find differences between Baptists and other Christian parishes, the Baptists stood out with better knowledge of the core postulates, and they were especially knowledgeable in the New Testament.¹⁰³

After 1861, the relationship between the Baptists of Courland and the Lutheran Church became strained. The reason for conflict was the separation of Baptists from the Lutheran parish. The Baptists refused to baptize their children at the Lutheran church. Thus, these children could be regarded as illegitimate and guardianship had to be considered for them. The Baptists refused

to get married at the Lutheran church and to bury their deceased relatives according to the Lutheran tradition, whereas the Lutheran parishes prohibited burying the Baptists in the parish cemetery, namely, in holy land.¹⁰⁴ It turned out that the secrecy of the Baptists' actions and the fact that their movement was pursued attracted more and more followers.

The opinion of the Ministry of the Interior regarding Baptists was neutral, even favourable. According to several draft laws prepared by the Department of Religious Cases of Foreign Denominations in the 1860s¹⁰⁵, the Ministry held a view that the new religious movement could be announced as tolerable in the Empire, comparing it to other Christian denominations in terms of rights and duties. However, the mentioned draft laws were not adopted due to the strictly negative attitude of the Ev. Lutheran General Consistory and the caution of the highest state authorities.

Already in October 1864, the Minister of the Interior Pyotr Valuyev (*Пётр Валуев*, 1861–1868) submitted a proposal to the Cabinet of Ministers¹⁰⁶ asking to apply regulations to the Baptists of Courland which would give them an opportunity to write their own metric records, namely, to register the new-born children, marriages and the deceased members of the parish. The proposal was declined. The members of the Cabinet indicated that the number of Baptist followers in Courland was too small (around 400 people), therefore it would not be useful to issue special regulations for such an insignificant number of believers. Besides, such regulations would confirm the official existence of a "sect", implying that it was tolerable in the Empire. Such a legitimization of Baptism would be premature and would only attach too much importance to the movement.¹⁰⁷ The Baptists of Volhynia were not taken into consideration this time.

Thus, an unusual situation arose – the preaching of Baptism was neither allowed, nor prohibited in the Russian Empire. Because the movement did not have official permission to preach their doctrine, the local authorities subjected its members to various punishments, but because Baptism was not forbidden the

penalized persons were often acquitted in St. Petersburg. The Baptists had close ties with other countries, especially Prussia¹⁰⁸, therefore foreign parishes got involved in the defence of brothers in Courland. In August 1865, Emperor Alexander II received a letter from Baptists J. G. Onken (Hamburg) and (?) Nymec (Memel) expressing their indignation about the fact that the freedom of conscience was oppressed and religious persecutions took place in his country.¹⁰⁹ The most active member of the Baptist movement in Courland, Adam Gertner sent repeated requests to the Minister of the Interior asking for the movement to be regarded in the same way as other tolerable denominations.¹¹⁰

To take control of the situation, the Governor General of the Baltic Provinces instructed the Governor of Courland Johann von Brevern to submit the list of Baptist cases that were under investigation or in court proceedings. He also ordered regulations to be passed which would stipulate that “in the event there were Baptist conflicts with the Church or local administration regarding the issues of faith, the order that was applicable to the dominant Orthodox Church and Lutherans should be followed”¹¹¹. Namely, it was asked to pass these cases to the Governor General, who either moved the case forward or left it without any notice. On the basis of this order, on 8th November 1865 the Governor of Courland issued instructions to the municipalities and the boards of police noting that the arrest of Baptists was permissible only in those events when the person had violated the law. In addition, the Governor General definitely had to be informed about the case; he would then review it and take the final decision. Finally, all currently submitted claim statements against Baptists had to be terminated in order to produce the list and pass it to the Governor General.¹¹²

In 1866, elaboration of the draft law on the tentative order applicable to Baptists started with a new vigour. Documents which contain data about the process of elaboration and adoption of the respective draft law have been preserved in the cases of the Ministry of the Interior. The articles in the Cabinet of Ministers were elaborated and corrected taking into account the order

submitted to the Cabinet on 19th October 1864 and the opinions expressed by the Governors General of the Baltics, Kiev, Podolia and Volhynia, as well as by the Minister of the Interior.¹¹³ It must be noted that over the elaboration of the draft law, the opinion of the Governor General of the Baltic Provinces Pyotr Shuvalov¹¹⁴ was more liberal than the opinion expressed by the Minister of the Interior Pyotr Valuyev, because the latter had a better knowledge in denominational politics and was of the opinion that the activities of Baptists had to be regulated, taking into account the legal status of other denominations so that the Baptists were not granted some advantages.¹¹⁵

Although the agreement regarding the text of the tentative order was already coordinated, the draft law was still not passed for adoption.¹¹⁶ In January 1866, the Governor General of the Baltic Provinces repeatedly pointed out that tentative regulations applicable to the activities of Baptists should be adopted, because the Lutherans of Courland treated them according to the example of Prussia, where Lutherans as the dominant denomination considered Baptists as “apostates”. It was also repeated that Baptists did not act against the national interests, therefore the sooner the movement was able to act without restrictions the less followers they would have.¹¹⁷

In January 1867, the draft law was passed for reviewing in the State Council, which forwarded the case to the Second Section of His Imperial Majesty’s Own Chancery or the Imperial Legislation Department.¹¹⁸ Despite the fact that the officials of the Department did not see any obstacles which would forbid giving the Baptists the status of a tolerable denomination in the Empire¹¹⁹, the case was not moved forward.

While the unexplainable delay in St. Petersburg continued, the Baptists at the local level had to “enjoy the fruits” of their indeterminate legal status. On December 1869 the Governor General of the Baltic Provinces introduced the Minister of the Interior to a significant case which accurately characterized the manifestations of unsettled legal issues on a domestic level.¹²⁰ Taking into account the conflicts regarding the burial of deceased

Baptists in Lutheran cemeteries, the Governor General had asked the Governor of Courland to ensure the Baptists did not have any obstacles to burying their deceased relatives in Lutheran cemeteries until they had permission to arrange their own cemeteries. This question was coordinated with the Ev. Lutheran Consistory of Courland, which agreed that the Baptists could bury their deceased relatives in the existing cemeteries according to their rituals, since they were not insulting the Christian doctrine in any way.¹²¹ The only condition that the Consistory stipulated was that the Baptists obeyed the orders of the police, namely, that they paid a certain sum for the maintenance of the cemetery and that they provided a prior notice regarding the Baptist burial to the local priest and the Cemetery Administration. The administration had to appoint an acolyte, whose duty would be to ensure that “due to the potential Baptist enthusiasm/inclination/obsession the religious feelings of the members of Lutheran parishes and the holiness of cemeteries would not be insulted”¹²². These terms and conditions clearly characterize the opinion of Lutherans in Courland – the Baptists were people who acted outside the law and they could not be trusted.

The Ev. Lutheran Consistory of Courland also indicated that permission to bury Baptists in Lutheran cemeteries should be regarded only as a tentative solution, because they hoped that the issue of their own cemeteries would soon be solved. At the same time, the Lutherans were entitled not to give the permission to Baptists in the event they “dared to manifest actions or words that would be insulting to the Lutheran Church at the moment the coffin was covered with earth”¹²³. It must be noted that such a wording was rather vague and once again proved that the Lutheran Church as the dominant denomination was entitled to determine the behaviour of the newcomers. The Governor General of the Baltic Provinces indicated that a parish cemetery was a property of the Ev. Lutheran Church (as stipulated by law), therefore the Lutherans had rights to act using their own discretion. Thus, their terms were reasoned and fair. In the conclusion once again it was asked to pass the Tentative Order or Terms. To avoid

further religious clashes, it was noted in the draft law that “the Baptists (at least in Courland) had to bury their deceased relatives in their own cemeteries”.¹²⁴

In further years too, the issue was not solved, although it seemed that most of the high profile state officials were absolutely convinced that the legal regulation of Baptists was necessary. For example, in 1870 Pyotr Shuvalov, the former Governor General of the Baltic Provinces, at the time the Chief of the Third Section of His Imperial Majesty’s Own Chancery, expressed his opinion about new religious trends in the Empire: “Experience shows that the spying tactics pursued by the government against various schismatic movements has been unsuccessful and on some occasions has even increased their fanaticism, given rise to fellow-feeling towards the chased [Baptists] as the martyrs of faith and has led to completely opposite results than expected.”¹²⁵

Only on 27 March 1879 the State Council approved the Tentative Order for the Baptist Metric Records. This law can be considered as legitimizing Baptism in the Russian Empire. It stipulated that:

“Without obstacles Baptists can profess their faith and carry out rituals according to their customs. They can hold their public worships in specially allocated houses after they have coordinated it with the Governor;

The spiritual leaders and representatives chosen by the Baptists (the elders, teachers and preachers) can perform legal actions and organise public worships only after the Governor has given his approval for them to hold such a position. The spiritual leaders from abroad have to swear an oath regarding their acolyte service while they are residing in Russia.

The metric records of Baptists are made by the local secular power.”¹²⁶

The adoption of this law eased the activities of Baptist parishes. The Baptists obtained an official legal status. On 12th November 1879, the Senate approved the forms of the Baptist metric records.¹²⁷ It was stipulated in law that the Baptists could make civil registry records or church metrics. They became completely

independent from the Lutheran parishes. It must be noted that in the Tentative Order of 27th March the Ministry of the Interior was asked to elaborate a draft law which would regulate the activities of all "Protestant sects" in the Empire.¹²⁸

Why was so much time required for adopting the legal regulation? This can be explained by the fact that the government of Russia could not clearly define its attitude towards new religious movements and therefore applied waiting tactics. A push for adopting the final decision was provided by the loud protests of foreign Baptist organisations and the necessity to find a solution to the administrative chaos because Baptists had no possibility to register their civil registration records.

CONCLUSIONS

The Baptist preachers emerged in the Russian Empire soon after the first parishes were founded in Prussia, that is, in the 1840s. After the Province of Volhynia, the Province of Courland became one of the most important centres of Baptist movements. Up to 1879, the legal status of Baptists in the Russian Empire was not officially stipulated. Initially it could be explained with the government's trust in the Ev. Lutheran General Consistory, which was of the opinion that the movement would only be short-lived and that the Baptist followers would return to their previous parishes after certain persuasion was carried out. Later the adoption of law was delayed due to the government's lack of interest in solving this issue.

The expansion of Courland Baptists should be explained by a set of religious, social and political factors. The political background was formed by the coming to power of Alexander II, the new liberal ruler of Russia providing hope for change in all areas of life. The social background was dominated by dissatisfaction with the agrarian issue and the privileged position of the Baltic Germans. Regarding the life of the church, the converts were not satisfied with the spiritual modesty (in particular demonstrated by their attitude towards alcohol consumption) prevailing at the

Lutheran parishes and the close links between priests and the nobility. The increase in the number of Courland Baptists should mainly be related to the active work of the mission, their skills in speaking to people and also the live testimony provided by them of maintaining their faith despite being targeted by the Lutheran church and the authorities. Hamburg as the centre of the mission played an important role in the process of formation of the first parishes, however, generally the importance of the foreign factor should not be overestimated. The Baptist parishes formed not only in cities, but also in rural areas. Ventspils and Liepāja were two of the most important Baptism centres, and have maintained their position until now.

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- ⁴⁵ Ibid.
- ⁴⁶ Tervits. *Latvijas baptistu vēsture. Faktu mozaika*, p. 38.
- ⁴⁷ RGIA, 821–5–980, l. 159–160.
- ⁴⁸ Ibid.
- ⁴⁹ Ibid.
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- ⁶⁷ *GARF*, 109–40–40.18 (Svedeniia po Kurliandskoi gubernii za 1865 god), l. 3–4.
- ⁶⁸ Ibid.
- ⁶⁹ *RGIA*, 821–5–980, l. 98.
- ⁷⁰ Ibid.
- ⁷¹ Ibid., l. 99.
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- ⁷³ Ibid.
- ⁷⁴ Ibid., l. 108.
- ⁷⁵ Ibid., l. 125.
- ⁷⁶ *RGIA*, 821–5–19, l. 35.
- ⁷⁷ Ibid., l. 52.
- ⁷⁸ Ibid., l. 63.
- ⁷⁹ Ibid., l. 75.
- ⁸⁰ *RGIA*, 821–5–19, l. 89.
- ⁸¹ Ibid., l. 75.
- ⁸² *RGIA*, 821–5–18, l. 108.
- ⁸³ Till 1875, the Riga Sākuma parish, Liepāja Otrā parish and Priekule rural parish were considered as self-sufficing parishes (Tervits. *Latvijas baptistu vēsture. Faktu mozaika*, p. 67.).
- ⁸⁴ Tervits. *Latvijas baptistu vēsture. Faktu mozaika*, p. 63.
- ⁸⁵ *RGIA*, 821–5–19, l. 153.
- ⁸⁶ Tervits. *Latvijas baptistu vēsture. Faktu mozaika*, p. 54.
- ⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 63.
- ⁸⁸ Ibid.
- ⁸⁹ *RGIA*, 821–10–780, l. 8.
- ⁹⁰ *LNA-LVVA*, 629–2–2090 (Acta betreffend die von der Kurl. Gouv. Regierung angeregte Bitte, dahin Anordnung treffen zu wollen, dass derjenigen Lutheranern, welche den Wuensch sagen zum Baptismus überzutreten von den ev. luth. Pastoren Kurlands die erforderlichen Zeugnisse hinzu nicht verzagt werden. 1902.), p. 2.
- ⁹¹ Ibid., pp. 10–11.

- ⁹² LNA-LVVA, 629–2–2839 (Acta betreffend die Klage über den Baptistenprediger Viting in Grobin, daß er die Amalie Kaspar in die Baptisengemeinschaft aufgenommen hat. 1899), pp. 2, 5, 7, 14.
In 1899 a priest did not give a notice to Lize Paule, initially excusing himself with the lack of time and busyness, later saying that he had not received a confirmation from Lize's father, since she was not of age yet. The father was unable to come to the priest, but expressed his will with the mediation of his wife and other witnesses. Demanding the confirmation from the girl's father, the priest at least for a while had delayed the girl's transfer to Baptism.
- ⁹³ LNA-LVVA, 629–2–2839, pp. 15–16.
- ⁹⁴ P. Laubers (1911). *Ko labu baptisti atnesuši Latviešu tautai?*
- ⁹⁵ RGIA, 821–5–19, l. 316.
- ⁹⁶ Ibid.
- ⁹⁷ Ibid.
- ⁹⁸ Werth. *The Tsar's Foreign Faith. Toleration and the Fate of Religious Freedom in Imperial Russia*, p. 45.
- ⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 4.
- ¹⁰⁰ RGIA, 821–5–980, l. 5–11.
- ¹⁰¹ Ibid., l. 5–7.
- ¹⁰² Ibid., l. 8.
- ¹⁰³ Ibid., l. 8–9.
- ¹⁰⁴ GARF, 109–40–40.18, l. 3.
- ¹⁰⁵ RGIA, 821–5–980, l. 46–48, 50–51.
- ¹⁰⁶ Ibid., l. 46.
- ¹⁰⁷ Ibid., l. 47–48.
- ¹⁰⁸ Tervits. *Latvijas baptistu vēsture. Faktu mozaika*, p. 45.
- ¹⁰⁹ RGIA, 821–5–980, l. 45.
- ¹¹⁰ Ibid.
- ¹¹¹ Riss (sast.). *Latviešu baptistu draudžu izcelšanās un viņu tālākā attīstība. Vēstures materiāli*, pp. 307–308.
- ¹¹² Ibid., p. 308.
- ¹¹³ RGIA, 821–5–980, l. 197–206.
- ¹¹⁴ In the process of elaboration of the draft law the notes of two Governor Generals of the Baltic Provinces can be seen, since in 1866 P. Shuvalov was proceeded by E. Baranov.
- ¹¹⁵ RGIA, 821–5–980, l. 197–198.
- ¹¹⁶ Ibid., l. 225, 228, 244, 245.
- ¹¹⁷ Ibid., l. 88.
- ¹¹⁸ Ibid., l. 237–238.
- ¹¹⁹ Ibid., l. 264–270.
- ¹²⁰ Ibid., l. 330–331.
- ¹²¹ Ibid., l. 330.
- ¹²² Ibid.
- ¹²³ Ibid., l. 330–331.
- ¹²⁴ Ibid., l. 331.

- ¹²⁵ GARF, 109 (III otdelenie Sobstvennoi Ego Imperatorskago Velichestva Kantseliarii, 1826–1880)–157–202 (O protestantskoi sekte Baptistov i Shtundistov. 22.08.1872.), l. 56.
- ¹²⁶ O vremennykh pravilakh o vedenii metriceskikh zapisei brakov, rozhdeniia i smerti baptistov, 12.03.1879. In: *Polnyi Svod zakonov Rossiiskoi imperii (PSZ)*, sobr. 2, t. 54. Sankt-Peterburg: 2-e otdelenie sobstvennoi ego imperatorskogo velichestva kantseliarii, pp. 277–278, st. 59452.
- ¹²⁷ O forme knig dlia zapisi brakov, rozhdeniia i smerti baptistov, 12.11.1879. In: *PSZ*, sobr. 2, t. 54, p. 232, st. 60169.
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PIRMO KURZEMES BAPTISTU DRAUDŽU VEIDOŠANĀS RELIĢISKAIS, SOCIĀLAIS UN POLITISKAIS KONTEKSTS

Kristīne Ante

Dr. hist., doc., Kārļa Universitātes Filozofijas fakultātes Austrumeiropas studiju institūta Baltistikas katedra (Čehijas Republika). Zinātniskās intereses: reliģiskā un sociālekonomiskā situācija Krievijas impērijas Baltijas guberņās, dažādu kristīgo novirzienu (sektu) darbība 19. gs. – 20. gs. sākumā.

19. gs. 60. gados Kurzeme kļuva par vienu no pirmajiem un nozīmīgākajiem baptisma kustības izplatības centriem Krievijas impērijā, turklāt jaunajai kustībai vēlējās pievienoties ne tikai pilsētās dzīvojošie vācieši, bet arī laukos dzīvojošie latvieši. Raksts sniedz pārskatu par Kurzemes baptistu aktivitātēm līdz 1879. gadam jeb līdz viņu atzīšanai no valsts puses, analizējot jaunās reliģiskās kustības izplatīšanās veicinošos un kavējošos faktoros. Raksta mērķis ir rast atbildi uz jautājumu, vai pirmo Kurzemes baptistu draudžu izveide būtu saistāma ar ticīgo reliģisko pārliecību, viņu neapmierinātību ar savu sociālo statusu vai arī ar politisku protestu pret evaņģēliski luteriskās baznīcas monopolu Krievijas impērijas Baltijas guberņās.

Atslēgas vārdi: ev. luterāņi, baptisti, sekta, Baltijas guberņas, konfesionālā politika.

Kopsavilkums

19. gs. otrā puse ir nozīmīgs laiks Krievijas impērijas vēsturē. Iepriekšējais, cara Nikolaja I (1825–1855) radītais, represīvais režīms, kas cerēja ar stingru aizliegumu palīdzību pasargāt Krieviju no Rietumeiropā notiekošajiem procesiem, ilgtermiņā izrādījās neefektīvs. Pēc Krievijas sakāves

Krimas karā bija skaidrs, ka valstī nepieciešamas reformas. Kad pie varas nāca imperators Aleksandrs II (1855), tās arī tika uzsāktas. Reformas skāra gandrīz visas dzīves jomas. Nozīmīgākās no tām bija: dzimtbūšanas atcelšana, cenzūras ierobežošana, atļauja veidot biedrības, kā arī izglītības, pilsētu pārvaldes un tiesu sistēmas reforma. Šie pasākumi deva cerības, ka impērijā gan indivīdiem, gan personu grupām tiks dota lielāka rīcības brīvība.

19. gs. otrā pusē ir lielu pārmaiņu laiks arī Baltijas guberņās. Lai gan dzimtbūšanas atcelšana te bija notikusi vairākus gadu desmitus agrāk nekā pārējā impērijā, tomēr tās reālie augļi bija jūtami tikai 19. gs. 60. gados, kad zemnieki jau bija savas saimniecības izpirkuši. Līdz ar saimniecisko patstāvību viņos modās arī lielāka pašapziņa. Latviešu zemniekiem beidzot bija iespēja būt mobilākiem, pašiem izvēlēties savu dzīvesvietu, sūtīt bērnus augstākās skolās. Šajā gaisotnē radās arī ideja par nepieciešamību pēc sirdsapziņas brīvības, kas ļautu katram pašam izvēlēties savu ticību.

Mūsdienās baptisti ir viena no Latvijas tradicionālajām konfesijām un viņi vairs netiek uzskatīti par kaut ko neparastu, svešu un bīstamu. Tomēr līdz šādai attieksmei bija jānoiet garš un grūts ceļš. Kurzeme bija viens no senākajiem baptistu kustības centriem visā Krievijas impērijā – pirmie baptisti te parādījās jau 19. gs. 50. gadu beigās. To lielā mērā sekmēja ģeogrāfiskā atrašanās vieta – tuvums Hamburgai un Mēmelei, kur darbojās pirmās baptistu draudzes Prūsijā. Starp šo teritoriju iedzīvotājiem (galvenokārt pilsētniekiem) pastāvēja intensīvi sakari, kas nodrošināja apmaiņu ar dažādām idejām, to skaitā garīgām.

Jaunu reliģisku strāvojumu ienākšana tā laika sabiedrībā apdraudēja pastāvošās reliģiskās institūcijas. Īpaši asi pret pirmajiem baptistiem vērsās Kurzemes evaņģēliski luteriskās baznīcas mācītāji, kuri darīja visu, lai, izmantojot savu autoritāti un monopoltiesības ticības jautājumos, nepieļautu baptisma ideju izplatīšanos Baltijas guberņās. Savukārt Volinijas guberņas laicīgās un garīgās varas iestādes pret jauno kustību neizturējās tik aizdomīgi, viņu attieksme bija drīzāk neitrāla. Baptisms te sākumā neskāra pareizticīgo baznīcas intereses, jo tas izplatījās vācu kolonistu – luterāņu – zemnieku vidū. Līdz ar to tieši Kurzemes evaņģēliski luteriskās baznīcas viedoklis bija izšķiroši svarīgs jautājumā par to, vai un kad baptistiem tiks atļauts brīvi darboties Krievijas impērijā. Šajā publikācijā tiek meklētas atbildes uz šādiem jautājumiem: kas sekmēja baptisma izplatīšanos Kurzemē? Kas noteica kustības popularitāti – politiski, sociāli vai reliģiski iemesli? Kādu loma baptisma draudžu atzīšanas jautājumā bija vācu faktoram, ev. luteriskajai baznīcai un Krievijas impērijas varas iestādēm?

Balstoties uz pieejamajiem vēstures avotiem, raksta autore nonākusi pie šādiem secinājumiem: Kurzemes baptistu izplatīšanās ir skaidrojama ar reliģisko, sociālo un politisku faktoru kopumu. Politisko fonu veidoja jaunā liberālā Krievijas valdnieka Aleksandra II nākšana pie varas, kas deva cerības uz pārmaiņām visās dzīves jomās. Sociālais fons bija neapmierinātība ar agrāro jautājumu, kā arī vācbaltiešu muižniecības privileģēto stāvokli. Baznīcas dzīvē baptistus visvairāk neapmierināja luterāņu draudzēs valdošā garīgā remdenība (īpaši attieksmē pret alkohola lietošanu), kā arī luterāņu mācītāju ciešās saites ar muižniecību. Kurzemes baptistu skaita pieaugums galvenokārt būtu jāsaista ar aktīvu misijas darbu, prasmi uzrunāt ticīgos, kā arī viņu pašu dzīvi kā liecību par turēšanos pie ticības, par spīti piedzīvotajām vajāšanām. Svarīga loma pirmo latviešu draudžu veidošanās procesā bija Hamburgai kā misijas centram, tomēr tās nozīme nebūtu arī jāpārvērtē.

Līdz pat 1879. gadam baptistu tiesiskais statuss impērijā nebija oficiāli noteikts. Sākotnēji to varēja skaidrot ar valdības uzticēšanos ev. luteriskās baznīcas ģenerālkonsistorijas atzinumam, ka šai kustībai ir tikai īslaicīgs raksturs un baptistu sekotāji drīz vien atgriezīsies savās iepriekšējās draudzēs, bet vēlāk likuma pieņemšanu kavēja valdības nevēlēšanās šo jautājumu risināt. Tikai 1879. gada 27. martā Valsts padome apstiprināja "Pagaidu kārtību baptistu metriskajiem ierakstiem". Tās pieņemšanu sekmēja ne tikai Eiropas baptistu organizāciju vairākkārt skaļi paustie paziņojumi par ticīgo vajāšanām Krievijas impērijā, bet arī administratīvais haoss, kas bija radies tāpēc, ka baptistiem nebija iespējas reģistrēt kristības, laulības un mirušos draudzes locekļus.

Kurzemes baptistu draudzes ir unikālas ar to, ka tās veidojušās ne tikai vācu, bet arī latviešu un lībiešu vidē. Turklāt tās radās ne vien pilsētās, bet arī lauku apvidos. Divi nozīmīgākie baptistu centri – Ventspils un Liepāja – kā tādi ir saglabājušies līdz pat mūsu dienām.

WORLD WAR I AND LATVIAN RIFLEMEN IN THE COLLECTIVE MEMORY OF LATVIA¹

Kaspars Zellis

Dr. hist., senior researcher, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, University of Latvia. Research interests: History of propaganda in Latvia in the 20th century, collective memory of the 20th century in Latvia, reflections of the past in the life stories of the population of Latvia.

The centenary of World War I in 2014 drew attention to the significance of this war in the history of Latvia. The aim of this article is to examine how one of the most vivid “sites of memory” of the war – the Latvian Riflemen – evolved and is still being used. The article reveals not only the preconditions and causes for the construction and development of the image of Latvian Riflemen, but also provides a framework which can be applied to analyse the genealogy of the public understanding of historicity and how our and foreign political elites have manipulated this historicity.

Key words: World War I, riflemen, collective memory.

THE CENTENARY

In 2014, the centenary of World War I was commemorated all over Europe with various remembrance events, exhibitions and conferences dedicated to the subject of the “Great War”. In Latvia too, the year 2014 passed with a peculiar remembrance atmosphere remembering World War I and forgetting other anniversaries which in the history of Latvia have been equally important. For example, Latvians neglected the 95th anniversary of the events of the War of Independence in Latvia, and 70 years since the memorandum of the Latvian Central Council was signed, the national resistance military groups were defeated and the reoccupation began. Instead, several conferences dedicated to the subject of World War I were held in Latvia,² accompanied by

respective exhibitions³ and public lectures.⁴ The great attention that was drawn to the beginning of World War I in Latvia can be explained both with the attempts to polish the image of Riga as the European Capital of Culture (2014), and with hopes to gradually decline from the nationally centred interpretation of the past, instead examining history in the context of the events that took place in Europe.

In 2014, several publications that were dedicated to the subject matter of the First World War were published. Overall, these publications illustrate the demand both of society and historiography to discuss such subjects. The Little Library series on Latvian History published Valdis Bērziņš' work *Latvian Riflemen in World War I (1915–1918)* (Latviešu strēlnieki Pirmajā pasaules karā (1915–1918))⁵; Colonel Jānis Hartmanis' book about the Riflemen's battles on the Nāves sala (The Island of Death) in 1916 was issued;⁶ the yearbook of the Latvian War Museum entailed the papers presented at the conference *Society, War and History: the Military, Political and Social Processes of World War I in the Baltic Region (1914–1918)*;⁷ the journal of the Institute of Latvian History⁸ was also dedicated to the subject of this war. Although some works undeniably enrich the range of historiography and enhance the knowledge and understanding of these questions, it must be concluded that World War I is not the key study subject for Latvian history scholars. It is a peculiar "twilight zone between history and memory", as defined by Eric Hobsbawm when referring to the situation where calm, passionless knowledge on something that has happened in the past still correlates to the emotionally meaningful presence of history in people's lives, when certain symbolic images may be brought up thanks to, for example, mass media or the atmosphere prevailing in the society.⁹ Perhaps, we can talk here of the transition of the communicative memory to the symbolic level – the level of cultural memory.¹⁰ The conferences, books and exhibitions dedicated to the centenary of the war are examples of such symbolisation acts, and they have little in common with a systematic research and representation of the past. As noted by Ēriks Jēkabsons, research

“only partially covers even the most important processes of World War I in the territory of Latvia.”¹¹

The collective memory of Latvia tackles the battle of representations of World War II. The collective memory draws a comparatively greater attention to the destruction of Latvia in 1940 or its incorporation into the Soviet Union in 1944–1945 as opposed to the processes that led to the foundation of the state at the end of World War I – on 18th November 1918.

World War I today in Latvia is represented through certain sites of memory. French historian Pierre Nora defines sites of memory (*Lieux de Mémoire*) as sites in the collective memory, where memory crystallizes and brings up those issues which make one realise that memory is ambiguous, while at the same time keeping the feeling of historical continuity. Memory is in a state of mutable evolution, open to the dialectics of memorising and forgetting. It is not aware of deformations and is subjected to all uses and manipulations. It can hibernate and it can be periodically revived.¹²

For the Latvian nation, there are two such symbolic sites of memory of World War I. Firstly, there is “the time of refugees”, when hundreds of thousands were forced to leave their home, migrating to Russia as a result of the German army’s attack in 1915.¹³ Secondly, there are the Latvian Riflemen. The ethnocentric history perspective squeezed out non-Latvian refugees from the memory, such as Jews and Baltic Germans, as well as the battles of the Russian Army in Latvia, etc. As noted by P. Nora, memory gets on only with those details which are comfortable, whereas the uncomfortable details are aborted.¹⁴ Since memory sacralises remembrance,¹⁵ the image of a Latvian refugee could represent the suffering of the nation during wartime, whereas the image of a rifleman provided an opportunity to demonstrate the heroic spirit of the nation. Later, the sacral motives appeared both in the respective metaphors referring to the events and remembrance rituals. For example, the battle of Ložmetējkalns, which took the lives of several thousand Latvian Riflemen in January 1917, was named the “Golgotha of Riflemen”, whereas the commemorative

ritualization was manifested in the Memorial Days of Riflemen, which has taken place at the Riga Brethren Cemetery since 1924.

The aim of this article is to examine the most outstanding “site of memory” of World War I – the genealogy and evolution of the image of Latvian Riflemen¹⁶ in the collective memory of Latvian society.

MEMORY

Historical events do not end with chronological records in the history textbook. They continue living and existing in memory and they continue affecting political, economic, cultural or social processes. When studying the collective memory, we not only understand the use and application of history, but also become aware of the mutual interaction mechanisms between society and power structures, an individual and a collective, the present and the past.

The collective memory is a theoretical generalization which scholars have used for several decades to unravel those issues that relate to the social use of the past. The collective memory, social memory, historical memory, cultural memory – these are only a few of the terms which are put in use in attempts to examine these phenomena. Jay Winter offers to replace the term “memory” with “remembering”, stating that the term “memory” can entail any attempt to get in touch with the past both at the individual and collective level. “Remembering”, on the other hand, reveals the strategy as to what, when, where and how the members of society remember.¹⁷

To my mind, the conception of four formations of memory (individual, social, political and cultural memory frames) offered by Aleida Assmann is the most appropriate framework that can be applied when studying the significance of Latvian Riflemen in the collective memory.

The individual memory is inevitably related to the stories or impressions of other people, therefore, especially in early memories, there are no strict boundaries between the individual

experience and the stories heard from others. An individual is tied with others not only by the means of language or other cultural elements, but also with the “memory frame”, as it was defined by Maurice Halbwachs, where certain events are selected and evaluated, emotionally saturated and socialized.¹⁸ The individual memory is communicative, it can last for the duration of three generations (80–100 years). Further on, its existence is endangered – it either is transferred at the level of cultural memory or it disappears. In fact, the memory of the Riflemen is at this point of intersection now – between disappearance or transition into a new quality.

Obviously, at the individual level in some families there are still circulated stories about the grandfather or great-grandfather’s experience as a rifleman; however, there is concern whether the youngest generation will also carry these memories along. For example, the film director Askolds Saulitis, who made a film about the Latvian Riflemen, admits that it was family history that served as a source of inspiration for the film:

“My grandmother Milda had a boyfriend. He was a rifleman. He went to Russia and was lost in the Perekop Battle. He was considered missing. Sort of alive, sort of dead. But she was waiting for him. My grandfather fell in love with her and persuaded her to forget the rifleman and marry him instead. [...] Milda replied that the guy must definitely be stuck at the border, because it was the beginning of the 1920s, when the agreement was adopted. Then Pēteris, my grandfather, said “Love has no borders”, and to prove that, he crossed the border of Latvia and Russia. He was caught and put in prison in Minsk. He was kept there for three months and then exchanged for a Soviet spy, who had been caught in Riga. [...] Then Milda said “yes” and my father was born from this marriage. Pēteris passed away very soon, but Milda waited for her rifleman for her entire life. When in the 1970s the museum of Latvian Red Riflemen opened [currently the Museum of Occupation of Latvia], she started working there hoping to meet him one day. [...] It never happened, she died.”¹⁹

When working with the life stories of Latvian inhabitants, it became clear that the stories and legends of Riflemen are still circulating at the level of communicative memory among the oldest and middle generations.

The social memory mostly lives at the communicative level²⁰ which exists while the eyewitnesses of the particular historical event are alive. The communicative memory is not static; it is constantly changing along with each social generation. Therefore, the memory is revised every 30 years when the new generation becomes the key representative of the past memory and takes public responsibility for it.²¹ As noted by P. Nora, there are as many social memories as social groups.²²

The political memory, similarly to the cultural memory, tends to manifest itself through symbols and material representations, it tends to establish intergenerational communication which uses both museums and archives, monuments and education, as well as the calendar of the public holidays and memorial days. The political memory tends to achieve homogeneous and self-contained seclusion; it excludes other social memories. Also, the political memory is not scattered and fragmentary; it is ordered in a certain narrative in terms of a plot, thus constructing the socio-political myth. This memory is stable and able to transmit the past not within one, but several generations.²³

The cultural memory could be defined as a strategy that is built to protect the continuously changing and collapsing individual and social memory. It can be manifested actively as a canon – all the canonized literary, visual, performing arts works, school curricula, memorial days, etc. Yet, it can also be manifested passively, as the memory of an archive which stores information on those issues which were denied, forgotten or excluded from the active memory but which are still considered important to preserve.²⁴ It is this ambivalent nature of the cultural memory which ensures renewal, change and reconfiguration. Contrary to the political memory, the symbolic system of cultural memory requires greater individual participation – reading, writing, studying, research, critique and appreciation.²⁵

Although the boundaries among these memories are rather blurry, they often overlap and duplicate. This concept, to my mind, can be used for collective memory studies. The centenary of World War I that was commemorated in August 2016 marks the end of the epoch of the communicative memory of these events and the transition of the memory to the level of cultural memory.

Before starting to discuss memory constructions, the use of the term “Latvian Rifleman” must be explained. If the political memory and historians strictly distinguish the first Riflemen (1915–1917) from the “Red Riflemen”, in the social and cultural memory a rifleman is a Latvian soldier who fought in the battalions of Latvian Riflemen from 1915 to 1920.

MEMORY CONSTRUCTIONS

World War I not only divided Europe into warring fronts, but also gave rise to very different memories and opinions about this war. If the narratives of collective memory in the West spoke about the tragedy of war and the absurdity of the number of victims, emphasizing that the key battles took place in the Western front,²⁶ in Eastern Europe the war was perceived as the prelude for the establishment of the nation states. From the perspective of the Polish and other East Europeans, this war is not perceived as an absurd slaughter of Europeans. As stated by Polish historian Kryzstof Ruchniewicz, it was a conflict that several generations had hoped for, opening the door to freedom.²⁷ As a result, there is a huge discrepancy between the voluminous studies of history and the abundance of visual evidence in the West and the relative lack of it in the East.²⁸

In Latvia after World War I (1914–1918) and the following War of Independence (1918–1920), the construction of political memory of the Republic of Latvia was initiated. The new political and military elite had to offer their own interpretation of the past, which would not only justify and strengthen the legitimacy of the regime and elite, but also consolidate society.

The political memory was constructed under the circumstances of the parliamentary democracy allowing rather liberal forms of historical representation of various social and political groups. The variety of these representations often offered crucially opposite interpretations of history, which we can refer to as “the wars of memories”. “The wars of memories” were based on the War of Independence or variations of interpretations of certain events from this war. The differing experiences of the Landesver and the Latvian army, the Northerners and the Southerners, the National Army and the Latvian Red Riflemen often gave rise to huge uproar in public, which was manifested not only as passionate disputes in the newspapers or at the Saeima, but also led to the vandalism of memorial sites and other extraordinary actions in the public sphere.²⁹

The political memory was dominated³⁰ by the War of Independence, memories, opinions and memorial events. It is not surprising, since this war was led for the state of Latvia, whereas the representations of World War I were of minor importance. Reflections about the events of World War I in Latvia evolved on various subject matters: migration of refugees, the German occupation of Courland, the year 1917 in Latvia, the project of the Baltic Duchy, origins of the idea of the independence of Latvia, etc.; however, in regards to their emotional and social potential and the intensity with which they were represented, they could not compete with the contradictoriness and emotional saturation that accompanied the Latvian Riflemen. For example, in literature and news the migration of refugees was treated as one of the reasons for the hatred that Latvians had against Germans. It was also interpreted as a catalyst for establishing battalions of riflemen. The history on Riflemen issued by the Latvian Riflemen's Union reveals: “Latvians fled not because they were less courageous than their neighbours the Lithuanians or Polish, but because they could not stand the victorious Germans in their vicinity.”³¹ One of the most prominent monuments of the Riflemen in literature – the novel *Dvēseļu putenis* (The Blizzard of Souls) by Aleksandrs Grīns – starts with the events surrounding

the main characters that made them flee the country and later join the newly-established battalions of Riflemen.³²

The attitude of the new state towards Latvian Riflemen after the War of Independence initially was reserved, which can be explained by the fact that the majority of Riflemen aligned with the Bolsheviks. Also, many of them moved to the military service of Soviet Russia and participated in the invasion of the Republic of Latvia in 1919 among Pēteris Stučka's Soviet Army of Latvia. Furthermore, Latvian leaders of opinion had not elaborated such a representation of Latvian Riflemen that would satisfy the numerous socio-political groups in the country. For example, when looking at the calendar for 1922, we will not find any memorial days dedicated to the memory of Riflemen or any mentioning of them in the chronological overview of the most important events in the Latvian past. Only the record of Ložmetējkalns as "a significant battle place between Latvian Riflemen and Germans" is an exception.³³

Attempts to bring forward and strengthen the role of Latvian Riflemen in the social memory, as well as attempts to include it in the political memory can be explained by several factors: 1) the task of the memory is to ensure the continuity of history, and the attachment of society to the past and future. Consequently, a need appeared to integrate the events of World War I in Latvia and the Latvian Riflemen into the collective memory.

2) The need to ensure that Latvian society did not divide into antagonistic groups. The political memory announced Germans as the main enemy. As a result, the image of the main enemy was referred to the Baltic Landeswehr and Imperial German units, and not the Riflemen under the control of Bolsheviks. Service in the Landeswehr was perceived as high treason, service in the Red Army as the irony of fate.³⁴

3) The need of the new military and political elite to emphasize their contribution in the fight "for the freedom of Latvia". In this case it is valuable to look at the biographies of the founders of the Latvian Riflemen's Union. The officers of the Latvian Riflemen Andrejs Auzāns (1871–1953) and Rūdolfs Bangerskis (1878–

1958) were important people in the battalions of Riflemen; however, they did not contribute to the battles for Latvian independence at all. General A. Auzāns from 1918 to 1923 served in the Red Army and lectured at the War Academy of the Red Army, whereas General R. Bangerskis served in Admiral A. Kolchak's³⁵ White Army and returned to Latvia only in 1921.³⁶ Both officers joined the service of the Latvian army and had a prominent status not only in public life, but also in the military service of the state. Many soldiers in Latvia had similar biographies. These men belonged to the so-called local elite groups in the cities, districts, army garrisons, etc. Corrections in the representation of the past enabled such inclusion of the representatives of the elite among the lines of "freedom fighters". As General Kārlis Goppers (1876–1941, who only returned to Latvia with the Imanta regiment in June 1920, wrote: "The Tīrelis Marsh, Ložmetējkalns, Nāves sala and other places of battle merge in the history, which will not distinguish these events in a separate episode, but will intertwine them with other battles under a joint title, *Battles for the Freedom of Latvia*."³⁷

A crucial aspect that allowed the memory of Riflemen to spread roots not only in the social, but also in the cultural memory was the fact that many artists, poets, writers, painters, actors, etc. either belonged to the battalions of Latvian Riflemen or were closely related to them.³⁸ This condition facilitated the establishment of the image of Riflemen and its approbation in literature and art.

Besides, in the 1920s–1930s were the first attempts to collect the memories about Riflemen and study the problematic issues related to them. In the beginning of the 1920s most of the books that were published on World War I were dedicated only to Riflemen, separating them from the processes of the War of Independence.³⁹ Perhaps the first to try to correlate the Riflemen's battles with the processes of the War of Independence was the writer and rifleman Jānis Akurāters (1876–1937), thus establishing an apparent continuity between the riflemen and the soldiers of the national army.⁴⁰ Poet Kārlis Skalbe (1879–1945) in his

work *Mazās piezīmes* (*The Little Notes*) writes: “Latvian battalions emerged as a new core of the people, who got attached to their country with all their hearts and did not want to leave their houses. We did not think about our country yet. But the permission to establish our own regiments was half of our independence. We had our own power to rely on. It was a high step towards independence. From here we could reach after the fruits of history.”⁴¹

The work on research and collection of memories was also initiated by the Latvian Riflemen’s Union. Although only the perspective and memories favoured by the Board of the Union were published (emphasizing the skills of certain Latvian military leaders, heroism of Riflemen and ignoring the unflattering critique), the activities of the Union must be seen as a positive phenomenon, contributing towards the so-called archival memories.⁴² The compilations published by the Union must be regarded as a peculiar attempt to introduce and strengthen the Riflemen at the level of the political memory – providing regular reminders about the merit of Riflemen for the sake of an independent Latvia.

The Latvian Riflemen’s Union played a crucial role in the construction of the memory of Riflemen. The Union was founded in December 1923 with an aim to “commemorate the Riflemen’s history and to cultivate their traditions and spirit”.⁴³ Politician Jānis Goldmanis (1875–1955), who was also the initiator of forming the Latvian Riflemen’s Battalions, was responsible for the organizational and ideological core of the Union. Numerous other high-ranking military officials contributed – Generals Andrejs Auzāns, Kārlis Goppers, Colonel Rūdolfs Bangerskis, etc.⁴⁴

One of the first tasks of the Union was to introduce a memorial day for the Riflemen. Celebration of the memorial day started already after the War of Independence,⁴⁵ yet, as noted by Rūdolfs Bangersikis in 1922, “due to various circumstances it lack[ed] the required splendour”.⁴⁶ The memorial day acquired that splendour in 1924, when the first serious celebration took place. It started with the “Holy flame” set by the state president Jānis Čakste on 5 January 1924 at the Riga Brethren Cemetery and the Riflemen’s

guard of honour dressed in winter clothing. On the next day – 6th January – a public procession honouring the Riflemen took place from the War Museum to the Brethren Cemetery accompanied by a solemn church service. The memorial day was concluded by the banquet at the Great Guild.⁴⁷

The leftist intellectual magazine *Domas* (Thoughts) wrote that in all these events and big articles in the newspapers “one can sense something which is feared to articulate”.⁴⁸ And this unarticulated idea is covered with certain resignation, sentiment and almost regret and forgiveness to Riflemen, somebody, who signed as MB, wrote in the magazine: “The Riflemen went to Russia without officers, or with a too small proportion of officers. The officers went to Russia without the Riflemen. The Riflemen in Russia fought **against** [original emphasis] the renewal of the tsarist, noble and undivided Russia organized by the old treacherous generals. The officers, especially at the highest ranks, acted and fought **for** the noble Russia, because neither the cadets,⁴⁹ nor Savinkovs⁵⁰ or Alekseyevs⁵¹ wanted to discuss the foundation of national autonomies (not to mention the foundation of countries!). This is the tragic moment in the drama and this is the unarticulated thought. The Riflemen for the revolution, the officers for the counterrevolution.” *Domas* wrote that it was not the death of Riflemen that gave rise to an independent Latvia, but their fight against the renewal of tsarist Russia in the Volga region and the Crimea. The Christmas Battles had separated the Riflemen from the officers, and the merit of the former leaders of the Riflemen should not be turned into heroic legends, but instead should be critically assessed if not as crime, then carelessness and short-sightedness.⁵² Such rhetoric and argumentation became an integral part of explaining the past of the politically left-wing.⁵³

However, in the next year the celebrations of the Riflemen’s memorial day had even greater splendour, not only in Riga but also in the provincial areas.⁵⁴ Emotional and solemn speeches were given, yet two of them are worth considering. General A. Auzāns’ answer to the greeting of the state president became a

peculiar testimony of loyalty to the state which had to terminate the existing prejudice against the Riflemen. Namely, A. Auzāns noted that “as soon as our homeland has some hardship again, we will listen to the first call of the state leader and go to the battlefield as quickly as we did [in the battles] at Ložmetējkalns”.⁵⁵

Whereas Colonel R. Bangerskis, who had become the Minister of Warfare, emphasized: “Now, when I am the leader of the warfare affairs, I can testify that the eagles of Tīrelpurvs have coalesced with the eagles of Venta. If we have to take our arms again, we will rise and fight against the enemy as one.”⁵⁶ Testimony of loyalty and gaining an equal status with the veterans of the War of Independence were the main targets of the social group represented by the Latvian Riflemen.

Both the Union and the Latvian intelligentsia constructed the mythical image of a Latvian rifleman. This image had no individuality, it was a collective who symbolized “us” and were ready to sacrifice their lives for the homeland and to listen to their leaders. Certain features of authoritarianism in the image of Riflemen ensured that it was later applied in the political rhetoric during the authoritarian years of Kārlis Ulmanis.

The “legend” of the Riflemen, as it was named by Jānis Akuraters, was based on the previously mentioned motives. Latvian Riflemen, as much as the soldiers of the national army, fought for the freedom of Latvia. The difference between both lies in the fact that the first fought “in a historical night, under the stars, whereas the national army – in the blood-red dawn and silver sunrise”.⁵⁷ The Christmas Battles were the apogee of the Riflemen’s battles, when under the leadership of their officers the Riflemen defeated the far superior German army. However, the Battles were a failure due to Russian indecisiveness and even treachery. Casualties were not in vain, since “the world got to know about the existence of a heroic community of 2 million people at the Baltic seashore.”⁵⁸ Latvians, too, came to know “what military genius was hiding in this peaceful nation of ploughmen”. They were “a common denominator and a healing factor in the sad and tragic days of refugees”.⁵⁹

In 1920 the highest military award of the Latvian state – the Order of Lāčplēsis – was given to the Riflemen for fighting in World War I. In 1927, the 1st grade Order of Lāčplēsis was given to Colonel Fridrihs Briedis⁶⁰ for the Christmas Battles.⁶¹ Thus, the state acknowledged the military merit of the non-Bolshevik Riflemen, not the political.

A crucial place for fusing the remembrance of the Riflemen and the soldiers of the War of Independence was not only the Latvian War Museum founded on the base of the Museum of Riflemen,⁶² but also the Brethren Cemetery which initially was a burial place for the Riflemen who had died on the Riga front, but later after the war was united with the remains of the soldiers who fought in the War of Independence, thus spatially creating a socio-political myth that the Latvian Riflemen of the tsarist army and the soldiers of the Latvian army fought for one goal – an independent Latvia. It is also emphasised by the date on the entrance gates “1915–1920”.

The legend of the Riflemen took on new importance in the middle of 1917, when the Russian revolution struck the nation and the intelligentsia aghast and the Riflemen surrendered to the counter-national Bolshevik propaganda.⁶³ In the 1920s this problem was hugely significant. First of all, it was important for the political memory to mark the chronological border after which the Latvian Riflemen turned into the Red Riflemen. Summoning the general meeting of the old Latvian Riflemen in November 1923, it was stipulated that those soldiers who were part of regiments until 1st October 1917 were Latvian Riflemen.⁶⁴ This date can also be found in the 1923 Law on the Allotted and to be Allotted Land of the State Land Fund, its Assessment and Selling for the Hereditary Possession or Hereditary Lease providing allowances for lawful and actual heirs of the soldiers killed in the Riflemen's battalions or the disabled Riflemen, by obtaining land for their possession.⁶⁵ However, the status of the freedom fighter and likening to the soldiers of the national army took five more years. Besides, the status and advantages in obtaining the land only referred to those Riflemen who had joined the regiments by

1st September 1917, and “if they had not served in the armies that fought against Latvia.”⁶⁶

Consequently, those who were responsible for the construction of Latvian political memory drew a boundary line. Withdrawal from Riga and battles at Mazā Jugla in the fall of 1917 served as a boundary which separated the “right” Riflemen from the “wrong” or Red Riflemen.

UNDER THE SPELL OF THE POLITICAL MYTH

In June 1940, the Latvian state was terminated by the Soviet Union. Its aim was not only to oppress society, but also its memory. The Soviet regime can be characterized by the prevalence of the political memory, which subordinated and transformed the individual, as well as the social and cultural memory corresponding to the political objectives.

In 1940, during the Soviet period, the last volume of the magazine *Latviešu Strēlnieki* (Latvian Riflemen) was issued, where the attempts to reconstruct the conception of the Riflemen’s memory can be observed. It was noted that the 1918–1919 Latvian Riflemen were more significant than the 1915–1917 Riflemen, emphasizing that there was a positive cooperation between the Red Riflemen and the Russian army. We can read in the editorial: “Since 1915 Latvian Riflemen have fought together with the Russian army in order to guard their country from the invaders. The Riflemen fought together with Russian regiments for their joint state, country and the Latvian people. Similar heroic battles took place in the next historical period, in the vast battlefields. Now again for the third time both armies have joined their hands for joint efforts and tasks. It all facilitates interest in the earlier cooperation and joint battles. It all increases our responsibility to portray these periods and to publish historical materials.”⁶⁷

The intention to offer the version of the Riflemen’s historicity that would be acceptable to the regime of occupation was not implemented. There were various reasons for that. The Soviet regime did not trust the Union and it was important for the new

regime to enforce their own historicity where the Latvian Riflemen did not have a place. During the 1937–1938 “Latvian campaign” in the USSR many Latvian Red Riflemen were wiped out. The questions related to the Riflemen could give rise to sensitive questions and unnecessary conclusions of the Soviet policy of the last few years. Therefore, the Latvian Riflemen’s Union was closed on 20th January 1941, and the activists were repressed. As noted by the scholar of Riflemen’s history Valdis Bērziņš, the very label “Latvian rifleman” was eradicated and exterminated. This situation remained until the “thaw” in the mid-1950s.

The most outstanding event during the “thaw” was the release of the Riga Film Studio film *Latviešu strēlnieku stāsts* (The story of Latvian Riflemen) in 1958,⁶⁸ where the Riflemen question was viewed through the prism of Soviet ideology. The Riflemen’s engagement in the imperialistic war led them towards the revolution as trustworthy comrades.⁶⁹ Despite the ideological content of the movie, which focused on a subject matter that had been forbidden to talk about for nearly 20 years, perhaps, Soviet authorities had planned to exchange the uncomfortable Latvian Riflemen of World War I for ideologically more correct Riflemen – namely, the image of the rifleman fighting in the 201st Riflemen’s division (the 43rd guard) of the Red Army actively participating in the German–USSR war, and later the image of the Rifleman of the 130th Latvian riflemen’s corps. However, the year 1959 and the defeat of the national communists did not allow it to be implemented.⁷⁰

As a result of the Soviet memory politics, Latvian Riflemen that had been concealed in the previous years became the symbol of history of the occupied or Soviet Latvia. Research in the 1960s was concluded with the study *The History of Latvian Riflemen, 1915–1920* and published in 1970.⁷¹

In 1965, “on the 25th anniversary of Soviet Latvia”, when “the manliness of Latvian Riflemen and inexorability in the fight for the ideals of the revolution, in aid of the international duty and Marxism Leninism” was celebrated, the square at the centre of Riga near the banks of the Daugava was named after the Latvian

Red Riflemen. The foundation stone was placed for the monument of Latvian Riflemen and a competition for the draft of the monument was announced.⁷² Next to that, in 1966 work was started to create the monument for the Red Riflemen at the centre of Riga.⁷³ The monument of Riflemen was opened in 1971 simultaneously with the Museum of Latvian Red Riflemen,⁷⁴ and over the Soviet stagnation years it became a peculiar representation place of Riga. It was a place to organise the so-called red neckerchief celebrations, when younger schoolchildren were admitted in the organisation of pioneers. The guards of honour were organised on the important dates of the Soviet regime. The visits to the museum and the monument were also offered to the official foreign guests of Riga.

The exhibitions at the Museum of Latvian Red Riflemen, as well as the many ideological stories of history gave rise to an ideologically perfect, yet “dead” image of Riflemen. To my mind, we can speak of a consciously constructed myth of Riflemen created by the political authorities, which could be more acceptable to the society as opposed to the image of a Rifleman of World War II, which was objected by the communicative memory of a great part of Latvian society. The documentary film *Strēlnieku zvaigznājs* (Sagittarius) by Juris Podnieks,⁷⁵ where the Latvian Riflemen who were still alive were interviewed and shown, was a brave step. The emotional level and the sharpness of the film to some degree created a huge contrast to the ideologically correct stories of history, which were offered to the inhabitants of Latvia by the Soviet regime. Next to the political memory were offered individual memory stories, which together created a significant and powerful artefact of cultural memory.

TRANSFORMATIONS AND DISAPPEARING FROM THE COMMUNICATIVE MEMORY

It is not surprising that during the reassessment of history, which was marked by the General Secretary of the Communist Party M. Gorbachev's perestroika (restructuring) and glasnost

(openness) policy, the Riflemen had to play the key role. Rewriting takes place not in the science of history, which is ideologically saturated and respectful of authority, but in culture; this time – in theatre. As noted by scholars, theatre feeds on memory because it shows the present experience, which is always located within the range of the past experience and associations. “The theatre of memories” is that space where one can recall the forgotten in order to understand the present, and perhaps choose the future.”⁷⁶

In 1987, the theatre performance *Mūžības skartie* (Touched by Eternity) directed by Kārlis Auškāps was staged at the Daile Theatre in Riga, in order to “return to the people” the heroic poem written by one of the most outstanding Latvian poets, Aleksandrs Čaks (1901–1950), “which for the entire Soviet period was kept in special archives of Latvian libraries”⁷⁷, as well as part of its history. The theatre performance offered not only an insight into the history of Riflemen and the creative oeuvre of the poet, but also offered numerous innovative concepts. It emphasised the heroism of the people and their efforts to set themselves free from the German and Russian oppressive forces. In the performance all enemies of the Riflemen were personified in one character of a Russian/German general, showing the hateful ethnic and political attitude of Germans and Russians towards Latvians. The red-white-red flag was allowed to be shown in a performance for the first time.⁷⁸ In 1989, A. Čaks’ poem became the basis for director Juris Rijnieks’ theatre performance *Psihiskais uzbrukums* (The Psychic Attack) at the Liepāja Theatre, interpreting the Riflemen issue in the context of the Russian Civil War, analysing and doubting the role of Riflemen, showing how they turned into blood-thirsty soldiers of the Civil War wrecking not only the Russian Empire, but also spirituality.⁷⁹ Also, the work by Jukums Vācietis *Latviešu strēlnieku vēsturiskā nozīme* (The Historical Meaning of Latvian Riflemen) written in 1922 in Moscow, was published in 1989.⁸⁰

The Cultural Foundation of Latvia established and led by the poet Imants Ziedonis (1933–2013) had intended to continue the

tradition started in the 1970s to find and look after the battlefields of the Riflemen.⁸¹ On 26th November 1988, in Piņķi near St. Jānis Church, a memorial stone created by sculptor Uldis Sterģis was opened as the Foundation's initiative. The memorial stone was dedicated to Colonel Jukums Vācietis – the commander of the 5th Latvian Riflemen's battalion of Zemgale, who had delivered a sermon to his soldiers before leaving for the front on 17th July 1916 in accordance with a “historical fact”.⁸² The fact was taken from the Aleksandrs Čaks' poem *Spreidīšis Piņķu dievnamā* (Sermon at the Piņķi Church)⁸³, which later became part of the epic *Mūžības skartie*, although historically nothing like that had happened.⁸⁴

Using the evidence provided by the contemporaries non-critically, especially the evidence provided by General Andrejs Auzāns,⁸⁵ as well as relying on A. Čaks' poetry, this episode was seen by contemporaries as an undeniable fact, which was introduced both in the exile historiography and the historiography of Soviet Latvia.⁸⁶ Many spectators in the audiences who went to see the theatre performance *Mūžības skartie* in 1987⁸⁷ at the Daile Theatre in Riga, perceived the lines of the patriotically charged poem *Spreidīšis Piņķu baznīcā* (Sermon at the Piņķi Church) as part of the Soviet “stolen history” which had deserved to be kept forever. In November 1988, in a service at the Piņķi Church, the lines were read by actor and rifleman Ēvalds Valters (1894–1994) with the national flags being waved, and *Dievs svētī Latviju!* (God, Bless Latvia) being sung, while a memorial stone was opened for “the great man from Courland, the first Commander-in-Chief of the Soviet forces, who said ‘yes’ to Lenin and October”.⁸⁸ In 1989, the film of six episodes *Zītaru dzimta*⁸⁹ (The Zītari Family) was released by Riga Film Studio, where J. Vācietis' sermon was relocated to January 1917 – before the Riflemen went to the famous Christmas Battles. The change of the function justifying the myth of Latvian Riflemen (the Riflemen as the fighters against the Soviet authorities) with the counter-presentable function (the Riflemen as the carriers of the national idea, as the victims of Stalinism) that could be observed at the period of

National Awakening,⁹⁰ failed despite the fact that initially it was perceived positively. Attempts to merge the Soviet ideological dogmas with the national explanation of history gave rise to peculiar accounts of history, however they were not destined to develop.

Today the stone is still situated next to the Piņķi Church and the information on the “historical service” can be found on the website of the congregation.⁹¹ As a real-life event praised in A. Čaks’ poetry, the service is also described in the textbooks for Latvian school children.⁹² There are several patriotic memorial events held near the church, although the image of Latvian Riflemen as national heroes has been replaced by Latvian Legionnaires.⁹³ The prevalence of the events of World War II in the Latvian political memory caused the forgetting not only of the Riflemen, but also of other memorial sites. The dominance of elements belonging to the cultural memory marked a certain transfer of this memory from the communicative memory to the cultural memory.

Since the regaining of independence in Latvia, the memory of the Riflemen has mostly been cultivated by several local social groups, for example, the municipality and various enthusiasts. Because the state has still been unable to offer the concept of the political memory of Latvia before World War II, the activities of these enthusiasts in preserving the memory of Riflemen are not systematically organised. Young people obtain information and understanding about Latvian Riflemen at school or visiting either the Latvian War Museum or the attractive Museum of Christmas Battles, or listening to the “black metal” band Skyforger’s album *Latviešu strēlnieki* (Latvian Riflemen).⁹⁴

In the collective memory, the memory of Riflemen is also commemorated by several memorial sites, for example, “The Altar of Heroes” was established to commemorate the battles of Mazā Jugla in 2005 by the Tinūži Elementary School. A special monument for Riflemen is the 2013 book *Pulcējaties zem latviešu karogiem!* (*Gather Under the Latvian Flags!*) edited by Andris Balcers, the leader of men’s group *Vilki* (Wolves). This book offers a broad visual heritage.⁹⁵ Certain interest in the subject

matter of Riflemen was raised in relation to the potential screen adaptation of A. Grīns' novel *Dvēseļu putenis* (*The Blizzard of Souls*).

Also, Egils Levits offered to restructure the subject matter of Riflemen for the needs of the political memory, initiating discussions in public regarding the necessity of a preamble to the constitution of the Republic of Latvia. He offered to look at the foundation of the 1915 Riflemen's unions as short-sighted Latvian engagement in useless warfare.⁹⁶ This thesis was not noticed in the public space and was not analysed enough, which allowed the image of Riflemen to be included in a new political myth.

CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW POLITICAL MYTH?

In 2015 a century had passed since the foundation of the Latvian Riflemen's battalions. On 1st August 2015, following the initiative of the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Latvia, the large *Celebrations of the People and the Army 'Latvian Riflemen 100'* took place. The Ministry of Defence chose this day, because on 1st August 1915 Commander-in-Chief of the Russian North-Eastern front Mikhail Alekseyev (1857–1918) had issued an order for the establishment of the first two voluntary battalions of Latvian Riflemen and the establishment of the Organizing Committee of the Battalion of Latvian Riflemen.

The celebrations started with the opening of the memorial plate at the building of the Organizing Committee, which was followed by a concert and a celebratory "procession of the people and the army" through Riga, which was concluded at 11th November Krastmala with a display of the Latvian National Armed Forces and a concert.⁹⁷ The President of Latvia Raimonds Vējonis said in his speech: "Today we celebrate in order to honour the Latvian soldier! The soldier from ancient times, the rifleman, the legionnaire – as well as the soldier, home guard and young guard from our times. The same way as Riflemen in those days went to battles from the Baltic Sea to the Urals, to the Black Sea, the Riflemen nowadays have also been in many places where inter-

national operations have taken place – in various hot spots.”⁹⁸ Whereas the Commander of the National Armed Forces Raimonds Graube noted that the state had two beginnings: “The spiritual awakening and the soldier’s awakening.” According to Graube, the memorial plate is “the reminder of the fact that our state was born in battle, with blood spilled and soldiers dying”.⁹⁹

The speeches and the conceptual context of the events provided grounds for obvious attempts to connect the image of a Latvian Rifleman with statehood and the Latvian armed forces. Both goals are historically unjustified and, we could even say, false. The president’s efforts to equate the Riflemen, Latvian Red Riflemen and Latvian SS Legion soldiers is not only incorrect, but speaks against the current state policy towards the legion soldiers.¹⁰⁰ However, the fact that the remembrance of the Riflemen is located in the previously mentioned “twilight zone”, ensures that this memory can be revived, filling it with a completely different content. It is a shame that the instrumentalization of the memory of Riflemen takes place without any public debates or discussions among historians. The instrumentalization of the memory of the Riflemen is also attested by the currently in production film *Dvēseļu putenis*, which did not attract funding from the state budget through the National Film Centre, but directly through the Saeima.¹⁰¹

Also, Askolds Saulītis directed a film on Latvian Riflemen entitled *Astoņas zvaigznes* (Eight Stars) with a leading motif portraying Latvian Riflemen as both the most outstanding and most tragic phenomenon of national awareness.¹⁰² The director admits that the film was a tool of research for himself, too, since he had been interested in this subject matter for a long time but he did not know much about it.¹⁰³ Perhaps, this approach encourages further questions which in the current social and political memory are not essential.

An interesting memorial monument is the 2016 monument in Smārde dedicated to the Finnish Jaeger troops who in World War I fought in the German Kaiser’s army and received a baptism of fire at the Smārde battles. The installation of the memorial

sign did not give rise to any objections. Besides, the installation of this sign was funded by the Finnish and the Finnish Minister of Defence, and it was the military management of the Finnish Army who participated in the opening ceremony. However, it is essential to draw attention to the representations by the media and Latvian officials at the opening of the monument. First of all, it was not mentioned that the Finnish Jaegers fought against the joint Latvian Riflemen's brigade, and the Latvian Riflemen who died in this battle were honoured with a monument by Kārlis Zāle in 1936. Second, instead of reflecting on various opportunities, which the "small nations" of the Russian Empire took advantage of in order to fight for their freedom in the years of World War I, it was used for events unrelated to diplomatic rhetoric.¹⁰⁴ This message was portrayed in the media, revealing that Latvia honoured the Finnish who defeated the USSR in the "Winter War", a narrative which, perhaps, was borrowed from the speech given by the Latvian Minister of Defence Raimods Bergmanis, who spoke about the joint mission of both nations, transferring the historical context to the Finnish "Winter War".¹⁰⁵ Of course, one can understand the diplomatic rhetoric, however, the "forgetting" of remembrance of Latvian Riflemen that the Ministry of Defence is currently taking care of leads to questions about ethics and consistency in using the remembrance of Latvian Riflemen for the needs of power rhetoric today.

CONCLUSION

The collective memory is not detached from the individual memory of an individual. Similar to the individual's memory, it also has its period of existence, after which it disappears. According to memory scholars, it can be revived under certain circumstances, yet even then the memory would not last forever.¹⁰⁶ The image of Riflemen in the framework of the communicative memory slowly but relentlessly passes. Whether the political and cultural memory will succeed in reviving the issue of Latvian Riflemen and achieving its reassessment, it becomes an instru-

mentalized tool of manipulation, or these memories vanish from the public memory altogether – only time will show.

After 1920, the memory of a small social group could become a significant part of the Latvian collective memory, also spread roots in the political and cultural memory of the Republic of Latvia. The year 1940 interrupted the development of this memory and the subject of Riflemen was tabooed up until the 1950s. After 1959, the myth of the Latvian Red Riflemen started to become stronger, eventually turning into the central element of the political memory of Soviet Latvia.

The rewriting and understanding of the past started in the late 1980s also affected the memory of the Latvian Riflemen. The instrumentalization of the elements of cultural memory marked some kind of departure of the collective memory from the zone of the communicative memory. After Latvia regained its independence, the main clashes of the communicative memory and representations of the past were focused on the processes of World War II casting a shadow on other sites of memory. The history of the Riflemen is closely related to the history of the establishment of the state. The only question is whether this connection will be forced in a non-critical and manipulative manner, or the role and significance of the Riflemen will be revised and reassessed. At a time when memory is disappearing from the level of communicative memory and when no “memory wars” are possible, unfortunately one must look sceptically at the prospect of any further development of this subject matter in the political and cultural memory.

The place of Latvian Riflemen in the collective memory of Latvia is very essential. It shows not only the genesis of the understanding of historicity, but also – how local and foreign political elites have manipulated this historicity. This article only maps the key issues related to the Riflemen and World War I. It has not examined the questions on the cultivation of the memory and remembrance of Riflemen beyond the geographical framework of Latvia, namely, in the 1920s–1930s in the USSR and in exile after World War II. These are subject matters which must be addressed,

but which, to my mind, have little affected the collective memory in Latvia. Likewise, individual studies focusing on the foundation and development of the memorial sites dedicated to the Riflemen both in spatial and cultural dimensions would be worth undertaking. It would be significant to examine this subject matter from the perspective of various representations (literature, film, theatre, etc.). We should not forget about the historical research of Riflemen, which so far has been as fragmentary as the collective memory. It should be emphasised that the researcher of the past, when examining how this past has affected the society in later periods, also participates in the formation of the collective memory.

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- ¹² Pierre Nora (1989). *Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire. Representations*, 26, pp. 7–24, here pp. 7–8.
- ¹³ Sk. Vitālijs Šalda, Tatjana Bartele (2007). *Latviešu bēgļi Krievijā 1915–1922* [*Latvian Refugees in Russia 1915–1922*]. Daugavpils: Saule; Vitālijs Šalda (2005). “Bēgļu laiki” Latvijā jeb kurzemnieki Vidzemē 1915–1918 [“The Times of Refugees” in Latvia or the Inhabitants of Courland in Vidzeme 1915–1918]. Daugavpils: Saule.
- ¹⁴ Nora (1989). *Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire*, pp. 8–9.
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- ¹⁶ In August of 1915, after the initiative of Russian Duma deputies Janis Goldmanis and Janis Zalitis, the Latvian Riflemen battalion was formed. It was a part of the Russian Army and formed on voluntary and ethnic principles. Within a short period of time 8 battalions were formed, but in October 1916 they became Riflemen regiments. The Riflemen units fought on the Riga front as a part of the 12th Russian Army, and were commanded by Latvian officers. After the February revolution of 1917 in Russia the Riflemen came under the influence of the Bolsheviks and a sharp radicalization took place, which resulted in many of the Riflemen going into service under the Bolsheviks. In December of 1918 the Riflemen formed the core of P. Stučka’s Army of Soviet Latvia, which invaded Latvia—starting the so called War of Independence. After their defeat in Latvia and as a result of a vast number of deserters, in the summer of 1919 the Riflemen were sent to war against the army of General A. Denikin.
During the civil war in Russia, the so called Imanta regiment and the Troicka battalion was formed. It consisted of those Riflemen who did not collaborate with the Bolsheviks and from Latvian refugees of Siberia. In 1920, these units started to evacuate to Latvia through Vladivostok’s harbor and upon return were either demobilized or incorporated into the Latvian Army.

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- ⁴⁴ Ibid.
- ⁴⁵ These celebrations were organised by the periodically summoned steering committee of the Christmas Battles and the fallen heroes.
- ⁴⁶ Rūdolfs Bangerskis (1922). *Latviešu strēlnieku ērkšķainā gaita*. Rīga: Valters un Rapa, p. 37.
- ⁴⁷ M. B. Veco latviešu strēlnieku svētki Rīgā [The celebrations of Latvian Riflemen in Riga]. *Jaunā Balss*, 12.01.1924., p. 4.

- ⁴⁸ S. N. (1924). *Piemīņa un strēlnieki*. *Domas*, 2, pp. 186–188, here p. 186.
- ⁴⁹ Cadets – members of the left liberal constitutionally democratic party of Russia.
- ⁵⁰ Boris Savinkov (*Савинков*, 1879–1925), a Russian politician and revolutionary. In 1918 he organised a counter-revolutionary organisation called the Society for the Defence of the Motherland and Freedom to overturn the Bolshevik Government. In this organization colonels Kārlis Goppers and Frīdrihs Briedis also participated.
- ⁵¹ Mihail Alekseyev (*Алексеев*, 1857–1918), Russian general, founder of the Volunteer Army to fight the Bolsheviks.
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- ⁵⁵ R. V. Veco latviešu strēlnieku piemiņas diena. *Latvijas Kareivis*, 08.01.1925., p. 1.
- ⁵⁶ *Ibid.*
- ⁵⁷ Jānis Akuraters. Gari un karogi [Spirits and flags]. *Jaunākās Ziņas*, 05.01.1937., p. 5.
- ⁵⁸ -ņš. Latviešu strēlnieki 1917.6.I. – 1937. *Tēvijas Sargs*, 01.01.1937., p. 6.
- ⁵⁹ *Ibid*, p. 7.
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PIRMAIS PASAULES KARŠ UN LATVIEŠU STRĒLNIEKI LATVIJAS KOLEKTĪVAJĀ ATMIŅĀ

Kaspars Zellis

Dr. hist., Latvijas Universitātes filozofijas un socioloģijas institūts, vadošais pētnieks. Zinātniskās intereses: propagandas vēsture Latvijā 20. gs., Latvijas 20. gs. kolektīvā atmiņa, pagātnes refleksijas Latvijas iedzīvotāju dzīvesstāstos.

Pirmā pasaules kara simtgade 2014. gadā aktualizēja šī kara nozīmi Latvijas vēsturē. Raksta mērķis ir izskatīt, kā veidojusies un tikusi un tiek izmantota

viena no spilgtākajām kara “atmiņu vietām” – latviešu strēlnieki. Rakstā atklāti ne tikai priekšnoteikumi un iemesli tam, kā latviešu strēlnieku tēls tika konstruēts un attīstījās, bet caur šo prizmu var vērot arī sabiedrības vēsturiskuma izpratnes ģenēzi un to, kā ar šo vēsturiskumu ir manipulējušas gan savas, gan svešas politiskās elites.

Atslēgas vārdi: Pirmais pasaules karš, strēlnieki, kolektīvā atmiņa.

Kopsavilkums

Raksts ir veltīts Pirmā pasaules kara laikā izveidoto latviešu strēlnieku bataljonu piederīgo tēlam Latvijas kolektīvajā atmiņā. Rakstā analizēts, kā tika veidots strēlnieku tēls Latvijā 20. gs. 20.–30. gados, padomju okupācijas laikā un pēc neatkarības atjaunošanas.

Latvijā pēc aizvadītā Pirmā pasaules kara (1914–1918) un tam sekojošā Neatkarības kara (1918–1920) sākās Latvijas Republikas politiskās atmiņas veidošana. Jaunajai politiskajai un militārajai elitei bija nepieciešams sniegt savu pagātnes reprezentāciju, kas ne tikai pamatotu un nostiprinātu režīma un elites leģitimitāti, bet arī konsolidētu sabiedrību. Attieksme pret latviešu strēlniekiem no jaunās valsts puses sākotnēji bija rezervēta, ko jāskaidro ar strēlnieku lielo boļševizāciju, daudzu pāriešanu Padomju Krievijas dienestā un daudzu piedalīšanos karagājienā pret Latvijas Republiku 1919. gadā Pētera Stučkas Padomju Latvijas armijas rindās.

Centieni aktualizēt, nostiprināt latviešu strēlnieku lomu sociālajā atmiņā un mēģinājumi to iekļaut arī politiskajā atmiņā būtu skaidrojami ar vairākiem faktoriem:

1. Atmiņas uzdevums ir nodrošināt vēstures kontinuitāti, nodrošināt sabiedrības sasaisti ar pagātņi un nākotni. Tādējādi parādījās vajadzība integrēt kolektīvajā atmiņā arī Pirmā pasaules kara notikumus Latvijā un latviešu strēlniekus.

2. Nepieciešamība nepieļaut latviešu sabiedrības nodalīšanos antagoniskās grupās. Politiskā atmiņa par galveno ienaidnieku pasludināja vāciešus, kā rezultātā galvenā ienaidnieka tēls tika attiecināts uz Baltijas landesvēru un valstsvāciešu vienībām, nevis boļševiku pusē esošajiem strēlniekiem. Dienests landesvērā tika uztverts kā valsts nodevība, savukārt dienests Sarkanajā armijā – kā likteņa ironija.

3. Jaunās militārās un politiskās elites nepieciešamība pamatot savus nopelnus cīņā “par Latvijas brīvību”.

Strēlnieku piemiņas dienas tradīcijas ieviešana, strēlnieku biedrību darbība spēja pārliecināt politisko eliti par strēlnieku sociālās atmiņas

pārņemšanu politiskajā. Pirmā pasaules kara kauju vietas Nāves salā vai Tīreļpurvā vēl pagājušā gadsimta 20.–30. gados tika padarītas par savdabīgām nācijas varoņu vietām. Rīgas Brāļu kapi, kas sākotnēji bija Rīgas frontē kritušo strēlnieku apbedījuma vieta, vēlāk tika apvienoti ar Neatkarības karā kritušo piēšiem, tādējādi telpiski radot sociālpolitisku mītu par to, ka cariskās armijas latviešu strēlnieki un Latvijas armijas karavīri cīnījās par vienu mērķi – neatkarīgu Latviju.

Valsts politika, vienādojot strēlniekus un Neatkarības kara karavīrus, izpaudās arī lokālu monumentu celtniecībā un patriotisku rituālu norisē valsts svētkos. Arī Latvijas valsts augstākais militārais apbalvojums – Lāčplēša Kara ordenis tika piešķirts arī strēlniekiem par cīņām Pirmajā pasaules karā.

Pēc 1920. gada šauras sociālas grupas – latviešu strēlnieku – atmiņa spēja kļūt par nozīmīgu Latvijas kolektīvās atmiņas sastāvdaļu, nostiprinoties arī Latvijas Republikas politiskajā un kultūras atmiņā. 1940. gads pārtrauca šīs atmiņas attīstību, un strēlnieku tēmu tabuizēja līdz pat 50. gadu vidum. Pēc 1959. gada, kad notika nacionālkomunistu sagrāve Latvijā, par politiski neviennozīmīgu kļuva Otrajā pasaules karā Sarkanajā armijā karojošās latviešu divīzijas veterāna tēls, jo nacionālkomunisti nāca no latviešu divīzijas aprindām. Tādējādi varai nācās nostiprināt sarkano latviešu strēlnieku mītu, kas ar laiku kļuva par Padomju Latvijas centrālo politiskās atmiņas elementu.

20. gs. 80. gadu beigās uzsāktā pagātnes pārrakstīšana un apjēgšana skāra arī atmiņu par latviešu strēlniekiem. Jau šajā laikā balstīšanās un operēšana ar kultūras atmiņas elementiem iezīmēja sava veida kolektīvās atmiņas aiziešanu no komunikatīvās atmiņas zonas. Pēc Latvijas neatkarības atgūšanas galvenās komunikatīvās atmiņas un pagātnes reprezentāciju sadursmes centrējas uz Otrā pasaules kara norisēm, aizēnojot citas atmiņu vietas.

No atmiņas “krēslas zonas” strēlniekus izcēla bataljonu formēšanas simtgades pasākumi, ko organizēja Latvijas Aizsardzības ministrija 2015. gadā. Pasākumi ideoloģiski iezīmējās ar centieniem saistīt latviešu strēlniekus ar Latvijas bruņotajiem spēkiem un valsts neatkarības ideju. Valsts finansējumu saņēmuši vairāki kultūras projekti par strēlniekiem, tomēr tajā pašā laikā nenotiek ne akadēmiskā problemātikas izpēte, ne arī plašākas diskusijas par strēlnieku lomu Latvijas vēsturē, kas rada bažas par strēlnieku tēla mitoloģizāciju un pakļaušanu politiskās atmiņas vajadzībām. Vai strēlnieku tēls tiks ideoloģizēts un instrumentalizēts vai arī nodots kārtējai aizmirstīšanai, par to šodien vēl ir agri spriest.

THE INVENTED TRADITIONS: THE CALENDAR OF FESTIVE DAYS AND FAMILY CUSTOMS IN THE LATVIAN SSR

Ilze Boldāne-Zeļenkova

Dr. hist., researcher, Institute of History of Latvia, University of Latvia. Research interests: ethnic identity and stereotypes, the history of minorities in Latvia, the heritage and legacy of the Communist regime.

The representatives of the Communist regime (1940–1941; 1944/45–1991) used newly invented festive and remembrance days, as well as celebratory traditions and family customs adjusted to the Marxist-Leninist ideology as instruments to legitimise power and its representative institutions, to strengthen the prevalent ideology and to assimilate societies. Although in the first years of the occupation regime this area was not very much addressed, in the 1970s a special infrastructure to invent traditions and the monitoring mechanism for this process were established. The aim of this article is to provide a preliminary assessment of the invention process of the Soviet festive and family customs in the Latvian SSR.

Key words: the Communist regime, the invented (replaced) traditions, the socialist content in the national framework.

INTRODUCTION

When examining the calendar of festive days and family customs of the so-called *Latvian socialist nation* living in the Soviet Socialist Republic of Latvia (hereinafter – the Latvian SSR), one must address it as part of the creation of a bigger ethnic entity – *the Soviet nation* – and of the educational process. The representatives of the Communist regime used the newly invented and replaced traditions of common festive and remembrance days, as well as celebratory traditions and family customs adjusted to the Marxist-Leninist ideology as instruments to legitimise power and

its representative institutions, to strengthen the prevalent ideology and to assimilate society.

According to the temporal and spatial context, especially when it is a result of social collisions, each society *invents*, introduces or changes traditions, festivities and rituals. *The invented traditions* is a term which gained recognition in 1983 from a book with a similar title¹, and the authors of the book defined such traditions as many specially organized and mutually interacting social practices, which include strict instructions, regulations, rituals and symbols. As noted by historian Eric Hobsbawm, the aim of invented traditions, with their repetitive character, is to introduce, instil and maintain values and behaviour whose meaning is based on the historical past. This process leads to a situation where the invented traditions become part of the collective (social, ethnic) and individual identities. Sociologists Émile Durkheim² and Peter L. Berger³, politologists George Schöpflin⁴ and Jeffrey C. Alexander⁵ and others have drawn attention to the potential of rituals and traditions to renew and strengthen social ties and solidarity among members of society over various historical periods.

The case of Soviet (= socialist) traditions⁶ is different. In the context of the domestic customs of the Latvian SSR a more suitable term would be the *replaced traditions*⁷. The traditional customs, including the related religious rituals, were replaced with the Soviet equivalent, which used a recognizable framework for the new content: folklore and ethnographic elements including crafts and the ceremonies of the Christian church. The initiators of traditions were not the elite of the local community, but the hierarchically highest representatives of the occupation regime in Moscow; the elaborators were the representatives of the local authorities, who also attracted the local representatives of the culture and science elite. The unification and invention of traditions took place gradually under strict control, allowing other customs to be practiced in parallel.

The aim of this article is to provide a preliminary assessment of the invention process of the Soviet festive and family customs in the Latvian SSR. The research is based on documents and correspondence revealing the decree of the Council of Ministers

(hereinafter – the CM) on the implementation of the improvement measures in the invention of Soviet traditions⁸ and the materials documenting the new traditions such as photographs, descriptions of events, the issued documents, etc.⁹ found at the Repository of Ethnographic Materials (hereinafter – the REM) at the Institute of Latvian History, University of Latvia. These materials were accumulated in the period from 1963 to the first half of the 1980s. The sources also include methodological publications¹⁰, calendars¹¹, as well as the statements provided in academic publications by ethnographers and folklore scholars regarding the theoretical and practical side of the invention of traditions.¹²

This subject matter is seldom in Latvian historiography. Researchers in humanities and social sciences only started to address the question of culture in the Latvian SSR at the beginning of the 21st century. After the renewal of the independence of Latvia, historians revised the historiography of this historical period in their assessment of the Soviet occupation, and it became dominated by the denial of the regime's positive impact on the development of Latvian people, release of new facts and analysis. Socialist traditions in Latvian post-Soviet historiography have been assessed only in some works, for example, in Laura Uzule and Vita Zelče's study of Latvian cemetery festivities,¹³ as well as in the work by Inta Rasa¹⁴ and articles by Rita Treija¹⁵, Sergejs Kruks¹⁶ and Daina Bleiere.¹⁷

A similar situation in the research of Soviet traditions can be observed in the neighbouring countries. The compilations of documents and works that have been dedicated to the analysis of the subject matter have only been written in the last few years.¹⁸

THE INITIATIVE FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SOVIET TRADITIONS, ITS JUSTIFICATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

The ideologists of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (hereinafter – the CC CPSU) were well-aware of the importance of common festivities and memo-

rial rituals in the ideological education and integration of society, although their establishment and introduction took more than a decade¹⁹ of experimenting with the form and content of the invented traditions, as well as trying to eradicate religious rituals from the daily life of inhabitants living in the vast country. According to the available documents and the statistics on the participation of citizens in various religious rituals²⁰, the latter was an impossible task.

More extensive and crucial was the instruction of new traditions which strengthened the Communist ideology and moral values, and corresponded to the requirements of the socialist economic order.²¹ This took place in the mid-1950s and early 1960s.²² It was affected by several circumstances: 1) economic – prevention of devastation caused by warfare, and the stabilization of the economic system; 2) ideological – only in the period when Nikita Khrushchev was the General Secretary of the CC CPSU (1953–1964), did the functionaries of the Communist Party realise that an alternative – the Soviet domestic traditions – was necessary to fight against the impact of religion on society. As noted by historian Daina Bleiere, in this context a crucial role was played by the optimism over the advantages of the Soviet lifestyle and Soviet culture, which emerged after the XX Congress of the CPSU. In the 1950s many post-revolution Soviet ideas and practices experienced a renaissance. These ideas and practices at least partially were transferred or were attempted to be transferred to national republics too, while taking into account the local specifics.

To implement this project, serious work was undertaken involving the ideologists and propaganda officials of the Party, as well as the representatives of the state, republic and the local administrative apparatus, and academics and practitioners. In the whole of the USSR, the Baltic republics, including the Latvian SSR, were the leaders in this process.²³

Up to the early 1960s, as noted by the ethnographers and researchers of traditions, the creation of festivities and the elaboration of their order “was based on the creative work of certain enthusiasts (individuals and collectives)”.²⁴ The 1963 decrees of

the Ideological Commission of the CC CPSU were the stimulus for the creation and introduction of the Soviet traditions, but the inspiration for the content and form of the new traditions was provided by two seminars on Soviet festivities and customs. The first took place in May 1964 in Moscow, the second in October 1978 in Kiev. Already in the first All-Union seminar the infrastructure of this process was defined, stipulating that the elaboration and strengthening of the new Soviet festivities and customs was the task of the Party and the state. This task had to be implemented while attracting and uniting the representatives of the Party, unions, trade unions and the Young Communist League, as well as academics and specialists in customs. The outcome of the Second All-Union seminar was the publication of recommendations for the event organisers.²⁵ This publication has often been used as reference in the works of Latvian ethnographers and researchers studying socialist traditions. Another outcome of the seminar in Kiev was a publication dedicated to the Decree of the CC CPSU “On Further Improvements in the Ideological and Political Education Work” (1979), where it was emphasised that “festivities and customs are part of the ideological work, which is related to collective activities (..) that have wide opportunities to demonstrate the greatness of the Communist ideals, the tireless productive work of the CPSU in raising the well-being of the nation and strengthening of the mightiness of the Soviet Homeland, revealing the essence of the Soviet lifestyle and the achievements of the socialist society”.²⁶

Reacting to the decrees of the CC CPSU, Congresses and Seminars, similar regulations were adopted in the Latvian SSR. For example, the 1963 joint decree issued by the Latvian Leninist Young Communist League (hereinafter – the LLYCL) CC bureau, the Executive Council of the Supreme Council of the Latvian SSR (hereinafter – the SC) and the panel of the Ministry of Culture of the Latvian SSR “On the Condition and Measures to Introduce Soviet Traditions in the Domestic Lives of the Proletariat of the Republic” and the “Regulation on the Commissions Monitoring the Introduction of Soviet Domestic Traditions and the Law on

Religious Cults”²⁷ approved on 6th June 1964 by the CM of the Latvian SSR, stipulated the establishment of commissions in the Soviet executive committees in cities, regions and villages. The representatives of the Communist Party, local executive power, trade union and Young Communist League had to be included among other members of these commissions.

From the early 1960s, when the establishment and introduction of the new Soviet traditions as part of the daily life was regarded as one of the top priorities of the Communist Party and the Soviet executive power at the level of the state and republics, the respective commissions, committees, cabinets and unions were created based on the structures of the SC and the CM. In 1960 in the Latvian SSR work was undertaken by the LLYCL CC *Commission of the Soviet Domestic Traditions (1960–1963)*²⁸; its work was continued by the sector for Soviet domestic traditions of the Republican Atheist Council of the Society of Information of the Latvian SSR. One of the first institutions that monitored the creation and invention process of the new traditions in the Latvian SSR was the *Commission Monitoring the Introduction of the Soviet Domestic Traditions and the Law on Religious Cults of the Council of Ministers of the Latvian SSR*, established on 6th June 1964, which on 9th October 1979, according to the new guidelines created by the Second All-Union Seminar and the official regulations was changed into the *Commission Facilitating the Soviet Traditions, Festivities, Rituals and the Law on Religious Cults of the Council of Ministers of the Latvian SSR*. Representatives from various institutions worked in the Commission and it was not an area that was of concern only to the Ministry of Culture. As mentioned before, commissions with analogous titles operated under the executive councils of the proletariat unions in regions, cities, towns and villages. According to the materials of the AEM, the representatives of various professions were involved in the work of these local commissions – librarians, teachers, club leaders, farmers from the collective farms, the best readers of the books available at the libraries, the secretaries of the village councils and executive councils, animal husbandry experts, chairs of the

collective farms.²⁹ Pursuant to the regulations, four sections were introduced as part of the commissions: 1) the section of children's festivities; 2) the section of the passport issuing ceremonies and majority festivities; 3) the section of marriage ceremonies and birth certificate issuing; 4) the section of funeral ceremonies.

The activities of these commissions and their satellite organizations in the Latvian SSR created solid infrastructure, which served as the grounds for organisational, propaganda and research work. They cooperated with *the Academic and Methodological Cabinet in the Activities of Clubs* of the Ministry of Culture of the Latvian SSR and *People's House of Art of E. Melngailis*³⁰ (hereinafter – the PHA), which had the biggest significance in the invention and implementation process of the new Soviet traditions. The task of the PHA was to introduce the decisions of the abovementioned commissions as concrete proposals, recommendations and methodological tools, to ensure their availability in the methodological cabinets of the houses of culture subordinated to the *Academic and Methodological Cabinet in the Activities of Clubs*, which passed this information further to community centres, clubs and houses of culture.

In 1976 the *Methodological Society of Socialist Traditions* (hereinafter – the Society) started working as part of the *Academic and Methodological Cabinet in the Activities of Clubs*, with members from the Party, councils, and the Young Communist League, as well as institutions of culture, education and academic research. Among them, there were also the ethnographers of the Institute of History of the Academy of Science (hereinafter – the AS) of the Latvian SSR, whose direct duties in this Society were related to the creation of festivities and customs, their improvement, monitoring, and elaboration of proposals for event improvements.³¹ In the mid-1970s, marking further activities of the ethnographic sector, “the contemporary lifestyle and culture of the rural and city dwellers of Soviet Latvia” was mentioned as one of the most important research directions, “drawing special attention to the proletariat family, Soviet labour and domestic customs and the clarification of the development of folk art”³².

The Society was responsible for: elaboration of the recommendations for ceremonies; listening to the reports of the regional commissions of traditions and analysing them; participating in the organisation and jury work of various seminars, shows and competitions; provision of corresponding instructions and consultations; preparation of academic and popular science publications; giving speeches in scientific and practical science conferences on various issues of festivities and customs; preparation of information releases to press, radio and TV.³³

As it can be seen, the PHA was responsible for the unification of traditions and the elaboration and offer of instruments to be used in the process of implementation. In the course of its actions the following work was accomplished: methodological tools and recommendations in the form of published brochures³⁴ and compilations of articles³⁵ were provided; conferences, seminars, lectures, and training were organised providing not only theoretical, but also practical direction (for example, how to prepare the hosts of funeral ceremonies)³⁶; publications in the republican press and local regional press were issued, and information disseminated with the help of other public media. The many methodological means published in the 1960s–1970s were a handbook for the practitioners, where the structure of the festive event was described in a very detailed manner starting from the decorations, props and scenography and ending with poetry and audio material that could be used for artistic amateur activities, as well as the clothing of the host and other nuances.

In the process of tradition implementation, according to the evidence provided by the materials at the Latvian State Archive³⁷, sociological studies, as well as pilot projects of various parts of ceremonies were organised. Later, these projects were carefully analysed, evaluating whether the respective element was corresponding and appropriate for the ceremony, how it contributed to the event etc., which ensured that many exaggerations and occurrences of *tastelessness* were avoided.

The feedback – information on the process of the implementation of traditions and the success – was provided by several

mechanisms of control: round-up reports which were submitted by the methodological cabinets at the regional houses of culture, shows (sort of socialist competitions) where the festivities and events were assessed by special commissions and the analysis of the materials (surveys, observations and interviews) obtained in the ethnographic expeditions of the Institute of History of the Academy of Science of the Latvian SSR.³⁸ All this information was discussed and carefully addressed both in the Society and the Commission under the CM of the Latvian SSR.

FESTIVITIES: THE CONTENT, FORM AND SOURCES

When examining the USSR calendar of festive and remembrance days, the ethnographers of the time categorised them in the following way: 1) The state and revolutionary festivities and festive days; 2) Labour festivities and customs; 3) Domestic festivities and customs, including the family.³⁹ In contemporary historiography a different perspective is provided, grouping the Soviet festivities and customs in the following way: historical, professional, folkloristic and others.⁴⁰ The introduction of the fourth group, “others”, is justified by many festive days on the Soviet calendar – for example, the International Day for Protection of Children (1st of June), the International UN Day (24th of October), etc., which cannot be included in the three categories provided by the contemporaries. Later in the article the author has provided an insight into the national holidays and labour festivities, as well as family customs, keeping the titles of categories given by the contemporaries.

1. NATIONAL HOLIDAYS AND REMEMBRANCE DAYS

The task of these festivities (see Table No 1⁴¹ on page 131) is to create collective memory, the sense of belonging to the state and feelings of patriotism. In this category, a crucial element is the idea of continuity – the young generation must remember, honour and protect what the older generation fought and sacrificed their lives for. In 1945 the calendar included the Remembrance Day of

Table No 1

NATIONAL HOLIDAYS AND REMEMBRANCE DAYS CELEBRATED AT THE LATVIAN SSR IN 1975

<p>January</p> <p>1. The New Year's Day 21. The Anniversary of Lenin's Death 22. The Beginning of the First Russian Revolution</p>	<p>April</p> <p>11. The International Release Day of the Prisoners in the Fascist Concentration Camps 22. V. Lenin's Birthday 24. The International Youth Solidarity Day 25. The RSDLP III Congress 25. The World's City Friendship Day</p>	<p>July</p> <p>21. The Foundation Day of the Latvian SSR 25. The USSR Navy Day</p>	<p>October</p> <p>24. The International UN Day 29. The Foundation Day of Russian Communist Youth League</p>
<p>February</p> <p>18. Birthday of the SC USSR Chairman Nikolai Podgorny 21. Birthday of the CM USSR Chairman Aleksey Kosygin 23. The Day of Soviet Army and Navy</p>	<p>May</p> <p>1. The International Workers' Day 5. K. Marx's Birthday 9. The Victory Festivity 25. The Liberalisation Day of Africa</p>	<p>August</p> <p>5. F. Engels's Day of Death 5. The Latvian SSR incorporated in the USSR 18. The Day of the USSR Air Fleet</p>	<p>November</p> <p>7. The Anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution 10. The World's Youth Day 19. The Day of Missile Army and Artillery 28. F. Engels's Birthday</p>
<p>March</p> <p>8. The International Women's Day 12. The February Bourgeois Democratic Revolution in Russia (1917) 14. K. Marx's Day of Death 18. The Day of Paris Commune 29. CP(b)R IX Congress 30. CPSU XXIV Congress</p>	<p>June</p> <p>1. The International Day for Protection of Children 22. The Beginning of the Great Patriotic War 27. The Day of Soviet Youth</p>	<p>September</p>	<p>December</p> <p>5. The USSR Constitution Day 18. C(b)P XIV Congress 19. Birthday of the CC CPSU General Secretary 30. Foundation of the USSR</p>

Lenin (22nd of January, later – 21st of January), the Foundation Day of the Latvian SSR (21st of July), the Anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution (7th and 8th of November, later – 7th of November), Stalin's (later – the USSR) Day of Constitution (5th of December)⁴², while starting with the 1960s the range of the festive days was crucially extended in the calendar. This extension was done by ideologically appropriate Congresses of the Communist Party, as well as by Russian and Latvian Social Democratic labour parties etc., new dates added included birthdays and death days of the regime ideologists K. Marx, and F. Engels, and V. Lenin, as well as of Latvian revolutionaries (P. Stučka, F. Rozītis-Āzis and others), and birthdays of the current General Secretaries of the CC CPSU. Many of these festive days were not kept in the calendar longer than for 10 years. From the 1950s onwards a stable tradition was the Army Day and the Navy Day (23rd of February), the Victory Day (9th of May) and also International Women's Day (8th of March). The general public knew these festivities under other names, for example, the *Men's Day* (23rd of February) was analogous to the *Women's Day* (8th of March). Consequently, these festive days were imbued with another meaning.

National and revolutionary festivities contributed to the myth surrounding the creation and creators of the state. The Anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution, the beginning of the 1905 Revolution, the USSR (in 1945 – Stalin's) Constitution Day, the Victory Day and the USSR Foundation Day were the most important points of departure in the USSR calendar of festive days. In the context of the Latvian SSR, the following events were crucial and thus enduring in the calendar of the festive days – the Foundation Day of the Latvian SSR (21st July; in the calendar from 1945 up to 1990), and the incorporation of Latvia into the USSR (5th August). Although the scenarios for celebrations were prepared for most of the national holidays⁴³, not all of them were implemented in real life. As already mentioned above, the idea of continuity was an essential part of such national holidays as the Anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolu-

tion and the Victory Day, therefore, a crucial and integral element of the festive ritual was the meeting of generations, which was organised in the places corresponding to the semiotics of festivities⁴⁴ – the Lenin monument and the Cemetery of the Brethren where Little Octobrists and Pioneers met with the participants of the Revolution and the veterans of the Great Patriotic War (Soviet name for World War II). The procession to the memorial site, the festive meeting, a lecture, a concert – all these were important elements of the celebrations.

The pantheon of heroes was also significant in the category of these festivities – the authors of Marxist-Leninist ideology (Marx, Engels, Lenin) and those who implemented these ideas in real life, including the local revolutionaries of Latvian origin, the current General Secretaries of the CC CPSU and certain representatives of the politburo. Besides, the military mightiness of the USSR had to be celebrated as well and there were many festive days for the army and its parts.

2. LABOUR FESTIVITIES AND CUSTOMS

Examining the calendars issued at the respective times and the organisational tools for the festivities, one must agree with the conclusion provided by Estonian scholar Tiiu Kreegipuu, namely, that the group of Soviet festivities dedicated to labour and professions (see Table No 2 on page 134) increased rapidly through the years. It can be justified on the grounds of the USSR ideology: “Work is the key content of life of a Soviet individual, which manifests his attitude towards society and the socialist homeland.”⁴⁵ The International Workers’ Day celebrated on 1st May was one of the most significant national holidays in the USSR remaining in the calendar of festive and remembrance days of the Latvian SSR from 1945 to 1990.

The group of Soviet festivities was classified in the following subgroups: 1) days of professions (for example, the Teachers’ Day, the Fishermen’s Day, the Builders’ Day and others in the calendar since the 1960s); 2) Celebrations of work collectives or certain members of the collective (for example, the anniversaries of

Table No 2

PROFESSIONAL FESTIVITIES IN 1975

January	April 6. The Day of Geologists 7. The World's Health Day 12. The Space Industry Day. The World's Aviation and Space Industry Day	July 5. The International Day of Cooperation 13. The Day of Fishermen 20. The Day of Metallurgists 27. The Day of Trade Assistants	October 5. The Day of Teachers 12. The All-Union Agricultural Workers' Day 19. The Day of Food Industry Workers
February	May 5. The Day of Press 7. The Day of Radio 25. The Day of Chemists 28. The Day of Border Guards	August 3. The All-Union Railroad Workers' Day 9. The All-Union Sports Teachers' Day 10. The Day of Builders 31. The Day of Coalminers	November 10. The Soviet Militiysa Day 17. The International Students' Day
March 27. The International Theatre Day	June 8. The Day of Light Industry Workers 15. The Day of Medical Workers	September 7. The All-Union Oil and Gas Industry Workers' Day 8. The International Solidarity Day of Journalists 12. The Day of Tank Drivers 21. The Day of Forest Workers 28. The Day of Car Constructors	December 22. The Day of Power Industry Workers

enterprises, retirement celebrations, etc.); 3) a group of events dedicated to the commencement or end of agricultural, construction or other works (for example, the First Furrow Day, confirming the utilization of a building, etc)⁴⁶. It is significant that the Midsummer Solstice (Jāņi and Līgo) Day, which could be found among the festive days until the early 1960s, was included in the category of labour festivities as the end of works in the spring season.

These festivities were organised to honour the most outstanding employees, to organise competitions and demonstrate professional mastery, to meet well-known and public figures, and to organise various mass events both in individual work collectives and in the general masses.

In the context of this group of festivities, special attention must be drawn to the day when a member of society started to work and joined the work collective which from then on, pursuant to the Soviet ideology⁴⁷ and irrespective of the subject's will, had to become an integral part of their private life.

3. DOMESTIC TRADITIONS

Irrespective of the political system in which an individual lives, there are also numerous events related to the cycle of life and local culture which are celebrated with the help of tradition, including the customs which use religious rituals or an alternative. Despite the fact that in the entire territory of the USSR a decree on the separation of the church from the state was adopted, annulling the birth, death and marriage acts registered in the church, this was the area where the material world competed with the object of abatement – religion – most.⁴⁸ To demonstrate to the external world that the freedom of faith and choice existed in the USSR, the involvement of church in family traditions and remembrance events was accepted, although carefully controlled and criticized. To create emotional and spectacular rituals which could outlive the rituals offered by the religious tradition was the greatest challenge for the creators of Soviet traditions. It was not easy to find an alternative for the christening of a child for

instance. After long quests, including such comic episodes as christening (giving the name) in the Pioneers' circle⁴⁹, the issuing of a birth certificate with a corresponding ritual and visual arrangement became an official event to be celebrated in the local civil registry office (see Figure 1).

Long debates and numerous pilot projects introduced the Festivity of Childhood⁵⁰ (see Figure 2) – the initiating ritual of a child into a collective – and ensured that this festivity became an integral part of the agenda of the local executive authorities. The next cycle of life in the system of invented Soviet traditions was the Festivity of Majority (see Figure 3), whose origins can already be observed in the Latvian SSR in the mid-1950s. It had to become an alternative for the Christening of the Lutheran Church. In the 1960s, as attested by the materials of the REM, the Festivity of Majority was celebrated in the entire territory of the Latvian SSR. The ritual of this festivity included the following elements: a pre-festive cycle of seminars, procession to the local Lenin



Figure 1. Issuing the birth certificate in the district of Daugavpils / Krāslava in 1983. E 57 156.

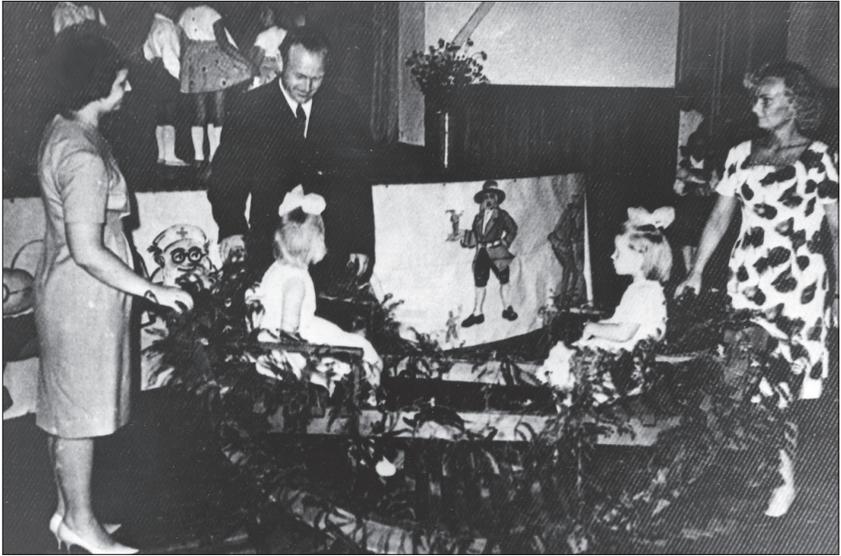


Figure 2. The Festivity of Childhood in the district of Daugavpils/Preiļi in 1968. E 35 1007.



Figure 3. The Festivity of Majority in the Council of Bērze Village in 1964. E 28 10236.

monument or the Cemetery of the Brethren, official speeches given by the members of the local Communist Party, executive committee or village council and work collectives, issuing of the certificate of majority and a concert which was respectively arranged in terms of content and visual decorations. An alternative for a marriage ritual was also sought, foreseeing such forms as *public wedding* or *the wedding of Young Communists*. The work collective where one, or both, of the newlyweds worked, took care of the organisation of the ceremony and costs.⁵¹ It must be noted that the registration of civil status outside the Church was a well-known practice in Latvia before the Soviet occupation, too.

“How was he buried – with an orchestra or a priest?” – this was a popular question in Latvian Soviet reality and it was asked to find out whether the funeral was organised as a religious ritual or according to the Soviet traditions. In this field religion demonstrated considerable resistance. An administrative support mechanism for the funeral organisation was introduced, with funeral services operated under the supervision of communal institutions. In rural areas there were special sections of the Soviet tradition commissions which had the representatives of the village councils and workplace as chairs who were responsible for the content and form of the funeral ceremonies.

During the Soviet occupation years, special attention was drawn to the outrival of the representatives of the Church from such events as cemetery festivities, remembrance days of the deceased or the eve of candles, which were very important to the Latvian cultural tradition. It can be stated that the musical accompaniment, emotional saturation and personal attitude which was manifested by calling the names of the people who had died in the particular year according to age groups, offered as part of the Soviet tradition in the 1970s–1980s, provided a crucial counter-action to the religious equivalent in the fight for public recognition.

Similar turns took place against Easter and Christmas, replacing the latter with the widely celebrated New Year’s Eve celebrations.

A fundamental part of the Soviet domestic traditions was played by a continuous involvement of work collectives, because “attitudes in the family were not only a personal issue of the members of the family, they were subjected to the moral principles and values of the Communist society. Therefore, genuine interest of society and participation in the most important events of family life was ensured. It can be particularly observed in three family celebrations related to starting a family, birth of children and the end of work and life – death and funeral”.⁵² Besides, “giving birth and raising children must not be considered a personal issue of a woman, but it is a nationally crucial social function”⁵³, and to implement it the work collective provided moral and material support. It congratulated on the wedding, was present at the moment the birth certificate was issued, brought presents at the Festivity of Childhood, graduation, and the Festivity of Majority, as well as taking part in the colleague’s and their relatives’ funerals.

The agendas of the commissions and societies of the tradition implementation initially included questions on how to make the new Soviet traditions recognisable and acceptable to the local society. A crucial resource for the family customs of the Latvian SSR was the presence of codes and symbols provided by the traditional culture in terms of the content and the visual arrangement of festivities.

Up until the late 1980s, discussion focused on the international and national (ethnic) component in the context of Soviet traditions.⁵⁴ In order to make the socialist content of the new traditions recognisable to the local society, pursuant to the recommendations provided by the commission and societies of the CM, folklore – folk songs and melodies – was used as well as ethnography – the traditional customs, clothing and applied folk art. The works created by local writers, poets and composers also ensured crucial support. Furthermore, the event plans created by the local practitioners were used in the recommendations issued by the PHA. The structure and external elements of the form of certain Church rituals were necessary to compete with the

religious ritual. One example is the Festivity of Majority, which included such elements as: 1) target audience of the festivity – youth that had attained their majority; 2) courses and seminars for those who had attained their majority – delivering training that had to be undertaken before the majority event; 3) clothing – the white dresses for young women, etc.

The information was disseminated in accordance with the specialists of the ideological and propaganda work of the Communist Party, who were engaged in the commissions and societies.

CONCLUSIONS

The invention of the new Soviet traditions, which can be viewed as a complex part of anti-religion policies (as such they were often discussed at the CPSU congresses), laid grounds for the implementation of the following tasks: 1) creation of the sense of belonging to the big Homeland and the Soviet people; 2) popularisation of the materialistic world view and turning against religion; 3) creation of the collective story of the past and making an individual belong to the country; 4) raising public awareness of the USSR as the country of the proletariat; 5) using recognisable cultural and religious rites and symbols of the traditional culture, the state ideology was approximated with the materialistic world view (it was made understandable); 6) creation and strengthening of the ties between an individual and the masses – collective, society, socialist nation, Soviet people – and a corresponding decrease of the private sphere.

The new traditions of the Latvian SSR were invented from positions of power, elaborating a complex institutional infrastructure for the invention of tradition and monitoring of the process. The specialists of the Communist party in ideological and propaganda work, the representatives of the authorities and executive power at the local and republican level, academics, cultural workers, practitioners and others participated in the invention and implementation process of the traditions. At the same

time, the process of the invention of traditions was monitored, studied and analyzed. The academics engaged in the process provided valuable suggestions for a successful implementation, and after the renewal of the independence of the Latvian state they received reproaches and invitations to public confession.⁵⁵ Many traditions did not spread roots; however, those traditions which the general public accepted and still continue to follow nowadays, must be noted. Here one must mention the secular funeral ritual, as well as the Festivities of Childhood and Majority, where the organisers put great efforts to find the right content and form. These festivities can still be found in the calendars of certain Latvian districts.⁵⁶ Also, the festivities of *Women's Days*⁵⁷, or *Men's Days* (more rarely) are still celebrated by some parts of Latvian society.

The invention and implementation of the Soviet festivities and traditions were based on the proposals provided by the CC CPSU and the CM USSR, the transfer of the good practice and local traditions of other republics (the Ukrainian SSR, the Lithuanian SSR), as well as on the monitoring and analysis of this process, and elaboration of recommendations, including the preparation and training of the respective specialists.

In the framework of the article, the author did not attempt to carry out a comprehensive analysis of the tradition invention process, but has rather tried to map the research field for further studies, which would be essential to analyse the mechanisms and resources that were involved in the implementation of this intention. Also, it would be crucial to examine the memories of the people who were involved in the invention of the traditions, such as ideologists, practitioners and their target audiences.

ABBREVIATIONS

The SC – the Supreme Council of the Latvian SSR

The CC CPSU – the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union

The REM – the Repository of Ethnographic Materials of the Institute of Latvian History, University of Latvia

E – specific archives at the REM

The RSDLP – the Russian Social Democratic Labour's Party

The LSDLP – the Latvian Social Democratic Labour's Party

The Latvian SSR – the Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic

The LLYCL – Latvian Leninist Young Communist League

The ILH UL – the Institute of Latvian History, University of Latvia

The CM – the Council of Ministers

The CPSU – the Communist Party of the Soviet Union

The USSR – the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

The PHA – People's House of Art of E. Melngailis

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- ⁶ The terms *Soviet traditions* and *Socialist traditions* have been used as synonyms in the examined sources and the historiography of the Communist regime. Definition: the element of the social and cultural heritage, which has been established historically within a certain group of people, has been appropriated from the previous generations and has been transferred further. The processes of Soviet festivities and customs manifest a materialistic worldview, demonstrate the socialist lifestyle and reflect the care that the Soviet country shows for an individual. *Latvijas Padomju enciklopēdija*. Vol. 9, Rīga: Galvenā enciklopēdiju redakcija, 1987, p. 698.
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- ⁹ The archive of ethnographic materials of the University of Latvia from the former districts of Balvi (E 27), Dobele and Ludza (E 28), Rēzekne and Preiļi (E 29), Preiļi and Daugavpils (E 35), Aizkraukle (Stučka) (E 39), Jelgava (E 40), Tukums and Jēkabpils (E 49), Daugavpils and Krāslava (E 57).
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- ²⁵ *Socialisticheskaia obriadnost' i formirovanie novogo cheloveka* (1979). Kiev.
- ²⁶ *Par ideoloģiskā un politiskās audzināšanas darba tālāku uzlabošanu: PSKP CK 1979. gada 26. aprīļa lēmums* [On Further Improvement of the Ideological and Politically Educational Work: the 26.04.1979 decree of the CC of the CPSU]; *Par partijas mācību tālāku pilnveidošanu PSKP XXVI kongresa lēmumu gaismā: PSKP CK 1981. gada 26. maija lēmums* [On Further Improvement of the Educational Events of the Party in the light of the XXVI Congress of the CPSU] (1981). Rīga: Avots.
- ²⁷ *LNA-LVA*, 270–3–1203, pp. 1–8; *LPSR Augstākās Padomes un Valdības Ziņotājs*. 16.07.1964., pp. 1087–1089.
- ²⁸ The Commission of the Soviet Domestic Traditions of the CC of the LLYCL consisted of 17 members (composers, artists, poets, etc.). *LNA-LVA*, 270–24–6, pp. 68–78, 136.
- ²⁹ E 27, 5505; 28, 10380; 29, 4221; 35, 1671–1673, etc.
- ³⁰ The People's Centre of Art of E. Melngailis – founded in 1945 under the name the Republican People's House of Art. In 1954 renamed as the People's House of Art of E. Melngailis. In 1989 the Academic Methodical Centre of Art and Culture Education of the Republican People's House of Art of E Melngailis was renamed as the People's Centre of Art of E. Melngailis. Source: The State's Archive of Latvia. Accessible on: <http://www.archiv.org.lv/index3.php?id=9009&kods=300110223&vien=2> (15.12.2016.).
- ³¹ Cimermanis, Slava. *Sociālistiskie svētki*, pp. 134–149. Alsupe, Cimermanis. *Padomju Latvijas lauku iedzīvotāji*, p. 166.
- ³² *Latvijas PSR Zinātņu akadēmijas Vēstures institūts* (1976). [History Institute of the Academy of Sciences of the Latvian SSR]. Rīga: Zinātne, p. 99.
- ³³ These tasks were revealed in the annual plans of the society. For example, *LPSR Kultūras ministrijas Klubu darba republikāniskā metodiskā kabineta padomju tradīciju metodiskās apvienības darba plāns 1979. gadam* [The 1979 annual plan of the Methodical Cabinet of the Soviet Traditions of the Ministry of Culture...]. *LNA-LVA*, 270–3–10645, pp. 33–34.
- ³⁴ Z. Saukāne (1959). *Bērnības svētki* [Childhood Festivities]; A. Auziņš *Sabiedriskās kāzas* [Public Wedding]. Rīga: LĻKJS, Em. Melngaiļa Tautas mākslas centrs; Ruta Broka (1962). *Liksmo līdz!: dzejoļu, dziesmu, rotaļu, deju un svētku uzvedumu krājums bērnudārziem* [Celebrate with us! A compilation of poems, songs, games, dances and festive performances for kindergartens]. Rīga: LVI; Ziedonis Purvs (ed.) (1981). *Svētku bridī: dzejoļi un dziesmas sadzīves tradīcijām* [At the moment of celebration: poems and songs for domestic traditions]. Rīga: Liesma and others, which over a year have been compiled in four volumes edited by Beatrise Arnicāne (1963, 1968, 1974, 1982). *Padomju tradīcijas: ieteicošās bibliogrāfijas rādītājs* [Soviet traditions: the index for the recommended literature]. Rīga: V. Lāča Latvijas PSR Valsts bibliotēka.
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- ³⁶ One of the most important events – a comprehensive inter-republican conference with the papers issued in a compilation. Saulvedis Cimermanis (ed.) (1981). *Sociālistisko svētku un ieražu attīstības jautājumi* [The Issues of Development of the Socialist Festivities and Customs]. Rīga: Zinātne.
- ³⁷ *LNA-LVA*, 270–3–10645, pp. 10–24.
- ³⁸ Zavarina. *Padomju sadzīves tradīciju*, pp. 195–209; Elga Čivkule, Lidija Jefremova (1970). *Padomju sadzīves tradīcijas lauku darbaļaužu dzīvē* [The Soviet Domestic Traditions in the Lives of the Proletariat]. *Arheoloģija un etnogrāfija*. Vol. IX. Rīga: Zinātne, pp. 211–239.
- ³⁹ Kampars, Zakovich. *Sovetskaia grazhdanskaia*, pp. 35–39; Strods. *Latviešu etnogrāfija...*, pp. 525–539.
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- ⁴⁷ Daina Bleiere (2012). *Eiropa ārpus Eiropas...: Dzīve Latvijas PSR* [Europe beyond Europe...: A life in the Latvian SSR]. Rīga: LU Akadēmiskais apgāds, pp. 84–87.
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- ⁴⁹ See more in: Zhidkova. *Sovetskaia grazhdanskaia obriadnost'*, pp. 407–428.
- ⁵⁰ Organised on 1 June on the International Day for Protection of Children, for children aged from 4 to 5, with an aim to attract the parents and society's attention to the upbringing of children.
- ⁵¹ Brēde (1979). *Svētku varavīksne*, p. 529.
- ⁵² Strods. *Latviešu etnogrāfija*, p. 529.
- ⁵³ Brēde (1979). *Svētku varavīksne*, p. 15.
- ⁵⁴ Valfrīds Podnieks (1987). *Nacionālais un internacionālais sociālistiskajos svētkos un ieražās* [The National and the International in Socialist Festivities and Customs]; Cimermanis. *Sociālistiskie svētki*, pp. 46–57; L. Saburova

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- ⁵⁵ Indulis Ronis (1995). Latvijas vēstures institūts laikmeta kontekstā [The Institute of Latvian History in the Context of History]. *Latvijas Vēstures Institūta Žurnāls*, 4, p. 33.
- ⁵⁶ These festivities are still popular in many municipalities of Latvia, attested by the information that can be found in 2016 on the websites of the districts of Daugavpils, Liepāja, Ludza, Mālpils, Viļaka, Ventspils and others.
- ⁵⁷ Dace Bula (2008). Astotā marta atgriešanās: sievietības svinēšana post-sociālismā [The return of the 8th March: Celebration of Womanhood in the Post-Socialism]. *Letonica. Humanitāro zinātņu žurnāls*, 18, pp. 27–53; Dace Bula (2017). Nesajaukt sievietes, kuras gaida apsveikumus, ar tām, kuras negaida [Do not confuse women who are waiting for greetings with those who do not]. Accessible on: <http://www.delfi.lv/news/comment/comment/dace-bula-nesajaukt-sievietes-kuras-gaida-apsveikumus-ar-tam-kuras-negaida.d?id=48620147> (10.03.2017.).

IEVIESTĀS TRADĪCIJAS: SVĒTKU KALENDĀRS UN ĢIMENES IERAŽAS LATVIJAS PSR

Ilze Boldāne-Zeļenkova

Dr. hist., Latvijas Universitātes Latvijas vēstures institūts, pētniece. Zinātniskās intereses: etniskā identitāte un stereotipi, mazākumtautību vēsture Latvijā, komunistiskā režīma (kultūras) mantojums.

Kā vienu no līdzekļiem varas un to pārstāvošo institūciju leģitimēšanai, dominējošās ideoloģijas nostiprināšanai un sabiedrības saliedēšanai komunistiskā režīma (1940–1941; 1944/45–1991) pārstāvji izmantoja jaunievietas svētku un atceres dienas, to atzīmēšanas tradīcijas un atbilstoši marksistiski-ļeņiniskajai paradīgam pielāgotas ģimenes ieražas. Lai arī okupācijas režīma pirmajos gados šai jomai pievērsta neliela uzmanība, 20. gs. 70. gados var runāt par sazarotu tradīciju ieviešanas atbalsta infrastruktūru un šī procesa monitoringu. Raksta mērķis – sniegt sākotnēju izvērtējumu padomju svētku un ģimenes ieražu ieviešanas procesam Latvijas PSR.

Atslēgas vārdi: komunistiskais režīms, ieviestās (aizstātās) tradīcijas, ieviešanas mehānisms, sociālistisks saturs nacionālā ietvarā.

Kopsavilkums

Vērtējot Latvijas Padomju Sociālistiskās Republikas (LPSR) un tajā dzīvojošās, tā laika terminoloģijā, *latviešu sociālistiskās nācijas* svētku kalendāru un ģimenes ieražas, jārūnā par to kā lielāka, pāretniska kopuma – *padomju tautas* – veidošanas un audzināšanas procesa sastāvdaļu. Viens no komunistiskā režīma pārstāvju izmantotajiem līdzekļiem varas un to pārstāvošo institūciju leģitimēšanai, ideoloģijas nostiprināšanai un sabiedrības saliedēšanai bija kopīgo svētku un atceres dienu tradīciju, kā arī marksistiski-ļeņiniskajai paradīgmai pielāgoto ģimenes ieražu ieviešana un pārveidošana.

Pētījumā izmantotais jēdziens *ieviestās tradīcijas* savu atpazīstamību guva 1983. gadā no grāmatas ar analogu nosaukumu, kuras autori to definēja kā daudzas īpaši organizētas mijiedarbībā esošas sociālās prakses, kas ietver stingrus priekšrakstus, noteikumus, rituālus un simbolus. Ieviesto tradīciju mērķis ir – ar tradīcijai piemītošo regulāro atkārtoto iedibināt, ieaudzināt un uzturēt sabiedrībā noteiktas vērtības un uzvedību, kuras jēga balstīta vēsturiskajā pagātnē un sasaistē ar to. Šis process noved pie situācijas, kurā ieviestās tradīcijas kļūst arī par kolektīvo (sociālo, etnisko) un individuālo identitāšu daļu.

Sociālistisko tradīciju ieviešanas gadījums ir atšķirīgs no klasiskajiem piemēriem. LPSR sadzīves ieražu kontekstā dažkārt atbilstošāks jēdziens būtu *aizstātās tradīcijas*. Tradicionālās ieražas, t.sk. ar tām saistītie reliģiskie rituāli, tika aizstātas ar padomju ekvivalentu, kas to jaunajam saturam izmantoja sabiedrībā atpazīstamu ietvaru – folkloru, etnogrāfiskos elementus, t.sk. tautas daiļamata meistarū izstrādājumus, kristīgās baznīcas atbilstošo ceremoniju kārtību u.tml. Tradīciju ieviešanas iniciatori bija okupācijas režīma varas pārstāvji Maskavā, to izstrādātāji – LPSR vietvaras pārstāvji, piesaistot lokālās kultūras un zinātnes elites pārstāvjus. Tradīciju unificēšana un ieviešana notika pakāpeniski, stingrā uzraudzībā, paralēli pieļaujot arī citu ieražu prakšu pieņemšanu.

Šī pētījuma mērķis – sniegt sākotnēju izvērtējumu padomju svētku un ģimenes ieražu ieviešanas procesam LPSR. Pētījumu avotu bāze balstīta dokumentos un sarakstē, kas atspoguļo Ministru padomes (MP) rīkojumu par padomju tradīciju ieviešanas darba uzlabošanu izpildī, un LU Latvijas vēstures institūta Etnogrāfisko materiālu krātuvē (EMK) esošajos jaunas tradīcijas fiksētajos materiālos – fotogrāfijās, norišu aprakstos, izsniedzamajos dokumentos u.tml., kas uzkrāti laika posmā no 1963. gada līdz 80. gadu pirmajai pusei. Uz avotu grupu attiecināmi arī metodisko krājumu izdevumi, kalendāri, kā arī laikabiedru – etnogrāfu

un folkloristu – zinātniskās publikācijās iestrādātas atziņas par tradīciju ieviešanas teorētisko un praktisko pusi.

Tēmas aktualitāti nosaka vairāki apstākļi: pirmkārt, Latvijas historio-grāfijā šī ir mazpētīta tēma (Latvijas humanitāro un sociālo zinātņu pārstāvju darbos tā kļūst aktuāla 21. gs. sākumā, līdzīga aina padomju tradīciju izpētē fiksējama arī kaimiņvalstīs); otrkārt, zinātnieku uzmanības vērtam jābūt ne tikai unificējamu tradīciju saturam un *uzpotēšanas* iemesliem, bet arī mehānismam un resursiem, kas iesaistīti šīs ieceres īstenošanā.

Komunistiskā režīma ideologi proponēja sabiedrībai modernu dzīvesveidu bez sabiedrības noslāņošanās. Viņu piedāvājums bija kolektīvā identitāte, kas pielīdzināma pilsoniskajai – nacionālajai identitātei. Tā tika būvēta uz tādiem pilāriem kā kopīga pieredze, kopīgi mērķi, un tas ir nozīmīgs veids, kā cilvēki identificē sevi un savas attiecības ar varu.

Jaunās padomju tradīcijas tika ieviestas no varas pozīcijām, izstrādājot sazarotu institucionālu infrastruktūru tradīciju ieviešanai un šī procesa uzraudzībai. Tradīciju veidošanā tika iesaistīti komunistiskās partijas ideoloģiskā un propagandas darba speciālisti, republikas un lokālās lēmējvaras un izpildvaras pārstāvji, zinātnieki, kultūras darbinieki, praktiķi u.c. Tradīciju ieviešanas process vienlaikus tika arī monitorēts, pētīts un analizēts. Procesam piesaistītie zinātnieki sniedza vērtīgus ieteikumus tā sekmīgai norisei, par ko pēc Latvijas valstiskās neatkarības atjaunošanas saņēma pārmetumus un aicinājumus uz publisku grēksūdzi. Daudzas tradīcijas neiedzīvojās, bet fiksējamas arī tādas, kuras sabiedrība ir akceptējusi un turpina kopt arī mūsdienās. Kā piemēri pieminamas Bērņības un Pilngadības svētku prakses, kuru izveidei, satura un formas meklējumiem tika pieliktas vislielākās pūles un kuras joprojām atrodamas atsevišķu Latvijas novadu kalendārā. Tāpat zināmā Latvijas sabiedrības daļā aktualitāti nav zaudējušas *sieviešu dienas* (8. marts), retāk arī *vīriešu dienas* (23. februāris) svinības.

Padomju svētku un tradīciju ieviešanas veidi balstījās uz Padomju Savienības Komunistiskās partijas (PSKP) Centrālās komitejas un PSRS MP rosināto tradīciju ieviešanas komisiju ieteikumiem, citu republiku un lokālo tradīciju ieviešanu pieredzes pārņemšanu (Ukrainas PSR, Lietuvas PSR), šī procesa monitoringu, analīzi un rekomendāciju izstrādi, kā arī atbilstošu speciālistu sagatavošanu.

Jauno padomju tradīciju ieviešana, kas skatāma kā pret reliģiju vērsta pasākumu kompleksa daļa (kā tāda tā arī visbiežāk parādījās PSKP kongresos aktualizēto jautājumu kontekstā), realizēja šādus uzdevumus: 1) piederības jūtu veidošana lielajai Dzimtenei un padomju tautai;

2) materiālistiskā pasaules uzskata vērtību popularizēšana un vēršanās pret reliģiju; 3) kolektīvā stāsta par pagātņi un indivīda piederības valstij veidošana; 4) PSRS kā darbaļaužu valsts tēla aktualizēšana; 5) izmantojot atpazīstamus tradicionālās kultūras un reliģijas ritus un simbolus, valsts ideoloģijas, materiālistiskā pasaules uzskata tuvināšana (darīta saprotama); 6) cilvēka saikņu ar masu – kolektīvu, sabiedrību, sociālistisko nāciju, padomju tautu – veidošana un stiprināšana, privātās sfēras mazināšana.

Raksta ietvaros ir iezīmēts darbības lauks turpmākajiem pētījumiem, kuros būtisks papildinājums būtu tradīciju uzpotēšanas, ieviešanas procesā iesaistīto cilvēku – ideologu, praktiķu, mērķauditorijas – atmiņas.

ATTĒLU SARAKSTS

1. att. Svinīgā dzimšanas apliecības izsniegšana Daugavpils / Krāslavas rajonā 1983. gadā. E 57 156.
2. att. Bērnības svētki Daugavpils/Preiļu rajonā 1968. gadā. E 35 1007.
3. att. Pilngadības svētki Bērzes ciema padomē 1964. gadā. E 28 10236.

PROTECTION OF ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE IN THE LATVIAN SSR (1945–1991): IDEOLOGICAL, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL ASPECTS

Mārtiņš Mintauris

Dr. hist., National Library of Latvia, Faculty of History and Philosophy of the University of Latvia, docent. Research interests: history and theory of cultural heritage, protection of Latvian architectural heritage, history of Latvian culture in the 19th–20th century.

This article examines the protection policy of architectural heritage in Latvia in the period of Soviet occupation. The author analyses the basic protection principles towards monuments, and their connection with the prevalent ideology of the Communist Party, as well as the protection peculiarities in terms of the typological groups of architectural monuments (sacred buildings, the centres of former estates and the objects of urban construction). The author has drawn attention to the practice of list-making, analysing the inclusion of architectural monuments protected by the state. The article is concluded with an overview of the condition of architectural monument protection in the Latvian SSR and the public attitude towards this area during the Soviet occupation era.

Key words: architectural heritage, the Soviet cultural policy, the Latvian SSR, protection of monuments.

INTRODUCTION

Architectural heritage consists of the historical buildings and construction complexes which society perceives as especially important. It can be related to the historical, aesthetic and symbolic value of the particular object. Therefore, the protection of architectural heritage is always connected with the interpretation of the significance of this heritage in accordance with the value criteria provided by experts in the heritage area and society. The

idea of a monument always has a certain political dimension, which, on the one hand, is made by the ideological “demand” of the state in relation to the interpretation of history, and, on the other, the readiness of monument protection employees to accept the offers of collaboration expressed by the power structures.¹ The public attitude towards architectural heritage is also an indicator of the public attitude towards its past, because the symbolic meaning of the historical buildings depends on what associations it creates in society.² When examining the history of monument protection in a certain period, the interpretation of a heritage is also marked by the term “policy for monuments”, which includes both the direct work of monument protection and the historical and social context.

In the historiography of Latvia, the history of the protection of architectural monuments so far has been studied by drawing attention to a few issues of monument protection work and assessing the contribution of certain individuals in this area. The range of historical sources available to scholars on this theme is extremely broad; it reveals the problems of legal protection of historical construction, as well as practical preservation issues. The aim of the article is to examine the protection of architectural heritage as part of the state cultural policy in the Soviet occupation period from 1945 to 1991.

CULTURAL HERITAGE AND SOVIET IDEOLOGY

The protection of cultural heritage, similarly to the cultural policy implemented in the state overall, was stipulated in the Soviet Union by the core ideological principles defined by the Communist Party. In the framework of these principles, the public (and partly also the private) life of each individual was perceived as the object of state politics. The attitude of the Communist Party towards cultural policy was determined by a utilitarian approach viewing culture as a specific area of production: the task of culture was to “entertain and raise the producers of material values in the spirit of the Communist ideology”³. In the

history of the Soviet cultural policy there were both periods of liberalization and political repressions, however, its core values remained unchanged: it was a policy to create an isolated society secluded from the outer world,⁴ and its key goal was to teach a worldview corresponding to the Soviet ideology or to achieve at least formal acceptance of this worldview in society.

The Soviet state articulated its attitude towards cultural heritage in 1934.⁵ In accordance with this conception, cultural monuments had to be used as examples for the history of class struggle in a certain period of social development: in national Soviet republics those cultural monuments which facilitated friendship among nations had to be preserved, whereas the sacred or “cult buildings” had to be used for antireligious propaganda. Thus, the value of those objects of cultural heritage that did not correspond to these criteria obtained a secondary meaning. The historical buildings, too, were perceived as symbols of social order and ideology in a certain period of time, and this determined the attitude of Soviet authorities in relation to the preservation possibilities of such objects.

The normative acts divided the architectural monuments into two groups: the monuments which were used pursuant to their initial function, and the monuments whose usage was not connected to these criteria.⁶ Ideologically harmful heritage objects were destroyed, justifying the destruction with the need for new constructions or a bad state of repair of the historical building. As evidenced by the destruction in 1948 of the remains of the House of the Blackheads, ruined during World War II, even the status of the building as a monument of All-Union significance did not grant its preservation. Formally, the highest status of legal protection of the House of the Blackheads in the Soviet system was ignored in the name of political considerations.⁷ The same result could be achieved indirectly as well: no attention or maintenance of a building resulting in its “natural” collapse.

Thus, the Soviet authorities protected cultural monuments and at the same time justified and implemented the destruction of these monuments. Formally, the USSR accepted the basic

principles of the preservation of international cultural heritage and participated in the work of international organizations (UNESCO, ICOMOS, etc.),⁸ emphasizing the role of monument protection in the political and aesthetic upbringing of Soviet society. Also, Article 47 of the 1977 Law *On the Protection and Use of Historical and Cultural Monuments* of the Latvian SSR stipulated the priority of ratified international agreements and conventions over the laws of the USSR and the Latvian SSR in the area of monument protection.⁹ It had a declarative meaning, because the actual boundaries of the priority were stipulated not by the international organizations but by the Soviet Union. The international documents of monument protection had an advisory nature, and their actual application in practice was not mandatory.

The awareness of cultural heritage and its preservation played an ambivalent role in Soviet cultural policy. On the one hand, it was one of the elements of the cultural industry, which could not obtain the same significance as, for example, the work of professional unions (literary scholars, artists, architects, etc.), which were the mediators for organizing and controlling the development of Soviet culture. On the other hand, the cultural heritage had a crucial ideological significance, because it was connected with the ideas of society concerning its historical past and, thus, concerning the Soviet regime. Especially in the recently occupied Baltic States society could use the cultural evidence of the past, comparing the Soviet reality with another non-Communist social order, traditions and values.

Due to ideological reasons the architectural heritage, as well as the culture of the past in general, was divided into the “bourgeois” and the “progressive” which was a potentially useful heritage for the construction of Socialism and Communism.¹⁰ Accepting only that part of the past which corresponded to the Communist ideology (depending on the political state of affairs), the Soviet history policy thus achieved an alienated public attitude towards the cultural heritage, which naturally led to the destruction of monuments.

Although during the Soviet occupation, in all three Baltic Republics, the system of monument protection was implemented centrally,¹¹ differences in the cultural policy in Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania determined a different outcome of this system. The priority in the preservation of the cultural heritage of the Latvian SSR was given to the protection of places that were connected to the lives and the most important events of outstanding individuals in the interpretation of Soviet history.¹² From the end of Stalin's period in 1953, there are no grounds to speak about a strong "Moscow's dictate" in this area. Since the mid-1950s, the last word in the cultural policy of the Latvian SSR belonged not to Moscow, but to the leadership of the Communist Party of Latvia (CPL). The key reason for the cautious attitude of the government of the Latvian SSR towards the protection of cultural heritage was related to the fact that the protection of monuments was considered a means for Latvian nationalists to implement anti-Soviet activities in a half-legal manner.¹³ Such a point of view of the CPL leadership was intensified after 1959, when the so-called national Communists lost their political influence, and this attitude remained until the Perestroika period in the second half of the 1980s. The Ministry of Culture, which had to supervise the protection of monuments since 1962,¹⁴ was one of the poorest and least prestigious ministries in the governance system of the Latvian SSR.¹⁵

The activities of industrial companies and rural collective farms which also included the monitoring of the architectural monuments were usually related to arbitrary reconstruction works or simply indifferent attitudes towards the historical building.¹⁶ It was popular to think in the Soviet Latvian society that interest and understanding of the objects of cultural heritage was something similar to a hobby or entertainment of specialists in certain fields, and not the concern of the general public.¹⁷ In a time period when published press articles were full of outrage aimed at the sad state of Latvian manors,¹⁸ the vandalising of architectural monuments still went on, for example, the looting and destroying of rural churches, and was implemented by the representatives of the same society.

INSTITUTIONS AND CRITERIA OF MONUMENT PROTECTION

The attitude of the Soviet authorities towards the architectural heritage of Latvia is revealed by the foundation and work of the monument protection institutions, as well as the lists of the objects to be protected by the state and the question about the assessment criteria of the historical buildings.

In the relatively short time period from June 1940 to June 1941, the Soviet occupation regime did not manage to introduce in Latvia the protection system of cultural monuments that was in force in the USSR, although there were practical measures implemented to subordinate the field of monument protection to the control of the Communist Party. The implementation of the plan by Soviet authorities in Latvia was interrupted by the war between Germany and the Soviet Union and the following German occupation. At the end of World War II, when the Soviet regime was renewed in the territory of Latvia, the process of Sovietisation was finalized, conceptually transforming the protection system of the cultural heritage, too.

The protection of cultural heritage initially was divided among various governmental institutions in the Latvian SSR, which was opposite to the practice of the Republic of Latvia, where this area was supervised by one institution – the Board of Monuments of the Ministry of Education. Such an approach in the Soviet bureaucratic practice would have implied the lowering of the status of monument protection and subordination to the interests of other fields.

The protection of architectural monuments was entrusted to the Department of Architectural Monument Protection of the Unit of Architectural Affairs of the Council of People's Commissars of the Latvian SSR in January 1945. Its manager was architect Leons Plaučiņš (1903–1993), who had started working in the protection of architectural heritage before the Soviet occupation. Plaučiņš played a crucial role in the field throughout the entire Soviet period. He represented the generation of those specialists who emigrated from Latvia to the West in World War II.

Starting from 1948, the legal grounds of the monument protection system of the Latvian SSR consisted of the adapted USSR laws which regulated the work of the institutions. At the same time, a unified classification system of cultural monuments was introduced in Latvia, which stipulated the classification of the objects into All-Union, republican or local significance: the list of the first category was approved by the Council of Ministers of the USSR, the list of the second category by the Council of Ministers of the United Republic, but the lists of monuments of local significance were compiled from 1971 by the deputy councils of regions and cities. Such a classification system of cultural monuments remained in force until the renewal of the independence of the Republic of Latvia.

The lack of clearly defined criteria for determining the value of architectural monuments can also be seen in the legal documents of monument protection of the Soviet period. In the 1950s the selection criteria of architectural monuments were not explained in much detail, usually only mentioning the social significance of architectural monuments.¹⁹ The social significance of the architectural monument was defined very broadly; comprising the political, scientific and artistic value.²⁰ In 1985, historian and representative of the Latvian SSR in ICOMOS, Mārtiņš Apinis (1938–1991) noted: “Nor in the academic, neither in the legal literature there are elaborated and justified the principles of such cultural values.”²¹ Therefore, the ideological manipulations of the value of architectural heritage played a crucial role. The lack of officially confirmed assessment criteria of architectural monuments (beyond their classification as All-Union, republican or local significance objects) did not impose any liability for using these criteria in practice.

The impact of ideology on the protection of monuments was revealed in the conference in 1967 organised by the Ministry of Culture with the support of the Central Committee of the CPL and the Academy of Sciences.²² Strict political requirements were set to the assessment criteria of architectural monuments: “When determining the level of restoration of architectural monuments,

one needs a strict ideologically grounded and class-wise differentiated approach to the monument overall and to its parts separately.”²³ A short while later, art historian Pēteris Savickis (1925–2015) tried to neutralize them using a different kind of rhetoric: “Sometimes one can hear fallacious arguments stating that the architecture of the past periods only approve the splendour and mightiness of the upper classes. In fact, not only the ancient castles and fortresses, but even the splendid churches tell about the efforts, skills and creativity of the working class.”²⁴ The indirect formulation on the fallacious arguments only formally masked reference to the officials of the Soviet authorities. As noted, the significance of the “class-wise approach” in the determination of the value of architectural heritage was regarded a priority in the entire Soviet Union.²⁵ In the case of Latvia, the class-wise principle could be mostly felt in the negative attitude towards construction works at the manors,²⁶ and it was intensified by the ideas on the “German oppressors”, rooted in the national Romanticism of the 19th century. Soviet propaganda continued to use it for its own purposes, merging the class-wise and the ethnic principle in the assessment of architectural heritage.

Some specialists of the field tried to decrease the role of political criteria in the determination of the value of the protected buildings. For example, in 1985 architect Andrejs Holcmanis (1920–2009) suggested applying the following assessment principles of architectural monuments: 1) **the historic value** of the building is determined by its age; 2) **the scientific value** can be diagnosed in all historical buildings; the key criterion is the typical features of the object – the architectural monuments must include all the most characteristic types of buildings; 3) **the artistic value** of the building plays a crucial role, and it is determined by the manifestations of the architectural style of the respective period in the building.²⁷ In the context of the international practice of the time, these criteria might seem archaic; however, in the circumstances of the Latvian SSR they were potentially apolitical while trying to avoid the impact of Soviet ideology.

INSPECTION OF ARCHITECTURAL MONUMENTS AND THE PRINCIPLES OF THEIR PROTECTION

The first expeditions to find architectural monuments in the territory of Latvia were organised after World War II in the summers of 1947 and 1949.²⁸ The aim of the expeditions was to collect materials for the lists of architectural monuments of republican significance. The lists were compiled for six years, since Moscow refused to approve the submitted lists and rejected them on several occasions due to the too huge number of protected objects. The first list of architectural monuments of republican significance, which the Council of the Latvian SSR finally approved in August 1952, contained 343 monuments. It was considerably less than in the list of architectural monuments prepared by the Council of Ministers of the Latvian SSR in 1949, stipulating to protect 670 historical buildings, which was rejected by Moscow.²⁹ Still, in the reduced list, too, the range of typology of the architectural monuments was rather broad: the dwelling houses and warehouses in the cities, the dwelling houses and household buildings of manors, churches, medieval castles and ruins, as well as historical manufactories, ancient cemeteries and parks.³⁰

The second list of architectural monuments of republican significance was approved on 31st October 1962, and the number of historical buildings included in it was decreased down to 198 objects.³¹ This related to the campaign at the USSR level to decrease the amount of cultural monument protection, due to the implementation of the Communism building programme approved at the CPSU XXII Congress. The scale of the campaign in Latvia was determined by the fact that since 1959, “cleansing” of the Latvian National Communists had been in progress.³² This list did not last for too long. Already on 29th December 1967 the Council of Ministers of the Latvian SSR approved a new, third list of architectural monuments of republican significance.³³ In the new list of architectural monuments using the data obtained in the inspection expeditions, 284 objects were mentioned, including

some historical buildings which in 1962 had “hastily”³⁴ been excluded from the list of the state protected monuments. From 1968, the monument protection inspectors worked in all 26 administrative boroughs of Latvia.

The Ministry of Culture together with the Institute of History of the CC of the CPL, the State Art Academy, the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences and the State Committee of Construction Affairs of the Council of Ministers started to elaborate the fourth edition of the list of architectural monuments of republican significance in 1976. Up until 1980, annual expeditions to inspect objects were organised in Latvian cities and rural regions, counting the monuments, measuring them and documenting them in photography, at the same time gathering the historical material available from the archives, museums and publications. As a result of the expeditions, all 33 urban construction monuments (historical centres of the cities or their parts) and 498 architectural monuments were included in the list approved by the Council of Ministers of the Latvian SSR on 18th October 1983.³⁵ Similarly to 1967, one accession number was used for registering those architectural complexes which consisted of two (a manor and a church) or even three historical buildings, for example, a church and a medieval castle; or the dwelling house of a manor and several household buildings.

The buildings of a chronologically more recent period (the 18th–19th century) were first counted in the category of architectural monuments of local significance. Part of the architectural monuments of local significance which were registered in the 1970s, for example, the Īvande, Madliena and Suntaži Lutheran churches,³⁶ in 1983 were incorporated in the list of architectural monuments of republican significance. The uncertainty of assessment criteria in determining the value of monuments provided an opportunity to increase the legal protection status of certain buildings, justifying it with the discovery of new aspects in the object’s artistic and architectonic value.

The significance of the legal documents of monument protection in the practical preservation of the cultural heritage was

restricted because they were contradictory and could not ensure the control of usage of the protected objects.³⁷ Besides, the violation of legal norms in the monument protection area could be easily justified by a lack of financial and materially technical resources. In the early 1980s the number of non-restored and collapsing monuments in the USSR considerably exceeded the number of those objects whose level of preservation and circumstances could be considered as satisfactory.³⁸ Therefore, for the Soviet authorities it was beneficial to choose just a few of the most outstanding objects of architectural heritage in each united republic and focus on the preservation and renewal of these buildings.

In Latvia, such “parade objects” were the Riga Dome complex and partially the St. Peter’s Church.³⁹ A similar status, taking into account the popularity of this object among tourists, was obtained in the mid-1970s by the Turaida Castle complex as the defining attraction of the Gauja National Park and the core of the only museum reserve in Latvia. Later, the ensemble of the Rundāle Palace, which had been renovated since 1972, joined them. The situation is well characterised by Imants Lancmanis (1941), the Director of the Rundāle Palace Museum, who in the late 1980s said that behind the “splendid façade [of the Rundāle Palace] many buildings called castles are hidden”⁴⁰, whose practical maintenance the state did not want or could not ensure.

The structure of the Soviet economy gave rise to certain peculiarities in terms of the practical preservation of architectural monuments. The key problem was related to finding an appropriate mode of usage. In circumstances when there were no rights for private property (land and buildings), this problem theoretically could be solved by the means of planning, determining for each historical building the most appropriate mode of usage with the help of experts. However, in practice this utopian idea was never implemented. Already in the late 1960s, one of the most prominent specialists in the architectural heritage in Latvia, Jurijs Vasiļjevs (1928–1993), stated that architectural monuments “could not be used in the same way as before in the changed

circumstances of life. Abandoned or half-collapsed old cemeteries, manors, churches, peasant houses and windmills could be seen everywhere. On most occasions they were not used at all or used in a completely dissatisfactory manner, these monuments considered a free-of-charge property with some material value⁴¹

The most important criterion of architectural monuments for practical preservation in the Latvian SSR was their potential for practical use and not the culturally historic significance of the object or its technical condition, except the conservation of castle ruins. In all other cases, the key criterion was the potential use of the architectural monument after the restoration works.⁴² However, in the implementation of the approved restoration works one had to take into account the problems and obstacles caused by the planning of the monument protection system and the restricted capacity.

In the plans for the repair and restoration works of architectural monuments funded by the state, only those objects which were supervised by the special scholarly restoration organizations of the Ministry of Culture were included.⁴³ The fate of the rest of the objects was subjected to the attitude of the building's user, which determined the outcome, namely, whether the necessary financial means, construction materials and qualified labour would be found to ensure the maintenance of the building. However, the budget planning practice implied that monetary means were allocated to the manufacturing objects and blocks of apartments first. Funding for architectural monuments had to be sought separately, and this was economically disadvantageous for the users of the monument,⁴⁴ because they wanted to obtain a practically usable building as quickly as possible. The building only had to "look good", no attention was drawn to the monument as the historical source and the preservation of its historical details was neglected.⁴⁵

The budget of the scholarly research and restoration institutions of the Ministry of Culture had increased significantly since 1982 due to the implementation of the regeneration project of Old Riga. However, the key task of the restoration was to im-

prove the technical state of the architectural monuments, allocating minimum funding to the research of the building and its interior.⁴⁶ In the time period from 1951 to 1968, conservation and restoration events were implemented at 150 architectural monuments in the entire territory of Latvia.⁴⁷ In the mid-1980s, the employees of the Scholarly Restoration Administration of the Ministry of Culture worked in around 120 objects simultaneously,⁴⁸ however, half of the capacity of the Administration was directed at objects which did not have any connection with the restoration of architectural monuments.⁴⁹ Therefore, the data to be found in publications on the total number of objects restored in Latvia, from 1951 to 1991 exceeding five hundred,⁵⁰ must be evaluated cautiously because the actual weight of architectural monuments among them was less than a half.

When the Soviet economy started to struggle, eventually more and more buildings, even those allocated the status of an architectural monument of local or republican significance, reached a bad state of repair and were not used anymore.⁵¹ In the 1970s, approximately 70% of all architectural monuments of republican and local significance were used, yet many of them, according to the specialists' opinion, were in a "dissatisfactory" or "poor" state, including several churches whose interiors were considered outstanding monuments of art.⁵²

In such circumstances in the early 1980s, two different approaches could be noticed in the protection of architectural monuments.⁵³ The supporters of the first approach, mostly the officials of the monument protection institutions, offered to concentrate resources on the restoration of the most prominent buildings and to destroy the buildings in a bad state of repair in order to save the means spent on their preservation. The second approach was supported by most of the specialists of the field, and pursuant to this approach no historical building could be destroyed without prior research. Unfortunately, the research started on many objects often could not be completed due to a lack of resources, thus the protection of buildings was even more jeopardised.

In accordance with the data published by the State Inspection of Cultural Monuments in early 1991, there were 172 architectural monuments of the republican and local significance in a bad state of repair in the territory of Latvia, for example, many rural churches and centres of manors, as well as a third, that is, 11 out of 33 monuments of urban construction, including the historical centres of Riga, Liepāja, Kuldīga, Aizpute and Jēkabpils.⁵⁴ These numbers attest to serious problems in the monument protection system in Latvia during the Soviet period.

THE MONUMENTS OF SACRED ARCHITECTURE OR THE “CULT BUILDINGS”

Until the so-called “Perestroika” period (1985–1991), the Communist Party considered religion and the Christian Church as some of the key enemies of the Soviet ideology, therefore, the sacred buildings were an inconvenient part of the architectural heritage, although their specific weight in the number of the protected objects in the Latvian SSR was considerable. In the 1950s, there were 108 churches included in the list of architectural monuments of republican significance,⁵⁵ according to other data – 100⁵⁶ churches. Assuming that the official data⁵⁷ on the 189 sacred buildings destroyed in World War II in the territory of Latvia are accurate, one can obtain an idea concerning the politics of Soviet authorities in this area.

The state funding allocated in the first post-war decade was used for the repair work of several churches (in Gulbene, Bērze, Cēsis etc.), as well as for provisional conservation work on the destroyed St. Peter’s Church in Riga.⁵⁸ However, the conservation of destroyed churches in the Soviet period was an absolute exception. For example, the remains of the Liepupe Lutheran Church, burnt down in 1971, were conserved only ten years after the church was destroyed.⁵⁹ The tower of the Jelgava St. Trinity Church was preserved after its destruction in 1954 only because the Soviet Army used it as the central point of the city triangulation network.⁶⁰

From the second half of the 1960s it was cautiously noted in the official reports of the Ministry of Culture that the churches in the Latvian SSR were being vandalized. Outstanding examples of sacred architecture were the victims of these vandalizing acts, for example, the Lestene Church in the region of Tukums, the Tērvete Kalnamuiža Church in the region of Dobele. Yet these examples were always named as “individual cases”.⁶¹ They were juxtaposed with the positive examples: equipping the Riga Dome Cathedral⁶², Valmiera St. Sīmanis’ Church⁶³ and the mediaeval church in Lielstraupe Castle⁶⁴ with concert halls. In comparison to the lists of architectural monuments approved in 1967 and 1983, it can be concluded that the number of protected churches had increased from 91 to 149 buildings.

The real situation was different: the practical usage of architectural monuments left the most devastating impact on sacred buildings in the Socialist period. The data collected by the Soviet institutions,⁶⁵ referring to all confessions, provide evidence that in the time period from 1960 to 1970 there were 124 churches and worshipping buildings closed, in 34 churches there were warehouses set up, 20 sacred buildings were demolished, and 21 unused churches collapsed “naturally”. Only 22 churches that were confiscated from the parishes were used for the purposes of concert halls or museums (in Koknese, Vietalva, Dubulti, etc.).

The overall tendency in this area is manifested by the fate of churches in one Latvian region – Semigallia – where parishes were forced to give up their churches.⁶⁶ When the churches were left to the disposal of collective farms or Soviet households, they were used for various practical purposes: at the Jaunsaule and Glūda Churches warehouses were set up, at the Lambārte Church – a collective farm club, while the Penkule Church was reconstructed as a sports hall. A similar situation was faced by the churches in the cities, for example, in the St. Nikolai’s Orthodox Church in Liepāja Karosta a sailors’ club of the USSR Navy was set up,⁶⁷ whereas the Valdemārpils Orthodox Church was reconstructed into a cinema.⁶⁸ If it was not possible to adjust the confiscated church to a similar “mode of usage”, the building was

closed and left to the hands of fate, usually without any protection or security means to guard the interior objects from vandalism and looting.

The attitude of the Soviet authorities towards the monuments of sacred architecture remained distanced until the end of the regime. Even in 1989 the Ministry of Culture was of the opinion that these monuments had to be preserved only due to the typological variety of architectural monuments.⁶⁹ Changes in the official attitude towards the “cult buildings” can be noticed when comparing two opinions of architect Jānis Zilgalvis (1955), which were published in the press a few months apart. First, the architect recommended arranging youth clubs, cafeterias and theatres in the abandoned churches, especially noting that this strategy was not jeopardizing the space of churches and their structural preservation.⁷⁰ However, soon afterwards Zilgalvis offered another, crucially different potential of usage of the sacred buildings: “No doubt, they must be renovated and perhaps given back to the parishes, if such parishes reappeared.”⁷¹ Since the renewal of state independence this task has been implemented with various degrees of success.

THE CENTRES OF RURAL MANORS AND THEIR USAGE

The complexes of the manors also constituted a rather big group of architectural monuments, and their preservation in Latvia was influenced both by the Soviet ideology and the opinions inherited from the pre-war period, namely, that manors were the “heritage of German culture”. World War II in the territory of Latvia destroyed approximately 40 centres of historical manors, and in some places the vandalism continued in the first years after the war, too.⁷² Therefore, the state of manor protection in the Soviet period can be compared with the situation of churches. The lists of monuments shows that in 1952 the status of an architectural monument of republican significance was provided to 57 dwelling houses and household buildings of former manors⁷³, but

in the list approved in 1967 there were 46 such architectural monuments included.

Next to the trend to arrange schools in the manors, which continued the pre-war tradition, in the Soviet period new modes of usage of the previous manor complexes emerged, related to the collectivisation of agriculture.⁷⁴ The collective farms used the manors as their administrative and economic centres: there were collective farms, mechanical workshops, warehouses for grain, construction materials and technical parts. The household buildings of the manors were reconstructed and extended. The parks, too, were partially adjusted to the needs of agricultural production. Starting with the 1960s, the new villages of the collective farms were usually built outside the former centres of manors, and part of the unused buildings were abandoned or temporarily turned into halls of residence.⁷⁵

In the Soviet period, too, the dwelling houses of manors were most often used for the needs of educational establishments. Arranging schools in these buildings was the principle of the “lesser evil”, because such a mode of usage destructively impacted the preservation of the historical interiors.⁷⁶ Taking into account the fact that a school at least maintained the building in a normal technical state, the monument protection institutions had to accept this solution. At times, it was the only way to ensure the preservation of the architectural monument. Such an example was the reconstruction of the unique wooden dwelling house of the Ungurmuiža manor in 1949–1954, which was termed as restoration,⁷⁷ yet, in fact, meant the adjustment of the building for the needs of an elementary school.

After World War II, there were continuous efforts and struggles to find an appropriate mode of usage for several medieval castles which were located in former centres of manors, for example, Ventspils, Dundaga, Ēdole, Nurmuiža and Krustpils castle, even though all these buildings were used for practical purposes. The recommendations of specialists to use medieval castles as the museums of local history, premises for public events or accommodation for tourists⁷⁸ were taken into account and implemented only in a few cases.

In the inspection campaign of the centres of manors in 1967–1970, there were 397 objects together with parks inspected to find out their mode of usage. The inspection data provided evidence that educational establishments were still dominating in the centres of manors, yet there were also arranged flats, administration premises, cultural houses, sanatoriums and old people's homes or homes for people with special needs.⁷⁹ This study showed that there was no such mode of usage of the centres of former manors, which would have ensured their preservation. It must be noted that some art historians in the 1970s admitted that the abandonment of manors was not acceptable: "If in 1905 all manors were burnt down or vandalised, history would not treat it as barbarism: it was a righteous outburst of people's anger, part of the fight for one's right. But, if the old buildings are damaged by decay over time, it happens because of our failure to act."⁸⁰ However, such an opinion did not change the situation of the former centres of manors. In Latvia, the preservation of these monuments mostly depended on the interests of the users of manor complexes. Overall, up to the late 1980s in approximately 30 manor complexes in Latvia various maintenance, repair and restoration works were carried out,⁸¹ however, the idea of a manor as an architectural treasure became popular only in the 1990s after the renewal of the state's independence.

THE MONUMENTS OF URBAN CONSTRUCTION

In the classification of Latvian architectural monuments, the Old City of Riga as a monument of urban construction was defined for the first time during the German occupation. In the battles between the Soviet and German army in June 1941, the centre of Old Riga was destroyed, yet in 1943, still under Nazi occupation, along with the status of architectural monument given to 337 historical buildings the entire territory of the Old Town was also announced as a monument protection zone. The reconstruction or demolition of the buildings included in this list, among them St. Peter's Church, the Town Hall and the House

of the Blackheads, was prohibited.⁸² In the circumstances of warfare, it had a symbolical meaning, however, this fact was not often mentioned during the Soviet occupation period.

The monuments of urban construction as a separate group in the documents of monument protection of the Latvian SSR only appeared in 1967, when pursuant to the decree of the Council of Ministers the protection of historical centres in 18 cities was stipulated⁸³. As noted before, in 1983 their number increased up to 33 objects. The first complex of urban construction which obtained a formal legal protection in January 1946, was again Old Riga.⁸⁴ The meaning of this decision was soon discredited by the demolishing of the remains of the House of the Blackheads and the Town Hall respectively in 1948 and 1954, which was sanctioned by the same representatives of the Communist Party and the Soviet government. Outside Riga, the protection regime was applied to the Kuldīgas and Cēsu Street networks and historical construction.⁸⁵ These events initially were merely declarative, because the Inspection of Protection of the Riga Architectural Monuments was only established in 1968 to carry out this task. In provincial towns there were no such institutions at all.

During the second half of the 1960s, architects started debating in the press, first about the preservation of Old Riga and then about the historical centres in other Latvian cities due to the reconstruction of the cities anticipated in the economic development plan. The press disseminated information on the structures of urban construction, the peculiarities of architectural styles and compositions, as well as the so far little known term “architectural landscape”.⁸⁶ Thus, for the first time in the protection of Latvian architectural heritage it was not the individual architectural monuments that stood out, there were attempts to perceive the monuments as a united complex of urban construction.

The inspection of the historical construction heritage in the cities started in the Latvian SSR in the 1970s and up to the mid-1980s it was found out that in 50 out of 93 inspected centres of cities and towns existed crucial architectonic heritage; however, the same was stated about 140 out of 670 rural centres.⁸⁷

Nevertheless, the inspection and protection events of the urban architectural heritage were uneven. The only example of complex research and protection of urban construction in the Latvian SSR was the regeneration project of Old Riga (1983),⁸⁸ which encompassed guidelines on the research of historical buildings, renewal and further usage. The implementation of the project was slowed down by the same circumstances that affected the system of monument protection overall: the lack of financial, material and human resources. When the funding allocated from the USSR state budget ran out, which in the time period from 1982 to 1991 covered the labour costs of the restoration specialists from the Polish People's Republic in Old Riga, and when the entire economic system changed, the regeneration project of Old Riga could not be adjusted to the new situation and thus this project as a programme of action lost its meaning.

In Latvia, the attitude towards the preservation of the historical construction of a town was uncertain: there was an opinion that new buildings had to be erected to replace old buildings. These new buildings had to be relatively adjusted to the existing urban construction. In the 1970s–1980s it was very popular to demolish wooden buildings, because it was not possible to ensure their preservation and reconstruction.⁸⁹ In the late 1980s, Latvian press discourse criticized the practice of Socialist states to “compensate” for the demolition of authentic buildings with look-alike imitations,⁹⁰ which had nothing to do with the protection of architectural monuments. The technical state of the historical buildings of Latvian cities at the time was regarded as catastrophic on many occasions: “It only remains to decide, whether to restore it or whether to preserve only the facades, erecting new buildings behind them, or to demolish the existing background buildings and to replace them with new buildings.”⁹¹

The condition of the Soviet economy did not provide special grounds for hope in the immediate future. As noted by architect Uldis Pilēns (1956) in 1986, the tired society only saw an opportunity in the restoration of architectural heritage “not to lose the reference points of the still preserved values,”⁹² hoping the lost

ideal past would replace the negative present. The popularity of restoration was turning into an illusory, nostalgic seclusion from the chaotic life of the late Socialist period. Thus, the public awareness of the symbolic meaning of the architectural monuments rose. It was vividly manifested by the majority of votes in favour of the renovation of the House of the Blackheads straight after the renewal of the state's independence, which from the point of view of monument protection was anachronistic.

CONCLUSIONS

The dependence of the cultural policy of the Soviet Union on the ideology of the Communist Party determined the politicization of the monument protection area. The officials of the Soviet state perceived the architectural heritage as a political phenomenon, whereas the popular opinion was that the point of renovating historical buildings was to achieve the presence of a beautiful, visually impressive object. Therefore, the attention was focused not on the entire architectural heritage of Latvia, but on individual objects which were politically significant or popular.

Starting with 1962, a branched system of inspection and control of architectural monuments was gradually introduced in Latvia. There were institutions which coordinated the scholarly research and restoration works of the historical buildings, although the resources of these institutions were not sufficiently large to ensure a balanced preservation of the architectural heritage objects.

The preservation of historical buildings depended on the attitude of the users of monuments, their priorities and interests, which did not correspond to the conditions of monument preservation. The negative impact of these factors could have been diminished by implementing a complex protection programme of architectural monuments, which was frequently discussed in the 1980s, yet such a programme was not introduced.

Public interest in the preservation of the architectural heritage in the Latvian SSR has never been a subject of sociological

research, yet it can be stated that it was paradoxical. Next to an intensive interest in the protection of Old Riga and some of the most outstanding objects elsewhere in Latvia (the Turaida, Cēsis and Rundāle Castles, the historical centre of Kuldīga, etc.), systematic looting and vandalising acts in rural churches were carried out and the Soviet authorities did not object to that even in terms of formal legal acts. In the Soviet period, Latvian society increasingly started to draw attention to the symbolic meaning of architectural monuments, because the historical buildings embodied another, long passed, yet attractive and idealised period, as well as human relationships.

ABBREVIATIONS

CC – the Central Committee

ICOMOS – the International Council on Monuments and Sites

CPL – the Communist Party of Latvia

CPSU – the Communist Party of the Soviet Union

SSR – the Soviet Socialist Republic

USSR – the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

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ARHITEKTŪRAS MANTOJUMA AIZSARDZĪBA LATVIJAS PSR (1945–1991): IDEOLOĢISKIE UN KULTŪRPOLITISKIE ASPEKTI

Mārtiņš Mintauris

Dr. hist., Latvijas Nacionālā bibliotēka, Latvijas Universitātes Vēstures un filozofijas fakultāte, docents. Zinātniskās intereses: kultūras mantojuma aizsardzības vēsture un teorija, Latvijas arhitektūras mantojuma aizsardzība, Latvijas kultūras vēsture 19.–20. gadsimtā.

Rakstā analizēta arhitektūras mantojuma aizsardzības politika Latvijā padomju okupācijas periodā. Raksturoti pieminekļu aizsardzības pamatprincipi un to saikne ar padomju valstī dominējošo komunistiskās partijas ideoloģiju un atsevišķu arhitektūras pieminekļu tipoloģisko grupu (sagrālo celtni, bijušo muižu centru un pilsēt būvniecības objektu) aizsardzības īpatnības. Aplūkota valsts aizsardzībā esošo arhitektūras pieminekļu sarakstu veidošanas prakse. Nobeigumā sniegts kopsavilkums par arhitektūras pieminekļu aizsardzības stāvokli Latvijas PSR un par sabiedrības attieksmi pret šo jomu padomju okupācijas laikā.

Atslēgas vārdi: arhitektūras mantojums, padomju kultūrpolitika, Latvijas PSR, pieminekļu aizsardzība.

Kopsavilkums

Rakstā analizēta arhitektūras mantojuma aizsardzības politika Latvijā padomju okupācijas periodā no 1945. līdz 1991. gadam. Raksturoti kopīgie kultūras pieminekļu aizsardzības pamatprincipi un to saikne ar padomju valstī dominējošo komunistiskās partijas ideoloģiju. Īsumā

aplūkota arhitektūras mantojuma aizsardzības institūciju attīstība Latvijas PSR un atsevišķu arhitektūras pieminekļu tipoloģisko grupu (sagrālo celtnu, bijušo muižu centru un pilsētībūvniecības objektu) aizsardzības īpatnības. Aplūkota valsts aizsardzībā esošo arhitektūras pieminekļu sarakstu veidošanas prakse. Nobeigumā sniegts kopsavilkums par arhitektūras pieminekļu aizsardzības stāvokli Latvijas PSR un par sabiedrības attieksmi pret šo jomu padomju okupācijas laikā.

Kultūras mantojuma aizsardzības sistēma Latvijas PSR kopš 1948. gada tika veidota centralizēti un pēc PSRS normatīvo aktu nosacījumiem. Tās uzdevums bija sniegt pārskatu par valsts aizsardzībā esošo objektu skaitu, tipoloģiju, kā arī par to stāvokli un izmantošanas veidu. Vienlaikus arhitektūras pieminekļu aizsardzība bija pakļauta padomju ideoloģijas priekšstatiem un tās uzdevums bija akcentēt padomju režīmam pieņemamos objektus, bet notušet ideoloģiski kaitīgos, piemēram, lielāko daļu no sakrālās arhitektūras pieminekļiem un lauku muižu centriem. Kopš 20. gadsimta 60. gadiem gan arhitektu vidē, gan sabiedrībā pieauga bažas par pilsētu vēsturisko centru saglabāšanas iespējām padomju industrializācijas un komunālās saimniecības problēmu dēļ. Sociālā spiediena rezultātā un arī republikas prestiža dēļ 1983. gadā tika apstiprināts Vecrīgas reģenerācijas projekts, taču provinces pilsētu vēsturiskās apbūves saglabāšana bija problemātiska. Arhitektūras pieminekļu aizsardzība arī padomju sociālisma sistēmā bija atkarīga no celtnes praktiskās izmantošanas iespējām. Visu kultūras mantojuma sistēmu kopumā ietekmēja arī padomju ekonomikas stāvoklis un ar to saistītais hroniskais cilvēku un materiālo resursu trūkums šajā nozarē. Savukārt sabiedrība arvien vairāk saistīja vēsturisko celtnu restaurāciju ar iluzoro priekšstatu par pirmskara ideālo Latvijas sabiedrību un saskatīja restaurācijā simbolisku iespēju atgriezties “zaudētajā paradīzē”, kas radīja priekšnoteikumus anahronisku Otrā pasaules kara laikā iznīcinātā Vecrīgas centra atjaunošanas koncepciju īstenošanai 21. gadsimta sākumā.

ĪSZIŅAS

GRIGORIJA SMIRINA DEVUMS LATVIJAS HISTORIOGRĀFIJĀ

Leo Dribins

Dr. hist., Dr. hon. hist. Latvijas Universitātes Filozofijas un socioloģijas institūta vadošais pētnieks.

Zinātniskās intereses: mazākumtautību historiogrāfija un dalība Latvijas kultūras dzīvē.

Latvijas historiogrāfijā vērtīgu ieguldījumu devis vēstures doktors Grigorijs Smirins (1955–2017). Īpaši nozīmīga ir viņa loma Latvijas ebreju vēstures pētniecībā, kā arī holokausta noziegumu pilnīgā izzināšanā Latvijā. Tomēr Latvijas sabiedrībā līdz šim G. Smirina vārds saistīts galvenokārt ar ļoti daudz zinātnisku manuskriptu rediģēšanu, rakstu un dokumentu krājumu sastādīšanu. Viņš bija viens no izcilākajiem redaktoriem izdevniecībās “Zinātne” un “Zvaigzne ABC”. G. Smirina talants izpaudās prasmē bagātināt tekstus ar tematiskiem komentāriem un piezīmēm. Viņa autordarbos atspoguļota ebreju prese Latvijā, garīgo draudžu un sinagogu sniegums kultūrā, sekulāro kopienu devums izglītībā un mākslā. Kopā ar vēsturnieku Meijeru Meleru radīts monumentāls stāstījums par Latvijas ebreju sabiedrības bojāeju visās Latvijas pilsētās un lauku apdzīvotās vietās. Atainota šīs traģēdijas atmiņas saglabāšana.

Atslēgas vārdi: historiogrāfija, ebrejība, holokausts, vēstures atmiņa.

Grigorijs Smirins ienāca Latvijas vēstures pētnieku vidū 1990. gadā, kad Latvijas vēstures institūtā apsprieda un akceptēja viņa pētījumu “Latvijas padomju periodiskie izdevumi (1917. gada marts – 1918. gada februāris)”. Institūta Zinātniskā padome piešķīra viņam vēstures zinātņu kandidāta grādu. Uz tā pamata 1993. gadā G. Smirins kļuva par Latvijas vēstures doktoru.

Mācoties Latvijas Universitātes Žurnālistikas fakultātē, viņš bija nolēmis kļūt par zinātnisko darbu redaktoru. 1977. gadā sākas G. Smirina dalība LZA izdevniecības “Zinātne” publicējumu sagatavošanā izdošanai. Viņš rediģēja krievu valodā rakstītās zinātniskās grāmatas.¹ 1988. gadā viņš kļuva arī par izdevniecības

“Zvaigzne ABC” ārštata redaktoru, bet no 1991. gada, kad “Zinātne” pārstāja izdot grāmatas krievu valodā, pārgāja strādāt uz pilnu slodzi izdevniecībā “Zvaigzne ABC”. No 1991. gada 2. janvāra līdz 2004. gada 1. oktobrim bija tās vecākais redaktors, kura pārziņā nāca mācību grāmatas un metodiskie līdzekļi, kas tika pārtulkoti no latviešu valodas krievu valodā un bija domāti mazākumtautību skolām. Šajā jomā G. Smirins kļuva par neaizstājamu “valodu starpnieku” ar apbrīnojamu erudīciju, divu valodu lietošanas sakaru dziļu pārzinātāju.

Viņa redaktora darba apjoms mērāms vairākos simtos grāmatu. “Zinātne” 14 gados viņa redakcijas un vērtējumu ietekmē tapuši gandrīz 400 izdevumi.

1995. gadā sākās redaktora G. Smirina darbība, sagatavojot Rīgā rīkoto starptautisko konferenci “Ebreji mainīgajā pasaulē” materiālu publikāciju. To pirmais sējums bija veltīts 1995. gada 28.–29. augustā notikušajai konferencē, ar kuru sākās jauns, nozīmīgs posms pasaules ebreju vēstures un intelektuālās dzīves (relīģiskie uzskati, filozofija u.c.) atspoguļošanā. Rīga kļuva par vienu no svarīgākajiem ebrejības zinātniskās domas attīstības centriem. Pavisam līdz mūsdienām šeit notikušas 10 šādas starptautiskas konferences. Par to saturu vēsta G. Smirina sastādītie un zinātniski rediģētie astoņi konferenci materiālu sējumi, kas nākuši klajā Rīgā 1996., 1998., 2000., 2002., 2005., 2009., 2013. un 2015. gadā.² Krājumos ik reizi publicēti arī G. Smirina raksti. Tos ievada raksts “Ebreju periodika Latvijā līdz Pirmā pasaules kara gadiem”, ar kuru sākās viņa devums Latvijas ebreju vēstures pētniecībā.³

Konferences materiālu otrajā sējumā to papildina viņa raksts “Ebreju periodika Latvijā starp diviem pasaules kariem”.⁴ Savu nozīmīgāko publikāciju par preses vēsturi G. Smirins devis latviešu valodā Riharda Treija redakcijā veidotā grāmatā “Latvijas Republikas prese 1918–1940”, nodaļā “Mazākumtautību prese Latvijā” ar rakstu “Ebreju prese”.⁵ Tajā parādīts un analizēts 40 periodisko izdevumu saturs. G. Smirina pārskats liecina, ka neatkarīgajā Latvijas valstī izveidojās Latvijas ebreju preses kopums, kas savā informācijā aptvēra visu valstī esošo ebreju tautību, bija tās

domu un viedokļu spogulis. Turklāt šajā presē pārsvaru guva demokrātiskās un Latvijai lojālās ebreju aprindas. Diemžēl Kārļa Ulmaņa autoritārais režīms pēc 1934. gada 15. maija slēdza populārās ebreju avīzes, to skaitā avīzi “Frimorgn”, kura sniedza ebrejiem objektīvu, interesantu ikdienas informāciju. 1937. gadā Latvijā iznāca vairs tikai viens dienas un divi nedēļas izdevumi, kuri pauda ebreju tradicionāli reliģiskos un valdībai pieņemamos uzskatus.

Grigorija Smirina radošā zinātniskā darba spilgta iezīme izpaudās viņa prasmē savienot grāmatas rediģēšanu ar plašu piezīmju un komentāru uzrakstīšanu, kas ievērojami papildināja un bagātināja, vairākkārt arī precizēja grāmatas autora teikto. Šāda pieeja izdevuma sagatavošanā bija īpaši nepieciešama, ja autors vairs nebija šaisaulē un viņa manuskripts tapis ārpus Latvijas pēc mūsu neatkarīgās valsts sagrāves.

Tādu metodi G. Smirins izmantojis, rediģējot Izraēlā kopš 30. gadiem dzīvojušā vēsturnieka Mendela Bobes (1894–1973) Telavivā 1972. gadā jidiša valodā izdoto grāmatu “Ebreji Latvijā”, kas 2005. gadā tika pārtulkota un 2006. gadā Rīgā nāca klajā krievu un latviešu valodā. Katrā grāmatā bija vairāk nekā 330 tulkojuma zinātniskā redaktora G. Smirina plaši skaidrojumi, kuri sniedza papildus ziņas par Latvijas ebreju sabiedrību agrāk un mūsdienās.⁶

Ļoti nozīmīga bija Grigorija Smirina loma, sagatavojot publicēšanai holokaustu pārdzīvojušo Latvijas ebreju atmiņas. Īpaši saturīgas bija Frīdas Mihelsones atmiņas “Es izdzīvoju Rumbulā”, kas pirmoreiz publicētas Izraēlā un guva pasaules ievērību ar izdevumu angļu valodā, kas iznāca Ņujorkā 1979. gadā (izdevniecība “Holocaust Library”). Latvijā tās izdevumu krievu un latviešu valodā zinātniski papildināja grāmatas sastādītāja G. Smirina vērtīgie komentāri un fotodokumenti.⁷

Šādā pašā veidā 2006. un 2012. gadā Maskavā un Rīgā nāca klajā Ellas Medaljes atmiņas “Tiesības dzīvot” Dāvida Zilbermana literārajā apdarē ar G. Smirina komentāriem.⁸

Minētie izdevumi ievērojami paplašināja un precizēja stāstījumus par Latvijas ebreju nogalināšanu nacistiskās okupācijas

pirmajā baigajā gadā (1941–1942). Ļoti problemātiska savā laikā bija holokaustu pārdzīvojušā Latvijas ebreja Maksa Kaufmana (1897–1987) Minhenē 1947. gadā vācu valodā iznākušās grāmatas “Die Vernichtung der Juden Lettlands” (“Ebreju iznīcināšana Latvijā”) tulkojumu izdošana Rīgā krievu un latviešu valodā. Autora norādītie avoti bija galvenokārt holokaustā cietušo cilvēku un arī viņa paša atmiņas par pārdzīvoto nacistiskās okupācijas laikā. Tās pauda sāpes, rādīja emocionālu attieksmi pret pāridarījumiem, naidu pret slepkavām un mocītājiem. Cietēju atmiņā pagātnes ainas dažkārt tika pārveidotas, tās attālinājās no īstenības. Tādēļ arī M. Kaufmana grāmatā esošās liecības ne vienmēr likās patiesas, radīja šaubas. Tomēr Šamira fonda ļaudis nolēma, ka grāmata jāpārtulko un jāizdod kā spilgta šausmu laikmeta liecība. Bet vājās vietas jālabo ar plašām principiālām piezīmēm un komentāriem. Grāmatas zinātnisko korekciju uzņēmās veikt redaktors Grigorijs Smirins. Viņš uzrakstīja vairāk nekā 800 (!) piezīmes, skaidrojumus, atsevišķus labojumus. Šis pielikums aizņēma vairāk nekā 100 lappuses (sīkā drukā) no grāmatas krievu valodas izdevuma 504 lappusēm.⁹ Vērtīga, precizējoša nozīme bija arī holokaustā cietušā izcilā Latvijas jurista Aleksandra Bergmana pēcvārdam, kas atgādināja arhīva ziņu svarīgumu.¹⁰

Par Grigorija Smirina uzņēmību liecina Krustpils ebreja tēlnieka Elmāra Rivoša (1906–1957) atstāto atmiņu un dienasgrāmatas manuskripta fragmentu apvienošana un visa teksta redakcionāla pārrakstīšana grāmatā “Elmārs Rivošs. Piezīmes”. Tas faktiski ir divu autoru – E. Rivoša un G. Smirina veidots pagātnes vēstījums. G. Smirins savu misiju veica pēc stāstītāja nāves, saņemot E. Rivoša ģimenes lūgumu pārvērst atstāto atmiņu sadaļas vienā kopīgā dzīves atstāstā. Tā centrālā daļa ir atmiņas par pārdzīvoto Rīgā nacistiskās Vācijas okupācijas dienās “Lielajā” un “Mazajā” Rīgas geto. Tur ir arī atmiņas par slēpšanos pēc izbēgšanas no geto 1942. gadā. Manuprāt, šī grāmata varbūt ir pati literāriskākā liecība par ebreja izdzīvošanas cīņu nacistu varas gados.¹¹

G. Smirins paveica ļoti lielu zinātniskās rediģēšanas darbu, veidojot Meijera Melera lielo grāmatu par holokausta norises ģeogrāfiju un tās upuriem Latvijā, rādot pieminekļus, kas apzīmē

nogalināto ebreju bojāejas vietas. Pats M. Melers bija apbraukājis visu Latviju, ticies ar simtiem liecinieku, savācis unikālu foto-materiālu krājumu. Taču viņš nebija izcils publicists. Šo trūkumu novērsa G. Smirina publicista talants. Tādēļ M. Melers vēlējās, lai grāmatai būtu divi autori. Taču Grigorijs tādu iespēju izslēdza, jo uzskatīja, ka M. Melera veikums ir daudz ietilpīgāks par viņa pie datora veiktā rediģējuma, norādot arī, ka Meijers Melers prot latviešu valodu daudz labāk nekā viņš pats, bet liecinieki lielākoties bija latvieši. Grāmata vispirms gan iznāca krievu valodā, jo arī Melers bija krievvalodīgais rakstītājs. Latviski to pārtulkoja Inese Runce un Inga Buša, teksta literāro rediģēšanu veica Arta Jāne. Izdevums krievu valodā (2010) saucās “Mūsu piemiņas vietas”, bet latviešu valodā (2013), kad teksts bija plašāks, – “Latvijas ebreju kopienas vēsture un holokausta piemiņas vietas”. Tāds bija abu grāmatas gatavotāju kopīgs lēmums.¹² Esmu pārliecināts, ka šo grāmatu lasīs daudzas paaudzes.

G. Smirins nebija reliģiskas pārliecības cilvēks. Tomēr viņš cienīja un izprata ebreju tautas reliģijas vēsturiskumu, kurā balstījās tās garīgums. Tā bija ebreju kultūras vadlīnija daudzus gadījumus, kura neizzuda, ieejot modernā laikmetā.

Latvijas ebreju zinātnieku piesaisti reliģiskās vēstures tēmai spilgti demonstrē Latvijas Valsts vēstures arhīva pētnieces Ritas Bogdanovas sastādītā un Grigorija Smirina zinātniski rediģētā ekskluzīvā liela formāta grāmata “Latvijas sinagogas un rabīni 1918–1940”. Tā izdota Rīgā 2004. gadā jidiša, latviešu, krievu un angļu valodā. Projekta vadītājs bija Latvijas un Rīgas virsrabīns Natans Barkans (1923–2003), kas nesagaidīja šīs grāmatas nākšanu klajā. To izdeva viņa dēls Menahems Barkagans, kas vada apvienību “Šamir”. Faktiski šī grāmata bija visas Latvijas ebreju sabiedrības izdevums. Grāmatā ir ilustrācijas, teksti un zinātniski pielikumi. Tā rāda šodienas ļaudīm ebreju sinagogu un lūgšanu namu arhitektūru pirmskara Latvijā. Redzams, ka ebreju garīgā kultūra bija Latvijas kultūras vēsturiska sastāvdaļa. Grāmatā sniegtas biogrāfiskās ziņas par 122 rabīnu ģimenēm, no kurām nākuši ebreju reliģisko draudžu garīgie vadītāji. Grāmata reprezentē arī 25 izcilākos sinagogu dziedoņus – kantorus un citus

reliģiskos darbiniekus. Viņi vairs nav vēsturē aizmirstie, bet pārstāv Latvijas ebreju kultūras reliģisko serdi.

Grigorija Smirina vēsturnieciskā liecība ir arī pēdējais lielais viņa veikums: “Latvijas ebreju vēstures materiālu kopojuma” pirmais laidniens, kuru viņš sastādīja un zinātniski rediģēja kā Latvijas ebreju enciklopēdijas redkolēģijas loceklis. Šī grāmata izdota 2015. gadā.¹³ Tās saturā ir no vācu valodas krieviski pārtulkotā Roibena Vunderbāra (1812–1868) grāmata “Ebreju vēsture Vidzemē un Kurzemē no ienākšanas sākuma līdz tagadnei”. Krājumā iekļauta arī Ādolfā Ērliha (1837–1913) brošūra “Ebreju kopienas skolas attīstības vēsture Rīgā. Kultūras vēstures apcerējums”, kas bija izdota Pēterburgā 1894. gadā vācu valodā. Historiogrāfiski vērtējot, īpaši nozīmīga ir no jidiša un ivrita valodas krievu valodā pārtulkotā Leiba Ovčinska (1871–1941) grāmata “Ebreji Latvijā: Kurzeme un Zemgale, 1561–1923”. Tā jidiša valodā nāca klajā 1928. gadā, un autors vēlējās to veltīt Latvijas Republikas 10. gadadienai. Arī šodien šai grāmatai par ebreju ienākšanu un dzīvi Latvijas zemēs ir svarīga loma ebreju kopienas vēsturiskās apziņas veidošanā. Tā liecina, ka ebrejiem no 18. gadsimta bijusi konstruktīva nozīme garīgajā dzīvē, īpaši Kurzemē un Zemgalē.¹⁴ Grāmatā sniegtas plašas ziņas par 185 rabīniem un 22 ebreju biedrībām. Diemžēl nekas nav rakstīts par ebreju ārstiem un māksliniekiem, bet saistībā ar viņu devumu varētu nosaukt vairāk nekā 200 personu. Pēc Latvijas neatkarības atgūšanas vairums ebreju šeit bija ienācēji no Krievijas, Ukrainas, Baltkrievijas, kuriem nebija patiesa priekšstats par mūsu zemes pagātņi un ebreju vietu tajā. Tādēļ L. Ovčinska grāmata krievu valodā ir liels palīgs viņu izglītošanā. Gandrīz katrā grāmatas lappusē ir G. Smirina komentāri un piezīmes, kurās ir arī daudz jaunas informācijas, kas padara visu tekstu zinātniskāku un pietuvo to mūsdienu lasītājiem. Viņš uzrakstījis arī uzziņu pielikumu un glosāriju.¹⁵

Rediģējot zinātniskās publikācijas par holokausta norisi Latvijā, G. Smirins krāja un sistematizēja dažādus materiālus par nacistiskās Vācijas rasistisko antisemitismu. Viņš salīdzināja ebreju vajāšanu dažādās nacistu okupētajās zemēs un tās pāraugšanu masu slepkavībās. Pēc G. Smirina domām, vācu antisemitiskā

rasisma pāreja no politiskiem, ideoloģiskiem un juridiskiem ierobežojumiem pret ebrejiem – uz klaju fizisku vardarbību sākās 1938. gadā ar tā saukto “Kristāla nakti”, kad 9.–10. novembrī visā Vācijā, Austrijā un Sudetu apgabalā notika visaptverošs ebreju grautiņš. To organizēja SS un nacistu partijas apgabalu organizācijas. Notika slepkavības ebreju dzīvesvietās, viņu dzīvokļu un tirgotavu izdemolēšana un izlaupišana. Turklāt ar Hitlera sankciju tika radīts priekšstats, ka tas noticis bez Lielvācijas valdības ziņas un paudis vācu tautas “nelokāmo gribu” atbrīvoties no ebreju klātbūtnes. Tā tika atvērts ceļš uz varmācīgu “ebreju jautājuma” atrisinājumu. Radās iespēja konfiscēt viņu īpašumus un pārdalīt ebreju privātās dzīves mantību, nododot to nacistu ģimenēm. G. Smirins bija pārliecināts, ka pēc tamlīdzīga krimināla scenārija vācu nacisti gribēja iesākt Latvijas ebreju masveidīgu nogalināšanu un aplaupīšanu, atļaujot slepkavām paņemt daļu nolaupītā pašu dzīves labiekārtošanai. Rakstā “1941. gada 4. jūlija diena Rīgā kā Vācijas “Kristāla nakts” analogs” G. Smirins ar aculiecinieku stāstiem atmasko nacistu melus par latviešu ierosmi holokausta uzsākšanā.¹⁶ Minētajā rakstā atmaskota arī nacistu antisemitiskās propagandas viltīgā taktika Latvijā nolūkā piesaistīt iznīcināšanas akcijām latviešus:

1. Pierādīt, ka ebreji ir svešinieki, tādēļ viņiem nevarot būt tādas pašas tiesības, kādas ir vietējiem āriešiem.

2. Ja ebreji ir beztiesiski, tad tos nepieciešams izolēt no citiem iedzīvotājiem.

3. Ja viņi ir beztiesiski un izolēti, tad nav pamats viņu klātbūtnēi mītnes zemē.¹⁷

Vai tā nedomā arī mūsdienu antisemitīti?

G. Smirina izcils nopelns bija krājuma “Ebreju iznīcināšana Latvijā 1941–1945” sastādīšana un rediģēšana, to viņš veica kopā ar arhivisti Ritu Bogdanovu. Krājums tika radīts “Šamir” projekta ietvaros, tā vadītājs bija rabīns Menahems Barkagans. Grāmata nāca klajā Rīgā 2007. gadā krievu valodā un 2008. gadā – latviešu, angļu, vācu un franču valodā, tās tulkojumus literāri rediģēja. Izdevumu atbalstīja Eiropas Savienības Izglītības, audiovizuālās jomas un kultūras izpildaģentūra (EACEA). Tā pasaulē

nāca visplašāk izplatītais izdevums par holokausta noziegumu Latvijā.¹⁸

G. Smirins pats uzrakstīja nodaļu "Holokausts Rīgā". Tas bija hronoloģisks vēstījums par 37 000 Latvijas galvaspilsētā esošo ebreju dzīvi un bojāeju 1941.–1942. gadā. Autors parāda, ka Rīgā notika vācu nacistu ierosināts un plānots iznīcināšanas process, kas sākās naktī uz 1941. gada 2. jūliju ar ielaušanos ebreju dzīvokļos, to izlaupīšanu un pēc tam – konfiscēšanu nākamo slepkavu vajadzībām. Masu slepkavības sākās 3. jūlijā Biķernieku mežā. Līdz rudenim tur bija nogalināti ap 4000 ebreju un 1000 citu tautību cilvēki. Slepkavošanas akcijas parasti sākās naktī un turpinājās dienā. Biķernieku mežs bija liels holokausta poligons. Taču nacisti un viņu noziegumu vietējie līdzdalībnieki bijuši spiesti ierobežot slepkavošanu, jo Rīgā bija vajadzīgs ebreju darbaspēks, daudzās amatnieku profesijās ebreji bija galvenie strādnieki, bez kuriem nevarēja iztikt. Tieši šī atziņa piespieda okupantus sapulcināt ebreju darbaspēku Rīgas ebreju geto. Taču tas bija tikai pagaidu solis. G. Smirins par geto galveno funkciju uzskata visu Rīgas ebreju reģistrāciju un pārraudzību, gatavojoties viņu totālai iznīcināšanas lielākijai.

Virsbendes Frīdriha Jekelna ierašanās Rīgā tika organizēta, lai pārņemtu Ukrainā izmēģināto Kijevas ebreju iznīcināšanas metodi, ko augsti novērtēja Ā. Hitlers un H. Himlers, nolūkā paātrināt ebreju "izzušanu". Arī Latvijā.

Rīgas geto bija Rumbulas priekšlauks, upuru sapulcināšanas asiņains pagalmis. Tādu to rāda G. Smirina zinātniskais vēstījums.

Latvijas Vēsturnieku komisijas rakstu 18. sējumā, kas veltīts pētījumiem par holokaustu Latvijā, publicēts Grigorija Smirina raksts "Rīgas ebreji nacistiskās okupācijas laikā (1941–1944)". Tajā izteikts historiogrāfisks secinājums, ka pēckara gados uzkrātās empīriskās zināšanas par holokaustu pirmo reizi guvušas vērā ņemamu atspoguļojumu Latvijā tikai 20. gadsimta sešdesmitajos gados Edgara Blūmfelda darbā "Hitleriskais okupācijas režīms Latvijā". Tā nosaukta arī viņa 1967. gadā veiksmīgi aizstāvētā disertācija vēstures zinātņu kandidāta grāda iegūšanai. Tās teksts

bija daļēji publicēts Rīgā 1964. gadā grāmatā “Kara dienas”. G. Smirins raksta, ka E. Blūmfelds rakstījis godprātīgi, spītējot padomju okupācijas gados valdošajam noskaņojumam.¹⁹ Savukārt fundamentālu holokausta izpēti Latvijā pirmais sācis ASV latviešu zinātnieks Andrievs Ezergailis. Tiesa – G. Smirins atzīmē arī viņa lielajā grāmatā “Holokausts vācu okupētajā Latvijā 1941–1944” dažus trūkumus: maz rakstīts par ebreju drausmīgo stāvokli un izmisuma noskaņojumu 1941. gada vasarā un rudenī, par pazemojumiem un aizdzīšanu iznīcināšanai Rīgas geto posmā. Sagatavošanās šim beigu cēlienam sākusies ar viņu pie-reģistrēšanu policijas uzskaitē un vizuālo apzīmēšanu ar dzeltenām lupatām. To pabeidza 1941. gada augustā. Otro represiju pakāpi ievadīja Ostlandes reihskomisāra H. Lozes 1941. gada 13. oktobra pavēle par ebreju kustamo un nekustamo īpašumu konfiscēšanu; ar to ievērojami “atviegloja” viņu piespiedu pārcelšanos uz geto rajonu, tā nabadzīgās peticības šaurumā.

G. Smirins uzsver, ka geto gūstniecība sākās pēc tam, kad bija pabeigta ebreju nogalināšana mazpilsētās un lauku apvidos. Rīgas ebrejiem varēja rasties ilūzija par viņu dzīvošanas pagarinājumu. Bet geto bija tikai īss (vienu mēnesi) ebreju darbaspēka ekspluatācijas brīdis. Gala stacijā – Rumbulā pa to laiku raka lielās bedres ebreju liķu “uzņemšanai”. F. Jekelna ierašanās Rīgā nebija pāvērsiens, bet holokausta turpinājums paātrinātā tempā.

G. Smirins savā rakstā rāda arī “Mazajā geto” ieslodzīto Latvijas un ārvalstu ebreju bojāeju 1942. gadā Biķernieku mežā, kur V. Arāja slepkavu komanda nogalināšanā lietojusi F. Jekelna izgudroto “sardiņu kārtošanas” metodi.²⁰

Rīgas geto ieslodzīto cilvēku iznīcināšana turpinājās arī Kairzervaldes (Ķeizarmeža) koncentrācijas nometnē, tās upurus nošāva gan Biķernieku, gan Dreiliņu mežā. Apmēram 2000 ārzemju un Latvijas ebreju apraka Rīgas vecajos ebreju kapos, vietā, kur līdz tam raka pašnāvniekus.²¹

G. Smirins norāda: Rīgas ebreju iznīcināšanas vēsture beigu-sies tikai 1944. gadā, kad SS un SD policisti rikojuši ebreju noga-lināšanas bedru pārrakšanu un liķu atlieku sadedzināšanu, beigās iznīcinot arī ieslodzīto “racējus un dedzinātājus”. G. Smirina īsais

pārskats par Rīgas geto ļaužu “izzušanu” ir zinātniska apsūdzība Vācijas nacistiem un viņu līdzskrējējiem. Spriedums paliek spēkā mūžīgi mūžos.

Latvijas Vēsturnieku komisijas 18. sējumā publicēti arī G. Smirina rediģētie un sakārtotie Elmāra Rivoša atmiņu fragmenti, kas tapuši, viņam vēl dzīvojot slēpnī Rīgā – 1943. un 1944. gadā. Arī šis atmiņas pārtulkotas latviešu valodā, papildinātas ar G. Smirina komentāriem un piezīmēm.²² Īpaši skarbas ir tās ainas, kas stāsta par Vācijas ebreju bērnu izdzišanu badanāvē. – Jā, holokausta melnās dienas Rīgā bija ļoti līdzīgas Varšavas geto un Aušvices laukumu briesmīgajām diennaktīm.

G. Smirins, gatavojot savus rakstus, pētīja muzeja “Ebreji Latvijā” fondus un atrada tur daudz izziņu par pilsētu, mazpilsētu un lauku ciematu ebreju vēsturi. Kopā ar Meijeru Meleru viņi nolēma, ka jāpēta nelielās ebreju kopas, to ļaudis laimē un nelaimē. Nevienu nedrīkst atdot aizmirstībai. Nolēma sākt, izpētot Zemgales mazpilsētiņas Silenes-Borovkas ebrejus, kuri tur sāka dzīvot 18. gadsimtā. Borovka veidojās kā ebreju miestiņš. Pat vēl 1897. gadā 83% tās iedzīvotāji bija ebreji. 1915. gadā pēc Krievijas militārās varas pavēles viņus deportēja no piefrontes apgabaliem uz valsts iekšieni. Latvijas Republikā 20. gados atgriezās tikai trešdaļa izsūtīto, daudzi no viņiem pārgāja dzīvot Daugavpilī, pašā Silenē-Borovkā palika tikai divi simti ebreju. Viņi bija kļuvuši ļoti nabadzīgi, sabiedrībā tika apsmieti, politiski bija neaktīvi, taču bija ļoti reliģiozi. Tomēr drīz vien viņi atkopās, 1935. gadā 17 ģimenēm jau bija savi privātie uzņēmumi. Darbojās divas sinagogas ar saviem rabīniem. Garīgi apdāvinātais Haims Bermants (1929–1998), aizbraucis uz Angliju, Londonā kļuva par pazīstamu rakstnieku. Savā pēdējā grāmatā “Genesis” viņš spilgti stāstīja par Silenē pavadīto bērnību. Viņam ir secinājums, ka Latvijas ebrejiem tas bijis “goldene medine” – “zelta valsts” laiks.²³ Koku un linu tirgotāju Baruhu Leiboviču dēvējuši par “savējo Rotšildu”. Borovkā visu ebreju durvis vienmēr bijušas atvērtas, sadzīvē nav liktas tautību barjeras.

PSRS jūgā Silene esot maz cietusi, izsūtītas tikai divas bagāto ebreju ģimenes. Bojāejas šausmas atnāca vācu nacistu uniformās,

bet 1941. gada 21. jūlijā no Rīgas ar autobusu atbraukusi V. Arāja “šāvēju grupa”. Eksekūcijā pie Smilgu ezera nogalināja 32 Silenes mazpilsētas strādīgo ebreju ģimenes – 186 cilvēkus. Viņu mantu slepkavas sadalīja. Izzuda ebreji, drīz izzuda Silene-Borovka. Zaudēja Latvija.

Kopš 1990. gada Grigorijs Smirins sadarbojās ar holokausta pētniekiem Krievijā, piedalījās dokumentu un materiālu krājuma “Nezināmā melnā grāmata” sagatavošanā.²⁴ (Krājums “Melnā grāmata” bija sagatavots iespiešanai Maskavā 1947. gadā, bet Kremlis to aizliedza iespiest un salikumu pavēlēja iznīcināt.) Jaunajā izdevumā (iznāca Maskavā 2015. gadā) G. Smirins bija piezīmju autors. Viņš piedalījās arī starptautiskos forumos, kurus Maskavā rikoja Zinātniskais un izglītojošais centrs “Holokausts”. 2015. gadā centra 9. konferences “Holokausts un mūsdienu Krievija” materiālu krājumā “Holokausts pēc 70 gadiem” ievietots G. Smirina raksts “Holokausta atspoguļojuma evolūcija Latvijas skolu vēstures mācību grāmatās Latvijā postpadomju periodā”.²⁵

G. Smirins iepazīna šo tēmu, rediģējot skolu mācību grāmatas un metodiskos materiālus, kurus izdeva “Zvaigzne ABC”. Viņš piedalījās arī skolotāju konferencēs, kur apsprieda holokausta mācīšanas problēmas. Maskavā publicētajā rakstā viņš parāda, ka holokausta rašanās un norises izpratne nerodas skolās, bet sabiedrībā, skatot vēstures avotus par 20. gadsimtu Eiropā. Svarīga loma te ir aculiecinieku atmiņām. Jākonstatē arī, ka ap holokausta atceri virmo ideoloģiskais un politiskais mūsdienu diskurss. Tas skar un aizskar daudzas ģimenes, kuru vec-tēvi un vecvectēvi karoja Otrajā pasaules karā. Skolēni to redz un dzird.

Pat vēstures skolotāji nav vienprātīgi par holokausta apjomu un represētāju skaitu, viņu vainas pakāpi. Kopumā vērojama divdabīga aina. Vieni cenšas rast zinātniski pamatotu patiesu holokausta atspoguļojumu cilvēku atmiņā, otrie cenšas holokausta atceri pielāgot mūsdienu politiskajiem uzskatiem un interesēm. Turklāt jāņem vērā, ka mūsdienu skolēniem demokrātiskā valstī ir grūti saprast, kādēļ radās tāda šausmīga antisemitiska attieksme pret ebrejiem.

G. Smirins savā referātā Maskavā un tā izklāstā parādīja, kā Latvijā vēstures skolotāji, pārvarot pretstatu grūtības, pilnveidoja un precizēja holokausta atmiņas kopainu. Liela nozīme bija starptautiskās demokrātiskās sabiedrības ietekmei, Otrā pasaules kara izpētei ASV un Rietumeiropā. Šis faktors spēcīgi iespaidoja 1998. gadā nodibinātās Latvijas Vēsturnieku komisijas zinātnisko darbību.

No G. Smirina raksta šeit izdalīšu tikai divus diskursa aspektus.

1. Tika apgāzta no nacisma okupācijas laika līdz mūsdienām nākusi iedoma, ka latviešu kolaborantu un bezprāta nacionālistu dalību Lielvācijas organizētā ebreju iznīcināšanā Latvijā zināmā mērā radījusi ebreju neloyalitāte pret neatkarīgo nacionālo valsti un ebreju aktīvā līdzdalība PSRS okupācijas režīma izveidošanā, boļševistiskā terora ienākšanā Latvijā. G. Smirins parāda, ka Latvijas vēsturnieki ir atmaskojuši šo melīgo priekšstatu, kura saknes meklējamas vācu nacistiskās propagandas publicējumos.²⁶ Mācību procesā skolā šai falsifikācijai nav vietas.

2. Otra, vēl joprojām neatrisināta problēma ir jēdziena “baigais gads” lietošana. Tas arī tapa nacistu propagandas ietekmē ar tāda paša nosaukuma grāmatu 1942. gadā. Tā bija boļševiku vainas uzvelšana ebrejiem un “latviešu antisemitisma” akcentēšana. (Grāmata tika pārtulkota vācu valodā un izplatīta vācu okupētājās zemēs.)

Bet G. Smirins atgādināja, ka jēdziens “baigais gads” Latvijā tiek lietots pat skolu mācību grāmatās, tiesa – tikai kā padomju okupācijas varas pirmā gada (1940–1941) apzīmējums.²⁷ G. Smirins uzskatīja, ka šī jēdziena piesaiste tikai vienam gadam dezinformē skolēnus un visu sabiedrību. Vēl baigāki bija vācu nacistiskās okupācijas četri gadi, kad šausmīgā veidā iznīcināja daudz vairāk Latvijas pilsoņu nekā līdz nacistu okupācijai – līdz 1941. gada jūlijam.

Vēlreiz jāatgādina Latvijas Centrālās padomes (LCP) 1943. gada augustā pasludinātā Latvijas tautas deklarācija Sabiedrotām nācijām, kurā teikts, ka “**vācu okupācijas divos Baigajos**

gados” nogalināti 10 tūkstoši latviešu un notikusi “nežēlīga izrēķināšanās ar LR žīdu tautas pilsoņiem”²⁸

Manuprāt, arī skolu mācību grāmatās jālieto šāds definējums. Pēc padomju baigā gada tūlīt pat (bez atelpas) sākās Lielvācijas okupācijas turpat četri baigie gadi. Tieši tie bija Latvijas ebreju iznīcināšanas un jebkuras demokrātijas neģēlīgas nopulgošanas gadi.

Par šo patiesības ievērošanu esmu rakstījis jau 2002. un 2007. gadā grāmatā par antisemitisma vēsturi.²⁹

Ja Grigorijs Smirins vēl būtu dzīvs, mēs abi rakstītu vēlreiz!

Nobeigumā jāuzsver, ka G. Smirins savas publikācijas adreseja lasītājiem, kuri komunikācijā un sadzīvē lieto krievu valodu. Tādi Latvijā ir vairāk nekā trešā daļa no mūsu iedzīvotājiem. Šiem ļaudīm bija domāta viņa hronoloģisko datu grāmata “Latvijas vēstures galvenie fakti. Palīgs pašizglītībai”, kas izdota Rīgā 1993. gadā un atkārtoti – 1999. gadā.³⁰ Šī grāmata palīdzējusi daudziem tūkstošiem cilvēku Latvijā pirmo reizi gūt plašu ieskatu mūsu zemes un valsts – Latvijas Republikas vēstures gaitā.

Grigorijs Smirins varētu teikt: esmu darījis cik spējis savos sešdesmit gados. Lai citi izdara vairāk.

ATSAUCES UN PIEZĪMES

- ¹ Grigorijs Smirins dzimis un audzis Baltkrievijas ebreju ģimenē Verhedvinskā (agrāk Drisa). Drīz pēc dēla piedzimšanas viņa tēvs pārcēlās uz Latviju un apmetās Jūrmalā.
- ² *Evrei v meniaiusheksia mire* (turpmāk – *EvMM*), I (1996). Materialy 1-oi mezhdunarodnoi konferentsii. Rīga, 28–29 avgusta 1995. Pod red. G. Branova i R. Ferbera. Rīga: Shamir; ... *EvMM*, VIII (2015). Materialy 8-oi mezhdunarodnoi konferentsii. Rīga, 30 iunija–4 iulija 2011 g. Rīga: Tsentr izuchenii iudaiki Latviiskogo universiteta.
- ³ Grigorii Smirin (1996). *Evreiskaia periodicheckaia pechat’ v Latvii do Pervoi mirovoi voiny*. *EvMM*, I, s. 236–243.
- ⁴ Grigorii Smirin (1998). *Evreiskaia periodicheckaia pechat’ v Latvii v period mezhdnu dvumia mirovymi vojnami*. *EvMM*, II, s. 310–332.
- ⁵ *Latvijas Republikas prese 1918–1940* (1996). R. Treija redakcijā. Rīga: Zvaigzne ABC, 448.–460., 497.–502. lpp.
- ⁶ Mendel’ Bobe (2006). *Evrei v Latvii*. Pervod s idisha. Rīga: Shamir; Mendels Bobe (2006). *Ebreji Latvijā*. Rīga: Šamir. (G. Smirina zemsvītras piezīmes.)

- ⁷ Frida Mihel'son (2005). *Ia perezhila Rumbulu*. Vtoroe izdanie. Rīga: Mezhdunarodnoe obshchestvo istorii getto i genocida evreev (MOGE); Frīda Mihelsone (2012). *Es izdzīvoju Rumbulā*. Rīga: Atradums. (G. Smirina komentāri.)
- ⁸ Ella Medalē (2012). *Pravo na zhizn'*. Vtoroe izdanie. Moskva–Rīga: MOGE. (G. Smirina komentāri.)
- ⁹ Maks Kaufman (2012). *Hurbn Letland. Unichtozhenie evreev v Latvii*. Perevod Natalii Kofner. Pod obshchei redaktsii ravvina Manahema Barkagana. Rīga: Shamir, s. 381–486. (G. Smirina komentāri.)
- ¹⁰ Turpat, 370.–380. lpp.
- ¹¹ El'mar Rivosh (2006). *Zapiski*. Rīga: Muzei "Evrei v Latvii"; Elmārs Rivošs (2006). *Piezīmes*. Rīga: Muzejs "Ebreji Latvijā".
- ¹² Meier Meler (2010). *Mesta nashei pamiati*. Rīga: Muzei "Evreii v Latvii"; Meijers Melers (2013). *Latvijas ebreju kopienas vēsture un holokausta piemiņas vietas*. Rīga: LU FSI, Muzejs "Ebreji Latvijā".
- ¹³ *Materialy po istorii evreev v Latvii* (2015). Vypusk I. Rīga: Shamir.
- ¹⁴ *Materialy po istorii evreev v Latvii* (2015). Vypusk I. Chast' 2. Kurliandskie goroda: obshchiny, obshchestva, ravviny i mudrecy. Rīga: Shamir, s. 245–455.
- ¹⁵ Turpat, 396.–455. lpp.
- ¹⁶ Grigorii Smirin (2013). Den' 4 iiulia 1941 g. v Rige kak analog "Khrustal'noi nochi" v Germanii. *EvMM*, VII. Materialy 7-oi mezhdunarodnoi konferentsii. Rīga, 27 avgusta 2009 g. Pod red. G. Branovera i R. Ferbera. Rīga: Tsentri izucheniia iudaiki Latviiskogo universiteta, s. 271–276.
- ¹⁷ Turpat, 274. lpp.
- ¹⁸ Titullapā teikts, ka grāmatā publicēts lekciju cikls par holokaustu. "Lektori" bijuši Boriss Volkovičs, Mirjama Zalmanoviča, Grigorijs Smirins, Rita Bogdanova, Ilana Ivanova, Rozālija Suhare, Josifs Ročko. Zinātnisko pielikumu "Vārdnīcu" sagatavojis G. Smirins. – Faktiski publicēti šo autoru raksti. Grāmatu var nosaukt arī par kolektīvu monogrāfiju.
- ¹⁹ Sk.: Grigorijs Smirins (2006). Rīgas ebreji nacistiskās okupācijas laikā (1941–1944). No: *Holokausts Latvijā. Starptautiskās konferences materiāli, 2004. gada 3.–4. jūnijs Rīga un 2004.–2005. gada pētījumi par holokaustu Latvijā* (Latvijas Vēsturnieku komisijas raksti, 18. sēj.). Rīga: Latvijas vēstures institūta apgāds, 83. lpp.
- ²⁰ Turpat, 103. lpp.
- ²¹ Turpat, 106. lpp.
- ²² Elmāra Rivoša atmiņas (2006). No: *Holokausts Latvijā. Starptautiskās konferences materiāli, 2004. gada 3.–4. jūnijs Rīga un 2004.–2005. gada pētījumi par holokaustu Latvijā* (Latvijas Vēsturnieku komisijas raksti, 18. sēj.). Rīga: Latvijas vēstures institūta apgāds, 313.–381. lpp.
- ²³ Grigorii Smirin, Meier Meler (2001). Borovka v Latvii. *Lekhaim*, oktīabr', 1/8–5/8. Pieejams: http://www.lechaim.ru/ARHIVI/114_smirin.htm (skatīts 10.06.2017.).

- ²⁴ Vasiliĭ Grossman, Il'ia Erenburg (red.), Il'ia Al'tman (sost.) (2015). *Neizvestnaia "Chernaia kniga"*. Moskva: Corpus.
- ²⁵ Grigorii Smirin (2015). Evoliutsiia otrazheniia kholokosta v shkol'nikh uchebnikakh v istorii Latvii v postsovetskii period. V kn.: *Kholokost: 70 let spustia: Materialy mezhdunarodnogo foruma i 9-i mezhdunarodnoi konferentsii "Uroki kholokosta i sovremennaia Rossiia"*. Moskva: Nauchno-prosvetitel'nii tsentr "Kholokost", MIK, s. 284–298.
- ²⁶ Turpat, 289. lpp.
- ²⁷ Sk.: Gunārs Kurlovičs, Andris Tomašūns (2000). *Latvijas vēsture vidusskolai*. II. Eksperimentāla mācību grāmata. Rīga: Zvaigzne ABC, 210. lpp.
- ²⁸ *Okupācijas varu politika Latvijā 1939–1991: Dokumentu krājums* (1999). Rīga: Latvijas Valsts arhīvs; Nordik, 207. lpp.
- ²⁹ Sk.: Leo Dribins (2002, 2007). *Antisemitisms un tā izpausmes Latvijā. Vēstures atskats* (Latvijas Vēsturnieku komisijas raksti, 4. sēj.). Rīga: Latvijas vēstures institūta apgāds, 128.–130. lpp.
- ³⁰ Grigorii Smirin (1993). *Osnovnye fakty istorii Latvii. Posobie dlia samoobra-zovanie*. Rīga: Zvaigzne; tas pats (1999), 2., izlabotais un papildinātais izdevums. Rīga: SI.

CONTRIBUTION OF GRIGORY SMIRIN IN LATVIAN HISTORIOGRAPHY

Leo Dribins

Dr. hist., Dr. hon. hist., Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, University of Latvia. Research interests: national minorities historiography and participation in the cultural life of Latvia.

The contribution of Dr. hist. Grigory Smirin (1955–2017) in Latvian historiography is represented by his life-long work in compilation and scientific editing of books in Russian published in Latvia. He has prepared hundreds of books for publishing houses "Zinātne" and "Zvaigzne ABC" including translations from Russian into Latvian and vice versa.

Summary

The contribution of G. Smirin is the compilation, editing and publishing of the conference proceedings – collection of reports of the International Conferences "Jews in Changing World", 1996–2013, in eight volumes. This was a considerable supplementation of knowledge about the history of Latvian and European Jews and their spiritual life. Together with the archival expert Rita Bogdanova, he compiled and edited an exclusive

voluminous work about the religious life and culture of Jews in Latvia, *Latvia Synagogues and Rabbis 1918–1940*, published in 2004 in Hebrew, Latvian, English, and in Russian. Also, G. Smirin's work in preparation of manuscripts on the Holocaust in Latvia and maintenance of the memory of its victims has outstanding academic importance.

This includes also the supplementation of memories of people having survived the Nazi terror with valuable commentaries about the procedure of 1941–1945 events and new data about the families of the perished victims. Thanks to the exhaustive editorial approach of G. Smirin, the book by Max Kaufmann, *Die Vernichtung der Juden Lettlands (Hurbn Lettland)*, published in 1947 in Munich (Germany), was made essentially more precise and supplemented, and it was prepared for publication into Russian, for publication in Latvia. (Of 504 pages of the new book, 110 pages contain texts of scientific appendix written by G. Smirin).

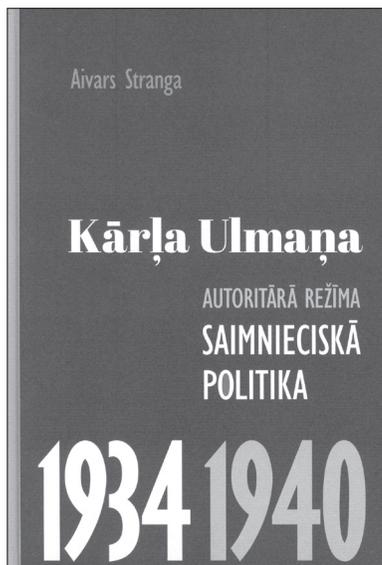
In 2015, the collection of previously published books, *Latvijas ebreju vēstures materiāli I (Materials of the History of Latvian Jews I)*, edited and broadly commented by G. Smirin, was published in Riga by the Shamir Foundation, which includes also republications of works by Reuben Wunderbar, Adolf Erlich, and Leib Owtchinsky. G. Smirin himself studied the crimes of the Nazi Germany occupational regime in Latvia, focussing on Riga. The attack by German and Latvian policemen on the city's synagogues on 4 July 1941 was called by him the repetition, in Latvia, of the *Kristallnacht* of November 1938 in Germany. It was followed by the first mass slaughter of Jews and formation of the Riga Ghetto in the autumn of 1941. This crime was finalised in the Rumbula woods on 30 November and 8 December when in two days 26,000 local Jews were murdered, and also the destruction of Jews deported from Germany was started. G. Smirin shows that Anti-Semitic terror in Riga and its environs continued till the autumn of 1944, until the arrival of the Red Army.

As a Holocaust researcher, G. Smirin cooperated with historians from Russia, participated in conferences in Russia, and also edited several books published in Russia. An article by G. Smirin, "Evolution of the reflection of the Holocaust in the textbooks of Latvian schools..." (Moscow, 2015, pp. 284–298) was included in the collection *Holocaust after 70 Years* (2015) published within "Russian Holocaust Library". Generally the article focuses on the incoming of the European-style research direction in Latvia, but some anachronistic shortcomings are also highlighted, including incomprehension (or unwillingness to comprehend) of the fact

that the four years of the Nazi occupation was the most dreadful and bloody period in Latvia during the Second World War.

The book by G. Smirin *Latvijas vēstures galvenie fakti (Basic Facts of the Latvian History)*, which was published twice (in 1993 and 1999, Zinātne Publishers, Riga, in Russian), was highly favoured. The readers who knew almost exclusively the Russian language gained their first complex insight about the most important events of their motherland, or their country of residence. For many this book was an aid in preparation for naturalisation and integration.

RECENZIJAS



Aivars Stranga. *Kārļa Ulmaņa autoritārā režīma saimnieciskā politika 1934–1940*. Rīga: LU Akadēmiskais apgāds, 2017. 270 lpp. ISBN 978-9934-18-238-9

Latvijas vēsturniekiem pēdējie gadi ir bijuši visai ražīgi. Tuvojoties valsts simtgadei, vai ik mēnesi sabiedrība tiek iepriecināta ar jaunām un jaunām grāmatām, kas aptver plašu vēstures tematiku loku. Īpaši jāuzteic šī dažādība – gan autoru kolektīvi, gan individuāli autori pievēršas dažādām tēmām, un arī izpildījums ir ļoti atšķirīgs, sākot no “klasiskām” sarežģītā zinātniskā valodā rakstītām monogrāfijām līdz

pat populārzinātniskiem darbiem, kurus viegli var lasīt visplašākais interesentu loks. Un vēl viena labā lieta, kas noteikti jāpiemin šīs recenzijas ievadā, ir fakts, ka mūsu vēsturnieku izdevumi regulāri ierindojas starp visvairāk pirktajām grāmatām, veiksmīgi konkurējot ar cita veida literatūru. Izņēmums nav arī Aivara Strangas monogrāfija “Kārļa Ulmaņa autoritārā režīma saimnieciskā politika 1934–1940”, kura visai ilgstoši turējās pirtāko grāmatu “topos”.

A. Stranga ir viens no ražīgākajiem Latvijas vēsturniekiem, un par viņa pēdējo gadu specializācijas tēmu visai droši var nosaukt 20. gadsimta 20.–30. gadu ekonomisko vēsturi. Kā norāda pats autors, šī grāmata “*ir turpinājums manam iepriekšējam darbam, kurā plašāk pievērsos Latvijas ārējo ekonomisko sakaru jautājumam 1919.–1940. gadā*” (7. lpp.).¹ Šķiet, ka laiks, kad ar Latvijas ekonomisko vēsturi pirmā asociācija visiem vēstures interesentiem bija gandrīz vienīgi ar pirms pusgadsimta izdoto

¹ Autors runā par savu iepriekšējo monogrāfiju *Latvijas ārējie ekonomiskie sakari, 1919.–1940. gads. Attiecības ar lielvalstīm (saimnieciskie, politiskie, diplomātiskie aspekti)*. Rīga: LU Akadēmiskais apgāds, 2015, 439 lpp.

Arnolda Aizsilnieka saimniecisko vēsturi,² ir pagājis. Bez jau pieminētajiem A. Strangas darbiem 2017. gadā tika izdota autoru kolektīva veidota Latvijas tautsaimniecības vēsture,³ savukārt 2012. gadā dienas gaismu ieraudzīja Latvijas Bankas 90. gadadienai veltīts izdevums “Latvijas Bankai XC”⁴. No neoficiāliem, bet drošiem avotiem varu ziņot, ka literatūras klāsts vairosies arī turpmākajos gados: drīzumā gaidāma ekonomista Edmunda Krastiņa monogrāfija, kas būs veltīta Latvijas rūpniecības vēsturei, tāpat ir uzsākti priekšdarbi Baltijas valstu ekonomiskās vēstures izstrādei. Jau šobrīd ir uzsākts darbs pie Latvijas ekonomiskās vēstures grāmatas angļu valodā, kas ir mērķēta uz starptautisko auditoriju, šīs grāmatas iznākšana ir iepļānota uz valsts simtgadi 2018. gada rudenī.

A. Strangas rokraksta pazinējiem nav sveša viņa krāšņā valoda un vienlaikus darbu ļoti augstā zinātniskā kvalitāte. Savos darbos A. Stranga ļoti prasmīgi izmanto citātus no aplūkojamā laika posma dokumentiem, preses izdevumiem un citiem avotiem, kas lasītājam ļauj dziļāk izjust laikmeta elpu. Līdz ar to lasītājs ne tikai iegūst jaunu informāciju, bet arī zināmu estētisku baudu, izbaudot autora smalki izkopto stilu. Autors neskoпоjas ar dzēlīgām piezīmēm, kurās nebaidās paust savu personisko attieksmi pret notikumiem, faktiem vai tendencēm. Pie šīs grāmatas “pērlēm” noteikti jāpieskaita iestarpinājums, ka “*ideāli ierēdņi, kuri ir ietekmīgi un var ņemt kukuļus, bet neņem, jo ir godīgi, ir reti sastopami jebkurā valstī*” (65. lpp.).

A. Strangas darbu pētniecisko mugurkaulu tradicionāli veido dažādu dokumentu padziļināta un rūpīga analīze, kas tiek papildināta ar preses izdevumiem, literatūru un laikabiedru atmiņām.⁵ Arī šajā gadījumā A. Stranga Latvijas Nacionālajā arhīvā ir identificējis virkni, tostarp iepriekš maz zināmu dokumentu, kas spilgti raksturo K. Ulmaņa autoritārā režīma saimniecisko politiku. Lai arī autors visai pieticīgi savu darbu raksturo kā pētījumu, kas “*cerams, papildinās [A. Aizsilnieka saimniecības vēsturi. – G. K.] ar kādiem jauniem faktiem vai Aizsilniekam nepieejamu avotu izvērtējumu*” (22. lpp.), ar A. Strangas pētījumu sperts

² Arnolds Aizsilnieks. *Latvijas saimniecības vēsture, 1914–1945*. Stokholma: Daugava, 1968, 983 lpp.

³ *Latvijas tautsaimniecības vēsture*. Rīga: Jumava, 2017, 1055 lpp.

⁴ *Latvijas Bankai XC*. Rīga: Latvijas Banka, 2012. Šis izdevums, lai arī plašākai sabiedrībai mazāk zināms, ir pieejams internetā gan latviešu, gan arī angļu valodā. <https://www.bank.lv/lb-publicācijas/citas-publicācijas/latvijas-bankai-xc>

⁵ Cita starpā, ņemot vērā iepriekšējo gadu iestrādes, šajā darbā A. Stranga plaši un veiksmīgi izmanto 20.–30. gadu sociāldemokrātu viedokļus par K. Ulmaņa režīmu.

nopietns solis joprojām ne līdz galam izpētītā, sarežģītā un no pētniecības viedokļa ārkārtīgi interesantā Latvijas vēstures perioda visaptverošā izvērtēšanā. Nodaļas par valsts plāna izstrādāšanu, Valsts plāna projektu, Darba centrāli un Saimnieciskā dienesta likumu dod līdz šim plašāko ieskatu šajos jautājumos. No grāmatas struktūras un režisūras viedokļa neapšaubāma veiksmē ir 10. nodaļas (Saimnieciskās darbības likums) atstāšana nobeigumā zināma saldā ēdiena vietā. Krāšņie apraksti ar daudziem preses un dokumentu citātiem par cīņu pret “slaistiem” izraisa nevilnotu smaidu un lasītāju sajūsmu.

A. Strangas darbs ir kārtējais trieciens nupat jau arvien vairāk balējošajam mītam par K. Ulmaņa autoritārā režīma sekmīgo saimniecisko politiku. Vienā teikumā izsakot galveno šīs grāmatas vēstījumu, jāatzīst, ka Latvijas tautsaimniecība 20. gadsimta 30. gadu otrajā pusē attīstījās par spīti, nevis pateicoties K. Ulmaņa politikai. Autors secina, ka autoritārais režīms nav atrisinājis nevienu no akūtajām Latvijas saimnieciskajām problēmām, lai arī par šīm problēmām režīma runasvīri ar sabiedrību runāja visai daudz un atklāti. Kā sava darba galveno mērķi A. Stranga ir izvirzījis *“izvērtēt autoritārās valdības politiku Latvijai vissarežģītākajos jautājumos – tie ir darbaroku trūkums laukos un rūpniecības ekstensīva attīstība”* (29. lpp.). Tas skaidro, kāpēc nav aplūkoti citi būtiski saimnieciskās politikas aspekti, piemēram, monetārā politika u.c. Strukturālās problēmas lauksaimniecībā (galvenā – liels saimniecību ar mazām zemes platībām īpatsvars) kavēja nozares attīstību un vienlaikus radīja akūtu, pat pieaugošu pieprasījumu pēc darbaspēka. Situāciju ilgstoši risināja darbaspēka imports no kaimiņos esošajām Lietuvas un Polijas, kurās dzīves kvalitātes līmenis bija ievērojami zemāks nekā Latvijā un vienkāršu darbu darītāji labprāt ieradās sezonālā “peļņā” uz Latviju.

Otrs saimnieciskais izaicinājums bija saistīts ar rūpniecību. No vienas puses, pozitīvi vērtējama šī sektora izaugsme, bet, no otras – pavērtējot šīs izaugsmes cēloņus, nākas secināt, ka to ļoti lielā mērā ir nodrošinājis radikāls protekcionisms. Augstās ievedmuītas ārvalstu ražojumiem Latvijas tirgu bija padarījušas faktiski nepieejamu. Savukārt daudzās nozarēs pilnu ražošanas ciklu nodrošināt nevarēja – daudzas izejvielas bija jāimportē no citām valstīm. Būtībā, 21. gadsimta terminoloģijā runājot, Latvijas tautsaimniecība bija nonākusi ļoti īpatnējā vidēju ienākumu un zemas produktivitātes slazdā – vietējie algotie darbinieki labprātāk darbu meklēja pilsētās (lielāks atalgojums un mazāka darba slodze vienlaicīgi), savukārt zemnieku saimniecību īpašnieki spēja atrast ārvalstu viesstrādniekus ar zemākām prasībām un radikālus risinājumus savā saimniekošanas modelī nemeklēja. Taču kopumā šis modelis, kuru vēsturnieki visai bargi

kritizē, funkcionēja pietiekami apmierinoši, ļāva strādāt gan lauksaimniekiem, gan rūpniekiem un radīja šķietamas stabilitātes ilūziju, un tas, manuprāt, lielā mērā izskaidro to, ka ar parunāšanu par problēmām autoritārā režīma valdīšanas pirmajos gados viss arī beidzās. Tikai izmaiņas ģeopolitiskajā situācijā – Otrā pasaules kara sākšanās – spilgti parādīja, cik šī ierastā kārtība bija trausla. *“Saimnieciskās problēmas bija smagas un gandrīz neatrisināmas, liekot uzdot jautājumu: vai Latvija nevarēja būt labāk sagatavota lielajiem pārbaudījumiem? Divi faktori bija mazinājuši Latvijas gatavību šiem notikumiem: pirmais bija pārliecība līdz pēdējam brīdim, ka kara nebūs; otrais – ja karš tomēr izcelsies, Latvija izmantos savu neitralitāti un uzturēs ekonomiskos sakarus ar jebkuru valsti, ieskaitot karojošās”* (255.–256. lpp.) – uz šādām fundamentālām K. Ulmaņa režīma saimnieciskās politikas kļūdām norāda A. Stranga.

A. Stranga bargu kritiku K. Ulmaņa režīmam velta par tiem soļiem, kas tika sperti vai plānoti, lai risinātu darbaspēka problēmas laukos, kas bija būtiski saasinājušās pēc Polijas valsts iznīcināšanas 1939. gada rudenī. Bija skaidrs, ka 1940. gada lauksaimniecības sezonā būs jāiztiek bez poļu laukstrādniekiem. Piekrītot autoram par to, ka 1940. gada maijā pieņemtais Saimnieciskā dienesta likums un vairākas turpmākās ieceres vairāk atgādina totalitāru valstu pieeju, gandrīz pilnībā militarizējot darbaspēka izvietojuma jautājumu valstī (242., 256. lpp.), tomēr gribētos uzdot pretjautājumu – kādas tad bija tā brīža alternatīvas? Atstāt neapstrādātus laukus, nenovākt ražu, radikāli sašaurināt lauksaimniecisko ražošanu, tanī pašā laikā skaidri apzinoties, ka rūpniecības jauda mazinās trūkstošo izejvielu dēļ? Kopumā prioritāšu definēšana, manuprāt, bija pareiza, mēģinot ražojošā līmenī noturēt vismaz lauksaimniecību, lai kaut cik noturētu kopējo saimniecisko jaudu. Taču fundamentāla valdības komunikācijas kļūda bija mēģinājumi situāciju daudzās jomās uzdot par labāku, nekā bija faktiskā realitāte. Valdība sāka melot, un, protams, šo melu kulminācijas punkts bija K. Ulmaņa paziņojums par “draudzīgās PSRS kara spēka ienākšanu” 1940. gada jūnijā, skaidrojot sabiedrībai notiekošo PSRS veiktās okupācijas faktu.

A. Stranga plaši un veiksmīgi savā darbā izmanto Politiskās policijas ziņojumus, kuri nepārprotami norādīja uz valdības popularitātes kritumu pēc Otrā pasaules kara sākuma. A. Stranga pamatoti norāda, ka, lai arī Latvijas valdība nebija vainīga pie ekonomisko sakaru ar Rietumiem pārtrūkšanas, strādniekos līdz ar izpeļņas mazināšanos un citām problēmām pieauga nepatika tieši pret Latvijas valdību (172. lpp.). Vēl viena komunikācijas kļūda bija sabiedrības publiska šķelšana divās grupās – sliņķos un strādīgajos. Tika deklarēts, ka darbaroku trūkumu risinās, identificējot

sliņķus un slaistus, un tos piespiedu kārtā nosūtīs lauku darbos. Saprotais, ka ar šo kategoriju sevi identificēt nevēlējās ne rūpnīcu strādnieki, ne ierēdņi, ne arī jaunieši, kuri tika aicināti piespiedu brīvprātīgā kārtā iesaistīties lauku darbos. Paradoksāli, ka ļoti līdzīgus pasākumus (tikai ar vēl augstāku radikalizācijas pakāpi) 1941. gadā sāka īstenot padomju okupācijas režīms, komunikācijā ar sabiedrību izmantojot identisku pieeju.⁶ Tikai Ulmaņa “slaistu” vietā bija nokļuvuši tie, kam īpašumi un uzņēmumi bija atņemti nacionalizācijās. Šos pasākumus līdz galam īstenot neizdevās, tikai pateicoties nacistiskās Vācijas iebrukumam.

A. Stranga izmanto ļoti plašu faktoloģisko materiālu – dažādus statistikas datus, tos uzskaitot un analizējot. Taču, lai šos datus sistematizētu, autors darbā nav izmantojis nevienu tabulu vai citu datu vizualizācijas veidu. Šī ir būtiska atšķirība no citiem ekonomiskās vēstures pētnieku darbiem un, manuprāt, ir šī darba trūkums. Virknē gadījumu autora domai ir grūti izsekot, kā piemēru var minēt strādnieku dzīves dārdzības pieauguma analīzi, izmantojot dažādus datus par 1930., 1934. un 1938.–1939. gadu (166.–167. lpp.). Pat vairākkārt pārlasot tekstu, ir grūti uztvert kopsakarības un autora domu gājienu, īpaši ņemot vērā, ka, izdarot secinājumus, ir salīdzināti atšķirīgi gadi. Ja autors salīdzina dažādu kategoriju strādnieku dienas izpeļņu 1930. un 1939. gadā, tad arī citos salīdzinošos rādītājos būtu jāizmanto tie paši gadi. Taču dažādu kategoriju cenu pieaugums ir analizēts, izmantojot datus par pavisam citiem gadiem (1934., 1938. un 1939.). Vienkāršas tabulas ieviešana šo situāciju varēja sakārtot. Vēl viena rekomendācija nākotnei – šādos starpdisciplināros pētījumos laba prakse būtu kā recenzentus piesaistīt ne tikai vēsturniekus, bet arī kādu ekonomistu. Šāda pieeja labi nostrādāja, gatavojot Latvijas tautsaimniecības vēstures izdevumu.⁷

Šķiet, ka dažos aspektos autors pārlietu aizraujas ar K. Ulmaņa režīma kritizēšanu, dziļāk neizvērtējot pieņemto lēmumu un īstenotās politikas ilgtermiņa konsekvences. Piemēram, autors kritizē K. Ulmaņa režīmu, ka, neraugoties uz bezdarba samazināšanos, tika turpināts iekasēt nodokli par labu bezdarba apkaršanas fondam (180. lpp.). Un tanī pašā teikumā piemetina, ka bezdarbs 1939. gada nogalē sāka pieaugt. Ņemot vērā ekonomiskās attīstības cikliskumu, uzkrāt līdzekļus bezdarba apkaršanas fondā brīdī, kad bezdarbs nebija problēma, bija tālredzīgs solis. Šādus ilgtermiņa plānošanas piemērus mēs vairāk varētu vēlēties mūsdienās.

⁶ *Latvijas tautsaimniecības vēsture*, 196.–198. lpp.

⁷ *Latvijas tautsaimniecības vēsture*. Recenzenti – prof., Dr. oec. Inna Šteinbuka un prof., Dr. hist. Ilgvars Butulis.

Nav noliedzamas 30. gadu otrās puses strukturālās problēmas rūpniecībā, taču, jomas nepārzinātājam izlasot šo grāmatu, rodas nemaldīgs iespaids, ka Latvijā tika ražota vienīgi dārga un nekvalitatīva produkcija. Grāmatā pamatoti norādīts, ka valdība tā arī nebija spējusi rūpniecību kādā veidā sašķirot perspektīvajā un neperspektīvajā, respektīvi, veikt kāda veida “viedo specializāciju”. Taču vairāki uzņēmumi spēja ražot starptautiski konkurētspējīgu un aktuālu produkciju, arī valsts īpašumā esošie, piemēram, Valsts elektrotehniskā fabrika (VEF). Pāris labu vārdu par to 30. gadu rūpniecības segmentu, ar kuru mums ir pamats lepoties arī mūsdienās, visticamāk, tomēr vajadzēja pieminēt. VEF *Minox*, dažādi oriģinālā dizaina radioaparāti bija pietiekami laba alternatīva uz modernizāciju kūtri noskaņotajai lauksaimniecībai. Esmu starp tiem, kas uzskata, ka pašmāju rūpniecībai bija gana labs izaugsmes potenciāls, ja ne Otrais pasaules karš un tā radītās sekas. To, kā notikumi attīstījās, protams, bija grūti paredzēt. Tas, ka liela daļa nodarbināto bija ieguvuši rūpnieciskā darba pieredzi, bija liels ieguldījums nākotnes vārdā, jo pilnīgi skaidrs, ka lauksaimniecībā nodarbināto skaits samazinātos (tā tas arī notika padomju okupācijas periodā, un nav nekādu šaubu, ka tas notiktu arī cita ģeopolitisko notikumu attīstības scenārija gadījumā). Modernizācijas simbols, kā arī spilgts apliecinājums bija Ķeguma spēkstacijas projekts. Lai arī tas pilnībā neatrisinātu valsts elektrifikācijas jautājumu, tas bija ļoti noteikts solis pareizajā virzienā, un bija plāni būvēt arī citas spēkstacijas.

Lai arī A. Strangas grāmata ir veltīta saimnieciskajai vēsturei, tā iezīmē vairākas nozīmīgas tēmas, kuras noteikti jāattīsta nākotnē. Piemēram, režīma politika nacionālo minoritāšu jautājumā, īpaši attiekmē pret ebrejiem un čigāniem. Autors pamatoti norāda, ka, lai arī formāli pret ebreju likums netika pieņemts, idejas, kas cirkulēja valdošajās aprindās, ir jāraksturo kā, mazākais, skandalozas (208. lpp.). Daudzās publikācijas presē arvien biežāk izcēla ebreju “īpašo stāvokli” un nenoliedzami atstāja ietekmi uz sabiedrības noskaņojumu. Šajos virzienos, kā norāda arī pats autors, ir nepieciešami turpmāki pētījumi.

Autors grāmatas noslēgumā ir pieminējis K. Ulmaņa nodomus īstenot jaunu agrāro reformu, vēl vairāk sadrumstalojot zemnieku saimniecības. Es pret šīm K. Ulmaņa rakstītajām piezīmēm kā ticamu vēstures avotu, kas atspoguļo viņa patiesos nodomus, iztuos ar visai lielu piesardzību. Ņemot vērā kontekstu – atrašanos izsūtījumā PSRS, kā arī analizējot citas K. Ulmaņa tā laika piezīmes, tikpat labi var izvirzīt versiju, ka šīs idejas viņa galvā ir dzimušas jau pēc PSRS okupācijas. K. Ulmaņa reformas “pieteikums” ir gandrīz identisks tam, ko okupācijas vara Latvijā

īstenoja drīz pēc zemes nacionalizācijas. Ļoti iespējams, ka K. Ulmanis centās sevi padarīt “draudzīgāku” padomju režīmam tīri aiz savas personīgās drošības apsvērumiem. Līdz šim nav atrasti citi pierādījumi par K. Ulmaņa iecerēto visaptverošo “agrāro reformu”, lai arī nosliece brīvo zemi dalīt mazākās platībās bija visai skaidri pamanāma. Vēstures paradokss, taču, izvērtējot saimniecisko (un ne tikai saimniecisko) politiku, arī bez šīs, iespējams, iecerētās agrārās reformas K. Ulmanis Latviju un tās sabiedrību PSRS okupācijai bija sagatavojis gana labi. Valstiskotie uzņēmumi, birokratizēta pārvaldība, iniciatīvas un demokrātiskās brīvības ierobežošana bija tie faktori, kas PSRS darbu, Latviju pēc okupācijas sovetizējot, ievērojami atvieglāja. Sabiedrība jau iepriekš tika pieradināta, ka valsts diktē un nosaka spēles noteikumus un jebkādas iebildes nav rekomendējamas. Un patiesībā jāatzīst, ka tieši PSRS okupācija bija viens no galvenajiem faktoriem, kas būtiski pavilka uz augšu arī paša K. Ulmaņa reputācijas reitingu tautas vēsturiskajā atmiņā. Gan tāpēc, ka K. Ulmaņa saimnieciskās politikas negatīvās sekas nepaspēja iestāties, gan arī tāpēc, ka PSRS īstenotā politika visās tās izpausmes jomās bija nesalīdzināmi brutālāka un varmācīgāka.

Gatis Krūmiņš

IN MEMORIAM

DR. PHILOL. H. C. HARRO FON HIRŠHEITS

(14.04.1925.–30.05.2017.)

Šī gada 30. maijā 92 gadu vecumā Vācijā miris pazīstamais grāmatizdevējs un kultūras darbinieks Latvijas Zinātņu akadēmijas goda doktors Harro fon Hiršheits (*Harro von Hirschheydt*). Viņš dzimis Rīgā 1925. gada 14. aprīlī luterāņu mācītāja Valtera fon Hiršheita ģimenē. 1931. gadā, tēvam sākot kalpot par mācītāju Aizputes vācu draudzē, ģimene pārceļas dzīvot šajā Kurzemes mazpilsētā. Tur Harro fon Hiršheits uzsāk savas skolas gaitas, turpinot tās Kuldīgas ģimnāzijā. 1939. gadā pēc Molotova–Ribentropa pakta noslēgšanas, sākoties Baltijas vāciešu repatriācijai, Hiršheitu ģimene izceļo uz Vācijas okupēto Polijas teritoriju Rietumprūsijā. Šeit Gnēzenes ģimnāzijā jaunais Harro turpina mācības līdz 1943. gadam. Sasniegušu 18 gadu vecumu, Harro mobilizē armijā. Kara beigās 1945. gadā viņš nokļūst amerikāņu gūstā un pēc gūstekņu noņemšanas pavadīta gada no 1947. līdz 1949. gadam studē Goslāras Universitātē, specializējoties grāmatniecībā un grāmattirdzniecībā. 1950. gada janvārī H. fon Hiršheits Grosbīvendē Volfenbiteles apriņķī nodibina savu uzņēmumu kā grāmatu tirgotājs, antikvārs un izdevējs. 1957. gadā firma tiek pārceļta uz Hannoveri-Dorenu.

H. fon Hiršheita kultūrpolitiskā, literārā un zinātniskā darbība bija virzīta uz lasītāja iepazīstināšanu ar Baltijas kultūras mantojumu. Viņa izdevniecība ir laidusi klajā vairāk nekā 500 grāmatu par Baltijas vēsturi un literatūru, dažādas vārdnīcas un leksikonus, arī žurnālu “*Baltische Hefte*”. Īpaši atzīmējama ir H. fon Hiršheita ilggadējā lektora un savas dzimtenes popularizētāja darbība Vācijā, kas aktivizējās pagājušā gadsimta 80. gadu beigās, sākoties atmodas laikam Latvijā. Kad mūsu valsts 1991. gadā atguva neatkarību, H. fon Hiršheits tūlīt centās piepildīt senoloto sapni un atgriezties savā bērnības zemē Aizputē.

1991. gadā viņa Vācijas uzņēmumā sāk strādāt dēls Roberts, kuram tēvs 1997. gadā pilnīgi nodod firmas vadību. Atgriezies uz dzīvi Aizputē, H. fon Hiršheits 1993. gadā dibina jaunu izdevniecību SIA “*Harro von Hirschheydt*” Aizputē. Šis apgāds nodarbojas ar latviešu oriģinālliteratūras, bērnu un jaunatnes literatūras, novada vēstures literatūras un vācbaltiešu darbu tulkojumu izdošanu. Izdevniecība pastāv līdz 2011. gadam. Šajos gados Latvijas vēstures institūta grāmatu apgādam izveidojas cieša

un auglīga sadarbība ar H. fon Hiršheitu. Viņš rūpējas, lai institūta izdotās jaunās grāmatas nonāktu viņa Vācijas uzņēmuma tirdzniecības namā. Latvijas grāmatu nosaukumi parādās ikvienā viņa firmas izdotā katalogā un līdz ar to izplatās arī Vācijā.

Baltijas kultūras mantojuma popularizētāja un saglabātāja grāmatizdevēja H. fon Hiršheita pašizliedzīgais darbs Latvijā ticis augstu novērtēts. 2004. gada 17. februārī Latvijas Zinātņu akadēmijas Senāts apstiprināja Humanitāro un sociālo zinātņu nodaļas 22. janvāra sēdē viņam piešķirto goda doktora grādu.

Grāmatizdevēja un kultūras darbinieka Harro fon Hiršheita devums grāmatniecībā un Baltijas kultūras mantojuma saglabāšanā vēl ilgi tiks izmantots arī nākamo paaudžu vēsturnieku darbā. Latvijas vēstures institūta darbinieki paturēs viņu gaišā piemiņā un novēl aizgājējam mūžības ceļos vieglas smiltis Bisendorfas ciema kapsētā Vācijā.

Andris Caune, Ieva Ose

AUTORI

Kristīne Ante – vēsturniece, Dr. hist., docente, Kārļa Universitātes Filozofijas fakultātes Austrumeiropas studiju institūta Baltistikas katedra, Nam. Jana Palacha 2, Praha 1, CZ-11 638, Čehijas Republika
kristine.ante@ff.cuni.cz.

Ilze Boldāne-Zeļenkova – etnoloģe, Dr. hist., Latvijas Universitātes Latvijas vēstures institūts, Kalpaka bulv. 4, Rīga, LV-1050
ilze.boldane@gmail.com

Andris Caune – arheologs, Dr. habil. hist., LZA īstenais loceklis, Valsts emeritētais zinātnieks

Anita Čerpinska – vēsturniece, Dr. hist., Latvijas Universitātes Latvijas vēstures institūts, Kalpaka bulv. 4, Rīga, LV-1050
anita.cerpinska@gmail.com.

Leo Dribins – vēsturnieks, Dr. hist., Dr. hon. hist., Latvijas Universitātes Filozofijas un socioloģijas institūts, Kalpaka bulv. 4, Rīga, LV-1050

Gatis Krūmiņš – vēsturnieks, Dr. hist., Vidzemes Augstskolas Sociālo, ekonomisko un humanitāro pētījumu institūts, Cēsu iela 4, Valmiera, LV-4201
gatis.krums@gmail.com

Mārtiņš Mintauris – vēsturnieks, Dr. hist., docents, Latvijas Nacionālā bibliotēka, Latvijas Universitātes Vēstures un filozofijas fakultāte, Aspazijas bulv. 5, Rīga, LV-1050
martins.mintauris@lu.lv.

Ieva Ose – arheoloģe, Dr. hist., LZA īstenā locekle, LU Latvijas vēstures institūts, Kalpaka bulv. 4, Rīga, LV-1050
ieva.ose@lu.lv

Kaspars Zellis – Dr. hist., Latvijas Universitātes Filozofijas un socioloģijas institūts, vadošais pētnieks, Kalpaka bulv. 4, Rīga, LV-1050
kaspars.zellis@gmail.com

AUTHORS

Kristīne Ante – historian, Dr. hist., Charles University Faculty of Arts, Institute of East European Studies, Department of Baltistics, Senegalská 635/6, Praha 6, The Czech Republic, 160 00
kristine.ante@ff.cuni.cz

Ilze Boldāne-Zeļenkova – ethnologist, Dr. hist., researcher, Institute of the History of Latvia, University of Latvia, 4 Kalpaka Blvd., Riga, LV-1050, Latvia
ilze.boldane@gmail.com

Andris Caune – archaeologist, Dr. habil. hist., Full Member of the LAS, State Emeritus Scientist

Anita Čerpinska – historian, Dr. hist., researcher, Institute of Latvian History at the University of Latvia, 4 Kalpaka Blvd., Riga, LV-1050, Latvia
anita.cerpinska@gmail.com.

Leo Dribins – historian, Dr. hist., Dr. hon. hist., Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, University of Latvia, 4 Kalpaka Blvd., Riga, LV-1050, Latvia

Gatis Krūmiņš – historian, Dr. hist., researcher, Institute of Social, Economic and Humanities Research of Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences, 4 Cēsu Street, Valmiera, LV-4201, Latvia
gatis.krums@gmail.com

Mārtiņš Mintaurs – historian, Dr. hist., National Library of Latvia, Faculty of History and Philosophy of the University of Latvia, docent, 5 Aspazijas Blvd., Riga, LV-1050, martins.mintaurs@lu.lv.

Ieva Ose – archaeologist, Dr. hist., senior researcher, Full Member of the LAS, Institute of the History of Latvia, University of Latvia, 4 Kalpaka Blvd., Riga, LV-1050, Latvia
ieva@lza.lv

Kaspars Zellis – historian, Dr. hist., senior researcher, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, University of Latvia, 4 Kalpaka Blvd., Riga, LV-1050, Latvia
kaspars.zellis@gmail.com