

# **ETHNICITY**

## **Politics of Recognition**

**2009/2**

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**HISTORIOGRAPHY AS FRAMING AND SUPPORT FACTOR  
OF ETHNIC IDENTITY:  
THE CASE OF HISTORIOGRAPHY OF LATGALE**

Historiography performs two different social functions: on the one hand, it provides reconstruction of historical past; on the other hand, it directly influences public opinion and person's consciousness; it also shapes, transforms or supports definite notions about ethnic values, national historical heritage, political and social reality. In this respect, historiography can be regarded as a social factor that affects social, also ethnic consciousness.

In order to reveal the role of historiography of Latgale in framing and preserving ethnic identities of the region, the stages of genesis and development of the historiography of Latgale are described and evaluated along the general lines. All in all, these stages can be correlated with the stages of emergence, development, and consolidation of ethnic identities in the region. Therefore, this paper puts a special emphasis on the connection of the historiography of Latgale with different *national* traditions (schools) in historical research. Based on the insight into history of the historiography of Latgale, the present-day situation in historical research of Latgale is characterized in order to reveal the contradictory role of the historiography of Latgale in framing and maintaining ethnic identities in the region.

**Key words:** historiography, historical research, Latgale, the Latgalian studies, ethnic identity, ethnic communities, support factor, historical heritage.

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## INTRODUCTION – THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

Theoretical frameworks of the paper are formed by an extended notion of the historiography concept. Conventionally, this concept is used to denote professional (academic) historical research, which is conducted by professional historians. However, on the other hand, a constituent part of historiography is knowledge of the past acquired by society; therefore, historiography embraces collective representations and notions of historical reality that exist in social consciousness, including ethnic consciousness. It means that, in some respect, historiography forms a specific system. Its «upper» level embraces results of professional historical research that are represented in monographs, articles, dissertations, and other research papers, but the «nether» level consists of historical myths, stereotypes, bias preconceptions, evaluations, and interpretations of historical past that are formed, borrowed and adopted by society and/or by social (ethnic) groups.<sup>1</sup> Between these two levels, there are historical representations, which are reflected in essays and popular works written by amateurs (mainly – nonprofessional historians), as well as by publicists and litterateurs who adapt professional historical discourse for common people interested in the historical heritage of their country (see e.g. Shmidt 1992). Thus, in historiography three interrelated basic levels can be pointed out. Actually, the structure of historical knowledge is even more complicated, since historical research is closely connected with political activities and political institutions, primarily – with State bodies. As a result, political institutions often use historiography as a specific tool solving political and ideological problems.<sup>2</sup>

The structure of historiography shows that historical research performs two different social functions: on the one hand, it provides reconstruction of historical past; on the other hand, it directly influences public opinion and person's consciousness;<sup>3</sup> it also shapes, transforms or supports definite notions concerning ethnic values, national historical heritage, political and social reality. It should be mentioned that in historiographic discourse these notions about topical political and social issues are correlated with historical experience acquired by society. In this respect, historiography can be regarded as a social factor that affects society and social, also ethnic, consciousness.

Some of the above-mentioned social functions of historiography have been revealed in monographs devoted to problems of historical research in the Soviet Union (see e.g. Tillet 1969; Mazour 1971; Baron and Heer 1977; Solomon 1993, etc.). Nevertheless, a theoretical approach to investigation

of social functions of historiography appears only in some papers. Thereof, the article «Historians and the Nationality Dissatisfaction» written by Kenneth E Nyirady can be mentioned (Nyirady 1977). In this paper, on the basis of vast historiographic material the author proposes a thesis that historical research conducted in the Baltic States under the Soviet rule should be treated, on the one hand, as an instrument of political control over the Balts and, on the other hand, as an ethnic identity support factor<sup>4</sup> despite the efforts of the totalitarian regime in the Baltic region: «*Soviet Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian historians respond significantly to what they perceive is their nationalities' current status. Their tendency seems evident, both, through their selection and ... interpretation of historical topics. As Baltic society continues to modernize, changing emphasis occurs among the various factors that serve as nationality supports. This movement has given historians changing roles to play as active supporters of the Baltic culture... [T]he historical interests of a nationality could be considered a part of the objective identity factor of cultural maintenance. An increase in emphasis upon this factor may result in the growth of a component of the regulatory factor of group pride...*» (Nyirady 1977, p. 58).

The thesis that historical research performs two social functions has been confirmed in a number of articles dealing with problems of historiography of Latvia (see e.g. Ivanovs 2005, 2007<sup>a</sup>, 2007<sup>b</sup>, 2009, etc.) and Latgale<sup>5</sup> (Ivanovs 2006, 2008; Ivanovs et al. 2003; Ivanovs and Ъteimans 1999, etc.) written by the author of this paper. In order to develop this thesis, the paper provides an in-depth case study of the historiography of Latgale; the author has concentrated his attention on direct and indirect connection of historical research of Latgale with ethnic groups living in this region of Latvia.

Although, the historiography of Latgale is considered an integral part of the historiography of Latvia in general, it has many specific features. The specific features of a historical research are determined by historical peculiarities of the region, as well as the factors that call for such peculiarities (see in detail in Soms and Ivanovs 2002; Ivanovs and Soms 2008). Since the historiography of Latgale has always been focused on the historical peculiarities of the region, the historical research establishes close and strong ties with the history of Latgale. As a result, the historiography of Latgale *per se* has become an «embodiment» of the regional identity. However, taking into account that, for the most part, the regional identity of Latgale is determined by the ethnic composition of the region, the historiography of Latgale has assumed the role of a support factor for ethnic identities of the region's population.

In order to reveal the role Latgale's historiography in framing and preserving ethnic identities in the region, the stages of genesis and development of the historiography of Latgale should be described and evaluated within the context of the regional identity of Latgale. All in all, these stages can be correlated with the stages of emergence, development, and consolidation of ethnic identities in the region. Therefore, this paper places a special emphasis on the connection of the historiography of Latgale with different historiographic schools and *national* traditions in historical research.<sup>6</sup> It means that simultaneously a particular accent is put on the role of different ethnic groups that historically have been involved in investigation of Latgalian past. On the basis of the insight into the history of Latgale's historiography, the present-day situation in historical research of Latgale is characterized in order to reveal the contradictory role of the historiography of Latgale in framing and maintaining the ethnic identities of the population of Latgale.

## REGIONAL AND ETHNIC IDENTITY – THE DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT OF THE HISTORIOGRAPHY OF LATGALE

Although the regional identity of Latgale is not in the focus of attention of the paper, this topic should be briefly discussed, because, as it was mentioned before, the regional and ethnic identity has facilitated the emergence of the historiography of Latgale and has determined its «mosaic» composition, as well as the contradictory nature and the ambiguous role in preservation of ethnic identities in the region.

The course of investigation of the history of Latgale (Strods 1989<sup>a</sup>, p. 3; Zeile 1996, pp. 5–11; see also Ivanovs et al. 2003; Ivanovs and Ѕbeimans 1999) testifies that since the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century researchers have *actually* considered Latgale a specific historical region, i.e. an object of regional historical research. However, in the 19<sup>th</sup> and in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the idea of the regional identity of Latgale was not conceptually framed, since regional studies as such emerged only in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Ivanovs, Soms 1999, pp. 97–98). For that reason, a comprehensive investigation of the regional and ethnic identity of Latgale started only in the 1990s (Broliņš 1995, p. 8; Zeile 1996, pp. 3, 12, 13; Ivanovs, Soms 1999, p. 97). Dealing with problems of regional and ethnic identities, historians have stated that the framing process of such identities is closely connected with cultural phenomena (see e.g. Zeile 1995; Zeile 1997, pp.

273, 282; Lukaševičs 1996, p. 23; Apine 1996, etc.), which, in their turn, are definitely determined by specific manifestations of ethnic identities of different ethnic groups residing in Latgale.

It is obvious that different aspects of the regional and ethnic identity in Latgale should be investigated more comprehensively, because a systematic approach to the problem can be noticed only in some papers (Soms and Ivanovs 2002; Ivanovs and Soms 2002, 2008). Moreover, in historiography, there are different opinions, about when the distinctive character of Latgale started to develop intensively, if it was in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, when Latgale was incorporated into the Polish-Lithuanian state, or long before that, along with the ancient Latgalian states in the 12<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> century. Nevertheless, all the researchers conclude that it is only from the 17<sup>th</sup> century that the history of Latgale was influenced to a considerable extent by several factors<sup>7</sup> that have determined its specific history, which was different from that of the rest of Latvia (Ivanovs and Jbteimans 1999; Počs and Poča 1993, p. 3).

The regional identity of Latgale became clearly apparent in the 20<sup>th</sup> century – during the time of the First Republic of Latvia (1918–1940); it was a specific systemic formation. In historians' opinion, the regional identity of Latgale is closely connected, first and foremost, with Latvians of Latgale, Latgalians – a sub-ethnic group of Latvians or an ethnographic group with several specific features. Hence, it is not by chance that the most essential features of the identity of Latgale, which are correlated with this ethnic group, are regarded as ethnic in nature – initially, they have developed in the course of the ethnic history of the region:

1. the development of the Latgalian language (in the opinion of some experts – dialect), the Latgalian writing, and literature in the Latgalian language (Zeile 1995, 1996);
2. domination of Catholicism and its identification with ethnic (respectively, Latgalian) consciousness in Latgale, since Catholicism has always played an important role in shaping the ethnic character of Latgalians;
3. manifestations of the Latgalian ethnic mentality in every-day life and culture, which have not let the Latgalian ethnic community, its vitality and creativity, disappear<sup>8</sup> (Zeile 1997, p. 281). In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, because of continuous contacts, the differences in ethnic mentality were leveled, although, certain elements were retained. Many researchers have pointed out that Latgalians express their sorrow more quietly and behave more joyously when they are happy. The degree of collectiv-



ism and mutual assistance is greater in relationships among neighbors (Apine 2001, pp. 59–67);

4. the sense of relative deprivation and detachment from the rest of Latvia; in its turn, the society of Latvia as often as not considers Latgale to be a specific region that differs significantly from other historical regions of Latvia. It seems that this specific system of mutual attitudes and perceptions, to a certain extent, maintains the distinct features of Latgale and therefore promotes deepening and further development of its regional identity.

Although the regional identity of Latgale is closely connected, first of all with the history of the eponymous ethnic community (Latgalians), the ethnic composition of the region is formed by a number of different ethnic communities: besides Latvians of Latgale, they are Russians, Byelorussians, Polish Byelorussians, Poles, Lithuanians, Ukrainians, Jews, etc.<sup>9</sup> (see in detail Strods 1989<sup>b</sup>; Markausa 1991; Meĥgailis, Trostina and Katkovska 1992).

Thus, the multiethnic and multicultural environment of Latgale is an essential feature of its regional identity (Apine 1996). The tradition of multiculturalism<sup>10</sup> was shaped by the ethnic history of the region and especially by the ethnic relations of Latvians of Latgale with other ethnic communities. The pattern of ethnic relations in Latgale reflects the diversity of the history of the region, since every ethnic minority represents and determines a particular historical period of Latgale. Thus, for example, the heritage of Russian domination in the region is reflected in ethnic consciousness of Latgale's Russians, as well as in their values, patterns of behavior, etc.

The multicultural environment is a contradictory phenomenon. On the one hand, it threatens the survival of the Latgalian ethnic identity. On the other hand, some historians and sociologists consider the «tradition of co-existence» of various ethnic groups a positive factor in the history of Latgale (Apine 1996, p. 14; compare with Milts 1996). It is worth saying that the concept of multiculturalism is closely connected with political discourse; this concept is used in order to substantiate and justify definite political aims.<sup>11</sup> As Professor Ilga Apine has pointed out, *«Moral and psychological atmosphere in rural districts and villages of Latgale is an especially valuable gain. A greater receptiveness has emerged there; tolerance for the 'Other' has become stronger in the spheres of language, appearance, and culture. The experience of co-existence takes root in their everyday life; authorities have not imposed it. The present-day thinking just calls for a greater tolerance, instead of seclusion and isolation from the 'Other'. The experience of Latgale should*

*be cultivated and used in everyday policies»* (Apine 1996, p. 19).

All in all, the regional identity of Latgale has been determined by interplay between two contradictory historical forces. One of them was the Latgalian ethnic mentality; the other force was the influence of the neighboring nations – their culture, traditions, lifestyle, and languages. Consequently, the historiography of Latgale not only reflects this interplay between the two forces, but also performs a rather contradictory function within the context of interaction of different trends in the development of the regional identity and ethnic communities in Latgale. Preserving the historical heritage of Latgale region and evoking collective historical memory, the historiography of Latgale maintains distinct features and patterns of ethnic identities of different communities residing in Latgale. It should be noticed that preservation of such patterns and features, to a certain extent, hinders the social, political, and economic development of Latgale, and its integration into the socio-economic system of present-day Latvia.

Connection of the historiography of Latgale with the above-mentioned ethnic communities is a factor that has always promoted the development of studies devoted to the ethnic history of Latgale; as a result, the ethnic history of Latgale has become an independent, complex object of historical research (Ivanovs and Soms 1999). In its turn, this object of historical studies has always influenced the course of historical research, shaping distinct features of the historiography of Latgale.

## **THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE HISTORIOGRAPHY OF LATGALE WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF COMPETING ETHNIC IDENTITIES**

The historiography of Latgale has come into existence due to long-term interaction of different historiographic trends and national schools (traditions) in historical research. This fact once again approves a well-known thesis that historical research is «accumulative» by its nature, since it constantly accumulates facts and historical records that forever remain in scientific circulation. However, it is doubtful whether the present-day historiography of Latgale is a sum of diverse fragments – descriptions (reconstructions) of historical facts, interpretations, approaches, concepts, etc. The emergence and development of the modern historiography of Latgale can be regarded as a process of historiographic synthesis of the above-mentioned fragments: some of them have been accepted, others – rejected

or revised in the course of development of the historical research. At the same time, all the fragments retain close connections with a definite historiographic trend – a national tradition in historical research, which has brought them into scientific circulation. It means that the modern historiography of Latgale actually reflects the processes of historical development of the historical research of Latgale region and implies notions that have emerged within different ethnic communities.

For a long while, investigation of the history of Latgale was conducted within national historiographic traditions that provided an insight into the Latgalian past as if «from outside»; as a result, the history of Latgale was «incorporated» into the historical contexts of other political and cultural formations – the Russian Empire, Poland-Lithuania (Rzeczpospolita), the Soviet Union. Consequently, representation of historical data was subjected to priorities and historical (actually, historiographic) stereotypes that were characteristic of the historiographic schools of the above-mentioned states and political formations. Furthermore, in the works written by representatives of different historiographic schools (with the exception of those written by the few researchers whose lives and activities were closely connected with Latgale), the history of Latgalians – the indigenous population of Latgale – was not in the focus of attention. It can be asserted that sometimes the history of Latgale was written in accordance with the guidelines drawn up by conquerors or representatives of upper classes; therefore, the principle aim of historical research was to justify the alien domination in Latgale.<sup>12</sup>

The Russian historiography of the history of Latgale provides a striking example that illustrates this thesis (see in detail Ivanovs et al. 2003, pp. 69–102). An overall insight into this historiographic trend, as well as evaluation of its main tendencies and interpretations, testifies that the works written by Russian historians reveal a certain political trend aiming at justification of the incorporation of the Baltic region (including Latgale) into the Russian Empire and exaggeration of «positive consequences» of the Russian rule for the Baltic nations (Počs and Poča 1993, p. 12; Zeile 1996, p. 19; Strods 1989<sup>a</sup>, pp. 15, 17). Although this political trend emerged in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, actually it took its roots in the medieval Russian historical thought (Ivanovs et al. 2003, pp. 36–44; Ivanovs 2002). In the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, Russian historians just renewed some ideas and approaches that had been put forward by some medieval Russian chroniclers. At the same time, these ideas and approaches were partly revised in conformity with the

spirit of the epoch and demands of the historiography of positivism.<sup>13</sup>

All in all, this political trend received general recognition in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Russian historiography for two reasons. Firstly, a historian always, without having a choice, had to execute a government and/or social «order», i.e. serve his/her country, quest for historical arguments in order to justify or excuse policies implemented by the State. The dependence of historical research on State authorities became apparent in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when historiography acquired an official status in the Russian Empire (starting with Nikolai Karamzin); in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, this dependence became even firmer. Secondly, historical research always preserves its national (even ethnic) nature, since it expresses the common consciousness of a nation (see e.g. Koialovich 1901). Hence, the political trend of the Russian historiography took roots in the self-awareness of Russians; in its turn, the Russian historiography purposefully influenced the Russians' mentality. For that reason, Russian historians propagated the above-mentioned political ideas not only intentionally, but also unfeignedly; seems that it was their firm belief that their approaches and interpretations were comprehensively substantiated.

Evaluating the role of the Russian historiography in the development of the Latgalian studies, we can state that there have been some achievements in the fields of historical reconstruction and source studies due to the work done by unprofessional historians – researchers of local history, culture, and lore.<sup>14</sup> The Vitebsk Province Statistic Committee and its Secretaries – A. Sementovsky (1863–1880) and A. Sapunov (1901–1907, 1913–1917), coordinated their activities (Sapunov 1913, pp. 4, 9). The scope of the Committee's research activities was extremely wide: statistics, archaeology, ethnography, geography, history, folklore, etc. To a certain extent, such manifold activities were indicative of the dilettantish approach to investigation of different problems. On the other hand, research papers published by the Committee<sup>15</sup> laid the foundations of the modern historiography of Latgale. Consequently, the historiography of Latgale accumulated a number of concepts and stereotypes, which had been worked out by the Russian imperial (actually – national) historiography, and, at the same time, the nonprofessional approach in the studies of local history and lore. Due to this heritage, in the present-day historiography of Latgale the difference between professional and nonprofessional historical research in some cases does not exist. Evaluation of the Polish historiography of Lat-

gale is similar to that of the Russian imperial (national) historiography (see in detail Ivanovs et al. 2003, pp. 103–141; Počs and Poča 1993; Zeile 1996; et al. 2003, p. 135).

Unfortunately, the professional level of the Polish historiography of Latgale was rather low; it was similar to that of the works published by the Vitebsk Province Statistic Committee. For instance, in the works written by the leading Polish researchers of the history of Latgale G. Manteuffel and K. Bujnicki (see in detail Bukłb 1957, pp. 176–187; Zeile 1993), there are many doubtful facts and inexact quotations and references to historical records used in reconstructions of the history of Latgale. Although these works, for the most part, have lost their scientific importance, they still make up an integral part of the historiography of Latgale.

In contrast to the works written by Russian and Polish nonprofessional researchers, monographs and articles published by German and Baltic German historians – C. Schirren, Th. Schiemann, F.G. von Bunge, L. Arbusow, R. Vittram and others still maintain their heuristic and methodological importance for investigation of the history of Latgale. Most of these works deal with the so-called Livonian period (13<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> century) in the history of Latgale.<sup>16</sup> Modern Latvian historians usually stress the tendentiousness of the Baltic German historiography of Latvia and Latgale, as well as some biased interpretations aimed at justification of crusades in the Baltic region and German rule there (see e.g. Zutis 1949; Ivanovs et al. 2003, p. 66). However, professionalism and a positivistic approach demonstrated by Baltic German historians, to a certain extent, counterbalance their tendentiousness.

In comparison with the Russian imperial (national) and Polish historiography of Latgale, the works written by Germans and the Baltic Germans are not widely used in the present-day historical research of Latgale. It means that this historiographic tradition takes a marginal position in the modern historiography of Latgale. Possibly, this fact can be explained taking into consideration a rather negligible share of Germans in the ethnic composition of the present-day population of Latgale; in other words, the Baltic German historiography has lost its audience in Latgale.

Thus, until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, representatives of the above-mentioned national historiographic traditions – Russian national (imperial), Polish, and Baltic German – conducted researches in the field of the history of Latgale. However, the history of Latgale was not in the focus of attention of those historiographic schools; as a result, reconstructions of the history of Latgale were fragmentary and incomplete. Although,

the above-mentioned schools had come to existence simultaneously, their research work was conducted separately; there can be hardly traced any signs of interaction between the national historiographic traditions and their representatives. Systems of references and notes in the publications present evidences confirming this thesis. For example, in the works written by Russian authors, there are only some references to the monographs and articles published by Baltic German and/or Polish researchers; and vice versa, Polish and German authors do not refer to the works written by their Russian colleagues. There are also different approaches to selection of primary historical records, main research topics, etc.

It seems that the situation in the field of historical research, to a certain extent, reflected the historical particularity of Latgale, namely, the aims of the above-mentioned alien powers in the region and conflicting interests of different ethnic communities (Germans, Poles, Russians) and social groups (nobility, landed gentry, State bureaucracy and officials). Unfortunately, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, interests of the indigenous population of Latgale – Latgalians – were not expressed in the historical discourse at all. We can also assume that reflection of the conflicting interests in the historiography of Latgale was a specific «instrument» (in other words, *support factor*) of ideological promotion of those interests; thus, the historiography of Latgale was an active factor within the system of ethnic and social relations in the region – it supported certain interest groups and ethnic communities there.

Promotion of such conflicting interests of social groups and ethnic communities by means of historical research in Latgale in the 19<sup>th</sup> century cleared the way for further development of the historiography of Latgale. It seems that in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century the social functions of historiography had become more expressed due to political developments and the State's direct interference in historical research.

Since the First Latgalian Awakening (1904–1907; see Zeile 1996, pp. 15, 78–85), the fourth Latvian historiographic trend has emerged within the framework of the historiography of Latgale. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, this trend had become the leading national historiographic tradition in investigation of the history of Latgale. Such Latgalian politicians and public figures as Francis Trasuns (1864–1926), Francis Kemps (1876–1952), Margers Skujenieks (1886–1941) and others were the first representatives of this historiographic trend.

The emergence of the Latvian national historiography of Latgale was determined, on the one hand, by the forthcoming transformation of

the regional identity of Latgale that, in its turn, was caused by Latgale's (re)unification with other historical regions of Latvia. On the other hand, the changing status and the role of the Latgalian (Latgale's Latvian) ethnic community in the development of the region, integration of Latgalians into the Latvian nation, and the diminishing role and status of Russians, Poles, Germans, and other ethnic groups there also promoted the emergence and further development of this historiographic tradition. For that reason, we can agree with I. Poča, who has evaluated the Latvian historiography of Latgale as follows: «... *for the first time, history was written neither for German or Polish audience, nor from the point of view of that furthered German or Polish interests; it was written for Latvians (Latgalians) from the point of view of their interests*» (see in Ivanovs et al. 2003, p. 150).

Initially, this historiographic trend could not compete with the traditional – Polish, Russian, German – historiographic schools in research of the history of Latgale, since until 1920s Latvian historians had predominantly written popular essays. However, after the establishment of the Republic of Latvia in 1918, the Latvian national historiography of Latgale had become the leading trend in research of the history of the region. We cannot provide any direct evidences that in the initial stage of the development of the Latvian national historiography of Latgale there was the so-called «historiographic synthesis», in other words, organic and flexible integration of the theses, which had been earlier advanced and substantiated within the framework of the Polish, Russian, and German historiography of Latgale, into forming the Latvian national historiography. Nevertheless, it can be logically concluded that this new historiographic tradition was grounded on the factual material and historical records that had been brought into scientific circulation by the above-mentioned historiographic schools. In addition, direct and indirect discussions, which aroused in historiography in the 1920s–1930s, give some evidence that interplay between different historiographic traditions lasted until the late 1930s. It means that specific historiographic manifestations of interests of the competing ethnic identities can be traced in the Latvian national historiography of Latgale.

Due to institutional support provided to historical research by the State of Latvia, during the time of the First Republic of Latvia historical research enjoyed an official status: historiography was officially seen as a tool for implementation of the nationalities' policy in Latvia. Actually, from the point of view of the State authorities, the main aim of historical research was inspiring and spiritual mobilization of the Latvian nation (Eihmane

2006, p. 14), as well as «Latvianization» of the multiethnic society of the First Republic of Latvia. This aim was clearly declared by the State President and Prime Minister Karlis Ulmanis (1877–1942); he declared that the mission of historiography was to raise the sense of national (actually, ethnic) unity, self-awareness of Latvians, and the feeling of pride about the national historical heritage (see e.g. Ulmanis 1937).

Thus, the authoritarian political regime of K. Ulmanis used historiography not only as an instrument for maintaining the ethnic identity of Latvians, but also as an ideological tool of re-identification of ethnic communities, including Latgalians, since the ethnic identity of Latgale's Latvians differed from that of Latvians living in other historical regions of Latvia. At the same time, emphasis put on the national historical heritage promoted development of the historiography of Latgale (see in detail Ivanovs et al. 2003, pp. 150–161).

In the 1940s, the development of the Latvian national historiography of Latgale was forcibly interrupted, since the Soviet regime inaugurated sovietization of historical research in the country, which predominantly took place in 1940–1941 and from 1944 until late 1950s (see in detail Strods 1991; Ivanovs 2003<sup>a</sup>, 2003<sup>b</sup>, 2005). The main directions of sovietization were as follows: politicization and ideologization of history, partial Russification, and integration of the Latvian historiography into the USSR historiography. There were striking changes in the methodology of historical research, too.<sup>17</sup>

All in all, this historiographic school of research of the history of Latgale leaves a rather contradictory impression (Ivanov and Shteiman 1999, pp. 46–98). On the one hand, because of sovietization, historical research in Latgale was under total political control and ideological pressures and eventually developed into one of the factors of Soviet policies there. Thus, the Soviet regime regarded historiography as an efficient tool for implementation of Soviet policies and indoctrination of Latgale's population by creating historical myths that promoted the regime and deformed the self-awareness of ethnic groups. On the other hand, from 1950s until 1980s under the Soviet rule, many qualitative, comprehensive monographs and articles about different aspects of the history of Latgale were published; the authors of those works were professional historians, who had maintained traditions of historical research that had been established during the First Republic of Latvia. They were mainly researches on the problems of Latgale's prehistory, medieval history, and the early modern history; the source



base of the researches comprised anthropological (E. Shnore, E. Mugurevichs, T. Berga, I. Loze, J. Urtans, M. Atgazis) and archaeological sources (R. Denisova). Some comprehensive research papers were devoted to problems of Latgale's ethnography (A. Zarina, A. Zavarina, S. Cimermanis), agrarian history from the 18<sup>th</sup> until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (H. Strods), peasants' movements (J. Babris), etc. In 1950s, Professor Boleslav Brezhgo (1887–1957) – the leading researcher of the history of Latgale – published a number of valuable scholarly works devoted to different aspects of the history of Latgale (*Professor Boleslav Brezhgo*, 1990; Ivanovs et al. 2003, pp. 161–170; Ivanov and Shteiman 1999, pp. 71–80; Вукљс 1957, etc.).<sup>18</sup>

However, the positive impression created by the works of the above-mentioned outstanding historians is undermined due to prevalence of ideologically and politically framed works, which are devoted to problems of modern history of Latgale.

Mostly these are publications dealing with issues of socio-economic and political history of Latgale in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Many works purposefully abound in dubious, ideologized theses and openly falsify the history of Latgale. The highest degree of falsification was reached in works treating the events of the 1940s and 1950s: the incorporation of the Republic of Latvia into the Soviet Union, World War II, the sovietization of Latgale, and the-so-called «construction of socialism» in the region. In these fields, historical research was completely subjected to abstract schemes, the goal of which was to indoctrinate the people of Latgale and to re-identify Latvians, as well as other ethnic communities residing in Latgale in conformity with the pattern of the so-called «Soviet people». Therefore, we can state that all these publications have entirely lost their heuristic significance.

It must be acknowledged that the Soviet regime has not achieved the goal of re-identification of the population of Latgale, and the historiography of Latgale as an instrument of the Soviet policies in the region has played a paradoxical social role. As Indulis Ronis has pointed out, in spite of the pressures of sovietization and Russification, Latvian historiography «*managed to prevent interruption of historic traditions in the research of ancient history and, partially, also medieval history of Latvia*» (Ronis 1995, p. 31). It seems that survival of the national historiographic tradition not only helped to lessen the efficiency of the Soviet historiography of Latgale as a tool of the Soviet rule, but also supported existence and development of national self-awareness of Latgalians between 1940s and 1980s by emphasizing historical heritage, historical pride, and historical consciousness.<sup>19</sup>

During the period from 1940s until 1980s, the Latvian national historiography of Latgale, which was developing in exile, proposed an alternative to the Soviet historiography of Latgale. This historiographic trend had thoroughly preserved the traditions of historical research that had been developed during the time of the First Republic of Latvia from 1920s until 1930s (see in detail Ivanov and Shteiman 1999, pp. 7–45). In exile, the leading researchers of the history of Latgale were Bonifacijs Brika, Mikelis Buks, Edgars Dunsdorfs, Tadeush Puisans, etc. Unfortunately, the level of historical research conducted in exile was not very high. As Professor Henrihs Strods has pointed out, the characteristic features of the sketches written by Latvian historians in exile are as follows: «... *opinion diversity, lack of primary historical sources ... and professional environment, topics that were brought up in 1930s. Comparing the most significant historical works published in Latvia with the ones published abroad, we should conclude that [the works published in Latvia] are based on a solid historical source base ... Theses proposed in the works published abroad, fall within the so-called synthetic literature, where primary sources and literature have equal roles*» (Strods 1991, p. 5).

Nevertheless, the Latvian national historiography of Latgale in exile was an important factor that promoted the revival of the Latvian national historiography in Latvia in 1990s: it maintained close connections with the pre-war Latvian national historiography of Latgale and, thus, handed down traditions of historical research through generations of historians.

## **CONCLUSION – PROSPECTS OF THE MODERN HISTORIOGRAPHY OF LATGALE**

Evaluating modern historiography, a researcher always faces some problems. The main problem results from the fact that the current period in development of historical research has not come to an end; therefore there is a serious lack of reliable evaluation criteria to reveal achievements and shortcomings in present-day historical research. On the other hand, «corporate» interests of historians influence a researcher of historiography; thus, he usually highlights the positive aspects in the development of modern historical research.

As concerns the present-day historiography of Latgale, it seems that its positive evaluation can be well-grounded (Ivanov and Shteiman 1999, pp. 99–162). The following confirms this thesis: the development of research

infrastructure for Latgalian studies,<sup>20</sup> lectures on the history of Latgale at Daugavpils University, engagement of both, professional historians and amateurs in Latgalian studies, and publication of numerous works dealing with different aspects of the history of Latgale, etc. Everything mentioned above also testifies that an independent school –Latgalian studies – has come into existence and has institutionalized within the framework of the historiography of Latvia. In this connection, we can point out that research on other historical regions of Latvia (Vidzeme, Kurzeme, Zemgale) is conducted only as a study of Latvia in general; nowadays, there are no signs of any independent schools in these research spheres.

The modern (professional) historiography of Latgale has come into being due to the restoration of independence of the Republic of Latvia in 1991. The process of revival of Latgalian studies was based on the ideas and approaches that had been worked out and substantiated by the Latvian national historiography of Latgale in the period from 1920s until 1930s, as well as the time between 1950-s and 1980s, when the research work was conducted in exile.<sup>21</sup> Therefore, the modern historiography of Latgale has also inherited some social roles from the former Latvian national historiography of Latgale. In the focus of attention of the modern historiography of Latgale there are problems related to the ethnic identity of the indigenous population of Latgale – the Latgalians, as well as different aspects of their ethnic history. For that reason this historiographic school has become a factor that strongly affects the ethnic self-awareness of Latgalians, and preserves their collective and ethnic identity.

One more argument can be mentioned to testify that there exists a close interconnection between the modern historiography of Latgale and the ethnic self-awareness of Latgalians. A specific feature of the present-day research of the history of Latgale is involvement of nonprofessional researchers (Ivanovs 2006). The flowering of the amateur Latgalian studies<sup>22</sup> provides evidence that the modern historiography of Latgale is exceeding, little by little, the limits of professional (academic) research and is becoming a specific mode of manifestation of ethnic, collective, and regional self-awareness.

Taking into account the fact that the modern (professional) historiography of Latgale supports and, in some respect, frames the ethnic identity of Latgalians, it is quite natural that in the focus of its attention there are predominantly the problems of ethnic and regional identity. Therefore, the most topical historical problems and aspects under investigation are the

following: the conception of the history of Latgale based on the notion that the regional identity of Latgale is closely connected with its indigenous population (Zeile 1995, 1996, 1997; Broliņš 1995; see also Soms and Ivanov 2002; Ivanov and Soms 1999, 2002, 2008); evolution of the Latgalian ethnic self-awareness and the history of the national liberation movement in the region (P. Zeile's works); political history of Latgale and Latgalian political parties in between 1920s and 1930s (S. Kuznecov); the role of Catholicism and the Catholic Church in the history of Latgale (H. Strods, J. Broks); the armed resistance movement against the Soviet rule after the World War II (H. Strods); the history of culture of Latgale; biographies of prominent Latgalians, etc.

Unfortunately, the history of other ethnic minorities of Latgale is not in the focus of attention of the modern professional historiography of Latgale. Actually, only few publications dealing with these historical problems can be mentioned, including brief essays on the history of Jews (written predominantly by amateurs; see also J. Shteiman's works), Poles (E. Jekabsons), Byelorussians (I. Apine), and Russians (I. Apine; see also Apine and Volkovs 2007). However, these works do not present an in-depth insight into the problem; moreover, the history of the above-mentioned ethnic minorities of Latgale is revealed within the framework of the history of Latvia at large. It seems that insufficient attention to the history of ethnic minorities in Latgale indicates that these ethnic communities have been partly deprived of their former social, political, and cultural positions in the region.

\* \* \*

In conclusion, some theses, which have been proposed in this paper directly or indirectly, should be emphasized. Some of them are discussible; at the same time, the author's attitude towards them is rather ambiguous.

1. An insight into the history of Latgalian studies shows that any «synthesis» of different approaches and interpretations of the history of Latgale, which have been advanced and substantiated by different national historiographic schools, is hardly possible. However, we cannot exclude this possibility. Actually, the «synthesis» of diverse approaches and interpretations is desirable, since the factual material, gathered by representatives of different national schools in the historiography of Latgale, is useful for further progress of Latgalian studies.

2. The «final» aim of Latgalian studies is not quite clear, since the aim of investigation of a region that has many distinctive features cannot be entirely scholastic: such an investigation emphasizes the regional and ethnic identity, which is deeply perceived by the indigenous population of the region. It means that the regional studies, including works dealing with the problems of the history of Latgale, actually preserve, support, and develop the regional and ethnic identity. It is doubtful that «conservation» of the regional identity of Latgale can be evaluated positively, since accentuation of regional peculiarities, to a certain extent, preserves detachment of Latgale from other historical regions of Latvia.
3. There are also some moot points related to the regional identity of Latgale and ethnic identities of the region's population that should be thoroughly examined, including the concept of «multiculturalism» and evaluation of ethnic heterogeneity of the region.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> This theoretical approach is based on the author's interpretation of Benedetto Croce's ideas about the so-called «contemporary history». See Croce 1923.
- <sup>2</sup> In papers devoted to theoretical and methodological problems of historical research, scholars ascertain that as often as not historical research is extremely politicized, since some historical issues cannot be politically and/or ideologically «neutral»; in addition, historical research is influenced by historian's social and institutional status, public opinion, State policies, etc. (Prost 1996; Strods 1991, p. 3). Moreover, in many cases, political elites are convinced that those who assume control of the past establish control over the present, too; those, who take control of the time, can also exert control over the people (*Facing Up to the Past* 1989, p. 5). Therefore, such elites consider historical research to be a political tool that can be used in order to create historical myths, which are beneficial for them. Obviously, the dependence of historical research on policies should be evaluated negatively, because sometimes it finds expression, on the one hand, in excessive engagement in political activities and, on the other hand, in falsifications of historical past. In this connection, it may be said with assurance that, to a certain extent, politicization of historical research is inescapable, taking into consideration close interconnections of the past and the present, topicality of many research themes, and conformity of research topics with the challenge of an epoch (Croce 1923; Prost 1996). On the other hand, the degree of politicization of historical research is determined by political regime: under totalitarian regime, historical research openly serves State

authorities and official ideology (Afanasyev 1996, pp. 20–28); it was especially evident in Latvia under the Soviet rule (see Ivanov 2003<sup>b</sup>). On the contrary, democracy makes it possible for historians to evaluate historical past relatively freely and independently.

- <sup>3</sup> Sometimes, historiography distorts and deforms public opinion and person's consciousness in order to achieve aims put forward by totalitarian political regimes. See Afanasyev 1996, p. 9; Ronis 1995, p. 32.
- <sup>4</sup> The *support factor* concept was framed by E. Allworth (Allworth 1977). Based on this concept, a number of case studies dealing with problems of ethnic identity in the Baltic region under the Soviet rule were made.
- <sup>5</sup> Latgale is a historical region that is located in the Eastern part of Latvia. The correlation and interaction of a number of common and distinctive features have created the regional identity of Latgale; therefore, it is considered an independent object of historical research. See Ivanov and Soms 1999; Soms and Ivanov 2002; Ivanov and Soms 2008, p. 41.
- <sup>6</sup> Involvement of different historiographic traditions and national schools in research of the history of Latgale determined another specific feature of the historiography of Latgale: on the one hand, the historiography of Latgale is considered an integrated, complex phenomenon; on the other hand, the historiography of Latgale is seen as a manifold and even eclectic formation.
- <sup>7</sup> The most important factors in the history of Latgale are as follows: its geographical and political location; its administrative isolation from the rest of Latvia since the 17<sup>th</sup> century; its specific social and economic conditions; the lasting influence of the Catholic Church and the spread of the Russian Orthodox Church; and demographical processes (high birth rate, large families, and migration). All the above-mentioned factors have influenced the ethnic identities of the population of Latgale.
- <sup>8</sup> It is obvious that the strong ethnic mentality of Latgalians has created an important support pattern, allowing this ethnic community to exist and maintain its identity, together with all its forms of expression. E.g. at the end of the 1980s, while representatives of ethnic minorities in Latgale (Byelorussians, Ukrainians, Jews, Russians, Poles, Lithuanians) showed very low indices of self-identification and national consciousness, Latgalians had preserved their ethnic identity and viability, their language, culture, and mentality (Zeile 1997). It seems that preservation of Latgalian ethnic identity in the hostile environment, despite external factors, is one of the most important features of the regional identity of Latgale, which requires further research.
- <sup>9</sup> Since ancient times, historical developments have promoted the influx of different ethnic groups in Latgale. The eastern part of Latvia was a special area where the Finno-Ugrians, and later the Baltic and the Slavonic tribes came into contact. In the time between the 16<sup>th</sup> and the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, there has been an influx

of Polish landlords, civil servants, peasants, and Russian Old Believers who were persecuted in Russia. Russian civil servants, merchants, and peasants flooded into Latgale after it had been incorporated into the Russian Empire (1772).

- <sup>10</sup> The thesis that the tradition of the so-called multiculturalism is widely spread in Latgale has been substantiated by Professor Ilga Apine. See e.g. Apine 1996; Apine and Volkov 2007.
- <sup>11</sup> Therefore, it seems that the concept of multiculturalism should be comprehensively verified, since its relevance to the tasks of historical research is doubtful.
- <sup>12</sup> This idea was clearly formulated by Professor Karlis Pochs, see in Ivanov, A. et al. 2003, pp. 186–187.
- <sup>13</sup> The traces of positivism can be found in justification of territorial expansion of the Russian empire by means of arguments provided by the so-called geographical determinism.
- <sup>14</sup> Professional Russian historians – e.g. N. Karamzin, P. Keppen, S. Solovyov, V. Novodvorskiy, V. Danilevskiy, G. Forsten, P. Briantsev, etc. – paid fragmentary attention to Latgale. In their works, the main research topics were as follows: Ancient Latgale, the Livonian War, Russian policies in Latgale in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (within the context of the so-called «Polish problem»); other aspects of the history of Latgale were actually ignored.
- <sup>15</sup> Among such publications, there can be mentioned «Reference Books of Vitebsk Province» (*Pamiatnaia knizhka Vitebskoi gubernii*) that were published from 1861 until 1914 (all in all – 33 issues).
- <sup>16</sup> Nowadays, researchers actually ignore this period in the history of Latgale.
- <sup>17</sup> The features of the Soviet methodology of historical research were as follows: an unbalanced approach to the study of different phases and issues of Latvian history; reduction of the whole process of history to modern history only; exaggeration of the role of the so-called «socio-economic basis» and the significance of the revolutionary movement; disregard of the national specifics of the history of Latvia; justification of the policies of the ruling Communist regime, etc.
- <sup>18</sup> There were different aspects of the history of Latgale, in the focus of attention of Professor Boleslav Brezhgo. The main spheres of his research work were the following: social and agrarian history, historical cartography, archival studies, editing of historical sources, paleography, epigraphy, etc. It can be argued that up to now in many fields of historical research, works written by B. Brezhgo represent the highest level achieved by the professional historiography of Latgale. However, many of these works were actually withdrawn from the scientific circulation. In addition, in Latvia under the Soviet rule, monographs and articles were censored and therefore distorted; some research papers were not published due to the ideological pressure.
- <sup>19</sup> As it was mentioned above, this paradox was explained by K.E. Nyirady. See Nyirady 1977.

- <sup>20</sup> This infrastructure encompasses a number of research institutions, which coordinate research activities in the field of the history of Latgale: Research Institute of Latgale at Daugavpils University, association of researchers «Latgola», publishing house of the Latgalian Cultural Centre (Rezekne), etc.
- <sup>21</sup> However, the continuity of the modern historiography of Latgale can be observed not only with the Latvian national historiography of the region, but also with the Soviet historiography of Latgale – especially in the field of archaeology, anthropology and ethnography.
- <sup>22</sup> At the same time, we can state that the scientific level of researches conducted by Latgalian amateurs is rather low. It means that the professional historiography should influence the research work of nonprofessional historians more actively.

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**Ilga Apine**

**LATVIAN SCIENTISTS ABOUT THE TRADITIONS  
OF RECOGNITION AND ACCEPTANCE OF RUSSIANS  
(OTHER ETHNIC MINORITIES) IN LATVIA**

Latvia is not an ethnically homogeneous country. Relations of the basic nation – Latvians – with other ethnic groups at all times have had a significant role in the social and political life of Latvia. Other ethnic groups come in with their ethnic face and cultural peculiarities. This otherness could be endured and accepted by the basic nation only to a certain stage, or could be approved by it as by the part of society, which has rights and responsibilities in this country. Contemporary standards of democracy envisage equal in rights partnership of the basic nation and historical ethnic minorities in all social and political processes of the state.

How is it in Latvia? This article is an attempt to give the answer to this question. The history of Latvian minorities is widely studied; communication between Latvians and non-Latvians in different periods of time is not side-stepped,<sup>5</sup> either. The novelty of the article is focusing on the problem of recognition and acceptance, because, exactly this subject most evidently discovers the development level of democracy in the country and the democratic maturity of the population.

The problem of recognition and acceptance is viewed in two aspects: as a point of view of the Latvian nation, Latvian society towards otherness, especially to Russians – the traditionally biggest ethnic group, and, as a judgment of Latvian scientists about this process. There Three periods of history are marked out and described in chronological order. They are the periods when Latvians were not anymore under the influence of any foreign rule and when they were free to form relations with other ethnic groups: the period of the first independent state

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between two World Wars, the short, but very significant period of Awakening (1988-1991) and the reestablished national state of Latvia after 1991.

**Keywords:** deficit of democracy, ethnic democracy, recognition, acceptance/adoption, admission, partnership.

## **TRADITIONS OF THE NATIONAL MINORITIES' RECOGNITION IN THE INDEPENDENT LATVIA**

Latvia is not an ethnically homogenous country. For Latvian people Latvia is a country of the ethnogenesis where their ancestors started to settle 4.000 years ago and where at the turn of the 16-17th centuries a single nation was created. They are an autochthonic indigenous nation in Latvia. Representatives of other nations appeared on the territory of Latvia in other centuries (XIII – XIX) with their own ethnic unique character and they settled down in a scattered fashion, not as one isolated enclave. There are various ways of cohabitation of different nations known in the world. In our case, we should speak about the relationships between the indigenous nation and national minorities. The typology of acceptance and recognition of other nations – newcomers – is determined by historic traditions, a type of social relations of every country and psychological peculiarities of a nation (greater or smaller openness to something different). The highest degree of recognition corresponding to all forms of modern democracy is the minorities' participation in all spheres of public life – the partnership.

Fully-fledged ethnic relationships between the indigenous nation and other ethnic structures can be formed only in its own independent state. Under the conditions of subjection or living in dependence on another ruling power, these inner ethnic relations become deformed (as happened when Latvia was a part of the USSR). An independent ethnic policy is also only possible in its own state. Latvians have had such a possibility twice – in the period of the first independent state (1918-1940) and after independence was restored in 1991.

What ethnic traditions were formed in the period of the first independent state? The favorable international conditions after the World War I when the reactionary monarchy had collapsed provided the way for independence of Latvia. Latvians could be satisfied becoming free from two historical oppressors. They constituted the complete majority on their territory – 75%. For the first time in history Latvians had obtained an independent state. The delineated borders and the relationships with the neighboring states also created the feeling of safety. All the above mentioned could

positively influence the relationships with their own national minorities, the proportion of which in the state comprised 25%, 10% being Russians. There could be two periods identified in the relationships of the Latvian state with the representatives of other nations – before K.Ulmanis's coup on May 15, 1934 and the period after it.

In both cases the model of cultural autonomy can be applied, but, in the first period in a more complete, liberal and favorable variant for the minorities, but after 1934 – in a significantly limited variant. In conformity with the model of cultural autonomy which was based on the concepts of Austrian scientists O. Bauer and K. Renner and was considered the best way of relationship between the state and minorities in Europe at that time, minorities in Latvia were recognized as a part of the society. They gained autonomy in the spheres of education and culture. The minorities really used this possibility educating their children in their native languages and trying to preserve their culture and their specific ethnic character. The minorities were satisfied with such a policy, though the attempts of Russian politicians to extend the possibilities for the use of the Russian language in the Saeima of the Latvian Republic did not receive any support. Participation of minorities, especially Russians, in politics was weak. In the period of independent Latvia the issue of other nationalities' participation in politics was not discussed. All the people in the state were citizens of the Republic of Latvia, and, in accordance with their abilities and educational potential, could take part in politics. The possibilities of the Russian minority were limited because of some objective reasons: the absolute majority of Russians were poor and poorly educated peasants in Latgale and they did not apply for participation in the state government.

The leading Latvian politicians (K.Ulmanis, F.Menders and others) in the period of the formation of the Republic provided a closer integration of minorities into the Latvian society. Scientists, especially M.Valters, substantiated the formation of a political nation, but this development tendency was stopped in 1934. The minorities' rights and possibilities were restricted. The radical politicians doubted the use of a cultural autonomy. The attitudes of negativism towards the minorities in the form of anti-Semitism and Russophobia intensified. What ethno-political experience has been acquired since the time of the first independent state? In the first period, minorities were favorably recognized as a part of the society which had common interests and future with Latvians. However, the political power was monopolized by Latvians. And thus, Russians and other minorities were not recognized as fully-fledged partners.

## **THE TACTICS OF TAUTAS FRONTE (THE POPULAR FRONT OF LATVIA) – UNITY OF LATVIANS WITH MINORITIES**

When *Atmoda* (Awakening) started, Russians and other national and ethnic groups in Latvia, from the legal point of view, were not yet recognized as minorities. A restored state to which they belonged and which could legally recognize their minority status did not exist yet. Despite this, there was a lot of attention paid to representatives of other nations in the materials and documents of *Tautas Fronte* (The Popular Front of Latvia). The leaders of *Tautas Fronte* (The Popular Front of Latvia) were fully aware of the significance of attitudes of the other, non-Latvian part of the population in Latvia (48%) and, especially, a large part of the Russian population (34%). The pitch was set by the Congress of the Art Unions on June 1-2, 1988. In the speeches of Latvian art intelligentsia one could hear pain of the Latvian nation about insults and the many years' humiliation of the republic but, at the same time, as something which goes without saying, there was an idea that the future development and movement forward were only possible together with other nations of Latvia. In the documents of *Tautas Fronte* (The Popular Front of Latvia) (in the materials of congresses and in the accepted programs of *Tautas Fronte* with the compulsory section on the national issues) there was a clearly formulated idea: restoration of an independent state and creation of the Latvian state is possible only with active participation of all national groups of Latvia (*Latvijas Tautas Frontes 2. kongress 1990*, p.13).

Documents of *Tautas Fronte* (The Popular Front of Latvia) called to a new way of thinking, renunciation of the enemy image, unity of representatives of other nations around Latvians. The newspaper «*Atmoda*» («Awakening») in its Russian edition published series of interviews with leaders of *Tautas Fronte* (The Popular Front of Latvia) in January 1990. Ivars Godmanis predicted that taking into consideration the proportion of representatives of other nations in the state, they could comprise one half in political parties and organizations (*Балодэ 1990*). Janis Skapars soundly stressed that the essence of the national issue is the relationship between Latvians and Russians. He summoned Russians to be politically active, to formulate their interests and to create their structures (*Казачков 1990 (1)*). Sandra Kalniete was also worried about the political passiveness of Russians, and called them to political thinking and to creation of their own structures including political ones. Her suggestions about citizenship were very liberal



and the claims to support Tautas Fronte's (The Popular Front of Latvia) candidates sounded rather dramatic. She admitted that without the support of the Russian population, Tautas Fronte (The Popular Front of Latvia) would not win in the local elections (Kazakov 1990 (2)). Not long before the elections to the Supreme Soviet the editor of the Russian edition of «Atmoda» («Awakening») Aleksey Grigoryev also emphasized the significance of the minorities' support: «Latvians alone will not stand the pressure from the Interfront, the Communist party and the military», he wrote. «Help, and this will become the choice of your destiny too!» (Григорьев 1990). And they helped.

The liberal-centrist administration of Tautas Fronte (The Popular Front of Latvia) before the decision of the Supreme Soviet on the citizenship was inclined to the flexible approach. It was searching for an optimum middle course between the supporters of the so called «zero» variant (citizenship for everybody automatically) and the excessively strict suggestion of the radically inclined Congress of Citizens, which could turn representatives of other nations into opponents to the independence of Latvia. From the documents of Tautas Fronte (The Popular Front of Latvia) representatives of other nations received the promise to grant citizenship to all permanent residents of Latvia who had lived in Latvia for 10 years and who had supported the idea of independence (Latvijas Tautas Fronte 1989, p.262). The position of the leaders of Tautas Fronte (The Popular Front of Latvia) could be perceived in the same way. Andrei Pantelejev asserted, «Anybody can become a citizen of Latvia only if he realizes himself as a patriot of Latvia (Пантелеев 1990). In the already-mentioned Sandra Kalniet's interview she did not support granting of citizenship based only on the fact of birth in the pre-war Latvia, saying, «What makes Mr. Dozorcev worse than me, who can have citizenship automatically?» (Казакон 1990 (2)).

Public opinions reflected in the media of that time demonstrate rather contradictory tendencies. Many Latvian authors were overwhelmed with emotions and extremes because they could not hide their suppressed offence any longer. Nevertheless, it was possible to see certain regularity – if the floor was given to competent representatives of the art and academic intelligentsia who were well-known in the Latvian-speaking environment – they proclaimed adherence to the principles of harmony and tolerance of different nations. Speeches of J.Stradins, U.Berzins, A.Klotins, M.Birze, A.Berkis, I.Lazovskis at the Assembly of the Art Unions and some newspaper articles were sustained in this spirit. Writer Janis Maulins expressed

original understanding of this topic calling the nations to a mutual absolution, «Let's forgive Russians for the year 1905, Lenin and others, Georgians for Stalin... Let's hope that other nations will forgive Latvians for participation in the October coup and the Civil War» (Mauliņš 1991). He wrote these lines being enraptured with the heroism of the Russian intelligentsia during the time of August putsch in Moscow in 1991.

The unity tactics of Tautas Fronte (The Popular Front of Latvia) was brightly revealed in the orientation towards a dialogue with various forces in order to provide a peaceful parliamentary way of development. During the numerous discussions on the radio, in the press, on television, during trips to other towns in Latvia, lecturers of Tautas Fronte (The Popular Front of Latvia) sat at one table together with the most inveterate representatives of the Interfront and had discussions about the zigzags of the Latvian history, citizenship and other issues. The Russian newspapers «Sovetskaya Latvia» («Soviet Latvia») and «Edinstvo» («Unity») expressed ardent Interfront views. In its turn, «Atmoda» («Awakening») was issued in two languages and the press for the youth was able to find a common language. In order to find out opinions regarding the citizenship issue, the newspapers «Padomju Jaunatne» («Soviet Youth») and «Sovetskaya Molodez» («Soviet Youth») organized a onetime telephone action among their readers about the newly-created law on citizenship and the results of the action were published on the same day – on September 21, 1991.

A round table conference in Riga on February 8-9, 1989 was a vivid example of the dialogue which confirmed the contacts of the Latvian democrats with the democratic forces in Russia. It was not surprising that Otto Lacis from the Moscow magazine «Kommunist» («Communist») was in charge of the event. At that time, this magazine did not differ from such editions as «Moskovskiye Novosti» («Moscow news»), «Argumenty i Fauty» («Arguments and Facts») in its openness and courage. Politicians, economists and sociologists from the three Baltic States were invited to participate in the Round Table conference. The issue of inter-ethnic relationships was put forward as the main topic of the discussion, but a much wider set of questions was touched upon, for example, economy. Such prominent economists as Arnis Kalnins, Mikhail Bronstein, Kazimiera Prunskiene, Peteris Gulans and Otto Lacis discussed a possible model of the economy. The Republics were trying to break away from the tight embrace of the centre, demanding greater economic independence. The model of the «strong centre» which was offered in Moscow was defended by the representatives

of Interfront – Jarovoy from Estonia, Belaichuk and Gaponenko from Latvia. Sociologists from Estonia Marja Lauristina and Klara Hallika informed the participants of the Round Table Conference about how the model of the «strong centre» looked in reality. The enterprise «Dvigatel» («Engine») under the supervision of the USSR had existed as a state within the state and had become an alien body in Tallinn and in the whole of Estonia.

V.Stesenko, I.Apine, L.Dribins, J.Goldmanis and others talked about the national issues on behalf of Latvia. Characterizing the consequences of the Soviet national policy, the USSR was called a cemetery of nations. The degraded national languages and cultures in the Baltics and the falsified historic truth about the admission of the Baltic States into the structure of the USSR in 1940 were the most discussed topics at the Round Table Conference. Surprisingly quickly – in just two months – the materials of the conference were published in Moscow. It should be admitted that there was much more pluralism in Tautas Fronte's (The Popular Front of Latvia) public relations than after the independence was restored in 1990s. Contacts with the Moscow democrats were also lost.

Almost simultaneously with Latvian Atmoda (Awakening) activity of democratic intelligentsia of other nations awoke. The Latvian press hurried to inform its readers about the variety of ethnic structure of Latvia. Latvians got acquainted with a lot of new things. Living together with representatives of other nations they had not had any information about the previous fortunes of Poles, Russians, Byelorussians and other nations in Latvia. The article by V.Suvcane about the Livs and the peculiarities of their language and culture was one of the first. Latgalian editions, for example the «Preili» regional newspaper, reflected the scenery peculiar to Latgale with its several nations (Poles, Russians, Gypsies, Jews), and various confessions as well as the integral part of the Latgalian ethnic structure – old-believers' settlements. (Ļeņina karogs 1989).

A series of articles about minorities – Poles, Byelorussians, Jews, Estonians and others appeared in the newspaper «Atmoda» («Awakening») in 1990. Along with this, Latvian readers got acquainted with the leaders of minorities: Ita Kozakevich, Sergej Kuznecov, Ruta Marjasha. The whole edition of «Literatura un Maksla» («Literature and Art) in January, 1990 was devoted to the fate of the Baltic Germans. It was planned on a large scale to dispel the prejudices and distrust of Latvians towards Germany. Academician J.Stradinsh reminded the readers about the contribution of the German intelligentsia to the development of culture and industry in Latvia, and the

enhancement of the ties with the Christian culture of Europe. In several articles (authors – V.Daugmalis, I.Feldmanis, D.A.Lebers) the myth about the seven centuries' enslavement was dispelled and the truth about the so called repatriation from Latvia in 1939 was revealed (Literatūra un Māksla 1990).

The structure of other nations in Latvia was extremely varied not only ethnically and confessionally but also in respect of structure, origin, and education. It was possible to relatively identify three large groups in this huge mass of people in the period of Atmoda (Awakening). The first group – mainly the humanitarian intelligentsia with democratic attitudes who consciously supported Tautas Fronte (The Popular Front of Latvia) and aspirations of Latvians from the very beginning. The second group – the marginal part of the population which already had lost its roots and orientation (very often unskilled workers) – formed the basis for the Interfront and the Council of United Work Groups. The third major group was comprised of the people who were still waiting and hesitating and who could be influenced by Tautas Fronte (The Popular Front of Latvia) as well as by the Interfront (Apine 2000, pp.109-116). There were not many representatives of the humanitarian intelligentsia but they were socially active, convinced about the righteousness of their position and could influence the hesitating part of the public. We can distinguish several well-known authors and journalists in Latvia among them – J.Abizov, V.Steshenko, M.Kostenecka, I.Kozakevicha, R.Marjasha, A.Grigoryev, A.Kleckin, V.Dozorcev.

A complete support of Tautas Fronte's (The Popular Front of Latvia) ideas by the main body of representatives of other nations' intelligentsia was reflected in the decisions of the People's Forum, in its programs, and in the speeches and articles of the leaders. Their support was really felt in January 1991. The newspaper «Neatkarīga Cīņa» («Independent Struggle») wrote about one of the greatest mass meetings on the embankment of the Daugava river on January 13, «A great support for Riga from other nations and rural population in order to protect its government, its Supreme Soviet» (Neatkarīga Cīņa 1991). The voice of this active part of the population was also of great importance. If representatives of other nations had not voted for Tautas Fronte (The Popular Front of Latvia) in March 1990, it would not have received the majority of places in the Supreme Soviet. During the referendum on March 3, 1991 73,58% of population voted for the independence of Latvia from the USSR. The active, sensible part of the representatives of other nations took the decision in favor of the independent Latvian state.

The minorities' activity in that period (1988-1991) had one significant feature – they came and acted independently, and they already participated in the political processes. The real participation in the period of *Atmoda* (Awakening) was displayed in a versatile way. The convocation of the People's Forum was suggested by the Central Committee of the Communist Party, though hoping for its conciliative influence over the excited minds of Latvians (Zīle 1998, pp.146-147). But, another thing happened – the Forum took place just after the 1st Congress of *Tautas Fronte* (The Popular Front of Latvia) on December 10-11, 1988 and its participants supported the ideas of *Tautas Fronte* (The Popular Front of Latvia). A carefully worked out set of Forum's decisions (a lot of work was carried out by R.Marjasha, A.Kleckin and others) contained suggestions of organized groups of representatives of other nations in Latvia for the future state legislation. Activity of the Association of National Minorities' Societies was of high significance.

One of the meetings of the Association of the National Cultural Societies was held on December 2, 1989 (materials from the author's personal archive). It was very representative: 164 delegates represented 17 cultural societies which were already functioning. One of the council members of the Association, Refat Chubarov (later he returned to the Crimea to fight for the rights of his nation – the Crimean Tatars) at the beginning of the conference called the representatives of other non-indigenous nations of Latvia not to remain in the position of passive observers of political processes but to participate in them and to create a sovereign democratic Latvia. The course of the conference confirmed that within one year the national cultural societies (Russian, Byelorussian, Polish, Jewish) had been created. The reports by G.Krupnikov, J.Abizov, S.Kuznecov and others expressed satisfaction with the course of events: societies' documents being accepted, problems with premises being solved and schools and classes functioning in the languages of minorities (Jewish, Polish, Estonian). The report of a lawyer Ruta Marjaļa reflected the national minorities' participation in the legal activity of the state. The Association put forward its suggestions for the creation of the language law and actively participated in the work of the Supreme Soviet commission where the law on national and ethnic groups was being developed.

The Association activists were closely connected with *Tautas Fronte* (The Popular Front of Latvia) and with the Latvian Society. Ivars Godmanis took part in the work of the conference and addressed its participants; Armands Melnalksnis, Aija Lace, Andris Barkans supported the societies'

activity. In their turn, the Interfront, the partocracy and some Russian editions did not hide their hostility towards the national minorities of Latvia and their organizations. The conference elected 18 of its representatives to become candidates for places in municipalities of Latvia. The work on the law «On the Free Development of the National and Ethnic Groups of Latvia and Their Rights for Cultural Autonomy» was a success. The law was adopted on March 19, 1991 and was sustained in the principles of democracy; minorities were promised not only cultural self-governing but a guaranteed equality of rights in all spheres. Not everything was realized, attitudes towards the use of the cultural autonomy also changed. However, even after 20 years this law remains the only law in the Republic of Latvia which stipulates the minorities' interests and status.

The attempt to create the Advisory Council of the Nations under the Supreme Soviet failed. The work of the Advisory Council would have become an equal activity of the minorities' representatives in the Parliament and its permanent commissions when the issues concerning the lives of minorities were discussed. Representation in the Council of the Nations itself was meant to be based on the principle of parity: all minorities would be represented equally despite of their size, and they themselves would nominate their representatives. But this good intention was ruined by the rows of the opposite forces in the Supreme Soviet and opportunistic considerations of some politicians. At that time it was decided to regularly call the Latvian People's Forum but the previously-mentioned Forum remained the only one in the history of Latvia. As follows from the mentioned above, in the period of *Atmoda* (Awakening) the administration of *Tautas Fronte* (The Popular Front of Latvia) presupposed the fully-fledged minorities' participation recognizing their representatives as partners, and the minorities' activists, in fact, acted as partners, but later there was a deviation from all the well-planned principles – equality, delegation, parity, etc.

The tactics of *Tautas Fronte* (The Popular Front of Latvia) were a success: at the time of *Atmoda* (Awakening) the unity of the active part of minorities, the intelligentsia with democratic attitudes, with Latvian people was achieved. This provided a majority in the membership in the Supreme Soviet and, in the election results in 1990 and 1991, and also the sympathies of the European states because Latvia took the road to democracy peacefully. The decision of the Supreme Soviet made on October 15, 1991 on the resumption of citizenship only to the persons who had been citizens of

Latvia earlier, changed the situation dramatically. The permit for obtaining citizenship for other residents (including one part of Latvians) remained unclear. That part of the Russian population which fully supported Tautas Fronte (The Popular Front of Latvia) felt betrayed and humiliated. The article by Marina Kostenecka «I can't help saying» published in the newspaper «Neatkarīga Cīņa» («Independent Struggle») on October 22, 1991 reflected their mood. Some years later, looking back at Tautas Fronte's (The Popular Front of Latvia) experience, two of its leaders Sandra Kalniete and Janis Skapars admitted that in October 1991 there had happened a conceptual strategic digression from the ideas of Tautas Fronte (The Popular Front of Latvia) (Egle 1997).

A dramatic change of tactics was stipulated for several reasons. The struggle for independence was taking place in the atmosphere of threats and danger. For example, the statement made by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union on August 28, 1989 about the situation in the Baltic States sounded explicitly threatening. It was made in the style of the humiliating rhetoric typical of the Soviet time. It was clear that the centre was able to attack the Baltic nations not only with words but with force too. The radical and extremist forces from both sides: on the one hand, the Interfront, the conservative Communist Party of Latvia which was already abandoned by the Latvian part of communists; and the Congress of Citizens, the Latvian National Independence Movement, and the radical association of Tautas Fronte (The Popular Front of Latvia), etc. on the other, destabilized the internal situation in Latvia. Tautas Fronte (The Popular Front of Latvia) was strong and able to perform flexible political steps while it was united. After the independence of Latvia was achieved Tautas Fronte (The Popular Front of Latvia) split and several political parties appeared on its basis. It was much more difficult to find a compromise with them. It was proved by the further history of the Latvian legislation.

## **PARTICIPATION OF SCIENTISTS IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONSHIPS**

Was it possible to ask scientists to draw conclusions about the processes taking place during the Atmoda (Awakening) period? Scientists themselves participated actively in these processes and they tried to comprehend what was going on, to evaluate all these contradictory opinions expressed during the numerous discussions. The significance of the inter-ethnic relations

was so obvious that even the presidium of the Latvian Academy of Sciences examined this issue at its sitting on December 14, 1989. Ilga Apine, a corresponding member of the Academy of Sciences, was entrusted to give a report on the situation with a research on this issue. E.Vebers, L.Dribins, V.Hausmanis, V.Millers participated in the debates. The governing body of the Academy of Sciences recommended scientists to get rid of the collapsed dogmata in the national issue and to turn to the concepts of foreign scientists, which were not previously known in Latvia.

A newly-formed department «The Studies of Culture and National Relations» (head Elmars Vebers) of the Institute of Philosophy and Law of the Latvian Academy of Sciences chose the topic «Democratization and National rights» for its first conference in 1990. The reviewers E.Vebers, E.Levits, A.Voroncovs, K.Hallika (Estonia), B.Zepa and others were trying to find answer to the question: how to implement the rights of the indigenous nation and to provide the rights for minorities so that they do not contradict each other. How to implement any national rights within the frames of democracy. This statement of the question was very timely. The inner discrepancy between the national aspirations and the norms of democracy in the ethnic policy in Latvia still cannot be overcome in the 21st century. Democracy was paid special attention to at all scientific forums in the period from 1989 to 1993 because, at that time, Latvia had started to move from totalitarianism to a democratic society and both, the general public and the just-emerging political elite were not aware of the principles of culture of a parliamentary democracy. Conferences and publications were given characteristic names: «The Basics of Democracy», «The Way to Democracy» (*editions of political scientists of Latvia University 1992-1994*). In their turn, the scientists who professionally studied ethnic relations called their conference in 1992 «Democracy and the Ethnic Policy».

The most topical issues of theory and terminology were assessed in the aspect of democracy. One of them – the nations' rights for self-determination. Latvia as well as other Baltic States was firmly heading towards independence. Who is the subject of law – the nation or the population of a certain territory? Who can make the final decision about the secession? The USSR government, being reluctant to set the republics free, hoped to impose upon them a new Federative treaty which would make the secession from the Union impossible. Scientists defended the idea that the right for self-determination was a compulsory norm under conditions of democracy, but the right to secede from any community was the prime



manifestation of democracy. The nation is in possession of these rights, but they are not granted once. Problems had to be settled by people in their territory, but not by the centre (Levits 1989). Cultural autonomy was the second issue which was theoretically and practically topical and which was frequently analyzed by the scientists (more often L.Dribins, A.Kalnciema, J.Goldmanis) in their publications and conference reports. In the period of the first independent Latvian state this model was successfully used in the relations with minorities. Later, the representatives of minorities often referred to it at their gatherings. It seemed tempting to repeat this model.

The citizenship issue was also connected with norms of democracy by political scientists and lawyers. Ideas about the essence of the state governed by the rule of law which were widely applied in the West after World War II were still alien to the Latvian society. That is why standards of the Western democratic norms were frequently proclaimed at that time in Latvia by the scientists from the emigrant circles (A.Ezergailis, E.Levits, N.Muizhnieks, A.Urdze, R.Karklina); they considered it their mission. Nils Muiznieks, based on the opinion of Western Sovietologists, reminded that the people of the Baltics could rely on their support and respect only if they provided a peaceful way of development and being able to involve representatives of other nations in their movement.

Suggestions of Latvian emigrants concerning the citizenship question were more liberal than the ones of the radically thinking authors in Latvia. Egils Levits conceded that the USSR citizens could obtain citizenship after having lived for a certain time in Latvia and having rejected the previous citizenship (thus supporting the independent Latvia). As concerned the compulsory knowledge of the state language he reckoned that it would be difficult to achieve (Ducmanis 1990).

Similar opinion was expressed by a historian from the USA, Andrievs Ezergailis. One of the most comprehensive of his publications was the article «A Month in Latvia» in the newspaper «Literatūra un Māksla» («Literature and Arts»). He noticed the deficit of democracy in the behavior of Latvians. A.Ezergailis was worried about «the roll the nationalistic drum», signs of anti-Semitism, and attempts of some young politicians to rehabilitate the organization *Perkonkrusts* (*Thunder Cross*). He accepted the «zero» variant of the citizenship for the former USSR citizens but under the condition that the applicant would sign a special declaration recognizing the independence of Latvia and promising to learn the language. It was not for the first time that A.Ezergailis reminded that Russians and the attitude

towards this largest minority was the biggest problem in Latvia. He wrote, «If they loved Russians, recognized them as a positive force in the Latvian politics, especially in the revival of the economy, Latvians themselves would become free people» (Ezergailis 1990).

Far-seeing Latvian politicians understood that without following the norms of democracy in relations with other nations Latvians could not hope for support of the Western countries. Ivars Godmanis also saw it while contacting politicians in America and Europe. He did not agree with the radical suggestions of the Congress of Citizens concerning the post-war intervention and emphasized that it would not be democratic if the Supreme Soviet of Latvia did not represent interests of all people living in Latvia (Godmanis 1989).

## **LEGISLATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF LATVIA AND INTERESTS OF MINORITIES**

History of the law on Languages shows the status of the Russian language in the renewed Republic of Latvia. The Latvian language was declared to be the state language already on October 6, 1988 by the Supreme Soviet of the Soviet Socialistic Republic of Latvia adding some changes into its constitution. The Russian language maintained the status of the language for communication.

On March 31, 1992 the Supreme Soviet of the Republic of Latvia adopted amendments to the Language Law which cancelled the status of the Russian language as language for communication. The new Law on the State Language was prepared in 1995 and adopted by the Saeima on December 9, 1999, according to it, all the minority languages as well as languages of other countries were equally declared «foreign». It also happened with the Russian language, although, for 200 years it had been used on the territory of Latvia and 30% of the population were native Russian-speakers (in Riga – majority). The Law on the State Language, while being discussed, was also criticized by international institutions as well as the International Organization for Security in Europe. Some critics came also from scientists: I.Ziemele, director of the Human Rights Institute of the University of Latvia, reminded that the question of minority languages had remained unsolved (Apine 2008, p. 11-12). Mark Djachkov, a well-known researcher from Moscow, knowing well the situation in Latvia (he also knows the Latvian language), suggested to introduce the status of regional and minor-

ity languages as amendments to the Law on the State Language (Дьячков 1996, p. 100). Active representatives of cultural associations expressed their dissatisfaction as they felt only pressure and control from the government instead of support in the process of learning the state language. Leading politicians of that time (V.Birkavs, A.Pantelejevs and others), explaining this language policy, referred to the concept of restoration of a national state, the basis of which is constituted by the identity of the main nation. The main reason for such strict changes in the language hierarchy was the necessity to save the Latvian language. The most famous researchers in Latvia accepted this approach (Vēbers, Kārklīņa 1995). Ina Druviete in her sociolinguistic research on the Law on the State Language wrote that it was legally correct. In the same work she admitted,» the Russian language in Latvia has the minority status. [...] The state must guarantee preservation of minority languages as well as the possibility to use them not only in families and informal conversations but also in cultural and educational spheres» (Druviete 1998, p. 49, 127). The actual usage of the Russian language in Latvia is much wider than that of a foreign language but this fact is not officially registered which creates serious discrepancies in the legislation.

Only after some years one could feel the unforeseeable consequences of the Language Law as the Russian language had become an optional subject in schools with the Latvian language of instruction and the whole generation of young Latvians had no chance to learn Russian properly. A famous American researcher David Laitin talking about Russian identities has admitted that Russian young people with their cultural education (knowing English, Russian, Latvian) received during the years of independent Latvia have shown themselves as more competitive. Moreover, the Russian language is required more and more in the EU (Apine 2007, p. 21). As concerns the influence of the language policy, several conclusions can be drawn. The new language norms which were implemented hastily (for instance the sudden changing of street signs and other activities) can be explained by the situation in which the Latvian language was after the Soviet time. Threat of degradation of the Latvian language was proved by scientists (Veidemane 1988). It did not take much effort to notice that the Latvian language was not widely used in big cities. The attitude of the Russian part of population towards the way the Latvian language was taught in schools had become disdainful. It was impossible to change such situation by gradual, slow actions.

The situation had crucially changed 10-15 years later. The changes in the hierarchy of languages were irreversible. The Latvian language was saved from dying. The Language Law was functioning successfully; most people belonging to minorities already in the end of 1990-s admitted that it was necessary to learn the state language, their knowledge of Latvian improved.

In the beginning of the 21st century ethnic mobilization of Russians and representatives of other minorities took place. It was proved by the widely supported protests striving to protect the place of the Russian language in education. It was clear that the well organized and well structured representatives of ethnic minorities would not agree with the decisions made in 1990-s. But the Law on the State Language remained unchanged. No laws in Latvia clearly state the status and the usage of minority languages.

The central problem of this article – perception of Russians and other non-Latvians in the independent Latvia as partners, companions or only as political objects is clearly marked by the Laws on the State Language and on the Citizenship. Leaders of the Popular front recognized them as participants of political processes and the most active representatives of minority groups behaved and felt so. Therefore, the decision made by the Supreme Soviet on October 15, 1991 to grant Latvian citizenship only to the ex-citizens had destructive effect. Most non-Latvians became non-citizens and the whole society was divided into «our people» and «strangers». The Law on Citizenship was based on the ideology of ethno nationalism. Revision of the Law on Citizenship with great delay was started by the 5th Saeima in the summer of 1994. At first, the bill was passed with the idea about establishment of the quota system. It determined the admissible norm of naturalization which would have to be revised annually. International institutions battered this law. On June 22, 1994 the Saeima adopted the Law on Citizenship without quota but with age limit. It was unsuccessful: it was delaying the naturalization process as a result of which the number of non-citizens continued growing.

The Law on Citizenship directly granted Latvians monopoly in the political life. Nils Muiznieks was one of the first persons who analyzed the fast changes in ethnic stratification. By comparing the ethnic factor with participation in the work of state authorities he drew the following conclusions: The Supreme Council in 1992 consisted of 73, 8% Latvians, 19, 1% Russians, some Ukrainians and some Byelorussians; in 1994 52, 2% of inhabitants in Latvia were Latvian; 81% of citizens had reached the voting

age. 88% of deputies of the 5th Saeima and 100% of ministers were Latvian (Muižnieks 1995, p. 15).

The aim of the laws in the ethno political sphere in the independent Latvia was to provide for rapid changes in the ethnic relations inherited from the Soviet time, to guarantee existence of national state and Latvian political governance. Ethno politics has never been a priority for any government and politicians have never considered interests of minorities important. The independent country was established, international recognition was achieved and the support of non-Latvians was not so important any more. Andrey Pantelejev, one of the most active politicians from the party «*Latvijas Cels*» (*Latvian Way*) clearly formulated the division of roles on April 24, 1994 during the international conference «Latvia – Whose Fatherland Is It?» organized by Goethe institute. He said, «Latvians will possess the political majority stake and Latvians as majority will be the ones to determine the political course and development of the country.» But, as Latvia is a multicultural country, all the ethnic groups would be granted the possibility to preserve their ethnic identity. (*Latvija – dzimtene kam?* 1994, p. 89)

On the whole, the scientists of Latvia did not challenge the accuracy of such state policy; they just encouraged politicians to support and to facilitate integration of the society with orientation to becoming a political nation.

Such books as »National Politics in the Baltic Countries» («Nacionālā politika Baltijas valstīs» 1995), »Civic Consciousness» («Pilsoniskā apziņa» 1998) and the work by E.Vebers »The Latvian State and Ethnic Minorities» («Latvijas valsts un etniskās minoritātes» 1997) reflected the position of researchers. There was a hope that ethno political situation would be gradually liberalized. It was important that most Latvians supported the strict ethno politics of the government as they saw it as the way out of the complicated ethnic situation. The number of Latvians in their fatherland was only 52% that caused panic. Latvian people felt insecure about their identity and about preserving their language. They were also influenced by the traditional fear they felt towards Russia and the mistrust towards the masses of Russians here in Latvia. The legislative power was influenced by the pressure coming from »the streets».

At the same time, the power elite had not analyzed and estimated the reaction of Russians and other minorities to the laws they had passed. Russians felt psychologically hurt – they found the laws unfair and working against them. However, the Russian inhabitants remained politically pas-

sive which, in a way, meant support for the changes. Mark Basinger, a professor from Wisconsin University, decided that the Baltic Russians accepted the changes as inevitable, at the same time, accepting the laws (Страны Балтии и Россия 2002, p. 309). Latvian politicians were wrong several times. The hope of the radical political parties that the strict Laws on the Language and Citizenship would make the post-war immigrants return to their ethnic homeland did not realize. To avoid extremely rapid naturalization such obstacles as quota and age limit were introduced. In reality the naturalization process was very slow and the Law on Citizenship itself needed amendments. In 1990s the non-Latvians were unexpectedly passive. Later they surprised the legislators with their reaction to the Education reform.

International partners of Latvia also criticized the Law on Citizenship. Latvia and Estonia were the only countries in the Eastern Europe to introduce such strict Laws on Citizenship which created the great number of non-citizens. Therefore, the international experts paid special attention to these two countries. Egbert Yan, professor of politology from Manheim, criticized the legislation of Latvia and Estonia in his book published in Moscow in 1997. In his opinion, both countries were only formally national and would not be able to assimilate the large numbers of Russian people, same as the Soviet regime had not been able to assimilate Latvians and Estonians: *«These countries are not monoethnic, nevertheless, they act as monoethnic following the ethno nationalism ideology. In future both countries will have to change and turn to state nationalism (or plebiscitary nationalism as Egbert Yan calls it) as it is the only type of nationalism compatible with democracy»* (Ян 1997, p. 277-278).

In 1998 Hanne Margreta Birkenbah from Schleizvig-Holstain World Research Institute published her work «Расследование фактов как средство превентивной дипломатии: Взгляд международных организаций на конфликт по вопросу гражданства в Эстонии и Латвии» (Examination of Facts as Preventive Diplomacy: Opinions of International Organizations about the Citizenship Conflicts in Estonia and Latvia). This work is of great value, especially, because the author has compiled letters and conclusions of experts from international organizations about the possible conflicts in Estonia and Latvia. Mrs. Birkenbah herself in her analytical compilation has expressed the opinion that politicians in Latvia have not followed the standards of democracy closely enough when adopting the laws. Such facts as: much delayed adoption of the Law on Citizenship, the unjustified re-

strictions for non-citizens when applying for some positions, delaying of the naturalization process (Биркенбах 1998, p. 55-56, 67, 87).

In 1990-s evolution of the Latvian Law on Education showed that it was becoming stricter and stricter. In 1991 the law guaranteed education in the state language, at the same time, allowing highschool education in minority languages. The amendments to the law which were made in 1995 and came into effect in 1999 foresaw education in the state language and in other languages in schools of minorities. But, paragraph 9 of the above mentioned law specified, «From September 1, 2004 all the highschools in Latvia shall provide education to students of form 10 only in the state language» (Izglītības likums 1990, p.19). It meant that the native language would not be used in the last years of studies in schools with the Russian language of instruction. The aim of the Education reform was to improve knowledge of the state language among non-Latvian children so, that their knowledge would meet the requirements of the state and market economy. Such target could have no objections. However, the speed of the transition was not considered, the compromise variants suggested by teachers from Russian schools and by some experts were not thought over. Scientists suggested not implementing the reform in such a hurry as the sociological research carried out in schools showed that they were not ready. Officials from the Ministry of Education and Science did not take into consideration other warnings and suggestions, either. As a result, large-scale protest campaign of teachers and children from Russian schools in order to protect their language took place in Latvia in 2003 and 2004. It reached the scale of an ethno political conflict, from which the international image of Latvia suffered greatly. Opinions of Latvians and Russians about the reform were radically different. 77% of Latvians supported the reform; Russians – only 26% supported and 74% were against. People of other nationalities supported the opinions of Russians – only 35% supported the reform (Etnopolitiskā spriedze Latvijā 2005, p. 9). One could notice the incapability of state officials to communicate with the Russian part of the society, to listen to their opinions, to justify their points of view.

Research of communication experts S.Kruks and I.Shulmane clearly reflects the intolerance of mass media during the time of the conflict. Intolerance, rhetoric and verbal aggression from both parties were often heard. Most often they were used by politicians K.Shadurskis, E.Repshe (political party «*Jaunais laiks*»), journalists L.Fedosejev and N.Kabanov from the newspaper «Chas», I.Murniece and R.Dzintars, authors of the newspaper

«Latvijas Avīze». It seemed that the members of the discussion were competing to see who would use more negative words like: dark forces, empty barrel, farce, fascists, hooligans, cheap market and others. All the efficient variants of the reform which could help to reach a compromise offered by scientists (B.Zepa) and representatives of the Russian part of the society (I.Pimenov) (Šulmane, Kruks 2005, p. 46-66) drowned in the sea of negative arguments.

However, the government chose the compromise variant of the reform. Russian highschools were allowed to keep the Russian language of instruction in 40% of subjects, while, most subjects (60%) had to be taught in Latvian. The protest campaign against the reform was followed by unexpected consequences. The Russian people turned out to have united and formed an alliance able to stand for their interests. It consisted of NGOs, political party PCTVL and the Russian press. During the time of the conflict Russians expressed their dissatisfaction not only with losing their native language in schools but also with their role in the Republic of Latvia. Until then, legislation of Latvia had not envisaged the strategy of involving the non-Latvians. Political parties were not open for the new citizens, therefore in 1990-s the political party PCTVL had monopolized protection of the rights of Russians (Apine, Dribins and others 2001, p. 58).

Some liberalization tendencies did not change the essence of ethno politics. The only law that was liberal was the one passed on April 28, 1995 on the status of ex-Soviet citizens. They were declared permanent residents of the Republic of Latvia with the rights to be protected by the state. In 1998, after the referendum the Law on the Citizenship was considerably changed – age limit was cancelled which made naturalization faster.

Amendments made to article 114 of the legislation of the Republic of Latvia (in 2000) stressed the rights of ethnic minorities to preserve and develop their languages as well as ethnic and cultural originality. Scientists started working out the program of social integration in 1998. Nevertheless, the political elite remained as conservative as before and were not able to offer new ideas.



## **LATVIAN SCIENTISTS ABOUT ETHNO POLITICS OF THE REPUBLIC OF LATVIA (2000-2008)**

The hopes to liberalize ethno politics and to direct development of the country towards the pluralistic democracy did not come true. Scientists following dynamics of ethnic relations saw it more critically. Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of Latvia University has finished an extensive research on ethno politics in Latvia and on how it influenced integration of the society (head of the research E.Vebers). The published summary of the research results showed the role in the integration process and contribution of the main actors (governmental organizations, political parties, NGOs, mass media). The authors of the research wanted the society to pay attention to the weak points of ethno politics. Since the beginning of 1990-s governmental institutions had traditionally protected only the interests of Latvians (the majority). Scientists suggested balancing interests of the majority and the minorities as well as creating a separate institution that would be responsible for ethno politics as political parties were missing any ethno political vision or program. It was high time a dialogue was started with non-citizens. Most work to improve integration was done by non-governmental organizations, although, not much was possible without financial and political support of the government. (Apine, Dribins and others 2001, p. 99-103).

New hopes were acquired when Latvia joined the European Union and ratified the Convention on Protection of National Minorities. A group of scientists mainly consisting of researchers from the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology worked at creating the concept of society integration. Though, the corresponding instruments and financial support were expected from politicians. The Integration program was signed and came into force in 2001. At last the ethno political functions of the state were in the hands of our government when the Secretariat of the Minister for Special Assignments for Society Integration Affairs started its work. The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe had closed its mission in Latvia, scientists sounded more optimistic. Ethno politics of Latvia in 1990s was criticized in a collective magazine in which representatives of different spheres analyzed prospects of Latvia in the EU (director T. Jundzis). However, a hope was expressed that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century it would become more constructive, more up-to-date and scientifically grounded (Apine 2004, p. 265).

The unsuccessful implementing of the Education reform had strained the ethnic relations and had slowed down the integration. Several sociological and political researches (N.Muizhnieks, B.Zepa, V.Volkov, J.Rozenvalds, V.Makarov, S.Kruk, I.Shulmane and others) have analyzed the naturalization process, dynamics of interethnic tension, perspectives of creating a civil society in Latvia and have found some contradictions in the integration process. In J.Rozenvald's opinion, the democracy level in Latvia was not satisfactory – its population was not brought up to follow the principles of the democratic culture during its interrelation with a different culture as the political elite were not able to show a good example (Rozenvalds 2005, p. 16).

This situation was very well revealed also in the sociological research on the relations between nations in Latvia carried out by V.Makarov. The question was, «*are interests of Russians taken into consideration in Latvia?*» Only 18% of Latvian respondents had noticed the problem of political exclusion of non-Latvians. At the same time, 68% of Russian-speaking respondents expressed their dissatisfaction with the existing situation (Uzs-kati par starptautiskajām attiecībām Latvijā 2005, p. 8).

Latvians do not see problems their neighbors- Russians go through. They are used to thinking that such division of roles in Latvia is the only one which is correct.

A group of researchers from the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the University of Latvia decided to deal with the problem of resistance to the integration process in Latvia. They did not find resistance more powerful than integration itself, but wanted to find out where and why the obstacles to normal processes were formed. Two studies the results of which were published in 2007 and 2008 have covered a lot of themes: have given theoretical approaches, analyzed the state policy, the role of NGOs, memories of historical events, the role of judgments in the integration process as well as the impact of the psychological factor (identity). They have also compared the processes to the similar ones in Estonia. Leo Dribins was the leader of this research.

The deep social differentiation of the society and the fact that a big part of the society did not believe in the state authority any more, negatively influenced the integration process. The passed years had helped to notice the peculiarities of the Latvian identity – mistrust in the different, precaution, uncertainty about preserving their own identity. How could it be reduced if even the Latvian intelligentsia (for instance, the creative intelligentsia who

had authority among Latvians) could be characterized like that? Their attitude towards the idea of a political nation and the society integration was «more than reserved» (Dribins 2007, p. 120).

When the historical problems of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Europe had become topical, it was important to find out opinions of different inhabitant groups in Latvia on the Latvian history. The study of L. Dribins «The Historical Factor in the Process of Society Integration» explains that our society has no common view at the 20<sup>th</sup> century events in Latvia. The largest disagreement is concerning the events of the World War II and the different, even opposite memories about them create negative emotions, resentment and divide the society. There is no other way out except for reducing the impact of politics on the history interpretation. The different approaches to the complicated events in the history could be approximated by leaving behind the confrontation style in the historians' works and by explaining patiently the events in our history. (Dribins 2007, p. 61-62).

After joining the EU, ethno politics in Latvia did not change much, it did not become more open or more including. Incapability of the conservative political elite to work out a new strategic vision was to be blamed for the inability of ethno politics. Ethno politics in Latvia could not get rid of the influence of the ethno nationalistic ideology. One could agree with L. Dribin's point of view on why in 1990-s a different state model was not possible in Latvia (similarly in Estonia), nowhere in Europe existed such big number of non-integrated citizens (35% in 1989). No other countries experienced such resistance to restoration of independence – furious resistance of the Interfront and the local partocracy. The political claims pushed by them were uncompromising as well. They demanded: to establish a two-community country with two state languages as well as division of power among citizens and newcomers (Dribins 2008, p. 20).

The objective political situation and the experience of the Soviet time did not let the defenders of the independence give up their goal of a national type of state and compromises were not possible, either.

As a result, the model of ethno politics called «ethnic democracy» by some scientists (Semmi Smootha, Prijt Jarve) was created in Latvia. Others, like Leokadija Drobizheva, called it «liberal nationalism». Creation of a similar model in other Eastern European countries was not a coincidence. Other countries were: Serbia, Georgia, Macedonia, and Estonia. These countries followed the standards of democracy: all citizens together were the carriers of the state sovereignty (not one ethnic nation); the par-

liamentary political system was functioning. There was no assimilation in the country; minorities were enjoying the guaranteed development of their culture and ethnic identity, although the political power remained in the hands of the ethnic majority. It was not an ethnocratic regime as some Russian politicians in Latvia liked to say (V.Guschin), but it could be called «insufficient, incomplete democracy».

What was necessary in the beginning of 1990-s, has changed its level of importance after ten, fifteen or more years. The dominating positions of Latvians in the political life of the country ensure that non-Latvians get more and more alienated, but Latvians themselves – more cautious. None of the political parties has had the courage to break this vicious circle. There is only one key to developing pluralistic democracy: the paternalistic tendencies of Latvia in its ethno politics must be suppressed granting real (not any more formal) participation of all citizens in the political processes and in decision-making.

After Latvia joined the EU and after it became more dependent on the universal globalization processes (for instance, immigrant workers from third countries), the question of using Russian resources turned into a pending matter. As mentioned in the first part of this article, there was not a question about Russian partnership in Latvia during the time of the first republic as Russians themselves had limited abilities to participate in the politics. This situation is different in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Russians constitute a considerable part of the society in Latvia, although, the number of Russian inhabitants has gone down from 905, 5 thousand in 1989 to 654, 435 thousand (28, 3%) in 2007 (Demography 2007, p. 8). Russian ethnos is demographically stable in Latvia and can create a wholesome cultural space. (Apine, Volkovs 2007, p. 115). Russian people have remarkable education potential. Already during the Soviet time proportion of people with university education was bigger among Russians than Latvians (44, 8% compared to Latvian 42, 6%) (Zvidriņš, Vanovska 1992, p. 96). This fact in combination with their knowledge of engineering and organizational skills let Russians do business successfully. For quite a long time Russians were passive and were not organizationally united. Although, it stabilized the situation in Latvia during the complicated transitional period, at the same time, it made Latvian politicians believe that Russians should be viewed only as political objects. These times have passed. In 2003-2004 during the protest campaign against the Education reform Russian ethnical mobilization took place. Russian people have now united in several cultural societies

and NGOs. The following organizations are the most powerful ones with regional departments: Russian Community of Latvia, The United Congress of Russian Communities of Latvia, Co-ordination Board of Latvian NGOs (exists since 1998 and unites 34 organizations including Byelorussians and Ukrainians of Latvia). Very active cultural work is done by Russian Cultural Society of Latvia, Association of Teachers of the Russian Language and Literature, Latvian Society of Old Believers, Society for Protection of Schools with Russian Language of Instruction and others (Apine, Volkovs 2007, p. 168).

In order to show the abilities of Russians in Latvia better, politologists like to compare them to Russian people in Estonia. Leo Dribins paid attention to the problem of non-citizens in Latvia and Estonia. Only 54% of Russians in Latvia are citizens, the rest – non-citizens. The number of non-citizens in Estonia is considerably smaller (9, 8%). It can be explained by the number of Russians who have accepted the citizenship of Russia. 7, 5% of permanent residents of Estonia are citizens of some other countries while, in Latvia – only 1, 65%. Russians in Estonia do not have much in common with their country of residence as they do not communicate much with Estonians, mixed marriages are very rare. Talking about Latvia, there are many mixed marriages, Russians and Latvians have a lot of contacts in their everyday life (Dribins 2008, p.24-25).

Juris Rozenvalds drew our attention to the fact that the abilities of Russians to organize themselves are better in Latvia than in Estonia. Latvian Russians already a long time ago have been much bigger and stronger a community than Estonian Russians. Moreover, they do not live in some separate regions; they have spread throughout Latvia and are more educated than Estonian Russians (Pax 2008, p.71).

These comparisons made by scientists of Latvia are not biased as their objectivity has been confirmed by scientists of Estonia. Sergey Isakov, professor and researcher of Russian history in Estonia regretfully admitted the low level of Russian self-organization in Estonia as he saw them as a conglomerate of separate persons (Исаков 2008, p.72).

Sociologist Marju Lauristina considers Russians in Estonia passive and weak, just waiting for some help from outside. Therefore, Estonian politicians do not see them as serious partners (Kacs 2007, p. 75). Such opinions do not exist in Latvia. Latvian politicians see the growing potential of Russians but, anyway, do not offer any partnership.

Politicians in Latvia are afraid of the new citizens joining voters which would change proportions of political parties in the parliament, although, the society in Latvia could benefit from political competition. Membership of Russian politicians in political coalitions and the government would offer us more choices and make ethnopolitical decisions more flexible and more pragmatic. Scientists suggest making few steps towards pluralistic democracy which would mean partial recognition of Russian citizens. It would mean development for the whole society changing the ethnically colored identity for the common civil, national identity. Ethnic borders of political parties and the theme of ethnic solidarity exploited by all politicians would turn into anachronism. J. Rozenvald in his interview to one Russian newspaper admitted that it did not change anything as Saeima still had the same proportions – 75% to 25%.

The situation could change if new parties for the new citizens were established and if the so called «Russian» parties were invited to join the coalition. But, the fifteenth government in Latvia that started its work in March 2009 led by V. Dombrovsky was formed without participation of Russian politicians.

It would require great courage and extraordinary thinking. Amendments to the legislation might not be made so soon, though; amendments to the Language Law granting the status of minority languages to Russian, Polish, Lithuanian, Byelorussian and other languages would liquidate the existing contradiction between the law and the real life. Non-citizens would become politically more active if they could participate in municipal elections. While discussing pluses and minuses of these steps the psychological effect is forgotten: it is necessary to create at least small changes in the political routine to make Russians feel understood which would increase mutual trust in the society.

Georg Shopflin, Hungarian-British politologist, expert of the project called «Resistance to Society Integration: Reasons and Consequences» who has read a report on June 9, 2006 during a seminar organized by the project group, has expressed a significant opinion. All national movements in the Central and Eastern Europe had not only political and economic motivation. It has been a «great» fight for recognition »to make the «large» nations recognize the new ones as equal» (Resistance to Society Integration 2007, page 14). At present 40% of inhabitants in Latvia (Russians and other non-Latvians, citizens and non-citizens) are waiting for a similar recognition from the natives of Latvia – the Latvians.

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**POLES IN LATGALIA: MARKING THEIR IDENTITY  
IN MULTICULTURAL EVERYDAY LIFE**

Latgalian Poles present an interesting case of a network of people that have retained their identity through the reference to the mythical community with which they lost the territorial link more than 200 years ago. As may be seen, we keep ourselves here far from calling Latgalian Poles – a group, if this term is reserved for what P.A.Sorokin used to call the «crystallized social groups», with distinctive structure, borders etc. We, thus, see that the private Polish «milieu» has predated the «public» one. There are obvious dialectical feed-back relationships between the two levels of social life – official and private.

In Latgalia many Latgalians identify themselves as Polish without acting as a Polish minority, both, in private or in public life. This may be even attributed not so much to the Soviet or tsarist russification, as it is often assumed by Poles, but to the overall pattern of identification which is present in this borderland area. Mixing up of ethnic groups had not led to the development of one and only one common identification except the regional or the local one, but to the plurality of identities, that, like family names help to identify the individuals without any further practical consequences.

**Key words:** Polish identity, national identity, ethnic group, ethnic minority, recognition, everyday life, private and public life

For people from outside, not knowing the details of Polish and Latvian history, and majority of those who settled in Eastern Latvia during the 50 years of the Soviet (including 4 years of the German Nazi) rule, didn't, the emergence in 1989 of vivid Polish minority that formed up to 14% of inhabitants of the largest city in the region, Daugavpils with more than 100,000 inhabitants, might have been a surprise. (See: Table 1.) Today, at

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annual city festival, in the presence of the mayor, Polish kids dance Polish traditional dances in national costumes, Latvian and Polish flags hang over the renewed building of the Polish high school named after Polish national independence hero Marshall Joseph Piłsudski and Polish officials visit their compatriots in the limousines marked with Polish flags having travelled the whole day from Poland. All that sounds normal, but these public signs of Polish identity are, in fact, the recognition that was the private reality of life for some of Daugavpils's citizens for a long time before 1990, when Latvia regained independence.

Table 1.

**History of the ethnic composition of Dyneburg (Daugavpils)  
1897-2005 in % (Barkovska, Šteimanis 2005, p.17, 101)**

Nationality	1897	1935	1959	1970	2005
Jews	46	22	3	2	–
Russians	28	21	56	57	48
Poles	16	18	18	14	15
Germans	4	1	–	–	–
Latvians	2	32	13	14	17
Byelorussians	2	3	6	8	8
Others	2	6	4	5	12
Total	69 696	51 200	66 600	100 400	108 206

Tim Edensor summed up this view, when presenting the wide scope of illustrations on how national identity is based upon the «trivial elements» of «everyday life» (Edensor 2002). Now, «everyday life» is quite a complicated concept in contemporary social sciences. Philosophically, to my taste, it has been analyzed at best by Jean-Claude Kaufmann, who transcended the earlier concept of «habitus» developed from earlier tradition by Bourdieu and pointed to its embodiment. The habits of our bodies, presuppose, are reflexive thoughts and conceptions (Kaufmann 2001). The conclusion is that it is in the private world of everyday life that persons experience their identities. Kaufmann's approach is also significant, as in his analysis he moves further towards acknowledgment of variety and flexibility of identities while Edensor remains at the more traditional stage of distinctive national identities as such.

Seen from this perspective, Latgalian Poles present interesting case of a network of people that retain one of their identities through the reference to the mythical community with which they lost the territorial link more than 200 years ago. Seen from Polish perspective, there is a Polish island, which in itself is atypical. Some nations, like English cultivate their insular traits as even constitutive of their national character due to good historical reasons. For the same reasons Poles, being historical nation of the continental interior, see themselves as settled together in a historically changing but always continuous space. Cases like Livonian Poles are anomalies, strengthened by the ethnic cleansing and re-nationalization policies in the 20<sup>th</sup> century that widely decimated the so-called Polish belt that once stretched between Warsaw and Brasław (Byelorussian Braslau) separating the Balts from the Eastern Slavs. Though, despite claims by some of Daugavpils's Poles, in 1920 Poland moved its forces back from the city and the Latvian-Polish border was set up 30 kilometers further East, the distance from Poland became much further once the Molotov-Ribbentrop agreement was recognized after the war and the Eastern Poland ceased to the Soviet Republics of Lithuania, Byelorussia and Ukraine. This is at least Polish history of the political borders in this area and, noteworthy, this is the history shared by Poles, both, living in Latgalia or in Poland.

In 1561 the Grand Master of the Teutonic Order Gotthard Kettler surrendered the territory which is called today Latgalia to Sigismund August, king of Poland and Grand Duke of Lithuania. Both countries were then united already for more than a hundred years, and the new territory became their joint property, while Kettler became the vassal Duke of neighboring Curland. 17<sup>th</sup> century witnessed the fierce Polish-Swedish battles over the area until, in 1680 the Polish-Swedish Treaty of Oliwa ended the war by dividing Livonia into Swedish and Polish territories. *Polonisch Livland*, as it was called by the German geographers, until the end of the World War I and in, then official Polish, «Polskie Inflanty» was made by Polish Sejm the Duchy separated from Poland and Lithuania by Daugavpils (then Dyneburg in Polish) as the capital where local Sejms were meeting and electing two deputies to the all-national Sejm in Warsaw. The local nobility of German origin was recognized as Polish gentry and became polonized quickly. With the interest in opening its window to the West, Russia continued its pressure and, first in 1721 the Swedes lost their part to Russia, while Polish Livonia was annexed by Russia in 1772 during the first partition of Poland. Under the Russian rule the area was included into the wider district

of Witebsk (now in Byelorussia) and throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century first was a strong but small garrison town until 1880s when it started developing fast as a strategic railroad center.

As may be seen, we keep ourselves far from calling Latgalian Poles a group, if this term is reserved for what P.A.Sorokin used to call the «crystalized social groups» with distinctive structure, borders etc. There is such a «group» of course, and this is the local department of the Union of Poles in Latvia (ZPŁ). The need for such organization was felt deeply amongst some Poles during the Soviet regime, when the previously active Polish organizations had been delegalized already in 1940 during the 1<sup>st</sup> occupation. While, in Riga the academic Polish semi-institutional activity has been reported since 1970s, in Daugavpils, though, the memory of pre-war activities was held in private, *«when I was about 5 years old both granddads used to tell how the Union of Poles had acquired that house, the lot, how they were buying it, walking around the town, it was advertised in the press, they were collecting money, they bought the [Polish] house in 1930,»* recalls Mr. Władysław Nowicki, one of the former presidents of the Union. Only in 1988 meetings of the small group of Poles started in one of the schools in which a Pole was the director, who preferred to keep himself off the meetings. *«After so many years of Soviet occupation everybody was afraid as all members of the pre-war association were arrested and [sent] to Siberia, afterwards, some returned, some did not, there were such fears,»* as recalls the organizer who succeeded in collecting the group who was allowed to act as Educational-Cultural Polish Center. In the same 1988 the Center transformed itself into a Union.

It was difficult as the activists could not publish in media the information addressed to other local Poles, so, for this purpose as Ms. Albina Czibele, the organizer and another past president recalls the Polish cultural event, the concert in the city's Culture House was organized. Though, the entrance was paid, the performance was local, through the private networking about 600 people came, amongst whom some agreed to sign the letter to authorities petitioning for granting the permission to organize the Union of Poles. As first, a Communist Party member and a local Soviet bureaucrat of Polish origin was elected as the President .

Another strategic factor which appears in these memories is the connection of «native» Daugavpils Poles, with the «new» ones, who arrived here especially in the 1940 s already under the Soviet regime and who knew both, Russian and Russians better and acted as go-betweens helping to set

up the Union of Poles again in the Soviet reality already under the «perestroika» (Kirczewski & Fuszara 2009). In this story one sees the role of private memories and private networking that helped to set up the formal organization that, as it is estimated counted then about 2 thousand members. These romantic days of successful struggle that continued even after the regaining of independence by Latvia in 1990 are contrasted nowadays with regular activities of the organization that counts about 360 members today. Interesting detail in this history is that the Daugavpils chapter of the Union of Poles in Latvia (PZŁ) is known under its own name as «Promień» (Radiant). The name comes from the Polish Roman Catholic pre-war organization which was active in Daugavpils and Latgale and points to the fact that under the Soviet regime the private Polish tradition was also preserved within the Catholic Church which was – in contrast to the pre-war Soviet territory – tolerated even if oppressed by Soviet authorities in the annexed Baltic countries.

This sketch of history illustrates the main sociological elements: a group that meets informally, most likely in a church where the service in Polish continued through all these times and, they have tea for mutual namesday parties that Catholics organize in contrast to Protestant birthdays. So, the people knew each other, knew as Poles, perhaps their parents had already known each other as well. There is family memory of the pre-Soviet era, when the organized Polish life was active. Then, there was the feeling that times changed for the better. As an idiom about the communist societies said – the signs of «liberalization» make the more temperamental to act precisely, to exploit the opportunity and to set up what seems to be possible at the moment – the culture club, later the Polish association – while the more prudent majority waits looking what will happen to the initiators. As the «liberalization» is real, the news are spread around amongst the, until then, the non-active category of those who feel Polish, but are not given the opportunity to practice it. They may not be church-goers, some were communist party members, etc. but they are transformed as the transformation goes on and a formalized group is created and legalized.

We see, thus, that the private Polish «milieu» has predated the «public» one. It has been, in a sense, hidden in the cold interiors of churches, in the warm little wooden houses traditionally inhabited by Daugavpils citizens and in the less well warmed rooms in the cheap mass apartment houses build in the second stage of the Soviet rule. Once allowed to be present in public, it helped the extension and intensification of the private Polish life.

There is obvious dialectical feed-back relationship between the two levels of social life – official and private. The groups crystallized in the form of associations, like «Promień» tend, however, to distort our perspective. If in Daugavpils, as the official statistics claims, in 2006 lived more than 16.000 Poles, the number of those who are members of the Polish association (360) is minimal, in comparison. There is, thus, a core group of Polish identity and quite a number of people who subscribe to Polish identity, but who are doing it rather privately. In fact, travelling through the city I often heard information that one shop assistant was Polish, and that a taxi driver had had a Polish grandmother, though, both spoke Russian. So, the first impression is that, though, most Poles here are not practicing their Polish-ness publicly, they are not hiding it and, are even somehow proud of the newly recognized Polish identity present in the town.

It is well-known that a language is not necessarily correlated to the national identity. Gaelic is rarely spoken amongst Scots or Irish. Though, we are told that Polish was spoken widely amongst Poles in the pre-Soviet times, and this is related to the proliferation of Polish-language education, slightly restricted after 1934 coup by then Prime Minister Ulmanis, after decades of total banishing of Polish from schools under the Soviet rule it is nowadays rarely used as the vernacular idiom of communication. It is seen even amongst the members of the Union of Poles when asked what language they used at home. (See: Table 2.)

*Table 2.*

**Answers to the question, «What idioms do you use in your everyday life?» ( in %, 258 = n = 100%)**

<b>Everyday vernacular</b>	<b>At home</b>	<b>Outside</b>
Polish only	20	2
Polish and Russian	29	18
Polish and Latvian	1	2
Polish, Russian and Latvian	11	28
Russian only	32	30
Latvian only	1	3
Russian and Latvian	4	15
Polish, Latvian and Byelorussian	1	1

In the most private situations, which means at home, only 62% of Poles speak Polish. Moreover, Polish as the sole idiom is spoken at home only by 20%, while Russian is the only language used at home by 32% of the respondents. In the public space, outside their home, use of the official state language, i.e. Latvian is reported by 49%, while use of Russian rises from 77% at home to 92%. It is no surprise to learn that with decades of Russification of Poles and the influx of Russian-speaking population during the Soviet times, Russian is the local lingua franca, vernacular for (almost) everybody. What is striking is the fact that more than one third of the Daugavpils Poles interviewed do not speak Polish at home. For some, as we mentioned it is a necessity as they don't know Polish at all, but, as this is not the case in our example, where almost all at least could somehow communicate with students from Warsaw in Polish, some other explanation is needed.

Books in Polish are kept in majority of homes (88%) even if Polish is not spoken daily. That could be an old book of prayers in Polish (they were not published in the Soviet days) or a new one, acquired from Poland (26% mention having Polish prayer books), but also some of the Polish literary canons, including, above all, poetry by Adam Mickiewicz (22%) and historical novels by Henryk Sienkiewicz (29%). Some mention Polish cookbooks and songbooks.

Being cut off from daily contacts with Polish printed media – and here is the contrast with the Soviet times when a Polish-language official newspaper for Poles in Lithuania was available as well as few titles imported from Poland – Daugavpils Poles enjoyed contact with their mother culture mostly through the Polish television channels, «Although, we tend to complain about the dominating role television has taken in the cultural life nowadays, it has to be admitted that in most cases it is television that helps our people in Latgalia to get in touch with Polish culture. The attached table demonstrates the answers to the questions about contacts with Polish mass media.»

In the context of the multicultural character of the social environment in Latgalia one should point out that the regular column in Russian in one of the local Russian-language newspapers prepared by a local Polish journalist and presenting «Polish perspective» on the various matters is considered «Polish» press. Press in Polish practically means either not regularly edited monthly or bi-monthly bulleting of the Union of Poles or Catholic magazines arriving from Poland and disseminated in churches. As for television, there are two competing short Polish «windows» in the local



TV channels but most often watched (by 58% of respondents) is TV Polonia channel disseminated from Poland and addressed specifically to Poles abroad. Only 10% of respondents mentioned the local TV programs in Polish. These facts show that, though Polish is not vernacular for the majority of local Poles, they have partial competence in Polish that allows them to watch and to listen to TV programs in Polish (See: Table 3.).

Table 3.

**Contacts with Media in Polish (in %, n = 258 = 100%)**

Type of media	Yes, most often	Yes	Yes	Yes, less often	Yes, n.d.	None
Press x	8	16	3	10	13	46
Broadcasting <sup>xx</sup>	11	18	4	10	20	46
Television <sup>xx</sup>	25	23	2	12	18	20
Internet xx	3	5	1	8	8	75

x – frequency classified as: more than once a month, once a month; less often; sporadic.

xx – frequency classified as: daily; few times a week; few times a month; less often.

First, even within the most intimate social life, that is, in the marital ties one observes the ethnic pluralism. Almost half of all unions are ethnically mixed. We also inquired about the more extensive social ties (See: Table 4).

Table 4.

**Answers to the question, «Most of your friends and acquaintances are...» (in %, n = 258 = 100%)**

Poles	33
Russians	8
Latvians	2
Others	3
Difficult to say, they vary	53
No data	1

For the majority (53%) their intimate social milieu is also ethnically mixed. There is, however, a smaller (33%) category of those who persist on keeping the closed intimate world composed of Poles only. Not surprisingly, this applies, above all, to elderly people of whom almost half (47%) have intimate contacts within the Polish milieu. Everybody who studies or works is immersed in the ethnically pluralist everyday world where the ethnic likeness might be helpful but certainly not the condition for establishing personal relations. Even amongst the core group of organized Poles, those who are holding their intimate ties with Poles only amount to 35%, while majority (59%) live in the pluralistic milieu.

One third of the interviewed Poles live within the purely Polish micro milieu, one third are ethnically isolated (See: Table 5.).

*Table 5.*

**Answers to the question, «How many Poles do you know outside your family?» (In %, n = 259 = 100%)**

<b>How many Poles do you know</b>	<b>In Daugavpils</b>	<b>In Latvia</b>
Nobody	33	35
One only	4	4
A couple, few	33	33
many	28	22

One may suspect, though a more detailed analysis of social networks would be needed, that they relate to other Poles (they would not be part of our sample otherwise) either through formal membership ties in »Promień« or through their family. Younger and better educated people (a correlated fact) have more Polish contacts in the city as well as outside. This may have resulted from the liberation of social contacts in 1990. Contacts with other Poles living outside Daugavpils are widespread almost to the same degree as in the city itself. Moreover, one fifth of the interviewed Poles (19%) have close family in Poland, 22% distant relatives and 15% – friends and acquaintances. Here, also the younger and better educated have more contacts. It again seems to be related to their life after 1990 when the travels to Poland and from Poland to Latvia became easy and also family relationship could have been rediscovered and reestablished. Apart from the official visits of Polish authorities and organizations, private contacts have

been established through the NGOs and the Church organizing holidays in Poland for young people.

Almost half of our respondents (43%) have rejected the ethnic criterion in the marital choice while slightly more than one fourth (28%) have admitted such an expectation (See: Table 6). Not surprisingly, better education, male gender and younger age are related to the ethnic blindness as concerns the marital choice. What is, however, interesting is that the native Daugavpils inhabitants are also less restrictive as 54% deny the significance of ethnic criterion in the marriage.

*Table 6.*

**Answers to the question, «People's opinion about mixed marriages differs greatly. What do you think?» (In %, n = 258 = 100%)**

Poles should marry Poles	28
It is better if Poles marry between themselves, but it is difficult nowadays	22
Nationality does not matter in a marriage	43

In the everyday life the mutual assimilation seems to be the dominating factor. If the identity of the marital partner does not interfere with one's own, it is possible because the identities discussed here are multiple and many-sided. One may remain a Pole in a Russian-speaking union with a Byelorussian partner, the partial Polish identity can be retained in that union also through the descent. Of course, it would be impossible if identities were exclusive.

Contemporary social sciences more and more point to the food (and drink) as important element of everyday culture. People from Central and Eastern Europe care very much for their «identity» food but rarely take it as the matter for academic interest. It may have its roots in the centuries of the strict distinction between the cosmopolitan noble cuisine and the simple rural serfs' food held in contempt by the gentry. However, the loss of independence and waves of anti-Russian insurrections led many of the upper strata of Poles (and Lithuanians who became predominantly polonized as well as Byelorussians) into exile in the West where the peculiarity of Polish food, especially the festive type was elevated to one of the national imponderabilia. Not surprisingly, in the national epos «Pan Tadeusz» written in Polish in Paris by the post-humorous Bard of the Old Republic, Adam Mickiewicz, description of the «home food» is one of the crucial elements.

His recipe how to make proper **bigos**, a dish from slowly cooked sweet and sour cabbage with sausages and game meat remains until today the point of reference in Polish culture (see «Pan Tadeusz» filmed by Andrezej Wajda), both, public or private. Such «proper» food served on main festive days of the Roman Catholic calendar – Christmas Eve and Easter is the marker of Polish-ness even for the people who do not practice it in the ordinary life.

Let us see how it is here in Daugavpils. We have asked all the interviewed about the Polish elements in their diet and answers vary very much. This is understandable as the dishes considered as Lithuanian by the Lithuanians are even included into the standard menu of Poles living in Warsaw and in Cracow, especially «*chłodnik litewski*» («Lithuanian cold soup» which is equivalent to Lithuanian «*saltimbarščiai*») or *kołduny* (*koldunai*). The union of two nations prevails at Polish table until today. Certainly, Polish/Lithuanian/Byelorussian food differs from the traditional Latgalian peasant food which was composed of meat eaten in old days once or twice a year, cheese, cream, bread and beer with cucumbers plus sweet water fish. Still, traditional food of Grand Duchy of Lithuania was considered poor by the Poles who used to nickname their compatriots «Botwina», i.e. the beet leaves considered as the basic daily stuff (in *saltimbarščiai* of course). Contemporary Latgalian cuisine is enriched by elements that arrived from the East such as *soljanka* soup, *pielmieni* dumplings (different from Polish *pierogi* and Lithuanian *koldunai*) and «sea cabbage» made from the seaweeds.

One fourth of the interviewed (exactly 25%) have answered that they do not cook any Polish food at home, while amongst the remaining three quarters, the emblematic cabbage *bigos* was most often mentioned (21%), though, we have not inspected the orthodoxy of the recipe used. On the lengthy list of the Polish dishes one sometimes finds examples that for someone like the author seem to belong to a different ethnic culture. They are dishes like Easter *pascha* cheesecake, *blini*, Christmas *kutia*, *koldunai* and *zeppelin* dumplings. Various cakes, Christmas carp and red borscht, tripe or tartar beefsteak are really important ingredients of the contemporary general Polish cuisine as well as the red and white *kisiel*, that is sour jelly. Of course, as mentioned earlier, not only all cuisine is mixed, but borderland's cuisine is mixed predominantly, but, whatever the source of the culinary product is, it is impressive that three quarters of Poles are paying attention to having at least some items in their home cuisine marking their Polish identity.

Finally, the definition of Polish-ness should be analyzed.

There were few questions in the interview devoted exactly to this issue. First of all, a list of possible criteria has been offered for multiple choice answers. The genealogical criteria (one must be born from Polish ancestors), the same repeated in terms of the family name (one must have Polish family name), the cultural criteria (one must know Polish language and culture), denominational (one should be Roman Catholic) as well as the classical subjective (one should feel Polish). These options were taken from the earlier open-ended interviews carried out in Poland and almost nobody chose a different answer as seen in the table below (See: Table 7).

*Table 7.*

**Answers to the question, «What makes it possible to call one person a Pole? Please mention all necessary conditions.» (In %, n = 258 = 100%)**  
(Percentages need not be summed up vertically to 100%, as the number of choices was not limited)

To be born in a Polish family	69
Knowledge of the Polish language and culture	67
Having a Polish name	22
Being a Roman-Catholic	49
Feeling as a Pole	39
Other	4
No answer	2

Two most often criteria applied when defining Poles are: Polish descent and familiarity with the language and culture. Unfortunately, we had not separated the language from other elements of culture, not knowing yet the linguistic patterns within Daugavpils. It is obvious that this criterion, if applied strictly, would eliminate many Poles in Daugavpils, so, one must assume that familiarity with the Polish language is only one component of the Polish-ness, not the necessary one. But tracing the descent in one's family must be based on another criterion, seemingly less popular, that is, on the subjective identity feelings. Such identity, when expressed in the past by the ancestors becomes the objective fact in contrast to the subjectivity felt at present. In short, one learns in his family that he/she is of Polish descent and that the ancestors, at least some, knew Polish language and culture. The past, however difficult to verify, is subjectively felt as the ob-

jective evidence. Polish names are not helpful in such objectivization, as some, even if slightly differently spelled, like Wasilewski may serve several Slavic nations, while others as Manteuffel, despite its German origin may hide a well established Polish identity. Though, the stereotype of Poles being Roman Catholics prevalent in Poland is true, people are well aware of the fact that (due to Polish rule here) native Latvians in Latgalia are mostly Roman Catholics as well, so, in fact, the denomination cannot serve as the distinguishing criterion. Another stereotype in the Eastern Europe is that of a Pole as the landlord. We asked about the nobility tradition in the family and it was confirmed in less than one fourth of the cases. It is not the religion, nor the inherited social status but the (some) competence and adherence to Polish culture as inherited within a family that is considered the core of the Polish identity. The better educated respondents' opinions differed from the ones of less educated not by acknowledgment of these criteria but by relatively less often mentioning the pure subjectivity as well as the pure «objectivity» such as possessing a Polish family name. It means that Polish intelligentsia points more clearly at the active factor of cultural and linguistic competence in the Polish identity.

We asked, «What are the features that differentiate Poles from other ethnic groups inhabiting Latgalia?» This time it was a purely open question to which the long list of mostly positive characteristics was given. So, we have been told that Poles are kind, well bred, know how to behave, are cultured, educated, open, well-wishing, ready to help, active, cordial, energetic, courageous, tolerant, peaceful, proud, reliable, conscientious, decent, laborious, gay, fair, just. Further, some pointed to religiousness and patriotism. Someone said that, «Polish girls are nice, there is something about them»; rather than, «Poles do not drink as much as Russians». It is all typical for the ethnic self-praising if not the remark made by someone that «there is a special status reserved for Poles; they are better treated». Seemingly in the regional collective tradition the memory is preserved about once Polish Livonia and Poles are really granted some historical rights even if, in reality, the particular families are not descending from those who once ruled here (in fact, the only one we met is the Russian-speaking man from the once polonized Baltic German barons' family who is in charge of the municipal guard now. As since the 19<sup>th</sup> century the former «lords» were able to oppose the ruling Russian administration only with the «lordly culture», that is the cultivated ways to socialize and manners of behavior this marked the ethnic stereotype. The thing with ethnic and other stereotypes is that they

influence not only the behavior of outsiders, but also – what is often forgotten by those struggling against the stereotypes – influence the behavior of the insiders who are taught at home and in the social contacts to behave as the stereotype expects.

This process which has been described by Gregory Bateson in terms of the feedback may lead to strengthening of cultural differences within a given milieu. It seems that Latgalian Poles are actually the «status group» in Daugavpils, as Max Weber has said, and feel the burden of the stereotyped expectation to keep up the ethos of the well behaving people. Polish sociologists (Florian Znaniecki and his disciple Józef Chałasiński) have pointed out the noble origin of such ethos, as well as the fact that in Polish case at least this noble ethos has been inherited by the Polish intelligentsia which is itself related to the massive character (more than 10% of inhabitants of the old Republic were treated as belonging to nobility and only under the Russian rule this petty nobility was largely reduced to peasants) of the lower-upper stratum. It is important to note the unusually high number of the interviewed Poles (35%) with university education. It proves that the Polish ethos in Daugavpils is linked with intelligentsia as its main representative.

It is difficult to present the results of such open interviews in figures. «Culture» as the differentiating factor was mentioned directly in this or another way by 23%, while the religious belonging and the Roman Catholicism by 17%. On the other hand, 17% of the interviewed were of opinion that Poles do not distinguish themselves in any substantial way from their neighbors in Daugavpils. As the negative pole of the self-assessment in some individual cases quarrelling and gossiping were listed. An interesting question is whether the Latgalian Poles resemble any other group of the Polish Diaspora, as described in the relevant literature. The most striking similarity seems to be that to the «old» *Polonia* resident in many countries. Polish schools and community centers, as well as cultural events, such as folk concerts or parish festivals, are important everywhere, as they have the very special function of cultivating the common culture. Yet, they refer to «Polishness» of the ethnic, folk kind, which is extremely traditional and usually linked to the Catholic Church. This is exceedingly important for Latgalians of Polish extraction, who, for decades, have been unable to cultivate their national roots and are now proudly and joyfully returning to their traditions, as if coming back to the sources of their identity. There is, however, a certain risk involved in cultivating such a very traditional perception of Polishness: it is hardly attractive to the younger generation.

The young prefer different pastimes or forms of entertainment, and would enjoy different cultural activities.

Throughout all our stay in the field the feelings were mixed. Mixed as well are the reports prepared by the researchers. Those who studied the Polish youth, Polish organizations, Polish culture and Polish schools were pessimistic, pointing to the lack of vitality today and nostalgic remembering the heroic past when at the turn of 1980s and 1990s the Polish minority was emerging to the public life. On the other hand, the picture received from the interviews is not so gloomy. Today I see two reasons for this ambivalence. Firstly, thinking about the past, one is surprised that Polish-ness has survived centuries in this particular corner of Latvia despite of the lack of any link with the country of origin. Secondly, more important is the difference between mass Polish-ness as evidenced in the impressive figures of those who give Polish nationality in the census and the small community of organized, active Poles. The ambivalence also results from certain assumptions of the researchers who are inevitably using their own categories when interpreting the social reality.

In Latgalia many Latgalians identify themselves as Polish without acting as Polish minority, both, in their private or in the public life. This may be even attributed not so much to the Soviet or tsarist Russification, as it is often assumed by Poles, but to the overall pattern of identification which is present in this borderland area. Mixing of ethnic groups has not led to the development of one and only common identification except for the regional or the local one. It has resulted in plurality of identities which, like family names help to identify the individual without any further practical consequences. The pattern was somehow started already when Latgalia was politically Polish-Lithuanian and when Latvian peasants were called Poles by their neighbors from the Swedish Livonia. Now, the genealogical remembrance of one's Polish ethnic roots has not disappeared but it counts little in the social life of an individual in this multi-ethnic society. These dispersed Poles do not lead a different everyday life than their Latvian or Russian or Byelorussian partners, neighbors and colleagues.

What is interesting, though, is the relationship between this quite massive dispersed Polish-ness and the small organized Polish minority which partially lives the Polish way. I think that the first one depends on the other. Even those Poles who do not know other Poles and do not attend Polish events know that there are Poles in the town. It is much less than what a Pole from Poland expects but much more than just being an isolated in-



dividual. Here, for most of the Poles, Polish-ness is probably one of the possible ways of breaking anonymity and giving some meaning to the individual being. Here we are confronting the ethnic or the national bond in its purely symbolic character. I speak Russian, I eat Latvian dishes, but I am one of the Poles. Polish-ness is, thus, a symbolic community that has vague borders and vague centers but it exists.

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**Olga Peipina**

## **THE ROLE OF ETHNIC IDENTITY IN THE MODERN MULTI-ETHNIC SOCIETY**

Within the frames of the project «Interaction of Collective and Individual Identities of Ethnic Groups in Eastern Latvia as a Factor for Development of a Civil Society» (Project No 07.2103 of the Latvian Scientific Council, 2007-2008) analysis of linguistic identity of ethnic groups in Latgale was carried out. At the stage of preparing and analyzing materials for the research the works of several researchers on ethnic relations and some theoretical propositions have been used (G.Allport, Y.Arutyunyan, R.Clemens, C.H.Dodd, L.Drobizheva, J.Habermass, K.A.Noels, R.E.Park, I.Shibutani). This review briefly summarizes the theoretical approaches which have been used in analyzing and interpreting the results. The issue of identity is an extremely complicated one since it involves the process of individual's self-consciousness.

**Key words:** ethnic identity, individual's self-consciousness, inter-group contacts, inter-ethnic relations, collective behavior, language identity

### **1. Theoretical background**

G. Allport's hypothesis of intergroup contacts which was for the first time described in the work «The Nature of Prejudice» published in 1954, is one of the most widespread conceptions in the study of ethnic relations. (Allport 1954/1979). According to this hypothesis the contact with representatives of another (ethnic) group can reduce prejudices against this group, since this is an opportunity to develop more adequate understanding, and to discover common views and values, which can promote positive attitudes and relations.

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Later studies based on Allport's hypothesis of communication revealed many new prerequisites which are necessary for creating a positive attitude towards other groups (Pettigrew 2002). T.Pettigrew thinks that it is necessary to pay more attention to the process of creating attitudes – how and why the change of attitude happens. He believes that this process can be seen as acquisition of information about the other group, can help to change behavior, to create emotional ties and to change of attitudes towards one's own group.

G.H.Meads's views on the essence of the concept of identity are stated in his work «Mind, Self and Society». All individuals belong to a certain nationality, live in a certain geographical territory, with certain personal and social ties, with one or another political attitude. People live in social structures which they have not created; they live under the conditions of institutional and social order which they have never established. They are always bound by restrictions of language, norms, customs and laws. All of them are constituent elements in the structure «Me», but individual «I» always reacts to the specified situations in a unique way.

Examining the personal categories «I» and «Me» connected with social experience, G. Meads defines the «I» category as a reaction of an individual to the attitudes of others, but the «Me» category as an organized whole set of attitudes of others to an individual. The behavior of a certain individual can be understood only proceeding from the behavior of the whole social group which the individual belongs to. That is why individual experience from the point of view of interpersonal communication, which is an important factor of social nature, in the scientist's opinion, is joined with the collective behavior experience of a social community.

Since a personality cannot exist separately from society, a society should be understood as a structure which is realized via a continuous process of communicative social acts where separate individuals are always oriented towards each other. American sociologist R.E. Park examines the «I» category in the social context in the light of collective behavior (Hughes, Park 1950). Society should be seen as a product of interaction between individuals who constitute it and whose behavior is regulated by the whole set of traditions and norms which appear in the process of interaction. Ideas about self (my «I») depend on the roles which they aspire to perform in the communities they live in. These roles are based on recognition of their individual status in the society by others.

In his work «Race and Culture» (1950), analyzing racial relations and racial differences in his American society R.E.Park introduces the concept

of «social distance». This concept characterizes the degree of closeness between groups and individuals. The degree of closeness determines the degree of mutual influence between social groups. The greater the social distance between groups or between an individual and a group, the less they influence each other. Racial, ethnic prejudices, in the author's opinion, are an objective reality of any modern society because this is just a tendency to keep the social distance.

In the process of integration a new self-categorization is formed through belonging to a certain social category («who am I?», «who are we?»), and social, national, and civil identities are formed and enhanced. One of the most significant identities in the system of an ethnic group's identities is the ethnic identity. In sociology there are some attempts to systematize and describe the main models of ethnic identity. According to sociologist V.Volkov, these might be the following:

1. ethnic identity is an inherited complex of social and psychological characteristics (inherited or primordial identity);
2. ethnic identity is a permanent unity of social characteristics in the process of creation. (Apine, Volkovs 2007, p. 127).

Some ethno sociologists consider ethnic identity, on the one hand, narrower than ethnic self-consciousness because it is a cognitive-motivational centre of ethnic self-consciousness but, on the other hand, wider because it contains in itself the subconscious layer as well.

What is the most important element of ethnic identity – an ethnic origin, a language, faith, religious identity, culture, ethnic self-consciousness? We think that the ethnic identity is interweaving of several universal and local peculiarities where language occupies one of the main positions. According to J.Habermas communication theory, language, first of all, is means of communication which encourages creating mutual understanding of the common «living environment» of an individual and a group (Habermas 1984, p.465).

In a number of scientific sources the significance of language for strengthening people's national identity, for creating civil consciousness, and for extending the process of community of values is also emphasized. C.H.Dodd, analyzing the dynamics of intercultural communication, underlines that language competence helps understanding of values of other nations (Dodd 1997). But this author warns that the fundamental principles peculiar to different individuals and societies influence greatly the intercultural communication and can be the reason for mutual lack of understanding. Adaptation

to the culture norms of the dominant group inevitably causes psychological stress in the adapting group. As a consequence of this – understanding of the insignificance of one's own culture can create the feeling of hostility to the environment. Thus, Dodd C.H. substantiates his theory of «culture shock» which explains lack of confidence and anxiety as a reaction to concern about one's own status and place in an alien society.

Competence in another nation's language helps either to overcome this feeling of insecurity, or deepens it. Language is one of the most influential factors of ethnic stratification in J. Shibutani's opinion. (Shibutani, Kwan 1965, p. 626). It is possible to agree with the scientist's opinion that the ethnic self-consciousness and its symbolic representation – the ethnic language, are important factors of ethnic stratification or ethnic consolidation. Educational establishments play a significant role not only in teaching a language but also, with the help of a language, in enhancing positive attitudes towards the users of this language. Here we can refer to numerous researches by the American scientist J. Ogbu on the importance of educational systems and descriptions of a culture identity through preserving one's own native ethnic language and learning another language (Ogbu 1995).

Awareness of the ethnic identity can increase or decrease depending on various factors, for example, the standard of living: the higher the standard of living the higher the satisfaction from it, the less the awareness of the ethnic identity and vice versa. Ethnic identity is one of the most important elements in the system of groups of ethnic identities. In the transition type of a society it can become the main element in the sphere of national self-identification. But it can result in hyper-identity when ethnic values become more important than other values including universal values.

In a situation of calm inter-ethnic relations, ethnic awareness of groups and individuals is not often emphasized, it is diluted. In the circumstances of modern globalization the importance of actualization of ethnic interests and values is being reduced on a conventional scale of values. And other universal values gain more importance, when ethnic hyper-identity is replaced by ethnic tolerance.

A number of studies on the ethnic identity awareness of some ethnic minorities have been carried out in Latvia. The key factors for the change of collective and individual identities are examined in the research «Changeable Identities: Mobilization of Ethnic Groups and the Influence of Public Ethnic Structures on Society Integration» (Apine, Volkovs 2004).

The sociological research on the level of people's social anxiety depending on their perception of different social factors as a threat to their person-

al and collective security (the supervisor of studies V.Menshikov) defines the level of threat to a native language and culture among the population of Latgale. The study on the problems of educated youth by the Institute of social investigations of Daugavpils University investigates the significance of ethnic origin and preserving the native language among young people in Daugavpils (Volkovs 2005, p. 73 – 85).

It is the native language that is one of the main features of the ethnic identity. Language competence and behavior from the point of view of the theory of identity are seen as a display of loyalty towards one's own people, but behavior of other groups in relation to the native language is perceived by the title nations as an expression of attitude towards their people (Интеграция 2004, p.160). In the circumstances of economic instability and the structure of changing social-status there is danger of too close connection between language competence and the character of inter-ethnic relations (Арутюнян, Дробижева, Сусоколов 1998, p.160).

In their research «The Latvian Russians' Identity: a Historic and Sociological Essay» the authors have paid a special attention to Russians' linguistic identity as the main indicator of Russian identity (Apine, Volkovs 2007, p. 134). In one of the interviews one of the authors of this research – V.Volkov has underlined even more the significance of a linguistic identity. The Russian language is the most significant factor of identity for Russians; the Russian identity is a linguistic identity. Using the words of modern ethnologist Fredrik Barth, the Russian language creates that «ethnic border» which, to a higher degree, makes them different from Latvians. Not only language creates borders between ethnic groups. The difference in the level and quality of the obtained education, positions occupied in the ethno-political life, income, political influence on the state and society – are also relevant for interpersonal borders.

Language competence greatly influences not only national self-identity but also inter-ethnic relations. Insufficient competence in the Latvian or Russian languages can lead to a mono-ethnic frustration, which is dissatisfaction with the fact, that poor knowledge of the language or lack of it impedes communication in some spheres of life, which, in its turn leads to exaggeration of differences between the nations.

It is a very important prerequisite in a multifunctional environment – as far as possible high language competence in one's own ethnic language and other languages as well. We can agree with the conception of the Canadian scientists R.Clement, and K.Noels that the ethnic identity of bi-cultural individuals is not static, it changes adapting to situations and social norms.

High competence in both, one's own language and another language corresponds to a high level of identity with both ethnic communities.

Competence in ethnic and «alien» languages influences greatly not only the forms of expressing ethnic identity but also attitudes towards other ethnic communities. Insufficient competence of mono-ethnic representatives in another language and, as a consequence, in the aspects of another culture, leads to exaggeration of psychological differences between the subjects of communication. Equal competence in the native and other languages allows communication with representatives of various ethnic groups, which enables understanding peculiarities of mentality and culture of «own» and «alien» ethnic communities.

Language competence in the native and «alien» languages encourages formation of a positive ethnic identity and is an important factor for creating inter-ethnic tolerance in the society. Motivation for learning another language is of great importance. It can be instrumental when the second language is learned in order to achieve personal goals and it can be integrative when the language is learned in order to join a group speaking another language and identify them with it. This integrative motivation is a more powerful stimulus for learning the language and its use in a future life. But the strongly expressed civil identity- the feeling of belonging to the state- is necessary for this kind of motivation to appear.

There are a number of languages functioning in poly-ethnic societies which are not only symbols of ethnic identities and the inter-ethnic communication. The real status of the state language and the language of ethnic minorities considerably influences formation of a civil society. Status of a language in the society, demographic characteristics of the language speakers, institutional state support for functioning of the language are the factors which influence aspirations of an ethnic group to preserve and develop its language. According to the conception of ethno linguistic vitality, language is the primary and most effective means for preserving and strengthening ethnic vitality (Giles, Bourtris, Taylor 1981). There are several factors which influence the desire to preserve one's own native language – the status of a language in a society, demographic characteristics of the language use, and institutional support for functioning of the language. Ensuring functioning of the language is a serious and considerable factor for creating a stable civil society.

Problems of ethnic identity and tolerance in the national relations of modern Latvia have been touched upon in the research «Integration

of Alien Youth into Latvian Society in the Context of Reforms» from the point of view of the influence of a language policy on inter-ethnic relations (Интеграция 2004).

The results of this research were presented in T.Leishkalne's article «Education Reform and Integration Problems of the Russian-Speaking Population in Latvia» (Лейшкayne 2005). In the author's opinion, there are no dramatic clashes between Latvians and Russians in their everyday life but on the level of group relations this rupture has deepened. T.Leishkalne has demonstrated her critical attitude towards the ethnic policy in Latvia which has always existed in its cultural-linguistic content and has been based on the idea of the language hierarchy, mainly on protection of the cultural-linguistic identity of Latvians, after the Latvian language gained a huge range of functions, not only socio-linguistic but also ideological and political.

V.Gareyeva also has referred to the same outcome of the research in her report «Language Competence as a Factor for Formation of the Inter-Ethnic Tolerance in a Society» at the international conference devoted to tolerance and intolerance in a modern society. The author analyzing the consequences of introducing the Law on Education in Latvia thinks that «the compulsory education in the Latvian language in accordance with the Law on Education in Latvia has resulted in even more severe alienation from the state» (Гареева 2008, p. 198-202).

## 2. Empirical data

Within the frames of the project «Interaction of Collective and Individual Identities of Ethnic Groups in the Eastern Latvia as a Factor for Development of a Civil Society» (Project No 07.2103 of the Latvian Scientific Council, 2007-2008) an ethnic survey was conducted among the teachers of educational establishments in Latgale on the issues of defining their self-identity, the place of ethnic identity in the system of individual and collective identity, and their importance in an inter-ethnic dialogue.

A high degree of tolerance in an inter-ethnic dialogue is of vital importance in Latvia and, especially in Latgale, because the ethnic structure of Latgale's population which differs from the national structure of other parts of the country determines the special approaches to the studied problem (see table 1).



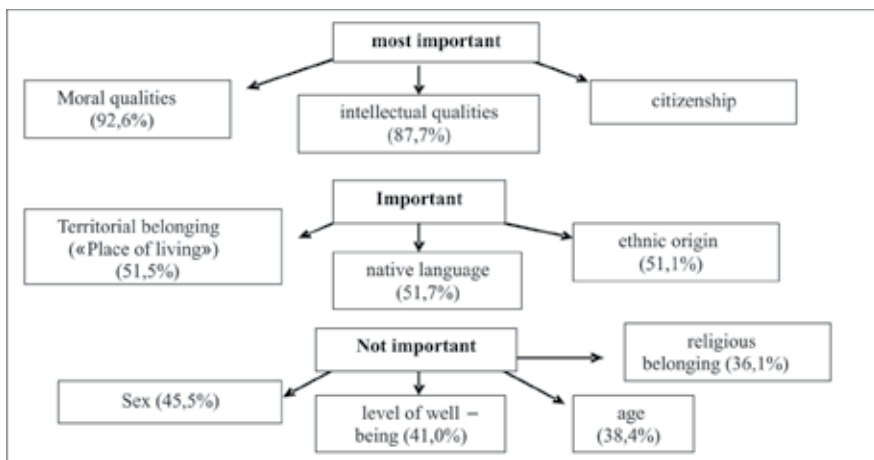
Table 1.

**Ethnic structure of the population of Latvia in the beginning of 2008**  
(%) (Demogrāfija 2008, p. 38-39)

	Latvia	Vidzeme	Kurzeme	Zemgale	Latgale
<b>Latvians</b>	59.16	85.03	73.88	68.09	43.84
<b>Russians</b>	28.04	10.03	15.53	18.73	39.46
<b>Byelorussians</b>	3.68	1.46	2.17	4.20	5.49
<b>Ukrainians</b>	2.50	0.97	2.76	1.99	1.43
<b>Poles</b>	2.38	0.79	0.79	1.81	7.14
<b>Lithuanians</b>	1.35	0.40	2.98	3.18	0.59
<b>Others</b>	2.89	1.32	1.89	2.0	2.05

In the given survey the respondents identified themselves as personalities based on different features which can be ranked according to the degree of their wish for self-identification. In the spectrum of the respondents' self-identification the personal, moral and intellectual qualities as well as their civil consciousness are most important (see picture 1).

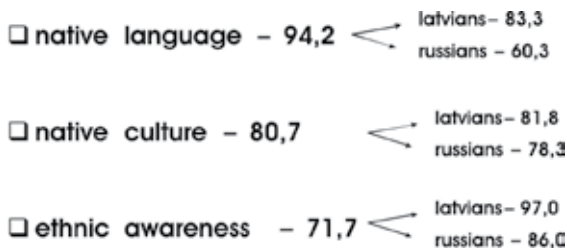
*Picture 1. The respondents' answers to the question «Which qualities characterize you as a personality?» (% from the number of respondents)*



Local territorial and ethnic identities are not that strong in comparison with indicators of the dominant personal identity, besides that, the civil identity is slightly higher than the ethnic and territorial identities. In order to characterize the significance of the ethnic identity in the respondents' self-identity they were asked a question, «What qualities characterize your ethnic identity to a greater or lesser extent?» The answers proved the great significance of the phenomenon of the ethnic language and culture in the structure of the ethnic self-identity. It was important to compare qualities of the ethnic identity of Russian and Latvian respondents.

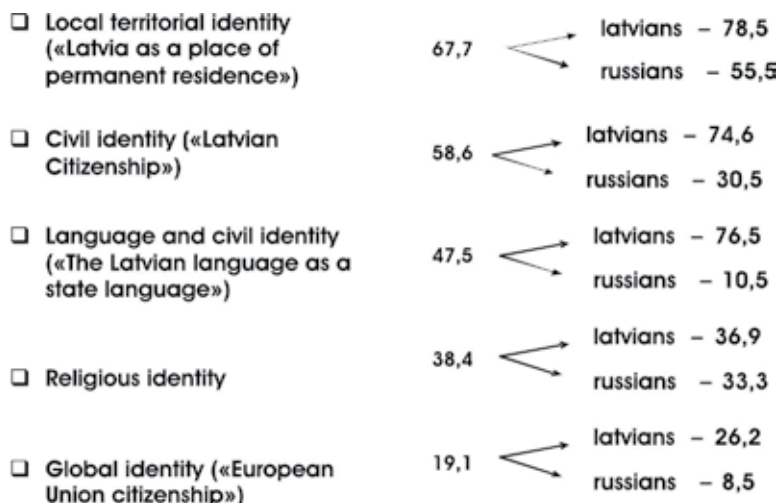
Local territorial, ethnic belonging and the native language as a symbolic sign of the ethnic identity are significant indicators of self-identity. Latvian and Russian respondents share similar views on the significance of the native culture for defining the ethnic identity but they have differing opinions about the importance of the native language. Importance of the native language in the structure of the ethnic identity is more explicitly expressed by Latvian respondents because the relatively small number of the Latvian language users expressed anxiety about preserving and real possibilities for functioning of the language (picture 2).

**Picture 2. Ethnic identity is mostly characterized by  
(% from the number of respondents):**



Ethnic self-identity is of a great importance for Latvian respondents; it is revealed as a significant and effective symbol of the national unity in spite of all other differences among Latvians, such as social status, religious belonging, political views, etc. For Russian respondents the ethnic self-identity is also important. Russians in Latvia have the status of an ethnic minority. This status is enhanced by understanding of their ethnic belonging, which is promoted, in our opinion, by the rise in ethnic self-awareness and its strengthening in Russia, although it is impossible to equalize identity of Russians in Latvia and in Russia (picture 3).

*Picture3. Ethnic identity is less characterized by  
(% from the number of respondents):*



Ethnic awareness which is revealed through its key symbols – native language and culture, is very important in the structure of the respondents' national self-identity. To a lesser extent, in the opinions of the respondents, national identity is defined by local territorial («Latvia as place of permanent residence») and civil («Latvian citizenship») identities, as well as the civil identity through the state language («the Latvian language as the state language») and religious identity.

In the group of these identities, excluding the religious identity, a huge difference in the opinions of Latvian and Russian respondents is observed. In the Latvian respondents' environment the mentioned identities are important for enhancing their own ethnic identity. Among the Russian respondents territorial and civil identities are weakly expressed and the state language identity is of little importance, which influences the policy of strengthening the state language.

The feeling of not belonging to the state is a burning issue which involves ethnic minorities. Crisis of belonging, i.e. identity, in a wide sense, to a large extent is connected with the change of status which applies to the national minorities living in Latvia. It is possible to unite and not to separate the civil and ethnic identities by making the state policy more active – by removing contradictions between the civil and ethnic identities and by uniting them successfully within the frames of a single policy.

In both groups of respondents the religious identity is expressed weakly. This identity is one of those which do not mark stark borders between the respondents from Russian and Latvian groups. Religious identity cannot influence significantly the social and political life of people of different nationalities.

The global identity is considered even weaker and less important. The respondents, especially the Russian ones, do not realize their fully-fledged membership and unity with the European Union. In comparison with the local territorial and civil identities, the global identity is not significant in the respondents' consciousness and, therefore, in the inter-ethnic dialogue.

Ethnic belonging in the structure of self-identity is especially important for those who know and use the ethnic language as a native language. Language competence, functioning of a language and the choice of languages are the factors of the ethnic identity which unite with one's own ethnic community and strengthen the feeling of this unity. In this sense the ethnic language has not only the communicative function but also a very significant symbolic function of the ethnic identity (see table 2).

*Table2.*

**The respondents' native language  
(% from the number of respondents in each group)**

Respondents' ethnic identity	Latvians	Russians	Byelorussians	Poles	others
The Latvian language	58.6	-	-	11.1	16.7
The Latgalian language	21.4	-	-	-	-
The Russian language	14.3	94.9	72.7	22.2	50.0
The Polish language	1.4	3.4	-	55.6	-
The Byelorussian language	-	-	9.1	-	-
Other language	4.3	1.7	18.2	11.1	33.3

Only Russians (94.9%) and Latvians use the language of their nation as their native language. The Latgalian language is very important for the Latvian respondents from Latgale because 21.4% identified the Latgalian language as their native language. The ethnic Poles also strive to preserve their national language. In spite of the strong influence of the Russian language, 55.6% of the Polish respondents have stated that their native language is Polish, therefore, the Polish language is not only as means of communication for the Poles but it is also the symbol of their ethnic identity and unity with their nation. The strong position of the Russian language in Latgale is influencing assimilation of other ethnic minorities, especially the Byelorussians: for 72.7% of the Byelorussian respondents the Russian language is their native language and only 9.1% of those interviewed think that their native language is the Byelorussian language. In the multifunctional environment with dominance of other, not native languages, the linguistic alienation might become stronger, and for those who have lost or do not know their ethnic language, in the structure of national self-identity of ethnic belonging, the indicators of ethnic language can be replaced by other indicators which are significant for each individual.

The possibility to speak their native language in various spheres of social life is not the same (see table 3). The sphere of private life («with friends and acquaintances») is a great opportunity for the use of the native language, thus confirming the ethnic identity. In the social sector («educational establishments», «at work with colleagues») Latvian as the state language is officially used, but in informal situations outside studies or work duties the Russian language is often used along with the Latvian language. On the governmental and municipal level («government and municipal establishments») the Latvian language is mainly used, more than 40% of the Russian respondents have stated that they have never used their native Russian language in governmental institutions.

Table 3.

**The respondents' answers to the question «How often do you speak  
in your native language?»  
(% from the number of respondents in each group)**

	often		rarely		never	
	Latvians	Russians	Latvians	Russians	Latvians	Russians
with friends and acquaintances	43.8	98.3	4.6	-	1	1
the educational establishment where you study (studied)	87.9	70.9	6.8	10.9	6.1	18.2
at work with colleagues	83.8	62.1	11.8	17.2	4.4	20.7
in shops, at the market	69.7	84.5	19.7	13.8	10.6	1.7
governmental institutions	83.3	37.9	6.1	13.8	10.6	48.3
municipal institutions	83.3	39.7	6.1	17.2	10.6	43.1
with police officers	79.0	45.6	9.7	17.5	4.8	10.5

Emotional communication and the sphere of mutual communication (family, personal and mutual cultural contacts of groups) are the most important for preservation of the native language and culture; only after that activities of governmental institutions and some special activities for protection of the native language and culture are mentioned. The family is the environment where an individual grasps his/her native language. At home we speak the language we want. The choice of the language in the family is voluntary and it is not connected with any social norms or conditions. It is a real situation of the language functioning where the spoken language is chosen by common consent and it can be the language of the parents' ethnicity or the language which all the members of the family speak best and use most often, or the language of the nation with which the individual identifies him/herself.

In the specific sphere of communication where the Russian language possesses strong positions, the Latvian language is required as the state lan-

guage for strengthening the dominating position in many spheres of social life, at least in governmental/state institutions and enterprises.

In general, these propositions can refer to the spheres of realization of the linguistic identity in Latvia:

- private life: the family, circle of friends;
- public environment: mass media, activities of public non-governmental organizations, activities of political parties and organizations;
- social life: educational establishments, cultural life, entrepreneurship.

The state policy of strengthening the Latvian language as the state language has resulted, in the respondents' opinion, in the situation where majority of Latvians can speak their native language in governmental and municipal institutions, at work and in educational establishments, whilst Russians have the possibility to communicate in their native language in their private lives («with friends and acquaintances»), at work («with colleagues»), and have fewer possibilities to communicate in governmental institutions. In the sphere of business («in shops», «at the market») because of other, namely, economic interests, both, Latvians and Russians have equal possibilities to communicate in one or the other native language.

Such examples of reducing the functions of native ethnic languages in the social and industrial spheres, in the sphere of education and strengthening the functions of the Latvian language as the state language are considered to be ambiguous by ethno sociology. According to ethno sociologists from Russia, as soon as the possibility of legislative strengthening of the status of the state languages appeared, language became not simply an ethnic symbol but acquired a strong social and political meaning (Интеграция 2004, p. 154).

Both, the educational system and mass media in ethnic minorities' languages as well as active participation of the representatives of ethnic minorities in the work of political and non-governmental organizations play an important role in enhancing the ethnic identity and preserving the native language and culture. It is one of the priority trends in creating a civil society (see table 7).

Table 7.

**In your opinion, what does preserving of secondary education in the ethnic minorities' languages in Latgale depend on? (%)**

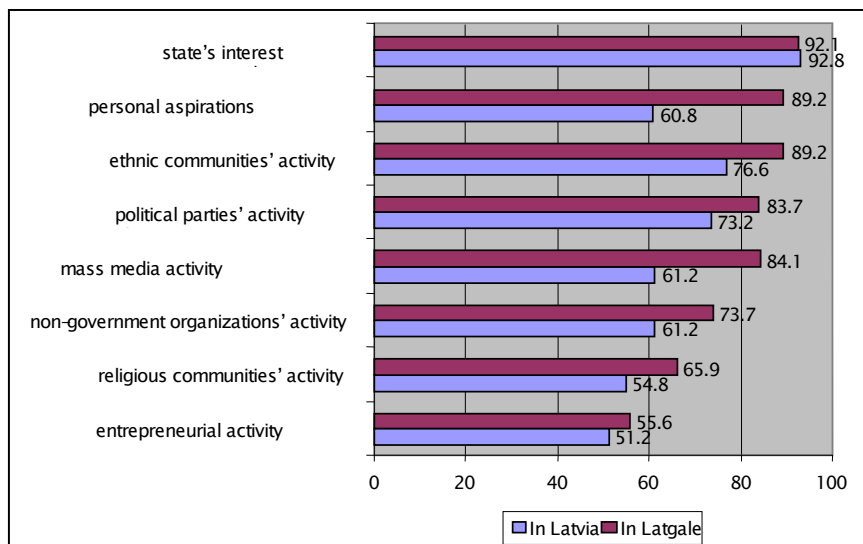
No		Depends on	Does not depend on
1.	Interest of the State	92.1	7.9
2.	Person's own efforts	89.2	10.2
3.	Activities of ethnic groups	89.2	10.2
4.	Activities of mass media	84.1	15.0
5.	Activities of political parties	83.7	15.7
6.	Activities of non-governmental organizations	73.7	24.4
7.	Activities of religious communities	65.9	32.3
8.	Activities of business structures	55.6	43.6

Every ethnic minority cares about preserving its ethnic identity. The ethnic identity, to a great extent, depends on the level of minority's competence in its own and other ethnic languages and on the real opportunities for usage of the language. That is why favorable conditions for preserving the functions of a language are of crucial importance. These aspirations to preserve education in the ethnic minorities' native languages must be mutual. Interest from the side of the state, on the one hand, and from the side of the ethnic community as well as the language speaker himself, on the other hand, will result in the positive symbiosis of ethnic interests, which will really support tolerance in the society (see picture 4).

The State's interest and activities of political and non-governmental organizations, as well as activities of ethnic communities themselves and bearers of the language and culture altogether create favorable conditions for the inter-ethnic dialogue.



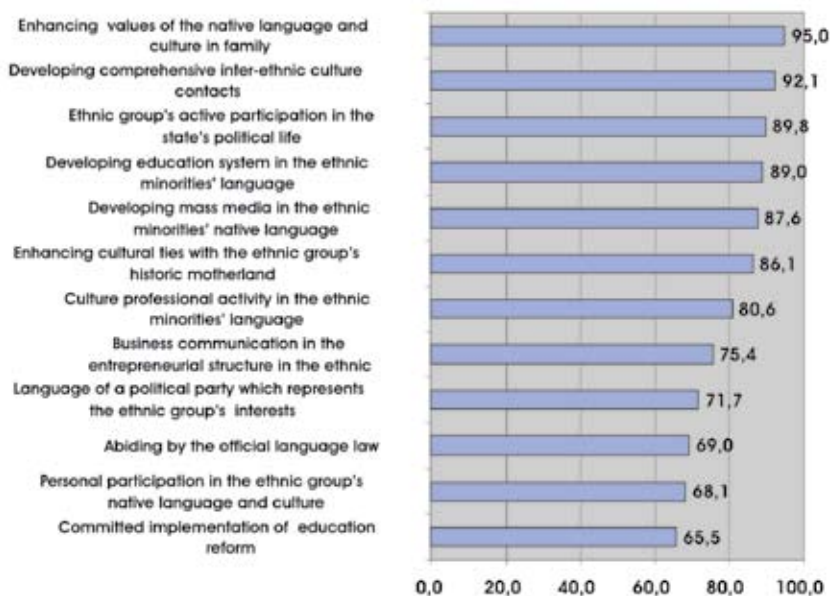
**Picture 4. The respondents' answers to the question «What does preserving of the secondary education in the ethnic minorities' native languages depend on?» – depend very much; depend (% from the number of respondents)**



Functioning of the ethnic minorities' languages is significant for preserving their own ethnic identity, first of all, preserving their culture and language. Educational establishments as well as mass media in the languages of ethnic minorities can play a really significant role in these processes. The respondents consider these the most important channels for achieving this aim. Both, in Latvia and Latgale the combination of three factors (state's interest, ethnic communities' activity and personal aspirations) can promote the situation of ethnic mobilization when the intensified attention is paid to one's own ethnic language irrespective of the real competence in this language.

These factors, based on the rich historic experience in Latvia, can positively promote the social integration processes in Latvia. Modern trends to preserve one's own ethnic identity through one's own mass media and educational establishments in ethnic minorities' languages, as well as through activities of non-governmental organizations are especially significant, and rely on Latvian historic traditions (picture 5).

**Picture 5. The respondents' answers to the question «Which factors promote preserving of the ethnic groups' native language and culture in Latgale?» – promote very much; promote (% from the number of respondents)**



The reviewed results of the conducted survey entitled «Interaction of Collective and Individual Identities of Ethnic Groups in the Eastern Latvia as a Factor for Development of a Civil Society» have revealed a number of problems in formation of a civil society in Latvia. One of the significant factors influencing this process is the public space where the Latvian language is functioning as the official state language and the space where the languages of ethnic minorities are functioning. In a society, there is no single language space as a way to overcome alienation among the speakers of different languages. On the one hand, the weak position of the languages of ethnic minorities in the public and the national spheres, on the other hand, the strong support from the state for the Latvian language in all spheres of public life and, at the same time, its weak position in the private life – all these make the alienation of speakers of these languages worse and reduce the sense of community in a single social environment.

The system of education in which the choice of one or another language of instruction would encourage both – preserving the ethnic identity and enhancing the common civil identity, would help to overcome these contradictions. In the respondents' opinion, education in the native language, especially at schools, enables increase in, not only, the level of the native language competence, but also, in the tolerant attitude towards other languages. The role of education in the ethnic minorities' languages is seen not only as a means of preserving a language. Such education promotes the possibility to preserve one's own culture and identity and, therefore, to perceive tolerantly other cultures and other identities.

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**Kaspars Zellis**

**LATVIAN JEWS AND THE SOVIET POWER FROM 1928 UNTIL 1953. SCIENTIFIC STUDY / COMPILED BY SCIENTIFIC EDITOR L. DRIBINS. RIGA, INSTITUTE OF PHILOSOPHY AND SOCIOLOGY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LATVIA, 2009. 308 PAGES**

Compilation of seven authors' works has been published. It is dedicated to Latvian Jews, to twists and turns in their relations with Stalin's regime during the Soviet time. This has been the reason to choose the chronology of the compilation – the time period from 1928 until 1953.<sup>1</sup> These years in the history are called «the time of Stalinism». In Latvian history the beginning of this period is connected with elections of the 3rd Saeima, it was when local Communists participated in the elections for the first time which contributed to increasing of their authority. Thus, the authors of this compilation have managed to find the chronological turning point in the history of The Soviet Union and Latvia.

Leo Dribins, the author and scientific editor of this compilation has written the introduction «Latvian Jews and the Soviet Power» in which he outlines the place of the theme in Latvian historiography and justifies the necessity of this study. In the author's opinion, two factors show the necessity of this study: insufficient research of the theme done so far and the concept of «Jewish Bolsheviks» introduced by the Nazis and its place in the memories of one part of our society members (Dribins 2009, p.8, 15). Lack of source-based research on the relations of Jews and the Soviet power in Latvia has been the basis for preconception. Historiography, in fact, has revealed only some fragments of the problematic groups.<sup>2</sup> One should admit that historians in Latvia have paid attention mainly to the holocaust problem during the past decades leaving other questions behind.<sup>3</sup> There-

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fore, this compilation will fill in the gap concerning this problem in Latvian Historiography.

Talking about the factor advanced by another author, it definitely is a significant stereotype existing in the social consciousness in Latvia about Jews as the 5th column in 1940. However, it should be mentioned that the concept or the myth about «Jewish Bolsheviks» was not started in Germany; it was started in Russia during the civil war by the reactionary white guards. Later immigrants spread it to Germany and other countries in Europe (Kelllogg 2005). Therefore, in my opinion, it would be necessary to describe in this compilation more thoroughly the relations of «Bolshevik» power and the Latvian Jews in 1919<sup>4</sup> as there existed big social differentiation within the Jewish community at that time (Bogojavlenska 2004, p.181).

The research part of the compilation is started by Arthur Zhvinkli's article «Jews During the Parliamentary Republic of Latvia from 1928 until 1934». The author describes political preferences and opinions of Jews during the democratic time in Latvia. The author concludes that most Jews did not support communists and, as the Communist Party in Latvia was not very popular, they could not have influenced much. One could object to the fact that the largest Russian newspaper «Сегодня» is called by the author «an impressive revealer of the Jewish social opinion» (Žvinklis 2009, p.41). Does the fact that the newspaper was owned and for a long time edited by ethnic Jews make it «a revealer of the Jewish social opinion»?<sup>5</sup> Shouldn't these statements be attributed to «Rigaesche Rundschau» as well, as the Jewish social and economic elite preferred the German environment?

Professor Aivars Stranga in his article describes the chronologically next period – the years of K. Ulmanis's authoritarian regime (1934 – 1940). He stresses that the Latvian Communist Party (LCP) did not significantly influence the domestic policy in Latvia and one cannot talk about large numbers of Jews in the Communist Party even in the regions with large Jewish population (Stranga 2009 (1), p.64-65). The second article by A. Stranga «Occupation of Latvia on June 17, 1940 and the Jews» could be the main article of the compilation. This article reveals how untruthful the Nazi propaganda was when they declared that «when Bolsheviks occupied Latvia on June 17, [...] crowds of Jews greeted them with roses, even kisses and expressed their welcoming feelings in other ways» (Albatross (A. Kroders) 1941). When analyzing the welcoming of the occupying army in Riga and in other parts of Latvia, A. Stranga concludes that the welcomers «were lead by brutal instincts instead of clear ideology or understanding» and

that «Jews were not dominating in the crowds of welcomers» (Stranga 2009 (2), p.106).

At the same time, this article touches the question which has not been sufficiently investigated so far – attitude of the population to the Soviet occupation as the research done before has revealed only the relations of the Latvian political elite and the Soviet power. Therefore, this article is important for understanding not only the history of Latvian Jews but also the history of Latvia in general.

The article by Daina Bleiere on the role of the Jews during the first year of the Soviet occupation (1940-41) continues exploding the Nazi myth on the «Jewish» Soviet power in Latvia. The author has analyzed the Jewish factor in the Communist party, the Comsomol organization, administration and court institutions, banks, executive committees, press, etc. The analysis has been built upon a large number of sources and has revealed that the proportion of Jews in the leading positions has been inversely proportional to how significant the corresponding sphere has been considered by the authorities of the Soviet regime which proves that the politics has been deliberately directed to preventing the Jews from taking important positions (Bleiere 2009, p. 146).

Eriks Zhagars has carried out a research on the Jewish participation in the Soviet military and repressive organizations. By this research he has exploded the myth created by the Nazi Germany propaganda that «all the power in Latvia was in the hands of the KGB, the armed Jewish guards and other rabble, moreover, the main executors and torturers were Jewish [...]» (Židisma pastari Jelgavā 1941). Analyzing the role of Jews in the army, the KGB, militia and the Workers' Guard the author stresses the lack of Jewish domination in the governing organizations in the Soviet Latvia in 1940 – 1941 and adds that the Jewish community, like other ethnic groups in Latvia, suffered greatly from retaliation and deportations, even if Jews were represented in the punitive institutions (Žagars 2009, p.174).

The article by Josif Shteiman is dedicated to the fate of Jews in the Soviet Union and the Red Army during the World War 2. This article is based on the works published earlier and does not contribute to the study of this theme. The author asserts that when Germany had attacked the USSR in 1941, the Jews were hoping that the Red Army would «save» the Jewish population (Šteimanis 2009, p.16). In fact, extermination of Jews started only with the operation called «Barbarosa» and the information on extermination of Jews, for instance, in Lithuania could not have reached Latvia

as the German army was moving forward very quickly and the Jewish refugees, who had escaped from Lithuania and come to Latvia, could not have known about it. To my mind, the idea that the Jews were trying to escape to the Soviet Union to avoid extermination is wrong. Before Soviet occupation the society in Latvia was well informed about the German racist anti-Jewish policy, therefore, the explanation of professor and historian Alexandra Rolova, «we ran away to escape humiliation»<sup>6</sup> could be more precise.

The author's statement that no more than 16 000 Jews became refugees needs a more detailed justification. As the work is mainly memory-based, it would have benefitted if the author had used the appropriate methods to evaluate critically the memories and if he had analyzed the social memory of Latvian Jews in the USSR or in the Red Army during the World War 2 instead of paying attention mainly to biographies of the interviewed persons and describing what they had been before the war and what they became after the war.

The study by Irena Shneidere is dedicated to Latvian Jews from 1944 until 1955. The author reveals the post-war time during the rule of J. Stalin and analyzes the place of Jews. This article is to be called one of the most important in this compilation (together with the works of A.Stranga and D.Bleiere) as it reveals not only the complicated relations of Jews and the Soviet regime during the mentioned period of time but also gives information about home-coming of Latvian Jews who had ran away in 1941, about immigration of Soviet Jews, about Jews taking part in the post-war social and political life, about attempts to emigrate and about repressive measures against them. The author has stressed that the Jewish community in Latvia was not re-established after the World War 2 and that opinions about the Soviet power differed greatly depending on whether they were expressed by Latvian Jews or by the ones who had arrived from the Soviet Union. A question «what were the relations of Latvian Jews and the incomers from the Soviet Union?» comes into one's mind when reading I. Shneidere's work. It could be good material for a separate study; hopefully it is carried out in future.

In general, the compilation is a big step forward not only concerning the history of Latvian Jews but also the history of Latvia. The authors of this compilation have dealt with a very important subject – revealing that the extent of Jewish collaboration with the Soviet power was equally small or even smaller than collaboration of Latvians or Latvian Russians with Stalin's regime. Thereby the concept of the research has been implemented



and the myth about the Jewish overactive collaboration with Communists has been exploded.

We shall be looking forward to the logical continuation of this work – a study or a collection of works on Latvian Jews and the Soviet power after the death of J. Stalin until the collapse of the USSR.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> 1929 is considered to be the beginning of Stalin's era.
- <sup>2</sup> For instance, retaliation against Jews after the World War 2 (in the works of I. Shneidere); Detailed studies on the role of Jews during the first period of Soviet occupation have been recently published (1940 – 1941; studies by D. Bleiere and A. Stranga) – e.g. Šneidere 2001, p. 328 – 349; Stranga 2008 (1); Stranga 2008 (2).
- <sup>3</sup> Historian K.Kangeris admits that at least 50 % of all publications in Latvia dealing with the time of German occupation are directly or partly connected to the Jewish theme. See Kangeris 2005, p. 128.
- <sup>4</sup> After reading the author's description of the anti-jewish policy of P. Stučka and the pro-German mood of Latvian Jews it is not clear why in 1920-s the right-wing press related Jews with Communists. In my opinion, it was the social status, not ethnicity, that was important. See Dribins 2009, p. 9-11.
- <sup>5</sup> In fact, the author has been influenced by the critics of «Сегодня» who declared that the newspaper had turned from Russian into a Jewish one. The newspaper should be considered a Russian emigrant newspaper. See Latvijas Republikas prese 1996, p. 439; Volkovs 2007, p. 104 – 105.
- <sup>6</sup> Interview with prof. A. Rolova, Aachen, Germany July 2, 2008.

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## NOTES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

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Articles are evaluated according to the adopted scientific criteria: correspondence of the research to the present-day theoretical level in the domain of the chosen problem; sufficient empirical basis; originality of empirical material; originality of hypotheses, conclusions and recommendations; topicality of the subject investigated. Logics and clearness of the exposition is evaluated as well. Preference is given to fundamental studies.

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### Layout of Manuscripts

Articles, which do not have an appropriate layout, will not be accepted.

**Volume of article:** 30,000–60,000 characters with spaces.

Manuscripts should be submitted in two Word-processed and fully formatted copies of A4 paper, attaching a diskette (CD) or sent via e-mail. The Text should be composed using *Times New Roman* font (*WinWord 2000/XP*); font size – 12, line spacing – 1.5. Text should be aligned 3.5 cm – from the left side, 2.5 – from the right side, 2.5 cm – from the top and the bottom. If special computer programs are used, they should be submitted together with the article.

**Annotation:** in the beginning of the article (after the heading), the informative annotation (800–1,500 characters) is located., The purpose and tasks of the paper are underlined, the research problem is formulated, the novelty of the research is marked and the main conclusions are represented in the annota-

tion. The key words (terms, with the essence of questions considered) should be given in a separate paragraph.

**Language of article:** literal, terminologically precise. If author prepares an article in a foreign language, he/she should take care of the linguistic correction of the written text consulting a specialist of the corresponding branch of social sciences – a native speaker. *Articles, which have spelling mistakes, will not be accepted and reviewed.*

**Layout of article** (references and notes, bibliography, tables, schemes, diagrams, charts, etc.). References should be placed in a text according to the example: (Turner 1990, p. 140); (Миллс 1998, с. 10); (Bela 1997, 112. lpp.). Explanations and comments should be given in the endnotes. Tables, charts, schemes, diagrams, etc. should have an indication of the source of the material and, if necessary, the method of making the table, the chart, the scheme (calculations, data gathering, etc.) should be marked. These materials should have ordinal numbers and titles.

**Bibliography** should be compiled according to the given samples:

**Monographs** (books, brochures):

Turner, J. H. (1974) *The Structure of Sociological Theory*. Homewood (Illinois): The Dorsey Press.

Миллс Ч. П. (1998) *Социологическое воображение*. Москва: Стратегия.

**Articles in collections:**

Turner, R. H. (1990) «A Comparative Content Analysis of Biographies.» In: Øyen, E., ed. *Comparative Methodology: Theory and Practice in International Social Research*. London, etc.: Sage Publications. Pp. 134–150.

**Articles in magazines:**

Bela, B. (1997) «Identitātes daudzbalisība Zviedrijas latviešu dzīvesstāstos.» *Latvijas Zinātņu Akadēmijas Vēstis*. A, 51, Nr.5/6: 112–129.

Шмитт К. (1992) «Понятие политического.» *Вопросы социологии*, № 1: 37–67.

**Articles in newspapers:**

Straziņš, I. (1999) «Matemātiķi pasaulē un Latvijā.» *Zinātnes Vēstnesis*, 8. marts.

**Materials from the Internet:**

Soms, H. «Vēstures informātika: Saturs, struktūra un datu bāze Latgales dati.» <http://www.dpu.lv/LD/LDpublik.html> (2002. 20.10).

Bibliography should be compiled in the alphabetic order according to the authors' names or to the titles (at the beginning – in the Latin alphabet, at the end – in the Cyrillic alphabet).