



University
of Glasgow

Germane, Marina (2013) *The history of the idea of Latvians as a civic nation, 1850-1940*. PhD thesis.

<http://theses.gla.ac.uk/4382/>

Copyright and moral rights for this thesis are retained by the author

A copy can be downloaded for personal non-commercial research or study

This thesis cannot be reproduced or quoted extensively from without first obtaining permission in writing from the Author

The content must not be changed in any way or sold commercially in any format or medium without the formal permission of the Author

When referring to this work, full bibliographic details including the author, title, awarding institution and date of the thesis must be given

**THE HISTORY OF THE IDEA OF LATVIANS AS A CIVIC NATION,
1850-1940**

Marina Germane, MSc.

Submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of
Philosophy (PhD)

Central and East European Studies
School of Social and Political Sciences
University of Glasgow

Abstract

This thesis challenges the customary approach of studying the latent ethnic conflict in Latvia exclusively through the prism of post-Soviet studies, looking for the causes of societal disaccord in Latvia's recent past as a Soviet Socialist Republic, when numerous traumas were induced on the eponymous nation, from the deportations of 1940 which robbed the nation of its intelligentsia, to Russification policies that threatened the very existence of the Latvian language and culture, and to mass labour immigration that radically changed the country's demography and ethnic composition.

While recognising that this approach has its own merits, this thesis focuses on another important factor contributing to the present ethnic discord, namely the historical development of the idea of the Latvian nation, especially vis-à-vis ethnic minorities, who have always been present in significant numbers on Latvian territory through the course of modern history. More often than not, the interwar period of Latvian independence and nation-building is discarded by political scientists as bearing purely symbolic meaning and having no real impact on the present. This thesis challenges this widespread assumption and argues that, on the contrary, both the genesis of the idea of the Latvian nation and its interwar experience of statehood are vital to understanding the present-day dynamics.

My thesis encompasses the period of Latvian history from the mid-19th century, when Latvians' national awakening began, to 1940, when the country lost its independence as a result of Soviet annexation. The aim of this thesis is three-fold: first, to challenge the widespread (and historically inaccurate) assumption prevalent in modern Latvia that the idea of the civic nation is something intrinsically alien and unsuitable, imposed on Latvia from above; secondly, to examine the long-forgotten original contributions made to the concept of civic nationalism, and to the whole universalist-particularist dilemma, by Latvian thinkers at the beginning of the 20th century, and to place them in the wider framework of European interwar history and nationalism studies; thirdly, to identify the key issues in majority-minority relations that contributed to the eventual deterioration of minority rights in Latvia prior to World War Two, and, to a certain extent, to the demise of parliamentary democracy in 1934. These issues (divided into three principal clusters: citizenship, language, and education) are then compared to the remarkably similar challenges faced by Latvian society since 1991.

Table of Contents

<i>Abstract</i>	<i>ii</i>
<i>List of Tables</i>	<i>iv</i>
<i>List of Abbreviations</i>	<i>v</i>
<i>Notes</i>	<i>vi</i>
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>vii</i>
<i>Author's Declaration</i>	<i>viii</i>
Introduction: Going Back to the Future	1
Chapter 1: Theoretical Background: Liberalism, Democracy, and Nationalism	12
1.1. The Civic vs. Ethnic Dichotomy and Its Contemporary Critics	13
1.2. Non-territorial Cultural Autonomy	38
1.3. Theories of Ethnic Bargaining	39
1.4. Triadic Nexus, Quadratic Nexus, and the Fifth Element	40
1.5. Communitarianism vs. Liberalism	43
1.6. Beyond the Sovereign State	44
Chapter 2: The Latvian Nation: Evolution of the Concept, 1850-1918	48
2.1. The Idea of Latvian Autonomy and the National Question	54
2.2. Three Latvian Nationalists	57
2.2.1 M. Skujenieks, the Idealistic Nationalist	60
2.2.2 M. Valters, the Practical Nationalist	75
2.2.3 Skujenieks and Valters: Liberal vs. Communitarian Approaches	80
2.2.4 E. Blanks, the Passionate Nationalist	82
2.3. P. Stučka and the National Question	86
2.4. A Winning Concept? Conclusions	109
Chapter 3: An Equal Among Nations, 1918-1934	112
3.1. The National Council, 1918-1920	119
3.2. The Constitutional Assembly, 1920-1922	130
3.3. The Parliament, 1922-1934	149
3.3.1. The First <i>Saeima</i> , 1922-1925	149
3.3.2. The Second <i>Saeima</i> , 1925-1928	160
3.3.3. The Third <i>Saeima</i> , 1928-1931	179
3.3.4. The Fourth <i>Saeima</i> , 1931-1934	183
3.3.5. Atis Ķēniņš, 'The Minorities' Oppressor'	196
Chapter 4: The Citizenship Law of 1919 and Minority Bargaining	216
Chapter 5: P. Schiemann, M. Laserson and Cultural Autonomy	272
5.1. Setting the Scene: Interwar Latvia according to Quadratic Nexus	274
5.2. The Fifth Element	279
Chapter 6: The 'Latvian Latvia', 1934-1940	308
Chapter 7: A Nation Once Again	338
7.1. Citizenship	345
7.2. Cultural Autonomy	348
7.3. Language	352
7.4. Education	355
7.5. Social Integration	358
Conclusions: A Virtue out of Necessity?	364
Bibliography	369

List of Tables

<i>Table 1.</i> Changes in the percentage of citizens among ethnic groups in Latvia, 1920-1925.	263
<i>Table 2.</i> Baltic German Representation in the interwar Latvian <i>Saeima</i> .	280
<i>Table 3.</i> Jewish Representation in the interwar Latvian <i>Saeima</i> .	291

List of Abbreviations

AFL-FFF/LNIM	All for Latvia – For Fatherland and Freedom/Latvian National Independence Movement
BISS	Baltic Institute of Social Sciences
EU	European Union
FCNM	Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities
FHRUL	For Human Rights in the United Latvia
Interfront	The International Front of the Working People of Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic
<i>Iskolat</i>	<i>Ispolnitel'nii komitet Soveta rabochih, soldatskih I bezzemel'nih deputatov Latvii</i> ; the Executive Committee of Latvian Workers, Soldiers and Landless Peasants
LNNK	<i>Latvijas Nacionālās Netkarības Kustība</i> ; Latvian National Independence Movement
LNKBA	<i>Latvijas Nacionālo Kultūras Biedrību Asociācija</i> ; The Association of the National Cultural Societies of Latvia
LSD	Latvian Social Democracy
LSDSP	<i>Latvijas Sociādemokrātiskā Strādnieku Partija</i> ; Latvian Social Democratic Workers' Party
LSSR	Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic
LTF	<i>Latvijas Tautas Fronte</i> ; The Popular Front of Latvia
NCA	Non-territorial Cultural Autonomy
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NKVD	<i>Narodnyi Komissariat Vnutrennih Del</i> ; The People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs
OCMA	Office for Citizenship and Migration Affairs
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe
RSDRP	<i>Rossiiskaya Social-Demokraticheckaya Rabochaya Partiya</i> ; Russian Russian Social Democratic Workers' Party
SIF	Social Integration Fund
NEPC	Network of Education Policy Centres
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

NOTES

Names and Proper Names

Due to the ethnic and linguistic diversity of the Baltic region, it proved very difficult to come up with a uniform transliteration of both personal and geographical names, and this inevitably led to some arbitrary decisions on my part. After careful consideration, I decided to use the original spelling of all personal names of ethnic Latvians; as for the ethnic minorities' representatives, for those who were already known outside Latvia, I have used the most accepted spellings of their names (hence Laserson, Nurock, and Schiemann). I have taken the same approach with the names of political parties known outside Latvia (hence *Agudat Israel* and *Zeire Zion*). For the rest, I have followed the Latvian rendering of their names and surnames as per the *Saeima*'s records. Whenever multiple spellings of either personal or geographical names were present, I have done my best to indicate it either in brackets or footnotes.

Translations

All translations are by the author, unless indicated otherwise in the text.

Acknowledgements

My first and foremost thanks go to my supervisors, Professors David J. Smith and Geoffrey Swain, for their continuous encouragement, expert guidance, constructive feedback, and, above all, their kind patience and extreme generosity with their time. I am also indebted to the Department of Central and East European Studies at Glasgow University for providing an excellent research environment, especially to Moya Flynn and Jon Oldfield for easing my way through the numerous PhD regulations and administrative hurdles, and to Maggie Baister and Ann Mulholland for keeping me up-to-date with the everyday life of the department, and for taking care of everything else, from conference trips to financial accounts.

I am also profoundly grateful to the late Professor John Hiden, who was incredibly generous in sharing his knowledge of the Baltic German community of Latvia (and, on a couple of occasions, his work notes on Paul Schiemann himself). Valentina Freimane was another valuable source of the behind-the-scenes information about Schiemann and other key Latvian interwar personalities during our lengthy telephone conversations.

I want to express my gratitude to Latvian historians Dr. Leo Dribins and Marģers Vestermanis, for being incredibly generous with their time and answering my numerous questions about the intellectual history of the interwar period – these were fascinating conversations. Dribin's (1997) book *Nacionālais jautājums Latvijā 1850-1940*, with its subtle and detailed account of ethnic relations in interwar Latvia through the prism of the press, was an early source of inspiration for my thesis.

I am thankful to Professor Aivars Stranga for helping me to clarify certain points in the biography of M. Skujenieks. Iveta Šķinke, of the Latvian State Historical Archives, kindly helped me to navigate the Archives' holdings, and made one of the best coffees I have ever tasted. I would also like to thank the anonymous reviewers from *Nations and Nationalism* and *Journal of Baltic Studies*, where two separate parts of this thesis have been previously published, for providing exceptionally helpful comments and thoughtful criticisms, which, I hope, helped to improve the relevant chapters. Needless to say, all the remaining mistakes are mine alone.

Author's Declaration

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, that this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

Marina Germane

8th January 2013

Introduction: Back to the Future

Progress in ideas, not in institutions. For the world gains by its failures. There is as much to learn from the experience of the nations that have failed, as from the discoveries of truth.

(Lord Acton)

In 1940, the independent state of Latvia, along with its neighbours Estonia and Lithuania, disappeared from the map of Europe, having been annexed by the Soviet Union as a result of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact. It took Latvians fifty long years to resume their rightful place among other sovereign European nations.

Since regaining national independence in 1991, Latvia has successfully recreated democratic state institutions, has effectively re-integrated into Western economic markets, and has largely curbed the widespread corruption of the early post-Soviet years. These achievements enabled Latvia's accession first to NATO and then to the European Union in 2004. The country's poor performance during the economic downturn of 2008 has since been remedied by the austerity measures implemented relentlessly by the government, turning it into a benchmark case for other economically ailing European countries like Greece and Spain. But this overall success story has been marred by a persistent blemish of ethnic discord, in particular by the problem of Latvia's non-citizens.

The citizenship Law of 1994 granted automatic citizenship to the citizens of the interwar republic (1918-1940) and their descendants, thus creating over 700,000 non-citizens – the majority of them non-ethnic Latvians (over sixty per cent of ethnic Russians failed to qualify for citizenship under the law). The Citizenship Law served two purposes: *de jure*, it signified the continuity of the Latvian interwar state; *de facto*, it separated those who had arrived in Latvia during the fifty years of Soviet rule (and whose loyalty towards an independent Latvian state was therefore questioned) from the body of citizens. These later arrivals were instead given the option of naturalising through history and language exams. Adding insult to injury, a complicated system of age-based quotas for naturalisation was introduced in order to control the number of applications, which was

initially predicted to be high. The quotas were lifted in 1998 after the actual demand for naturalisation turned out to be extremely low.

Another justification usually given for the restrictive Citizenship Law is the ‘endangered state of Latvianness’ – the proportion of ethnic Latvians fell from 75.5 per cent of the country’s population in 1935 to just 52 per cent in 1989, whereas the proportion of ethnic Russians tripled over the same period. Meanwhile, the Latvian language and culture were perceived to be under threat of extinction.

The Citizenship law of 1994 is widely regarded as the primary source of ethnic tensions in post-Soviet Latvia (Smith *et al.* 1996; Lieven 1994; Pabriks and Purs 2002), and the ensuing naturalisation process has proved to be painfully slow. At the beginning of 2012, the number of non-citizens still stood at 312,189, meaning that over fourteen per cent of the population were excluded from the country’s political life, unable to vote at either parliamentary or municipal elections.¹

The National Programme of Social Integration – commissioned by the government in 1998 in response to increasing international and domestic pressure, and officially adopted in 2000 – was eventually recognised as outdated and in need of revision: by 2006, it had become clear that no real progress was being made in uniting the ethnically divided society around common political values, prompting well-founded worries that a ‘two-community state’ was emerging instead. The draft Guidelines for Social Integration 2008-18, developed by the Secretariat of the Special Assignments Minister for Social Integration (which fell victim to the austerity programme mentioned earlier) in 2008, was widely criticised as ‘too multicultural’ and was ultimately discarded. Then a new National Identity and Social Integration Programme started being developed by the Ministry of Culture, which succeeded a string of other governmental institutions in the hosting of social integration matters. In March 2011, the ministry published a draft preamble to the future Programme, outlining its main goals and introducing new definitions – most importantly the definition of the ‘state nation’ (used by the authors to denominate the core *ethnie*), which, together with ethnic minorities, forms the ‘Latvian nation’ on the basis of a common ‘Latvian identity’ (i.e. Latvian language, Latvian culture and social memory). The preamble drew numerous criticisms from independent experts for being constructed upon outdated theoretical premises, and for placing ethno-cultural values above civic ones. After

¹ Data of the Office for Citizenship and Migration Affairs, <http://www.pmlp.gov.lv/lv/statistika/> (accessed 4th September 2012)

several months of controversy in Latvian printed and electronic media², and consultations with experts and minority representatives, on 20th October 2011 the Cabinet of Ministers adopted the final version of the document as the Guidelines for National Identity, Civil Society and Integration Policy.³ Overall, and especially in comparison with the original Social Integration Programme, which posited that ‘the goal of integration is to form a democratic, consolidated civil society, founded on shared basic values’ and named an ‘independent and democratic Latvian state’ as one of these fundamental values, the Guidelines may be interpreted as a swing towards ethnoculturalism and away from the earlier declared civic principles.⁴

These recent discussions on the nature of nation and national identity notably brought the ethnic vs. civic theoretical division back into Latvian public discourse. The history of the concept of civic nation in post-independence Latvia is not an easy one. In the mid-90s, a group of social and political scientists attempted to initiate a public discussion on the future of the Latvian civic nation, but, according to the Latvian sociologist E. Vēbers (2006:94), ‘The Latvian public was not ready for this idea, and perceived it with such negativity, with such intense inadequacy, that in order not to harm the naturalisation process, we stopped addressing this topic in the Latvian-language publications addressed to non-specialists.’⁵ The idea of the civic nation has not faded away completely, but it has since been removed to the margins of Latvian political thought. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the general public still perceives the idea of a civic, political nation as alien, foreign to Latvia; something which is being imposed from above, like numerous European Union directives which allegedly do not always take into account Latvia’s unique historical past and the unusual ethnic composition of its population.

However, the ethnic vs. civic dilemma is by no means new to historical nationalist discourse in Latvia, where, as a result of a long history of foreign conquests and dominations, several ethnic groups have been living side by side for centuries, despite contemporary Latvian politicians making frequent claims to the contrary. If, during the

² See, for example, Ījabs, I. 2011. ‘Neirotiskā integrācija’ at <http://politika.lv/article/neirotiska-integracija>, and Mūrmiece, I. 2011. ‘Pārāk daudz latviskuma! Vai būs pieņemami krieviem?’, *Latvijas Avīze*, 13th May.

³ ‘Nacionālās identitātes, pilsoniskās sabiedrības un integrācijas politikas pamatnostādnes (2012–2018)’, http://www.km.gov.lv/lv/nozares_info/integracija.html (accessed 06.09.2012).

⁴ ‘National Programme The Integration of Society in Latvia’, 2001. Rīga: Naturalisation Board of the Republic of Latvia, pp. 7-8.

⁵ Vēbers, Ē. Sabiedrības integrācijas procesa analīze un vērtējums, in: Apine, I. (ed.) (2006), *Pretestība sabiedrības integrācijai: cēloņi un pārvarēšanas iespējas (ethnicitātes, valsts un pilsoniskās sabiedrības mījedarbības analīze)*. Rīga: Latvijas Universitātes Filozofijas un socioloģijas institūts, LU aģentūra.

first five decades of its existence, the Latvian nationalist movement centred around the preservation of Latvian ethno-cultural heritage, the Russian Revolution of 1905 transformed it into a state-oriented, independence-seeking movement. And although, until the February Revolution of 1917, a majority of Latvian nationalists would have been content with the goal of Latvia becoming a fully autonomous unit within a new democratic Russia, they nevertheless had to address the issue of the multiethnic nature of the Baltic territories as soon as their movement expanded beyond purely cultural demands.⁶ Hence at the beginning of the twentieth century, two competing concepts of the Latvian nation came into being simultaneously: a civic nation, which foresaw the equal democratic participation of all ethnic groups residing in Latvia, and an ethnic one, which put minorities at the margins of the new state. These two conflicting concepts influenced state legislation, permeated Latvian interwar politics, inspired parliamentary debates, and were widely reflected in the press right up to 1940, when the nation-building process was interrupted by the Soviet annexation. When Latvia regained independence in 1991, the civic *vs.* ethnic dilemma promptly resurfaced, remaining a highly contested topic to this day.

There were two major ideological influences on the creation of a sovereign Latvian state in 1918. One was the famous ‘Fourteen Points’ speech by President Woodrow Wilson, with its proclaimed ‘mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small nations alike’. The other was the theory of non-territorial cultural autonomy (NCA) developed by Austrian Marxists at the turn of the century, and which was embraced by Latvian Social Democrats, a main driving force behind the national revival, at a time when the peak of Latvian national aspirations was an autonomous Latvia within a democratic Russian state. When the kaleidoscopic changes in the international situation at the end of World War One granted Latvians an opportunity of becoming a sovereign nation instead of an autonomous republic, it seemed logical to extend the same principles which Latvians had deemed appropriate for themselves in the past towards their newly created national minorities.

The newly created Latvian Republic was therefore a democratic state which guaranteed cultural rights to the ethnic minorities living on its territory; from the very start the founders of the state assured the minorities of their intention to build a united civic Latvian nation, where people of all ethnic backgrounds were welcome. This somewhat

⁶ According to the census of 1897, Latvians comprised 68.2 per cent of the populations, Russians 12.2 per cent, Germans 7.1 per cent, Jews 6.2 per cent, Poles 3.3 per cent, Lithuanians 1.3 per cent and Estonians 0.9 per cent (Skujenieks 1913).

idealistic, ‘multicultural’ vision of the new statehood, however, was soon tested by various practical challenges. Some of these challenges were specific to the particular Latvian situation, while the others arose due to changes on the international scene. A cynical view would be that the more secure Latvians felt as a sovereign nation (after, for example, the recognition of the state *de jure* in 1921, and membership of the League of Nations achieved during the same year), the less need they felt to court their minorities. And although these considerations, without any doubt, contributed to the change in attitude on the part of certain Latvian politicians, to ignore other contributing factors, such as the lack of pre-existing state institutions and any experience of practical implementation of participatory democracy, as well as the absence of democratic traditions, and the overall dire economic conditions, would be an enormous oversimplification of the matter. Specific reasons notwithstanding, the ‘honeymoon’ between the Latvian majority and its ethnic minorities (the three biggest being the Russians, the Jews and the Baltic Germans) lasted for months rather than for years. After that, disagreements slowly started to pile up.

Minority activism in interwar Latvia revolved around two axes, namely the citizenship question and the issue of cultural autonomy. The Citizenship Law of 1919, which excluded part of Latvian residents, mainly of Jewish ethnicity, from entitlement to Latvian citizenship, became the most debated issue of Latvian interwar politics and served as a litmus test for governments and individual politicians. Cultural autonomy for ethnic minorities was never legally and formally institutionalised in Latvia, unlike in neighbouring Estonia and Lithuania, although the Education laws of 1919 together ensured minorities’ control over their own educational and cultural matters in practice. Minorities’ later attempts at passing proper cultural autonomy laws, however, were unsuccessful. The citizenship issue and cultural autonomy belonged to two different spheres of interest – whereas the former belonged to the area of equal rights among all residents, the latter was concerned with the recognition of the right to cultural particularity specific to each ethnic minority. As we shall see, Latvian minorities chose the citizenship issue as the prime object of their aspirations and political struggle.

The aim of this thesis is three-fold: first, to challenge the widespread (and historically inaccurate) assumption prevalent in modern Latvia that the idea of the civic nation is something intrinsically alien and unsuitable, imposed on Latvia from above. In order to do this, I have undertaken a very detailed ‘forensic’ examination of the available historical sources (primary and secondary) pertaining to the interwar republic. My second aim has been to examine the long-forgotten original contributions made to the concept of

civic nationalism, and to the whole universalist-particularist dilemma, by Latvian thinkers at the beginning of the 20th century, and to place them in the wider framework of European interwar history and nationalism studies. Nowadays, Latvia is largely viewed as a case study for political theorists rather than as an active contributor to the debates. The highly original contributions made to international political theory by Schieman and Laserson demonstrate that this was not always the case. Thirdly, I aim to identify the key issues in majority-minority relations that contributed to the eventual deterioration of minority rights in Latvia prior to WW2, and, to a certain extent, to the demise of parliamentary democracy in 1934. These issues (divided into three principal clusters: citizenship, language, and education) are then compared to the remarkably similar challenges faced by Latvian society since 1991.

In brief, the main goal of my thesis, quoting Lord Acton (1988: 643), is ‘to exhibit the course of ideas and the course of events in their parallel progress and their action on each other’ in order to contribute to a better understanding of the nation-building in Latvia in the past and at present.

My main hypothesis was that, historically, the multiethnic nature of the population of the Latvian territories had a crucial impact on the formation of Latvian nationalism; in its own turn, the advent of nationalism profoundly changed interethnic relations in Latvia. I believe that these changes took place long before Latvia’s annexation by the Soviet Union in 1940. However, I do not advocate the ‘ice box’ theory, i.e. that old ethnic hatreds were ‘frozen’ during Soviet totalitarian rule only to spring back to life after that rule ended. It seems to me beyond any doubt that Soviet rule aggravated some pre-existing ethnic tensions as well as bringing along new ones. Nevertheless, Soviet ethnic policies in Latvia are the subject of a separate enquiry, and it would be way too ambitious to try to extend this thesis to cover this period of Latvian history (besides, Soviet ‘ethnic engineering’ policies have been already repeatedly addressed by other authors (Karklins, 1994; Lieven, 1994; Plakans, 1995; Smith, G., 1996; Pabriks and Purs, 2002; Eglitis, 2002)).

In short, my thesis is based upon the firm belief that in order to assess the challenges in the area of minority-majority relations presently faced by Latvia, one must enquire further back in history, with the aim of examining early developments in the

relationship between the emerging Latvian nationalism and Latvian ethnic minorities – an aspect which has been previously addressed by scholars only in passing.⁷

In Latvia, the current widespread opinion – a maxim, even – is that residents of the interwar republic and their descendants are by default ardent supporters of the Latvian national idea and state independence, in contrast to Soviet-time settlers who, allegedly, cannot even start to comprehend its advantages. Not only is this an oversimplification of the whole concept of loyalty to one's country, this argument is also used for classifying ethnic minorities as 'good', 'traditional' minorities (like Jews and Poles) and 'alien', 'non-traditional' minorities (Russians, Ukrainians, Tatars). I will argue that such a divisive policy towards different ethnic minorities does not really have a basis in Latvian history (the Russian community, for example, has also been present in Latvia for centuries, although just as in the case with the Jewish community, its composition changed during the Soviet occupation), and that it fosters ethnic discord instead of societal integration. I believe that by examining, in detail, the genesis of the Latvian national idea on the one hand, and the history of ethnic politics in Latvia on the other, my thesis – challenging a number of existing stereotypes and faulty historical perceptions in the process – helps to fill in an existing gap in Latvian history.

Chapter One sets the main theoretical framework of the study, i.e., the ethnic vs. civic dichotomy of nationalism, examines its origins, summarises current debates on the applicability of the dichotomy as an analytical tool, provides a response to common criticisms of the dichotomy, and explains why the dichotomy was chosen as the main analytical framework for this study. The chapter also outlines four additional theoretical approaches, which are closely related to the civic-ethnic distinction, namely the theory of minority bargaining, the quadratic nexus theory (which I extend to include a fifth – original – dimension), the liberal vs. communitarian distinction, and post-sovereign theory – and justifies their respective application in Latvia's case.

Chapter Two traces the early development of the concept of the Latvian nation from the mid-19th century to 1918, and describes the historical background and preconditions for the emergence of Latvian nationalism. The four sub-chapters examine the theoretical legacy to the national question of four Latvian thinkers, namely M. Skujenieks, M. Valters, E. Blanks, and P. Stučka. The concluding part of the chapter

⁷ Two notable exceptions to this rule are *Nacionālais jautājums Latvijā 1850-1940* by L. Dribins (1997), and *From Nationalism to Ethnic Policy: the Latvian Nation in the Present and the Past* by A. Pabriks (1999).

makes a comparison between the contributions made by these four thinkers representing different sides of the political spectrum, to the national idea in general, and to the concept of a civic nation in particular; there is also an assessment of the impact of their theoretical legacy in present-day Latvia.

Chapter Three, which is organised chronologically, describes the nation-building process and the changes in the relationship between the Latvian majority and ethnic minorities during the democratic Latvian Republic (1918-1934) through a detailed examination of legislative documents, parliamentary debates, newspapers, archive materials, and personal memoirs. The chapter also contains a small case study about A. Kēniņš (who, as a former education minister, became known in Latvian historiography as the ‘minorities’ oppressor’), which challenges some of the prevailing assumptions about his attempted reforms by revealing other factors at work.

Chapter Four, after providing the necessary historical and legal background in the introductory part, closely follows the political debates surrounding ‘the chronic issue of Latvian interwar politics’, the Citizenship Law of 1919. The citizenship issue is crucial to understanding the dynamics of majority-minority relations in the interwar years; what makes it even more important is the fact that, since 1991, citizenship has yet again become the most divisive issue in Latvian politics. The second part of the chapter is dedicated to a scrupulous analysis of the citizenship issue in interwar Latvia within the theoretical framework of the theory of minority bargaining.

Chapter Five follows the fate of minorities’ cultural autonomy in interwar Latvia and stakes a theoretical claim by adding an additional, ‘fifth element’, to the existing theory of the ‘quadratic nexus’. This so-called fifth element, the complicated interplay *between* different national minorities sharing the same homeland along with the core nation, is explored through a case study dedicated to the unlikely alliance formed by the Baltic German and Jewish communities, represented by P. Schiemann and M. Laserson respectively, in interwar Latvia. The disagreements between these two minority activists on both theoretical and practical issues not only shed an interesting light on the dynamics of intergroup minority relations in interwar Latvia, but also have deep resonance with the modern debates on minority rights. In addition, Chapter Five examines their original theoretical contribution to the theory of minority rights, cultural autonomy, and to what nowadays is defined as post-sovereign, or postnationalist, studies.

The introduction to Chapter Six questions the highly ambiguous (despite the largely critical treatment that it has received at the hands of historians) public perception of K. Ulmanis and his dictatorial rule in present-day Latvia, and scrutinises the possible causes of this – until now – essentially ‘unanalysed nostalgia’. The rest of the chapter, organised chronologically, examines the six years of the authoritarian rule of K. Ulmanis, the changes it brought along in all main sectors of public life, and assesses the impact it left on the nation-building process and majority-minority relations in Latvia.

Chapter Seven, after providing a brief description of the historical events that led to Latvia regaining its independence in 1991, examines the nation-building process over the past twenty years by dividing it into the clusters of citizenship, cultural autonomy, language policies, education, and social integration,

The Conclusions summarise the findings of the previous chapters, draw some parallels between the two periods of Latvian independence, and suggest which lessons from the past may be applicable to today’s situation.

In terms of methodology, my thesis belongs to the field of interdisciplinary studies, and is, above all, an amalgam of history and political theory. Although I have ultimately kept the original title of the thesis, ‘The history of the Idea of Latvians as a Civic Nation’, during the process of my research I came to realise that the resulting product does not exactly fall under the remit of intellectual history (in all its existing definitions, from Lovejoy to Skinner and his critics). Therefore, by combining traditional historical investigation of primary and secondary sources with the application of political theory concepts (which includes both the use of historically dated concepts in their respective historical setting, and, in some cases, the placing of these supposedly dated concepts within a framework of modern political theory), I have rather aimed at creating a kind of ‘structural history’, described by the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1992: 91) as history that ‘finds in each successive state of the structure under examination both the product of previous struggles to maintain or to transform this structure and the principle – via the contradictions, the tensions and the relations of force which constitute it – of subsequent transformation.’

For the purpose of my research, I have used a variety of primary and secondary sources available in the Latvian, Russian, English, and German languages. The primary sources used included: transcripts of the sessions of the National Council, the

Constitutional Assembly, and all four of the Latvian interwar parliaments; as well as governmental documents, speeches, party programmes and legal acts; a variety of newspapers and other periodicals; and, finally, collections of personal documents and NKVD files from the Latvian State Archive and the Latvian State Historical Archives and a number of personal interviews.

I have extensively drawn on secondary sources in Latvian history available in the Latvian language (some – also in Russian). These include, but are not limited to, the memoirs published by members of the Latvian émigré community, such as M. Valters (1969), F. Cielēns (1961, 1963, 1964) V. Bastjānis (1964, 1966, 1970), and others; works on the history of Latvia by the émigré Latvian historians Ā. Šilde (1964, 1976, 1982, 1985, 1988), E. Dunsdorfs (1975, 1978, 1982), U. Ģērmanis (1968, 1992, 1993), A. Švābe (1948, 1962), A. Spekke (1951, 1965, 1995, 2003), and E. Andersons (1982, 1984). I am heavily indebted to contemporary Latvian historians, such as L. Dribins (1997, 2000, 2002, 2005, 2008, 2009), A. Stranga (1998, 2001, 2002, 2005, 2007, 2008), I. Ronis (1978, 1994), I. Apine (1974, 1992, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008), I. Butulis (2005), I. Feldmanis (1993, 2000), R. Cerūzis (2004), J. Goldmanis (1994, 2005), U. Krēsliņš (2005), V. Volkovs (1996, 1998, 2005, 2007), T. Feigmane (2000, 2002), Ē. Jēkabsons (2006), V. Ščerbinskis (2006), and others.

As for secondary sources in Latvian history and politics available in the English language, I am heavily indebted to the Latvian-American historians A. Plakans (1966, 1974, 1995, 2007, 2011) and A. Ezergailis (1974, 1983, 1999). The book *The Jews in Latvia*, under the editorship of M. Bobe, which was published in Tel Aviv in 1971 by the Association of Latvian and Estonian Jews in Israel, was an irreplaceable source of information on the interwar Jewish community. The work of the British historian John Hiden (1987, 1992, 1994, 2004, 2012) on Latvia's interwar history, and the history of its Baltic German community was indispensable for my thesis. David J. Smith's (2002-I, 2002-II, 2005, 2012) work in both Baltic history and in political theory was both a source of inspiration, and a frame of reference. My analysis of the ideological trends within the Latvian Marxist movement and my subchapter on the leader of the Latvian Bolsheviks, P. Stučka, was largely inspired by G. Swain (1999, 2010). The early writings of the Latvian political scientist A. Pabriks (1994, 1997, 1999) on Latvian nationalism, minority rights and the impact of communitarian and liberal values on the nation-building process were instrumental in determining directions for my own research; I have also borrowed from his later work (Pabriks 2001-I, 2001-II, 2003).

I also owe a huge intellectual debt to many contemporary historians and political scientists, Latvian and not, such as G. Smith (1996), A. Lieven (1994), I. Zaķe (2005, 2008), I. Ījabs (2008, 2009), I. Silova (2001, 2002), N. Muižnieks (1993), A. Purs (2002), R. Taagepera (1973), V. Pettai (2007), M. Jubulis (2001, 2008), and many others.

To place interwar Latvia within a wider European context, I have drawn on the works of E.H. Carr (1962), C.A. Macartney (1929, 1934, 1972), A. Cobban (1945, 1969), A. Sturmthal (1944), O.I. Janowsky (1945), I. Kosinski (1970, 1974), D.H. Aldcroft (2006), G. Alderman (1993), M. Kitchen (1998), M. Mazower (1998), R.J. Overy (2007), E. Mendelsohn (1983), and others.

In order to place different strains of Latvian political thought in a wider ideological context, I have extensively consulted the works of K. Renner (2005) and O. Bauer (2000), H. Krabbe (1922), R. Luxemburg (2012), L. Kolakowski (2005), A. Przeworski and J. Sprague (1986), and others.

In the political theory part of my thesis, I have used a great variety of sources that are described, in detail, in Chapter One. I have also referred to my sources throughout the chapters, where appropriate, and in all quoted matter. The rest of the thesis contains my original work.

Chapter One: Theoretical Background. Liberalism, Democracy, and Nationalism

Liberal democracy and nationalism are the two major forces that have shaped the Western world for the past three centuries. The relationship between these two forces, however, is often strained and conflicted. If nationalist and nationalising movements at their early stages are often seen as liberal and liberating, then upon achieving their ultimate goal, a sovereign nation-state, they promptly come into contradiction with the ideals of liberalism, democracy and the principles of equality and justice associated with it.

The sovereign nation-state derives its legitimacy from the national community whose interests it represents; in return, the nation-state assures that the interests and welfare of the nation supersede all other interests and claims. By doing so, the state already comes into contradiction with the ideal of individual liberty that is central to the doctrine of liberalism. The second major tension, created by the convergence of the terms ‘nation’ and ‘state’, lies in the fact that the nation-state can only be considered truly legitimate if it represents the interests and the will of its entire population, thus presupposing a uniformity of interests and will that can only possibly exist within an ethnically, culturally and religiously homogeneous population. Such uniformity of interests and opinions is by itself not compatible with the liberal principles of individualism and autonomy. Moreover, in a world where the majority of nation-states are, to varying degrees, ethnically, culturally and religiously diverse, the application of the nation-state model as a homogeneous national community that is the sole bearer of sovereignty within a designated territory has resulted in what remains the biggest problem facing the nation-state – the problem of national minorities. Minorities, as political outsiders, ‘challenge the prevailing principle of legitimacy’ (Jackson Preece 2005: vii), and threaten uniformity by their refusal to comply. The so-called ‘minority question’ represents the greatest obstacle in the way of reconciling the nation-state with the values of liberal democracy. As such, it has occupied the minds of political scientists, philosophers and historians for a long time.

1.1. The Civic vs. Ethnic Dichotomy and Its Contemporary Critics

The earliest response to the inherent contradiction between nationalism and liberal democratic ideals came in the form of the civic vs. ethnic (also known as the Western vs. Eastern, political vs. cultural, liberal vs. organic, territory-based vs. descent-based, voluntarist vs. particularist) dichotomy of nationalism. This analytical distinction, which reaches far back into the history of political thought – perhaps as far as nationalism itself – remains one of the most contested subjects in the field of contemporary nationalism studies.

Although there is no general agreement on the exact date of birth of nationalism, it is safe to say that the majority of scholars date it back to the age of Romanticism. Among the Romanticists, Rousseau is traditionally recognised as the father of political nationalism, and Herder – of the cultural variety. Although both thinkers put a special emphasis on the historical past of the people, Rousseau was more interested in its influence upon future political transformations, whereas Herder was more preoccupied with the cultural implications of the past. Rousseau, in *Considerations on Representative Government*, envisions a national state (as opposed to a monarchical state) which is bound together by a common will and dedication to common political ideas, and which bestows equal rights and obligations upon its citizens. Herder, on the other hand, attaches little, if any, importance to political ideas or to the will of the general public, concentrating on the concept of *Volk*, comparing it to a nuclear family, and regarding the national state as a natural product of growth.¹

Later liberal thinkers of the 19th century, starting to suspect an inherent contradiction between nationalism and liberal theory, made the first attempts at reconciling the two by juxtaposing the old and the new, the retrograde and the progressive strains of nationalism. Lord Acton in *Nationality* distinguishes between the nations of the ancient world, ‘the progeny of a common ancestor’, ‘a result of merely physical and material

¹ F.M. Barnard in ‘Herder on Nationality, Humanity, and History’ (McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2003) casts a shadow of doubt over the appropriateness of the distinction between the political nationalism of Rousseau and the cultural nationalism of Herder, on the premise that detailed analysis of their writings renders more similarities in their views than first meets the eye. Be that as it may, one cannot avoid the fact that this traditional, if faulty, perception has greatly influenced most of the subsequent interpretations of the works of the two philosophers.

causes' and the new conception of nationality under Christianity, 'a moral and political being' (Acton 1985: 426-427). To Acton, a passionate Liberal and an advocate of diversity, modern nationality is derived from the state, not vice versa, which would be 'contrary to the nature of modern civilisation', as 'our connection with the race is merely natural or physical, whilst our duties to the political nation are ethical' (Acton 1985: 427).

Mill, in *Considerations on Representative Government*, posits that although the feeling of nationality is generated by different causes, such as race, descent, language and religion, 'the strongest of all is identity of political antecedents', such as national history and common recollections (Mill 1958: 229). Like Acton, Mill believed that ethnic and cultural diversity resulting in 'nationalities admixture' was of great benefit to humanity. He was of the firm opinion that to make a distinction between what is due to a fellow countryman, as opposed to what is due to a fellow human being, is more worthy of savages than of a civilised society. Mill was, however, concerned about the possible diversity of interests becoming a hindrance to the functioning of a representative government. Having famously declared that 'free institutions are next to impossible in a country made up of different nationalities' (Mill 1958: 230), and that for those institutions to prosper, the boundaries of governments should largely correspond to those of nationalities, he nevertheless concludes that due to 'geographical hindrances' many nations in Europe have no other course left open to them but 'to make virtue out of necessity and reconcile themselves to living together under equal rights and laws' (Mill 1958: 233).

Meinecke draws a distinction between the two types of modern nation: the cultural one (*Kulturnation*), and the state, political nation (*Staatsnation*). He identifies the Swiss as a genuine political nation and the German nation as a cultural one. He also points out that the two 'can shade into each other in historical reality': a cultural nation can be also a political nation (France and England), members of different cultural nations can comprise a single political nation (Switzerland), and several political nations can grow out of a cultural nation (Germany). Meinecke observes that it is difficult to distinguish between cultural and political nations in practice, as it is often not possible to determine which ties – political, religious, or cultural – are more important in bonding a nation together. He also provides a definition of the political nation: 'a population with a lively feeling of political community' (Meinecke 1970: 11-18).

But it was not until the second half of the 20th century and the aftermath of World War Two, which demonstrated the horrifying extremes of unbridled nationalism, that the

cultural-political nationalism dichotomy started to be applied as a symbolic divider between the West and the East. Whereas Acton, Mill and Meinecke spoke about cultural and political varieties of European nationalism either as of evolutionary phases or as of ideal types, Hans Kohn in his seminal work *The Idea of Nationalism*, first published in 1944, drew an imaginary vertical line through the map of the world. According to Kohn, the two main varieties of nationalism, Western and Eastern, or 'old' and 'new', developed differently in the course of history and are based upon different ideological premises. While Western nationalism (that of Western Europe, the United States, and the British dominions) was based on political reality, was closely linked with the 18th century's ideas of individual liberty and rational cosmopolitanism, and was more concerned about 'the struggles of the present without too much sentimental regard for the past', Eastern nationalism (including Central and Eastern Europe, as well as Asia), on the contrary, was rooted in the past, detached from the present political reality and arose out of an inferiority complex, out of protest against, and in conflict with the existing state. Kohn explains these two separate developments by the difference in the impact of the political ideas of the Renaissance and the Reformation: in the West, where they put down deep roots; in Germany, where they had only a limited influence; and further East, including Russia, where, according to Kohn, these ideas did not reach at all. Therefore, because of underdeveloped political and social structures, nationalism in the East was destined to express itself primarily in cultural terms, thus further deepening the long-existing cleavage between the West and the East. The differences between the cultural and political varieties of nationalism, in Kohn's interpretation, become a dichotomy proper: what one possesses, the other one lacks:

These two concepts of nationalism are the poles around which the new age with its innumerable shadings and transitions will revolve: from them it draws the pathos and the promises which move the hearts of men and masses as did in preceding ages the expectations of heavenly bliss and of redemption.

(Kohn 2005: 574)

Kohn also attaches strong normative tags to Western and Eastern nationalisms, continuously characterising the former as progressive and liberal, and the latter as backward and oppressive.

The Western-Eastern dichotomy was further explored by John Plamenatz in his *Two Types of Nationalism* (1976). His interpretation of the differences between the

Western and Eastern types of nationalism runs along similar lines to Kohn's: whereas the former is the nationalism of peoples 'culturally equipped' for modern challenges, the latter is 'the nationalism of peoples recently drawn into civilisation hitherto alien to them', of people 'who come to be called 'backward'', and whose nationalism is both competitive and imitative. But if for Kohn, Western nationalism simply equals political (liberal) nationalism and Eastern equals the cultural (illiberal) one, Plamenatz, who largely subscribes to the Western/liberal and Eastern/illiberal division, views cultural and political varieties of nationalism as developmental stages rather than as a fixed typology. To Plamenatz, nationalism is primarily a cultural phenomenon that can also often take political forms. As he sees it, France and England represented examples of cultural nationalism transformed into the political variety when they were, or at least seemed to be, 'the pre-eminently progressive people'; thus their nationalism became liberal. The cultural nationalism of Italy and Germany in the 19th century turned into the illiberal political nationalism of the 20th century, but this happened largely because they were 'defeated in war' or 'disappointed in victory'. As for Eastern nationalism, which he defines as 'not invariably but often' illiberal, and which for Plamenatz encompasses the Slavic peoples of Eastern Europe, as well as the peoples of Asia, Africa, and Latin America, the main accent is placed on their unpreparedness for the great ideas of modernity and on the authoritarian nature of this kind of nationalism. It is unclear from the Plamenatz's account, though, how cultural and political elements co-exist in Eastern nationalism, and overall this part of his account is not as thorough as the one on Western nationalism. Plamenatz's typology was critically reviewed by Gellner (1983), who raised many valid points, one of them being Plamenatz's somewhat blurred account of how benign Western nationalism turned into its 'most un-benign' form in the 20th century. He also stated that 'there can be no doubt but that he [Plamenatz] saw Western nationalism as relatively benign and nice, and the Eastern kind as nasty, and doomed to nastiness by the conditions which gave rise to it' (Gellner 1983: 99). It seems to me that in this particular instance 'The Sad Montenigrin from Oxford' is not guilty as charged. On the contrary, despite his obvious personal distaste for Eastern nationalism, Plamenatz ends his essay with an admirable (sixteen years prior to the fall of the Berlin Wall) foresight that although illiberal, this kind of nationalism has a liberating streak, and that it is 'a part of social, intellectual and moral revolution of which the aspirations to democracy and personal freedom are also products' (Plamenatz 1976: 35-36). Another interesting and rather unexpected point made by Plamenatz, and somewhat overlooked by Gellner, is his claim that there is no 'logical repugnance between nationalism and liberalism' (Plamenatz 1976: 27). Further on, he posits that there is nothing illiberal about cultural nationalism as such because 'diversity is desirable as much

within the nation as between nations if the life of the individual is to be enriched' (Plamenatz 1976: 28). This seems to be a rather radical point of departure from the traditional interpretation of the tendency of political nationalism to be 'liberal' and of that of cultural nationalism to be 'illiberal'. Later on, similar arguments will be employed by the adherents of the concept of liberal nationalism.

Ernest Gellner (1998), for whom nationalism was primarily a political principle, constructed his own typology of nationalism, introducing four 'time zones' stretching from the European Atlantic coast to the East, and basing it upon differences 'in terms of *marriage* between state and culture'. *Zone 1* includes societies spread along the Atlantic coast, which had both culture and state present long before the arrival of the Age of Nationalism, and which were therefore ready for the peaceful transformation to benign liberal nationalism. *Zone 2* encompasses the territory of the former Roman Empire, where culture was present for a long time, but there was no state in place. According to Gellner, two outcomes are possible under these circumstances – benign and liberal nationalism, or nationalism going 'nasty'. Eastern Europe is divided into *Zones 3 and 4*; the latter includes countries that were under Communist rule for decades. Eastern Europe, where neither national culture nor national state were available at the dawn of the nationalism era is, according to Gellner, predestined for horror. Eastern European peoples do not really have a choice: either they abandon the nationalist project, or ethnic cleansing will be unleashed. I do not see any substantial difference between Gellner's typology and the Western/Eastern dichotomy elaborated by Plamenatz, apart from Gellner's more detailed account of the development of Eastern European nationalism. Certainly, Gellner also introduces *Zone 2* as a subdivision of Western nationalism – but so, to perhaps a less detailed extent, does Plamenatz when distinguishing between the nationalisms of France and England and those of Germany and Italy. Both Plamenatz and Gellner identify the prevalence of the cultural over the political component in this area of the West, and stress the deficiencies in both cultural and political structures in the East.

Eric Hobsbawm in *Nations and Nationalism since 1870* (1990) speaks of the 'developed' world of the 19th century and the 'dependent' world of the first half of the twentieth century, where the transition to the national state was 'plainly a central fact of historical transformation' in the case of the former, and a product of the movement for national liberation and independence as a part of overall political emancipation in the case of the latter (which also had a largely imitative character). This division by and large corresponds to the Western/Eastern dichotomies developed by Kohn and Plamenatz.

Liah Greenfeld identifies two branches of nationalism in her seminal *Nationalism. Five Roads to Modernity* (1992), namely individualistic-libertarian and collectivistic-authoritarian. The difference between them depends on the interpretation of the concept of popular sovereignty, which Greenfeld characterises as a ‘relationship between nationalism and democracy’. In addition, she distinguishes two types of nationalism according to the criteria of ‘membership in a national collectivity’, which may be ‘civic’, (identical to citizenship, open, voluntaristic and can be acquired); or ‘ethnic’, where it ‘has nothing to do with an individual will, but constitutes a genetic characteristic’ (Greenfeld 1992: 11). Greenfeld observes that individualistic nationalism cannot be ethnic, but civic nationalism can be collectivistic. She also draws attention to the fact that these categories should only be used for describing certain characteristic tendencies within specific nationalisms, and treated as models, as they can never be fully realised. ‘In reality, obviously’ -- writes Greenfeld – ‘the most common type is a mixed one’. (Greenfeld 1992: 11-12)

Anthony Smith (1993) largely supports Kohn’s original dichotomy and bases his own, more detailed, typology upon it. He contends that Kohn’s dichotomy remains ‘valid and useful’, but stresses the necessity of applying ‘geopolitical labels’ with caution, as both varieties of nationalism can be encountered both in the West and in the East, as well as within the separate national movements. Further on, Smith argues that although this traditional division captures the ‘basic logic of many nationalisms’, it overlooks a number of sub-varieties of nationalism; he proposes his own typology based upon the distinction between *ethnic* and *territorial* (Smith prefers the latter term to ‘political nationalism’) nationalisms. This typology divides territorial nationalisms into pre-independence, or anti-colonial, and post-independence, or integration, nationalisms; whereas ethnic nationalisms are divided into pre-independence (secession and diaspora) nationalisms and post-independence (irredentist and ‘pan’) nationalisms. According to Smith, this typology, without being exhaustive, allows us ‘to compare nationalisms within each category, and to place nationalisms in broad comparable contexts, while allowing the possibility of more general explanations’ (Smith 1993: 83). In *Nationalism and Modernism* (1998), Smith elaborates further on the distinction between ethnic and civic nationalisms, and introduces a third type, the ‘plural’ nationalism of immigrant societies like Australia and Canada. Describing the modern debates about the civic vs. ethnic character of nationalism, Smith emphasises that although few modern states possess just one kind of nationalism, ‘we can usefully distinguish between ‘ethnic’, ‘civic’ and ‘plural’ types of nations and nationalism’, and that these analytical distinctions can be successfully applied in practice,

helping to explain, for example, differences in the immigration policies of different states. On the other hand, Smith recognises that the two types often overlap, and that the combination of the two may be changing over time. As a warning against assigning normative connotations, Smith stresses that all three types have ‘peculiar problems’, i.e. ethnic-genealogical nationalism may be exclusive; civic-territorial nationalism is often ‘impatient’ of ethnic differences; ‘plural’ nationalisms with an emphasis on diversity can contribute to the loss of national cohesion and instability, etc. Smith also reflects upon the pariah status of ethnic nationalism (which remains the most popular and widely-adopted version of nationalism in real life) among philosophers and political scientists, leaving this ‘most vexed and explosive’ part of the subject unanalysed and unaddressed.

In ‘The Ethnic Origins of Nations’ (1988), Smith introduces a ‘state-to-nation’ and ‘nation-to-state’ distinction, describing the different paths that nations in the West and the East respectively took in their development due to varying political, economic and cultural conditions. This distinction largely overlaps with the Western/Eastern dichotomy. However, for Smith ethnic and territorial are not fixed categories, since nations, according to him, constantly re-negotiate their bases in response to changing historical circumstances. Smith posits that it is inevitable for a modern nation to incorporate ‘ethnic and territorial components in varying proportions at particular moments of their history’ (Smith 1988: 149).

Ethnic nationalism may have become a pariah among intellectuals, as observed by Smith, but such is not the fate of cultural nationalism.² Hutchinson (1994) identifies two different types of nationalism, cultural and political, which ‘must not be conflated, for they articulate different, even competing notions of the nation, form their own distinctive organizations, and have sharply diverging political strategies’ (Hutchinson 1994: 122). Political nationalists, inspired by Enlightenment ideals, value reason above all and seek to secure a modern representative state, whilst for cultural nationalists nations are *organic* beings rather than political entities. It is important to note, though, that for Hutchinson the two nationalisms are like two sides of the same coin, as they ‘emerged side by side’ and are often combined, supporting each other:

² It is extremely difficult to avoid a confusion of terms here, because in nationalism studies ‘ethnic’ and ‘cultural’ are sometimes used as synonyms, and sometimes as two separate terms. Without getting into a terminological dispute, suffice to say that whenever one looks more closely at a national culture, including those of ‘civic’, ‘political’ nations, certain ethnic elements can always be discovered, and it is more often than not a culture of a particular ethnic group, usually a dominant one, or which used to be dominant, which has propelled itself to a more ‘universal’ level. In other words, ‘ethnic’ and ‘cultural’ are essentially synonyms when attached to ‘nationalism’, the main difference between them being that the term ‘cultural’, unlike ‘ethnic’, has no stigma attached to it.

Political nationalists asserted a cultural distinctiveness to mobilise their constituencies and justify their claims to political independence, and cultural nationalists, to defend the national ethos and institutions, required the support of a state.

(Hutchinson 2005: 46)

Moreover, cultural nationalists provide an ‘essential moral basis for the projects of political nationalists’ (Hutchinson 2005: 46). Both Smith and Hutchinson, who address nationalism from an ethno-symbolist perspective, see political and cultural (territorial and ethnic for Smith, respectively) nationalisms not as radically different stages of historical transformation but rather as two different strains of nationalist thought or varieties of nationalist politics, which are often present, in proportions that vary over time, within the same society.

One of the latest adherents of Kohn’s dichotomy, Michael Ignatieff, gives a rather straightforward account of the dual nature of nationalist movements in the introduction to his *Blood and Belonging* (1994). For Ignatieff, there are just two types of nationalism, civic and ethnic. The former ‘maintains that the nation should be composed of all those – regardless of race, colour, creed, gender, language or ethnicity – who subscribe to the nation’s political creed’ (Ignatieff 1994: 3). The latter ‘claims, by contrast, that an individual’s deepest attachments are inherited, not chosen’ (Ignatieff 1994: 4-5). Moreover, for Ignatieff civic nationalism is necessarily democratic, and ethnic nationalism often produces authoritarian regimes. Ignatieff speaks of civic and ethnic nationalisms not as if of ideal types or analytical categories, but as of currently-existing varieties of nationalism: whereas Great Britain is portrayed as the apotheosis of civic belonging, ‘*ethnic nationalism is flourishing in Eastern Europe*’. Ignatieff, a self-proclaimed cosmopolitan, attempts to reconcile cosmopolitanism with its antithesis, nationalism – he recognises that cosmopolitanism ‘will always depend, in the end, on the capacity of nation-states to provide security and civility for their citizens’ and therefore believes in the necessity of nations (Ignatieff 1994:9). That is, in the necessity of *civic* nations.

The civic-ethnic dichotomy, which had been previously extensively used for analysis of the nationalism phenomenon, was most rigorously challenged by Rogers Brubaker, who found it both analytically and normatively problematic. In his 1996 precursory article (later partially incorporated into the collection of essays *Nationalism Reframed* (1996)), he draws attention to what he calls ‘the dual neglect of ethnicity’ in the existing literature on nationalist politics – ethnicity not generally being recognised as a

major *impediment* to the nation-building process, and at the same time not being seen as a major *component* of this process (Brubaker 1996: 413). According to Brubaker (1996: 413), this neglect can be explained by the fact that the existing ‘strong normative preference for civic over ethnic identities’ and the ‘robust empirical confidence in the development of civic identities and state-wide, state-oriented loyalties’, are rooted in the early 1960s, when there was strong confidence in the superiority and desirability of the Western model, as well as in the viability of its universal application. Brubaker (1996: 414) recalls how the ‘more ethno-cultural models of nationalisation’ prevalent after the disintegration of the three great empires during the interwar period came to be regarded as marginal and irrelevant to modern development. However, posits Brubaker, the interwar nation-state experience cannot be viewed as marginal any more – on the contrary, for the analysis of the new, post-socialist nation-states it is much more relevant than the application of post-colonial theory or comparisons with the old state-nations of Western Europe.

Brubaker introduces the concept of ‘the nationalising state’, which he applies to both the ‘old new’ Europe, and the ‘new’:

A nationalising state, I have suggested, is one understood to be the state of and for a particular ethnocultural ‘core nation’ whose language, culture, demographic position, economic welfare and political hegemony must be protected and promoted by the state, the key elements here are (1) the sense of ‘ownership’ of the state by a particular ethnocultural nation that is conceived as distinct from citizenry or permanent resident population as a whole, and (2) the ‘remedial’ or ‘compensatory’ project of using state power to promote the core nation’s specific (and therefore inadequately served) interests.

(Brubaker 1996: 431)

After identifying the new, post-1991 European states as nationalising, Brubaker considers the alternative state models available, the three principal ones being (1) the ‘civic’ state (‘state of and for and of all’ its citizens, irrespective of their ethnicity); (2) the binational or multinational state comprised of two or more ethnocultural core nations; (3) ‘the hybrid model of minority rights: the state is understood as a national, but not as a nationalising state’. (Brubaker 1996: 432) He posits that the much lauded civic model does not stand much chance in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union (despite some civic principles being incorporated into constitutions and frequently invoked in public) precisely because of ‘the pervasively institutionalised understanding of nationality as fundamentally

ethnocultural rather than political' (Brubaker 1996: 432). The same goes for the binational and multinational models. Brubaker considers the 'minority rights model' to have better prospects provided that the 'internationally-sponsored minority rights regimes will be more successful today' than in interwar Europe. (Brubaker 1996: 433)

Although already drawing attention to the normative bias of the civic-ethnic distinction, in 1996 Brubaker still applied both 'civic' and 'ethnic' labels extensively in his own theorising on nationalising states. Later on, however, he attempted to fully discredit the dichotomy. In 'Ethnicity Without Groups' (2004), Brubaker claims that the civic-ethnic distinction does not address the empirical characteristics of nationalist movements and serves more 'political' rather than 'analytical' purposes regardless of whether it is applied by politicians in order to legitimise or discredit a certain nationalist project, or by scholars seeking to categorise 'different modes of self-understanding' (Brubaker 2004: 135). To support his claim, Brubaker submits the 'ethnic' and 'civic' categories to a scrupulous examination, uncovering multiple analytical and normative ambiguities, such as the ambivalent nature of the 'ethnic' and 'civic' terms themselves, an equivocal relationship between both civic and ethnic categories and culture, a continuous overlapping of the two categories and a strong normative meaning attached. These undeniable weaknesses of the dichotomy are, however, hardly a novelty, as they have been previously observed and to a varying extent addressed by some of its adherents, notably by Smith (1998, 1993) and Hutchinson (1995), and to a lesser extent by Plamenatz (1976). A cardinal point made by Brubaker, and later extrapolated on by the proponents of liberal nationalism, is that the common interpretation of civic nationalism as 'inclusive' and thus liberal, voluntarist and universalist, and of ethnic nationalism as 'exclusive' and thus illiberal, ascriptive and particularist, is actually a fallacy. In fact, argues Brubaker, all forms of nationalisms are both inclusive and exclusive, 'what varies is not the fact or even the degree of inclusiveness or exclusiveness, but the bases or criteria of inclusion and exclusion' (Brubaker 2004: 141). Brubaker reasons that the civic understanding of nationalism is rooted in the idea of citizenship granted regardless of particularist traits, but that the modern institution of citizenship itself is by its very nature exclusive as well as inclusive. Considering that access to citizenship is always limited by various factors, he continues, 'on a global scale, it is probably far more important, in shaping life chances and sustaining massive and morally arbitrary inequalities, than is any kind of exclusion based on putative ethnicity' (Brubaker 2004: 141). Brubaker then puts forward his own 'modest alternative' to the civic-ethnic dichotomy: a distinction between the *state-framed* and *counter-state* forms of nationalism. His proposed classification has given birth to a whole new body of

nationalism studies, but was extensively criticised by Kuzio (2001) who, ironically, found it more ‘confusing’ than the traditional civic-ethnic dichotomy (*see further down*).

Will Kymlicka (1999), the most famous proponent of multiculturalism and the liberal theory of minority rights, believes that although Ignatieff is right to distinguish between civic and ethnic nationalisms, he overlooks the presence of the cultural component in civic nationalism (and this failure to recognise the connection between the state and culture, according to Kymlicka, accounts for liberals’ failure to understand nationalism), and that his claims on the impact of this distinction on democracy are often ‘overstated’. Kymlicka provides examples of native-born Americans, ‘whose citizenship has nothing to do with their political beliefs’ (Kymlicka 1999: 133) and of Latin American countries, as a proof that civic nations are perfectly capable of producing military dictatorships. For Kymlicka himself, ‘what distinguishes ‘civic’ nations from ‘ethnic’ nations is not the absence of any cultural component to national identity, but rather the fact that anyone can integrate into the common culture, regardless of race or colour’ (Kymlicka 1995: 24-25). Moreover, ‘the idea of a purely non-cultural definition of civic nationalism is implausible, and often leads to self-contradiction’ (Kymlicka 1995: 200). Kymlicka maintains that participation in a national culture, contrary to what liberals claim, does not inhibit individual choice, but rather ‘*makes individual freedom meaningful*’ (Kymlicka 2001: 209). Kymlicka casts aside the possibility of a symbiosis between cosmopolitan beliefs and nationalists feelings, as for him cosmopolitans are those who ‘regret the privileges of national identities in political life, and who reject the principle that political arrangements should be ordered in such a way as to reflect and protect national identities’ (Kymlicka 2001: 204). ‘Liberals today no longer are confident that history is on the side of cosmopolitanism’, claims Kymlicka (1999: 36), and puts forward the idea of liberal nationalism as an alternative attempt at reconciliation between nationalism and ideas of liberal democracy. He defines liberal nationalism by a set of constraints it puts on traditional nationalist principles: despite bearing a ‘particular national character’ in terms of state language, national symbols and institutions, it ‘does not attempt to coercively impose a national identity on those who do not share it’³; ‘allows political activities aimed at giving public space a different national character’; does not restrict membership of the national group to a particular race, ethnicity, or religion; displays ‘relatively thin’ criteria of admission, like a state language exam and a long-term commitment to the nation’s well-

³ This seems to me to be a slight contradiction in terms – can anything really be ‘*imposed*’ without ‘*coercion*’?

being. Finally, being unaggressive, liberal nationalism is ‘willing to accord public recognition to, and share public space with, those national minorities within a state which consistently and democratically insist upon their national distinctiveness’. (Kymlicka 2001: 39-41) The politics of liberal nationalism, therefore, are consistent with the liberal principles of individual freedom and social justice, although Kymlicka does make the caveat that they will not resolve all existing tensions between national and ethnic groups. More importantly, he acknowledges that liberal nationalism, in order to operate, depends on ‘some level of goodwill’ (Kymlicka 1996: 193). This latter statement sounds a bit optimistic – abandoning wishful thinking, one has to recognise that such peaceful coexistence would require a tremendous amount of goodwill, not just ‘some’, on both sides, and at the same time. Such unanimity of will and intent on behalf of the parties pursuing rather different agendas is not outright impossible, but is seldom observable in real life, and is as such not particularly to be depended on. Kymlicka is also being somewhat evasive as to how exactly this idyll can be brought about.

David Miller, one of the most prominent advocates of liberal nationalism, observes that although the Western/Eastern dichotomy has been applied in an invariably different manner by Kohn, Plamenatz, Gellner and Smith, the overarching conclusion is that “‘Western’ nationalism is at least compatible with a liberal state if not positively conducive to such a state, whereas “Eastern” nationalism leads more or less inevitably to authoritarianism and cultural repression’ (Miller 1995: 9). This claim that the idea of nationality encourages political authoritarianism is, according to Miller, one of the two serious challenges this idea faces (the first one, of a philosophical kind, accuses the idea of being ‘rationally indefensible’). On the other hand, the ‘Western’ civic conception of nationhood which discards shared history and common culture in favour of the purely political bases of association is squarely rejected by Miller. In ‘Citizenship and National Identity’ (2000), Miller sets out to explore and defend the idea of nationality on the premise that nationality is ‘a primary source of identity for citizens in contemporary democratic states’ (Miller 2000: 6). In yet another attempt to bring together ideas of nationality and liberal democracy which are usually seen as clearly antagonistic, he develops a ‘left-communitarian’ model of *republican citizenship*, which he defines as the active involvement of all citizens in the shaping of the future of the political community, as opposed to liberal or libertarian individualistic conceptions of citizenship (which are less demanding of participation in the case of the former, or impose literally no obligations on individuals in the case of the latter). The left-communitarian model constructed by Miller evidently aims to appease both liberals and adherents of the strong civic society: the

national community is being strengthened by individuals who made a (unanimous) free conscious choice to actively contribute and participate. Such a model, according to Miller, is better equipped than any other to accommodate cultural diversity ‘by virtue of its ability to draw groups who initially have very different priorities into public debate, and to find compromise solutions to political issues that members of each group can accept’ (Miller 2000: 3). It may seem that the model proposed by Miller is a version of civic nationalism, but although from the very start he takes care to distance himself from the purely ethnic conception of the nation, he at the same time recognises the significant role ethnicity as a group identity plays in nationalist politics, and tries to solve the problem by claiming, somewhat unconvincingly, that ethnic identity is increasingly becoming a matter of choice.

In any case, Miller’s model is a theoretical construct, which he hypothetically applies to real life situations, trying to predict possible (but ultimately invariably positive) outcomes. Whereas Yael Tamir, another apologist for liberal nationalism, has an altogether different point of departure: an Israeli philosopher, she strives to reconcile Zionist nationalist politics with liberal democratic ideas. She is, overall, less optimistic than Miller about the buoyancy of such symbiosis – it speaks for itself that one of the chapters in her book *Liberal Nationalism* (1993) carries Mill’s phrase ‘Making a virtue out of necessity’ as its title. Tamir (1993: 35) recognises that liberal nationalism, which ‘attempts to capture what is essential to both schools of thought, drawing from liberalism a commitment to personal autonomy and individual rights, and from nationalism an appreciation of the importance of membership in human communities in general, and in national communities in particular’ poses no problem only in ethnically homogenous nation-states, whereas in multinational states the demand on one national culture reflected by the state brings with it harsh implications for minority groups, which will always be at a disadvantage, one way or another. This conflict, according to Tamir, is endogenous and cannot be resolved – minorities’ grievances can be alleviated by the open political process and cultural rights guaranteed by liberal nationalist policies, but these grievances will not disappear. But liberal nationalism is, nevertheless, the best available option, posits Tamir and proves her case by critically examining and discarding alternatives. For instance, she brings out an intrinsic contradiction of the ‘political nation’ using an example of political dissent in a society based upon commitment to common political values – it follows logically that someone who is a citizen by birthright but does not share these values or even actively opposes them should be stripped of citizenship, which is against everything that liberals hold dear. She also draws attention to the fact that a political nation model presupposes active political participation and the involvement of each and every citizen, whereas in real

life large segments of the population abstain even from such minimal political action as voting in elections, inevitably casting ‘doubts on the view of the state as a voluntary association whose authority is grounded on consent’ (Tamir 1993: 131). Tamir also rejects the notion of a nationally and culturally neutral state on the grounds that cultural differences are part of the political reality, not of the private domain, ‘as those who create the political system, legislate its laws, occupy key political positions and run the state bureaucracy have a culture that they cannot avoid bringing into the political domain, the separation between state and culture is revealed as an impossible endeavour’ (Tamir 1993: 149). Tamir predicts that ‘the illusion that liberal and national ideas could be fully accommodated within one political framework’ will fade away, but that the liberal national entity which endorses liberal principles of distribution inwards and outwards, and whose political system reflects a particular national culture, while leaving its citizens free to practice different cultures – is here to stay. Tamir’s definition of liberal nationalism is almost identical to Kymlicka’s, and, like him, she believes that the most distinctive feature of this model, in comparison to the other liberal conceptions of society, is the introduction of culture as a political dimension.

Stefan Auer in *Liberal Nationalism in Central Europe* (2004) promotes the cause of liberal ‘cultural’ nationalism being conducive to democratic transition in the post-communist countries. Heavily borrowing from Miller, Kymlicka and Tamir, Auer claims that ‘in order to make liberal values relevant to a particular political community, they have to be articulated within the specific cultural context of that community’ (Auer 2004: 9), and this is where liberal nationalism, ‘which seeks to reconcile the universal demands of liberalism with particularist attachments to a national culture’ comes in handy. According to Auer, ‘even ethnic nationalism, if culturally based, can be liberal.’ (Auer 2004: 26) Auer rejects the ‘old’ civic and ethnic classification of nationalism on the grounds that post-communist studies cannot be advanced by this simplistic dualism, which distorts our perception of political developments, and suggests abandoning it in favour of ‘cautious and detailed analysis of nationalistic discourses within each nation’, which in his opinion, would make it possible to highlight similarities across the countries without neglecting peculiarities (Auer 2004: 28). He does not elaborate on how exactly this detailed analysis of various nationalistic discourses would manage to highlight similarities without a theoretical framework in place.

Bernard Yack (1999) shrewdly observes that ‘distinguishing civic from ethnic understandings of nationhood is part of a larger effort by contemporary liberals to channel

national sentiments in a direction – civic nationalism – that seems consistent with the commitments to individual rights and diversity that they associate with a decent political order’ (Yack 1999: 104). Yack is sceptical about the civic-ethnic distinction not only because of the normative implications, but also because the image of a civic nation as a community built on commitment to certain political ideas seems untenable to him as ‘a mixture of self-congratulation and wishful thinking’. Yack argues that the so-called civic nations, as the French, Canadian and American nations are usually perceived to be, are not built solely upon the commitment to a set of political principles – no matter how much one sympathises with the political principles of another nation, one would not consider changing one’s national allegiance, because of a deeper emotional attachment which has little to do with rational choice. Therefore, the much-praised civic nation is an illusion and a political myth, a norm that is not rooted in our historical experience. As for the proponents of the idea of the civic nation,

...The norms that they come up with tend to say much more about the way in which we should order lives within *given* national communities than about why the boundaries of these communities should take one shape rather than the other.

(Yack 1999: 111)

For Yack, too, the cultural and the political are too closely intertwined in modern society to attempt a separation. He argues that liberal principles, after all, developed and flourished within the network of national communities. Yack employs the argument that national membership based upon political assent may turn out to be even more illiberal than that based upon descent; birthright-based citizenship, according to Yack, promotes toleration ‘precisely by removing the question of communal membership from the realm of choice’ (Yack 1999: 116).

Nationalisms *per se* are not always intolerant or exclusionist, says Kai Nielsen (1999), another supporter of liberal nationalism. For Nielsen, too, a national identity based solely upon political principles is ‘too thin’ and lacks the necessary cultural component. Therefore, discarding civic nationalism, but unwilling to endorse the ethnic one, he comes up with a third variety – cultural nationalism (the latter two not to be confused). According to Nielsen, all nationalisms are cultural, but not all cultural nationalisms are ethnic, as long as the culture supported by the state is a liberal-democratic culture (in Nielsen’s interpretation, one that protects minority rights). On this condition, concludes Nielsen,

‘nationalism and liberalism can, and do, go comfortably hand in hand’ (Nielsen 1999: 128). Nielsen is very categorical in his rejection of the civic/ethnic dichotomy:

Talk of civic nationalism had better be dropped from our political vocabulary (including the vocabulary of political theory), if we wish to be clear and coherent in our analyses in the real world. We should see that all nationalism is cultural nationalism.

(Nielsen 1999: 127)

Umut Özkirimli in *Contemporary Debates on Nationalism* (2005) summarises arguments against the civic/ethnic dichotomy, i.e. normative implications, analytical deficiencies, etc. and concludes that it can be dismissed as ‘bogus’. Instead, he suggests that nationalism can be analysed as *a form of discourse*, because ‘...nationalism is a particular way of seeing and interpreting the world, a frame of reference that helps us to make sense of and structure the reality that surrounds us’ (Özkirimli 2005: 30).

In order to forestall criticisms of the proposed definition being too general or too vague, Özkirimli comes up with four specific ways in which the nationalist discourse operates, namely: 1) ‘the discourse of nationalism divides the world into ‘us’ and ‘them’; 2) ‘the discourse of nationalism hegemonises’; 3) ‘the discourse of nationalism naturalizes itself’; 4) ‘the discourse of nationalism operates through institutions’. I am not at all convinced, though, that these four statements make Özkirimli’s case for the originality of the nationalist discourse any stronger – for example, all four statements remain true if you substitute ‘discourse of nationalism’ for ‘discourse of religion’, or for ‘discourse of racial supremacy’, or for ‘discourse of imperialism’. Moreover, the validity of the first three statements, which can be theoretically attributed to any kind of mass ideology, largely depends upon the fourth, namely the support of public institutions, being available. Therefore, as useful as an analysis of any public discourse is for our understanding of the reality that surrounds us and the on-going social and political processes, contemplation of nationalist discourse does not, in my opinion, invalidate, exclude or replace the civic/ethnic dichotomy as an analytical tool. The two are complementary, not antagonistic.

The civic/ethnic dichotomy received a somewhat kinder treatment, albeit not an uncritical one, at the hands of Aviel Roshwald (2006). When characterising civic and ethnic nationalisms, Roshwald draws attention to their voluntary and ascriptive aspects respectively:

...civic nationalism is commonly associated with liberal, tolerant, inclusive values, because its criteria for membership can theoretically be met by any resident of a nation-state territory; it's simply a matter of individually choosing to *subscribe* to a common set of principles. Civic nationalism does not in theory impose any requirements for cultural homogeneity beyond the circumscribed realm of a shared political culture. Ethnic nationalism is considered intolerant of both individual right and cultural diversity because of its preoccupation with *ascriptive* qualities that can neither be freely acquired nor voluntarily relinquished, its conception of the nation as an organically cohesive collective entity, and its understanding of national-cultural identity as an integrated package in which there can be no distinction between a public, political-legal arena and a private or associational, cultural-communal sphere.

(Roshwald 2006: 256)

Roshwald is fully aware of the normative and analytical ambiguities of the dichotomy – for example, he observes that ‘even at the theoretical level, a purely ethnic or purely civic nationalism is a contradiction in terms’ (Roshwald 2006: 256) and that ‘a purely civic nationalism would, arguably, not be an example of nationalism at all’ (Roshwald 2006: 257). He does believe, however, that ethnic and civic typologies remain powerful instruments of analysis, but cautions against simplistic usage, speaking of civic- or ethnic- *leaning* nations instead. Roshwald, similar to Tamir, observes that ‘every polity necessarily embodies some element of cultural particularism’ and that every liberal-democratic state ‘faces a contradiction between its role as embodiment of particular culture and its espousal of equal rights for all’ (Roshwald 2006: 281).

Taras Kuzio (2001) recognises the legitimacy of using civic and ethnic typologies of nationalism as ideal types for analytical purposes, but believes that the recent developments in post-communist Europe are not taken into account by this traditional division, thus leading to a terminological confusion. According to Kuzio, in order to ‘come to grips’ with all the recent changes, two steps are necessary: first, to recognise that many of the present nation-building policies employed in the East are similar to those employed in the West during earlier periods of history. Second, to accept that all so-called civic states, regardless of their geographical location, include ethno-cultural elements. Kuzio posits that the balance between the civic and ethnic elements depends solely upon the progress of democratisation and the development of civil society. He is also critical of Brubaker’s distinction between civic, nationalising and bi-ethnic states, on the grounds that he applies the newly coined term ‘nationalising states’ exclusively to Eastern Europe, but

not to the West, effectively substituting one normative term for another. Furthermore, according to Kuzio, Brubaker's framework cannot be applied successfully to all twenty-seven post-communist states as it does not distinguish between those nationalising states that adopted civic nation-building policies, and those who resorted to authoritarian measures. Notably, Kuzio calls Brubaker's framework 'confusing' and observes that 'a less confusing division of European states would be according to whether they are civic or ethnic' (Kuzio 2001: 144) (back to square one?). Kuzio's own alternative theoretical framework divides the post-communist states into two large categories, 'civic' and 'nationalising ethnic', with the former being subdivided into mono-ethnic, plural-liberal, plural non-liberal, and ethnic democracies.

Out of all the post-communist states, he places only Belarus and Yugoslavia in the 'nationalising ethnic' category. In the end, though, Kuzio does not radically break with the traditional civic/ethnic typology, but rather extrapolates it further, building on Brubaker's notions of civic and nationalising states. This more detailed classification allows him greater flexibility and permits the placement of the twenty-five post-communist states in the 'civic' category, thus finally erasing the hypothetical divide between the East and the West. Unfortunately, Kuzio does not elaborate on how his proposed classification would work when applied to states outside the post-communist bloc.

Mark Jubulis (2008) maintains that the distinction between civic and ethnic nations is 'exaggerated', largely because scholars tend to underestimate role of culture in civic nations and to insufficiently distinguish it from ethnicity in ethnic nations. He is critical of Kohn's distinction between civic and ethnic nations exactly because it is a dichotomy, i.e. a strict division not allowing for any 'grey areas', which allegedly leads to consequent over-simplification of nationalism typologies. Jubulis, however, does not precipitately discard it altogether, insisting that it 'can retain its usefulness as long as we are clear about ideal types and as long as we are more sensitive to the role of culture, as supportive of civic identity and as distinct from ethnicity' (Jubulis 2008: 6). Furthermore, in order to add a third, cultural dimension to the traditional division, he proposes changing perspective from the vertical civic/ethnic dichotomy to a linear spectrum 'on which nations are positioned based on their openness to new members', with the 'civic ideal' at one end, 'ethnic' at the other, and 'cultural/linguistic' in the middle. The potential shortcoming of such a spectrum, according to Jubulis, is the difficulty of determining the exact placement of a nation with a relative balance of all three components. He also makes the caveat that nations can move along the spectrum in the course of history.

The placement of culture as a third separate criterion in the middle of the spectrum seems problematic to me. After all, as Jubulis's argument goes, both civic and ethnic nationalism models are infused by culture. However, if a hypothetical nation is placed in the middle of the spectrum, it would imply a strong cultural component, but if it is shifted to the left (civic) or to the right (ethnic), it would allegedly start losing it, which is self-contradictory.

The latest (at the time of writing of this thesis) alternative dual dichotomy, which bears, in my opinion, a close resemblance to the original civic-ethnic one, was introduced by Stepan, Linz, and Yadav in *Crafting State-Nations. India and Other Multinational Democracies* (2011). The authors juxtapose *state-nations* and *nation-states*, aiming at establishing 'a normative standard to which multinational democracies can aspire and to introduce a set of observable empirical socio-political realities that a polity, if it is a state-nation, will manifest' (Stepan, Linz, and Yadav 2011: 4). It is this focus on the practical implementation of the state-nation ideal, with the unreserved recognition of the 'normative' element in it that distinguishes *Crafting State Nations* from the other works in the field.

State-nations are defined as multicultural (sometimes with significant multinational components) states, which 'nonetheless still manage to engender strong identification and loyalty from their citizens, an identification and loyalty that proponents of homogeneous nation states perceive that only nation states can engender' (Linz and Stepan 1996 as quoted in: Stepan, Linz and Yadav 2011: 4). Nation-states, by contrast, 'stand for a political-institutional approach that attempts to match political boundaries of the state with the presumed cultural boundaries of the nation, or vice versa.' (Stepan, Linz and Yadav 2011: 4) The authors add a caveat that both are ideal-type distinctions and that the 'state-nation is not a matter of recognising a pre-existing reality.' (Stepan, Linz and Yadav 2011: 8)

In order to become a state-nation, a diverse polity is expected to follow four 'empirically verifiable patterns': (1) a high degree of *positive identification* with the state; (2) *multiple but complementary* political identities and loyalties among its citizens; (3) 'a high degree of *institutional trust* in the most important constitutional, legal, and administrative components of the state'; (4) 'a comparatively high degree of positive *support for democracy*' among the citizens. (Stepan, Linz and Yadav 2011:7-8) But the

most important component (which in my opinion also happens to be the weakest link when one considers practical implications) is the intrinsic sense of belonging to the polity (which the authors choose to call the ‘we-feeling’). It is the ‘we-feeling’ that marks the difference between the state-nation and the simply multinational state, which always remains at risk of separatist trends.

The ‘we-feeling’ is in its substance not dissimilar from Meinecke’s ‘lively feeling of political community’ described earlier. However, Meinecke is being descriptive rather than prescriptive in his usage of the term, stipulating that the exact origins of nation-bonding ties are very hard to determine. Stepan, Linz and Yadav, while making the ‘we-feeling’ a crucial element of the state-nation existence, do not exactly ponder on how this feeling will come about. Their description of the ‘we-feeling’ – it ‘may take the form of defining a tradition, history, a shared culture in an inclusive manner, with attachment to common symbols of the state, or of inculcating some form of ‘constitutional patriotism’’ (Stepan, Linz and Yadav 2011: 5) resonates very well with the much-discussed and highly desirable attributes of the civic nation. In practice, however, this ideal finds it very hard to compete against readily available and easily accessible ethnocultural bonds. The authors do not elaborate on how, and why, civic ties will become preferable to ethnic ones. Ironically, while Stepan, Linz and Yadav set out to deliver the latest practical solution to state-nation building, their project is undermined by the same old theoretical division between civic and ethnic, or rather by the seeming impossibility of achieving a right mix of the two.

Overall, the existing critique of the civic/ethnic dichotomy can be summarised as follows: it is normatively laden, analytically problematic due to the ambiguity of terms, simplistically dual as it allows for no ‘grey areas’, does not sufficiently account for the role of culture in national communities, is too narrow to account for recent developments in the post-communist bloc, and does not offer much in terms of practical implementation. I will attempt to address each of these arguments in turn.

Normative tags

It cannot be denied that the terms ‘civic’ and ‘ethnic’ have acquired strong normative meanings in relation to nationalism over time, with ‘civic’ readily implying ‘liberal’ and ‘inclusive’, and ‘ethnic’ usually associated with ‘illiberal’ and ‘exclusive’. The main argument against these normative tags is that they are potentially misleading,

because a civic nation is not necessarily liberal and democratic (here Brazil under the military government of 1964-1985 serves as a perfect example), and besides, both civic and ethnic nations may be exclusive, albeit on different grounds. Therefore, it is not entirely clear why exclusion on the basis of ethnicity and descent is normatively more problematic than, for example, exclusion on the basis of political affiliation.

I believe that the main reason that most liberals feel more uncomfortable with exclusion on an ethnic basis lies in the fact that ethnicity, like race, and unlike political affiliation, is an inborn trait, often marked by certain obvious physical characteristics, leaving little free choice for the individual in terms of membership of a specific ethnic community. This is not the case with other types of affiliation, such as political or religious. For example, although one can be born and remain Conservative through one's life, if one decides to switch to Labour instead, it is an incomparably easier task than for an ethnic Indian to become ethnically English (not just in his or her own description, but also in the perception of others). Religions welcome converts and new recruits (although some, like Judaism, do it with more reservations). And although there is a certain truth to Miller's (2000) claim that ethnicity may also be a matter of choice, ethnicity, just like race, largely remains an ascriptive, and not a self-descriptive characteristic. And it is this ascriptive aspect limiting the free choice of the individual that makes liberally minded people wary of ethnic nationalism. I would like to stress 'liberally minded', because strictly speaking, 'ethnic nationalism' has negative connotations only in their perception; people of different political convictions do not necessarily perceive 'ethnic nationalism' as a pejorative term. Besides, the word 'nationalism' itself has acquired persistent negative connotations outside of nationalist rhetoric (or the field of nationalism studies), but nobody is seriously considering replacing it with something impartial and politically correct, like, for example, 'people's quest for self-determination'.

Ambiguity of terms

As for the alleged ambiguity of the terms 'civic' and 'ethnic', this brings to mind what Isaiah Berlin (2005: 168) once famously said about the concept of freedom: 'Like happiness and goodness, like nature and reality, it is a term whose meaning is so porous that there is little interpretation that it seems able to resist'; he went on to claim that 'this protean word', freedom, has about two hundred different meanings recorded. Two hundred meanings may be exceptional, but most of the terms employed by social scientists in their

studies are contentious and highly resistant to strict definitions. For that matter, a concise and unambiguous definition of nationalism is still waiting to be developed. 'Liberal' can also have a variety of meanings, depending on geographical location and historical context. Under scrupulous analysis, the widely used term 'liberal democracy' becomes a contradiction in terms. And if terms were to be discarded on the charge that they are ambiguous, political science would come to a standstill. But, 'to neglect the field of political thought, because its unstable subject-matter, with its blurred edges, is not to be caught by the fixed concept, abstract models and fine instruments suitable to logic or to linguistic analysis... is merely to allow oneself to remain at the mercy of primitive and uncriticised political beliefs' (Berlin 2005: 167).

Simplistic dualism

Although Kohn's original division between the types of nationalism is dualistic, none of the well-known subsequent interpretations of his dichotomy (with the possible exception of Ignatieff's (1993)) exclude the so-called 'grey areas' between civic and ethnic nationalisms; on the contrary, 'civic' and 'ethnic' are persistently used strictly as ideal types. Even Kohn's predecessor, Meinecke, observes that it is difficult to distinguish between cultural and political nations in practice. Plamenatz (1976) speaks of two *types* of nationalism, but stresses that the nationalisms of different peoples do not clearly fall into just one of them. Greenfeld (1992) insists that the two types of nationalism, individualistic-libertarian and collectivistic-authoritarian, should be only used as *models*, and that in reality the most common is the *mixed* type. Anthony Smith (1993) claims that both varieties of nationalism can be encountered in the West as well as in the East, and also within specific national movements. For Hutchinson (1994), cultural and political nationalisms represent two sides of the same coin and are often combined. Any *dichotomy* is dual by nature – that is its main characteristic, but it is the analysis it is used for, and the method of its application, which should be held responsible for occasional excessive dualism or exaggerated simplicity.

Undermining the role of culture

There is a persistent opinion that the civic-ethnic dichotomy insufficiently addresses the role of national culture in the construction of national identity, and aims to

replace it with a 'mythical civic culture' (Tamir 1993; Kymlicka 1995, 2001; Nielsen 1999; Yack 1999; Jubulis 2008). This claim is usually made either by the proponents of liberal nationalism, or by those who argue for the existence of 'cultural nationalism' as a category in its own right (in the words of Kai Nielsen, 'cultural nationalism, neither civic nor ethnic').

As a rule, this argument is more contextualised than based in broader political theory (Quebec for Kymlicka and Nielsen, Israel for Tamir, and Latvia for Jubulis). As Yael Tamir (1999) reflected herself, one's theoretical approach is often influenced by personal reasons. It is also notable that this line of reasoning has been adopted by different scholars not so much in response to the civic-ethnic dichotomy as such, but to its sometimes-casual application to real-life cases (of which Michael Ignatieff's 'Blood and Belonging' is perhaps the most prominent example).

I would like to argue that the notions civic and ethnic, applied as ideal types, and not as crude templates, do not in the least diminish the role of culture in the construction of national identity. On the contrary, proponents of the dichotomy view culture as a very potent ingredient of national politics. But just as advocates of cultural nationalism believe – rightly – that it is very difficult to separate politics and culture, adherents of civic nationalism are convinced that it is even more difficult, if not altogether impossible, to separate culture and ethnicity. Rather, as Beiner (1999: 14) observes, 'what animates the 'civic' conception is the vision of a shared citizenship and civic identity that would be in principle capable of transcending these cultural preoccupations, however legitimate they may be, in a political community where linguistic and cultural identities are in a potential conflict'.

Overall, it is obvious that the role of culture and that of ethnicity and religion as its integral components are, and are likely to remain, extremely important within any national community, civic- or ethnic-leaning alike. The only difference, according to the dichotomy, is that while recognising the potency of culture, the former would strive to separate it from the state while the latter would be reluctant to do so.

Unsuitability for post-communist studies

The collapse of the Communist bloc in Central and Eastern Europe and the emergence of the new national states introduced a whole new dimension into nationalist politics, leading to claims that existing theoretical frameworks were not suitable for the analysis of the new developments (Auer 2004; Kuzio 2001, Jubulis 2008). For example, Auer writes that although liberal nationalism has recently gained new credibility in the West, ‘no significant attempt has been made to show its relevance to the experience of the post-communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe’, while ‘old classifications of nationalism (civic and ethnic, equated with Western and Eastern) distort the perception of recent political developments in the region’ (Auer 2004: 28). Jubulis posits that ‘we need to appreciate that nations in the West have an ethnic or cultural element and nations in the East can have a civic dimension’ (Jubulis 2008: 6). Kuzio argues mainly against Brubaker’s classification of civic and ‘nationalising’ states on the grounds that it is ‘far too broad when applied to twenty-seven post-communist countries’ (Kuzio 2001: 137); the main fault he finds with Brubaker’s typology is that it is ‘placed within the context of the traditional literature on nationalism, which divides Europe into a ‘civic West’ and an ‘ethnic East’ (Kuzio 2001: 135).

It seems that the main concern here is not so much about the analytical deficiency of the civic-ethnic divide as about the allegedly biased way it is being applied to the post-communist states. Apparently, there is nothing intrinsically wrong with the ‘civic’ notion *per se* when it is applied to the Eastern European countries, or with the term ‘ethnocultural’ when applied to the West. I think there is a certain danger in censoring analytical terms and bringing political correctness into nationalism studies, especially if one subscribes to Kuzio’s own view that the balance between ethnic and civic elements is dependent upon the general level of democratisation and advances in civil society’s development. Here one needs to bear in mind that most post-communist studies up until now have confirmed that despite the overall continuous progress in achieving these two objectives among the Eastern European nations, the process is not quite complete as yet.

Overall, it may be said that the civic-ethnic dichotomy appeared in response to the need to address an inherent contradiction between nationalism and liberal democratic ideals, as an attempt to reconcile a collectivist ideology that strives at particularism with an

ideology that promotes individual liberty and equal rights for all. And although out of the two, liberalism arguably goes much further back in history than nationalism, from the 19th century onwards the two ideologies largely developed in parallel, and together came to dominate the world – after all, we live in a world of national states, the majority of which are also (or at least claim to be) liberal democracies. This does not mean, however, that the necessary checks and balances are all in place – there have been many moments in history when an escalation of virulent nationalism led to the demise of a liberal democracy altogether, and the relationship between the two remains problematic even at the best of times. In my opinion, the civic-ethnic dichotomy was brought to life as an earnest attempt at reconciliation of the two. As time went by, and ethnic nationalism showed little sign of waning (on the contrary, the collapse of the Communist bloc and increasing world migration gave it a boost), it was perhaps inevitable that an attempt to make a ‘virtue out of necessity’ in the case of ethnic nationalism, too, would be made, either by casting doubt on the credibility of the civic version, or by re-evaluating the role of ethnicity in the process of nation-building. In any case, these ‘revisionist’ efforts have significantly widened our understanding of nationalism, introducing wholly new dimensions of the interplay between politics, civil society, ethnicity, culture and religion. What they, in my understanding, have failed to do is to convincingly discredit or, more importantly, to successfully replace the civic-ethnic dichotomy, which remains a perfectly valid analytical tool. But, once again, this only holds true on the condition that ‘civic’ and ‘ethnic’ are used as ideal types in the Weberian sense, and not as labels for existing national movements.

Another strong argument in favour of the suitability of the ethnic vs. civic distinction for the analysis of the evolution of the concept of the Latvian nation during the first half of the 20th century is the fact that both the Latvian nationalist thinkers and their minority counterparts were well familiar with the dichotomy. In a sharp contrast to the modern-day situation in Latvia, where the concept of the civic nation is dismissed outright as unsuitable (see Chapter Seven), the ethnic vs. civic debates permeated Latvian public space during the interwar years, being discussed in the *Saeima*, argued about at the sessions of the Riga Council, and polemicised in the press, as described in Chapters Two and Three. It seemed only appropriate to place those historical debates within the original theoretical framework.

1.2. Non-territorial Cultural Autonomy

Another theoretical framework indispensable for my analysis of minority politics in interwar Latvia is the idea of non-territorial cultural autonomy (NCA). This was first introduced by the Austrian Social Democrat Karl Renner in his programmatic article *Staat und Nation* (1899) and was then further developed by his colleague Otto Bauer in the monumental *Die Nationalitätenfrage und die Sozialdemokratie* (1906). It seemed that the NCA model elaborated by the Austrian Marxists had something to offer to everybody – it rendered the Marxists with an attractive option of reconciling socialist leanings with national pride, and provided the bourgeois national ideologues with some sort of vindication that truth was on their side all along. The theory itself rested upon the three fundamental premises; a sharp distinction between the nation and the state, the ‘personality principle’ freeing a national group from any territorial attachment, and the principle of pluralistic sovereignty allowing national communities to take certain functions over from the state. Both Renner and Bauer repeatedly compared national associations with religious confessions, claiming that both are best separated from the state.

Although the NCA model was largely abandoned by its authors after 1918, when the Austro-Hungarian Empire (which the model was intended to salvage in the first place) fell apart, it had a very strong impact on the political and philosophical thinking of the time, inspiring authors far away from its native Austria. Admittedly, its influence was greatest among Social Democrats in Central and Eastern Europe – not least because the Austro-Marxists were the first to break with the orthodox Marxist tradition that recognised no national sentiment, offering an attractive alternative for those who were sympathetic to the plight of the working class but were nevertheless not ready to throw national aspirations away. Many Latvian Social Democrats, like Skujenieks and Valters, were taken with the NCA idea and built their own theoretical work on its premises, albeit very selectively – Skujenieks (1913), for example, although extremely supportive of cultural autonomy in general, did not accept the non-territorial principle, while Valters (1914) evaluated the advantages of cultural autonomy almost exclusively from the vantage point of ethnic Latvians, who were themselves an ethnic minority within the Russian Empire at the time.

However, the impact of the NCA concept was not limited to Social Democratic circles only – before being ultimately ‘buried by Lenin, Stalin and Trotsky’, it inspired a number of short-lived experiments during the last days of the Russian Empire (see Bowring 2005), and had a pronounced impact on the Zionist movement in Europe. After the collapse of the Russian Empire, two newly created Baltic countries came closest to the practical implementation of the model – in 1919, the Latvian National Council passed two laws – a Law on Latvian Educational Institutions and a Law on Minority Schools in Latvia – which, although not granting explicit cultural autonomy to national minorities, together secured minorities’ practical control over their own education and cultural matters. This was an important achievement, secondary only to the Estonian Law on Cultural Autonomy of 1925, which granted non-territorial cultural autonomy to Estonia’s largest minorities (a lesser known cultural autonomy for Jews was established in Lithuania in 1920; it did not, however, follow the personality principle). In both Estonia and Latvia, the implementation of cultural autonomy (full in the case of the former, and partial in the case of the latter) would not have been possible without the indefatigable efforts of its main advocates, the liberally inclined members of the Baltic German community.

After World War Two, the NCA remained forgotten for decades, until it was revived in the early 1990s, largely by the efforts of its foremost contemporary advocate E. Nimni, who initiated and moderated modern debates on the NCA, as well as writing countless commentaries and introductions to the theory (Nimni 1991, 1995, 2000, 2005). The ranks of supporters of the NCA model have been growing steadily since, as the ideas of Renner and Bauer have proved to resonate deeply with modern debates on multiculturalism and minority rights.

1.3. Theories of Ethnic Bargaining

Despite the overall complexity of Latvian political life during the interwar period, with its kaleidoscopic changes of government and the proliferation of political parties, further complicated by the lack of transparency and by personal struggles for influence, three closely-interrelated major developments can be clearly traced: the continuous deterioration of majority-minority relations, the radicalisation of both the left and the right wings of the political spectrum; and, ultimately, the abandonment of liberal democratic values and parliamentary rule in favour of unbridled ethnic nationalism.

There is a vast body of dedicated work which links democratic politics and ethnic mobilisation together (Dahl 1971; Rabushka and Shepsle 2008; Horowitz 1985; Lijphart 1977, 2008). Chandra (2001: 338-339) provided an excellent summary of the ‘five principal propositions’ affecting the bargaining process between majority and minority groups that emerge from this area of study:

- 1) Demands made by ethnic groups are indivisible;
- 2) Demands made by ethnic groups are zero-sum;
- 3) Demands made by ethnic groups are motivated by a desire for relative rather than absolute gains;
- 4) Demands made by ethnic groups are about high stakes because they concern resources that affect future bargaining power; and
- 5) Demands made by ethnic groups are inseparable from a larger conception of selfhood and therefore cannot be treated as discrete issues.

In Chapter Four, I apply these propositions, as well as one of the latest concepts in the theory of ethnic bargaining, the integrationist versus the segregationist dichotomy introduced by Jenne (2007), to the case of the Citizenship Law of 1919. Having been described by contemporaries as ‘a chronic issue of Latvian politics’ and ‘the most controversial issue in Latvian parliamentary life’, the Citizenship Law of 1919 as a case study reveals many important undercurrents in Latvian ethnic politics of the interwar era.

1.4. Triadic Nexus, Quadratic Nexus, and the Fifth Element.

Another analytical approach that I based my investigation upon was developed by Rogers Brubaker (1995, 1996). His theoretical framework of the ‘triadic nexus’ linking nationalising state, national minorities and their ‘external national homelands’ successfully challenged the prevailing, until then, dyadic approach to the study of national conflict, which had traditionally juxtaposed a majority state-possessing nation and an ethnic minority. The triadic model, besides introducing minority kin-states (which Brubaker designates as ‘external national homelands’) as a significant contributing factor in nationalist politics, also offered a new, ‘relational’ approach to the study of ethnic conflict, as all three sides of the nexus are defined not as static actors or as ‘fixed entities’, but as dynamic relational fields within which perceptions, representations, interpretations, and,

subsequently, claims, continuously shift and are closely intertwined, as well as being frequently contested by the actors involved.⁴

The triadic nexus model proved to be particularly popular in the study of ethnic relations in Central and Eastern Europe, and indeed came to dominate the field, allowing Pettai (2006: 125) to call it ‘almost a cliché’. David Smith (2002) was the first, to the best of my knowledge, to expand the model by adding a fourth dimension to the nexus, namely international organisations such as the European Union, the European Council, the OSCE, and NATO – an avenue later explored by many other commentators (see Tesser 2003, Kemp 2006, Galbreath 2005). This fourth dimension has also attracted criticisms – for example, Kemp (2006), after successfully exploring what he terms a ‘fourth variable’ (i.e. the international community and its role in domestic politics), as well as appending another important contributing factor, international law, and providing many other valuable insights, somewhat unexpectedly concludes that ‘the international community is not a player, so one should not amend Brubaker’s theory to speak of a quadratic nexus’. Rather, posits Kemp (2006: 123), the international community ‘provides a framework, standards and potential mediation in cases when the actors have exhausted domestic and bilateral means of resolving their differences’. Perhaps, one should read this interpretation of the supposedly ‘hands-off’ role of international organisations as if it were a category of analysis rather than a category of practice, or, in other words, as a normative description of the niche the international organisations ultimately aspire to fill in an ideal world rather than a reflection upon existing reality. Another argument in defence of the fourth dimension of the nexus is that the original triadic model does not conceive the elements of the nexus as ‘actors’ (although there are ‘actors’ in each given field), but rather as interconnected ‘relational fields’. Furthermore, Brubaker, in fact, distinguishes between ‘internal’ and external relational fields and posits that the central aspect of the nexus is reciprocal interfield monitoring, where ‘actors in each field closely and continuously monitor relations and actions in each of the other two fields’, and where the representation of other fields is often contested and becomes the object of ‘representational struggle’ (Brubaker 1995: 118). Therefore, even if one accepts Kemp’s normative definition of international organisations as ‘non-actors’, there is little doubt that the ‘fourth dimension’

⁴ Brubaker’s concept of the ‘relational field’ is based on the notion of field developed by the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (see, for example, Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992). Bourdieu envisioned the field as ‘a space within which an effect of field is exercised, so that what happens to any object that traverses this space cannot be explained solely by the intrinsic properties of the object in question’, and posited that ‘to think in terms of field is to *think relationally*’ (1992: 100, 96). Notably, Bourdieu’s framework for analysis in terms of field is also triadic (see Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 104-105).

does constitute a relational field according to Brubaker's theory (and the original theory of fields by Bourdieu, for that matter). Consequently, I beg to differ with Kemp on the subject of amending Brubaker's framework, and vote firmly for the 'quadratic nexus'.

The 'Fifth Element'

In fact, I would like to suggest that there is yet another side to the national question, another 'relational field' in the nexus: the complicated interplay *between* different national minorities sharing the same homeland along with the core nation. I will argue that this 'fifth element' is vital for the comprehensive analysis of interethnic relations in the cases where more than one sizeable ethnic minority is present in the same state (or indeed was present in the past – I will elaborate on this point in the concluding part of Chapter Five) as it has a direct impact on minorities' relations with the eponymous nation, with their respective kin-states, and on the overall state of majority-minority relations in a given country.

This fifth dimension of ethnic relations has been conspicuously overlooked by nationalism studies.⁵ Brubaker (1996: 60) himself, for example, speaks of variance within a national minority, which he views not simply as a group, but rather as a 'dynamic political stance', or even a 'family of related but mutually competing stances', and of the variation of cultural and political demands which different national minorities can make of their respective states, but he never speaks about the variance among national minorities within the *same* state.

Despite claiming that the triadic relation is 'a *relation between relational fields*; and relations between the three fields are closely intertwined with relations *internal to*, and *constitutive of*, the fields' (Brubaker 1996: 67), Brubaker, when applying the framework to the case of interwar Poland and meticulously analysing relations between the Polish nationalising state, its four biggest ethnic minorities (i.e. the Germans, the Jews, the Ukrainians, and the Belarussians), and their external homelands (Germany, the Belarussian and Ukrainian Socialist Republics, and, for the Jews, 'a homeland distant not only in space but also...in time', Palestine), stops short of examining this other dimension. He scrupulously accounts for the cultural, economic and political differences in the position of

⁵ A notable exception is Mendelsohn's 'The Jews of East Central Europe Between the World Wars' (1983), which accounts not just for the relations of the Jews with the eponymous nations, but also – more often than not, with an effect detrimental to the Jewish situation - with other ethnic minorities within the same state.

each minority, and for the divergent ways in which they were perceived by the majority nation, as well as for the variations in the claims they in return made on that majority nation, delivering, as promised, a ‘relational and interactive perspective’. But what is conspicuously missing from this account, is the relational interplay among these four minority groups, which, although largely living in segregation, did, in fact, interact in the sphere of politics, and especially in the sphere of minority politics.

The same element is also noticeably missing from subsequent studies of ethnic conflict based upon Brubaker’s triadic model, or the enhanced ‘quadratic nexus’. Although many authors pay attention to the variances within a specific ethnic minority, or the variations among different minorities (especially those studies that have a historical component), no attempt has yet been made, as far as I am able to tell, to look into relations between different minorities and to link these to the other parts of the nexus, either triadic or quadratic.

The ‘relational, dynamic, interactive approach to the nationalist conflict’, advocated by Brubaker (1996: 75), which was greatly enhanced by the addition of a fourth dimension of international organisations, would further benefit – in my opinion - from adding this ‘fifth element’ of the interplay between several national minorities, as I will demonstrate in Chapter Five of this thesis with the example of Baltic German and Jewish (and, to some extent, also Russian and Polish) communities in interwar Latvia.

1.5. Communitarianism vs. Liberalism

Another theoretical framework instrumental for understanding the dynamics of nation-building and majority-minority relations in interwar Latvia is the distinction between a liberal (focus on the individual) and a communitarian (focus on the community) approach, as elaborated by Rawls (1971, 1993), Taylor (1989) and Walzer (1990). The liberal-communitarian debate is closely related to the previously discussed civic-ethnic distinction and the post-sovereignty theory in a sense that it also addresses the tensions created by the uneasy symbiosis of liberalism, the nation, and the state.

This distinction was extended by Miller, in order to avoid simplistic duality, who divided communitarianism into three sub-categories: 1) communitarianism of the left, or

egalitarian; 2) communitarianism of the right, or authoritarian; and 3) communitarianism of the centre, or liberal. (Miller 2000: 97-107)

All three types of communitarianism described by Miller featured prominently in the political discourse of the interwar republic. Perhaps not surprisingly, as forging a new national state requires great social mobilisation and unity – in fact, it is ‘the communitarian understanding of life that lies at the basis of formation of a state’ (Pabriks 1997: 45). After the Latvian state was formed, the notions of the ‘nation’ and of the ‘state community’ were promptly elevated to a sacramental level in the political and public discourse, where they become untouchable for either questioning or criticism. Not just the national membership, but also the substrate membership in minority communities was defined strictly on collective terms. As a result, using Sandel’s (1992) descriptions, ‘the communitarian politics of the common good’ started to trump ‘the liberal politics of rights’.

The detrimental effects of this erosion of liberal values on Latvian interwar politics, and on the post-1991 nation-building process have been previously observed by Pabriks (1997). I agree with Pabriks’s assessment that the unequivocal domination of communitarian values contributed to the collapse of Latvian democracy in 1934, and impedes the formation of a civic nation at present. I will further explore the balance between communitarian and liberal values in Latvian politics in the remaining chapters of this thesis.

1.6. Beyond the Sovereign State

The previous part of this chapter described how for many years, political theorists and historians have been studying the nation-state, trying to locate the source of the problem within the nation itself, out of a belief that if a democratic, liberal, and just version of nationalism could be achieved, then the problem of minorities would be successfully resolved. The civic concept of nationalism, liberal nationalism, and multiculturalism have all appeared as attempts to remedy the nation, but have paid little attention to the other side of the equation, the state, whose legally defined inalienable sovereignty has seemed to be fixed in stone.

The European Union brought with it changes to the established legal and political order, member states having voluntarily transferred some of their powers to the overarching EU institutions. These new developments, coupled with the concerns about the effects of globalisation, increasing migration and ethnic diversity of the population, and the plight of stateless nations, stimulated a radically new contemporary way of thinking about the relationship between the state and the nation, which, in McCormick's (1996: 553) words, allowed to 'bracket off the nation for a moment, and reflect on the state'.

Gottlieb (1993: 24) claims that 'the fact that scores of nations are struggling for self-determination calls for fresh thinking about the relationship between states and nations'. According to Gottlieb, this relationship, which has been 'sadly neglected' since the treaty of Versailles, acquired new salience since the dissolution of the Soviet Union. The main question posited by Gottlieb is whether the existing system of states can be supplemented with – but not replaced by – 'a new system of nations, with legal regimes capable of responding to the claims of the hundreds of peoples that still aspire to independence' (Gottlieb 1993: 24). The international legal community, asserts Gottlieb, can be expanded beyond states and international organisations to the stateless peoples endowed with international legal status. (Gottlieb 1993: 39)

MacCormick (1996: 554) posits that 'the attempt to match up nations with states, and then to accord sovereignty to each state may be the true source of the evils we perceive', and suggests that the 'sovereign state as the essential model for legal security and political order' may be up for revision (1996: 555). Speculating about the outcome of the revision of the old conceptions of state sovereignty and the absolutist nation-state, he claims that it does not necessarily mean the abolition of the nation, the state, and nationalism itself, but possibly a creation of 'space for a new nationalism, an acceptable and even perhaps mandatory nationalism that it is intrinsically liberal in character' (MacCormick 1996: 562).

Habermas (1996: 128) identifies two sets of problems that the sovereign nation-state has to confront today, namely the differentiation of civil society, and the existing trends towards globalisation; both, he claims, throw light on its historical limitations. Habermas (1996: 137) concludes that 'in view of both the growing pluralism inside the national societies and global problems national governments face on the outside, the nation state can no longer provide the appropriate frame for the maintenance of democratic citizenship in the foreseeable future'.

Appadurai (1996), reflecting on the impact of increasing globalisation, and the ‘deterritorialisation’ that accompanies it, on the modern world, declared that the nation is in crisis, and that ‘we need to think ourselves beyond the nation’ (1996: 158). According to Appadurai, ‘the nationalist genie’ has escaped ‘the bottle of the territorial state’, which could never perfectly contain it anyway, and, being carried by the increasingly mobile population, is not restrained by ‘ideas of spatial boundary and territorial sovereignty’, and is being replaced by ‘transnations’ and ‘transnationalism’.

Keating (2001) advocates a what he calls plurinational state integrated in supranational and international systems, and believes that nationality claims can be reconciled through shared and divided sovereignty, where one’s status is negotiated within the constitutional order of the state.

However, these ground-breaking reappraisals of the link between the state and the nation are not as novel as they may appear at a first glance. The idea of non-territorial cultural autonomy (NCA) developed by the Austrian Social Democrats at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries and described earlier in this chapter, already contained seeds of dissent from the veneration of the state, which would germinate in the works of their most devoted followers. Another popular idea at the time was the juridical concept of plural sovereignty elaborated by such thinkers as the French jurist L. Duguit, the Dutch legal philosopher H. Krabbe and the British political theorist H. J. Laski. Both of these concepts seriously challenged the territorially based sovereign nation-state.

The theory of the a-national state developed by the Baltic German minority leader P. Schiemann, which was for the first time articulated from the podium of the second Nationalities Congress in 1926, linked the two theories described above, and effectively called for the separation of all ethnically cultural affairs from the political state unit. M. Laserson, the Latvian Jewish minority leader, challenged the traditional model of relationship between minorities and the state in his book *Staat, Souveränität und Minorität* (1927). These minority thinkers from Latvia were not alone in their scepticism about the ability of the sovereign nation-state to treat all its residents equally. C. Macartney, who was recognised by the Royal Institute of International Affairs as the leading authority on the relationship between national states and national minorities, came to the conclusion that national states and national minorities were incompatible (Macartney 1934). A.

Cobban (1945) maintained that the culturally united nation-state as the sole basis of legitimate political organisation is untenable both in practice and in theory.

In Chapter Five, I will examine, in brief, the original contribution made by Latvian minority thinkers, well ahead of their own times, to what nowadays is defined as ‘post-sovereign’, or ‘postnational’ studies.

Chapter Two: The Latvian Nation - Evolution of the Concept. 1850-1918

By the end of the 18th century, after a succession of rule by foreign powers, all territories inhabited by Latvians, namely Vidzeme (*Livland*), Kurzeme (*Courland*), and Latgale (*Lettgallia*), had become part of the Russian Empire. The land-owning Baltic German nobility, however, after swearing allegiance to the new sovereign, largely kept control of local administration; the ethnically Latvian population remained in serfdom. After serfdom was gradually abolished by 1819, a new class of landless peasants emerged in the territories. In the 1860s, those peasants started migrating into the cities, where the newly developing industrial enterprises were hungry for labour. In record time, the capital city of Riga was transformed from a sleepy provincial town into one of the biggest industrial centres of the Russian Empire, and its second-largest commercial port. In 1852, there were 65,413 people living in Riga; in 1914 – 520,000. In 1851, Riga counted 63 factories; by 1910 that number increased to 324 (Skujeneeks 1922: 95). The gradual improvement of economic conditions stimulated cultural development; a rapidly widening network of elementary schools in the countryside, and of the higher education establishments in the cities, ensured the highest literacy level of the population of the Baltic provinces among the peoples of the Russian Empire. From the Latvian peasantry, and its newly formed working class, a national intelligentsia started to emerge.

In the second half of the 19th century, the Latvian territories, much like the rest of Europe, were subjected to two social major forces: the emancipation of the bourgeoisie, and the rising labour movement. These two often-conflicting impetuses shaped the Latvian nation, and contributed to the diversity of its ideological base. According to Plakans (1995:92), it is misleading to speak of a specific programme or a coherent movement when describing the early stages of Latvian nationalist movement; besides known clusters of like-minded individuals in such centres as Dorpat, St Petersburg, Moscow and Riga, there were many people who 'had come to their new beliefs on their own'. The same is true about the later stages of the nationalist movement – it borrowed many popular doctrines of the time; Latvian nationalism was exposed to various ideological influences, from German Romanticism to Kantian Idealism, from Russian 'legal Marxism' to German Orthodox Marxism (as well as, for some, Bolshevism), and, significantly, the Austro-Marxist ideas of non-territorial cultural autonomy.

The Latvian nationalist movement, also known in Latvia as the *National Awakening*, is traditionally divided into three periods: the First National Awakening dating from the 1850s to the 1880s, the Second National Awakening beginning around 1905 and leading to the proclamation of national independence in 1918; and the Third Awakening, starting in the late 1980s and resulting in the restoration of the Latvian Republic in 1991.

The First National Awakening originated at the University of Dorpat (now Tartu, Estonia) where a group of young Latvian intellectuals got together to study Latvian folklore, Latvian history and to discuss the future of Latvian culture and language. This early national movement, which united students, essayists, scientists and poets, later became known as the Young Latvians, and quickly spread to other expatriate Latvian communities, in St Petersburg and Moscow, and to Riga itself. The most prominent Young Latvians were Krišjānis Valdemārs, an essayist and economist; Krišjānis Barons, the founding father of Latvian folk studies; the poet and essayist Juris Alunāns and Atis Kronvalds, a teacher and linguist. The Young Latvians focused primarily on the preservation and development of Latvian culture, language in particular; as well as on economic growth and the creation of Latvian financial capital. Although they did not have a particular political agenda, this did not prevent Baltic Germans from seeing them as a threat to the existing order of things. The publication of the newspaper *Pēterburgas Avīzes*, edited by Barons, Alunāns and Valdemārs, which became a platform for discussion amongst nationalistically minded Latvians, was constantly hindered by the Baltic Germans' complaints to the Russian Ministry of Interior demanding stronger censorship; the Young Latvians themselves and their cultural aspirations were constantly ridiculed in the German press.

It may be said that this deepening confrontation with the Baltic Germans, which exacerbated the existing centuries-long grievances of ethnic Latvians, somewhat clouded the Young Latvians' judgement and thus predetermined the future course of Latvian history. Scholars largely agree that at that particular moment, the movement could either have followed a course of slow democratisation and liberalisation of the existing administrative order, or, as actually happened, taken a radical pro-Russian stance in hope of a faster progress (Skujenieks 1913; Valters 1914; Plakans 1995; Butulis 2005). In Plakans's (1995:100) words, 'the Latvian nationalists' flirtation with the Slavophile movement in Moscow and Saint Petersburg bore unexpected fruit': Russian Senator

Manasein's famous investigation, so actively supported by thousands of Latvian petitions, resulted not in the liberalisation of the existing order as widely hoped, but in subsequent decades of ruthless Russification, which was just as detrimental to Latvian national aspirations as it was to the Baltic Germans' formerly privileged position. In a way, Latvians finally achieved the desired political equality with the Germans – both were now at the mercy of Russian bureaucrats who took over regional administration, educational establishments, courts and public institutions. Plakans (1995: 101) observes that 'in this political game, the Latvians had been naïve'. Skujenieks (1913: 238), eighty-two years earlier, expressed a similar sentiment with a popular saying: 'Where two are brawling, the third is laughing'.

The Young Latvians awakened nationalistic sentiments in Latvians, but they did not come up with any kind of programme for the nationalist movement. Neither did they address pressing social issues such as the deepening economic inequality and class segregation within Latvian society; as a result, their influence upon the wider masses started to fade. By the 1880s, the movement had largely outlived its usefulness (Butulis 2005).

Its ideological successor, the New Current movement, which dates from the mid-1880s, put social inequality and the lack of democratic governance at the centre of its agenda. But as the members of the New Current, led by Jānis Pliekšans (Rainis) and Pēteris Stučka, at the time largely subscribed to orthodox Marxist ideology, they rejected the cultural nationalism of the Young Latvians as irrelevant to the plight of the proletarians; neither were they interested in political autonomy. Indeed, Latvian essayist Ernest Blanks (1927) lamented that had the New Current followed the developments in European national and political thought, they would have discovered in the early nineties new ideas 'much more appropriate for our situation' – Springer's [Renner's] and Bauer's works on the national question in multinational regions.¹ But while the New Current did not pay much attention to the national question, they, through the newspaper *Dienas Lapa*, edited by Rainis and Stučka in turn, and through their numerous cells established in all major Latvian cities, tirelessly called for labour strikes and protest actions. By starting a

¹ Contrary to Blanks's assumptions, P. Stučka was familiar with the works of Renner and Bauer; he has positively evaluated the latter's contribution as 'the first substantial work on the national question from a Marxist point of view' (Stučka 1972: 88). However, Stučka ultimately rejected the Austro-Marxist vision as nationalism under a socialist label.

tradition of political activism, they, albeit inadvertently, made an important contribution to the future of the nationalist movement.

From the New Current's Marxist cells sprang the Social Democratic movement, which remained one of the principal forces shaping Latvian political life prior to World War Two. As elsewhere in Europe, the Social Democratic movement in Latvia was not homogeneous but united a whole spectrum of political opinions, from the orthodox Marxism of German and Russian Social Democrats preached by Bolsheviks, to the Austrian Marxism of Bauer and Renner advocated by Mensheviks, and socialism represented by the *Bund*. None of the above, however, remained indifferent to the national question. As these ideological differences are vital to understanding the nature of Latvian nationalism, the turbulent history of Latvian Social Democracy deserves a closer examination.

The Latvian Social Democratic Workers' Party (*LSDSP* in its Latvian abbreviation), the first organised Latvian party ever, was founded in Riga in 1904 by Jānis Ozols, Jānis Jansons-Brauns and Pēteris Stučka. The LSDSP initially united only 2,500 Social Democrats of Latvian ethnic origin, whereas Social Democrats of Russian and Jewish ethnicity were members of the Russian Social Democratic Workers' Party and the *Bund* respectively – both of these organisations had local chapters in Riga. Therefore, the LSDSP was formed on a national basis (Apine 1974; Kalniņš 1956). In 1906, the LSDSP merged with the Russian Social Democratic Workers' Party (*RSDRP* in its Russian abbreviation), becoming its territorial chapter under a new name – the Latvian Social Democracy. Importantly, in 1906, the party also absorbed about 500 Social Democrats of Russian ethnicity, and 80 of German ethnicity, therefore becoming multi-ethnic (Apine 2005).

The original 1904 programme of the LSDSP put forward four demands: national self-determination, autonomy for the provinces, equality for all nations, and free use of their mother tongues. It is worth noting that when it joined the RSDRP in 1906, the LSD added the caveat that it did not have to follow the RSDRP's programme on the agrarian question. Butulis (2005) observes that it was a paradox of a kind that a party programme which 'dogmatically followed' the German Social-Democratic model abstained from agrarian demands.

Echoing disputes between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks of its Russian counterpart, the Latvian Social Democracy also witnessed constant rifts between the two ideologies, with the Bolsheviks, notably Pēteris Stučka, repeatedly criticising the Mensheviks for putting the national question ahead of the social in their aspirations for Latvian national autonomy. Mensheviks, such as Mārgers Skujenieks and Fricis Menders, reneged on Marxist dogma, adopting the views of Renner and Bauer on the national question, whereas the Bolsheviks P. Stučka, Fr. Roziņš, J. Daniševskis stuck to the orthodox Marxism of Engels and Kautsky. Bolsheviks largely dominated the LSD up to 1917, while Mensheviks, despite their ideological differences, refrained from organising a separate faction (according to Ezergailis (1974: 26), Latvians did not officially split into Bolsheviks and Mensheviks because of their ‘fetish of unity’ and a lack of theoretical precision). There was yet another uniting factor for Latvian Marxists: as observed by Ģērmanis (1968: 50), ‘...Latvian internationalists were by no means indifferent to the vital interests of their own nation, and in practice they were often more nationalistic than could be inferred from their dogmatic phraseology and from the attacks upon ‘the nationalistic bourgeoisie’ found in the Bolshevik press’.

Although in 1914, the Bolsheviks had gained control of the party, in 1917 Bolsheviks and Mensheviks together passed a resolution demanding Latvia’s right to self-determination as an indivisible state made up of Vidzeme, Kurzeme and Latgale; overall, they cooperated on the question of autonomy (Ģērmanis 1968). By 1918, the LSD had, however, finally split, with the Mensheviks re-establishing the LSDSP, and the Bolshevik faction of the LSD, led by Pēteris Stučka, later founding the Latvian Communist Party.

Another important Social Democratic organisation was the Social Democratic Union founded by Miķelis Valters and Ernest Rolavs in Switzerland in 1903, although it always remained small in numbers. The Union, which was greatly influenced by the works of Austro-Marxists, took a somewhat more radical stance than the LSDSP on a number of issues, notably on agrarian reform – it demanded immediate re-distribution of the land. The unionists believed the LSDSP to be an unnecessary competitor which was destroying the unity of the socialist movement in Latvia by introducing ideas of Russian socialist revolutionaries - deemed inappropriate for Latvian circumstances by the unionists (Kalniņš 1956). Nevertheless, the LSDSP enjoyed much wider popular support than the Union.

Significantly, even before 1905, the Social Democratic Union had put forward the idea of decentralising and remodelling Russia as a federation. M. Valters, who was the editor of the newspaper *Proletarietis* at the time, voiced the idea of Russia's 'decentralisation-disintegration' as the only alternative to the existing order, in an article published in 1903 (Apine 1974:190). In 1905, in an article published in the newspaper *Revolucionāra Baltija*, Valters came up with an even more radical solution – to create 'as many states as there are nations in present-day Russia'. He did not, however, repeat this demand in his later works, as observed by Apine (2005:33). Dribins (1997:63) writes that Valters 'was the first to lift the flag of national independence'. Ernests Blanks believes that the Social Democratic Union continued the National Awakening tradition and developed its ideology further, despite maintaining firm socialist positions. He calls them 'national socialists' (Blanks 1927:280).

Despite the numerous ideological disagreements within the Latvian Social Democratic movement, it successfully merged the ideas of its predecessors, such as the cultural nationalism of the Young Latvians and the political activism of the New Current, with a strong focus on social issues. Ģērmanis (1968) posits that Latvian political nationalism, which 'burst out with great fervour in 1917', was born within the Social Democratic movement.

Apart from the Social Democracy, other nationalist-oriented Latvian parties sprang to life. The Latvian Democratic Party, whose programme demanded a democratic order in Russia and regional autonomy for Latvia, local autonomy in education matters, as well as universal suffrage, was founded in Riga in 1905. Its supporters came from the urban petite bourgeoisie and intelligentsia. Among its prominent members were A. Bergs, the editor of the newspaper *Baltijas Vēstnesis*, and the philosopher P. Zalīte, who was also the author of one of the first detailed proposals for Latvian autonomy. Importantly, the Latvian Democratic Party was calling for full equality of rights for Latvian Jews (Dribins 2002: 48). The right wing was represented by the People's Party founded by F. Veinbergs, which took an openly anti-Semitic stance, and by the New Nationalists under the leadership of A. Niedra, who undertook to modernise the Young Latvians in a non-socialist direction, through the development of agriculture, industry, and Latvian culture.

The revolution of 1905 arguably was not led by any particular political force in Latvia, but assumed a rather spontaneous character (the Social Democrats attempted to

assume leadership, but they proved not to be ready organisationally to exercise control at all times). According to Spekke (1948), after the revolution was brutally suppressed by the Russians, Latvia, despite heavy losses, emerged with a new self-confidence and a feeling of strength. The idea of Latvian autonomy, and possibly independence, seemed to linger in the air.

2.1. The National Question and the Idea of Latvian Autonomy

Although it would be the Social Democrats who brought together the national sentiment and the idea of Latvia as an autonomous unit, the early works on both the national question and on political autonomy were produced by authors with no partisan affiliation. The first known publication on the Latvian national question was *Political Thoughts from Latvia (Politiskas domas iz Latvijas)* by Frīdrihs Veinbergs, first published in Leipzig in 1885. Although it understandably contained no reference to Latvia's autonomy, it attempted to link, albeit somewhat awkwardly, the previously separated issues of class segregation, economic inequality, national consciousness and foreign cultural domination in Latvia. In this sense, Veinbergs's opus can be seen as a precursor of the later works on the national question by Latvian Social Democrats.

An apologist for the upper classes as a necessary condition of social progress, Veinbergs devotes the larger part of his pamphlet to a historical overview of the English and French class systems, highlighting the calamities which befall the aristocracy when it starts to abuse its privileged position. As for Latvia, Veinbergs posits that with the worldwide spread of social democracy, the only two reasons it has not yet taken root in the Latvian soil are: 1) the lingering hope for long-awaited social reforms in the Baltic provinces of the Russian Empire; 2) the fact that socially and educationally advanced Latvians have not been alienated from the lower classes as yet, national interests holding them together. According to Veinbergs, the lower classes live in hope that as a result of social reforms the indigenous upper classes will have a bigger say in state administration and will thus be able to protect the Latvian lower classes from 'excessive oppression'. The newly emerging Latvian upper classes, representing the majority of the population, should replace the German upper classes as local administrators. Such a change, argues Veinbergs, would meet no resistance on the part of the Russian government, as the peace and order which this changeover would ensure in the Baltic provinces are in their best interests. Furthermore, writes Veinbergs (1924: 81), the well-being of the Russian

language would also benefit from the new circumstances as ‘there is no doubt that Latvians, who share ethnic and linguistic roots with Russians [sic!], would be much more sympathetic towards the expansion of the Russian language than Germans’.

Veinbergs’s conservative version of Latvian nationalism based upon the premise of the rule of Latvian upper classes had been ridiculed by his democratically-inclined contemporaries, like J. Čakste and M. Valters, but, importantly, it stimulated further debates on the future of the Latvian nation, and even more importantly, of its *necessarily democratic character*. According to one of the members of the student corporation *Austrums*, J. Čakste, a law student at the time, gave a highly critical paper on *Political Thoughts from Latvia* at a regular meeting of *Austrums* in Moscow. Čakste countered Veinbergs’s thesis on the leading role of Latvian upper classes with the quote by Kr. Valdemārs that ‘Latvian nation can only be democratic’, and was unanimously supported by his audience. (Kurmis 1973: 40)

It still remains undetermined who exactly, how and when, first voiced the idea of Latvian autonomy, although many claims have been made to this effect. Quite possibly, the earliest mention of autonomy was made by Professor Pēteris Zālīte, a Latvian philosopher, editor, one of the founders of the Latvian State University, and a passionate adherent of Kantian philosophy. Zālīte’s project for Latvian autonomy was first published in 1905, but according to the author, it was conceived and written during his studies at the University of Jena in 1891-1893, where he studied Plato, John Locke and Kant. According to Zālīte, it was particularly Kant’s ideas and views on peoples’ self-determination (above all, those expressed in *Perpetual Peace*) that served as his main source of inspiration. However, due to censorship constraints, he could only publish his proposal under the title *The Ideal of the State [Valsts Ideāls]* in the newspaper *Mājas Viesis* in 1905.

Zālīte’s ideal of the state is embedded with liberal individualistic values. The ideal state, according to Zālīte, ‘is not and cannot be detrimental to either individual or public life; on the contrary, it should enhance them’². The state’s responsibility, in his view, is ‘to cultivate the welfare of all its peoples [*visu tautu*], and all separate individuals; to ensure that everybody can live their natural lives and develop their abilities. However, this should be done in such a manner that will guarantee the harmonious common existence of different individuals and peoples’. Anybody, posits Zālīte, should be able to determine his

² This and all further quotes per Zālīte, P. ‘Valsts ideāls’, *Mājas Viesis*, 1905, Nr. 46, 47, 49.

own fate, while being guided by the reciprocal principle 'do unto others as you would have them do unto you'. The same moral, he argues, applies to social life; nations have similar rights to self-determination.

Zālīte's project for Latvian autonomy within the Russian Empire, which he insisted would only strengthen ties between the two, was clearly based upon democratic, inclusive principles:

- 'Latvia' is defined as Southern Vidzeme, all of Kurzeme, and Inflantija (Latgale), which are populated by Latvians.
- It remains a part of Russia, with which it shares a ruler and a common Parliament, which legislates in the matters pertaining to the whole Russian state.
- Latvia, in addition, has its own constitution, its own Saeima, and its own governor, who will defend Latvian interests within the Russian government.
- The Latvian Saeima consists of the legislative body and the executive body, which he calls the Ministry. The Ministers and the Chief Minister are elected by the legislators. The Latvian Saeima's competence encompasses all matters apart from those under the Russian parliament's responsibility.
- The Saeima is elected by a secret ballot through direct general elections.
- Suffrage belongs to every 'eligible (*cilvēka tiesību nezaudējis*) Latvian resident of 21 years and over, regardless of gender, ethnicity and religious creed'.
- The Russian government is responsible for: the civil list; all foreign relations (in politics and trade); financial matters; army recruitment; customs, taxes and excise tax; as well as post, telegraph and railway communications. Administration of the above on Latvian territory is the responsibility of the Latvian autonomous government.
- All matters not mentioned above fall under the jurisdiction of the Latvian Saeima.
- Latvian autonomy extends to school and church matters, as well as to agrarian matters.
- This autonomy should be based upon universal suffrage through direct secret ballot; *habeas corpus*; the right to association; as well as freedom of speech, of assembly, and of the press.
- Religion is separated from the State.
- All subjects at school are taught in children's mother's tongue.
- Religious dogma at schools is to be replaced by ethics or religious studies.
- Schools are to be free from partisan or religious influences.

Gērmanis (1992) also believes that Zālīte's *The Ideal of the State* can be considered the first project for Latvian autonomy, which did not receive popular support due to the simple fact that the author was not associated with or supported by any political party or group. It was also an important step in the development of national theory as it contained many ideas that were progressive for its time. Priedīte-Kleinhofa (2008:19) observes that Zālīte was the first Latvian philosopher to be interested both in nationalist theory and in nationalist politics.

The next eight years produced no significant work on the national question. Ernests Blanks, one of the leading Latvian nationalist ideologues and himself a proponent of ethnic nationalism, writes bitterly in 1927 that the era between the revolution of 1905 and the First World War was Latvian nationalism's 'degradation period', when the 'national psyche gradually atrophied, and Social Democratic cosmopolitan propaganda reached a new high' (Blanks 1994: 291).

Blanks considered the publication of two significant works on the national issue by M. Skujenieks and M. Valters on the eve of World War One to be the beginning of a new chapter in Latvian nationalist thought, and lauded the two writers accordingly. An active contributor to the national question himself, Blanks seemed to be unable to gauge just how far his own increasingly chauvinistic view were removed from the views of his paragons.

2.2. Three Latvian Nationalists

It was the idea of non-territorial cultural autonomy (NCA) first introduced by the Austrian Social Democrat Karl Renner in his programmatic article *Staat und Nation* (1899) and further developed by his colleague Otto Bauer in the monumental *Die Nationalitätenfrage und die Sozialdemokratie* (1906) that gave a new impetus to the Latvian national idea. It seemed that the NCA model elaborated by the Austrian Marxists had something to offer to everybody – it rendered the Marxists with an attractive option of reconciling socialist leanings with national pride, and provided the bourgeois national ideologues with some sort of vindication that truth was on their side all along. The theory itself rested upon the three fundamental premises; a sharp distinction between the nation and the state, the 'personality principle' freeing a national group from any territorial attachment, and the principle of pluralistic sovereignty allowing national communities to

take certain functions over from the state. Both Renner and Bauer repeatedly compared national associations with religious confessions, claiming that both are best separated from the state. After the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which the model aimed to salvage, had collapsed in 1918, the NCA model was abandoned by its authors. Nevertheless, it had a very strong impact on the political and philosophical thinking of the time, especially among the Social Democrats in Central and Eastern Europe. Many Latvian Social Democrats, like Skujenieks and Valters, were taken with the NCA idea and built their own theoretical work on its premises, albeit very selectively – Skujenieks (1913), for example, although extremely supportive of cultural autonomy in general, did not accept the non-territorial principle, while Valters (1914) evaluated the advantages of cultural autonomy almost exclusively from the vantage point of ethnic Latvians, who were themselves an ethnic minority within the Russian Empire at the time. Latvian Bolshevik leader P. Stučka (1907), although ultimately rejecting the NCA principle, recognised the importance of Bauer's work on nationality issues, and doled out some carefully worded praise for Skujenieks's work as well. Even E. Blanks quoted some of Springer's (K. Renner's pen name) and Bauer's definitions on an *ad hoc* basis (and usually to his own ends) in his essays.

The main significance of this new chapter in the history of Latvian nationalist thought, inspired by Austro-Marxism, lies in the fact that it compelled Latvian theorists to finally address an issue which had to be addressed sooner or later, namely the ethnic diversity of the population of Latvian territories, and the possible impact of this diversity on the nature of the Latvian nation. According to the census of 1897, the last census carried out in the Russian Empire, Latvians comprised just 68.2 per cent of the population of the 17 Latvian districts³, with Russians being the biggest ethnic minority – 12.2 per cent, followed by Germans – 7.1 per cent, Jews – 6.2 per cent, Poles – 3.3 per cent, Lithuanians – 1.3 per cent, and Estonians – 0.9 per cent (Skujenieks 1913: 191). This ethnic composition, especially in the absence of compact territorial settlements (most ethnic minorities, apart from those Jews restricted by the Pale of Settlement, tended to settle in the cities), presented a serious challenge to the Latvian national project. In fact, it was facing a dilemma: is the new Latvian nation inclusive of all residents, or does it belong solely to ethnic Latvians? This became the one issue on which Latvian democratically inclined nationalist thinkers widely differed.

³ These included Cēsis, Tukums, Valmiera, Jaunjelgava, Bauska, Dobele, Aizpute, Ventspils, Valka, Kuldīga, Talsi, Rīga, Grobiņa, Ludza, Rēzekne, Dinaburg (now Daugavpils), and Īlūkste districts.

The following three sub-chapters will examine the works of M. Skujenieks, who at the time was in favour of a civic Latvian nation; of M. Valters, another proponent of political unity for all residents, although of a slightly different persuasion; and of E. Blanks, who represented the competing version of ethnic nationalism.

Both M. Skujenieks and M. Valters started their political careers as Social Democrats; both went on to become prominent Latvian politicians and were among the founders of the Latvian state, having famously contributed to the main state documents; and both were dedicated democrats who had their reputations tarnished because of the support they lent (albeit to a different degree – whereas Skujenieks became a member of the authoritarian government, Valters merely published a convivial newspaper article) to the authoritarian *coup d'état* of 1934. Skujenieks was a member of all four Parliaments in interwar Latvia, and twice held the post of prime minister (notably, of a left-wing government in 1926-28, and of a right-wing one in 1931-33). Valters had been a Minister of Interior in the first government of the independent Latvia for less than a year, before in September 1919 he left active politics altogether and resigned himself to diplomacy. After Latvia had been annexed by the Soviet Union in 1940, Skujenieks was deported to Moscow where in 1941 he was shot. Valters after 1940 lived and worked in exile, and died in Nice in 1964.

Ernests Blanks studied history and philosophy in Moscow, and was one of the leaders of the Latvian National Democratic Party, the members of which U. Ģērmanis (1968: 51) credits as the ‘most active and vociferous spokesmen’ for the widest possible autonomy for Latvia. Blanks himself is also credited for being the first to openly express the idea of Latvia as a sovereign state, in 1917; and for authoring the term ‘*Atmoda*’, Latvian for ‘awakening’, which came to symbolise national renaissance. Blanks was a member of the National Council, but his main passion was journalism – he published dozens of articles on the national question, mainly in the newspapers ‘*Latvijas Sargs*’ and ‘*Latvijas Vestnesis*’. He is also well known for his detailed account of the history of the Latvian nationalist movement,

Skujenieks, Valters, and Blanks have gone down in Latvian history as prominent nationalist ideologists and ardent Latvian patriots committed to the idea of Latvia as a sovereign state and dedicated to the nation-building process. At the time when their major

works were published, their only point of ideological divergence was the role of ethnic minorities in that process. Let us take a look at each of their suggested versions of the future Latvian nation in turn.

2.2.1. *Margērs Skujenieks, the Idealistic Nationalist*

It was with the publication of *The National Question in Latvia* [*Nacionālais jautājums Latvijā*] by Margērs Skujenieks in 1913 that Latvian nationalism gained its own theoretical and analytical base. Skujenieks, already a dedicated socialist prior to the 1905 revolution, broke ideological ranks with the Latvian Bolsheviks and together with another prominent Social Democrat, Felikss Cielēns, formed an informal Menshevik faction. According to Šilde (1985), Skujenieks was not able to blindly accept the ‘*socialist dogma*’ in its entirety, especially not the part about the worker not having or needing a Fatherland. Instead, Skujenieks became increasingly drawn toward the ideas of Austro-Marxists, notably Bauer. Šilde (1985:231) quotes one of Skujenieks’s roommates during his student years in Moscow, who remembers that Skujenieks did not pay much attention to his studies at the university so taken was he by the National Question, spending his days at the Rumyancev library reading up the relevant literature and taking notes. B. Kalniņš (1956:90) writes that ‘Latvian Marxists, criticising M. Skujenieks, gave him the nickname “sheepish nationalist”, still hoping that he would return to Marxist views’. Skujenieks, however, persisted in his beliefs, and went on to publish *The National Question in Latvia*, which probably remains the widest account of nationalism written in the Latvian language up to the date.

The National Question in Latvia owes a significant debt to Bauer’s theoretical work on the subject, especially to *The Question of Nationalities and Social Democracy* (1907), and particularly in relation to disproving the alleged antagonism between class and national belonging. Skujenieks (1913: 137), too, sees no contradiction between class struggle and national aspirations, and claims that it was a mistake on the part of Latvian Marxists to fail to see that ‘there are many different kinds of nationalism in existence and that nationalism *per se* is not necessarily retrograde’.

The main body of his book, however, is an ambitious take on the general theory of nationalism, which sets it apart from the writings of his contemporaries, certainly in Latvia and quite possibly also abroad. It is challenging to give a comprehensive review of his

monumental work within the constraints of this thesis, but it is important to note that it is a generally accepted view among nationalism scholars that no attempts at the general academic study of nationalism had been made prior to the end of WWI, and that it was the early works of Hayes and Kohn which marked the first steps in the development of nationalism theory (Smith 1998: 10; Özkirimli 2000: 12-13). In this light, the work of the Latvian statistician (Skujenieks was the founder of the Latvian State Statistics Board) published in 1913 seems all the more remarkable.

In his seminal work, Skujenieks gives an overview of the rise of nationalism worldwide, re-evaluates existing definitions, suggests his own typology of nationalism, analyses current trends and the latest developments both at home and abroad, and sketches his own vision of the future of Latvia as an administratively autonomous region of Russia. His work is not without fault – similar to Bauer (as critiqued by Nimni (1991: 143)), he attempts to address the national question from an ideological position different from that of orthodox Marxism while still using, largely uncritically, many of the classical Marxist analytical tools. This often affects his line of reasoning, at times making his argument unclear, or leading to contradictions; these theoretical ambiguities are most pronounced in Skujenieks's treatment of the relationship between class and national identities, and of the role of different classes as agents of social change.

In the introduction, Skujenieks outlines the genesis of nationalism, closely following the Marxist tradition (which was one of the major contributing factors to what is now known as the modernist theory of nationalism) - i.e. he links the emergence of nationalist sentiment with modern capitalist development, market expansion and improved communications. He observes the paradox between the growing need for a common language of communication (Skujenieks does not name Esperanto, but refers to the 'attempts to create such an international language of communication'), deterioration of particular national traits and the strive for international culture stimulated by recent economic developments on the one hand, and the worldwide process of national awakening during the last century, on the other. 'Consolidation of small and dependent nations can be observed everywhere. Many nations [*tautas*], which seemed to be petrified, which did not show any signs of development, suddenly started to awaken from their centuries-long slumber.' (Skujenieks 1913: 6) Notably, Skujenieks does not confine his scope to Europe, which would be characteristic for writers at the time: besides Hungarians, Czechs, Finns and Irish, he mentions national awakening and 'determination for national

and political independence' in Turkey, Egypt, Persia, India, China, and Japan. Skujenieks posits that the aforementioned contradiction between globalisation and particularism dissolves when one has a closer look at its causes, which should be sought in economic development: 'Close ties between different nations, which grew particularly strong with advent of the capitalist order, call for a commonly understood language. But capitalism's development inside each respective country brings about nationalism for the peoples.' (Skujenieks 1913: 7)

Nationalism does exist, asserts Skujenieks (1913: 7) and its potential great power is often abused: 'No matter where we look, we encounter developments that are, justifiably and not, connected to the national question. The word 'nationalism' is assigned different meanings. All kinds of economic and political projects are being justified by defending national interests and nationalism.' He notes the enormous impact that nationalism has on the international scene: 'Relationships among the nations are also changing. Nations that have been recently oppressed themselves are now oppressing others, as, for example, Hungarians. New nations are entering the world political scene, and international relations are getting more complex.' (Skujenieks 1913: 7) Skujenieks summarises international developments afflicted by the rise of nationalism: the Balkan War, which liberated Bulgarians, Serbs and Greeks from the Turkish dominance, annexation of Polish lands in the Eastern German provinces 'under the pretext of German national interests', and the ethnic conflict between German and Czech workers in Austria. He posits that in the name of Russian national interests, native language rights are being infringed upon in the Baltic provinces, while in the name of nationalism, Irish rights are being curbed and Boer lands are being conquered in Africa.

Skujenieks (1913: 8) grasped the extreme complexity of nationalism, which he calls 'one of the most complicated issues of today', and its ever-changing nature and ability to adapt to particular circumstances: '...National aspirations and demands are not identical everywhere. They change depending on the time and the place. They do not contain universal norms applicable in every situation.' He is not mistaken about nationalism's destructive powers, either – he calls them 'the dark additives'. But he insists that as the nation has become an important social phenomenon, it deserves the closest attention. The purpose of his book, he writes, is 'to discuss national relations in Latvia and therefore, at least to some measure, to clarify the question of how the common life of people belonging to different ethnicities can be organised'. It is important, he claims

(Skujeneeks 1913: 10), ‘because the central question of the national problem is how to arrange the common life of different peoples within one state or region.’ This latter statement sets Skujenieks radically apart from his Latvian predecessors and contemporaries alike, who interpreted the national question exclusively from the perspectives of the cultural and economic emancipation of the ethnic Latvian nation, and of the goal of political autonomy or independence for this ethnic nation. Non-Latvian ethnic groups were either omitted from these designs, or mentioned exclusively in relation to minority rights provisions (with the exception of M. Valters, who considered association with other ethnic groups a precondition for political unity, but more on this later). Making the co-existence of different ethnic groups within one political unit central to the national project, Skujenieks laid a theoretical foundation for the Latvian *civic* nation.

A social scientist by calling, Skujenieks starts his second chapter by stressing the necessity of working out a definition of the nation – no easy task given the ambiguity of the term. In this regard he quotes Kautsky: ‘The nation is the social relationship, which constantly develops and which assumes different content under different circumstances; the nation is like Proteus, and every time we try to seize it, it metamorphoses into something else or disappears entirely; nevertheless, it continuously exists and greatly influences us’ (Skujeneeks 1913: 10-11). Despite the anticipated difficulties in defining the nation, he continues, it is absolutely necessary because ‘if we accept a wrong definition, we from the very beginning lay a wrong foundation to our enquiry and cannot be sure about the validity of our conclusions’. (Skujeneeks 1913: 11) Besides, observes Skujenieks, there is already a plenitude of definitions in existence that do not satisfy the very basic theoretical requirements.

Skujenieks (1913: 13-14) provides an extensive critique of the then-existing definitions of nation and nationalism. It is highly erroneous, he claims, to equate the terms *nation* and *state*. Skujenieks argues that states where a particular ethnic group is contained within the same political unit are in a minority in the world, and concludes that the borders of nation and state should not necessarily coincide.

We can be certain that the nation is a community, he states. But it is not the only existing community as there are also state communities, class communities, professional communities, city communities, street communities, single house communities, etc. He

muses that the passengers of a certain ship also constitute a community of a kind. So how can the nation be theoretically separated from all these other communities uniting people?

The most popular definition, continues Skujenieks, is that the nation is a *language community*. He argues that language is not the only characteristic of a nation, and besides, a common spoken language does not necessarily make people into a nation (here he borrows heavily from Chapter One of Bauer's (1906) *The Question of Nationalities and Social Democracy*; all the examples Skujenieks uses to illustrate his point, come from Bauer's book – English and Irish, Danes and Norwegians, Serbs and Croats; as well as Jews). Skujenieks stipulates further that although Jews are a nation [*tauta*], they have long lost their common language and adopted the languages of the countries they live in (with the exception of Russian Jews who, he says, speak Yiddish (but not the original Hebrew) among themselves). However, a Russian-speaking Jew, claims Skujenieks, is well aware of the fact that he belongs to the same community as a Latvian- or a German-speaking Jew.

As for *nation as a community united by blood ties*, Skujenieks (1913: 14-15) concedes that the times when this statement rang true are long gone. Skujenieks is convinced that differences in ethnic provenance do not affect national unity; the blood relationship is overvalued. He notes ironically that although the noble Baltic German family of Lieven traces its descent line from the Livonian traitor Kaupo, nobody would seriously think of calling them Livs⁴. Besides, he observes, assimilated members of the nation are often the most dedicated ones (Skujenieks 1913: 15).

Those who claim that a nation is a *community created by the sense of belonging* shared by its members, continues Skujenieks (1913: 18), base their theory solely on psychology, and not on objective criteria. Many people, perhaps even a majority of them, are not even conscious of belonging to a particular nation (he provides an example of an average Latgalian, who, when asked about his nationality, would usually answer that he is a Catholic, an Old Believer, or a Russian Orthodox⁵). Nevertheless, he continues, nations do not cease to exist simply because their members are not actively aware of belonging to a nation.

⁴ Livs, or Livonians – indigenous people of Livonia, or Livland (nowadays – north-western Latvia and south-western Estonia). Kaupo, their leader, lived in the 13th century.

⁵ Latgale – a south-eastern part of Latvia with a distinctive culture created through the strong influence of Roman Catholicism and Slavic cultures.

Common fate, asserts Skujenieks, is an important but not a decisive factor in the makeup of a nation. He supports his statement with the argument that although there is a lot of commonality in the historical fate of Latvians, Estonians and Finns, they have never merged into one nation. Often, the nation has been historically divided into several parts, whose historical experiences differ, but they stay one nation nevertheless.

Religion, writes Skujenieks, should not be viewed as a factor contributing to a common nation. Latvians, for example, belong to four major confessions – Lutheran, Catholic, Russian Orthodox, and Baptist. He counters the wide spread assumption that the division between Baltic and Latgalian Latvians is based in their faith differences, arguing that the main reason for existing differences is the uneven economic development in the regions.

Skujenieks then calls into question the *territorial principle*, according to which a nation is a community of people inhabiting the same territory. Again, he concedes that in the past there were certain large areas that were ethnically homogenous, and for some parts of the world, like Russia's central regions, it may still be true. Overall, however, the capitalist development brought with it a huge admixture of people everywhere, especially in big industrial cities. At the same time, the multiethnic composition of the population of Russian and Austro-Hungarian empires is often defined not so much by economical, as by political considerations. Skujenieks observes that although Latvians are a majority in Latvia overall, there are cities in Latvia where they are a minority. National territory, as a territory that is mainly populated by members of a certain ethnic group, cannot be equated with a nation, he argues.

The 'most commonly used and abused definition' is the one that characterises a nation as a community united by *common interests*, argues Skujenieks from a typical Marxist perspective. He asserts that the so-called 'Latvian interests' which are being constantly exploited by the Latvian press are in reality the interests of its bourgeoisie only, and that the class segregation in modern society is so advanced that there can be no commonality of interests among representatives of different classes apart from a handful of issues (which he will discuss at a later stage).

The main deficiency of the existing definitions, concludes Skujenieks (1913: 19-20), is the fact that they tend to treat the nation as a constant, as something fixed and

unchanging; whereas in reality a nation is a living organism, which constantly evolves and changes its characteristics in response to external conditions. Therefore it is totally erroneous to talk of *national spirit* as of something with which the nation has been inculcated since ancient times, which has been preserved since then, and which will always guide the nation towards its *historical mission*. National character is not at all unalterable and rigid, neither is it perpetual. This is not to undermine the importance of national character, he continues, as all the metamorphoses in the national history have been imprinted upon it, as if written in stone, and can be therefore called the '*national history petrified*' – a paraphrase of Bauer's 'The inherited characteristics of a nation are nothing but the precipitate of its past, its *solidified history [erstarrte Geschichte]*, so to speak.' (Bauer 2000:32).

The notion of *variability* of national character was borrowed by Skujenieks from Bauer; he makes a direct reference to Bauer's statement that a study of the national question should begin with a conception of national character. He then closely follows Bauer's argument on the relationship between the *national* and the *class* characters, and on their relative strength in forging community ties. One does not exclude the other, the difference between the two is the transitory nature of the class character – it is bound to disappear as soon as the class segregation is removed; the national character, however, will remain and flourish.

Skujenieks posits that the *national character* and the *national culture* make a nation, the third component being a *national language*. His definition is in substance very close to Bauer's (2000: 103-104) *community of nature* (hereditary features plus acquired traits from exposure to historical conditions passed from one generation to another) and *community of culture*, though the terms differ slightly. Skujenieks's interpretation of *national culture* (1913: 25-29) is an amalgam of Marxism, cosmopolitanism and national romanticism. He defines it by refuting two hypothetical objections to the notion. First, that national culture does not exist, and that culture itself is by definition international. Second, that all members of the same nation do not share the same culture because of class differences, and it is therefore more legitimate to talk about a class, rather than a national, culture. In response to the first objection, he argues that prominent historical, philosophical and economical teachings and thinking do not belong to one nation only; they transcend national borders and are owned by every cultured person in the world. Therefore by content culture is *international*. But the nation's cultural achievements can only gain

international outreach through the medium of *language*. Skujenieks argues that if *Faustus* had not been translated into other languages, it would remain merely a German cultural treasure, similar to the work of the Latvian poet Rainis, which belongs only to Latvians. Therefore, although culture is international in content, it is *national in form*.

Slujenieks makes a reservation that this definition cannot be attributed in full measure to cultural achievements expressed through other means than spoken and written word, i.e. sculpture, paintings, music – these are accessible to any cultural nation's members in their original form, and the national component is of lesser importance. For example, he notes, although music of Grieg, Sibelius and Kalniņš (Latvian composer 1879-1951) is mainly inspired by Northern motives, it is not as if these composers cannot be comprehended by Southerners.

As for the second objection, Skujenieks (1913: 29-31) separates two issues: the provenance of cultural products, and actual access to them. For him, class influence is most obvious in historical and economical works; but when it comes to natural sciences, it is absurd to talk about workers' or bourgeois botany, astronomy, medicine, etc. A nation as a community owns the whole body of cultural works, which belongs to all its members without class distinctions. A different matter, however, is whether all members of the nation can enjoy access to it. Skujenieks asserts that although at the time of writing national culture belongs almost solely to the propertied classes, there is an unmistakable tendency towards its democratisation. Once again he shows his solidarity with Marxists by supporting Bauer's view on the central role of the working class in this democratisation.

Moving on to the next chapter, Skujenieks (1913: 39-40) introduces the dichotomy of *nations with history* and *nations without history*. Similarly to Bauer, he distances himself from the classical Marxist interpretation of this distinction, which in Nimni's (1995: 66) words 'had been a source of both embarrassment and amazement for a considerable number of commentators within the Marxist tradition', and attempts to apply the dichotomy while omitting its deterministic component. Skujenieks emphasises that the distinction is strictly terminological, that in reality there is no such thing as a nation without traditions and history. Nations with history, he writes, are the ones that are politically independent class societies. Nations without history are those that at some point lost their independence and yielded real power to the ruling classes of other nations, turning themselves into an oppressed nation of peasants who are not constant actors in

either cultural or political life. Through the prism of this definition, Skujenieks reviews the Latvian history of German domination, the advent of capitalism and the birth of Latvian middle classes. He asserts that *nations without history* have a right to existence alongside the historical ones; argues that their culture, albeit much less developed in depth and scope, should not be perceived as inferior. Skujenieks also stresses importance of public education in the national language for the national development, and warns of the dangers of Russification.

While passionately arguing against assimilation in any form, Germanisation or Russification alike, and insisting upon the utmost importance of the national language and public education in that language for the nation's cultural development and for its very existence, Skujenieks demonstrates a clean break with the classical Marxist tradition, within which assimilation of small stateless nations into bigger ones is both inevitable and highly desirable. But while recognising the multiethnic and multicultural nature of Latvia and insisting on the importance of a common national language at the same time, Skujenieks does not address the inbuilt tension between the two; he merely predicts that that 'a very complicated language issue lies ahead of us' (1913: 163). But the language issue, a major stumbling block in the practical implementation of the theory of cultural autonomy, had not been sufficiently addressed by any of its famous proponents of the time, including K. Renner, O. Bauer, or Skujenieks's fellow countryman P. Schiemann.

From the theoretical part of his book, Skujenieks moves on to practical questions, first of all to the necessity of a long-awaited municipal reform in the Baltic provinces. Observing that in the absence of universal suffrage interethnic relations in Latvia have not come under particular strain, Skujenieks imagines the 'multicultural' sessions of a democratically elected *Landtag* of the Livland province:

... If every 10,000 residents delegated a representative to the *Landtag* on a proportional basis, there would be 56 Latvian deputies, 51 Estonian, 10 German, 7 Russian, and 4 deputies belonging to the other ethnic groups. ...It is hard to imagine such a *Landtag* having boring sessions!

(Skujenieks 1913: 161-162)

Skujenieks provides a sketch of the ethnic diversity of the Latvian population and the problems it causes in everyday life:

Several peoples live side by side in our homeland. Not even side by side, but rather in a most colourful mixture. And instigation of national hatred is a common phenomenon. All the time we hear about the 'German Cause' and about national struggle against those belonging to other ethnic groups.

(Skujeneeks 1913: 116)

But how to change these conditions, asks Skujenieks? His answer is wide political and cultural autonomy through democratically elected local governments: 'Such establishments will be able to secure and extend the language rights of different ethnic groups.' But unlike his main sources of inspiration, Austro-Marxists, Skujenieks is not quite ready to give up the territoriality principle: 'At the same time, the coverage of a municipal authority should comply with the given ethnic group's settlement area' (1913: 285).

Notably, Skujenieks (1913: 139) distinguishes between a *Nationalstaat* (France, England, and Scandinavian countries), in which ethnic and geographic borders coincide, and a *Nationalitetenstaat* [*sic.*] (Austrian, Russian and Ottoman Empires), where people belonging to different ethnic groups live side by side or in a colourful mixture within the same state, and stresses that they produce two different kinds of nationalism. In an ethnically homogenous national state, he writes, where the words 'people' and 'nation' are interchangeable, and education in a native tongue is a given, 'the national question has no place at all, and it does not permeate the minds of the working classes'. It is, claims Skujenieks, the aggressive nationalism of the bourgeoisie, indistinguishable from imperialism, militarism, and colonialism, which gave the very word 'nationalism' its current bad connotations (1913:140). But the nationalism of states composed of different nationalities, argues Skujenieks, is an entirely different matter. Oppressed nations fight for recognition of their own national rights, like the right to use their mother tongue in public communication and to get education in this tongue, not for domination over other peoples (1913:144). But despite insisting that the 'aggressive nationalism of the bourgeoisie', which is in its essence a struggle for power, and the 'cultural nationalism of the working classes', which is a struggle for basic rights, are two separate phenomena born of different circumstances, Skujenieks allows that they can also overlap and merge. Moreover, he posits that once the goal of ensuring basic linguistic and political rights is achieved, the cultural nationalism of the national proletariat could be hijacked by its power-hungry members in order to satisfy their own ambition of gaining advantage over other ethnic groups. Skujenieks (1913:143) warns that this alarming tendency can already be detected

within the Latvian national movement, referring to an article published on 25th January 1911 by the liberal socialist newspaper *Jaunā Dienas Lapa*, which stated that if Baltic Germans did not yield to Latvian and Estonian demands for equal rights without a bitter struggle, ‘then it would be only natural that, after Latvians and Estonians win, which is largely a question of time, they would also treat local Germans not from a position of justice, but from a position of power.’⁶

Skujenieks laments that the ‘national struggles among different peoples’ are being mentioned on a daily basis in the Baltic political press. Many social groups, he observes, claim that all their political actions are based solely upon national premises. The Riga city council elections of 1913 were presented in the Latvian press as a ‘historical fight among Latvians and Germans’, while a ‘united Latvian party’ promised to safeguard Latvian national interests. According to Skujenieks, the actual fight that took place was actually among the Latvian and German bourgeoisie, not among the ‘peoples’, and aptly reasons that in the situation where only one per cent of the population enjoys suffrage, it is unreasonable to talk about popular support. ‘...Also during election to the State *Duma* nationalistic chords had been pinched and patriotic songs had been sung. It was done by Russian nationalists, by German press, and by a bigger part of Latvian press.’ (Skujenieks 1913: 116-117)

This national struggle, asserts Skujenieks putting on his Marxist hat again, is in reality a masked class struggle. To support his claim, he produces a rather unorthodox interpretation of the ‘traditional struggle against Germans’. Skujenieks is convinced, despite continuous (over fifty) years of attacks by the Latvian press on the privileges of Baltic Germans, that Germans in Latvia as an *ethnic group* do not enjoy privileges since decades ago. He argues that the Baltic Germans lost all their political privileges after the amendments to the Baltic Provinces’ Constitution in the 1880s and the start of Russification. Baltic Germans had been replaced by Russians, claims Skujenieks: administration, courts, schools are now in hands of Russian bureaucrats. If Germans still play a big role in the Baltics, insists Skujenieks, it is because they represent an *economically* strong group in the region - Baltic industry, wholesale trade, and significant land ownership still belong largely to them. They do not, however, possess any advantages that would be stipulated by the law. For the sake of fairness, continues Skujenieks, not all Germans are big-shot capitalists; there is also a significant number of workers and

⁶ ‘Latweeschi 1910. gadā’, *Jaunā Deenas Lapa*, 12.01.1911

tradesmen among them. So whatever advantages there have, they are, strictly speaking, ensured not by belonging to the German nation (*tauta*), but rather by a certain prosperity level. The Baltic Germans, claims Skujenieks, nowadays do not enjoy full political rights just as Latvians do not.

Further on, Skujenieks critically evaluates the past of the Latvian nationalist movement. All leaders of the Latvian national movement without exception, claims Skujenieks, were ideologists of the petite bourgeoisie. The creation of the petite bourgeoisie, especially the class of small landowners, and its development and consolidation had been the main goals pursued by the nationalist leaders. Skujenieks believes that economy played central role in the early nationalist movement, and that economic emancipation was put ahead of nationalistic demands. He cites the absence of the real protest against Russification at the time as the evidence of just how little attention was paid to equal rights for all citizens and to the legal status of the Latvian language. The Germans' position in the Baltic was very strong, he notes, and the citizens of the autonomous Baltic provinces (peasants excluded) to a very large extent defined their own destiny. The central government in the past had no habit of interfering in the Baltic internal affairs, and all important matters were dealt with by the *Landtags* and municipal governments. Skujenieks observes that the Baltic Satversme of the time contained many viable principles; however, it was a mixture of both progressive and retrograde norms, especially in relation to the existing class/guild system. He posits that the common opinion among Latvians, Estonians, and partly also among Germans, in the past was that the municipalities' wide area of authority should be preserved by any means, but that the electorate should be extended – in other words, the initial goal of the nationalist movement was *democratisation* of the existing system.

However, continues Skujenieks, Latvian nationalist leaders of the first generation did not find this path particularly promising, especially not within the nearest future, and therefore turned for help elsewhere (outside the Baltics). It had been ceremoniously announced that Latvians, in fact, are Slavs suffering under the German yoke, and that other Slavic peoples ought to reach out a helping hand. Skujenieks mentions that the newspaper '*Kronshtadskii Vestnik*' was the first to call Latvians Slavs in 1862; in 1865 K. Biezbārdis, the first Latvian linguist, writes about Latvians as '*die jüngeren Brüder der Slavischen Welt*' (Skujenieks 1913:125) Now, observes Skujenieks, the view that Latvians are Slavs has been largely discarded, but at that time the all-Slavic theory was blossoming. The

Russian Slavophiles were a force to be reckoned with – they were somewhat feared by the government; and many Slavophiles themselves occupied high positions in the Russian government. With the support of the Slavophiles, the Latvian nationalist movement stood a very good chance of getting rid of the Baltic German domination, but Russification was the price to pay. According to Skujenieks, some of the farsighted nationalist leaders understood very well that it would be much more difficult to defend Latvian national identity from the Russification than from the Germanisation attempts. But the union with the Slavophiles held a promise of quick economic emancipation, which was the ultimate goal of the nationalists, and for the sake of it they were ready to sacrifice demands for schooling and public administration in the national language (Skujenieks 1913:125).

Nationalists achieved their goals – German domination had been uprooted, and Latvians were freed from the dictate of guilds, corporations and other exclusive in character German establishments. But in exchange for civic and economic rights, posits Skujenieks, Latvians traded in their own cultural development. According to Skujenieks, early nationalist leaders, such as Kr. Valdemārs and Fr. Brīvzemnieks, endorsed Russification.

At the next stage of the nationalist movement, while bourgeoisie continued its perpetual ‘struggle against Germans’, continues Skujenieks, the New Current leaders dedicated all their efforts to a fight against what they labelled ‘pseudo-nationalism’, ignoring the actual changes in interethnic relations in the Baltics, and crusading against *any* kind of nationalism, which they considered an outdated and condemnable phenomenon. Skujenieks deems it a crucial mistake made by the Latvian Marxists, which can be explained by the fact that Marxism came to Latvia through the works of German and Russian orthodox Marxists, who tirelessly condemned nationalism as reactionary. Therefore, also in Latvia for a time nationalism became a synonym of reaction.

True to his professional calling, Skujenieks supplies an abundance of statistical data on Latvian territory and demography, and runs numeric comparisons between Latvian territories and other European countries. He observes that Latvia’s ethnic composition constantly changes, and comes up with his own classification of different population groups.

Latvians, according to Skujenieks, are the indigenous population of the territories. They were later joined by the non-Latvians, who can be divided into two large sub-groups: 1) non-Latvians, who were born and raised in Latvia, whose ancestors had been living in Latvia for centuries, and 2) new settlers, who consider some other region outside Latvia to be their motherland, and who plan to reside in Latvia for a short period of time, as well as those who have recently arrived but plan to stay for a longer period of time. If Latvians are the indigenous people, continues Skujenieks, then those non-Latvians belonging to the first group are the local residents, whereas those belonging to the second group are the new settlers. Baltic Germans had been living side by side with Latvians for centuries. Russian Old Believers had been living in Latvia for many generations too; same with the Jews, especially in the Kurzeme region. Therefore local residents are comprised of: 1) Latvians as indigenous people, 2) Germans, 3) Russian Old Believers, and 4) Jews.

Skujenieks, however, is no slave to the rigid classification, especially if it impedes scientific accuracy. It goes without saying, he writes, that in reality, there are many new settlers among the members of the latter three groups. Likewise, there are many local residents among the Orthodox Russians, Lithuanians and Poles. But overall this classification is correct, says Skujenieks, and supports it with the following original evidence. According to him, in all European countries apart from Greece the absolute number of women will always be bigger than that of men. As these are the men who traditionally get uprooted and start migrating in search of better-paid work, by comparing proportion of male and female residents across the different groups of population, it easy to distinguish between the permanent residents and the new settlers. For example, in Kurzeme (date of data collection unspecified) for each hundred of male residents, there were 111 Latvian females, 118 German, 108 Jewish, 17 Belarussian and 44 Russian Orthodox females. (Skujeneeks 1913: 208-210)

Writing about Russification and the colonisation of the Baltic provinces by Russian peasants, Skujenieks does not let emotion to cloud his objectivity. Likening Russian settlers to the vandals destroying a superior economic culture, he supports his statement by describing different agrarian techniques brought along by the Russian settlers but unsuitable for the Latvian less fertile soil; he writes of the destruction of the superior agrarian methods that were already in place; about the settlers' overall conservative and parochial ways, which prevented their accommodation or assimilation within the Latvian society. But he makes an immediate reservation that the settlers themselves are not to be

blamed, but rather those who had implemented those conscious colonisation policies. Despite acknowledging that Russification is detrimental for Latvian cultural development, Skujenieks remains optimistic about the future: 'The numbers of Russian colonists in the Baltics will always remain smaller than local population. It had been repeatedly observed that settlers of a lower culture gradually try to merge with the culturally better developed environment and little by little change their identity.' (Skujenieks 1913: 219)

Commenting on the present-day state of Latvian nationalism, Skujenieks remarks that some liberal conservatives are ready to infringe on the rights of other ethnic groups for the benefit of their own people. Such actions, claims Skujenieks, do not advance the national cause but rather complicate it unnecessarily. The more one ethnic group gains, the less is left for the others. These kinds of relations among ethnic groups are unnecessary, he insists, they are created by present conditions.

But how to change the present situation, asks Skujenieks? His answer is the introduction of cultural autonomy; he insists that local governance is closely linked to the national question. According to Skujenieks (1913: 254), 'overall, the national question cannot be separated from the issue of local governance in the provinces inhabited by different ethnic groups; the essence of the national problem is how to organise their common life in the best possible, practical manner'. However, presently the *Landtags* represent exclusively the interests of the landed nobility; besides, since the 1880s, with the advent of Russification, the *Landtags*' authority was being consistently diminished. Under universal suffrage, the *Landtags* would represent interests of all ethnic and economic groups, and would be much more efficient: 'Local governments which are responsible for all local aspects of life will be able to do so much more when they are elected democratically. Such establishments will be able to secure and extend language rights of different ethnic groups.'

But despite his astute and perceptive understanding of both the liberating, and the destructive potential of nationalism, which he supports with abundant empirical data, Skujenieks seems to be unable to transcend his self-imposed, class-based dichotomy of benign proletarian nationalism, and the aggressive nationalism of the ruling classes. For him, proletarians can do no wrong, and the bourgeois nothing right (the fact that Skujenieks himself hailed from a wealthy family of intellectuals, could have contributed to his socialist zeal). This stubborn, uncritical clinging to a Marxist belief in the pivotal role

of the working class blinds him to the existing evidence, and ultimately undermines his theoretical framework. Another weakness in his analysis is the failure to address potential tensions between the cultural aspirations of different ethnic groups within a single political entity, and the complex relationship between culture and politics. For this perhaps he should not be judged too harshly, as even one hundred years later political scientists - especially proponents of liberal nationalism (Taylor 1992; Tamir 1993; Miller 1995) and multiculturalism (Kymlicka 1993, 1995) - still struggle to reconcile ethnic diversity and the principles of equality with the order of nation-states. Like many other liberal thinkers of his time, Skujenieks simply invested too much hope in democracy *per se*, obviously believing that once a just democratic order was established, all existing tensions would resolve themselves. Struggles among ethnic groups are unnecessary, he claims, they are created by the current conditions. He is idealistically committed to the principles of equality: 'The more one ethnic group gains, the more others stand to lose.' (1913: 284) In his later life, after entering active politics, Skujenieks would undergo many ideological transformations, and would leave the socialist camp altogether by becoming a leader of a centre-right party in 1928. He would also earn the mistrust of the Latvian ethnic minorities by his increasingly harsh stance on citizenship and immigration issues.

At the time of its publication, *The National Question in Latvia* gained positive reviews, but attracted little general interest. M. Valters gave it his strong approval, while expressing reservations about the author's alleged over-reliance on the Marxist dialectical method (Dribins: 1997). The editor and publicist A. Plensners (1928: 198) wrote that Skujenieks's book, 'despite a pronounced foreign approach in his analysis', was without doubt one of the most serious works of the day on the national question, but observed that it had hardly made any impact upon the society, possibly due to the fact that it was published on the eve of World War I. Dribins (1997: 86-87) posits that with the publication of *The National Question in Latvia*, 'the national theme was transferred into the domain of scientific analysis.'

2.2.2. Miķelis Valters, the Practical Nationalist

By 1914, when *The Question of Our Nationality. Thoughts on the Latvian Present and Future* [*Mūsu tautības jautājums. Domas par Latvijas tagadni un naktotni*] was published, Miķelis Valters had already become hugely disappointed by orthodox Marxism, and the ideological rift between him and the mainstream Latvian Social Democracy was

rapidly widening. However, his book shows that he was not in a haste to abandon socialist views entirely. His sources of influence and inspiration are the same as Skujenieks's – the works of Renner and Bauer. Yet, unlike Skujenieks, who is deeply interested in the general concept of the nation and in both its theoretical and practical implications worldwide, Valters primarily focuses on Latvia; he examines the history of the national movement, follows the evolution of Latvian nationalist thought, evaluates the current state of the Latvian press, and discusses the goals and benefits of municipal reform.

In the opening chapter, Valters warns of recent 'assimilationist' tendencies among Latvians both at home and abroad, which often masquerade as 'social and democratic ideas' spread by Latvian Marxists (1914: 12). Observing that one of the Marxists' main objections to the expansion of Latvian cultural societies in the diaspora is their alleged association on a purely ethnic basis, which Marxists consider to be undemocratic, Valters (1914: 15) argues that '...Latvians come together not because they belong to the same ethnic group, but mainly because it is the easiest way to satisfy their cultural needs'. Valters firmly believes that when the national idea merges with 'overall development efforts', together they start to attract all of the people's progressive forces, whereas the 'dark elements' are increasingly pushed away.

The second chapter addresses the ostensible paradox between national and class struggles. Valters repudiates the orthodox Marxist view that with the development of the Latvian working class, a process of assimilation and de-nationalisation will speed up. The working class is by nature anti-capitalistic, he concurs, but capitalism should not be equated with nationalism, although the former often uses the latter as an ideological and political instrument. Similarly to Skujenieks, Valters believes that there is a big difference between different kinds of nationalism, and that 'capitalist market nationalism' and the 'nationalism of small nations' protection and cultural development' belong in two separate categories. Similarly to Bauer, and also to Skujenieks, Valters views the 'internationalism' of the working class as a catalyst, not a threat, to the 'cultural nationalism of small nations'. (Valters 1914: 26)

Like Skujenieks, Valters defends Latvian culture as being in the first stages of development, and as such not competitive with big well-established cultures. For Valters, too, the biggest foe of Latvian national culture is Russification, which he claims often lurks behind the international and cosmopolitan ideas of the Latvian Marxists.

Chapter Three explores the causes of the present decline in national politics. Valters believes that Latvian intelligentsia in 1880s was not ready, theoretically and politically, to take the national idea to the next level, which he blames on Latvians' isolation from the liberation movements of other nations. 'If we were situated closer to Austria, we would perhaps be able to get inspiration from the national struggle in this land laden with national problems.' (Valters 1914: 41) Valters is utterly dismissive of the New Current, claiming that it borrowed its world outlook from the brochures of German Marxists, stubbornly stuck to the 'naïve cosmopolitanism' of Russian Marxists, and itself did not contribute anything valuable to the national idea; on the contrary, its contribution, according to Valters, was detrimental. He criticises the orthodox German Marxism for its incomprehension of the importance of the national question and the failure to develop a theoretical base for it. The biggest weakness of Russian Marxism, in Valters's understanding, is the 'lack of national principles', or, in other words, 'hate against nationalism of small nations'. (Valters 1914: 56)

Valters posits that the new Latvian nationalism, which strives to achieve self-determination for Latvian people, developed as an effort of Latvian Social Democracy. He writes that the New Current, which in the past opposed the political thinking of older generation, now stands in opposition to the new nationalist thought.

The Old Current (Valters's term for the Young Latvians) lacked a social platform; it gave birth to the idea of a Latvian nation, but it did not have a programme for further action. Political nationalism is the next stage of cultural nationalism's development, claims Valters. The Old Current stimulated Latvians' economical development and the growth of Latvian capital, but it lacked social thinking, and therefore failed to involve the wide masses.

Addressing the question of regional administrative autonomy and the impending reform, Valters decisively refutes the well-worn argument of its opponents that such autonomy would endanger ethnic minorities. He subscribes to the Austro-Marxist theory of cultural autonomy, i.e. that it would allow ethnic minorities to keep up their traditional way of life without endangering the administration of regional autonomy. Ever practical, Valters (1914: 81) notes that such an arrangement would benefit not just the ethnic minorities living in Latvia, but also the Latvian diasporas elsewhere (which, at the time

when at least a hundred thousand ethnic Latvians were living abroad, was a vital consideration).

Like Skujenieks, Valters recognises that the existing administrative system of *Landtags* has its positive features, and is organisationally superior to Russian *zemstes* [a Latvian word for *zemstvo*, Russian territorially-administrative unit], but that it needs further democratisation: ‘from a wider point of view, we can tell the supporters of *zemstes* that we have nothing against the *Landtags* on condition that they get reformed in terms of rights.’ (Valters 1914: 114)

Chapter Ten, with the telling title *Latvians’ association with other ethnic groups, especially Germans*, is dedicated to an evaluation of Latvians’ potential allies and foes:

Constant fighting against attempts to destroy our nation makes us consider not only how to reinforce our position through our own means, but also where to look for support among other forces nearby, who, in their own turn, are forced to draw closer to us for their own protection.

(Valters 1914: 120)

Valters refers to the *Pēterburgas Avīzes* publication of 1902, which raised the question of possible cooperation between Latvians and the other nations. The newspaper defended the view that Latvians should care more about their own unity and development rather than seek cooperation with other nations. But for Valters, the goal of unity can be achieved through solidarity with others rather than in isolation. He speaks both of ‘peoples with whom we live together’ and of ‘those who are our neighbours’ and argues that it would be a political mistake to deny any association outright:

While deciding which peoples we should be cooperating with, we should try to look at our mutual relationships from a strictly political point of view, suppressing all emotions...We should, as much as possible, liberate our political life from past memories and recognise that in politics such memories often prevent us from considering the future path calmly.

(Valters 1914: 121)

It is self-evident to Valters (1914: 121-122) that any alliance is only possible in the ‘face of a sincere wish to cooperate, and where both parties have equal rights’. Valters believes that it is not the past that prevents Latvians from the cooperation with the Baltic

Germans, but rather their present attitude towards the Baltic nations. As soon as the Baltic Germans recognise Latvians as equals, he writes, there will be ‘no further impediments to political accord’ (Valters 1914: 122). Valters actually predicts, very accurately in retrospect, that the Baltic Germans will get eventually divided: ‘...One part of Germans will of course stick to their old politics, but along with the Latvians gaining more power, another part of Germans will join them. We will find a common language with these Germans. The question whether these Germans will decide to remain Germans or choose to assimilate with Latvians, is not of a big importance – this is, despite all the discussions it raised at a time in the Latvian press, truly is of very little practical significance.’ (Valters 1914: 122)

Re-affirming his choice of the Baltic Germans as the future allies of Latvians, Valters (1914: 123) asserts: ‘Latvians do not and never will have hateful feelings against cultural Germans in the Baltics. On the contrary, Latvians will respect them as representatives of the bigger German culture, and will support them, as their ethnic group’s decline would be a loss for cultural life in the Baltics.’

Valters then evaluates the potential danger that the affiliation with a different ethnic group poses to Latvians, i.e. losing their own members to that group, and dismisses it as irrelevant to the modern developments in the Baltics. He recalls how just ten years before a question about ‘crossing over’ from one nation to another was viewed exclusively from a racial point of view; how the ‘possibility of Baltic nations joining together seemed unbelievable because nations were perceived as absolutely closed communities, and nobody gave a lot of thought to development of political parties in the Baltics, which, as history has proved, rearranges these closed communities...and opened their borders’. Valters predicts that when the Baltic German community gets divided into two, one of them will feel politically and socially closer to the progressive part of the Latvian nation. The same can be said about Russians, writes Valters. As for Latvians, they stand little to lose from such division, as the small conservative group which would in this case split away from Latvians, will be ‘a negligible cultural loss’...Valters concludes: ‘The differentiation process among Baltic nations can only be beneficial to us, as we will be able to evaluate political circumstances correctly and through this reshuffling will be able to attract the most free-minded elements of other nations.’ (Valters 1914: 133)

Overall, Valters does not hold such benevolent views on the Baltic Russians as he does on the Baltic Germans; he accuses Russians of chauvinism and indifference towards Latvian cultural events. Valters (1914: 143-144) concedes that understanding between Russians and Latvians would be possible only if the liberal part of Russians separated from the rest in order ‘to support Latvians in strong liberalism’.

In conclusion, Valters stresses importance of the ‘social question’, and the imperative to find a balance between political, cultural and social in the quest for a Latvian nation.

2.2.3. Skujenieks and Valters: Liberal vs. Communitarian Approaches

Understandably, parallels and comparisons are often drawn between *The National Question in Latvia* by Skujenieks and *The Question of Our Nationality* by Valters. For example, Šilde (1985: 91) writes that the only difference between the two authors’ works is ‘the fact that M. Valters completely repudiated any Marxist doctrine, whereas M. Skujenieks at that time still keeps in mind one or two socialist findings; although he is just as harsh towards the nation’s deniers as M. Valters.’ Apine (2008), observing that both works remained scientifically valuable throughout the 20th century, draws the conclusion that Valters represents political (in a sense of autonomy-oriented) nationalism, while Skujenieks is an adherent of cultural nationalism.

As regards the distinction between cultural and political (autonomy-oriented) nationalism, neither Skujenieks nor Valters directly mentions the idea of Latvian national independence, which, arguably, was already ‘in the air’ at the time.⁷ Valters is certainly more outspoken than Skujenieks on the question of regional autonomy – he repeatedly uses expressions like ‘*organised national communities*’ and ‘*political national unions*’, which Ā. Šilde (1985: 192) interprets as euphemisms for Latvian national independence, used for the benefit of Russian censors. Valters also frequently uses the term ‘political nationalism’ itself to denote autonomy-seeking nationalism. And in this sense, Apine’s aforementioned juxtaposition of cultural and political nationalisms seems justified. However, if Valters’s book had to be published abroad to avoid Russian censorship, would not Skujenieks,

⁷ M. Valters himself is repeatedly credited with voicing the idea of Latvia’s political independence already in 1903 (Šilde 1982: 45; Cielēns 1964: 13).

whose book was actually published in St Petersburg, have exercised even bigger caution towards the censors? Besides, Valters's passionate book, although it includes historical overviews and theoretical parts, reads more like a political pamphlet, whereas Skujenieks's methodical work belongs to the domain of social science.

A more important distinction to make between the two theorists and their respective concepts of the Latvian national community may be the liberal stance of Skujenieks, and the communitarian approach of Valters. Skujenieks's vision of the future Latvia at the time was built upon the unreserved recognition of the country's multiethnic nature. In 1913 Skujenieks was, one may say, dedicated to '*making a virtue out of necessity*'. Skujenieks would undergo many political transformations in his later life, and like many other political idealists before and after him, would ultimately betray the ideas of his youth; nevertheless, it seems significant that in his other book, which came out nine years later, he again wrote that: (1922: 227)

Regardless of the big percentage of ethnic Latvians, Latvia is, however, a land where people of different ethnicities live next to each other; at the same time every ethnic group has its own goals and aspirations, and wants to live its own life. Latvia may be considered a multinational state, as opposed to a national state, inhabited by those belonging to just one ethnic group.⁸

By comparison, Valters, despite demonstrating an outright willingness to grant equal rights to minorities, as well as to ensure their democratic participation in the life of the new state (without which he believed political unity was impossible), at times reveals a clear ethnocentric tendency. For Valters, the primary concern is, unreservedly, the ethnic Latvian nation. In his vision of the future Latvia, ethnic Latvians are the core, possibly joined, and perhaps at a later stage, by the 'more progressive parts' of the other ethnic groups. Symptomatically, he tends to evaluate this possible affiliation exclusively through the prism of its potential benefits for the national endeavour of the *Latvian* people, without quite admitting that ethnic minorities can contribute anything of intrinsic value to the new Latvian state. Valters believes that the modest assistance to the Latvian cause that he allocates to the minorities would aid their own political emancipation, as they would follow Latvians in their 'strong liberalism'. In Valters's model, the national self-determination of ethnic Latvians is both the first and the final cause, to which the multiethnic nature of the population is only a possible contributing factor; and the future

⁸ Notably, in the updated edition of the monograph of 1937 this passage is conspicuously absent.

accord between the core nation and the minorities is largely dependent on how useful and accommodating those minorities will become in advancing the Latvian enterprise. It was this communitarian model that was adopted by the majority of Latvian democrats during the interwar period, and that still dominates the nation-building discourse of Latvian politicians today.⁹

2.2.4. Ernests Blanks, the Passionate Nationalist

During the very first years of national independence, Blanks, although sceptical about minorities' loyalty towards the Latvian state, grudgingly allowed overall for the formation of a political nation. For example, when responding, in 1919, to the debates over the Citizenship Law in the *Saeima* and to subsequent publications in the Russian-language newspaper *Segodnya* accusing the titular nation of chauvinism, he wrote (referring to the precariousness of Latvia's situation while it was still at war with Russia, and not safe from Germany either) that 'what is being defined as chauvinism is the state's willingness to sift out those Russian and Jewish elements who came to Latvia by chance during the war years, and who have not made any sacrifices in the fight against Bolsheviks'. At this point in time, Blanks obviously still believed, which is not the case with his later writings, that unity between Latvians and minorities could have been achieved after a successful 'sifting': '...we however hope that after several conspiracy plans have fallen through, those who wish us ill will abandon their attempts to sell Latvian freedom. When this happens, the wall that exists between the Latvian people and the minorities will fall down. In all aspects, the collapse of this wall is totally dependent upon their attitude towards Latvian sovereignty.'¹⁰

But less than a year later, Blanks already demonstrates a less tolerant attitude. In June 1920, A. Frīdenbergs, a liberally-minded National Democrat and newly elected Mayor of Riga, took a brave political stand against radical nationalist publications that were opposing what they saw as overly liberal provisions for ethnic minorities. In his article 'The civic nation and nationalists', he claimed that: 'Cultural autonomy in the case of minority schools, the permitted use of the German and Russian languages in state and communal institutions, and so on attest to the fact that the shadows of the past do not

⁹ For a succinct analysis of the historical interrelationship between individual and communitarian values in independent Latvia, see Pabriks (1997).

¹⁰ Blanks, E. 'Chauvinisms'. *Jaunākās Ziņas*, 30.08.1919.

conceal the rising Latvian sun. We seriously want to build Latvia together with citizen-non-Latvians who honestly want to merge with us in a single civic nation.’¹¹

Frīdenbergs’s idea of the Latvian civic nation had been relentlessly criticised in the Latvian nationalist press, above all by Blanks, for being based upon an ‘an unreal illusion of collaboration’. From then on Blanks became Frīdenbergs’s personal nemesis, criticising, in the pages of the newspaper *Latvian Sargs*, every move the City Council made in conjunction with the minorities’ faction.

Blanks’s monograph *Nation and State*, published in 1926, reveals him as an accomplished apologist for ethnic nationalism: ‘Just one glance at the Latvian state’s geographical position, and at its big neighbours Russia and Germany, makes it abundantly clear that Latvia will never survive as a mixture of three or four ethnic groups (Latvians, Germans, Russians, and Jews); it will exist only as a Latvian national state or it will not exist at all’. (Blanks 1926: 18)

Unlike Skujenieks, Blanks (1926: 5) does not believe that it is possible to define the concept of ‘nation’; for him a nation is ‘a subjective notion, a trait of a certain consciousness’. He also posits that a nation is characterised by solidarity, and that the nation’s members are united by ‘invisible spiritual bonds’ which guarantee consensus. But despite being committed to a somewhat exultant, romanticist version of nationalism, Blanks has no taste for the idea of a strong leader. During the parliamentary crisis, he defends the Latvian Constitution, claiming that it is the current political leadership, and a society indifferent toward politics that should be blamed for the present state of affairs, not the fundamental principles of the republic. Blanks is unequivocally critical of Mussolini, and of authoritarian regimes in general. According to Blanks (1926: 35), ‘amending the weak sides of democracy with a dictatorship is like treating an illness with death.’

Blanks (1926:22) argues passionately against all foreign influences upon national culture; he is critical of both German and Russian influences, but it is obvious that he considers the latter especially detrimental to the Latvian national character: ‘Latvian youth must understand that to speak German in our country is impolite, and that to speak Russian or to mix Russian words with Latvian is uncultured.’ He also warns his readers about possible dangers of Jewish economic and political domination.

¹¹ Frīdenbergs, A. ‘Politiskā nācija un nacionālisti’. *Jaunākās Ziņas*, 05.06.1920.

Independence has been won, ascertains Blanks, and now it is time for the second phase, which he calls a phase of 'internal reinforcement and consolidation'. Reinforcement, for Blanks, is not just the development of the national economy and of further democratisation, both of which he considered vital for the Latvian Republic, but also the strengthening of the 'Latvian element' against any foreign influences. He repeatedly opposes Russian (Blanks had a particular dislike for 'Russian culture', always putting it in parentheses), or any other 'Orientalist' tendencies, which he considers backward, and warns against cosmopolitanism, as well as against the possible dangers of Jewish economic and political domination. Blanks takes on a role of a national safeguard against any foreign 'decadence', often pushing it to the point of ridiculous. For example, he bemoans the dictate of the Anglo-American ('Jimmy') fashion in clothes and shoes as 'all this nonsense that comes from abroad'; according to Blanks, 'truly cultured nations would never stoop down to such foolery'. Blanks, somewhat touchingly, appeals to women's organisations to take the matter into their own hands, and with the help of some homemade sewing to put an end to this 'foreign intervention'. (Blanks 1926)

In Blanks's view, minorities are enjoying disproportionate rights and privileges as Latvian citizens. For example, he complains that 'judging from our 'international' education policies, one may think that Latvia is a typical national conglomerate state. Thankfully, it is not true' (Blanks 1926: 121).

Blanks (1926: 122) examines the historical contribution made by Latvian minorities. He accepts that Germans in Latvia have 'centuries-long historical roots' and that over this time 'they have acclimatised and acquired citizenship rights naturally'. Yet, claims Blanks, the same cannot be said of the local Russians. All Russians apart from Old Believers in Latgale, are 'recent settlers and immigrants', he writes, who have 'no accomplishments in Latvian history' (Blanks 1926: 122). Blanks is convinced that 'as Russians here have neither property nor cultural traditions, unlike Germans, they should not be included among ethnic minorities' (Blanks 1926: 122). Acknowledging that economically Jews as an ethnic group have made real progress since Latvian independence, Blanks (1926: 123) expresses concern that 'Jewish influence in our trade and overall economic life has reached such a level that it is starting to threaten Latvian businessmen'. But what is really unacceptable to Blanks is the fact that Jews are also actively popularising Russian culture in Latvia by taking an active part in Russian-

language newspaper publishing and Russian theatre productions, as well as by sending their children to Russian schools. This is a recurrent theme in Blanks's writings (in one of his newspaper articles he once wrote that 'Jews are unacceptable to us in the first place as Russian Jews'¹²), which became central to his nationalist views and politics. Whereas founders of the Latvian state in their 'unexamined liberalism', to use Walzer's term (1995: 145), strove to guarantee equality for minority cultures through the legislation, the practical implication of this cultural pluralism was that the Latvian culture and language, which the national state was supposed to nurture and protect, were constantly challenged (in Blanks's view – infringed upon) by the two big competing cultures, Russian and German. For Blanks, the fact that Jews, who he claimed were free to exercise their own cultural rights, or to assimilate into the Latvian culture, opted for the Russian or German cultures instead, signified the ultimate betrayal.

It is noteworthy that Blanks refers to Theodore Roosevelt, the 26th President of the USA, for ideological support. For example, countering the then current idea that Latvia should adopt the American 'melting pot' concept, Blanks argues that a new notion of 'Americanism' has taken a strong hold over the last few years. Most likely, he is referring to the speech *True Americanism* (1894) in which Roosevelt denounces 'hyphenated Americans' and double allegiances. Roosevelt's views on citizenship and nation-building are known to be ambiguous, and often contradictory; Blanks seems to embrace his campaign against hyphenated citizens, which escalated during WWI, while totally discarding another important part of Roosevelt's (1913: 164) legacy: 'Probably the best test of true love of liberty in any country is the way in which minorities are treated in that country.'

Like Roosevelt, Blanks was concerned about possible double allegiances. Unlike Roosevelt, he was unable to appreciate the positive contribution of ethnic minorities, or to offer a way for them to integrate. Especially when it comes to the Latvian Russians, Blanks does not set requirements for assimilation, but rather speaks of a hypothetical exodus: 'Taking into consideration their negative role in the history of our cultural and political life, and their zero role in our economic life, Latvia will not suffer anything in the event of their departure'. (Blanks 1926:123)

¹² Blanks, E. 'Muhsu nazonālā politika un minoritātes', *Latwijas Wehstnesis*, 21.10.1922.

It is perhaps not surprising, given his overall xenophobic tendencies, that in the early twenties Blanks became associated with a proto-fascist organisation, The Latvian National Club (LNK); Blanks's writings contributed significantly to the ideological foundations of the movement (Krēsliņš: 2005; Zaķe: 2008). However, according to Dribins (1997), by the mid-twenties Blanks had broken all connections with the LNK and other national extremist organisations. Dribins also asserts that Blanks cannot be perceived as a classic anti-Semite, as he never attacked Jews as an ethnic or a religious group. Moreover, in 1933 he published a brochure, *Hitler, Jews and Latvia*, condemning Nazi policies towards the Jewish population, and warning pro-Nazi oriented Latvian extremists that the Latvian people could also fall prey to aggressive German expansionism.

In the early 30s, Blanks grew increasingly bitter about the Latvian political scene, accusing politicians of corruption, demagoguery and betrayal of national ideals. This increasing disappointment in the Latvian Parliament conditioned him towards acceptance and support, albeit somewhat reluctant, of the authoritarian *coup d'état* instigated by the Prime Minister K. Ulmanis (who advertised a new, improved Constitution as one of the goals of his regime – a promise which was never fulfilled) in May 1934. The few – rather spiritless - publications he authored after the *coup* praised the role of the People's Leader in strengthening national culture. Blanks's career as a publicist was essentially over – soon he became an anonymous propaganda labourer in the authoritarian Ministry of Public Relations.

2.3. Pēteris Stučka, the National Question and the Question of Latvia's Autonomy

As seen from the earlier part of this chapter, the national question started to dominate political discussions in Latvia after 1905; it occupied the minds of Latvian Social Democrats-Mensheviks and bourgeoisie alike. The Latvian Bolsheviks, despite the programmatic denial of the importance of nationality, did not remain immune to the national question either. Surprisingly, it manifested itself most strongly in the writings of the main Latvian theoretic of Marxism, the hardened Bolshevik Pēteris Stučka. When it came to his native Latvia, Stučka was not so quick to subscribe to Leninist internationalism in practice, as he was in theory, often demonstrating conflicting views and attitudes, and at times behaving in a manner that would have made any Latvian nationalist proud.

Pēteris Stučka remains an enigmatic character in Latvian history, as he lived many lives. A prosperous lawyer and a prominent Social Democrat, a former editor of the Social Democratic newspaper *Dienas Lapa* and Rainis's brother-in-law, Chairman of the Latvian Socialist Soviet Republic and an instigator of mass terror, the first Chairman of the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation and a declared 'enemy of the people' during Stalin's purges in the 1930s (luckily for Stučka – posthumously), a lauded Latvian communist hero whose name the Latvian University bore from 1958 to 1990, and a *persona non grata* in the Latvian nationalist pantheon.... In Russia he is probably best remembered as one of the founders of Soviet jurisprudence, but his main legacy in his native Latvia is the short-lived (on most of Latvia's territory - from December 1918 to May 1919) Latvian Socialist Soviet Republic.¹³

A son of a well-to-do farmer from the Vidzeme region, Stučka showed early academic potential, which enabled him to enrol in a prestigious German classical high school in Riga at the age of fourteen. It was there that Stučka met the future poet Jānis Pliekšāns (Rainis), who would become a close friend, and whose younger sister Dora he would later marry.¹⁴ Upon graduating from school, both friends continued their studies at the Law faculty of St. Petersburg University, where they also became attracted to social democratic ideas. Both would take turns serving as editors of *Dienas Lapa*, the liberal socialist newspaper of the New Current movement published in Riga. Little is known of Stučka's other socialist activities in the late 1890s, until his arrest (along with other New Current members) and deportation to the Vyatka region of Russia in 1897. But the fact that Stučka was among the very few people in the Bolshevik Party whose party membership was back-dated to as early as 1895 speaks for itself (Dzērve 1957: 28).

While in exile in Russia, Stučka, among other things, dabbled in statistics – he contributed to several publications of the Vyatka region statistical department (Dzērve 1957). He continued with his social democratic activities, too; during the first Congress of the Latvian Social Democratic Workers Party (LSDSP in its Latvian abbreviation) that took place illegally in Riga in 1904, Stučka (back in Latvia) represented the Riga organization and was elected as one of the Congress's chairmen. Although the LSDSP was

¹³ For an English translation of Stučka's legal writings, see Shalet, R., Maggs, P.B. and Beirne, P. (1988) *P. I. Stučka. Selected Writings on Soviet Law and Marxism*. Armonk, New York; London, England: M.E. Sharpe, Inc.

¹⁴ The early friendship between Rainis and Stučka subsequently developed into a very uneasy relationship. It is described in detail in the fictionalized biography of the Latvian national poet, 'Rainis and His Brothers' by R. Dobrovenskis (2000), where Stučka is portrayed as one of the 'brothers' alongside J. Jansons (Brauns), P. Dauge, M. Valters, and others.

aspiring to become a member of the all-Russian Social Democratic Workers Party (RSDRP in its Russian abbreviation), a prolonged dispute about the basis of such membership ensued between the Latvian Social Democrats and their Russian counterparts. Whereas the LSDSP Congress unanimously voted for joining the RSDRP on a *federative* basis, the Russian Bolsheviks, especially V.I. Lenin, insisted on the centralised organisation of the united party. Although Stučka would eventually change his mind and recognise his ‘past mistakes’, he was initially a strong supporter of the federation principle: ‘...if we could assume that all members of the organisation are ideal people without any human weaknesses, then, understandably, there would not be much to say against such an order [i.e. a centralised party structure]. But, unfortunately, what we see in real life is that revolutionaries also have weaknesses’.¹⁵ The majority of the Latvian Social Democrats, Stučka included, remained firm on the federalist principle due to several considerations, such as their willingness to keep a good relationship with the *Bund* (which was adamant on federation), and their determination to avoid splintering the Latvian party, and last but not least, the fear that if the LSDSP joined on a centralised basis, all its future activities and propaganda among the workers would be conducted in the Russian language (Kalniņš 1972; Dzērve 1957). ‘As long as there are a million Latvians who do not speak other languages apart from the Latvian language, it is our responsibility to provide access to Social Democratic theory for them in that language, and to fight for their right to speak, and to conduct business with the state and municipal institutions in that language,’ - wrote Stučka.¹⁶

In 1907 Stučka, fearing another arrest, left Latvia first for Finland, and then for St. Petersburg (the order for his arrest and deportation did actually arrive a few days after his departure). In Finland, he for the first time personally met Vladimir Lenin, the man who would become his role model for years to come. Perhaps it was that meeting, and the ensuing friendship, that completed Stučka’s ideological transformation and his final departure from the Menshevik-sympathising ranks of the Latvian Social Democrats – in 1907 he became the leader of the Latvian Bolsheviks (Kalniņš 1972); however, Šilde (1982) concedes that Stučka did not play a major role in the Russian Bolshevik party until 1917.

¹⁵ As quoted in Dzērve (1957), p.51.

¹⁶ Stučka, P. (1906) ‘Vienotā partija vai partiju apvienojums’, *Cīņa*, Nr. 29, 25 March, as quoted in Dzērve (1957, p. 75).

Stučka's political metamorphosis was in startling contrast to that of his contemporaries M. Valters and M. Skujenieks, whose ideological evolution took them from the Social Democratic left to the centre-right of bourgeois parties: Stučka started out as a 'moderate Social Democrat' (as described by B. Kalniņš in 1906 (Kalniņš 1983: 23)), and eventually became a fervent Bolshevik. What exactly led to Stučka's radicalization, while many of his peers, including his closest friend Rainis, became Social Democrats in a present-day sense is unclear. Was it because Stučka, while studying at St. Petersburg, and later during his exile years in Russia, fell under the spell of the Russian Marxist tradition, while other Latvian Social Democrats, according to Kalniņš (1983; 1972) had been more exposed to the more moderate teachings of German Social Democrats?

The ideological genesis of Latvian social democracy is a contentious issue. Kalniņš, for example, insists that Latvian social democracy developed in the 'Western Socialist spirit', and drew its inspiration from the works of Bebel, Kautsky, and Lafargue, and not from Plekhanov, Akselrod, Martov, and Lenin. He writes that the movement was started by graduates of German high schools who continued their education at Dorpat University, while reading socialist books from the German bookstores in Baltic cities (Kalniņš 1956: 94; 1972: 134-135). Likewise, F. Cielēns (1961: 244) also writes that Latvian Social Democrats were not familiar with the works of Russian Marxists until 1906. Without doubt, German socialist publications after 1890, when the German Reichstag did not renew the Anti-Socialist Laws, were more abundant than Russian Marxist literature still published illegally; they still needed to be smuggled into Latvia though, hence the famous suitcase filled with socialist literature brought by Rainis from his trip to Switzerland in 1893. But Rainis himself, along with Stučka, M. Skujenieks, F. Cielēns, V. Bastjānis, A. Petrēvics, A. Buševics and many other prominent Latvian socialists spent their university years in St. Petersburg and Moscow, during the times when universities were in the vanguard of new ideas and political change, and hardly in isolation from the Russian Marxists, whose ideological differences with their German counterparts, until the rise of Leninism, were relatively minor. Indeed, J. Ozols (1906: 30), describing the first steps of the Latvian Social Democratic movement, explicitly mentions that the Latvian intelligentsia was exposed to 'German and Russian socialist literature' in Dorpat and 'other Russian universities'. J. Jansons (Brauns), one of the most prominent Latvian Social Democrats of the early period, recalls that the first Latvian Marxists, being cordoned off in 'our idle provincial corner', had at first been isolated from the Russian Marxists and Russian émigré political currents (like G. Plekhanov's group Liberation of Labour, based

in Geneva). However, Jansons attests that although the New Current members gained their initial introduction to Marxism from the works of Marx, Engels and Kautsky, as early as 1895 they also became familiar with the 'Critical Remarks on the Subject of Russia's Economic Development' by P. Struve, and 'The development of the Monist View of History' by the 'father of Russian Marxism' Plekhanov (the latter work, according to Jansons, had a particularly profound impact on Latvian Social Democrats). 'I want to stress that our Marxism has not appeared thanks to one or other particular person; neither has it been borrowed from abroad as a ready-made ideological mould. No, it was a process of collective thought, to which our democratically inclined young people, following different paths, contributed together.' (Jansons 1913: 83)

Overall, it seems to be an oversimplification to deny any Russian influence on the socialist movement in Latvia, characterising it as a Western-type moderate movement – not least because of the revolution of 1905 in Latvia, and the role of the Social Democrats in it, which belies its supposedly moderate character. Rather, as another prominent Latvian socialist, J. Augškalns-Aberbergs (1929: 17) describes it, Latvian Social Democrats chose their own path, leaning towards German Social Democrats ideologically, but following their Russian counterparts when it came to revolutionary tactics. Until the final split in 1918, Latvian Bolshevism and Latvian Menshevism (a division that mirrored the one in the RSDRP) represented two sides of the same coin. As Ezergailis (1983: 23) puts it, 'the differences that existed between the Latvian Bolsheviks and Mensheviks was much more a matter of personalities than it was of programs'.

Strictly speaking, Latvian Marxism, while widely recognised as exceptional in tactics, never had its own theoretical base. Ezergailis (1974: 24) names Stučka as one exception to the 'dearth of theoreticians' in Latvia (coincidentally, the short life-span of the Latvian Soviet shows that Stučka was not so good at tactics). But in terms of his overall grasp of Marxist ideology, familiarity with its various strains, and of the sheer scope of issues covered in his own writings, Stučka was infinitely superior to his contemporaries, Bolsheviks and Mensheviks alike, who in their theoretical work usually concentrated just on one particular aspect of socialism (as with culture for Rainis, and the national question for Skujenieks). Ezergailis (1974: 88) correctly observes that Stučka 'was not forced to join the Bolsheviks', and that prior to the revolution of 1917 he did not necessarily perceive Lenin as his intellectual superior. Rather, Stučka stood for his own brand of Marxism, his own system of beliefs, which eventually led him to converge with

the Russian Bolsheviks. Swain (2010: 1999) observes that Stučka represented ‘Latvia’s own Marxist tradition’ – a tradition that he also defines as Latvian ‘Luxemburgism’.¹⁷

Rosa Luxemburg, a German Marxist of Polish-Jewish extraction, who represented the left wing of German social democracy (together with K. Liebknecht, she founded the German Communist Party in 1918), was famously in simultaneous opposition to the revisionists, to the Marxist orthodox centre, and to the Bolsheviks. A revolutionary Marxist herself, she relentlessly criticised E. Bernstein for his opportunistic departure from the Marxist concept of history; ardently disagreed with K. Kautsky on the question of mass strike and the spontaneity of the revolutionary movement; and vehemently opposed the Bolsheviks on the issues of democracy (of which, it needs to be said, Luxemburg had her own interpretation), nationality and self-determination (this list of Luxemburg’s ideological grievances against her fellow Marxists is not exhaustive).

It is a well-known fact that Marxist theory, Austro-Marxism notwithstanding, has precious little to say on nationality in general. Set against this background, Nimni (1991: 50) calls Luxemburg ‘probably the most uncompromising Marxist commentator on the national question’. He explains Luxemburg’s ‘inability to conceptualize the national phenomenon’ by her adherence to the ‘logic of epiphenomenalism’, or, in other words, her stubborn refusal to examine national communities in an analytical framework different from the Marxist theory of the universal development of the forces of production. (Nimni 1991: 56)

Swain (1999: 668) posits that Latvian social democracy in general was ‘Luxemburgist through and through’, and that it was ‘closer to the ideas of Rosa Luxemburg than Vladimir Lenin, while Stučka in particular was ‘dogmatically Luxemburgist when it came to the question of nationality’. In support of the first part of his statement, Swain refers to the aforementioned claim made by B. Kalniņš that Latvian social democracy had closer links with German than with Russian Marxists. This, in Swain’s interpretation, ensured that the Latvian party ‘kept a certain distance from Lenin and his fractional disputes’ until the outbreak of World War One, pursuing its own policy of ‘worker Menshevism’ and insisting on operating within a federal structure. But the

¹⁷ Kolakowski (2005: 403) refers to ‘Luxemburgism’ as ‘a particular variant of Marxism which, though not possessing an articulate philosophical basis, occupies a place of its own in the history of the socialist doctrine’.

Latvian Social Democrats' aloofness, stresses Swain, should not be confused with moderation, especially in their position on the agrarian question. Indeed, while Lenin repeatedly revised his position on agrarian reform prior to 1917, Latvian Bolsheviks, especially Stučka, who was considered an authority on the matter among them, stubbornly stuck to immediate nationalisation of the land and the means of agricultural productions, and collectivisation – a policy which proved to be disastrous and which ultimately led to the Bolsheviks' demise in Latvia. Stučka's position on the agrarian question is, in fact, very close to that of Luxemburg, who fiercely criticised 'Lenin and his friends' for the 'sudden, chaotic conversion of large landownership into peasant landownership', which in Luxemburg's opinion piled up 'insurmountable obstacles to the socialist transformation of agrarian relations.' (Luxemburg 2012: 43- 44)

What were the other similarities in the ideological outlooks of the German revolutionary Marxist and the leader of the Latvian Bolsheviks? Stučka admittedly shared Luxemburg's uncompromisingly negative stance on the right of nationalities (especially small ones) to self-determination – which she famously called 'an idle petty bourgeois phrase and humbug' (Luxemburg 2012: 49) – as 'the greatest danger for international socialism' (Luxemburg 2012: 55). She considered the recognition of the right of nationalities to self-determination, which former Russian provinces, including the Baltics, opportunistically used for achieving state independence, as the Bolsheviks' greatest mistake (Kolakowski 2005: 428). Stučka wrote in 1919:

Neither the Latvian Social Democratic Party, nor its successor the Latvian Social Democracy, has ever used a slogan of 'independent', 'sovereign' Latvia. On the contrary, we always ridiculed this slogan as absurd, as during the era of imperialism the independence of tiny states is nothing other than diplomatic deception, and during the era of socialism it is simply unnecessary.

(Stučka 1919: 6)

Stučka, like Luxemburg, uncompromisingly clung to the classical Marxist principle expressed by Engels as a 'universal revolution on a universal terrain':

Only the proletarian revolution can freely and without a hidden agenda proclaim the real self-determination of the peoples. But this does not mean that it will create a fragmented world of small separate national units; the proletarian revolution is by its nature a true carrier of true

internationalism and it recognizes that communism should result in an all-world union of communist autarchy.

(Stučka 1920?: 223)

For Luxemburg, who never changed her views on the matter, this obstinacy cost her her proper place in the Communist pantheon – in the 1930s her position was linked by Stalin to the theory of permanent revolution formulated by Trotsky, whom Stalin claimed she had inspired; ‘in consequence, all that was distinctive in Rosa Luxemburg’s political and theoretical views became a dead letter’. (Kolakowski 2005: 431-432)

Stučka’s views on the subject of universal revolution proved to be more flexible. After allowing himself to be coaxed by Lenin and Stalin into accepting the post of the Head of the Latvian Soviet government, and perhaps in exchange for Lenin’s forgiveness for the disastrous results of this government’s rule, he compromised and acknowledged that:

To protect itself from imperialistic accusations, the Soviet state must recognise the bourgeois or democratic self-determination of nations, leaving it to each nation to live out this illusion internally, and should simply liberate them [nations] from external imperialistic influences and conduct broad propaganda for proletarian, or Soviet self-determination supported by the working people.

(Stučka 1920?: 223)¹⁸

But here, I think, the similarity between Luxemburg’s and Stučka’s views ends. For example, while Luxemburg was in strong opposition to the proletarian dictatorship implemented by the Bolsheviks as a reign of terror (Luxemburg herself interpreted the proletarian dictatorship as a ‘manner of applying democracy’, not its elimination), Stučka had no qualms about unleashing terror and silencing his opponents during his short rule in Latvia. I also beg to differ with the second part of Swain’s statement that Stučka was ‘dogmatically Luxemburgist’ on the question of nationality. Luxemburg was unwavering in her opposition to the very idea of nation; she was not prepared to make any sentimental

¹⁸ Quoted as per Stučka, P. ‘Nacionālisms un tautu pašnoteikšanās’, first published in 1972 in: Stučka, P. (1972) *Nacionālais jautājums un latviešu proletariāts. Darbu izlase. 1906-1930*. Rīga: Liesma; with a footnote that the article was written not earlier than in the end of 1920.

concessions to her native Poland, whose long-sought independence she fiercely opposed (she often put the words ‘The Poles’ in inverted commas in her writing); nor did she show any compassion towards the Polish Jews during the pogroms of 1903-1906, sternly advising them not to expect recognition of their cultural rights under capitalism. This unwavering position on national matters cannot be compared to Stučka’s, who, when it came to all matters Latvian, demonstrated surprising ambiguity, as I will show later in this chapter.

Stučka’s stance on the national question was perhaps the most important point of his ideological divergence with his Social Democratic peers in Latvia. The works of K. Renner, and especially of O. Bauer, on the national question and non-territorial cultural autonomy had a profound impact on the Latvian Social Democrats, inspiring Skujenieks’s book *The National Question in Latvia* (1913) and Valters’s *The Question of Our Nationality* (1914), and ultimately transforming the Latvian social democracy into an independence-seeking movement. It needs to be said that although Stučka ultimately rejected the Austro-Marxist vision as nationalism under a socialist label’, he did not, at the time, eschew Austro-Marxism as categorically as the Bolsheviks’ main theorist on the national question, J. Stalin, who viciously criticised Renner and Bauer’s theory of nationalism labelling it ‘weak’, ‘idealistic’ and ‘self-refuting’ in his essay *Marxism and the National Question* published in 1913. Stučka, in fact, considered Bauer’s book *Question of Nationalities and Social Democracy* (1907) to be ‘the first substantial work on the national question from a Marxist point of view’, and praised Bauer’s explorations of nations’ pasts (Stučka 1972: 88). Stučka (1972: 93) also gave a generally positive evaluation of Skujenieks’s *The National Question in Latvia*, which owed a significant intellectual debt to Bauer, but in conclusion he wrote: ‘People and nations are important facts that cannot be simply discarded...here I agree with M. Skujenieks; however, we must not make a leap to nationalism from here. I hope that the author will not follow this path, either.’ Ezergailis (1974: 115) juxtaposes Skujenieks’s ‘autonomous federalism’ with the ‘democratic centralism’ of Stučka, asserting that Skujenieks’s thesis was based on a ‘belief in the uniqueness of Latvia and her higher economic and cultural level’. Paradoxically, Stučka was also convinced of Latvia’s superiority over Russia – but that only led him to believe that the socialist revolution stood a better chance in Latvia than in Russia, and he remained adamant to the end that the interests of the proletariat could not be reconciled with those of the national bourgeoisie.

Stučka's growing dedication to class struggle and the world revolution, which seemed to intensify rapidly from 1907 onward, deepened the rift between him and the Latvian Mensheviks, the question of Latvia's independence from Russia becoming the decisive point. Arguably, until the February Revolution of 1917, and immediately afterwards, all Latvian Social Democrats advocated some kind of cultural autonomy for Latvia in a free democratic Russia. As observed by Ģērmanis (1968: 41), 'the difference in the various drafts and declarations of autonomy which appeared after the Revolution was in the question of relations with Russia'. In the course of just a few months, though, all Latvian political parties, apart from the Bolsheviks, abandoned the earlier autonomy projects and started pursuing full independence.¹⁹ Stučka became the main advocate for the preservation of the union with Russia, which was reflected in the numerous articles he published in the Social Democratic press at the time.

Stučka obviously believed, like the leader of the Russian Bolsheviks V. Lenin, that in the absence of any coercion the Latvian working class would make the right choice:

Right now is the time to finally decide what we want when we say 'Latvia and Russia'. The self-determination rights of the Latvian people do not depend on bureaucrats or generals any more, but only on the people themselves. Therefore we should openly say what our thoughts are on this question.²⁰

Stučka does not see the union with Russia as the only possible choice; he has obviously contemplated other options, while still considering the final proletarian victory in the class struggle an ultimate goal:

Let us admit that we were never frightened (and could not have been frightened) by the danger of separation from the autocratic – at that time – Russia. Whatever you say about the

¹⁹ It seems impossible to determine who was the first to voice the idea of Latvian independence, as there are many contenders. M. Valters was repeatedly credited as the author of the idea of Latvian independence. For example, Apine (1974, p. 190 and 2005, p. 33) mentions that Valters promoted the idea of Russia's 'decentralisation-disintegration' as the only alternative to the existing order in an article published in 1903, and came up with an even more radical solution – to create 'as many states as there nations in present-day Russia' in an article published in 1905. Dribins (1997, p. 163) contends that Valters 'was the first to raise the flag of national independence'. Šilde (1985, p. 192) interprets the expressions 'organised national communities' and 'political national unions', which Valters repeatedly used in his book 'The Question of Our Nationality' (1914), as euphemism for Latvian national independence. Cielēns (1961, p. 505) believes that L. Laicēns (who at the time was still a National Democrat) was the first to put forward the demand for Latvian sovereignty in the newspaper *Dzimtenes Atbalss* during the summer of 1917. E. Blanks, one of the leaders of the National Democratic Party, whose members Ģērmanis (1968, p. 51) calls the 'most active and vociferous spokesmen' for the widest possible autonomy for Latvia, is yet another possible contender.

²⁰ Stučka, P. (under the pseudonym §) (1917) 'Latwija un Kreewija', *Zihņa*, 10 (24) March.

German regime, there were, and there still are, certain political freedoms there. The economic development there is so advanced, that when any serious Social Democrat imagines the possibilities of the *final fight* there, his heart skips a beat (and there is no doubt that some of our big patriots, at the bottom of their hearts, think the same). A German eagle, or a Russian sceptre - for the [Latvian] proletariat it makes no difference; what is important is to be close to our own class comrades, either in Germany or in Russia, as the final fight for socialism is still ahead of us.²¹

But no matter how dedicated he is to the idea of the world revolution, Stučka is not prepared to sacrifice the unity of the Latvian people – here he seems to be in full agreement with the nationalists:

The natural desire that the Latvian people do not get split up between the two masters [i.e. Russia and Germany] is quite understandable. It is understandable even to those who are in no way nationalists, simply because in this case their cultural force would also be split up, and this would lead to endless chauvinism. ...Everybody is concerned that this separation should not happen, albeit for different reasons; at the very least, this concern can be expressed with an old saying: ‘In heaven or in hell, but all together!’²²

However, Stučka believes that with the recent democratic changes in Russia, and with the common goals shared by the Latvian and Russian proletariat, there can be no hidden dangers if Latvia decides to stay with Russia:

But the Latvian proletariat does not have the slightest reason to long for separation, not beforehand, and not now when it has been shedding blood together with its Russian comrades for the final victory. We wholeheartedly believe that our democratic freedoms, also in terms of our language specifically, are not threatened by Russian democracy.²³

The ambiguity of Stučka’s views on Latvian independence is clearly demonstrated in his article published in May 1917. On the one hand, Stučka persists in his ‘Luxemburgist’ position on the undesirability of the independence of small states:

We say that comrade Lenin goes too far to the national side when he insists on the unlimited rights of every nation to secession, and we say that it is generally childish to talk about the independence of small states during the imperialistic era. Comrade Lenin, as a member of a big

²¹ Stučka, P. (under the pseudonym §) (1917) ‘Latvija un Kreewija’, *Zihņa*, 10 (24) March.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*

nation, offers us more rights than we really want; and we say that it is the union of the big states that is really in the proletariat's best interests...²⁴

On the other hand, Stučka yet again asserts that a divided Latvia is not the price he is prepared to pay: 'But we, Latvian Social Democrats, also allow the possibility that if in a complicated international situation, Kurzeme was forced to become independent, or to become a free port territory, then we would also obviously vote for the rest of Latvia joining the independent Kurzeme'.²⁵ Altogether, it seems that Stučka may have considered Latvia being a part of Russia a short-term tactical solution before the universal socialist revolution came to pass: he claims that the Latvian Bolsheviks are, above all, 'for a broadly democratic, self-governing, undivided Latvia within a democratic Russia, if not within a wider all-European or all-world democratic republic'; and that 'only then it will be in Kurzeme's interests to be annexed by Russia when it is an equal part of Russia or of an even wider democracy.'²⁶

Gērmanis (1968: 72) also observes that the attitude of the Latvian Bolsheviks to the national question was 'particularly significant', as although 'they parroted the principle of 'democratic centralism' and advocated a class struggle', they cooperated with other Latvian political parties and organizations on the question of autonomy on several occasions in 1917, and in 'certain hypothetical international situations' promised to support the separation of Latvia from Russia.

As a well-established lawyer, in his earlier years Stučka managed to combine his Social Democratic activities, mainly in the theoretical field, with a comfortable bourgeois existence (see Valters 1969, Kalniņš 1983, Lorencs 2005). Both Valters and Kalniņš mention Stučka's large, handsomely appointed apartment and the generous hospitality that he extended to his fellow (and less comfortably situated) Social Democrats. Valters (1969: 198) claims, however, that 'the hardness of a Communist chieftain was present in his soul already in the 90s; behind all this bourgeois façade there was something else... some concept of justice which did not want to take into account the laws of life and its

²⁴ Stučka, P. (under the pseudonym §) (1917) 'Kurzemes aneksijas jautajumā', *Ziņņa*, 07 (20) May. This statement by Stučka is, in my opinion, in clear contradiction with the assertion made by Ezergailis (1974, p. 86) that 'Stučka did not differ from Lenin to any significant degree on the matter of tactical use of the nationality question'. I would like to argue that there was less difference in Stučka's and Lenin's views on nationality in general, than on the 'tactical use' of it. It was precisely Lenin's flexibility on the national question for the sake of strategy that both Luxemburg and, albeit not quite as vehemently, Stučka were so opposed to.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*

unavoidable deficiencies'. Valters repeatedly juxtaposes the personalities of Stučka and Rainis (whom Valters worshipped); he speaks of Stučka's 'autocratic leftism', his consistency, his opposition to the national idea, and his intolerance. For Stučka, with his 'lawyer's psychology', writes Valters, it is the idea that rules absolutely - and it should be meticulously implemented. Valters remarks caustically that Stučka's pen name *Paragrafs* (Paragraph) was indeed very fitting (1969: 198). Lorencs's (2005: 100) descriptions of Stučka are unequivocally negative: he speaks of Stučka's 'cowardly caution', his aloofness, his lack of 'comradely warmth', and his haughtiness. 'The morality of an underground movement, its special comradeship, closeness and altruistic selflessness were completely alien to Stučka,' – claims Lorencs (2005: 100). It is impossible to determine just how much these personal recollections of Stučka, written at a much later date, were informed by subsequent developments in Stučka's political career – consciously or not, the benefits of hindsight may be hard to resist.

In any case, the apparent clash between Stučka's benign 'bourgeois' appearance and his dogmatic ideological fanaticism puzzled even casual observers. George Popoff, who left a detailed account of life in Riga under the Bolshevik government, although repeatedly calling Stučka 'the Latvian Lenin', nevertheless insists that 'he was no savage terrorist or bloodthirsty tyrant, but rather a quiet thinker and deliberate theorist, a sort of Red professor. Moreover, in private life he was a pleasant and good-natured old fellow, by no means inaccessible to argument.' (Popoff 1932: 57). Describing the public address that Stučka delivered in response to the rumours circulating about the impending massacres of the German and Jewish population - a speech which Popoff witnessed - he writes:

I must confess that he won all our hearts immediately – indeed, he made an exceedingly agreeable impression. What a charming old fellow he seemed as he stood there on the platform, and how quiet, highly moral and 'unrevolutionary' was all that he said! An extreme socialist, of course; but not a trace of the savage tyrant, the rabid Bolshevik! He was more like a comfortable, good-natured shopkeeper, a professor or a clergyman.

(Popoff 1932: 69-70)

Referring to Stučka's low-hanging moustache, Popoff calls him 'an amiable walrus'. (Popoff 1932: 70). However, just a few months later, recounting the increasing panic among the Bolsheviks after the fall of Mitau when they were bracing themselves for the defence of Riga, Popoff changes his tune:

...Even President Stutchka, who till now had always been considerably more moderate than such rabid extremists as Simon Berg, Endrup, Danishevsky²⁷, the President of the Revolutionary Tribunal and most of the other Bolshevik leaders, and had acted to some degree as a brake on their frantic zeal, now changed his tone – doubtless from fear that he would lose his popularity and that the control of the movement would slip out of his hands. He became less and less of the good-natured and friendly theorist and professor we had formerly known; he displayed a new roughness and irritability; and indulged more and more frequently in demagogic utterances, from which he had hitherto completely abstained.

(Popoff 1932, p. 205)

By the time Popoff describes in his memoir, Stučka had not just become a hardcore Marxist – in many of his views he was more radical than his role model V. Lenin (who reportedly had to intervene upon receiving complaints about Stučka's 'excesses' during his reign over the Latvian population). Stranga (2007: 104) writes that Stučka's communism, the 'perfect Latvian communism', was implemented with the aim of showing Russians how to build a real, 'pure' communism different from their own – and that meant endless terror.²⁸

The Latvian Socialist Soviet Republic was proclaimed on December 17, 1918. Shortly afterwards, Stučka arrived in Latvia from St. Petersburg. It was, strictly speaking, already a second attempt at establishing socialism in Latvia – the first being the *Iskolat* Republic (*Iskolat* – a Russian abbreviation of the Executive Committee of Latvian Workers, Soldiers and Landless Peasants) whose brief existence encompasses the period from July 1917 until February 1918 (with the advance of the German troops, *Iskolat* retreated to Moscow where it was later disbanded). *Iskolat* proclaimed itself the highest organ of power in Latvia and issued a decree on nationalisation of all agricultural land and natural resources, and on the formation of the Red Guard. Ģērmanis (1968: 63) observes that 'a part of *Iskolat*'s decrees had a pronounced national inclination: all business in government institutions were to be transacted in the Latvian language, programmes of instruction in schools were altered in order to emphasise the teaching of Latvian language and Latvian history'. On Latvia's position *vis-à-vis* Russia, *Iskolat* declared that it

²⁷ Simon Berg - the head of the Riga Soviet; Rūdolf Endrup – Commissar for Finance in Stučka's government; Jūlijs Daniševskis – Commissar for Foreign Affairs, and for a while also Commissar for Social Welfare (Šilde 1976: 292).

²⁸ The precise number of the victims of Stučka's regime remains unknown. Šilde repeatedly mentions (1976, p. 295; 1982, p. 195) 3632 people shot (1549 in Riga, and 2083 in the countryside), but Stranga (2007) observes that these numbers are not supported by documental evidence.

‘recognises the autonomy of a united Latvia (Kurzeme, Vidzeme and Latgale) which is based on democratic centralism, i.e. a system which does not exceed the framework of the decreed principles of the Russian dictatorship of the proletariat and at the same time ensures the broadest self-determination of the Latvian labour democracy’.²⁹ The Latvian Socialist Soviet republic was the *Iskolat*’s successor in more ways than one – the *Iskolat*’s former Chairman Fr. Roziņš (Āzis) was, alongside Stučka, one of the two possible candidates for the head of the new Latvian Soviet government. Dribins (2011: 51) describes how after the vote among the Latvian Bolsheviks in Moscow - where on 4th December 1918 the decision was to take place - turned out to be equally divided between the two candidates, Stučka and Roziņš reportedly tossed a coin that flipped in Stučka’s favour. Roziņš, unperturbed, acquiesced to becoming the Commissar for Agriculture in Stučka’s government.

After announcing the dawn of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and adopting a new Constitution (which closely followed the constitution of the Russian federation of 1918, which Stučka had helped to develop), Stučka formed a central government, and a number of Soviets responsible for the main spheres of life in Soviet Latvia, i.e. economy, finance, welfare, education, etc. Initially welcomed by the general population, Stučka’s government quickly lost its popularity because of the nationalisation of the land, and the collectivization of the means of production - ideas intrinsically foreign to the Latvian farmer of the time; because of the famine which followed collectivisation, and of the repression, such as executions dispensed by military tribunals, torture and property confiscations, which the regime employed to stifle discontent.

The Latvian Soviet received uneven treatment at the hands of historians. If Soviet historiography endlessly glorified its short existence as a heroic attempt stifled by the imperialist forces, Latvian historians tend to emphasize the active role of Bolshevik Russia in installing Stučka’s government, and the overall chaos of war in the Latvian lands in 1918 (Šilde 1976, Bleiere *et al.* 2005). The same goes for anecdotal evidence. For example, Kroders (1968) attributes the Bolsheviks’ popularity in Kurzeme to the general confusion in the occupied territories in 1919, when the residents of the devastated land were past caring about ideological agendas: ‘Whoever comes – Bolsheviks or Mensheviks,

²⁹ *Brīvais Strēlnieks*, 22.12.1917, quoted per: Ģērmanis, U. (1968) ‘The Idea of Independent Latvia and its Development in 1917’, in: Sprudz, A. and Rūsis, A. (eds.) *Res Baltica. A Collection of Essays in Honour of the Memory of Dr. Alfred Bilmanis*. Leyden: A.W. Sijthoff, p. 64.

it will be a relief from the German occupation's inhumanity and destruction' (1968: 299). He also mentions mistrust on the part of the local population towards the 'totally non-Latvian surnames in our government – Ulmanis, Meierovics, Valters, Goldmanis, Hermanovskis, and Blumbergs', which he claims helped swing popular support in the Bolsheviks' favour (1968: 300). Centuries-long distrust towards the Germans, public speculation about the uneasy cooperation between Ulmanis and Van der Goltz in general, and popular dismay at the promise of Latvian citizenship Prime Minister Ulmanis had had to give to those German soldiers who agreed to fight for Latvian independence, must have made the soil ripe for those seeds of suspicion. It should be added, that, ironically, the Bolsheviks did indeed have a much more Latvian-sounding team: Roziņš, Pētersons, Kārklīš...

At the same time, historians agree that the electoral records of the municipal elections of 1917, and the elections to the All-Russian Constituent Assembly of the same year unequivocally indicate that the Bolsheviks enjoyed the support of the majority of the Latvian population at the time. For example, in Riga the Latvian Social Democracy (which was by then controlled by the Bolsheviks, who led all the election lists) obtained 41%, while all the other parties together gained 59%; in Valka, the Bolsheviks gained 61% of the votes, in Cēsis – 64%, and in Valmiera – 75%. In the elections to the All-Russian Constituent Assembly, the Bolsheviks gained 72% of all votes in Vidzeme (by comparison, the Agrarian Union gained 23%, and the Mensheviks – 5%; whereas Stučka received 97,781 votes, the Agrarian Union candidate J. Goldmanis got only 31,253 (Zīle and Ziemelis 1979: 20; Šilde 1976: 172)). Stučka's government did not enjoy popular support for very long, but such support was beyond any doubt enormous to start with: 'In 1917 the Latvian Social Democracy was under Bolshevik leadership and in a position to exult loyalty not only from the party membership but also from thousands of other Latvians' (Ezergailis 1983: 69). Page (1948: 28) also attests that 'when the Red Army drove into Latvia in December of 1918, there were numerous indications that it was operating on friendly territory'.

The overwhelming popular support further convinced Stučka that Latvia was ripe for a socialist transformation. But the form of this transformation, i.e. Latvia's becoming an independent Soviet state, caused a disagreement between Stučka and Lenin - as a true dogmatic thinker, Stučka persisted in his beliefs, and refused to consider tactical considerations. Stučka had never supported the idea of Latvia's independence, firmly

believing that the independence of small countries under imperialism was nothing but a 'diplomatic deception', and under socialism was simply unnecessary (Stučka 1919: 6). Stučka was reportedly 'horrified' at the decision taken by Lenin and the Central Committee to form a provisional revolutionary government in Latvia (White 1994; Swain 1999), and only reluctantly agreed to accept the post of head of government of the independent Soviet Latvia in 1919 under considerable pressure from Lenin himself. Nevertheless, upon receiving orders to create a Latvian Republic, 'he endeavoured to do it with a certain perfectionism, being convinced that his own 'power construction' was superior to that of the Russians' (Šilde 1976: 290).

Stučka's revolutionary zeal in expropriating land and property and in dealing out harsh punishments to the 'enemies of the people', however, was not matched by a similar fervour in matters national or ethnic, despite his repeated assertions of being against all nationalisms, even when under a socialist label.³⁰ When it came to his native Latvia, Stučka was not so quick to subscribe to Leninist internationalism in practice as he was in theory, often demonstrating conflicting views and attitudes, and at times behaving in a manner that would have made any Latvian nationalist proud. It is a famous fact that Stučka's 'revolutionary' government did not include a single non-ethnic Latvian. Stranga (1998, p. 26) observes that Stučka's government, which started its activities with an unmistakably characteristic terror, was 'the most Latvian of all governments in the Latvia of 1919 – in terms of its ethnic composition, and in terms of the initial support of the residents'. When it came to geographical borders, Stučka acted like a nationalist – his position on Latgale being an integral part of Latvia remained unshakeable (Šilde 1976: 295); he vehemently defended Valka as a Latvian city in the territorial dispute with Estonia, and insisted that Palanga, claimed by Lithuanians, 'is a part of Kurland separating us from Prussia, and is necessary for revolutionary purposes' (Stučka 1919: 26). In the Latvian Soviet, Latvian was declared the official language of communication, and all decrees were issued, and public announcements made, in Latvian only. Stučka justified choosing Latvian as the only language of communication by claiming that 'Latvia is a land inhabited largely by Latvians', and, incredibly, that 'the majority of Latvians do not know any other language'. Dribins mentions that reacting to criticisms from Moscow, the Latvian Soviet government issued a decree on March 8, 1919 that allowed the usage of

³⁰ Stučka was closely familiar with the works of Austro-Marxists; he disagreed with O. Bauer on the future of the national question, but acknowledged his 'diligent work in researching the past' and praised Bauer's 'new ideas' (see Stučka 1907: 38-39).

Russian and Latgalian along with Latvian, and adds: 'This enabled the majority of Latgale's Jews to read the communists' orders and circulars, as they did not speak Latvian at the time'. (2005: 9)

Stučka was also strongly opposed to the idea of a centralised Russian government, insisting on conditions of true autonomy in all fields apart from the military: 'We are putting forward an unconditional demand for local, i.e. Soviet regional government, and local Soviet control.' He continues that 'within those limits which are necessary in order to account for the specific Latvian conditions, we will be autonomists despite any reproaches or accusations of being too independent' (Stučka 1919: 61).

These 'specific Latvian conditions', in Stučka's own interpretation, deserve a closer look. In striking similarity to his Latvian nationalist counterparts, Stučka appears convinced of Latvia's superiority to Russia, both economic and cultural. He posits that Latvia, 'despite the devastation of the war, still represents an area economically radically different from the rest of Russia, as its capitalist relations are more developed' (1919: 59). (This latter circumstance had led Stučka to believe mistakenly that Latvia would be able to take a short cut to socialism). Having otherwise copied all the management structures and symbols of Soviet Russia, Stučka nonetheless did not find it possible to use the famous hammer and sickle emblem: citing the necessity of 'stressing the higher level of economic development of the region', he proposes to replace the sickle, 'long forgotten in our land', with a scythe (1919: 16).

He also recalls how 'once upon a time, our Russian comrades made fun of the 'bourgeois appearance' of most Latvian workers, of their habit of dressing nicely, living in a nice flat or room, etc.' (Stučka 1919: 58). In an article published in 1914, Stučka (1972: 86) casually observes that '...Latvian emigrants, who came to live in an environment with a lower degree of development, even in exile managed to assimilate part of the local indigenous population, but being stuck at this stage without further evolution, within one generation slid below the level of local residents' – he is obviously referring to the Latvians exiled from Latvia to Russia.

Stučka's animosity towards the Baltic Germans rivals that of his nationalist counterparts; he is preoccupied with the past German domination of Latvia, and its influence upon Latvian social and cultural life, observing bitterly: 'In 1897, the German

influence in Latvia was strong enough to motivate a significant part of Latvians to start calling themselves Germans.’ (1919: 28). Moreover, using his earlier acquired skills and putting himself on a par with the latter-day Skujenieks in statistical manipulation, Stučka sets out to prove that the overall presence of Germans in Latvia has been exaggerated:

In 1897, out of 282,230 inhabitants of Riga there were 127,046 Latvians and 67,286 Germans, or 24 %. In reality, this number is much lower, because one needs to subtract 3,964 Jews (by faith) who declared themselves Germans, and 7,489 peasants with the ‘German native tongue’ (there are no such peasants in the Baltics; they are just Latvian peasants who declared themselves Germans), and as a result the percentage of Germans in Riga in 1897 will not exceed 20 %...The census of 1913 in Riga provided a totally different picture: out of 517,582 inhabitants there were already 191,956 Latvians, and only 61, 923 Germans, or only 12 %! And thus the number of Germans in Latvia does not validate all the talk of the German character of Latvia!³¹

(Stučka 1919: 29)

But simply disproving German numerical domination is not sufficient for Stučka, and he launches an attack on German culture: ‘German craftsmen in the countryside are less cultured in comparison with Latvian peasants, and the percentage of illiterate people among the Germans is much higher’ (1919, p. 31). From the countryside he moves to the urban scene, where, according to Stučka, Baltic Germans fare even worse:

Also in the cities all these artisans and petite bourgeoisie of German provenance are no more cultured than Latvians. On the contrary, if one subtracts the so called literati, or intelligentsia, where Riga’s Germans account for 16%, and Latvians only for 1.5 %, then literacy among the remaining Latvian population is 77%, and among the remaining German population – only 67%!

(Stučka 1919: 31)

Finally, he makes a rather surprising - for a Marxist – statement, which can be interpreted as recognition of the existing upward class mobility in Latvian society: ‘The

³¹ Stučka obviously chooses to ignore the fact that although numerically ethnic Latvians grew from 1897 to 1913, their percentage of the whole population of Riga over the same period fell from 45 to 42. It is unclear how he came up with the number of 191,956 Latvians in Riga in 1913 (Stučka does not identify his sources) – other sources indicate that the number of Latvians in Riga in 1913 was around 217,000, or 42 % of the whole population of the city (see, for example, Skujenieks 1938, p. 12). Stučka’s observation of the inflated number of Germans is supported by Skujenieks (Skujenieks 1913, footnote * on p. 188), who also writes: ‘Russian statistics define ethnicity by native tongue. Many Jews have declared Russian and German as their native tongues. Therefore the numbers of Germans and Russians are inflated on account of Jews.’

nobility once upon a time represented a closed society. But that was once upon a time! This difference is disappearing with each passing day.’ (1919: 31)

There is no unanimous opinion on Stučka’s attitude towards the Jews. Stranga (2007), for example, believes that Stučka was not an anti-Semite, and supports his position with the argument that the *Bund* was able to continue its activities in the Soviet Latvian Republic, and that there were no impediments to education in Yiddish. According to Stranga, the persecution of the *Bundists* that followed later (all Zionist organizations were banned in the summer of 1919) did not have an anti-Semitic character either. He does, however, mention that Stučka’s national communism created two-fold problems for Russian-speaking Jews: firstly, the communist regime consistently implemented the Latvian language as the official language of communication; secondly, Stučka was a consistent defender of a ‘united and indivisible Latvia’ that included Latgale, causing dissatisfaction among those Latgalian Jews more oriented towards the Vitebsk province of Russia – dissatisfaction that Stučka chose to ignore (this, according to Stranga (2007: 105), can hardly be held against Stučka).

Bobe (1971) posits that Stučka’s government discriminated against Jews, and therefore can be counted as anti-Semitic. V. Ziv, in an article published on 22nd May 1924, on the 5th anniversary of the liberation of Riga, paints the Stučka government as extremely hostile towards the Jews: ‘The minority question arose for the first time in Latvia on 2nd January 1919, when the ‘victorious’ army led by Stučka occupied Riga. From this day onwards, and until the Bolsheviks’ retreat, Latvia became an epicentre of the persecution of minorities.’³²

According to Ziv, a ‘nationalist war’ was waged under the slogan of social equality, when Jewish, German and Russian shopkeepers and landlords were singled out for lootings, confiscations and persecutions. Ziv describes, as ‘characteristic of the regime’, that those minority representatives who were able to speak Latvian enjoyed certain privileges. He draws attention to the fact that there was not a single German or Jew among the commissars. Ziv mentions a rather curious fact about the procurement of printing paper – according to him, the Bolshevik newspaper *Cīņa* was published on paper of the highest quality, whereas newspapers in minority languages could only get hold of small quantities

³² Dr. V.Ziv (1924), ‘Stučka I menshinstva’, *Segodnya*, 22 May.

of wrapping paper to print on. Ziv goes as far as positing that ‘the advent of the communist government opened the history of anti-Semitism in Latvia – until then, Latvians and Jews were good neighbours. There was no old reckoning between them, and there could not have been, as both were equally oppressed in the past.’³³

Dribins (2009) asserts that the majority of Latvian Jews, despite being the poorest part of the population, did not support the Soviet government in 1919, and that approximately one thousand Latvian Jews were fighting in the Latvian national army against the Latvian Bolsheviks and the Red Army. ‘In any case, after the Soviets were driven out of Latvia, Stučka was forced to change his attitude – or, to be more precise, his political tactic – towards the ethnic minorities’ – Dribins (2009: 9) mentions Stučka’s later publications in which he attempted to ‘defend’ Latvian Jews against the alleged anti-Semitism of the leader of the Latvian Social Democrat-Mensheviks, M. Skujenieks.

Stučka himself categorically denied all the accusations of anti-Semitism against his government, but, notably, not the existence of anti-Jewish sentiment among Latvians in general – which he tries to attribute to the Latvian propertied classes exclusively, but then, carried away by his own rhetoric, repeatedly shoots himself in the foot. For example, he starts with a typical socialist-internationalist argument about class struggle: ‘The Latvian bourgeoisie, and its petite bourgeoisie are anti-Semites with a long history. Jews in Latvia are largely merchants and factory owners, and they were competing against the rising Latvian bourgeoisie’. But then, a few sentences later, the overall tone of proletarian compassion changes to ill-disguised contempt: ‘Besides, there are those *Moskovskye* suburbs in Riga, where the impoverished Jewish population is living side by side with true Russian darkness’. (Stučka 1919: 55). Yet the ensuing passage evokes writings on the same topic by the ardent nationalist Ernests Blanks:

It should be added that another feature of Latvian Jewry, especially of that in Riga and Kurland, is their ‘German orientation’...As a consequence, the nationalistic hatred of the Latvian bourgeoisie and petite bourgeoisie towards the Germans has been extrapolated to Jews. And the joy with which this part of the Jews welcomed the German occupation both in 1917 and in 1919 also served this cause.

(Stučka 1919: 55)

³³ *Ibid.*

After the Soviet government was ousted by the Latvian national army, Stučka retreated to Moscow, where he dedicated his efforts to the drawing up of the Soviet civil code. He passed away in 1932, and his ashes were interred in the Kremlin Wall behind the Mausoleum of his role model Lenin. During the Great Purge, Stučka's legal theory was declared a 'harmful ideology', and Stučka himself – an 'enemy of the people'. He was rehabilitated after the 20th Congress of the Communist Party, and made an exemplary communist hero in Latvia – both the Latvian University (which was established by Stučka's government in 1919), and the small town of Aizkraukle were named after him.

As much as the memory of Stučka and his Latvian Soviet was hated in interwar Latvia, subsequent historical events put it in a somewhat different perspective. For example, Šilde (1982: 195), comparing the Latvia of 1919 to that of the Stalin era, points out several advantages of Stučka's regime, namely: 1) only Latvians, and not Russians, were in the government and among the party leaders; 2) Stučka, overall, did not strive to bring any Russians to Latvia; 3) there were no overarching, all-republican ministries; everything was concentrated in Latvians' own hands instead 4) the Latgalian dialect was allowed, and on the whole Latgale was joined to Latvia.

Similarly, Dribins (2005: 135) observes: 'He will never be forgiven for the 'red terror' horrors of 1919, for ignoring the wishes of Latvian landless peasants, and for his negative stance on the demands for national independence. But the Latvian people also remember how Stučka opposed Latvia's Russification, sometimes harshly arguing with the big comrades from Moscow. It distinguishes him positively from the later communists, especially when compared with A. Pelše, A. Voss, and other spineless toadies'.

Interestingly, Dribins (1997, pp. 86-87) himself names M. Skujenieks as the founder of the movement within Latvian nationalism that would later become known as 'national communism' – an ill-fated attempt by a group of Latvian communist leaders, such as E. Berklavs, V. Krūmiņš and P. Dzērve, to expand the Latvian Republic's autonomy and to eliminate the Russifying aspects of the Soviet regime during the Khrushchev Thaw (Misiunas and Taagepera 1983). It seems, however, that a much closer comparison can be drawn between Stučka and the national communists, especially between him and Pauls Dzērve. Prior to his demise during the purge of 1959, Dzērve served as the Director of the Economy Institute of the Latvian Academy of Sciences. In

1957, Dzērve published a newspaper article and a book about Stučka, which – rather meekly, truth be told – attempted to interpret Stučka’s widely acknowledged ‘mistakes’ in agrarian policy and in the overall management of the first Latvian Soviet as creative attempts to protect his native country, with its unique history and nature, from certain aspects of Bolshevization.³⁴

It is hard to gauge what was deemed as a worse transgression by the Communist party: Dzērve’s own program of unorthodox economic measures aimed at protecting Latvian industry and agriculture, or his alleged tarnishing of the image of ‘this noted Soviet Latvian figure’, ‘the communist internationalist and the fighter for friendship between nations’, Comrade Stučka. Apparently, Comrade Dzērve ‘exhibited serious political mistakes’ and ‘revealed his own inability to correctly understand the nature of P. Stučka’s mistakes and their importance’ by using them ‘as a positive example of independent and creative attempts to answer questions about Socialist construction, of taking revolutionary initiative, by taking into consideration Latvia’s uniqueness’.³⁵

The Latvian national communists will be fondly remembered for their failed attempts to resist Russification in Latvia long after their demise in 1959. In the late 1980s, the elderly E. Berklavs would become one of the most prominent leaders of the independence movement and the founder of the Latvian National Independence Movement (LNNK in its Latvian abbreviation), which would transform into an important political party in the newly independent Latvia.³⁶ As for comrade Stučka, who was a source of inspiration for the national communists, he sank into oblivion – as soon as Latvia re-gained independence, both the University of Latvia, and the town of Aizkraukle were relieved of his name, as a part of the overall purge of the Communist past.

³⁴ The boldest of Dzērve’s statements goes as follows: ‘Pēteris Stučka was fighting against the bureaucratic centralism which ignored local conditions and peculiarities, which was present in the work of the management of some of the organizations and enterprises which were under control of the Communist party of the Russian Federation.’ (Dzērve 1957: 131)

³⁵ Document No. 57, ‘Secret report by L. Lapina, Head of the Science, Schools and Culture Section of the Central Committee of the Latvian Communist party, and N. Muravjov, Deputy Leader, to the Bureau. December 15th, 1959’, in: Plakans, A. (2007), pp. 270-271.

³⁶ In 1997, LNNK merged with the *For Fatherland and Freedom* (TB in its Latvian abbreviation), forming a conservative right-wing alliance with a nationalist agenda. In 2010, LNNK/TB joined forces with the radically nationalist party *All for Latvia*.

It is an irony of history that Pēteris Stučka, a dogmatic Marxist and a Communist warrior, is ultimately best remembered in Latvia for an aberration in his professed creed, namely for the nationalist feelings which he himself took such great care to suppress.³⁷

2.4. A Winning Concept? Conclusions

The works of Skujenieks, Valters, Blanks, and Stučka offer an important insight not just into the history of Latvian nationalist thought, but also into the general complex relationship between nationalism, ethnicity and democracy at the beginning of the 20th century, which still resonates with modern debates on multiculturalism and minority rights.

Blanks's vision of an ethnic Latvian nation was most fully implemented during the authoritarian regime of K. Ulmanis, when the economic, political and cultural interests of the core ethnic group were put ahead of the welfare of all state citizens as a whole. This, however, was achieved at the cost of parliamentary democracy and civic freedoms – a price Blanks himself was ultimately not prepared to pay. Whether this turn of events made him reconsider his views, we will never know for sure – but perhaps the fact that a prolific writer like Blanks completely disappeared from the public scene after the *coup* is an answer in itself. And perhaps his fate can serve as a warning to those who think that an ethnic democracy is a viable option. Because although this way of thinking remains confined to the far-right end of the nationalist spectrum in today's Latvia, it has not disappeared from the political scene entirely, regularly resurfacing in the *Saeima* debates and in the mass media.

Valters's concept of the Latvian nation, which attempted to reconcile Latvian ethnic pre-eminence with democratic fairness, was unquestionably favoured by the majority of Latvian democrats during the interwar republic, and it continues to be popular at present. His vision of Latvia's future has fully materialised - Latvia has taken its rightful place among other sovereign democratic nations, and the continuity of the Latvian language and culture is protected by law. However, this model of majority-minority relations, with its emphasis on communitarian values, proved to be problematic for successful nation-building during the interwar period, and is even more problematic in post-1991 Latvia – this will be discussed later in this thesis.

The Latvian civic nation envisioned by Skujenieks in 1913, just as during the First Republic, remains conspicuously out of reach. Although Skujenieks's own ideological transformations later in life do not lend additional credibility to his theory, one must separate the man and his work, and they should be judged separately. Whatever Skujenieks's personal failings, his 'National Question in Latvia' remains a remarkable example of Latvia's own political thought, which not only demonstrates affinity with the latest European theory of the time, but also contains many original ideas and is full of intellectual courage, allowing it to transcend narrow parochial borders. I believe that if resurrected from the past, Skujenieks's theoretical legacy would introduce an entirely new dimension into Latvian modern political thinking.

Ā. Šilde (1982:70) observes that at the beginning of the 20th century both Skujenieks and Valters failed, as national ideologists, to capture the imagination of a wider audience. He attributes this to the fact that they appealed only to fellow intellectuals, and were unable to rally the masses. In this respect, Blanks perhaps gained a wider popular support base in interwar Latvia, his ideas being reproduced and recycled by the LNK and other extremist organisations, and the seeds of his xenophobic teachings falling into soil made more fertile by the worldwide Depression. But it is important to remember that it was the civic nation model advocated by Skujenieks and Valters that was officially adopted by the Latvian state at the time independence was attained. All available historical evidence suggests that in 1918 the founders of the Latvian state perceived national unity and ethnic harmony to be integral parts of the future political system, and were firmly committed to the principles of equality and inclusiveness. This willingness to include all ethnic groups living in Latvia in the process of building the new state was manifested both in the first legislative acts and in politicians' speeches, and was widely echoed by the Latvian press, as will be demonstrated in the next chapter.

Stučka's legacy is not a straightforward question. The Latvian Soviet, with its socialist internationalist ideology, was a short-lived political enterprise, which quickly lost its initial appeal to the Latvian population. However, just twenty-one year later, in 1940, the dictatorship of the proletariat would loom over Latvia again. That second socialist experiment, which lasted until 1991, would erase the independent state of Latvia from the map of Europe, would send hundreds of thousands of Latvians into exile, and would impose Russification with a vengeance.

Whether *Stučka* would have felt any remorse if he had still been alive then, we can only speculate. But it seems that he had done his penance – after 1919 and until his death in 1932, he lived and worked in Russia, without returning to Latvia once. As *Ģērmanis* (1973: 155) poignantly observes, out of the three contending government heads of 1919, *Niedra*, *Ulmanis*, and *Stučka*, only *Niedra* was lucky to be buried in Latvian soil. *Stučka*, just like *Ulmanis*, died in exile – is there a worse fate for a nationalist?

Chapter Three: An Equal Among Nations, 1918-1934

The February revolution of 1917 gave a new impetus to Latvian political life. Paraphrasing Ezergailis (1917: 1), the word ‘Latvia’, which was already in common currency, suddenly assumed not just cultural, but also political connotations. A number of new political parties sprang to life in 1917. The National Democratic Party, which was the first to demand state independence for Latvia through its newspaper *Dzimtenes Atbalss*, was formed in Moscow in March by the Latvian émigré intelligentsia. Ernests Blanks, Jānis Akuraters, Atis Ķēniņš, Kārlis Skalbe, and Andrejs Frīdenbergs were all members of this party, and they would all make significant contributions, albeit often on different sides of the barricades, to the national question in independent Latvia. Another prominent party that would play a decisive role in Latvian interwar politics, the Agrarian Union, was founded in Valka in May 1917. Among its members were the future Latvian statesmen Kārlis Ulmanis, Zigfrīds Meierovics, Jānis Goldmanis, and former Social Democrat Miķelis Valters.

Two overarching organisations that would play a crucial role in achieving independence were also formed in 1917. The Democratic Bloc, also known as the ‘Bloc of the seventeen men’ (this should not be taken literally, as the actual numbers were higher) was founded upon the initiative of the Social Democrat P. Kalniņš and writer A. Deglavs in September in Riga, which was then under the German occupation; M. Valters, M. Skujenieks, and Fr. Menders were among its members. The Latvian Provisional National Council was established in November 1917 in Valka, founded by most of the Latvian political parties and organisations, with the notable exception of the Social Democrats. J. Goldmanis, J. Čakste, Fr. Trasuns, Z. Meierovics, and Ādolfs Klīve were all active in the Council. (Šilde 1982) The two organisations complemented each other in terms of membership – the centre-right leanings of the National Council were balanced out by the leftist Democratic Bloc; in conjunction, they were a perfect representation of the Latvian people. Ethnic minorities, however, were represented in neither of them.

By 1918, Latvia had been ravaged by World War One, its industry ruined, population dispersed, and territory partitioned. Kurzeme was occupied by the Germans,

which prompted a massive exodus of the rural population – about 570,000 people fled eastwards to Vidzeme, Latgale, and Russia in 1915 alone; over the next two years the number of refugees from the Latvian provinces reached 760,000 (Plakans 1995: 114-115). Riga was taken by German forces in September 1917, from where they started to spread northwards to Vidzeme. The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, signed in March 1918, legalised the partition of the Latvian territories – Germany kept control of Kurzeme and Riga, the fate of Vidzeme remained undecided, and Latgale was ceded to Bolshevik Russia (the latter fact was of little practical importance as the Bolsheviks had already declared the right to self-determination for all peoples within their territories; besides, they were too busy fighting to protect the achievements of the October revolution at home). This new political order turned out to be short-lived – Germany’s defeat on the Western front prompted Kaiser Wilhelm, in September 1918 to recognise Vidzeme and Riga as free territories. This was done in order to maximise available military resources and in a vain attempt to appease the Baltic peoples so that they would remain voluntarily under German administration. As a result of this mind-boggling turn of events, in the autumn of 1918 no great power could legitimately claim the Latvian territories – all of a sudden, independence came within reach, and Latvian nationalists immediately seized the opportunity. On 18th November 1918, the Latvian National Council, formed by the Provisional National Council and the Democratic Bloc the previous day, proclaimed Latvia an independent national state. The National Council also established a provisional Government led by the Agrarian Union representative Kārlis Ulmanis.

It is noteworthy that Šilde (1982) attributes the formation of the National Council primarily to Ulmanis’s desire to include ethnic minorities in the state-building process, despite certain reservations towards the new state on the part of the Baltic Germans:

Ulmanis’s strongest argument in favour of the National Council was the fact that the Provisional National Council *represented only ethnic Latvians*, but it was necessary to create a political body that would represent *all of the country’s population*. It was also necessary to involve ethnic minorities in state-building. The minorities comprised approximately one quarter of all Latvia’s residents. ... If ethnic minorities were not invited to join from the start, it was only because of their scepticism – they did not comprehend the Latvian State idea; moreover, the Baltic Germans were openly against the formation of such a state.

(Šilde 1982: 163)

All available historical evidence suggests that in 1918 the founders of the Latvian state perceived national unity and ethnic harmony to be integral parts of the future political system, and were firmly committed to the principles of equality and inclusiveness. This willingness to include all ethnic groups living in Latvia in the process of building the new state was manifested both in the first legislative acts and in politicians' speeches, and was widely echoed by the Latvian liberal press.

The document known as the National Council Platform defined Latvia as a united, sovereign and independent democratic republic. Delegates were to be sent to the National Council by: a) political parties; b) national minorities; c) those Latvian regions, i.e. Kurzeme and Latgale, where at the moment no political parties existed. Article 4, which was dedicated to minority rights, declared that national minorities could send their representatives to the Constitutional Assembly and to legislative bodies on a proportional representation basis; that minorities represented in the National Council could participate in the Provisional Government on a coalition basis; and that the national and cultural rights of national minorities were protected by constitutional law.

The newly appointed Prime Minister K. Ulmanis emphasised in his speech that 'All citizens, regardless of their ethnicity, are invited to help out [in building the new state], as the rights of all ethnic groups will be guaranteed by the Latvian state. It will be a state of democratic fairness, where there will be no place for oppression and injustice.'¹

The newspaper *Jaunākās Ziņas* enthusiastically greeted the newly born state in its editorial on 19th November 1918:

The main manifestation of this state's genius is national unity! With a wise and farsighted vision, different classes and circles represented in the National Council have united around common state tasks. Similarly, the whole Latvian nation without any exception, including our minority fellow-citizens, should with a common effort support the building of the new state and all its supreme power institutions!²

Further on, the article explained the basic tenets of the National Council:

¹ *Jaunākās Ziņas*, Nr. 4, 19.11.1918.

² *Ibid.*

The Latvian National Council is founded upon the principle that it is a territorial state power; that it is not an exclusively Latvian, or exclusively German, power body, but that it represents all ethnic groups resident in Latvia. This is why it bears the name of the Latvian [*Latvijas*], and not ethnic Latvian [*Latviešu*], National Council. Ethnic minorities are not represented in the National Council as yet. But it has been decided to allocate twenty per cent of the total number of deputies to be shared among Germans, Russians, Jews, Poles, Lithuanians, Estonians and other ethnic groups living in Latvia.³

Max Laserson (1971: 95), a lawyer and a member of the National Council, and of the first three interwar parliaments representing the Jewish Socialist party *Zeire Zion*, recalls: ‘At its first meeting the National Council gave expression through the speeches of its members to its firm desire to bring minority groups into the structure of the new state. This desire found expression on the part of both right-wing and left-wing circles.’ He attests that ‘...the main groups of the Latvian people aspired from the earliest days of their independent State to recognise the cultural rights of the minority peoples, as well as their right to take an active part in the political life of the country.’ (Laserson 1971: 95)

Historians also concur that ‘Latvian political figures believed strongly that a multi-ethnic solution would offer the best, if not the only guarantee of their state’s future viability.’ (Hiden 2004: 42). Dribins (1998: 128) mentions that on the eve of independence, Miķelis Valters addressed Baltic Germans in the article ‘Latvian State Nation’ (*Lettlands Staatvolk*) published by the liberal newspaper *Baltische Zeitung*, inviting them to evaluate the legitimacy of Latvian political aspirations and asking them not to hinder the creation of an independent Latvia. Valters stressed that the ethnic Latvians wanted to create a united state nation [*valsts nācija*], which along with them would include all those who saw Latvia as their motherland. He asserted that the Baltic Germans could be a socially, politically and culturally important integral part of this nation; and that minorities’ representatives would take an active part in the legislation and administration of the national state. At the same time, Dribins draws attention to the somewhat limited character of this vision of Latvia’s political future, as the article clearly stressed that the ethnic Latvians would be a core nation that would always take the initiative.

³ *Jaunākās Ziņas*, Nr. 4, 19.11.1918.

What were the minorities' reactions to the founding of the new state? They ranged from a negative attitude on the part of conservative Baltic Germans to a sceptical one on the part of the Jews, and an indifferent one on the part of Latvian Russians.

Jaunākās Ziņas reviewed, on a daily basis, the articles in other Latvian newspapers following the announcement of independence. On 20th November 1918, it quotes extensively from the editorial 'The Latvian National Council' (*der Lettische Volksrat*) published by the *Baltische Zeitung*, which, by and large, calls on its readership to support the formation of an independent Latvian state:

It seems to us that there can be no doubt that in the immediate interests of our Motherland, the fact that such a large number of Latvian political groupings has united in their common will to build a new state can only be welcomed. It would not be right, against the spirit of the century and in disregard of the seriousness of the situation, for national minorities ...to take a negative stance towards this turn of events. ...We do need a state, as German military power will be able to maintain the social order only for a limited time; this state of order is temporary. We need a state so that internal forces can be created for the protection of our internal culture. We also need a state in order to forge, through a positive process, political forces that will prevent the devastation that like a political epidemic constantly threatens us from the East.⁴

The *Baltische Zeitung* cannot, however, resist the temptation to examine an alternative state order in which the Baltic Germans would assume a more prominent role: 'It would be in accordance with the German tradition and, undeniably, in everybody's best interests, if Germans for their part came up with an initiative to bring all the Baltic lands together.'⁵

The conclusion of the editorial, nevertheless, is that the Baltic Germans have no other option than to yield to the will of the majority:

But neither the Estonian nor Latvian nations would agree to it. Estonians want their own state in the territory inhabited by Estonians, and Latvians want Latvia. As already said, an alternative path would be justifiable and possible, but it is clear by now that it is not an option...That second path is not to be followed. Therefore, we now have to support the construction of both the Estonian and the Latvian states.⁶

⁴ *Jaunākās Ziņas*, Nr. 5, 20.11.1918.

⁵ *Jaunākās Ziņas*, Nr. 5, 20.11.1918.

⁶ *Ibid.*

Jaunākās Ziņas also complains that ‘in terms of reaction to the news of the formation of the Latvian state, the conservative Baltic German newspaper *Rigasche Zeitung* stands apart’ – it did not dedicate a special article to the event, as all other newspapers did, but just mentioned it in the ‘Local News’ column. *Jaunākās Ziņas* also finds the whole tone of the article and the choice of words inappropriate for the occasion: the *Rigasche Zeitung* complained that the adornments in the National Theatre, where the state proclamation took place, were not ready on time, causing a thirty-minute delay, and described the decorations as ‘*pieces of red-and-white cloth, apparently the new republic’s flags*’. Worst of all, continues *Jaunākās Ziņas*, the *Rigasche Zeitung* correspondent, describing the outfits worn by the public in attendance, had claimed that ‘some ladies were even in *décolletage*’. ‘This is not true!’, indignantly protests *Jaunākās Ziņas*, and concludes bitterly : ‘...obviously, this is how the *Rigasche Zeitung* is trying to find a common understanding between the Latvian majority and the national minorities...’.

Cerūzis (2004: 68) writes that the local German press demonstrated a very cautious attitude in its published commentaries, stalling and waiting to see what kind of reaction would follow from Germany and the *Entente* states. Hiden (2004) observes that amidst ethnic Latvian declarations about their willingness to ensure minorities’ participation in the new republic, the German National Committee, uniting several political parties and organisations, used the moment to try to secure special treatment for the Baltic German population, demanding that their representation should reflect their economic and cultural significance rather than their numbers; these demands were not exactly popular with the Latvians. Hiden (2004: 43) writes that the National Committee’s ‘overall position on the Latvian state remained that of the reluctant suitor; it would not say yes and it would not say no’. Dribins (2002: 51) notes that the majority of Jews took a sceptical, wait-and-see attitude towards the independent Latvian republic. Apine (2007) observes that Latvian Russians were not convinced about the viability of the Latvian state; some of them still hoped for a democratic Russia, while others expected the Russian Empire to come back to life.

Overall, this notable lack of enthusiasm on the part of the national minorities at the moment when the new state was born but its fate was still far from certain, bears witness to the fact that they did not share the national aspirations of the Latvians, but had assumed the passive role of onlookers. This wary cautiousness, however, has a number of plausible explanations. Conservative Germans were offended that their carefully nurtured idea of the

Latvian and Estonian territories united under Baltic German leadership had been cruelly snatched away; besides, considering the long history of animosity between them and the Latvians, they had suddenly been put in a precarious position. More liberally inclined Germans, the Jews and the Russians, although not opposed to the idea of an independent Latvian state, nevertheless felt threatened by the new order of things, despite Latvian assurances of protection of minority rights. Everybody was entering uncharted waters – especially taking into account the deep existing segregation among Latvian ethnic groups in all spheres of public life, and the inevitable resulting lack of communication. The Latvian national movement leading the path to independence had a strictly ethnic membership; minorities had not participated in the foundation of the new state, but were presented with the fact of its existence. Mutual trust could not arise out of nowhere; the promises of equality made by the Latvians were reassuring, but minorities questioned their underlying motives.

The two main explanations for the Latvians' willingness to include minorities in the construction of the new state that have been offered to date are 1) their concern about the image the new state would project internationally, and 2) their need for minorities' support in the precarious political and economical situation. Bobe (1971: 52) writes that the state of Latvia came about during a period of 'general recognition of the principle of self-determination for small nationalities'; therefore it was only logical that the Latvians chose to follow this principle. Laserson (1971: 96) draws attention to the fact that the Latvians had been an oppressed minority themselves, and their own political past within the Tsarist Empire would not permit them 'to proceed immediately to an extreme chauvinism'; besides, Latvians wanted to demonstrate good will to the Allies. Recalling the economic devastation in Latvia in 1918, Laserson (1971: 97) also mentions that the 'minorities included a considerable number of industrialists and business men [sic.] with foreign ties, and persons who still retained part of their property and money. They included a large number of members of the liberal professions who were also a very useful group in the emergency conditions.' He claims that appeasing the national minorities was necessary 'to help to prevent hesitant groups among the Germans of Latvia from joining the reactionary activities of the *Landeswehr* and Von der Goltz, and would also prevent hesitant Russians from joining the counterrevolutionary forces of Bermond-Avalov and Yudenitch'. (Laserson 1971: 97) Importantly, Laserson, after having carefully examined all possible considerations behind the liberal minority policies introduced by the Latvians,

does not subscribe to the view that these were the results of international pressure. Moreover, he draws a sharp distinction between the minority treaties signed by Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and others in 1919-20s, and the declarations that were signed by Latvia *immediately* after its establishment in 1918. He remains convinced that ‘the main groups of the Latvian people aspired from the earliest days of their independent State to recognise the cultural rights of the minority peoples, as well as their right to take an active part in the political life of the country.’ (Laserson 1971: 95). I tend to agree with Laserson, rather than with Bobe, that such an early, unprompted recognition of minority rights by Latvian state founders was of an exceptional character.

Similarly, Hiden (2004: 42) writes that ‘aspirations to build a Latvia for the Latvians were certainly held in check by anxieties over the external world, but other Latvian political figures believed strongly that a multi-ethnic solution would offer the best, if not the only guarantee of their state’s future viability.’

3.1. The National Council 1918-1920

The newborn state found itself in an extremely fragile situation while different forces fought over its territories. Kurzeme and part of Vidzeme were still under German control. In December 1918, the part of Vidzeme unoccupied by the Germans and the whole of Latgale were taken over by the Latvian Bolsheviks led by P. Stučka. The Provisional Government fled to Liepāja in Kurzeme, seeking refuge from the Bolsheviks in the German-occupied territory. April 1919 witnessed the creation of the parallel pro-German government of A. Niedra supported by the Iron Guard military forces under von der Goltz’s command. From the north, Latvia was threatened by Bermond-Avalov, a self-proclaimed Russian count, who rallied the remaining divisions of the Baltic White Russian Army, formerly under the command of Prince Anatol Lieven. Von der Goltz and Bermond-Avalov joined forces against the Latvian national army raised by the Provisional Government, and were finally defeated by them in December 1919. The Bolsheviks were driven out of Latgale at the beginning of 1920. Latvia signed a peace treaty with Russia in August 1920; at the same time Russia officially recognised the Latvian State. The Independence Wars were over, the provisional government returned to Riga, and on 1st

May 1920 the Constitutional Assembly was elected with the purpose of drafting the Latvian Constitution.

The provisional government faced the daunting task of reviving the national economy and introducing order into the chaos left behind by World War One and the subsequent Independence Wars with their kaleidoscopic changes of occupying forces. The Latvian territories had been devastated, and their population was scarce – if in 1914 the population of the Latvian territories stood at 2,552,000, in 1920 it was only 1,596,131. Two of the Latvian regions suffered the most – the Riga region lost 65 per cent of its population, and Zemgale lost 42 per cent. It was estimated that appx. 750,000 people had left Latvia during the war – as E. Blanks put it, ‘with all their cattle’ [*ar visiem lopiem*] (Blanks 1928: 9). These alarming demographic changes were compounded by changes in the structure of the population – the numbers of males and of young children decreased in favour of females and elderly people, and the birth rate remained negative until 1921 (Skujeneeks 1927; Plakans 1995).

The undernourished population of the recently liberated territories was ravaged by an epidemic of typhus, and by widely spread venereal diseases, the two eternal travelling companions of war. Latgale was worst affected – 528 incidents of typhus were registered there at the peak of the epidemic, in March 1920. (Plensners 1928)

The country’s industry was ruined – at the start of the war, the main Latvian industrial enterprises had been evacuated to Russia. Bridges had been destroyed by the Russians during their retreat in 1916; in the cities, there were no street lights at night. There was no money in the Central Bank (there was no Central Bank yet either), and as one witness recollects, the country’s first budget was carried around by the finance minister in his wallet. But the newly independent Latvians were ready to do their best for the homeland.

A British timber merchant who travelled to Latvia on business in 1920, marvels at Latvians’ orderliness and tidiness:

Yet though the whole country was ragged, with its twisted shell-torn trees, its broken fences and boarded paneless windows, its shabby clothes and empty shops, it was clean. Some say the Dutch are the cleanest people, others the Finns, but I give the prize to the Letts. To be clean

where everything is neat and tidy may be force of habit. But to be clean and clean up when what remains is broken, ragged and dilapidated shows an inborn sense of the love of cleanliness.

(Anderson 1942: 39)

Despite the surrounding mayhem, Latvian legislators were busily drafting the legal basis of the new state. During the 59 sessions of the National Council, from 18th November 1918 until 18th March 1920, 83 laws were passed (183 draft laws were submitted). Among the members of the National Council, which had 183 seats altogether, there were 19 Baltic Germans, 15 Jewish delegates, 7 Russians, 2 Lithuanians, and one Pole. Minorities were also represented in the government – in the first provisional government (19.11.1918 – 13.07.1919), the post of State Controller was held by the German representative Eduards Rozenbergs (Eduard Rosenberg); while in the second provisional government (14.07.1919 – 08.12.1919) there were three minorities' representatives: the Finance Minister – Roberts Erhards (Robert Erhardt), the Justice Minister – Edvins Magnuss (Edwin Magnus), both Baltic Germans; and the Jewish Pauls Mincs (Paul Minz) as State Controller.⁷ Erhards and Mincs would also retain their positions in the third provisional government (09.12.1919 – 11.06.1920).

As early as December 1918, *Jaunākās Ziņas* published an editorial 'The need to consolidate our political parties' in response to the growing political fragmentation that would become a source of malaise in Latvian democracy for years to come. The article drew attention to the fact that the abundance of parties could not be explained by the diversity of political views, as many newly created parties had very similar programmes, and it concluded that fragmentation was not only against the public interest, but also against the parties' own financial interests, as merging with other similar parties would allow them to enjoy economies of scale.⁸

Aside from party fragmentation, another ailment of Latvian political life manifested itself very early – despite an initially declared mutual determination 'to build Latvia together', political, ideological, and cultural disagreements between the Latvian majority and the ethnic minorities quickly started to accumulate. Grand declarations collided with complex realities. Over the next few years, both phenomena would grow in strength,

⁷ *Latvijas Tautas padomes stenogramu satūra rādītājs*. 1925. Latvijas Republikas Saeimas izdevums.

⁸ 'Mūsu politisko partiju apvienošanas vajadzība', *Jaunākās Ziņas*, No.16, 04.12.1918.

dividing opinions and loyalties, inspiring vicious campaigns on the opposing sides in the press, and often bringing the Parliament's work to a halt. Both political fragmentation, and the constant in-fighting between the majority and the minorities, significantly contributed to the eventual demise of Latvian democracy.

But when on 8th December 1919 the National Council passed two laws – a Law on Latvian Educational Institutions and a Law on Minority Schools in Latvia – there was nothing to indicate these future disagreements. Taken together, the two laws secured minorities' control over their own education and cultural affairs.

Article 1 of The Law on Latvian Educational Institutions specified that all Latvia's educational and pedagogical institutions and affairs were to be under the authority of the Ministry of Education, with the exception of those schools that were founded in accordance with a separate law. Article 2 stipulated that schools and pedagogical institutions were to be founded and maintained by state and municipal institutions, as well as – with the permission of the Ministry of Education – by juridical and physical persons. Article 8 declared the Latvian language, Latvian history and Latvia's geography to be compulsory subjects in all schools. In those schools where the language of instruction was other than the state language, the latter was to be introduced from the second year of primary school. Article 39 stipulated that all compulsory school studies (from the age of six until the age of sixteen) were to be conducted in the pupil's 'family language' [*ģimenes valodā*]. Article 40 defined the family language as the language declared by the pupil's parents when enrolling the pupil in the school, and in which the pupil could express his or her thoughts freely. Article 41 declared that state and municipal institutions were to maintain as many schools for each ethnic group as were necessary for their children's compulsory education, in accordance with the provision of this Law. The footnote to Article 41 stipulated that Latvian citizens belonging to an ethnic minority had a right to require the opening of a special class if there were not fewer than thirty pupils studying under the supervision of the same teacher. Those children who because of their insufficient numbers could not attend either a class or a school in their family language, could either study privately, or, on an exceptional basis, attend schools with a different language of instruction.⁹

⁹ '1919. g. 8. Decembra sehdē peenemtais Likums par Latwijas izglihtibas eestahdem', *Waldibas Wehstnesis*, Nr. 88, 17.12.1919.

The Law on Minority Schools in Latvia determined set boundaries for the autonomy of minority schools. It established Minority Departments within the Ministry of Education whose heads, although reporting to the Minister, were to be appointed by the respective minority's faction in the Parliament. These departments had a free hand in choosing the language of instruction, and in administering their allocated portion of the state school budget. Moreover, Article 7 of the Law stipulated that the heads of the minority education departments 'represented their respective ethnic group in all cultural affairs, with the right to liaise with all departments of the Ministry of Education, as well as to participate, in an advisory capacity, in the sessions of the Cabinet of Ministers related to any aspects of the cultural life of their respective ethnic group.'¹⁰ This remarkable piece of legislation, which was the most liberal law on minority education in Europe at the time (the even more advanced Estonian Law on Cultural Autonomy would not be passed until 1925), did not give rise to any substantial objections from among the delegates, and was passed unanimously, with only 18 abstaining votes.

However, just eight months later, another minority-related piece of legislation provoked heated debates. In August 1919, the National Council reviewed, in two readings, the draft Law on Language Rights, prepared by the Commission on National Affairs headed by the Baltic German Paul Schiemann. It is worth examining the debates in detail, as not only were they one of the very first manifestations of the underlying tensions between the majority and minority representatives, but language rights as such would eventually become of the most contentious issues in Latvian politics right up until today.

The draft submitted to the Council stipulated:

Article 1. Any Latvian citizen is to have the right to use his native language in private and public life.

Article 2. Those belonging to an ethnic community, who comprise more than 20 per cent (but not fewer than 1,000 people) of a city or a district's population, are to have the right to communicate in their native language, both orally and in writing, with the local administration and courts, as well as to receive responses from them in the same language.

¹⁰ '1919.g. 8. Decembra sehdē peenemtais Likums par mazakuma tautību skolu eekahrta Latwijā', *Waldibas Wehstnesis*, Nr. 89, 18.12.1919.

Article 3. Independent of the conditions stipulated in Article 2, the use of the German and Russian languages is to be guaranteed:

- a) For the German language – in all state and municipal offices, cities and bathing places across all of Latvia except in Latgale.*
- b) For the Russian language – in all Latvian dwellings with at least 15,000 residents; and in all state, municipal and public offices in Latgale.*

Article 4. Free language usage is to be allowed in all Latvian districts where non-Latvians comprise more than 50 per cent of the population.

Article 5. All post and telegraph offices are to allow the use of the German and Russian languages alongside the Latvian language.

Article 6. State and municipal notices are to be published in languages which, in accordance with the stipulations of this Law, enjoy full rights in a given place; all public announcements are to be published in one of each ethnic minority's newspapers.

The *rapporteur* M. Skujenieks (LSDSP), presenting the draft to the Council, states that there are no objections to this 'basic request to ensure the use of each minority language'.¹¹ However, the ensuing discussion of the draft causes controversy among the delegates.

K. Pauļuks (Latvian Agrarian Union), supported by E. Blanks (Democratic Union) criticises the draft for being based upon the wrong principle of dividing the country's administration into separate units, and for the almost complete absence of references to the Latvian language, which he interprets as an insufficiently respectful attitude towards the State language on the part of minorities. Pauļuks suggests rejecting the draft on the first reading and leaving the final solution of the language question to the future Constitutional Assembly.

M. Skujenieks counters that K. Pauļuks and E. Blanks's judgement is clouded by prejudices, and that they 'see ghosts where there are none'. He insists that although it is

¹¹ Obviously, at this time the views of Skujenieks as a practicing politician did not yet differ from the liberal views expressed in his 1913 book. However, a tension between the two would start manifest itself very soon.

possible that the draft needs an amendment introducing a definition of the State language, its main points are correct. [The German part of the audience applauds].

P. Schiemann (German Democrats) passionately defends the draft, and adds that if changes are necessary, it should be forwarded to a different committee, because the Minorities committee is not willing to change a word.

A. Klīve (Latvian Agrarian Union) observes that with this draft law, the minorities are trying to impose on the majority's rights and notes that K. Skalbe, the committee's secretary, who has signed the draft, should as a Social Democrat have been more protective of the national cause. J. Grišans (Latgalian faction) announces that such a raw draft, which is full of misunderstandings, is unacceptable. E. Rosenbergs (German Progressive Party) stresses that the law would help to attract those elements of the minorities who are still hesitant in their political orientation. Pauļuks explains that he is not against minority rights *per se*, but wants minorities to stay within boundaries set by the state. According to the draft law, says Pauļuks, it would be necessary to grant equal rights to eight different languages, and state officials would also have to speak the Jewish and Gypsy languages. However, he has nothing against handing the draft over to a different committee for elaboration. J. Cālits (Radical Democrats) suggests removing the draft law from the agenda, and handing it over to some other committee at one of the future sessions.¹²

The session was concluded. The draft Law never re-surfaced again – presumably, it was lost while being transferred for review from one committee to another.

Another early point of collision between Latvian and minority deputies was the first draft of the Citizenship Law, also reviewed by the National Council in August 1918. The Citizenship Law, which would become the most troubled piece of Latvian legislation of the interwar period (it would be returned to the lawmakers on numerous occasions, would be amended several times, and would become a trump card frequently played by both the majority and the minorities in their political game) and the debates surrounding it are reviewed in detail in Chapter Four.

¹² *Jaunākās Ziņas*, Nr 79, 28.08.1919 'Tautas Padomes sēde 27.08.1919'.

September 1919 witnessed some heated sessions at Riga City Council, proving once more that promising to respect all ethnic groups' cultural peculiarities in theory is one matter, and trying to implement those multicultural principles in real life is another. The test for the Council's cultural tolerance came by way of the decree on the official weekly holiday for retailers. When Sunday was suggested as a day off for shopkeepers, the Jewish faction argued that as Jewish-owned shops, due to religious considerations, also had to close down on Saturdays, they would be forced to take two days off instead of one, which would make them uncompetitive with Christian-owned shops. Therefore they suggested that Jewish-owned shops should be allowed to be closed on Saturdays, but to remain open on Sundays. Importantly, this was a rare occasion when both left- and right-wing Jewish deputies found a common position – the compromise between them was reached by agreeing that the Sabbath is not a religious, but a cultural tradition. The Social Democrats' initial position on the matter was that social principles came above everything else, and therefore any day could be designated as a holiday, as long as it was just *one* day for everyone. Eventually, though, they sided with the rest of the Latvians and voted for Sunday as the official day off – this prompted the *Bundists* to leave the Social Democratic faction, accusing their former partners of 'not protecting Jewish cultural interests'. The German faction joined with the Jews in the name of tolerance, while the Russians took a neutral stance, and did not participate in the debates, or the voting.

Jaunākās Ziņas, analysing the 'shopkeeping debates' at the City Council, earnestly tries to take into account all vested interests. It claims that the Jewish position is understandable, and toys with the idea of designating any other day of the week, say Thursday, as a holiday for all – but it would only be viable, continues *Jaunākās Ziņas*, if 'we had no religious or cultural traditions of our own'. Moreover, 'we have grown up with the idea of Sunday'. And although in principle the Jewish plight is worth supporting, the City Council, writes *Jaunākās Ziņas*, obviously has national and state interests at heart – after all, Riga, as a city with a Latvian Christian majority, deserves to have its Sunday. As for the Jewish shops being allowed to open on Sunday, speculates the newspaper, again, at first glance there can be no objections, but a closer look allows us to see that with a big number of Jewish shops located in Riga it would absolutely disrupt the 'Sunday peace'. As a result of these multicultural polemics, where cultural, economic, and party interests became closely intertwined, reports *Jaunākās Ziņas*, the City Council has finally announced Sunday as the official day off. In conclusion, *Jaunākās Ziņas* mentions that the

National Council member and editor of the newspaper *Rigasche Rundschau*, Paul Schiemann, has published an open letter addressed to the Social Democratic faction calling the adopted regulation ‘a Pyrrhic victory’ and claiming that such a decision by the City Council ‘signifies a concession to the anti-Semitic inclinations of the masses’.¹³

In September 1919, M. Valters resigned from the post of Interior Minister within the Provisional government after repeated clashes with the Social Democrats, notably with Fr. Menders. *Jaunākās Ziņas* writes on this occasion: ‘Minister Valters’s continued presence in the government threatened to cause a sharp conflict with the Social Democrats and partly also with the centrist Social Democratic Union.’¹⁴ There was no love lost between the ‘renegade’ Valters and his former party colleagues, but they were not Valters’s only enemies; for example, the Baltic Germans still regarded him as an unpredictable leftist. Valters’s resignation was enshrouded by rumours; one of the most persistent was his alleged close connections with Germany. A. Klīve, a prominent member of the Agrarian Union and the leader of its faction in the *Saeima*, as well as Valters’s long-time contender for the affections of K. Ulmanis, dedicates a disproportionate part of his memoir ‘unmasking’ the ‘Germanophil’ Valters; according to Klīve, Latvia’s British and American allies urged Ulmanis to dismiss M. Valters from his post in the government (Klīve 1969). Šilde (1985: 202) cites evidence that the main reason behind his resignation was not so much Valters’s devotion to the protection of minority rights, as his continual disagreements with the Social Democrats, and Prime Minister Ulmanis’s willingness to sacrifice Valters for the sake of government stability. Bastjānis (1966: 97) also posits that Ulmanis himself, ‘out of a feeling of uncontrolled envy towards a talented colleague, pushed him off the political stage’. Whatever the real reason for Valters’s demise, the ethnic minorities lost a reliable supporter within the government at the time.

It is noteworthy that the minorities’ factions were initially in opposition to the armistice treaty with Bolshevik Russia, which Latvia eventually signed on 11th August 1920. During the heated debates at the National Council in October 1919, V. Presņakovs, speaking on behalf of the Russian National Society, and P. Schiemann, speaking on behalf of the Democratic Bloc, criticised the idea of signing an armistice with a non-democratic government of Russia. (Laserson 1971). J. Akuraters immediately interpreted their position as a demonstration of disloyalty towards the Latvian state: ‘This armistice is desired by all

¹³ ‘Swehtdeenās meers’, *Jaunākās Ziņas*, No. 88, 08.09.1919.

¹⁴ ‘No kabineta ir izstumts Valters’, *Jaunākās Ziņas*, No. 82, 01.09.1919.

Latvian political factions in the National Council. Only the minorities, the Germans and the Russians, do not want it. And the reasons behind this are very clear: both Dr Schiemann and Presņakovs had difficulties in concealing these reasons during their speeches. They only want peace with a ‘democratic Russia’, because their democratic Russia is hiding under the masks of Kolchak and Denikin.’¹⁵ In other words, Akuraters was accusing the Baltic German Schiemann and the Russian Presņakovs of monarchical sympathies, building this assumption on the fact that both these minorities were in a privileged position under the Russian Empire. This Jesuitical casuistry would become a favourite weapon used by ethnic nationalist against the minorities during the interwar period – whatever position minorities took on Soviet Russia, they were promptly accused of either being Bolsheviks, or monarchists. For example, the openly anti-Bolshevik editorial team of the newspaper *Segodnya* was often portrayed by its Latvian counterparts as a clique of monarchists.

The election of Andrejs Frīdenbergs, a liberally-minded National Democrat and a passionate believer in the viability of the Latvian civic nation, as Mayor of Riga in February 1920 revived the discussions on civic and ethnic nationalism. In June 1920, with the article ‘The civic nation and nationalists’, he took a brave political stand against radical nationalists and their latest publications. Referring to some recent publications in the press by authors whom Frīdenbergs designated as ‘irresponsible elements’, he claimed that ‘they use our sacred national slogans for their own ends’ and ‘hardly comprehend the responsibility that would befall them if their declared ideas got implemented in practice’.¹⁶ Recalling recent times when Latvians had suffered injustice at the hands of Tsarist bureaucrats, he posited that ‘when the Russian giant fell apart, the misfortune of the Russian people did not elicit any compassion in our hearts: with satisfaction we watched as the state which could not come up to modern standards passed away’. However, continued Frīdenbergs, the Latvian people, who, thanks to the will of fate, had become the ruling people in the state, must not follow the mistaken paths of the old Russia - the very first task at hand was to create conditions for securing Latvia’s own citizens’ freedom and rights, and ‘the protection of citizens’ national individuality against excesses and against the majority belongs among these rights’.

¹⁵ ‘Par Tautas Padomes sēdi’, *Jaunākās Ziņas*, No. 114 08.10.1919.

¹⁶ Most likely, Frīdenbergs is referring to the article ‘Latvian Latvia’ by Ivande Kaija published in *Latvijas Sargs* on 28.04.1920.

Addressing the Latvian Russian and Baltic German minorities, Frīdenbergs asserted: ‘This is our and your common land, which we will defend from any attacks from Russia, as well as from big Germany. When this understanding is shared by Latvians, Germans, Jews and others who live in our land, then the Latvian **civic nation** will be born’. He noted that despite the fact that there was ‘plenty of fuel for hate amongst different peoples’, the establishment of cultural autonomy in minority schools and the admittance of the German and Russian languages to state and communal institutions bore witness to the fact that ‘the shadows of the past do not conceal the rising Latvian sun’. Frīdenbergs concluded: ‘We seriously want to build Latvia together with citizen non-Latvians who honestly want to merge with us in a single civic nation’.¹⁷

Frīdenbergs’s idea of the Latvian civic nation was mercilessly criticised in the Latvian nationalist press, especially by E. Blanks, for being based upon an ‘illusion of unreal collaboration’. Blanks became Frīdenbergs’s personal nemesis, criticising every move the City Council made in conjunction with the minorities’ faction, in the pages of the newspaper *Latvian Sargs*; there was even a court case filed by Frīdenbergs against Blanks on the grounds of assault on personal dignity.

In May 1920, the City Council formed a special commission on minorities’ social care, which was to administer the budget allocated by the city to minorities, including donations by minority businessmen. Blanks commented on this fact in two articles, with the telling titles ‘The guardian of national interests’ and ‘The City Head has lost his head’, protesting against Frīdenbergs’s ‘pro-German policies’ and against what he saw as the beginning of a transformation of the national state into a ‘Latvian vs. minorities’ two-community state.

It is difficult to say whether Frīdenbergs eventually grew tired of being a permanent target of Blanks’s personalised attacks, or whether his interest in minorities-related matters simply waned, but in the second half of the 1920s he withdrew from active political life, finding a different outlet for his inexhaustible energy and publishing articles dedicated to studies of Esperanto (he was one of the founders of the Latvian Esperanto society), and the fight against alcoholism. Needless to say, these other undertakings did not cause as much controversy in the wider society as his lonely crusade for the Latvian civic nation.

¹⁷ Frīdenbergs, A. ‘Politiskā nācija un nacionālisti’, *Jaunākās Ziņas*, Nr. 126, 05.06.1920.

On 18th May 1920, debates arose at the City Council about the presence of minorities' representatives in the social care department. Deputy Štrausmanis, a representative of the Agrarian Union, objected to forming a special commission of minority representatives, calling it 'a republic within a republic'. P. Schiemann, supported by the Social Democrats and the Mayor A. Frīdenbergs, insisted that such a commission was a necessity. The decision on forming the commission was passed by 35 votes to 25.¹⁸

Blanks responded to the decision on the pages of the newspaper *Latvijas Sargs* with an indignant article entitled 'On Guard for Nationalism'. The Russian newspaper *Segodnya* retaliated with an article 'On Guard for Chauvinism', musing that Blanks, who had compared the minorities' section within the city council to an 'autonomous railcar', was being nostalgic for the times when Jews were thrown out of the railcars.¹⁹

Following on from this continuous exchange of 'pleasantries' between the two newspapers, E. Bramanov (Brams) writes in *Segodnya*:

For *Latvijas Sargs*, all Germans are barons; all Russians keep portraits of Tsar Nikolai and Bermondts close to their hearts; and all Jews are speculators...It is difficult to argue against *Latvijas Sargs* – how can you possibly prove to its essayists, who distance themselves from Niedra and Stuchka, that Russians also have a right to their own Bermondts and Lenins, and Jews – to their own Trotsky....

We are not going to apologise for all the crimes alleged by *Latvijas Sargs*. Our position ...is so clear, that it does not need a loyalty certificate from a newspaper.²⁰

3.2. The Constitutional Assembly 1920-1922

The elections to the Constitutional Assembly in April 1920, and the lively polemics they inspired in the press clearly demonstrated that the Latvian public's appetite for representative democracy was growing; and that minorities were already starting to take a more pro-active role in the political life of the new state. The Russian newspaper *Segodnya* called on its readership:

¹⁸ 'V gorodskoi dume', *Segodnya*, No. 110, 19.05.1920.

¹⁹ 'Na strazhe shovinizma', *Segodnya*, No. 113, 22.05.1920.

²⁰ Bramanov, E. 'Zhupeli', *Segodnya*, 29.05.1920.

Citizens, remember that your own happiness, and that of your close ones, is in your own hands. Forget your trivial everyday interests, and go to the polling stations!

Citizens belonging to ethnic minorities, for you it is especially important that not a single vote is lost. Your rights, your language, your school, your faith can be duly and permanently protected only by your own representatives!²¹

The turnout at the elections was exceptionally high – more than 700,000 residents, or almost 85 per cent of the voting population. (Šilde 1976: 344) Sixteen parties and political organisations made it to the Constitutional Assembly. The most popular was the Latvian Social Democratic Socialist Party, which got almost 40 per cent of all votes, and, as a result, a total of 57 mandates. The next in popularity, the Agrarian Union, got significantly less – 18 per cent of all votes, and 26 mandates. The Latgalian Agrarian Party, in third place, received 17 mandates. No other party among the sixteen gained more than 6 mandates. By comparison, the minority parties together shared 17 mandates.²² As a result, in the Constitutional Assembly where nobody had a majority, the minorities became a force to be reckoned with – their votes could tilt the balance either left, or centre-right; this situation would continue for years to come. Minorities would use this acquired power for their own ends, often providing support for other parties in return for a promise to put their weight behind minority-related legislation. Even before the Constitutional Assembly started its work, Latvian bourgeois nationalist circles were already expressing indignation about this future forced cooperation with the ‘reactionary’ minorities, voiced yet again by E. Blanks: ‘The existing antagonism between Latvian democracy and minorities absolutely excludes the possibility of any bargains with them. The main social question in Latvia, the agrarian question, sets these two poles even further apart’.²³

Nevertheless, loathsome as it was to the Latvian parties that the minority bloc had become indispensable to them, they would groan about it, but in the absence of other choices, would often negotiate with the minorities behind the scenes.

²¹ Denj viborov v Uchreditelnoye Sobraniye’, *Segodnya*, 17.04.1920.

²² Out of 150 members of the Constitutional Assembly, 17 represented ethnic minorities (6 Jewish deputies, 6 Germans, 4 Russians, and one Polish delegate). It was characteristic of the relative political passivity of the minorities that while they comprised 25 per cent of the population, they only managed to get 12 per cent of the votes in the first truly democratic elections in Latvia. The Baltic Germans continued to be the best organised minority group throughout the independence years, while the Jews were politically active but very fragmented, and the Russians remained the most passive.

²³ Blanks, E. ‘Satversmes Sapulze’. *Latvijas Kareivis*, 1920, Nr. 52, 22.04.

The Latvian Constitutional Assembly had two main official tasks: to work out the new country's Constitution, and to provide the legal basis for the much-needed agrarian reform. Its third, unofficial task was to find a *modus operandi* where all different represented groups could be united around the common tasks of state legislation. Challenging as the first two tasks were, they were successfully accomplished in a relatively short period of time (the first part of the Law on Agrarian Reform was passed on 16th September 1920, and the Latvian Constitution was adopted on 15th February 1922). The third task turned out to be a tougher nut to crack. Šilde (1982) describes this challenge to the Latvian legislative body as follows:

Speaking of the nation of 1920 that gathered at the Constitutional Assembly, it was far from homogeneous, and did not grow organically to form one united community of citizens. Out of every four citizens of the Latvian Republic, only three were ethnic Latvians; others were ethnic minorities, who willingly or unwillingly had to get used to recognising themselves as Latvian citizens. It was not possible to accomplish this in one fell swoop.

(Šilde 1982: 229)

The tensions between the ethnic Latvian and minorities' representatives, which had manifested themselves on several occasions during the National Council sessions, were not about to abate during the Constitutional Assembly, as there was a significant overlap in the membership of the two; many delegates got re-elected. M. Skujenieks (1928: 62) finds it worth mentioning that 'that the elections [for the Constitutional Assembly] did not bring any proportional changes among the representation of the political parties, preserving those political relationships that were established during the National Council'. Those already established 'political relationships' obviously entailed certain hostility between the majority and minority deputies. This hostile attitude emerges in F. Cielēns's otherwise joyful recollection of the first celebratory session of the Assembly: 'It was a warm sunny day when, on 1st May 1920, the members of the Constitutional Assembly gathered for its first session. It seemed that nature itself was smiling on this extraordinary event in the history of the Latvian people' (Cielēns 1963: 118). He describes how the deputies, putting the recent pre-election fights behind them, shook each other's hands, willingly demonstrating their joyful mood on such a big historic day. 'Elated national self-assurance, even pride was visible on the deputies' faces' (Cielēns 1963: 118). However, it seems from Cielēns's account that this celebratory occasion was not for everybody:

The minority representatives felt pushed back on the day of the Constitutional Assembly's convention. After all, the democratic Latvian state had been won by Latvians' own hard sacrifices, and that called for respect. They [minority representatives] tried to stay in the background. Only two deputies did not stay in the shadows, but boldly, even obtrusively mingled with the Latvian deputies. One of them was the German pastor Keller, the other Jewish deputy Dubins, who at the National Council still spoke Russian to Latvians, but now, with a loyal smile, addressed everybody in Latvian.'

(Cielēns 1963: 125)

It was not just minority members of the Constitutional Assembly that 'felt pushed back' and 'stayed in the shadows'. In fact, divisions among the Latvian legislators closely reflected those experienced by the wider society, where different ethnic groups continued to live in their accustomed isolation from each other. This pronounced segregation was often observed by foreign visitors; one of them writes poignantly:

In Estonia there were Estonians, in Lithuania there were Lithuanians but in Latvia there were not Latvians. There were Letts, Baltic Germans, Jews and Russians. And each of these four was a distinct and isolated group with only superficial contact with the others. Ignorance of this social and political structure on the part of a foreigner ruined a few well meant [*sic.*] uplifting dinners given by British or American newcomers...It was incredible that a small town like Riga with about three hundred thousand inhabitants could contain so many exclusive circles...

(Anderson 1942: 42)

Latvians, Germans, Russians and Jews largely socialised only with the members of their own ethnic group; they read newspapers in their own language, and attended their own theatres. Anybody who has read memoirs of Latvian interwar society written by members of different ethnic groups, knows this eerie feeling – but for the occasional mentioning of familiar places, it is hard to believe that all the authors are describing life in the same country and at the same moment in history; it is rather as if they all exist in parallel universes. Business and trade negotiations aside, municipalities and the Constitutional Assembly were the only places where representatives of different ethnic groups engaged in discussions; perhaps it is little wonder that these discussions often got polarised.

During its first session, the Constitutional Assembly elected its Chairman, whose functions were essentially those of a state president. The Agrarian Union's candidate Jānis Čakste won with 83 votes, while only 48 votes were given to his rival, national poet Jānis Rainis (Pliekšāns) representing the Social Democrats. Rainis, who had become a symbol of Latvian independence for generations of Latvians, and his wife Aspazija (Elza Pliekšāne) had received a royal welcome from the Latvian people just two years before, upon their return from their fifteen-year-long exile in Switzerland. Cielēns (1963) gives two explanations for the outcome of the vote – first, Čakste had already proved himself an excellent chairman during the National Council, whereas Rainis's qualities as a chairman were unknown (for this reason, not even all Social Democrats voted for him); secondly, Rainis, with his well-known socialist credentials and sympathetic views on minorities issues, was snubbed as an LSDSP candidate by all bourgeois parties. J. Kārklīšs (1990) describes Rainis as being at odds with both the Social Democrats and the bourgeois parties: while the former wanted his undivided allegiance both as a politician and a writer (for example, the Social Democratic party forbade its members to write for the bourgeois press), the latter viewed the poet with suspicion because of his ideological beliefs, and because his enormous popularity among the masses lent additional credibility to their political competitors. Rainis, who was convinced that he would win, suffered a terrible blow to his self-esteem and took it very badly – immediately after the results of the vote were announced, he rose up and went home, where he stayed for a month under the pretext of illness (Cielēns 1963: 127). J. Čakste would become the first president of Latvia in 1922. The bitterly disappointed Rainis would eventually move to the margins of political life, further weakening the base of support for the minorities' movement among ethnically Latvian politicians.

Apart from the drawing-up of the Latvian Constitution, the Assembly faced another daunting task – Latvia was in desperate need of agrarian reform. Plakans (1995) estimates that in 1920, some 40-50 per cent of the Latvian rural population was landless. In addition, the large and middle-sized land plots were concentrated in the hands of non-Latvian owners, mainly Baltic Germans, but in Latgale also Poles. Von Rauch (1995: 87) identifies three main factors behind the drive for reform in Latvia: 1) socio-economic, i.e. the desire to redistribute the land on a more equal basis; 2) political, as the re-distribution of small land-holdings to the peasants supposedly made them immune to Bolshevik propaganda,

which at the time was still a real threat; and 3) political-nationalist, which aimed at undermining the economic and thus political influence of the foreign upper class. This last consideration was aggravated by the centuries-long domination of the Germans as Latvia's ruling elite – Latvians felt that Germans should be stripped of all remaining privileges as soon as possible. Aizsilnieks (1968: 234) also mentions historical justice as one of the motives behind the reform. Plakans (1995: 124) observes that for the Assembly 'to allow these relatively wealthy non-Latvians to continue to own or control some half of all agricultural properties would have been to commit political suicide.'

The first and the fourth parts of the Law were passed in September 1920, the second part in December of the same year, and the third part in May 1922 (Aizsilnieks 1968). The Law nationalised all rural properties exceeding 110 hectares in size, which were transferred to the specially created State Land Fund for further distribution among the landless peasants. The actual implementation of the Law took 17 years. Historians agree that the reform of 1920 solved the landlessness question, but at the same time turned Latvia into a typical country of smallholders, which had both political and economic downsides (Plakans 1995; von Rauch 1995). Aizsilnieks (1968: 236) astutely observes that the results would have been different if the goal of the reform, from the very beginning had been formulated not so as 'to restore the agriculture destroyed by the war', but rather so as 'to create rational agriculture in Latvia'.

Predictably, the elaboration of the Law sparked heated debates between the Latvians and the Baltic Germans. Although everybody understood that redistribution of the land in one form or another was inevitable, the scope of nationalisation and especially the question of compensation to landowners remained highly contested. The Baltic Germans came up with a proposal envisaging that landowners would voluntarily release parts of their estates against suitable compensation on an *ad hoc* basis, but this would not stand with the Latvians. The Social Democrats took the most radical stance on the reform, while the Agrarian Union and the right-wing parties were inclined to satisfy, at least partially, the Germans' request for compensation. In the end, compensation to the landowners was voted down by only three votes. In 1925, the Baltic Germans together with some Russian and Polish members of the Parliament complained about the Agrarian Reform to the League of Nations. Although their appeal was rejected as unfounded, it caused outrage in the Latvian press, and overall did not improve already tainted relations between Latvians and Baltic Germans.

Both the Russian and the Jewish parliamentarians had initially abstained from participation in the debates on the Agrarian Reform, but then, in a surprising turn of events, appended their signatures to a petition to the Agrarian Commission of the Assembly, which was rejected as 'reactionary'. The former Latvian parliamentarian from *Zeire Zion* M. Laserson (1971: 113) expresses indignation that by doing so, the Jews jeopardised their special standing with Latvians as 'the most loyal minority' (more about it in Chapter Five).

Although there is a lot of truth to Laserson's aforementioned claim that Latvians perceived Jews as their most loyal minority (or the least suspect, as unlike the Germans and the Russian minorities, they had nothing to lose with the collapse of the Russian Empire), the situation was hardly that straightforward. During World War One and its immediate aftermath, anti-Jewish sentiments were running high in most of the countries of Eastern Europe, even in those, like the former Habsburg lands, which had no previous history of pogroms. The Jews were turned into scapegoats, charged with numerous sins, like helping the advance of the German troops, spying for the Habsburgs, and aiding the Bolsheviks. Intensified by the deprivations of the war, these accusations turned into public hysteria directed against the vulnerable ethnic minority. Anti-Jewish disturbances continued in Ukraine, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Lithuania, and Poland during the period from 1918 until 1921. (Mendelson 1983; Pearson 1983). In the summer of 1920, this wave of anti-Semitic riots reached Latvia.

Amidst continuing uncertainty about the outcome of the Polish-Soviet war, and the persistent rumours that Latvia was again under the threat of Bolshevik occupation, anti-Semitism suddenly escalated in June 1920 in Riga, Rēzekne and Daugavpils, where numerous attacks aimed at the personal dignity of the Jews, as well as looting and vandalising of Jewish businesses, took place for several days. Luckily, nobody was seriously hurt. The seemingly spontaneous attacks started in Vermanis Park in the centre of Riga, where a crowd of hooligans started harassing the Jewish passers-by, knocking hats off their heads, abusing them verbally, etc. Apparently, two main themes reverberated through the crowd: all Jews were speculators, and they were shunning service in the national army. The mob then started moving towards Bastion Hill at the Old City, shouting

‘Beat up the Jews!’. After another scuffle by the canal, the crowd of hooligans was finally dispersed by the police.

On 3rd June the Interior Minister A. Bergs issued an announcement printed by all major newspapers, in which he claimed that ‘such disorder and riots, which remind us of the darkest sides of Tsarist Russia, are not to be tolerated in Latvia’. He assured the public that the city police were taking all necessary measures, and reported that thanks to their actions, there had been no serious injuries.²⁴

Segodnya reports on the same day in detail, describing the growing crowd of ‘people in military uniforms’ assaulting Jewish (or supposedly Jewish) persons who happened to be in the vicinity of Vermanis Park. Simultaneously, attacks were carried out in nearby cafés and cinemas, where self-appointed ‘patrols’ confiscated money and valuables from the Jewish part of the public. Some gunshots were reported to have been fired, creating panic and chaos. Giving credit to the Minister A. Bergs for his prompt reaction to the events, and for his official statement directed against the hooligans, *Segodnya* stipulates that the measures, however, were not sufficient to reassure the Jews:

Because of the events, the spirit of the Jewish population of Riga is declining. Those who would be able to give detailed evidence about the experienced offences and incurred losses, refuse to give their names for fear of further persecutions. This fact is being exploited by *Jaunākās Ziņas*, which claims that only one Jew showed up at the police station complaining of having received several punches.

In conclusion, the newspaper writes: ‘Every decent citizen of Latvia should once and for all understand that the welfare of the state’s population can only be achieved by a joint effort of all nationalities’.²⁵

The next day, 2nd June, the unrest continued in Riga. L. Fišmanis, a member of the Constitutional Assembly, accompanied by Rabbi Zaks²⁶, paid a visit to President Čakste to express their worries about the situation. Čakste assured the delegation that he viewed the events as ‘an unacceptable phenomenon in the life of our state’, expressed his personal

²⁴ Bergs, A. ‘Iekschleetu ministra paskaidrojums’, *Jaunākās Ziņas*, Nr. 124, 03.06.1920.

²⁵ ‘Vystuplenija protiv evreev v Rige’, *Segodnya*, Nr. 121, 03.06.1920.

²⁶ *Segodnya* only mentions the surname, but it was almost certainly the Chief Rabbi of Riga, Menachem Mendel Zak (Menahems Mendels Zaks).

sympathy towards the victims, and promised that he would do everything possible in his power to ensure that the government would prevent any such occurrences in the future.²⁷

The riots subsided in Riga by Thursday 3rd June, but over the weekend, cases of vandalism and looting against Jewish shops and places of business were reported from Daugavpils and Rezhica (Rēzekne). According to *Segodnya*, the offenders had travelled from Riga.²⁸ The Minister for the Interior A. Bergs issued a warning to those who were ‘trying to disgrace Latvia’ by attacking Jews, and announced that the troops had received orders to use their weapons without hesitation.²⁹ The attacks were eventually curbed by the authorities with the help of the military.

The riots in Latvia were unquestionably of a much milder character than elsewhere in Eastern Europe at the time – no killings took place, and there were no serious injuries either. However, as Stranga (1997: 39) observes, it was only by a lucky chance that the violence did not escalate into a tragedy that would bring shame on Latvia at the moment when the *de jure* recognition was not achieved yet. The Latvian government did not hesitate to condemn the attacks, and the police took immediate action. But the psychological damage was huge, and the nonchalant way in which the Latvian press responded to the attacks added insult to injury.

With the exception of *Segodnya*, other Latvian newspapers relegated the reports of the riots to the second and third pages of their editions. True, both *Latvijas Sargs* and *Latvijas Kareivis* dedicated analytical articles to them, but the main theme of those articles can be described as ‘the Jews had it coming’. *Latvijas Kareivis*, commenting on the events, published an article, which, while describing the riots and the sentiments behind them as a ‘typically Russian phenomenon’ that had undoubtedly taken root in Latvian society during its subjugation to the Russian Empire, nevertheless interprets the pogroms as something that Latvia could not be proud of. The article then took a supposedly analytical turn, aiming to examine the ‘underlying causes’ of the riots, i.e. financial machinations Jews were blamed for, their alleged unwillingness to serve in the army, etc. ‘Anti-Semitism exists everywhere in the world (can it exist without any reason?), and if it has grown even

²⁷ ‘Vystupleniya protiv evreev 2 iyunya’, *Segodnya*, Nr. 122, 04.06.1920.

²⁸ ‘Evrei – chleni Uchreditel’nago Sobraniya u Glavnokomanduyushchago po voprosu o rezhitskih ekstsessah’, *Segodnya*, Nr. 126, 09.06.1920.

²⁹ The very same Arveds Bērgs who would later become the main ideologue of anti-Semitism in Latvian bourgeois circles.

among our peace-loving and just nation, the Jews should really start taking it into account,' – posited *Latvijas Kareivis*.³⁰

Summarising the lessons learned during the riots, E. Bramanov wrote bitterly in *Segodnya* that all Latvian newspapers had either kept silent or tried to reduce the pogroms to 'drunken disorders', if one did not count the diatribes of the 'chauvinist-in-chief' E. Blanks. Bramanov stressed that the *Rigasche Rundschau* was the only newspaper in Latvia to condemn Blanks's polemical excesses against the Jews. Bramanov, like *Latvijas Kareivis*, also referred to Tsarist Russia's customs as a source of inspiration for the hooligans; however, he reminded his readers how even during the 'darkest times' the best representatives of the Russian intelligentsia had not hesitated to raise their voices against injustice and intolerance. What one could not comprehend in Latvia, he wrote, is why Rainis chose to keep his silence:

Let Rainis make a cultural appeal to the masses, let the most prominent and respected leaders of society and political organisations express indignation. We expect unconditional condemnation of the excesses, regardless of their relative size, from Latvian society, whose democratic tendencies we have never doubted. Instead of letters in Mr Blanks's style, we expect an appeal for discipline and common work for the good of Latvia by the Latvian democratic press.³¹

Segodnya's call went unanswered. Next day, *Latvijas Kareivis* published an article 'About our national self-respect' by the Latvian writer E. Virza, a well-known champion of the peasant class as the true carrier of Latvian national identity, who claimed that 'in our country, every outburst of nationalism is viewed with disdain, but every chimera of internationalism is seen as the supreme philosophical truth'. Virza asserted that 'we do not have to hate any other ethnic groups, we do not have to organise any pogroms; but we have to arrange things in such a way that every ethnic group, in return for the advantages it enjoys in our country, will also undertake some responsibilities.'³²

During the early twenties, the newspapers *Latvijas Kareivis* (the official organ of the Latvian Army under the editorship of Aleksandrs Plensners) and *Latvijas Sargs* (which after the resignation of its founding editor A. Kroders in March 1920, was edited by K. Augenbergs-Ezerietis) consistently published articles on the national question and on

³⁰ 'Par pehdejo deenu eelas notikumeem', *Latvijas Kareivis*, Nr. 86, 05.06.1920.

³¹ Bramanov, E. 'Pochemu molchit Rainis?', *Segodnya*, 12.06.1920.

³² Virza, Ed. 'Par muhsu nazionalo paschapziņu', *Latvijas Kareivis*, 13.06. 1920.

minority-related issues; the overall tone of those articles was not minority-friendly, as the newspaper *Segodnya* constantly stressed in its reviews of the Latvian press.

The writer and poet Jānis Akurāters, a hero of the revolution of 1905 and one of the most active proponents of Latvian independence, in the 1920s assumed a strictly nationalistic position in his articles and essays: ‘What does it mean – Latvian orientation? It means the evaluation of internal and external politics and the state of culture from a purely Latvian point of view. It means the assessment of all values from the point of view of our existence and prosperity.’³³

The journalist and editor Jānis Grīns, the older brother of the famous Latvian writer Aleksandrs (Jēkabs) Grīns, regularly expressed xenophobic and intolerant views, complaining of Latvia becoming ‘increasingly international’, of the growing number of foreigners in the streets, ‘especially young Jews’. Grīns claimed that ‘...our land, which we managed to defend against Russian-German colonisation during the Tsarist era, is now becoming a “place of international arrivals”’. He criticised the government for being excessively tolerant, and suggested deportation programmes for certain groups of the population.³⁴

Against this background, one feature in *Latvijas Kareivis* during the turbulent (for majority-minority relations) summer of 1920 stands out remarkably – the series of articles under the title ‘On nationalism’ by A. Kroders, who had recently resigned as the editor of *Latvijas Sargs* in protest against the attempt of the Agrarian Union to turn the newspaper into the main propaganda vehicle of its election campaign (Kroders 1968, Zelče 2010).

Kroders, one of the most prominent journalists in interwar Latvia, had established a solid reputation as a true Latvian patriot by editing the newly founded *Latvijas Sargs*, the press organ of the Ulmanis government published in Liepāja during the Independence Wars, which had played an outstanding role in providing a ‘Latvian view on things’ for a population totally disoriented by the frequent change of regimes, as well as by both German and Bolshevik propaganda. Although he started his political career as a Social Democrat, Kroders eventually abandoned socialist views in favour of national patriotism, which he continued passionately expressing in the pages of his newspaper.

³³ Akurāters, J. ‘Latviskā orientācija’, *Latvijas Kareivis*, Nr. 167, 10.09.1920.

³⁴ Grīns, J. ‘Kāds neatliekams jautājums’, *Latvijas Sargs*, 19.06.1920.

Kārkliņš (1990: 163) writes about Kroder's ideological transformation:

He now believes that the workers should be saved and protected from the Social Democratic ideology, and that the socialist party should be demolished by the press...Temperamental Kroders has fallen victim to the very old 'renegade disease'. He does not long [any more] for social equality or the positive task of cooperation between different classes, but is swinging to the opposite extreme.

Kroders, who belonged to the left wing of the LSD until 1915 (Ģērmanis 1968: 59), would change ideological course twice more. He would support the authoritarian *coup d'état* of 1934, and would use his pen to praise the new ideology excessively. In 1941, he would become, albeit for a short time, the first editor of the magazine *Tēvija*, the official organ of the occupying Nazi forces.

But Kroders's ideological swings notwithstanding, the 'On nationalism' series of 1920 remains the best example of balanced analytical writing on the national question ever published by *Latvijas Kareivis*.

Kroders sets out to explore the ideas of national equality, of the difference between individual and group rights, and of minority rights within a multinational state. Demonstrating a certain breadth of knowledge, he undertakes an earnest attempt to establish what kind of arrangement can be considered fair in the first place, and how it could possibly be implemented taking into account the often more difficult reality. This piece of writing stands in sharp contrast to the other works authored by Kroders on the same topic:

First of all, national equality should be understood not as equality among ethnic groups, but as equality among the citizens belonging to different ethnic groups.

...

National freedom and equality belong to the same basic civic rights as the freedom of conscience, of the press, and of association. All national citizens, who live in the same state, should be given equal rights. A person's rights cannot be restricted just because he belongs to the one, and not the other, nation.

Therefore, all the limitations that were directed against so-called ethnic minority citizens should be eliminated at once. In the name of the nation, no one should be deprived of rights that

belong to everybody. ... Political calculations and political sympathies must not limit the breadth of civic rights.³⁵

Kroders then elaborates on what he calls ‘the complicated issue of the equality of languages’, again displaying an unanticipated (on the pages of *Latvijas Kareivis*) liberality of views. Kroders does not question the underlying principles of justice and equality, but he treats the person’s right to use his or her native language as a given (‘the free usage of one’s native language cannot be denied to anybody’; Meetings and associations, as long as they are acting legitimately, can use whatever language they wish’ There can be no doubt that each person should enjoy primary, secondary, and where the nation’s circumstances permit, also higher education in his native tongue’); his main concern is about the possible practical arrangements: ‘But what language should laws be issued in, in what language should bureaucrats correspond, in which language should the nations’ representatives speak in the parliament, in state offices, and in courts?’

These practical difficulties, claims Kroders, arise only in those states that are inhabited by two or more ethnic groups, like Latvia. That is when the national question becomes complicated, he continues, and it is not sufficient any more to talk about equality among citizens belonging to different ethnic groups; it is necessary to talk about equality among the ethnic groups themselves. Alas, posits Kroders, ‘to arrange for equality among different ethnic groups in a state is much more difficult than to arrange for equality among citizens. Sometimes, it becomes almost impossible’.

It is clear to Kroders that ‘every nation wants to be autonomous, wants to decide for itself according to its own beliefs, independent of other nations.’ Apart from wishing to be able to develop freely, every nation wants to unite its members politically, and to have an impact on the life of the state. The force of such an impact, according to Kroders, depends on the ethnic group’s size in comparison to other ethnic groups living in the same state, on the stage of its cultural development, on its community and organisations, and on the way it is territorially positioned in the state.

In Latvia, continues Kroders, Germans, Russians, and Jews live next to ethnic Latvians; ‘and it is impossible to solve the national question in Latvia by Germans forming

³⁵ This and all further quotes are from: A.Kroders, ‘Par nacionalismu’, *Latvijas Kareivis*, 1920, Nr.118, 119, 121, 126, 127, 130, 131; 15.07. -30.07.1920.

a separate state – it is easy to see why not, and we will not discuss it further’. Therefore, concludes Kroders, we should look for other solutions of the national question. He analyses the examples of Switzerland and Belgium, coming to the conclusion that although those countries have achieved significant equality among their ethnic groups, this is however far from perfect (he cites the Romansh ethnic group as being disadvantaged in Switzerland, and the Flemish language as being inferior in status to the French in Belgium).

Kroders believes that ‘for the purpose of fairness, all nations in all states should be in this or another way autonomous’. Autonomy, explains Kroders, means the possibility of self-rule for every ethnic group, and the right of this group to a certain independence from the state. The character of this autonomy can be different, he says, but the main goal is clear:

It is possible to grant ethnic groups rights to cultural autonomy. But the law on cultural autonomy should be issued by the state parliament. There are also other ways of solving the national question; the main goal of all of them is to ensure that each nation has a right to free development, existence and protection.

He concludes: ‘the fewer conflicts, disagreements and fights there are among the different ethnic groups within the state, the stronger and mightier it will be externally’.

Symptomatically, the newspaper *Segodnya*, which always reacted so promptly to any negative opinions about minorities expressed on the pages of *Latvijas Kareivis*, in this particular case chose not to respond – perhaps suspecting a clever ruse, but most likely simply considering a response unnecessary as long as the writer ‘stayed in line’. Kroders’s theses on the national question, which could have been the start of a productive discussion, were left hanging in the air – both the minorities and the nationalists, for some inexplicable reason, chose to ignore them. Possibly discouraged by this lack of attention, Kroders did not attempt anything similar until 1940³⁶, when literally a month before the Soviet annexation he published a book in which he called the alienation of Latvian ethnic minorities after 1934 a big mistake, and proposed to start working immediately on the creation of a unified civic nation.

³⁶ Kroders did publish these articles as book in 1924, see Kroders, A. 1924. *Par minoritatu autonomiju*. Rīga: Latvju Kultūra.

The year 1921 was marked by two important milestones: Latvia finally achieved the long-sought international legal recognition of its status on 26th January, and joined the League of Nations on 22nd September. The coverage of the two historical events in the press provides a snapshot of majority-minority relations and differences of opinion in 1921.

The *de jure* recognition was celebrated by a festive procession of more than eighty professional and public organisations, accompanied by three wind orchestras, through the centre of Riga. It stopped by the building of the Constitutional Assembly, where the President of the Assembly J. Čakste was given a boisterous ovation. Čakste gave a short speech in return, stressing that a new period had started in the life of the Latvian state, and that the process of state-building requires all citizens to stand ‘shoulder to shoulder’. The orchestra playing the national anthem, the procession moved to the Castle to greet Prime Minister K. Ulmanis, who said in his speech: All are equal in Latvia; it will know no difference either among languages, or confessions, or among parties. The Old Riga has turned into a new Riga!³⁷

Most of the Latvian press articles dedicated to the *de jure* recognition concentrated on the foreign policy aspects of the historical achievement. By contrast, an article that appeared in *Jaunākās Ziņas* in February 1921, focused on ‘the impact of our state’s final recognition *de jure* on interethnic relations’, while in reality also using the festive opportunity to settle some old accounts.

According to the author, who writes under the pseudonym *Simplex*, the creation of an independent democratic Latvian state three years ago, which made all of its citizens equal by taking away the privileges enjoyed by the Russians and the Germans under the Tsarist yoke, could not, and was not appreciated by these two minorities. Still, in the absence of other options, and trying not to lose their influence in the country, they condescended to work for the welfare of the new state. However, only a small part of Latvian Germans, Russians and Jews believe in the viability of the Latvian state; the majority of them have been all this time secretly hoping that it will not be internationally recognised, maintains the author. After sustaining a hard blow when Latvia was

³⁷ ‘Torzhestvuyushaya Riga’, *Segodnya*, 1921.

nevertheless internationally recognised, he writes, the minorities are now forced to re-examine their values. ‘It is not impossible that a big part of them will even start feeling proud of Latvia’s achievement and of their own belonging to a free democratic state’, allows the author, immediately adding that the only part of the population that will never be reconciled with the idea of an independent Latvia are the Baltic Germans. The author concludes that ethnic Latvians, on various occasions, have demonstrated tolerance towards the ethnic minorities, and now, when the Latvian state has been reinforced by official recognition, this tendency can only grow: ‘And this is how the recognition *de jure* will have the most positive impact on relations among different people in our land’.³⁸

An article on Latvia’s accession to the League of Nations published by *Segodnya* provided some answers to supporters of the outlook expressed by *Simplex*:

Now that Latvia has achieved the ultimate recognition of its sovereign rights in the family of equal free civilised peoples, all real and imagined dangers, all genuine and fictional enemies should stop occupying the attention of the Latvian state. It should instead direct all available energy towards its internal construction. After discarding the unhealthy growth of chauvinistic intolerance, and the suspicious division of Latvian citizens into the ‘right’ and the ‘wrong’ [*belen’kiye* and *chernen’kiye*], Latvian statesmen must involve all available positive forces, who honestly want to contribute, in the daunting task of economic revival.³⁹

During the spring of 1921, the Constitutional Assembly witnessed intense debates on the project for national autonomy – or, to be precise, on the *projects* for national autonomy. The initial project, submitted by the *Zeire Zion* deputy J. Hellmanis (*Geļman*), which envisaged a wide scope of autonomy for minorities, including social, economic and cultural rights supported by a special taxation system, was suddenly upstaged by another project, submitted by the *Bund* deputy I. Berss, which envisioned only rights for cultural autonomy. From there on, both projects were reviewed simultaneously by the Assembly’s commissions. Opinions were divided within the factions – while the Social Democrat A. Kuršinskis defended the Hellmanis project on the grounds that ‘cultural autonomy’ was too narrow a definition, one of his party’s leaders, Pauls Kalniņš, insisted on Berss’s version, but in ‘a wider understanding’. P. Schiemann also supported cultural autonomy, but on

³⁸ Simplex ‘De jure un nazionalais jautajums Latvijā’, *Jaunākās Ziņas*, 05.02.1921.

³⁹ ‘Latviya v Lige Nacii’, *Segodnya*, 24.09.1921.

condition that minorities ‘keep the right to be active in the social sphere’ as well; at the same time he sided with Hellmanis on the issues of taxes and budgeting. The overall theoretical confusion did not help to clarify the issue of national autonomy, which was a novelty for both politicians and the general public. Moreover, the disagreement between the two Jewish deputies was opportunistically used by their opponents, most notably by the Latgalian deputy Trasuns⁴⁰, who viewed national autonomy as an attempt to create ‘a state within a state’.⁴¹

The idea of non-territorial cultural autonomy (NCA) for minorities, which had originally been conceived by the Austrian Marxists E. Renner and O. Bauer at the beginning of the 20th century to address population diversity issues within the territories of the Habsburg Empire, was in the 1920s enthusiastically embraced by other European minorities. The Baltic Germans (like the Estonian Edwald Ammende, author of the Law on Cultural Autonomy of 1925 and the founder of the European Nationalities Congress, and the Latvian minority thinker Paul Schiemann) were in the vanguard of the new movement. National-cultural autonomy was also popular with the *Bund*, the Jewish Social Democratic movement. At the initial stage of the discussion of cultural autonomy for Latvian minorities, conservative Latvian nationalists interpreted it as another demonstration of the alleged disloyalty of minorities to the state, but this was not the official stance of the Latvian government, which was still obviously eager to comply with international requirements in terms of minority protection. This can best be illustrated by an interview given by Prime Minister Z. Meierovics in May 1921 to the newspaper *Segodnya*. Asked by the interviewer about his personal attitude towards cultural autonomy for minorities, Meierovics replies that ‘the minority question will be solved in Latvia to the extent foreseen by the Treaty of Versailles’ and that the aim of the government’s policy on autonomy is to resolve it ‘in the same plane’ as in Poland, Czechoslovakia and Western Europe.

Altogether, insufficient preparation, persistent theoretical ambiguities and an overall lack of clarity (for example, none of the advocates of cultural autonomy attempted to provide a definition of ‘minority’ itself, to the utter dismay of the Head of the

⁴⁰ The Latgalian faction in the Saeima, and especially Fr. Trasuns, assumed a very ambiguous position vs. minorities, which Laserson described as playing the role of a ‘half-minority’ when they saw fit, and being opposed to any cooperation with the ‘foreigners’ on other occasions (Laserson, M. ‘Peregovory s men’shinstvami’, *Segodnya*, 26.11.1922).

⁴¹ ‘Ob avtonomii men’shinstv’, *Segodnya*, 11.03.1921; ‘Nacional’naya avtonomija men’shinstv’, *Segodnya*, 30.04.1921; ‘Nacional’naya avtonomija men’shinstv’, *Segodnya*, 04.05.1921.

Constitutional Commission M. Skujenieks), as well as repeated disagreements among minority representatives themselves, resulted in the Assembly's decision to enshrine only the basic principles of national autonomy in the Constitution, and to elaborate those principles further in a separate law (more about the fate of this law in Chapter Five).

In the meantime, the second government of Latvia under Prime Minister Zigfrīds Meierovics (June 1921 – January 1923), like all the subsequent governments prior to 1940, did not include any minority representatives. Stranga (2005:134) believes that this exclusion, and the fact that Meierovics adopted an informal principle of 'Latvia for Latvians', can be seen as a kind of 'dividing line' in the life of the new democracy, despite the fact that minorities were not under direct attack, and nor were their rights restricted.⁴²

In September 1921, Latvia joined the League of Nations. This did not just make Latvia a fully-fledged member of the international community, but also provided an illusory, in retrospect, sense of collective security. Accession also signified that Latvia had passed the test of compatibility with Western democratic standards, including minority protection.

The Latvian Constitution, or *Satversme*, which was modelled on the Swiss, French and German Weimar constitutions, was originally designed in two parts. The first part, regulating state institutions, was adopted on 15th February 1922. The second part was supposed to outline citizens' rights and obligations, including fundamental rights. Articles 115 and 116 would enshrine minorities' language rights and the right to cultural autonomy at the constitutional level. As formulated by the Constitutional Commission's *rapporteur* A. Kurčinskis, 'this second part will provide the democratic content for the first part; without it, the first part will lose much of its importance. It is clear that if we do not have citizens who possess civic rights ... then our citizens will not be able to utilise, develop and sustain the state order defined in the first part of the *Satversme*.'⁴³ The second part of the *Satversme* was voted down on 5th April 1922. Šilde (1976:706) believes that the failure to adopt the second part of the Constitution should be viewed as an accident rather than as an

⁴² Opinions differ: a survey of the Baltic countries undertaken by the Royal Institute of International Affairs (1938: 34) dates this divide as of 1929, and characterises the situation of minorities under all the Agrarian Union governments prior to that date as 'very favourable'.

⁴³ *Latvijas Satversmes Sapulces stenogrammu izvilums* (1920-1922). Rīga, 2006, p. 494.

expression of conscious opposition to fundamental rights, as in reality there were only six opposing votes versus 62 ‘for’, and 62 abstentions (according to the Constitutional Assembly’s internal regulations, opposing and abstaining votes were counted together). Besides, the debates themselves did not concentrate upon minority rights, but mainly on Article 104, introducing strikes as legitimate means in the resolution of economic disputes. However, Stranga (2005: 134) believes that the general mood at the Constitutional Assembly was already starting to change, leaving the ‘idealistically democratic dream’ behind, not least because Latvia had already been recognised *de jure* by the international community, and accepted into the League of Nations.

F. Cielēns, one of the *Satversme*’s authors and the Social Democrat most dedicated to fundamental rights, engaged in a passionate argument with A. Bergs (The Non-Partisan Group). Bergs generally doubted the need to include fundamental rights in the Constitution, referring to the example of England, which, despite not having a Constitution at all, remained a democratic country. Cielēns replies: ‘If we lived in a land like England, with an older cultural tradition of political life and political freedom, then I would be able to declare, with an open heart, that the second part of our Constitution is completely unnecessary, as historical traditions, civic conscience and participation are the guardians and guarantors of political freedom. But we are still so very, very far from the elementary civic democracy already in place in big and small older European countries.’⁴⁴ Cielēns’s opinion notwithstanding, the Social Democrats voted for the whole *Satversme* without its second part. On 1st May 1922 the Latvian Constitution was adopted. Minority rights remained unprotected by the interwar *Satversme*; the fundamental rights section was added to it only in 1998 after Latvia had regained its independence.

Another important piece of legislation passed by the Constitutional Assembly was the *Saeima* Election Law (June 1922), whose main shortcoming was the lack of a percentage barrier for political parties to gain representation in the *Saeima*. This encouraged further fragmentation of political life, made passing legislation extremely difficult, and resulted in kaleidoscopic changes of governments – all these factors significantly contributed to the subsequent demise of Latvian democracy. Political fragmentation would be very pronounced within the minority faction of the *Saeima*, seriously hindering cooperation among the ethnic minorities.

⁴⁴ *Latvijas Satversmes Sapulces stenogrammu izvilks (1920-1922)*. Rīga, (2006), p. 507.

3.3. The Parliament

3.3.1. *The First Saeima, 1922-1925*

The functioning of the Latvian Parliament was from the very start hindered by numerous obstacles, such as the absence of a clear majority, the extreme fragmentation of political parties (28 parties were represented in the Third *Saeima* alone), and minority factions' preoccupation with their own interests. Neither could it count on popular support and public benevolence, as more than half of Latvia's population lived in the rural areas, where social and economic problems were very pronounced but the ideas of liberal democracy had hardly taken hold.

Ethnic minorities were represented in all Latvian interwar *Saeimas*. Invariably, the biggest and the best organised faction was that of the Baltic Germans, not least thanks to the indefatigable Dr. Paul Schiemann, who attended almost all sessions of the National Council, the Constitutional Assembly, and the Parliament; was active in the committees' work; and spoke on all important pieces of legislation without limiting himself to minorities' direct interests. According to Hiden (2004: 66), during the Constitutional Assembly years alone, 'apart from political initiatives that stemmed directly from him he had a major personal input into the 130 laws and seventy-three parliamentary amendments and submissions drafted by the Committee of German Balt Parties.' The high overall level of discipline and organisation among the Baltic Germans was well-known - Šilde (1976) describes a special filing system they used for voters, which allowed them to move voters from one region to another before elections in order to gain the maximum amount of mandates – and envied by other ethnic minorities. On the eve of the Constitutional Assembly election, the Russian newspaper *Segodnya* urged all citizens, and ethnic minorities in particular, to active participation, using the Baltic German community as a model of political activity: 'Germans, your social discipline is too well known, there is no need to worry about you. Without any doubt, you will unanimously vote for your own list No. 1!'⁴⁵

The next day, *Segodnya* reported from the polling stations: 'Germans close ranks at the elections. At the polling stations in the German-populated areas, more than half the

⁴⁵ *Segodnya*, No. 87, 17.04.1920.

electors have already voted by the end of the first day. Even ill and injured people are being carried to the polling stations.’⁴⁶

Jewish political life during the Parliamentary period was very active, but its influence in both legislative and administrative bodies was often undermined by the fact that the numerous Jewish parties could not always agree among themselves. Dribins (2002) observes that the Zionist parties, which protected Jewish cultural interests and were loyal to the Latvian State, were the most influential. He also mentions the fact that in the elections to the Fourth *Saeima*, many Jews already started voting for the ethnic Latvian parties, which could indicate that common state interests for them were already more important than ethnic concerns. Overall, writes Dribins, the Jews integrated well into the new independent state, and contributed to its development. (A more detailed account of Jewish and Baltic German political representation during the interwar period is available in Chapter Five).

Apine (2007) notes that although the Russians during the interwar years were Latvia’s biggest ethnic minority, their political activity remained low in comparison to that of the Baltic Germans and the Jews. She explains this by the Russians’ overall lower educational level, inferior professional status (the majority of Russians in Latvia were employed as low-skilled industrial and agricultural labourers), and, among Russian intellectuals, a certain passive reliance on higher authorities inherited from the Russian Empire. Feigmane (2002), similarly, explains the political weakness of the Latvian Russian population by their lower social status and economic underdevelopment, as well as, notably, by the absence of obvious leaders among them. Another significant factor contributing to Latvian Russians’ political inactivity identified by Feigmane (2002) is the fact that at the beginning of Latvian statehood, they could not count on any support from their ethnic kin-state.

There was, however, a recognised need among the Latvian Russian intelligentsia for greater political activity and better political organisation. The biggest Russian newspaper *Segodnya* regularly published articles by K. Arabažin, K. Mansirev, and E. Brams (Bramanov) calling on Russians to shake off their political passivity and join Latvians in the process of building the new state. ‘As only Latvian citizens can participate in the elections for the Constitutional Assembly, and citizenship not supported by a

⁴⁶ ‘Выборы’, *Segodnya*, No. 88, 18.04.1920.

Latvian passport may be questioned, it is the duty of every citizen who is interested in rebuilding our country, to make his best effort to clarify his citizenship status and obtain a Latvian passport,' wrote *Segodnya* on 2nd April 1920.

The Russian parties represented in the interwar *Saeimas* were constantly re-grouping and changing their respective names (as a rule, way too long and close to impossible to pronounce – try The Faction of Russian Orthodox, Old Believers and United Russian Organisations, for example, or the Faction of the Union of Russian Peasants and Russian Civil Servants). They could, however, be broadly divided into four major groups: the Old Believers (led by Meletijs Kaļļistratovs), the Russian Orthodox (headed by Jānis Pommers), the Russian National Democrats (under the leadership of Aleksandrs Bočagovs), and the Russian Parish and Municipal Workers (represented in the *Saeima* by Leontijs Špoļanskis.⁴⁷ All Russian parties in the *Saeima* supported the idea of cultural autonomy for minorities; however, they were also subject to internal disagreements between the orthodox nationalists and the liberals – the former insisting on a strictly ethnic basis of party membership, while the latter wanted to be more open to other cultures. This inability to reach a consensus affected the Russians' cooperation with national institutions, such as when, for example, they could not agree on a candidate for the Head of the Russian department within the Ministry of Education, or on which out of the two Russian theatres would receive the allocated state funding. And although the loyalty of Russians, including the new immigrants, towards the Latvian State was constantly growing, all the Russians' activities in the *Saeima* were, in one way or another, limited to campaigning for Russian language rights in education, municipal life, and the courts (Apine 2007; Feigmane 2002).

The general tendency of Latvian minorities to put their own interests ahead of those of the state can be observed both in the Parliament and City Council debates, and in the press of the interwar period. M. Laserson notes that 'the Minorities Bloc voted together only on issues involving protection of the political and cultural rights of the minorities', when it was also necessary 'to strengthen democratic principles in General Laws of the country which bore no direct relation to Minority Affairs'. (Laserson 1971: 123, 138)

Laserson also laments the political immaturity of the Jewish deputies, which was displayed in the 'absence of the courage and capacity to stress a specific Jewish approach

⁴⁷ The spelling of the surname Špoļanskis (also Spoljanskis, or Špoljanskis) differs widely in *Saeima* transcripts.

in all problems affecting the political fate of the country' (1971: 105). He notes that they also remained silent during the earlier discussions of a possible alliance with Bolshevik Russia; that they were absent during the historic National Council session on 9th October 1919, allowing a Latvian deputy to make a joke that 'minorities' representatives must have gone to Mitau (where Bermondts's headquarters were at the time; now - Jelgava); that no Jewish voices were heard on the establishment of the Latvian Economic Council and on the rehabilitation of industry; and that the Jews did not participate in the discussion of 'the second basic problem of the Assembly, namely, the new Constitution' (Laserson 1971: 113). Most astonishing of all, he posits, is the fact that the Jewish deputies could not appreciate the significance of, and refrained from participating in, the debates on the Minorities Schools Law, 'which afterwards became famous in the History and Theory of National Minority Rights in Europe as a model piece of legislation' (1971: 107).

Laserson contrasts the overall passivity of the Jewish faction towards 'general state matters' with the proactive stance of the Baltic Germans, especially Schiemann, who became a recognised leader of the Minority Bloc. At the same time, he notes: 'A measure of psychological animosity towards the minorities was inevitable in view of the fact that the Germans were among them, and more precisely at their head.' (1971: 124)

Tensions between the majority and minorities were exposed again in the *Saeima* on 25th January 1923, when the government of J. Pauļuks, which brought together the left Social Democrats and the right Agrarian parties (namely, the Agrarian Union and the Latgalian Christian Agrarian Union), received a vote of confidence. Although Pauļuks's government declaration only mentioned minorities in passing, i.e. promising that the government 'will also take into account minorities' fair requirements and will be accommodating towards those minorities' national-cultural needs', the new composition of the government allowed hope for a change of course, especially after the government of Z. Meierovics, whose attitude towards cooperation with minorities was very reserved at best.⁴⁸ M. Laserson notes during his speech that although the coalition between the 'landowners from the countryside' on the one side, and the left Social Democrats on the other, is not very strong politically or economically [indeed the Pauļuks government's term in office was only six months], it is a coalition that is 'based upon the principle of

⁴⁸Latvijas Republikas Saeimas Stenogramas. I. sesijas 11. sēde, 1923. gada 25. janvārī, p. 142. This and all further quotes per *Latvijas Republikas Saeimas Stenogramas. 1922-1934*. Latvijas Republikas Saeimas izdevums. Krājuma Saeimas stenografiskā birojā, Rīgā, Jēkaba ielā No. 11.

overarching national goals'. 'Until now, – says Laserson – national goals have unfortunately been equated with hate towards minorities.' He is, however, dissatisfied with the 'bleak and vague admonition' minorities have received in the government's declaration, and points out that this was contrary to the promises of the National Council's platform, in particular with the promise to enshrine minority rights in the Constitution, which has been never fulfilled. Laserson ends his speech with assurances that minorities are willing to work together with the majority, as long as they are not pushed away.⁴⁹ P. Schiemann speaks bitterly of minorities not being invited to participate in the coalition talks; moreover, the government declaration 'built of general phrases' was sent to the minorities factions 'just a few hours in advance', denying them any chance to get familiar with it; therefore, 'nothing else is left to us but to wait and see which course the government will take before giving it our vote of confidence'.⁵⁰ The German, Jewish, Russian and Polish factions abstained from the vote.

On 26th June 1923, after the demise of the short-lived Pauļuks government, Z. Meierovics formed his second government, whose declaration said, among other things: 'In relation to minorities, the government... will take into account their fair requirements and will be accommodating towards minorities' national-cultural needs. Recognising the general rights assigned to minorities, this government sees its next task in this field as putting in order the legal status of Latvian minorities within the League of Nations.'⁵¹

The minorities were clearly not impressed by the declaration, as shown by the subsequent parliamentary debates.

The speech of the Baltic German Party's representative W. Fircks (V. Firkss) mainly centres on the issue of the transfer of the Lutheran St. Jacob's Church in Riga into the diocese of the new Catholic Bishop of Riga, initiated by the previous government, against which the Baltic Germans were vigorously campaigning – to the dismay of the Latvians. Later on, in September 1923, the Baltic Germans even initiated the first referendum in the history of the Latvian state, which was ultimately declared invalid because of the overall insufficient number of votes – according to Hiden (2004: 92), 'an honourable failure'. Meierovics in his declaration undertook to go ahead with the

⁴⁹ Latvijas Republikas Saeimas Stenogramas. I. sesijas 11. sēde, 1923. gada 25. janvārī, pp. 147-148.

⁵⁰ Latvijas Republikas Saeimas Stenogramas. I. sesijas 11. sēde, 1923. gada 25. janvārī, p. 155.

⁵¹ Latvijas Republikas Saeimas Stenogramas. II sesijas 21. sēde, 1923. gada 26. jūnijā, p. 565.

confiscation. Fircks, therefore, declares that although otherwise the German faction would be ready to provide the new coalition with its ‘moral support’, it regrettably cannot vote for the government that promises to uphold the St. Jacob’s Church’s confiscation, and will abstain.⁵²

The next speaker, M. Nurock (*Mizrahi*) claims that the new coalition has the same ‘Down with minorities’ motto as the previous one: ‘These gentlemen, who hold a patent on love towards the Fatherland, would rather build a wobbly government without minorities, than a stable one with them.’ He reminds those present that the ethnic minorities helped to rebuild the country during times of hardship. Nurock claims that now, when the worst is already in the past, minorities are being pushed aside; ‘the Moor has done his work, the Moor can leave’. Nurock announces that the Latvian Jewish residents who he has the honour of representing in the *Saeima* do not consider the new coalition capable of securing the real welfare of the state. Therefore, he concludes, the Jewish faction, ‘with a heavy heart, but with a clear conscience’, will vote against the cabinet.⁵³

A. Bočagovs (Russian National Party) speaks along the same lines as Fircks and Nurock, accusing the new coalition of sticking to the previous government’s policy towards the minorities and claiming that the part of the declaration dealing with minorities is ‘widely open to interpretation’, and so it is futile to expect any changes. He concludes that the Russian bloc will not vote for the government.⁵⁴

M. Laserson (*Zeire Zion*) lists multiple grievances accumulated by the Jews under the rule of the previous government, especially against the unpopular Education Minister P. Gailītis. He then cautions the coalition: ‘Do not think, gentlemen, that you will be able to do without ethnic minorities; without them you will never have a stable majority. Unless you carry out a *coup d’état*, or try to undermine the fundamental democratic election rights, in every new Latvian *Saeima* you will encounter the same ethnic minority problem, and the necessity of their support’.⁵⁵

M. Kallistratovs (Old Believers’ Party) reinforces the message of the previous minority speakers, claiming that yet again a coalition is being built in strict isolation from

⁵² Latvijas Republikas Saeimas Stenogramas. II sesijas 21. sēde, 1923. gada 26. junijā, pp. 571-572.

⁵³ Latvijas Republikas Saeimas Stenogramas. II sesijas 21. sēde, 1923. gada 26. junijā, pp. 573-574.

⁵⁴ Latvijas Republikas Saeimas Stenogramas. II sesijas 21. sēde, 1923. gada 26. junijā, p. 574.

⁵⁵ Latvijas Republikas Saeimas Stenogramas. II sesijas 21. sēde, 1923. gada 26. junijā, p. 576.

minorities. Minorities, he says, are almost regarded as an ‘anti-state element’ [*pretvalstisks elements*]; this attitude is reflected in the media, and it pervades all aspects of state and municipal life. Kallistratovs concludes that he will not vote for the government.

At the end of the session, the second Meierovics government received 51 votes for, 37 against, and three abstentions.⁵⁶

Ten days later, the *Saeima* was discussing the 1923/1924 state budget. Although the period from 1923 to 1929 has traditionally been viewed as a time of growing economic prosperity in Latvia, there were already many factors in place that would escalate the onset of economic depression just a few years later, such as uneven distribution of the tax burden, a steadily growing number of state monopolies, instability in the area of economic legislation (every new coalition tended to revise, and often to revoke concessions given to industries and trade – as a consequence, Latvia had difficulties in attracting foreign capital), and, last but not least, the continuing dominance of minorities in the private sector. These issues would continuously reverberate through the *Saeima* sessions, often getting unnecessarily politicised. Aizsilnieks (1968: 274) observes that the primary economic goal of increasing the nation’s prosperity was often neglected in favour of nationalistic and party politics.

During this particular session on 5th July 1923, after the budget has been presented to the *Saeima*, the first speakers’ comments are directly related to the subject. Whereas R. Bīlmanis (Social Democrats) criticises the budget for its ‘class-based taxation policy’ (i.e. it relies excessively on indirect taxation, thus putting the main tax burden on consumers and affecting less affluent parts of the population), J. Hans (Baltic German Party) draws attention to insufficient investment in the industrial sector, especially in the port industry. Hans stresses that although three quarters of the Latvian population at the time are engaged in the agricultural sector, the neglect of industrial development is a short-sighted policy. R. Kalnings (Non-Partisan National Centre) comments on various parts of the budget relating to different ministries and on the desirability of foreign loans.

But when the podium is taken by J. Veržbickis (Polish Union), his speech, with its starting point being the insufficient sum allocated by the budget to the Polish School Department, eventually drifts further and further away from the budget, turning into a long

⁵⁶ Latvijas Republikas Saeimas Stenogramas. II sesijas 21. sēde, 1923. gada 26. jūnijā, p. 602.

account of grievances that Poles hold against ethnic Latvians, and against other ethnic minorities. The existing statistical data on the number of Poles in Latvia is incorrect, claims Veržbickis, as during the census of 1920 many Poles declared themselves as Belarussians. According to Veržbickis, not just Poles, but also many Russians and especially former bureaucrats of the Tsarist Empire, who do not master the Latvian language, have declared themselves as Belarussians for one reason only – because in Belarussian schools all teaching takes place in the ‘universally understood’ Russian language [ironically, Veržbickis himself speaks Russian in the *Saeima*]. Belarussian schools, claims Veržbickis, are busily recruiting new students belonging to other ethnic groups in order to inflate their statistics and increase their respective part of the state educational budget – all this with the approval of the government. Veržbickis expresses indignation that the Belarussian school budget in 1923/24 exceeds the Polish one by more than 22,000 Lats. True, he says, ‘they have more schools than we do, but we all know very well what kind of children attend these schools!’ Overall, concludes Veržbickis, Poles in Latvia often encounter unfair and unfriendly attitude, although they have never given a reason to doubt their loyalty towards the state.⁵⁷

Fr. Trasuns (Latgalian Union) predictably dedicates the larger part of his speech to the difficult economic situation in Latgale, which is still lagging behind other Latvian regions. He then shifts the focus of his attention to the previous speaker, J. Veržbickis, responding to his claim that Poles are often treated with mistrust. What kind of trust the Poles can demand, wonders Trasuns, if they contribute to de-nationalisation [*pārtatutošana*] of Latgalian children [implies that not all children in Polish schools are ethnically Polish], and if a recent inspection of the Polish schools discovered portraits of Marshal Pilsudski in the classrooms where portraits of President Čakste are supposed to be? Trasuns criticises all ethnic minorities together for being in opposition to the budget on the grounds that their rights are not being respected – these claims are unfounded, he claims, as the budget generously covers their educational needs.⁵⁸

The most memorable speech at this budget debates is delivered by the orthodox Jewish representative M. Dubins (*Agudat Israel*). He speaks at length not so much reviewing the budget itself, as submitting one ministry after another (in the same order as they are mentioned in the budget) to criticisms ‘from the Jewish perspective’: – for

⁵⁷ Latvijas Republikas Saeimas Stenogramas. II sesijas 27. sēde, 1923. gada 5. jūlijā, pp. 746-748.

⁵⁸ Latvijas Republikas Saeimas Stenogramas. II sesijas 27. sēde, 1923. gada 5. jūlijā, pp. 755-756.

example, speaking of the Foreign Ministry, his focus is on excessive bureaucracy at Latvian consulates abroad which makes the return of Jewish refugees more difficult; the Ministry of the Interior is responsible for the Citizenship Law, which is unfair towards the Jews; the Justice Ministry makes it difficult, through its regulations, for the Jews to buy property; Jews encounter unequal treatment at the Agricultural Ministry; and the Transportation Ministry is not active enough in fighting anti-Semitic incidents on the trains.

And as legitimate as Dubins's complaints could have been, it was hardly an appropriate time and place to raise them in such detail – this was reflected by the next speaker, G. Reinhardts (Christian National Union):

Highly esteemed assembly, I hereby ask your permission to return to Latvia's state budget after discussing all these 'Jewish budgets' – as it seemed from the speech of the previous orator that we were gathered here to discuss Jewish matters in Latvia. And Mr. Dubins's initial promise to speak from a non-partisan perspective turned out to be an empty promise – he did not speak about budget in a non-partisan way, he only spoke of Jewish matters. And I therefore have to ask your permission to return to Latvia's state budget. I think Mr. Dubins will not hold it against me.⁵⁹

For the next couple of days, Dubins's 'Jewish budget' became the joke of the town – there was hardly a local newspaper that did not mention it. Regrettably, the parliamentary discussion of the 1923/1924 budget demonstrated the minorities' inability to rise above their respective ethnic groups' interests at the moment when their input into overarching state matters was required; it was this kind of partisan action which made the majority believe that the minorities were 'all take and no give'.

On 7th July 1923, after protracted negotiations, Latvia's delegate M. Valters finally signed the Declaration on Minority Rights; it was ratified by the Latvian government on 28th July 1923. Although Latvian statesmen in 1918 handed out early promises of equality to minorities unprompted – the National Council Platform, with its direct references to minorities and their political rights, was formulated seven months earlier than Article 93 of the Treaty of Versailles (signed on 28th June 1919), which defined minorities, for the first time in the history of international legislation, as inhabitants of a state 'who differ from the majority of the population in race, language, or religion' - the subsequent negotiations

⁵⁹ Latvijas Republikas Saeimas Stenogramas. II sesijas 27. sēde, 1923. gada 5. jūlijā, pp. 767.

between the Latvian Government and the League of Nations caused frustration on both sides.

The Polish Minority Treaty, which was signed on the same day as the Treaty of Versailles, and also became known as the ‘Little Versailles’, served as a basic template for all other minority treaties with the new and enlarged states created as a result of the Treaty of Versailles. Whereas twelve of these states, including Austria, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Poland and others, were fully bound by the minority treaties, four other states, namely Albania, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania only acquiesced to signing declarations to the Council of the League of Nations (Dickinson 1928: 10).

The Latvian government argued that the protection of minorities was already enshrined in the country’s liberal constitution, and that the imposition of minority treaties on selected European states was a violation of the principle of equality. Furthermore, Latvia argued that the internalisation of minority rights through the treaties opened the door to foreign intervention and endangered state sovereignty. (Robinson *et al.*, 1943: 166) The resulting Latvian declaration avoided the word ‘guarantee’ in relation to minorities, but stipulated the right of the League of Nations to re-open negotiations with Latvia if in the future the situation of minorities in the country was found wanting in comparison to the standards set in the minority treaties. (Macartney 1929: 20) *Jaunākās Ziņas*, commenting on the fact of the signing, observed that although at the session of the League of Nations Council just a few days earlier the situation on minority question was not favourable for Latvia, the final declaration’s text did not ‘encroach on the state’s self-respect and did not violate its internal order’.⁶⁰ Laserson in *Segodnya* commented bitterly that the Declaration ‘changed nothing’.⁶¹

When the second Meierovics government resigned on 15th January 1924 after just over six months in the office (the life of its predecessor, the government of K. Pauļuks, was even shorter at five months), the cabinet was formed by the independent V. Zamuels with the support of the Social Democrats.⁶² The Social Democrats did not get any ministerial posts themselves – the coalition consisted of independents, the Democratic Centre, and the Non-Party National Centre. Because of the reported LSDSP involvement,

⁶⁰ ‘Deklaracija parakstīta’, *Jaunākās Ziņas*, Nr. 146, 09.07.1923.

⁶¹ Laserson, M. ‘Men’shinstvennaya problema’, *Segodnya*, 28.07.1923.

⁶² The story behind this government and the role of the LSDSP in its creation is described in detail by Cielēns (1963).

and the most notable absence of the Agrarian Union representatives, and perhaps also because of its declared goal of eliminating corruption at the state level, the government was often referred to as the 'left government'. When on 25th January 1924 Zamuels read a very short declaration by the government composed that very morning, he stressed: 'In internal politics, this government will stand on firm national and democratic foundations; we will counter any attacks on the Constitution of the Latvian Republic, no matter which side they come from, eliminating conflicts between different groups of citizens and in interethnic relations.'⁶³

By contrast, when on 16th December 1924 a new government led by H. Celmiņš (formed by the Agrarian Union with the support of the conservative Baltic German Party) presented its declaration, it contained no reference to ethnic minorities at all.

A. Rudevics (Social Democrats), promptly comments on the fact that neither minorities nor nationalism were mentioned in the document: '...its is a peculiar phenomenon that precisely at the moment when nationalism is so widely discussed everywhere, our biggest nationalists 'forget' to include this question in their declaration'. Rudevics has a ready explanation for this unlikely memory lapse: having used the support of the 'pro-Niedra' German minority, the coalition has been forced to keep quiet about its nationalistic goals.⁶⁴ P. Schiemann (German Democrats), M. Laserson (*Zeire Zion*) and M. Nurock (*Mizrahi*) all express indignation at the omission of the minority question in the government declaration, and at the minorities' habitual exclusion from the coalition talks.

Ironically, it would be Schiemann to whom Celmiņš would turn for help just a few weeks later – unnerved by the failed communist coup in Tallinn in December 1924, Celmiņš's government wanted to promptly pass amendments to the existing legislation on national defence; Schiemann promised his support in return for the government's backing on cultural autonomy for minorities (Hiden 2004: 102).

In March 1925, Minister of Justice P. Juraševskis started a new tradition in the government's dialogue with ethnic minorities, which is still occasionally used by Latvian politicians, inevitably causing polemics in the press. Mr. Juraševskis made a public statement that he would only converse with his visitors at the ministry in the Latvian

⁶³ Latvijas Republikas Saeimas Stenogramas. IV. sesijas 21. sēde, 1924. gada 25. janvārī, p. 120.

⁶⁴ Latvijas Republikas Saeimas Stenogramas. VI. sesijas 21. sēde, 1924. gada 16. decembrī, p. 786.

language. With those who were not proficient in Latvian, he would only communicate with the help of an official translator. *Segodnya*, commenting on the announcement, complains about the waste of state budget resources, and stresses that as minority languages have certain rights in Latvia in accordance with the law, Juraševskis, as the minister of justice, should have known better.⁶⁵

3.3.2. *The Second Saeima, 1925-1928*

The elections to the Second *Saeima*, which took place in October 1925, did not bring along any significant changes in the composition of the Parliament. The LSDSP gained two additional seats, whereas the Social Democrats Mensheviks, led by M. Skujenieks, lost four. Cielēns (1963: 280) explains this power reshuffle among the Social Democrats by the fact that a group led by A. Petrevics and R. Dukurs, which had joined Skujenieks earlier in 1925, decided to return to the ranks of the bigger party. This ‘catastrophic loss’ sealed the fate of the Mensheviks – they became an insignificant ‘three-man party’. There were no significant changes in the composition of the right wing of the *Saeima*, but it is important to note that the overall number of political factions grew from 20 to 27 – a factor contributing to political instability and frequent governmental crises (Šilde 1976: 396-397).

At the end of 1925, the second government of K. Ulmanis (24.12.1925. – 06.05.1926.) won in an unprecedented, for the Latvian Parliament, competition with a rival government of V. Zamuels – both prospective governments presented their declarations to the *Saeima* on 22nd December.

V. Zamuels’s prospective cabinet foresaw the Social Democrats F. Cielēns as the minister for foreign affairs, M. Skujenieks as the minister for the interior, V. Bastjānis as the finance minister, and Fr. Trasuns (Latgalian Union) as a minister without portfolio. Zamuels’s declaration promised to fight corruption in state institutions and public life; the government promised to treat all residents equally regardless of their social, ethnic, or religious affiliation. It also contained an indirect and carefully worded reference to the Citizenship Law: the government undertook to expedite ‘the resolution of the legal status

⁶⁵ ‘Ministr justīcīi govorit tol’ko po-latyšski’, *Segodnya*, 23.07.1925.

of those residents who had close and lasting ties with Latvia'. In the field of education, the declaration promised to ensure cultural autonomy for minorities through a separate law.⁶⁶

M. Laserson (*Zeire Zion*) reminds his parliamentary audience that the previous Zamuels cabinet did not fulfil all its promises, in particular those related to the Citizenship Law. He addresses the *Saeima* in Russian, as is his usual custom, prompting Ā. Klīve's exclamation 'Speak Latvian! We all know that you can!'. Laserson retorts that 'under the new programme for minorities', he is asking for the *Saeima*'s kind permission to speak in the Russian language, which allows him to express his thoughts freely; this causes merriment in the audience. Later on, Laserson welcomes the new promise of a separate law on cultural autonomy; however, he stresses, minorities do not consider this as something extraordinary. After all, says Laserson, 'it would mean living up to the promises that we gave to ourselves and to the rest of the world in the Political Platform [of the National Council] in 1918, when founding the Latvian state'.⁶⁷ The Jewish faction promises support to Zamuels's left coalition as long as they stick to the promises of their declaration.

M. Kallistratovs (Russian Old Believers) speaks along the same lines as Laserson, reminding Zamuels of his unfulfilled promises. He also claims that while deciding whether to vote for or against the Zamuels cabinet, the Russian faction 'will not be limited by defending exclusively Russian interests in the *Saeima*', taking into account the larger picture.⁶⁸ Kallistratovs, on behalf of the Russian faction, promises support for the Zamuels coalition.

Despite the minorities' support, the Zamuels government did not win the vote of confidence from the Parliament – although 47 deputies voted for, and 44 against, there were also 5 abstentions; according to the *Saeima*'s rules of procedure, these abstentions were counted together with the 'against' votes. After the voting, a one-hour break was announced.

Later that evening, another government was presented to the Parliament - one lead by K. Ulmanis. The future prime minister presented a surprisingly lengthy declaration, given the supposedly short notice, which is perhaps a clear sign that the outcome of the

⁶⁶ Latvijas Republikas II Saeimas Stenogramas. I. sesijas 9. sēde, 1925. gada 22-23. decembrī, p. 174.

⁶⁷ Latvijas Republikas II Saeimas Stenogramas. I. sesijas 9. sēde, 1925. gada 22-23. decembrī, p. 183.

⁶⁸ Latvijas Republikas II Saeimas Stenogramas. I. sesijas 9. sēde, 1925. gada 22-23. decembrī, p. 188.

previous vote was not entirely surprising to the Agrarian Union. The declaration, promising to continue strengthening the democratic foundation of the Latvian state, stipulated: ‘Minorities should be provided with cultural autonomy within the same limits as up until now. The administrative practice in relation to schooling, ethnicity, citizenship, land ownership and economic matters should be strictly in compliance with the law and with democratic requirements.’⁶⁹ Although this was the only reference to minorities in the whole declaration, the minorities and their relations with the left-wing and right-wing parties in the *Saeima* featured prominently in the ensuing debates, which continued late into the night.

F. Cielēns, speaking on behalf of Social Democrats, mentions the Agrarian Union’s (and their coalition partners’) vested interests in the Central Bank, the Agrarian Bank, and the Union bank.⁷⁰ He also expresses doubt that the Agrarian Union will wholeheartedly pursue the implementation of the agrarian reform, implying that the promises made to Baron Fircks in return for the support of the conservative German party will prevent them from doing so.

An interesting insight into majority-minority relations and into the behind-the-scene party struggle is provided by the speech of O. Nonacs (New Agrarian Union). Nonacs speaks of the ‘hateful relationship’ between the left and the right wings of the *Saeima*. The left wing, he says, is always portrayed as betrayers of the national idea, while the right wing as the epitome of reaction, with which no cooperation is possible. But on this particular night, says Nonacs, the *Saeima* is experiencing something unprecedented: two different governments are competing in a race, as if at the hippodrome. The main goal of both those on the left, and on the right is to discredit their respective opponent, not to ensure stability in the state. As for minorities, continues Nonacs, the previous speakers referred to them as ‘reactionary’, but were these not the same minorities with whose help all ‘democratic laws on civic liberties’ were passed by the Social Democrats? Was it not the now ‘reactionary’ minorities who were praised by the newspaper *Socialdemokrāts*? ‘You should re-read the *Saeima* transcripts, then you will see what you said about minorities in the past’ – admonishes Nonacs. He then mentions Riga City Council, where

⁶⁹ Latvijas Republikas II Saeimas Stenogramas. I. sesijas 9. sēde, 1925. gada 22-23. decembrī, p. 193.

⁷⁰ The latter two will be embroiled in corruption scandals for years to come.

he claims the Social Democrats are siding with the minorities in order to ‘isolate the Latvian bourgeoisie’.⁷¹

Nonacs claims that in the present ‘hippodrome-like race’ of the two governments, more minorities’ parties are on the side of the right-wing coalition than there are on the side of the centre-left. The reason for this, he says, is that although both coalitions give certain promises to minorities (and the centre-left coalition is far more generous, in fact), it is not so important as *what* is promised as *who* gives the promise. According to Nonacs, ‘moderate minorities’ know that the right-wing promises stand a better chance of materialising, because ‘the bourgeoisie promised, promises, and will promise to minorities only as much as is in the interests of the Latvian state, and is in accordance with [ethnic] Latvians’ self-respect, and not more.’⁷²

P. Schiemann (German Democrats) retaliates bitterly that all the continuous talk about minorities’ own vested interests, and the frequently repeated speculations about ‘what has been promised to them in return’, reflect more on the Latvian parties’ own experience in political negotiations than on minorities’ practices. Schiemann claims that the minorities, in pursuit of their own national interests, are willing to participate in common work in the interests of the state, even if it means joining ranks with the nationalists. Comparing the two governments in question, Schiemann observes that the right-wing Ulmanis government is in a better position to ensure ‘uninterrupted economic development’ than the Social Democrats, whose constant rhetoric of ‘class struggle’ and ‘economic war’ undermines stability in the country. Despite various disagreements with the Ulmanis government’s declared goals, stresses Schiemann, the right wing’s programme is closer to the interests of the German minority than the ‘endless experiments’ of the Social Democrats.⁷³

In their speeches, the Social Democrats F. Cielēns and V. Bastjānis mention that the Ulmanis cabinet has gained support from P. Schiemann and M. Dubins (*Agudat Israel*) in return for some unknown promises. M. Dubins retorts that the Social Democrats should be ashamed to accuse the Agrarian Union of cooperation with minorities as if such cooperation was by definition a negative thing – ‘minorities are not second-class citizens,

⁷¹ Latvijas Republikas II Saeimas Stenogramas. I. sesijas 9. sēde, 1925. gada 22-23. decembrī, pp. 212-214.

⁷² Latvijas Republikas II Saeimas Stenogramas. I. sesijas 9. sēde, 1925. gada 22-23. decembrī, p. 214.

⁷³ Latvijas Republikas II Saeimas Stenogramas. I. sesijas 9. sēde, 1925. gada 22-23. decembrī, p. 217-219.

are they? They fulfil the same responsibilities as other citizens, and you have no right to rebuke us for not voting for your government'. Furthermore, says Dubins, minorities do not have to be ashamed for asking for amendments to the Citizenship Law in return for their support, as the citizenship issue is not a purely minority issue, but concerns the whole state.⁷⁴

In an open vote, the Ulmanis government gained 48 votes for, 42 against, and 3 abstentions. The German faction and *Agudat Israel* supported the government along with the bourgeois parties; the Social Democrats, *Bund* and *Zeire Zion* voted against, while the Latgalian and the Russian factions split. Ulmanis's victory was not a lasting one – his government survived for only four months.

On 4th May 1925, A. Alberings (Agrarian Union) presented his government declaration to the parliament. Promising to make economic development the main focus of the government, the brief declaration mentioned minorities under the section devoted to domestic policies: 'Minorities should be provided with cultural autonomy within the existing boundaries.'⁷⁵

The ensuing debates contain the customary accusations from the Social Democrats towards the Agrarian Union of unfulfilled promises, reactionary politics, disregard for the interests of the working class, and corruption in state and public life. The Social Democrat-Menshevik M. Skujenieks strikes a somewhat different note in his speech. Skujenieks posits that the proposed government, just like the late Ulmanis government, is an 'extreme government' in the sense that it only represents interests of a certain part of the population, and is vehemently opposed to the interests of the remaining part. The life span of such extreme governments, says Skujenieks, cannot be long, as they polarise opinions and complicate matters not just within the Saeima, but also in the social and economic life of the country in general. Although the Albering government promises to follow a more centrist course, its declaration, which is full of vague and generalised statements, does not reflect this, leaving too much 'in the open'. The Mensheviks, concludes Skujenieks, will not vote for this government.

⁷⁴ Latvijas Republikas II Saeimas Stenogramas. I. sesijas 9. sēde, 1925. gada 22-23. decembrī, p. 225-227.

⁷⁵ Latvijas Republikas II Saeimas Stenogramas. III. sesijas 11. sēde, 1926. gada 4. maijā, p. 396.

O. Nonacs (New Agrarian Union), expressing his party's support for the government, observes that it will keep the same balance of power in the parliament as the previous government of K. Ulmanis – the centre-right coalition against the Social Democrats. But what about the other big part of the *Saeima*, the minorities, asks Nonacs. Admitting that the proposed government is a 'national government, perhaps even more national than all the previous governments', Nonacs nevertheless expresses his certainty that it will be able to pursue fair policies towards the ethnic minorities, as it is a duty of every national government to ensure that minorities 'feel like at home' in Latvia.⁷⁶

Ā. Klīve's (Agrarian Union) speech contains a half-hidden threat towards the 'treacherous' section of the minorities who have allegedly helped to overturn the previous government: 'naturally, those minorities who continued to support the previous government, can expect more favourable attitude from the government to come'. Having said this, Klīve nevertheless assures the audience that the Agrarian Union does not intend to 'distinguish among the minorities'.⁷⁷

P. Schiemann's (Baltic German Party) attitude towards the proposed government is in sharp contrast with his positive stance on the previous one; apparently he came to regret lending his support to the Agrarian Union (whether this was because of some behind-the-scenes promises that remained unfulfilled, or because of general disappointment with their overall policies, is not known). He expresses bitterness about not being invited to participate in the coalition talks, and indignation at the fact that the coalition is supported by the same forces who 'destroyed the foundations of the previous government under the incomprehensible motto 'Down with minorities!''. The German faction will not vote for Alberings, concludes Schiemann.⁷⁸

M. Nurock, speaking on behalf of the Jewish faction, promises that they will closely follow the new government's policies, but will abstain from the vote.

J. Veržbickis (Polish Union) announces that the Polish minority, which along with other minorities, was ignored during the coalition talks, will abstain from the vote.

⁷⁶ Latvijas Republikas II Saeimas Stenogramas. III. sesijas 11. sēde, 1926. gada 4. maijā, pp. 403-404.

⁷⁷ Latvijas Republikas II Saeimas Stenogramas. III. sesijas 11. sēde, 1926. gada 4. maijā, p. 410-411.

⁷⁸ Latvijas Republikas II Saeimas Stenogramas. III. sesijas 11. sēde, 1926. gada 4. maijā, p. 411.

The government was confirmed with 51 votes for, and 36 votes against. There were no abstentions – apparently, those who had decided not to participate in the vote left the room.

At the end of 1926, a left-wing government led by the Social Democrat-Menshevik M. Skujenieks gained a vote of confidence in the *Saeima* – an event unprecedented in the eight-year history of the Latvian state. The new government's declaration sparked fierce debates in the Parliament, during which surprising allegations were made, and many startling details revealed.

By this time, the minorities had no reason to expect any profound changes in their overall situation under Prime Minister Skujenieks – with his liberal views on the cohabitation of different ethnic groups within one 'multinational' state being long forgotten and replaced by a fear of immigration verging on paranoia, he had become a staunch opponent of any amendments that would relax the Citizenship Law. However, in a complex political game, where everything was shrouded in secrecy and negotiations mainly took place behind the scenes, which was so typical for the Latvian interwar parliament, it was precisely this piece of legislation that would secure Skujenieks's coalition.

Skujenieks, presenting his rather lengthy declaration, stressed that most of the government's efforts would be put into developing economic and financial policies, which would in turn ensure the future successful development of all other sectors. He made only a passing reference to minority rights, promising 'to treat all Latvian citizens justly and equally regardless of their ethnicity and faith'.⁷⁹

Ā. Klīve, a tireless spokesman for the Agrarian Union, also known for his unsavoury business affairs⁸⁰, immediately launches an attack on the government's programme, taking apart one section of the declaration after another, and labelling them as 'contradictory', 'incomplete', and 'unrealistic'. Overall, Klīve casts doubt on the Social

⁷⁹ Latvijas Republikas II. Saeimas IV. Sesijas 21. sēde 1926. gada 17. decembrī, p. 993

⁸⁰ Klīve, Chairman of the Board of the Latvian Bank, was a constant target of scathing remarks (mainly from the left wing) referring to him abusing his powers for the benefit of the Agrarian Union and his own business interests. According to Cielēns (1963:300), one of the main reasons for the Agrarian Union's fierce opposition to the Skujenieks government were Klīve and Ulmanis's fears that V. Bastjānis, the newly appointed finance minister who had a reputation for personal honesty and absolute intolerance towards corruption, would not be as convenient for them as the previous Finance Minister A. Buševics.

Democrats' ability to deal successfully with economic and financial challenges, on the grounds that unlike the Agrarian Union, which he claims represents the 'interests of producers', the left-wing government will only represent the 'interests of consumers'.

It is noteworthy that out of all the ministerial candidates, Klīve singles out J. Rainis-Pliekšans, the future Education Minister, for criticism. Addressing those of the right-wing camp who entered into coalition discussions and supported the closed voting process, he promises that when Rainis takes his place at the Education Ministry, those education workers who support the national cause will find themselves not so happy about the changes. [He could have been referring to Rainis's commitment to minority educational rights, to his previously demonstrated stance against casual anti-Semitism, and especially to his dedication to the Belarussian cause, which had already put him at odds with many of his ethnic compatriots in 1924.⁸¹ It is symptomatic of the profound hidden changes in Latvian politics over the eight years of independence that the man who had been previously considered the spiritual leader of the Latvian nation, and a source of inspiration to many national ideologists, M. Valters included (Valters's book 'The Question of Our nationality' is dedicated to Rainis), could in 1926 be casually referred to as a potential threat to the nationalist cause.]

Klīve draws MPs' attention to the minorities' participation in the coalition: 'Not for nothing has this government become known to everyone as the Nurock Cabinet!' [Remark from the audience: 'And yours – as the Dubins Cabinet!']. Klīve sarcastically urges Skujenieks to read to the *Saeima* the 'second', 'secret' part of the declaration, which he alleges contains the coalition's promises to Nurock in return for his 'services in organising this Cabinet'.

However, continues the experienced demagogue Klīve, the most piquant and interesting fact is the existing relationship between the coalition and the German faction. Reminding the Social Democrats of their previous consistent opposition to 'barons' and 'Bermondians', he 'marvels' at the fact that 'now the whole cabinet is based upon the German faction' and speculates that the Germans' votes have been secured in the lobby.⁸²

⁸¹ See, for example, Rainis's speech in the Saeima, Latvijas Republikas Saeimas V. sesijas 11. sēde 1924. gada 16. maijā, p. 347-354.

⁸² Latvijas Republikas II. Saeimas IV. Sesijas 21. sēde 1926. gada 17. decembrī, p. 999

Responding to Klīve, the Social Democrat A. Petrevics retorts that if the minorities have given their support to the Social Democrats, then it is because they have realised that they will never get sufficient support from the right.

G. Reinhardts (Christian National Union) mainly concentrates on the alleged connection between the new coalition and deputy Nurock in a speech full of elaborate metaphors. He starts by telling the *Saeima* that the future Prime Minister Skujenieks is ‘a genuine *Kurzemnieks*’ (inhabitant of Kurzeme, the western part of Latvia). Because, he continues, it is well known to everybody present that every affluent *Kurzemnieks* always has his own middleman, his own broker, his own fixer [*faktermanis*]. [A cry from the floor: ‘A Jew’!] Yes, continues Reinhardts, Skujenieks also has his own middleman and broker, and this is our very much-respected rabbi, Mr. Nurock [cheers and laughter in the audience]. But what is the price of Nurock’s services, Reinhardts asks dramatically. The price will be very high, he answers, so high, that it could not have been mentioned in the coalition’s programme, but ‘had to be written on a separate sheet, signed and stamped; and is now hidden in Nurock’s pocket’. We know what the price was – it was the Citizenship Law, he triumphantly announces. Before concluding his speech, he addresses Nurock, warning him that he should not trust the new government’s assurances [A retort from Laserson: ‘As if only you could be trusted!’].⁸³

The next attack on Skujenieks is launched by Ā. Bļodnieks (New Farmers and Smallholders), who expresses disbelief that this ‘socialist-Jewish government’ will provide any support for farmers. As for the ministerial candidates, Bļodnieks’s main objection is to the future prime minister. Mentioning the notorious ‘paper in Nurock’s pocket’, he draws the *Saeima*’s attention to Skujenieks’s inconsistent stand on the Citizenship Law question, and reminds his audience how with ‘righteous anger’ Skujenieks has always protested against attempts to amend the Citizenship Law in the past. Bļodnieks adds: ‘Although I should acknowledge that Mr. Skujenieks is very tolerant, and is one of the most broad-minded deputies here, it is very hard to trust somebody who changes his political beliefs so quickly’.⁸⁴

The Latgalian MP J. Trasuns (Progressive Peoples’ Union) reveals further details on the background of the ‘Nurock government’. Claiming that it is ‘comical’ to say that the

⁸³ Latvijas Republikas II. Saeimas IV. Sesijas 21. sēde 1926. gada 17. decembrī, p. 1005-1006.

⁸⁴ Latvijas Republikas II. Saeimas IV. Sesijas 21. sēde 1926. gada 17. decembrī, p. 1011.

‘Latvian cause’ has been damaged due to the alleged fact that Rabbi Nurock has put together a government, he reminds the audience how the Zamuels government was overthrown by the Agrarian Union with a one-vote majority - that one vote being Nurock’s. According to Trasuns, at that time both Nurock and Dubin obtained certain guarantees in writing [from the Agrarian Union]. Those promises, however, have never been fulfilled. Hence it is not fair to throw accusations at the new government, stresses Trasuns, and Skujenieks is the last person to deserve it, as in the past he really tried a ‘different politics’ than the majority of the *Saeima*, but had, in the long run, to yield to the common practices.⁸⁵

The Social Democrat-Menshevik V. Holcmanis defends the new government’s position on cooperation with the minorities against Klīve’s attacks. His line of defence, however, reveals the rather cynical approach of the Mensheviks towards such cooperation as a purely tactical device. Holcmanis asks rhetorically whether there has ever been a single government that did not cooperate with minorities, and whether it is possible at all to form a coalition in the *Saeima* without the minorities’ participation. Until a coalition is possible between the Agrarian Union and the Social Democrats, he points out - a coalition that the Agrarian Union does not want - minorities will be a part of every coalition. And if the present government is called the ‘Nurock government’, then the previous government under Alberings should have been called the ‘Dubin government’. ‘And if we have to choose between Nurock and Dubin, then, it seems to me, our sympathies are with the democratically inclined Nurock rather than with Dubin, who is Mr. Ulmanis’s right hand-man,’ – concludes Holcmanis.⁸⁶

V. Fircks (Baltic Germans) attests that the German faction did not participate in coalition talks, did not give any promises to anybody, and did not receive any promises in return. Therefore, the German faction reserves the right to act of its own free will, which will be used in accordance with the faction’s principles and economic platform.

M. Dubins (*Agudat Israel*) speaks in the name of the Jewish faction, except for the deputy Nurock. Drawing attention to the two parties comprising the new coalition, the Social Democrats and the Social Democrats-Mensheviks, Dubins claims that neither of them can be considered a friend of minorities. According to Dubins, on previous

⁸⁵ Latvijas Republikas II. Saeimas IV. Sesijas 21. sēde 1926. gada 17. decembrī, p. 1024.

⁸⁶ Latvijas Republikas II. Saeimas IV. Sesijas 21. sēde 1926. gada 17. decembrī, p. 1029.

occasions, including the voting during the attempted amendments to the Citizenship Law, the Social Democrats were often absent, negatively affecting the outcome of the vote. As for the Mensheviks, continues Dubins, the newly self-appointed minority rights' defender Holcmanis was not so friendly to minorities when he was the minister of justice.⁸⁷ But, exclaims Dubins, who has done more against the Jews and other minorities than the future prime minister? Dubins alleges that during the discussions on the amendments to the Citizenship Law, Skujenieks 'was consciously not telling the truth' when claiming that the amendments would result in 250,000 new citizens. Or, continues Dubins, if Skujenieks really believed it himself, then all that money spent on state statistics is wasted money. Dubins also expresses doubts that 'the Jewish people' will be grateful to Nurock for his role in Skujenieks's coalition.

From Holcmanis and Skujenieks, Dubins moves to attacking other MPs who are supposedly pro-coalition. Mentioning that K. Dišlers has published many articles on minorities' legal status, he enquires why the views that Dišlers expresses in his articles are always so different from the ones he reveals in his private conversations with M. Laserson [also a lawyer]. This causes jovial exclamations in the audience.

Dubins criticises Trasuns for his lack of principles, asserting that he voted for the Ulmanis government in the past in exchange for a place on board of the Latvian Bank. His next comment, 'It was stupid on the part of Mr. Ulmanis to give you that place. It should not have been done', somewhat gives away Dubins's own proximity to Ulmanis.

It is very regrettable, continues Dubins, that the Citizenship Law has become a constantly used bargaining tool. Now it is the Social Democrats who are trying to earn capital from it, he claims. 'You only got Nurock's support because of the Citizenship Law. This is very bad. If Nurock came to you because of his political ideas, because he agreed with your programme, it would be a different matter. But he only came because you had showed him a 'corner of the page' of the Citizenship Law.' He concludes: 'When you, the left wing, start to haggle with our rights, then this socialism is very weak.'⁸⁸

Dubins also claims to possess credible information, reportedly supplied by P. Juraševskis (Agrarian Union) that the promise of amendments will never be carried out,

⁸⁷ Holcmanis held the post of Minister of justice in the Pauļuks cabinet, 27.01.1923. – 27.06.1923.

⁸⁸ Latvijas Republikas II. Saeimas IV. Sesijas 21. sēde 1926. gada 17. decembrī, p. 1036-1038.

because the moment the Citizenship Law is re-opened, the government will be toppled. According to Dubins, the previous promise, given by the Zamuels government, was not carried out because it proved impossible to ensure a majority in practice – members of the Parliament simply disappeared into the lobby, called in sick, etc.

The results of the vote of confidence were 52 votes for, 35 against, 2 abstentions, and another 10 MPs, including the whole of the German faction, simply leaving the room. The government was supported by the democratic centre. The Jewish faction became divided over the Skujenieks government: whereas the *Zeire Zion* (Laserson) and the *Bund* (Maizels) voted for, the *Agudat Israel* (Dubins) left the room; two of the Russian deputies voted for, and two were not present.

The Social Democrats had indeed been actively lobbying for what they correctly saw as a rare opportunity to finally form a government. Recalling the days preceding this historic vote in the *Saeima*, Cielēns (1963) claims that the day before the vote of confidence, it came to his and Skujenieks's knowledge that at the Agrarian Union headquarters, Ulmanis and Klīve were offering political favours and money in return for votes against the left-wing government. Feeling that the vote was in the balance, Cielēns immediately approached the Russian deputies Špoļanskis (Russian Parishes) and Kaļistratovs (Old Believers), as well as the Jewish MP Nurock (Mizrahi), who were all considered to be democrats. According to Cielēns, he addressed each one of them in turn, describing 'the existing threat of fascism to the democratic order', and hence also a threat to the cultural rights of minorities. He stressed that if a new government were not appointed promptly, the Parliament's reputation, already tarnished by haggling and corruption, would be further damaged. Promising that the left-wing government would 'within the limits of the possible satisfy your demands in schooling, theatre and other cultural matters', Cielēns urged them to contact Skujenieks immediately and lend him their support (Cielēns 1963: 302-303). It needs to be said here that when one considers the numerous references in the newspapers, and all the comments during the Parliamentary session the next day, Cielēns's account of Nurock's degree of involvement in the coalition talks seems very understated.

Cielēns (1963:303) also attests that Skujenieks had a conversation with P. Schiemann, during which the German MP let him know that it was quite possible that the German faction would not follow the right wing during the vote of confidence, saying that

‘the German faction does not want to appear as a blind appendage of the right wing majority in all instances and always.’ Hiden (2004:158) also writes that Schiemann ‘strongly rejected Fircks’s call for a permanent alliance with the bourgeois parties in the *Saeima*, as well as his argument that social democracy would undermine the German Balts’ existence by taking Latvia eastwards’; polemics among the two of them on the question were especially dynamic during the course of 1927. However, contrary to Schiemann’s hints about the Germans’ possible support during the vote, the *Saeima*’s transcripts show that during the voting process all members of the German faction, Schiemann included, appeared as ‘not present’. Apparently, Fircks was not persuaded, and Schiemann complied with the faction’s discipline. Over the next year, however, in Hiden’s (2004: 150) words, ‘the German fraction became of crucial importance to the electoral arithmetic behind the social democrat Mārgēris Skujenieks’ cabinet’ by adopting ‘benevolent neutrality’ towards its policies’. Schiemann in particular provided crucial support to the Foreign Minister F. Cielēns during the ratification of both the Latvian-Soviet non-aggression pact, and the bilateral trading agreement with the Soviet Union of 1927.

Skujenieks, whose first government lasted for 13 months, kept his promises. Contrary to Dubins’s predictions, amendments to the Citizenship Law were finally passed on 20th May 1927. As a result of the amendments, about 4,000 Jews acquired Latvian citizenship (Dribins 2002: 70), a far cry from Skujenieks’s predicted 250,000.

In May 1927, the *Saeima* passed a law stipulating the independent status of the *Herder Institut* (in existence since 1921) as a private Baltic German higher education establishment, which was an important achievement for the German minority in their quest for cultural autonomy.

18th November 1928 marked the 10th anniversary of the Latvian state. Mass celebrations took place all around the country, culminating in a rally and a military parade on the Esplanade, the central boulevard of Riga. Prominent politicians and national leaders addressed the public on the pages of newspapers, reminiscing about the Independence Wars and the deprivations of the first years of the new state, as well as praising the later significant political and economic achievements. It is however hard not to notice, despite

the overall celebratory tone, how many of the authors express growing concerns about political instability and widespread corruption.⁸⁹

M. Skujenieks, in the jubilee issue of the newspaper *Jaunākās Ziņas*, reminds his readers about the horrors of Russification experienced in the past, summarises the state's achievements in overcoming it in all spheres of public life, and concludes that without any doubt, 'had Latvia not belonged to the Russian Empire, then social and political transformations would have happened much sooner.'⁹⁰

To commemorate the tenth anniversary of the founding of the state, a monumental volume (over 800 pages) entitled 'The Latvian Republic during the Ten Years of Its Existence', with numerous plates and illustrations, was produced under the editorship of Dr. A. Bīlmanis.⁹¹ Apart from the articles on Latvian history, geography, agriculture and industry, arts and education, the publication notably contained a section on ethnic minorities, where the chapter on Baltic Germans was authored by P. Schiemann, the chapter on Jews by M. Laserson, on Russians by E. Tichonickis, on Poles by J. Veršbickis⁹², and on Belarussians by K. Jezovitovs (in the order they are presented in the book). This section on minorities provides a snapshot of both minority-majority relations, and of the particular situation of each respective Latvian ethnic minority after ten years of independence.

E. Tichonickis on the whole describes the situation of Russians in independent Latvia as continually improving (although he is critical of the Agrarian Reform, which reportedly has not had an impact on the difficult economic situation of Russian peasants-smallholders). But it is hard to avoid the impression from his writing that this apparent improvement is both badly needed and long overdue, not least because the author constantly compares the Russians' situation with that of the other minorities, and these comparisons are almost always not in the Russians' favour. For example, the author expresses regret that Russian residents play a less significant part in the country's economic and industrial life than prior to the World War, explaining this by the fact that many big Russian-owned enterprises were destroyed during the conflict. Tichonickis

⁸⁹ See, for example, Dišlers, K. 'Valsts desmit gadi', *Jaunākās Ziņas*, 17.11.1928; Bļodnieks, A. 'Zemneeciba valsts neatkarības svehtkos', *Jaunākās Ziņas*, 17.11.1928; Bachmanis, K. 'No idealisma līdz materialismam', *Jaunākās Ziņas*, 17.11.1928.

⁹⁰ Skujeneeks, M. 'Ko nedrihkstam aismirst', *Jaunākās Ziņas*, 17.11.1928.

⁹¹ Bihlmans, A. (red.) *Latvijas Republika desmit patsāvēšanas gados*. Golts un Jurjans, (1928).

⁹² Tichonickis and Veršbickis also appear in the *Saeima's* transcripts as 'Tihonickis' and 'Veržbickis'.

recognises that ‘in the cultural sense, Latvian Russians are behind Latvians and Germans’, drawing attention to the still high level of illiteracy among the Latvian Russians. The author cites statistics (which are somewhat shocking, especially in comparison with the titular nation) that in 1925 only 60 per cent of Russian men, and 45 per cent of Russian women were literate. Still, insists Tichonickis, it is a great improvement on the average of 35 per cent in 1920. Lamenting the fact that there are not many scientists and writers among Latvian Russians (he counts about ten Russian professors in Latvian universities, and five or six locally published writers), he takes pride in the fact that the Russian-language newspaper *Segodnya* is one of the biggest published outside Russia; he also praises the significant achievements of the Russian Drama Theatre in Riga.

Whatever Tichonickis’s grievances about his ethnic compatriots’ precarious situation, he does not attempt to put the blame on others. ‘For the sake of fairness, it should be recognised that there are favourable conditions for the cultural development of the Russians in democratic Latvia,’ asserts Tichonickis. More importantly, he admits that ‘if the number of Russian representatives in the *Saeima* and in municipalities is two times smaller than their respective proportion among the population, it is Russian electors’ passivity that is the main reason behind this’.⁹³

Overall, concludes Tichonickis, ‘looking back at the first ten years of the new Latvian State, the Russian minority can with great satisfaction testify that democratic principles in Latvia have a solid unshakeable base.’⁹⁴

J. Veršbickis, writing about the Latvian Poles, asserts that they ‘have been living alongside Latvians for centuries, establishing the very best relations and friendship, while preserving their own faith and cultural and linguistic peculiarities’⁹⁵. According to Veršbickis, these friendly relations have been further enhanced since Latvia gained independence. The author observes that the Agrarian Reform, however, has not improved economic conditions for Latvian Poles [as would be expected, since Poles were among the biggest landowners in Eastern Latvia prior to the reform]. Polish political representation in Latvia is more or less proportional, concludes Veršbickis.

⁹³Tichonickis, E. 1928 ‘Krievi Latvijā’, in: Bīlmanis, A. (red.) *Latvijas Republika desmit pastāvēšanas gados*. Rīga: Golts un Jurjāns. pp. 51-52.

⁹⁴*Ibid.* p. 52

⁹⁵ Veršbickis, J. ‘Poļi Latvijā’, in: Bīlmanis, A. (red.) *Latvijas Republika desmit pastāvēšanas gados*. Rīga: Golts un Jurjāns, p. 52.

K. Jezovitovs, on behalf of the Latvian Belarussians, stakes an interesting claim saying that ‘...among other ethnic minorities, Belarussians take a special position as they are not oriented towards the ‘united minority front’, but rather seek closer ties and a better mutual understanding with Latvian democracy’⁹⁶. There are two reasons behind Belarussians’ separation from the other Latvian minorities, according to Jezovitovs. First, that Belarussians are constantly forced to fight off assimilationist attempts on the part of the other two Slavic nations, Russians and Poles, who do not recognise Belarussians as a nation in their own right. Second, that Belarussians have strong disagreements with the Baltic Germans on the question of land distribution. Jezovitovs attests that Belarussians have no political parties of their own, but many of them are members of the Latvian political parties.

But it is the articles written by Schiemann and Laserson that stand out in this jubilee edition by their critical content and somewhat bitter tone, allowing an closer insight into the state of minority-majority relations in Latvia by 1928.

Schiemann opens his article with the statement that the founding of the Latvian state ten years ago caught Baltic Germans absolutely unprepared. ‘This idea was totally alien to them,’⁹⁷ claims Schiemann. He continues that although certain efforts aimed at independence could be observed during the First Russian revolution, it seemed that these were not taken seriously even by the Latvian people themselves. The main demands, it seemed to the Baltic Germans, consisted of the need for democratisation of the local administrative system, and for an agrarian reform. Schiemann posits that this initial disagreement on the country’s political ideology has been the cause of all the difficulties that were in the way of ‘state thinking’ and of good relations between the two mutually dependent nations [Balts and Letts] during the first years of independence. Latvians and Germans, he writes, have been living side by side without actually knowing each other, largely because their intelligentsias were strangers to each other. Schiemann posits that although the topic is impossible to avoid, it would now be futile to pose the question of who exactly is to blame for the existing state of affairs. He does try, however, to provide if not some answers, then at least some explanations for the *status quo*.

⁹⁶ Jezovitovs, K. ‘Baltkrievi Latvijā’, in: Bīlmanis, A. (red.) *Latvijas Republika desmit pastāvēšanas gados*. Rīga: Golts un Jurjāns, p. 53.

⁹⁷ Schiemann, P. 1928 ‘Baltijas vāci un Latvijas valsts’, in: Bīlmanis, A. (red.) *Latvijas Republika desmit pastāvēšanas gados*. Rīga: Golts un Jurjāns. p. 47.

Schiemann lauds the Latvian intelligentsia for its cultural work among its own people, which has proved to be an enormous force, but ‘has not been immediately apparent to outsiders’⁹⁸. He draws attention to the inherent political differences between the traditionally conservative Balts and the Latvian intelligentsia, who he claims were attuned to the various Russian leftist parties, from whom they often borrowed their way of thinking.

Schiemann describes how until the Great War, the Balts considered the Baltic States’ belonging to Russia as an irrefutable fact, where to try to change something would be total madness. The World War, with its persecution of Germans, he continues, caused the Baltic Germans to distance themselves from the Russian regime. Schiemann admits that the subsequent German occupation brought with it an illusion of the establishment of German dominance on the Baltic Sea coast. But according to Schiemann’s interpretation, this – illusory - dominance meant good news for Latvians too, as it introduced, ‘contrary to all hopes and expectations, a sudden opportunity for both nations, Germans and Latvians, to leave the Eastern cultural space and enter the more appropriate Western European cultural space’⁹⁹. He concludes that the illusion was too short-lived for the Baltic Germans to grasp all the potential internal and external political problems that it had created. Once it was shattered, ‘the Baltic Germans’ political ideology lost all its foundations’¹⁰⁰.

Schiemann admits that the Agrarian Reform has been a direct cause of conflict between the Balts and the Letts; whereas the Baltic Germans view the reform as an attempt to infringe on minority rights, the majority of Latvians do not agree with this.

However, continues Schiemann, ‘the fact that Latvia, unlike the majority of the newly founded national states, was forthcoming towards the specific cultural needs of its ethnic minorities, has greatly facilitated the Germans’ getting used to the ‘state mode of thinking’ [*valsts domāšana*]¹⁰¹.

The conclusion of Schiemann’s article is carefully worded; he hints that some of the past conflicts have been, at least to some extent, resolved, and that there is indeed hope

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Schiemanis, P. 1928 ‘Baltijas vāci un Latvijas valsts’, in: Bīlmanis, A. (red.) Latvijas Republika desmit pastāvēšanas gados. Rīga: Golts un Jurjāns. p. 47.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

for a better future in German-Latvian relations. Speaking about the implementation of school autonomy, Schiemann refers to ‘various disagreements’ in earlier years, but attests that at present minorities’ school autonomy can be considered accomplished. This way, he claims, the German faction’s hands are being ‘untied’, and ‘it is increasingly being given an opportunity to rise above its own narrow ethnic interests, and to give its undivided attention to bigger, overarching national tasks’. And this opportunity for the Balts and Letts to start working together, according to Schiemann, is no small achievement of the past ten years. It is quite difficult to gauge whether he speaks in earnest, or with a hint of irony.¹⁰²

M. Laserson starts his article with an excursion into the recent past of Russian dominance in Latvia, when the Pale of Settlement effectively separated the Latvian and Latgalian Jewish communities from each other. By erasing this dividing line, claims Laserson, the Latvian State has created new favourable conditions for Jewish cultural development. This cultural development has been particularly facilitated by the introduction of school autonomy. But if there are evident accomplishments in the Jewish educational and cultural life, the situation is different in the economic sphere, continues Laserson. After independent Latvia had lost a big part of its cargo transit through seaports and railways, the economic situation of Latvian Jews, who were mostly involved in trade and commerce, has sharply deteriorated. The implementation of the Agrarian Reform, claims Laserson, has not been as benevolent towards the Jews as it has been towards the Latvians when it comes to land distribution, especially in Latgale. As a result, a large percentage of the Jewish rural population has been impoverished, and has started migrating into bigger cities. Laserson accuses Latvians of ‘economic anti-Semitism’: ‘The numerically dominant nation has not solved its own economic problems yet, and is thus inclined to see competition everywhere, even where it cannot exist.’¹⁰³

Laserson finishes on an optimistic note: ‘There are new tendencies and trends in minorities’ relations with the dominant Latvian nation. They should transcend the cultural domain and expand into the economy...It seems that after ten years of independence this is starting to be acknowledged in Latvian circles as well... At this moment an understanding

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Lazersons, M. 1928 ‘Žīdu minoritātes stāvoklis Latvijā’, in: Bīlmanis, A. (red.) Latvijas Republika desmit pastāvēšanas gados. Rīga: Golts un Jurjāns. p. 50

is developing that Latvia's prospects are wider and more important than the narrowly interpreted [ethnic] Latvian interests.¹⁰⁴

Compared with the other fulsome contributions to this book, it is notable that the furthest that either Schiemann or Laserson were willing to go in striking a celebratory note was to reservedly acknowledge the recent positive 'trends' in majority-minority relations, and to express cautious hope about the future. As elaborate as the celebrations of the 10th anniversary of national independence were, it seems that not all the country's residents fully shared in the excitement.

After the fall of Skujenieks's government in January 1928, mainly due to the discontinued support from the Democratic Centre party, which started leaning more towards the right (Šilde 1976: 408), the next government was formed by the leader of the Democratic Centre P. Juraševskis. According to Hiden (2004: 154), Schiemann was reluctant to let the Skujenieks government fall without a specific cause, but he was forced to yield to the combined pressure from Fircks and another member of the Baltic German Party, K. Keller. The Baltic German E. Magnuss made a spectacular comeback as the cabinet's justice minister after ten years in the political wilderness.

The Juraševskis government would only be in office for ten months; after the Third *Saeima* was elected, it would be replaced by the government of H. Celmiņš (01.12.1928. – 26.03.1931), another representative of the Agrarian Union, with the support of the New Farmers and Smallholders, the Latgalian faction, and of a part of the ethnic minorities.

Celmiņš presented his second government's declaration to the Third *Saeima* on 30th November 1928; the section pertaining to minorities' affairs read: 'The government will expedite adoption of the School Law while observing and not restricting existing norms applying to minority schools.'¹⁰⁵

M. Nurock, commenting on the government's declaration, mentions that the amended Citizenship Law is in reality being implemented at a very slow pace; he also provides numerous example of discrimination against Jews claiming that Jewish merchants are treated like 'stepchildren' by the Latvian Central Bank, and that the path to the civil

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ Latvijas Republikas III. Saeimas I. sesijas 7. Sēde 1928. gada 30. novembrī, p. 183.

service for the Jewish intelligentsia and Jewish workers is closed. Nurock argues that the government declaration contains standard phrases on the status quo in the school area, and also speaks of some national-cultural autonomy for minorities. We, the minorities, insists Nurock, think, however, that the final goal is nothing short of the true national autonomy, as a legal institution with rights to self-taxation, as proclaimed at the national congresses in Geneva.

This government would last almost throughout the Third *Saeima* – Šilde (1976: 409) attributes its longevity to Celmiņš's own political prowess, and the high level of professionalism among his cabinet's ministers.

3.3.3. The Third Saeima, 1928-1931

The year 1928 brought significant changes in Latvian political life; these changes would have a long-lasting effect and would arguably contribute to the future parliamentary crisis. The balance of power in the newly elected Third *Saeima* was quite different from the previous one. For the first time in independent Latvia's history, the communists abandoned their strategy of boycotting the parliament, and stood for elections under the name of the Party of Workers and Peasants, gaining a total of six mandates. The communist faction in the *Saeima* was headed by Linards Laicēns, a romantic poet who prior to 1918 was a member of the National Democratic Party, widely credited for its unwavering support for the widest possible autonomy for Latvia from the early days of national struggle onwards (both the liberally-minded A. Frīdenbergs and the staunch nationalist E. Blanks had been members of this party in the past). Cielēns (1963: 405) posits that previously, the communist-leaning electorate traditionally gave their ballots to the Social Democrats – the fact that the six seats that the communists had gained were exactly what the Social Democrats had lost, now holding only 25 mandates, seems to support his theory. The Social Democrats' position in the *Saeima* was irrevocably weakened, making it impossible to form a left-wing government in the future. Cielēns also alleges that allowing the illegal Communist party to stand for elections under an assumed name was a clever ruse by the bourgeois parties, who hoped to undermine the Social Democrats' faction. Cielēns names A. Bergs and K. Ulmanis as the main driving forces behind the decision by the Political Police not to start an investigation into the origins of the Party of Workers and Peasants. Dunsdorfs (1978: 253), commenting on Cielēns's version of events, observes that he failed, either on purpose or because of his true

ignorance of the fact, to mention that the Communist election campaign was financed by Soviet Russia through the Transit Bank.

Cielēns concludes that by allowing the communists to enter the *Saeima*, Ulmanis achieved a double goal – not only did he successfully diminish the Social Democrats' influence in the Parliament, but he also, at the same time, significantly strengthened the Agrarian Union's position. The fact that during the Third *Saeima*, both of the appointed prime ministers and the elected state president were members of the Agrarian Union, seems to support this notion.

Ā. Klīve recalls that during the election campaign meetings in the countryside in 1928, one could observe a 'new phenomenon': much stronger criticisms of the Social Democrats voiced by the working classes. Contradicting Cielēns's conviction that the admission of communists to the parliament was a conscious political move on the part of the Agrarian Union, Klīve claims that 'Ulmanis was surprised by the communists' significant achievements... he believed that there would be no communist followers in the countryside...' Klīve, dismissing other possible contributory factors, such as rising unemployment, the first signs of economic depression and the poor harvest of 1928 (all of which affected the countryside most), is quick to blame his political rivals for the communists' success: 'However, it turned out that the Social Democrats, with their social policies oriented towards urban workers, have not managed to attract rural residents, and have ended up alienating them. In voting for the communists, it seems, landless peasants were guided by a feeling of hatred towards the affluent lifestyles of the Social Democrats' leaders, which made them indistinguishable from the bourgeoisie.'¹⁰⁶ But their shared dismay over the communists' success did not apparently narrow the rift between the Agrarian Union and the Social Democrats, as Klīve continues:

'From the standpoint of our Social Democrats, Latvia was doomed to remain an agrarian country, without significant industry and therefore without the vast urban working masses, a source of strength for the Social Democrats, for a long time. Hence there was no sufficient base in Latvia that would allow the Social Democrats and their ideas to hope to win a ruling position. It would be quite different if Latvia had been an autonomous part of Russia. Then, so the Social Democrats think, industries would have been widely developed in Latvia, and factory workers would have overpowered the bourgeoisie and the farmers.'

¹⁰⁶ Ā. Klīve, Personal papers, Latvijas Vēsturiskais Arhīvs, 1970 1:63.

Klīve stresses repeatedly that the Agrarian Union had every reason to believe that the Social Democrats were secretly against the independent and democratic Latvian republic.¹⁰⁷

Another blow dealt to the leftist bloc in the Parliament, according to Cielēns (1963: 407-408), was the fact that Skujenieks's small group could not be considered socialist anymore, but rather radical-centre; this ideological shift would soon be acknowledged by the group members' abandoning the name of Social Democrats-Mensheviks, and starting to call themselves the Progressive Union instead. The Mensheviks' congress on 14th December 1929 passed a resolution to cease the activities of the Social Democratic Menshevik Party on the grounds that there was no longer a need for the two Social Democratic parties in Latvia. Former Mensheviks also stated that all their past political decisions, as well as their future aspirations, were in fact based upon the democratic bourgeois national standpoint, and therefore it was not feasible to keep the Social Democratic name of the party. From then on, it was asserted, the Progressive Union would represent only the interests of the new farmers and smallholders, who had always been part of their electorate. The newly created Progressive Union appealed to Social Democrat-Menshevik electors to vote for the new party.

It is arguable precisely which year - 1928, 1929 or 1931 - can be said to have marked the beginning of the rapid deterioration of Latvian democracy. It seems beyond doubt that the elections of 1928 exacerbated the pre-existing ideological tensions in the *Saeima* and pushed the parties on both sides of the political spectrum towards further radicalisation (the Democratic Centre, which had initially supported the left-wing government, soon afterwards withdrew their support and sided with the right wing, which was one of the main reasons behind the demise of the Skujenieks government just 13 months after its appointment). The Social Democrats, after the left-wing government's resignation in January 1928, remained in opposition until the end of the Third *Saeima*. According to Cielēns (1963:434), being in permanent opposition to the government eventually pushed the Social Democrats, especially their younger generation, further to the left. Ā. Klīve, who lost his *Saeima* mandate in the 1928 elections, joined the circle of the Satversme's critics and protested loudly against the minorities' dominance in the economic sector. Besides, it was in 1928, at least according to Cielēns (1963: 407-408), that one of

¹⁰⁷Ā. Klīve, Personal papers, Latvijas Vēsturiskais Arhīvs, 1970 1:63.

the previously staunchest supporters of liberal democracy, M. Skujenieks, had turned coat and joined the centre-right.

Contrary to this, the evaluation of the Royal Institute of Foreign Affairs (1938: 34) states that the previously ‘very favourable’ situation of minorities in Latvia ‘on the whole deteriorated gradually from 1929 onwards’.

In 1930, the worldwide economic crisis reached Latvia. Latvian exports, which had been hitherto steadily growing, fell from 273 million Ls in 1929 to 247 million in 1930, taking a further plunge to 163 million in 1931. The value of all industrial production, which had peaked at 450 million Ls in 1929, started to decline in 1930 and had reached its lowest point of 290 million by 1932.¹⁰⁸ Arguably, ethnic Latvians were hit harder by the crisis than the Latvian Germans, Jews and Russians as they were mainly employed in the state sector, whereas ethnic minorities were significantly more active as private entrepreneurs; hence they had larger savings and could still benefit from the foreign credit lines and loans. As Dribins (2002: 70) astutely observes, the minorities-dominated private sector’s resilience actually cushioned the depression’s effect on the Latvian economy overall, but this fact was completely overlooked by the right-wing parties who instead tended to blame the crisis on the minorities’ economic and financial success.

Šilde (1976: 563) writes that a new outbreak of extreme nationalism came along in 1931, when the *Perkonkrusts* (Thundercross) union, or, as it was originally called, *Ugunskrusts* (Firecross) was founded. Šilde regards it as a continuation of the National Club, as in a similar fashion, *Perkonkrusts* turned against ethnic minorities’ economic power, and against Marxism and internationalism. The union adopted the slogan ‘Latvia for Latvians, work and bread for Latvians’, and its programme foresaw granting political rights to ethnic Latvians only. According to Šilde, it attracted part of the ‘nationalistically inclined youth’, and the circulation of its newspaper, which bore the same name as the organisation itself, reached 15,000 copies.

Notably, *Perkonkrusts* also took a strong stance against corruption in state institutions and among Parliamentarians, paying particular attention to the Agrarian Union and its leaders. Allegations were often made against K. Ulmanis and Ā. Klīve in the

¹⁰⁸ Skujeneeks, M. (1938) Latvijas statistikas atlās. Rīgā: Valsts Statistiskā pārvalde. p.48 and p. 35 respectively.

newspaper *Perkonkrusts* in connection with the Union Bank, the Agrarian Bank, and the 'Lats' company, which were all frequent recipients of extensive credits and loans from the Central Bank. (Šilde 1988: 83)

K. Ulmanis became prime minister for the sixth time in March 1931, with the support of the Latgalian faction. This government lasted for eight months.

3.3.4. The Fourth Saeima, 1931-1934

Elections to the Fourth *Saeima* in October 1931 delivered a majority to the bourgeois parties for the first time in independent Latvia's history, eliminating the need for the support of ethnic minorities, which hitherto had been a constant factor in Latvian politics. M. Skujenieks, analysing the results of the elections, observed that contrary to the general tendency in the rest of Europe at the time, Latvian extremists on both sides of the political spectrum had sustained significant losses, whereas the centre had gained in strength. Both Communists and Social Democrats lost votes; if in 1928 the socialist camp had gained 34.9 per cent of the total votes, in 1931 this decreased to 27.1 per cent. Right-wing parties lost one third of their electorate, or 26,000 votes (the National Union was hit the hardest, losing almost a half of its voters). The Agrarian Union gained just 12.2 per cent of the total votes, a 2.8 per cent decrease on the 15 per cent secured in the 1928 elections. The electoral support base for the centre parties, on the other hand, doubled in size – in 1928, 9.8 per cent of electors voted for them, and in 1931, 18 per cent. Skujenieks explained the success of all the three centre parties (Democratic Centre, Progressive Union, and New Farmers) by their consistent nationalist policies, which he believed had chimed with the general mood of the public. Skujenieks was quick to explain away the fact that all ethnic minorities without exception had gained votes in the 1931 election (their joint gain being 20,578 extra votes, or a 1.48 per cent increase) by mistakes in the Social Democrats' policies towards them. Skujenieks claimed that by being too accommodating to minorities' demands, the Social Democrats had achieved the opposite goal of stimulating 'minorities' chauvinism'.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁹ Skujenieks, M. 'Saeimas vehleschanu iznahkumi', *Jaunākās Ziņas*, 17.10.1931.

Latvian political life during 1931 was largely dominated by the so-called Dom Affair, which brought the already strained relations between Latvians and the Baltic Germans under new duress. Built in the beginning of the 13th century, the cathedral (also known as St. Mara's), situated on the main square of the Old City, had been in the possession of the German Lutheran Congregation Union since 1888. M. Skujenieks was apparently the main promulgator of the draft law, which was submitted to the *Saeima* in March 1931, and which aimed at 'returning' the cathedral to the state's possession and at putting it under the supervision of the War Ministry. The two main reasons for the expropriation, cited by Skujenieks in the *Saeima*, were the alleged historical injustice of the cathedral's belonging to the Germans in the first place, and the lack of a dedicated place of worship for Latvian war veterans. (Bilmanis (1951:349) mentions that during the Dom Affair, the 38,513 German inhabitants of Riga claimed the cathedral 'for their exclusive use' against 242,731 Latvians). After prolonged debates in the Parliament, the draft law was rejected (notably, the National Union also voted against it). In response, the centre parties, namely the Progressive Union (M. Skujenieks) and the Democratic Centre (J. Breikšs) initiated a popular referendum on the question of requisition of the Cathedral. Although the referendum, which was held in September 1931, failed, the Cabinet of Ministers, under Article 81 of the Constitution, passed amendments to the Law on Lutheran and Catholic Cathedrals from 1923. Although those amendments formally left the Cathedral in the possession of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, control over it was effectively taken away from the German Congregation, whose representatives were now in the minority on the newly elected Board. Insulted Germans abandoned the cathedral (according to a Latvian newspaper, taking most of the valuable inventory with them¹¹⁰). Two complaints on the matter were filed by the Balts with the German Reichstag, causing a wave of indignation among Latvians, who rightfully considered it an invitation to a foreign power to meddle in their sovereign state's affairs. Altogether, the Dom Affair significantly deepened the rift between Baltic Germans and Latvians, and as Hiden (2004:187) observes, both sides were equally to blame. Hiden describes how for P. Schiemann (who for health reasons had been away from Latvia for most of the time during which the conflict had been unfolding) the loss of the Cathedral was also an affront to his own stated political line of the necessity of 'restraining oneself nationally', and which, as a result of the aforementioned developments, many Baltic Germans now considered to be a failure. The fact that M. Skujenieks, who had always stressed the valuable Baltic German

¹¹⁰ 'Latvija un Vācija', *Valdības Vēstnesis*, 15.12.1931.

contribution to the Latvian state's life in the past, was now personally leading the assault, considerably added to the sting.

Understandably, the 1932/33 budget debates in the *Saeima*, in the midst of the economic crisis, again sparked controversy, with Skujenieks's government coming under intense criticism from the left and from the national minorities. Whereas the Social Democrats predominantly berated the government for allegedly putting most of the economic burden upon the shoulders of the working class, minorities were largely concerned about the deterioration of democratic practices under the so-called 'national government', and especially about the worsening relationship between them and the Latvian ethnic majority.

P. Schiemann (Baltic Germans) delivers an uncharacteristically dark speech, which in retrospect fills one with a sense of foreboding. He speaks broadly about the worldwide depression, his understanding of its causes, and the effect of the economic downturn on Latvia. He issues a warning to those Latvians who tend to blame the current economic difficulties on 'bad politics' and advocate a new Satversme and new, 'better' men in power. 'There are already all kinds of constitutions in place in the world, proletarian and plutocratic, monarchic and republican, dictatorial and democratic, absolutist and liberal – and not one of them is capable of protecting its own state against the devastating effects of the global crisis,' – asserts Schiemann.¹¹¹

Obviously influenced by the popular at the time writings of Sigmund Freud (1930) and Carl Jung (1931) on the psychoanalysis of society as a whole, and claiming that the worldwide crisis is not just a political and economic crisis, but a global spiritual crisis as well, Schiemann traces its origins to WWI, labelling the current psychological state as 'war psychosis'. The nature of the psychosis, he continues, is a 'peculiar sense of community', developed during the war when all other considerations, ethical, moral, cultural, any human considerations, in fact, were subordinated to the interests of that community. During war, continues Schiemann, this sense of community manifests itself as hatred against another community and the desire for its annihilation. According to Schiemann, for the previous generation, which was 'surprised' by the World War, this phenomenon was unfamiliar, and it took them time to adapt, whereas the present generation took this state of affairs for granted. Obviously referring to German National Socialism in the first place,

¹¹¹ Latvijas Republikas IV Saeimas III sesijas 12. sēde 1932. gada 27. maijā. p. 452.

Schiemann claims that this war-borne psychosis has become a cornerstone of politics for young people all around the world; it has been transplanted to the post-war world and to all of its activities. Hatred has permeated state politics and nationalist movements, and has infused partisan beliefs, he observes. Shifting his focus back to Latvia, which he says is also affected by this global phenomenon, Schiemann claims:

National feeling and party politics are based upon hatred toward the others. Negatively charged national feelings are now raised as a state banner. If just 12 years ago everybody was in agreement that the sovereign power in the Latvian state belongs to the Latvian people, i.e. to the whole body of its citizens, now, contrary to the *Satversme*, only the ethnic Latvian state and its interests are being recognised.¹¹²

Schiemann mentions A. Kēniņš's educational policies, which he believes are mainly oriented towards alienating minorities from the state, in support of his argument. S. Trofimovs (Russian Farmers and Russian Municipal Workers' Party) in his speech characterises the education minister's policies as 'dangerous'.

Fending off his critics, Skujenieks published an article about his government's priorities which was reproduced in all leading newspapers with a subtitle which summarised his new politics remarkably well: 'Not a single step is being taken that is not acceptable from a Latvian point of view'. Skujenieks credited his own government not just with the numerous 'innovations' in education, but also with achieving independence from the minority factions in the *Saeima*, without which, he claimed, passing important legislation, like the Law on Grain Monopoly, would not be possible. 'It goes without saying, – writes Skujenieks – that various parties and groupings can have different opinions on all kind of matters, and that they should be respected'. But after this curt nod to pluralism, he concludes on an entirely different note: 'At the same time, being petty and practically insignificant, these so-called 'demands' are only an impediment to the work of the state.'¹¹³

It seems beyond doubt that Skujenieks's startling metamorphosis from a liberal democrat committed to the principles of equality and equal participation to a chauvinistic supporter of 'Latvia for Latvians', by 1931 was almost complete. His second, right-wing

¹¹² Latvijas Republikas IV Saeimas III sesijas 12. Sēde 1932. gada 27. maijā. p. 453.

¹¹³ 'Ministru presidents M. Skujenieks par valdības stahwokli', *Jaunākās Ziņas*, 31.05.1932

government, which came to power in December 1931 and lasted until March 1933, became known as the most hostile towards minorities' rights in the history of the democratic Latvian republic.

The nationalistic course was especially pronounced in education, and the newly appointed Education Minister A. Kēniņš was a strong proponent of the prompt 'Latvianisation' of education and of culture in general. According to Šilde (1985: 257), 'it all went in the opposite direction from the one determined by Rainis, who was the Education Minister within Skujenieks's first government'.

Presenting his government's declaration to the *Saeima* on 4th December 1931, Skujenieks spoke mainly of the unprecedented economic hardship experienced at that moment by the Latvian people and of the necessary measures in order to combat the crisis: 'Current conditions worldwide, not just in our country, are very difficult. In order to overcome these difficulties, big sacrifices will be required from the widest sections of the community's residents. The foremost task of this government is to spread the burden created by the crisis justly among all citizens, putting more weight on the shoulders of those groups who can manage it more easily.'¹¹⁴ There was no mention in the declaration of the new government's stance on policies towards ethnic minorities. The ensuing parliamentary debates, however, were largely instigated by the minority speakers.

If Skujenieks's aforementioned statement planted a suspicion in minority minds that those 'groups' who were supposed to shoulder most of the burden of the crisis were actually minorities themselves, their fears were further fuelled by the comments of J. Breikšs (Democratic Centre). Breikšs stressed the necessity of cutting existing state subsidies, mentioning that 'these subsidies are indeed very wide, and statistics show that they are mainly benefitting 'foreign peoples' at our Latvian residents' expense, especially in education, as well as in other fields. Taking this into account, it seems to us that the present government will really follow a course favourable towards Latvian residents; that hitherto-existing subsidies will finally be scrapped under the pressure of the crisis.'¹¹⁵

P. Schiemann (Baltic German Party) mentions the discussions on the necessity of a 'national government' that permeated the recent public discourse. He claims that the

¹¹⁴ Latvijas Republikas IV Saeimas I sesijas 10. sēde 1931. gada 4. decembrī. p. 336.

¹¹⁵ Latvijas Republikas IV Saeimas I sesijas 10. sēde 1931. gada 4. decembrī. p. 351.

‘national government’ motto sounds great if it designates a government that does not take into account just separate groups’ interests, but cares instead for the wellbeing of the whole nation in accordance with the Latvian Constitution. However, he continues, this national slogan is bad if the real goal is to ensure the wellbeing of a particular community and to harm other groups of residents. ‘If you think that now is the right time to marginalise and leave out those national groups which belong to our state’s living organism, then it will inevitably harm everybody’s interests.’¹¹⁶ He concludes that the German faction cannot vote for the government.

M. Nurock (*Mizrahi*) expresses concern that at a time when the economic situation is critical, when it is crucial to create a broad coalition government (with the exception of ‘one particular group’, i.e. the communists) which would enjoy the support of the whole *Saeima*, the new government comes out with the slogan ‘Down with minorities!’ He draws the *Saeima*’s attention to the fact that this way, more than twenty per cent of the population are being effectively excluded from the legislative process without further ado. ‘Thus there are first and second-class citizens. One class is declared as being supportive of the state, and the other – as a disloyal class, which could at best be ‘allowed’ to give their votes to the ‘national government.’¹¹⁷ Nurock ends his speech with a statement that it will not be possible for *Mizrahi* to vote for such a government.

J. Veržbickis (Latvian Polish Union) announces that recently a ‘new era’ has dawned not just for the Parliament, but for the political life of the country in general. Minorities, he claims, are not trusted anymore with any kind of responsibility. ‘Minorities are now regarded as second-class citizens; it is same with their MPs, they are not trusted with any responsibilities at all.’ And it is very symptomatic, he continues, that this is not the outlook of one particular faction, but of the whole *Saeima*. ‘Not only did nobody try to involve minorities in the coalition talks, but the government’s declaration did not contain any information on its intentions with respect to the minorities question, or on how it intends to protect minorities’ rights.’ Veržbickis continues: ‘...and this despite the fact that there have been numerous signals in the society and in the press that this government will curtail minority rights.’¹¹⁸ Under these circumstances, he concludes, the Poles will not vote for this government.

¹¹⁶ Latvijas Republikas IV Saeimas I sesijas 10. sēde 1931. gada 4. decembrī. p. 353.

¹¹⁷ Latvijas Republikas IV Saeimas I sesijas 10. sēde 1931. gada 4. decembrī. pp. 353-354.

¹¹⁸ Latvijas Republikas IV Saeimas I sesijas 10. sēde 1931. gada 4. decembrī. p. 361-362.

L. Špoļanskis (Latvian Parishes and District Governments' Russian Workers' Union) supports all those MPs from the minorities who have previously spoken expressing their negative opinions on the future government. He notes that obviously nobody is asking for minorities' support anyway, as it is not necessary for the government to be approved. But Špoļanskis insists that with the minorities being an integral part of the *Saeima*, their opinion of the government should be voiced and heard. Špolanskis observes that 'we are not being spoken to anymore. It is out of fashion. There was a different fashion not so long ago. Then Mr. Skujenieks was very talkative, and insistently invited minorities to support his coalition, not taking ethnic allegiances into account.'¹¹⁹ He announces that the Russian MPs will not vote for the government.

M. Dubins (*Agudat Israel*) ironically observes that Skujenieks wants to assemble a Latvian national government at any price. Is this the same prime minister who once sided with the minorities, he asks rhetorically. Was that government not a national government as well? Like Nurock, he stresses the necessity of working together in times of economic hardship. Dubins claims that it is a very badly chosen moment to push away the minorities away and to create a 'national' government. He reminds his audience that the minorities possess better commercial contacts with other countries, and that it would be easier for them to secure foreign loans. Dubins observes that although the Skujenieks programme did not contain any direct references to the minorities, the subsequent comments of J. Breikšs have made it apparent that the national government will be acting 'at the minorities' expense'. 'We know how Mr. Skujenieks treats minorities. Therefore do not expect minorities to vote for this government,' concludes Dubins. [Exclamation from the audience: 'Not necessary, either!']¹²⁰

When the debates are resumed on 30th December, A. Breikšs (Democratic Centre) takes the floor in order to respond to the minority speakers. He denies that the budget cuts were planned exclusively 'at minorities' expense', mentioning a decrease in the number of state departments, and the liquidation of several embassies and representations abroad. Breikšs insists that the minorities should take the difficult economic situation into account, and claims that the biggest 'abnormalities' can be found within the Education Ministry. School boards need to be decreased in size, he insists.

¹¹⁹ Latvijas Republikas IV Saeimas I sesijas 10. sēde 1931. gada 4. decembrī. p. 367-368.

¹²⁰ Latvijas Republikas IV Saeimas I sesijas 10. sēde 1931. gada 4. decembrī. p. 374-375.

K. Dēķens (Social Democrats) responds to Breikšs, stating that the Social Democrats are of a somewhat different opinion on the cuts relating to the minorities' education budget. He claims that over the 12 years which have passed since the Law on Minorities' Schools was adopted, those hopes that the Social Democrats invested in minorities' school boards have not been realised, and that the disappointments have been many. But nevertheless, he continues, the Social Democrats' position on minorities' school autonomy remains unaltered. 'We cannot be the oppressors just because we were the oppressed before', he says. Dēķens reminds Breikšs that prior to cutting the subsidies for the minorities' school boards, one should take into account that these boards are not just in charge of schools, but are also responsible for all the minorities' educational and cultural affairs. Dēķens outlines possible alternative measures, and promises to submit a detailed proposal at a later stage.¹²¹

Unexpectedly, another Social Democrat, F. Cielēns, takes the floor in order to add to what has been said by Dēķens: 'Mr. Dēķens here has said on behalf of our faction that the Social Democrats recognise the necessity of ensuring cultural-national rights for minorities by the state; but we also want to tell our minorities something else. If certain minorities try to turn this national-cultural autonomy apparatus into something that to a certain extent starts to be in opposition to the Latvian State on the one hand, and to Latvian democracy on the other, then a time will come when the Social Democrats will stop protecting Latvian minorities. [Cielēns must have been referring to the Polish, Lithuanian, Russian and German minorities; all of them had lately been accused in the press of keeping too close 'cultural contacts' with their respective kin states]. Cielēns complains to the *Saeima* that none of the previous education ministers have bothered to supply minorities' schools with history textbooks written from the standpoint of the Latvian democratic republic. He claims that some Polish schools in Latvia use history textbooks printed in Poland, and 'don't we all know how history is taught in Poland'.¹²²

P. Schiemann responds to Breikšs, arguing that despite what he said about the minorities not being willing to cut their own expenses, the German faction is always trying to find a way to save money. But one thing that should not be sacrificed is the school boards, he says, because they are crucial to maintaining minorities' cultures. As for Cielēns's accusations, he says, ideological convictions do not come from schools alone,

¹²¹ Latvijas Republikas IV Saeimas Ārkārtējās sesijas 4. sēde 1931. gada 30. decembrī. pp. 703-705

¹²² Latvijas Republikas IV Saeimas Ārkārtējās sesijas 4. sēde 1931. gada 30. decembrī. pp. 706

and the school administration does not exercise full control over the beliefs of its students. ‘You are speaking about the national movement which came from the neighbouring German state, and which found strong support among our German youth. But this movement does not have any political nature with a view to changing the existing state order; it is just a strongly expressed nationalism – the same nationalism which can be observed among your young people, and not just among the young people, but here in the *Saeima* too.’ And only society itself, continues Schiemann, can overcome these ideological trends. ‘But if you want to take away our autonomy, to send all our children into the same school with the same clichéd spirit, then you can be sure that all these movements that do not allow you peace of mind today, will not only fail to shrink, but will also grow disproportionately. Autonomy does not hinder development of loyalty towards the state; on the contrary, it fosters it, and makes it possible. A de-nationalised state would push those minorities who are good citizens today into a different camp.’¹²³

V. Lapinskis (Latvian Polish Union) responds to Cielēns, categorically denying his accusations about the Polish schools and teachers being involved in anti-state propaganda. He refers to the parliamentary investigative commission (where Polish representatives were not allowed), which has recently visited the Daugavpils and Ilukste regions, without any results. Lapinskis assures the *Saeima* that ‘We Poles have always been, and still are, a loyal section of residents.’¹²⁴

The minorities’ fears of the new Skujenieks government’s policies turned out to be not without grounds. Early in the following year, on 18th February 1932, the Cabinet adopted the new Regulations on the State Language:

Article 1 established the Latvian language as the state language of the Latvian Republic.

Article 2 made the Latvian language’s usage obligatory in the army, navy and all other state and municipal offices and enterprises; as well as in private persons’ interaction with those. Footnote 1 made a caveat that the use of language in the parliament was regulated by its Rules of procedure. Footnote 2 allowed, until the next municipal elections in 1935, the use also of the German and Russian languages, with the permission of the

¹²³ Latvijas Republikas IV Saeimas Ārkārtējās sesijas 4. sēde 1931. gada 30. decembrī. pp. 709-710

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

chairman, or at least by demand of one-third of members, during the sessions of municipal administrative offices. If at least one member demanded it, all speeches were to be translated into Latvian.

Article 3 allowed usage of the German and Russian languages, both during sessions and in communication with residents, in those municipal administrative offices where according to the latest census one specific ethnic minority exceeded fifty per cent of the local population. All speeches delivered in German or Russian during the session were to be translated into the Latvian language if so demanded by at least one member.

Article 4 allowed free use of any other language during public meetings, and religious services; in commercial communication; in the press, publishing, and educational establishments.

Article 5 regulated that all applications submitted by public and commercial organisations, firms, private persons and legal entities to state or municipal organisations, as well as accompanying, related reports, notifications, correspondence and documents, in case the originals were in a foreign language, were to be accompanied by translations into the Latvian language (with the exception of books).

Article 6 obliged all public and commercial organisations, firms and legal entities to discuss and approve all applications in the state language during their business activities, board sessions, and meetings.

Article 7 ordered names of all trading and industrial enterprises, firms, agencies, associations, unions, and organisations, as well as their stamps, seals and shop signs to be displayed in the state language. Other languages were acceptable alongside the state language, but in a secondary position.

Article 8 regulated that all geographical names in official communication were to be used in the state language exclusively.¹²⁵

¹²⁵ Noteikumi par valsts valodu. *Valdības Vēstnesis*, 19.02.1932.

Prior to the adoption of the Regulations of 1932, language usage in Latvia had no legal basis (the Latvian Constitution of 1922, for example, did not contain a reference to the state language or languages), with very few exceptions.

For example, the Regulations of 1921 requested all state institutions and their officials to accept petitions and applications in the Latgalian dialect from organisations and private persons. The Regulations also granted the right to use the Latgalian dialect in bookkeeping, correspondence, advertising and signboards to all Latgalian state and municipal institutions. (Šilde 1976: 378) These rights were therefore revoked by the Regulations of 1932.

The use of languages in the *Saeima* was regulated by its Rules of Procedure. German and Russian were allowed to be used alongside the Latvian language, with two caveats: all written communication had to be in Latvian, and those deputies who spoke in languages other than Latvian were responsible for submitting the transcripts of their speeches in Latvian translation to the *Saeima*'s secretariat.

In other spheres of public life, such as in the courts, state and municipal agencies, postal offices, railway stations, etc. language use was largely at the discretion of officials, and by and large the attitude towards it was very flexible. In civil procedures, all written documents in foreign languages were to be translated into Latvian, but verification of the accuracy of the translation was often omitted by mutual consent. (Loeber: 1993)

Understandably, after fourteen years of such relaxed language practices, minorities did not quite 'see it coming', despite growing voices of dissatisfaction among the titular nation, who considered this tri-lingual situation to be damaging not just to the Latvian language, but to the Latvian image and reputation abroad. Besides, the newly adopted Regulations were to come into force as early as on 4th March 1932, less than three weeks later.

P. Schiemann (Baltic German Party) immediately proposed amendments to the Regulations that would postpone their implementation until 15th April 1932. Defending his position against J. Breikšs (Democratic Centre), who accused Schiemann of being willing to 'procrastinate' about this 'so liberal a law that it only recognises the already existing practices', Schiemann reminds the *Saeima* that the Minorities' Education Departments

within the Ministry of Education enjoy the status of state organisations. According to the new regulations, they would also have to use the Latvian language exclusively. Schiemann states that for him it is impossible to imagine that anybody present would conceive of ordering the Head of the German education department to communicate with the German students' parents in any language different from their native tongue. He enquires whether it would not make more sense to amend the Regulations before they came into force, and warns the *Saeima* that if his proposal gets voted down, the German faction will have no choice but to interpret the motives behind it as villainous and hateful.¹²⁶

F. Cielēns responds by announcing that the Social Democrats will support the German faction's motion. [J. Breikšs from his seat: 'That was to be expected!'] It was to be expected indeed, continues Cielēns, because the Social Democratic faction recognises that in the matter of minorities' language rights a certain tolerance should be observed. Especially in Latvia, he claims, where minorities constitute 25 per cent of the population, this matter should be resolved in such a manner as to avoid inflaming tensions among the different ethnic groups.¹²⁷

J. Šterns (Progressive Union) is indignant about both the minorities' protests and Cielēns's excessively tolerant attitude. He posits that for the finely-educated Cielēns communicating in different languages presents no difficulty, whereas he, Šterns, is forced to leave the *Saeima*'s main auditorium every time when Schiemann, for example, gives a speech, because he always speaks in German, which is incomprehensible to Šterns. The same goes for the speeches by Schiemann's colleague, V. Fircks. Šterns expresses disappointment that there is no majority in the *Saeima* that would submit a proposal to use only the Latvian language in its proceedings. Šterns also makes an interesting claim (from a purely factual point of view) – according to him, almost every *Saeima* member understands Latvian; all MPs speak Latvian when they act as *rapporteurs* on draft laws, but the moment they start speaking as deputies, they switch to their own language.¹²⁸ He suggests that in addition to the Regulations, the Parliament's Rules of Procedure should be amended as well.¹²⁹

¹²⁶ Latvijas Republikas IV Saeimas II sesijas 3. sēde 1932. gada 1. martā, p. 128.

¹²⁷ Latvijas Republikas IV Saeimas II sesijas 3. sēde 1932. gada 1. martā, p. 129.

¹²⁸ Loeber (1993: 225) also writes that 'In practice, deputies from minority groups exercised their language rights in plenary session, but used the state language in commission work'.

¹²⁹ Latvijas Republikas IV Saeimas II sesijas 3. sēde 1932. gada 1. martā, p. 130.

S. Vittenbergs (*Agudat Israel*) expresses his opinion that the new regulations are ill suited to Latgale, which has been an integral part of Latvia only for the past 14 years, and therefore the Latvian language proficiency of its population is not adequate. He claims that it is unfair to expect Latgalians, among whom there are many illiterates not capable of signing their own name, to be able to communicate with state and municipal institutions in the Latvian language. Vittenbergs observes that the new education minister is quick to ban and prohibit, but that he does not show much initiative in making sure that every citizen has a chance to learn the Latvian language. He proposes to postpone the Regulations' enforcement in Latgale until 1935.¹³⁰

In response, Šterns confronts Vittenbergs with some handy statistics: the proportion of literate Russians in all Latvia in 1920 was only 41 per cent, whereas in 1930 it was already 62. In Latgale, the percentage of Russians who could read was 34 in 1920, and 75 in 1930. Šterns also jokingly draws everybody's attention to Vittenbergs's inconsistent position on language – on the one hand, he insists that each ethnic group should use its own language. On the other hand, Vittenbergs himself speaks in the *Saeima* in the 'beautiful Latvian language'.¹³¹

M. Nurock (*Mizrahi*) speaks bitterly:

After a long time the word 'foreigners' has started to be used again. It was brought back to life by the Latvian people, alongside whom we had suffered under the Tsarist yoke. Forgotten are the wartime proclamations of freedom, the new national legislation, minority rights, protection of minorities, self-determination and preservation of the national character! And who are these so-called 'foreigners'? They are those who had put down roots here centuries ago, and who contributed to our Motherland's economic and cultural development no less than the majority nation; those who after the proclamation of the state helped to restore the devastated land, to increase exports, to reconstruct industry, to invest capital, and to foster mutual trust.¹³²

Nurock posits that despite the fact that many minorities' representatives speak better Latvian than some ethnically Latvian youngsters, it is nevertheless unjust to compare Latvia to other countries, because even during the Russian Empire there was already a tri-lingual tradition in place in Latvia. Nurock reminds his audience that even under the Tsar,

¹³⁰ Latvijas Republikas IV Saeimas II sesijas 3. sēde 1932. gada 1. martā, pp. 132-135

¹³¹ Latvijas Republikas IV Saeimas II sesijas 3. sēde 1932. gada 1. martā, p. 135

¹³² Latvijas Republikas IV Saeimas II sesijas 3. sēde 1932. gada 1. martā, p. 136

Latvians were able to communicate in their own language with the municipalities. He states that up until now Latvia could be proud of its fair solution of the minority question, and recollects how the papers on minority rights' recognition in Latvia that he and Schiemann delivered at international conventions in the past have always earned ovations from the audience. And now, he continues, we are destroying our own good reputation. The Latvian nation's 'foreign part' does not ask for privileges, he says, but for equal rights. We appeal to the majority nation's objectivity and healthy state-oriented thinking.¹³³

At the end of the debates, the proposed amendments were passed to the Public Rights Commission for review. They would resurface in the *Saeima* one more time, on 10th May 1932, when they would not be put to the vote on the grounds that the proposed extended deadline of 15th April had already passed.

The deterioration of minority rights in general, and of language rights in particular, during the interwar period in Central Europe is customarily linked with the establishment of authoritarian regimes in the majority of these countries in the 1930s. It therefore seems significant that the first legal act curtailing minority rights was already introduced in Latvia at the beginning of 1932, when Latvia was still a democratic republic.

3.3.5. *Atis Ķēniņš, 'The Minorities' Oppressor'*

Skujenieks's 'national government' is perhaps best remembered because of the radical course taken by the Education Minister A. Ķēniņš [sometimes also Ķeniņš], who issued a series of decrees tightening up the use of the Latvian language in schooling and effectively reversing many of the existing provisions for minority schooling, citing the need to build a 'united nation'. According to Šilde (1985: 257), under Ķēniņš's leadership 'it all went in the opposite direction from the one determined by Rainis, who was the Education Minister in Skujenieks's first government'.

A writer and a former schoolteacher, Ķēniņš was a member of the Democratic Centre party. Ķēniņš had a long-standing reputation for pedagogical excellence among the Latvian intelligentsia. M. Vētra (1955: 208) describes the schools Ķēniņš and his wife A.

¹³³ Latvijas Republikas IV Saeimas II sesijas 3. sēde 1932. gada 1. martā, p. 136

Rūmane-Ķēniņa ran in pre-independence Latvia as ‘the only oases in German-Russian Riga, where Latvian youngsters could speak and study in their mother tongue...’ Latvian writers, poets and scientists worked as teachers in Kēniņš’s school, attests Vētra. The Democratic Centre party adopted a nationalistic course at its congress in 1932, and Ķēniņš endeavoured to keep it up in government. Once appointed as the education minister, he eagerly got down to work, busily issuing decrees regulating different aspects of national education and publishing emotional articles in the newspapers about the poor state of education and the desperate need for reforms.

Regulation No. 2796 of 09.06.1932 on ‘Testing of the state language’s knowledge of the schoolteachers belonging to ethnic minorities’ obliged all principals and teachers at ethnic minorities’ schools to pass a test in the Latvian language, orally and in writing, with those 50 years old and older being exempt.

Regulation No. 2813 of 10.06.1932 ‘On the composition of the student bodies in ethnic minorities’ gymnasiums and vocational schools’ stipulated that only the children of parents belonging to those ethnic groups whose language was the instruction language at a given school were allowed to study in those schools. Children of all ethnic backgrounds were allowed to study at gymnasiums and vocational schools with the Latvian language of instruction.

Decree No. 815 of 13.02.1933 ‘On usage of textbooks published abroad in schools’ stipulated that those foreign textbooks which had equivalents published in Latvia could be used only until 1st August 1 1933; for those textbooks which had no counterparts published in Latvia yet, the term was extended until 1st August 1934.

Decree No. 816 of 13.02.1933 banned the usage of three particular textbooks in schools due to their ‘biased content’. The books listed were a German Reich Geography textbook published in Munich and Berlin, a European geography textbook published in Munich and Berlin, and a History in Pictures textbook published for German minority schools in Libau (Liepāja) in 1932.

Decree No. 66 of 02.06.1933 dismissed the Director of the Riga State German Classical Gymnasium, V. Vulpius, from his position for ‘pedagogically and administratively unacceptable actions’. The detailed list of his actions revealed the use of a

‘political radio transmission’, interruption of normal school routine without registering it in the school journals, and the unwarranted celebration of a holiday not recognised by law (the date in question was 22nd May 1933 – on that day in 1918 the German army had recovered Riga from Stučka’s Bolsheviks – an occasion ethnic Latvians had mixed feelings about, and which they were not eager to commemorate). Decree No. 65 rebuked two officials on the German School Board, and twenty-five school administrators of different German schools for ‘a wilful celebration’ on the same day.

A circular of 14.06.1933 stipulated that teaching of the Latvian language, Latvian history, and Latvian geography in minority schools was not up to standard; cited the lower remuneration of those subjects’ teachers in minority schools in comparison with Latvian schools as a cause, and ruled that teachers of these subjects in minority schools should have their pay equalised with the pay received by their peers in Latvian schools.

A decree of 15.06.1933 removed minority school boards and schools from direct subordination to the Minister of Education and his Secretariat, stipulating instead that they should be reporting to the respective departments of the Ministry.

A. Kļēniņš became a minister amidst economic depression, when the education sector, along with the rest of the state apparatus, was suffering significant budget cuts. Among the numerous problems he faced, the issue of further cuts to the already overcrowded Latvian state schools (especially in the countryside) was perhaps the most challenging. Another paramount concern of Kļēniņš was the continuing, in his view, Russification and Germanisation (in Latgale, also Polonisation) of Latvian and minority students alike, which reportedly caused their increasing alienation from Latvian cultural and political reality and further weakened minorities’ loyalty towards the Latvian state.

Kļēniņš came up with a seemingly *blitzkrieg* solution for all these problems at once – a proposal to merge the Latvian and minorities’ state-funded schools in those regions where Latvian schools were overcrowded, and minority schools sparsely attended, and to leave it to minorities to maintain their private schools by their own means in the future, with an occasional grant from the government. In February 1933, the Cabinet of Ministers submitted amendments to this effect to the Law on Educational Institutions, and to the Law on Minority Schools. The earlier attempt by the government to pass amendments under Article 81 of the Constitution had failed, mainly due to the extensive press campaign

against it undertaken by the minorities. But A. Kēniņš, introducing amendments to the *Saeima* in February 1933, stresses the fact that the government has voted for the proposed amendments unanimously. According to Kēniņš, both laws adopted in 1919 (The Law on Latvian Educational establishment and The Law on Minority Schools, which together provided ethnic minorities with the means to exercise cultural autonomy from the state; this autonomy was not stipulated explicitly in the Constitution or any other piece of state legislation) are outdated and in need of urgent revision. At the time the laws were passed, he claims, the newly born Latvian state did not have much to offer in terms of education, as its school system had not been developed yet. There were no textbooks available, and no proper curriculum. Under those circumstances, continues Kēniņš, it was logical to allow minorities to develop their own school system by allocating a portion of the state budget for this purpose. But in the past few years, Latvian schools have blossomed, and in terms of curriculum and its implementation they can now safely compete with minority schools. Besides, new conditions require new approaches, stresses the minister.

Referring to the language reform of the previous year, Kēniņš posits that if before merging the Latvian and the state-supported minority schools did not look viable, now the necessary conditions have been created for the successful transition of minority schoolchildren from minority primary schools to Latvian secondary schools.

But is it in the first place desirable that youngsters of different ethnicities study together, he asks rhetorically. He then provides his own answer: no matter how much good is done by children continuing to study in the environment most comfortable for them, the benefits of a unified school system are still greater. And not just because it allows pupils to be better prepared for subsequent higher education in the Latvian language, but, more importantly, because ‘starting from school, they grow together, start feeling like citizens of the same state, and establish close, even friendly relations.’¹³⁴

There are already existing examples of children from different ethnic backgrounds attending the same schools, insists Kēniņš. But those schools up until now have not been the Latvian schools, but the German and Russian ones. If this is possible with the German and Russian languages of instruction, it should be possible with the Latvian language of instruction as well, concludes the Minister.

¹³⁴ Latvijas Republikas IV Saeimas V sesijas 2. sēde 1933. gada 3. februārī, p. 47.

Finally, Kēniņš recognises that financial considerations are yet another major driving force behind the draft law. In the present situation, according to the Minister, there are often about ten secondary schools in total in the small towns like Ludza and Rēzekne, with minority schools being half-empty, and Latvian schools overfilled. Comparing primary schools, Kēniņš claims that more often than not there are fewer pupils in a whole minority school, with four grades and eight teachers employed, than in one grade of a Latvian school. He considers it to be undemocratic, and a waste of existing resources, and therefore proposes the new law as a remedy. As for the private minority schools, he stresses, the draft law foresees a possibility for them to receive allowances from both municipalities and the state; here the Latvian state demonstrates an obliging attitude not very common in other democratic states, asserts Kēniņš.

P. Schiemann (Baltic Germans), responding to the minister, posits that in the situation of an overall budget deficit, minorities would be ready to discuss austerity measures pertaining to schools – but ‘within reason’. However, it was clear to everybody present from the Minister’s speech, he claims, that financial considerations are only secondary for the government, while ‘cultural domination’ is their primary goal. Schiemann rightfully objects to Kēniņš’s interpretation of the 1919 laws as temporary and transitory in nature. He insists that primary school alone is not sufficient for developing an understanding and appreciation of one’s national culture. As for Kēniņš’s argument in favour of better relations between children of different ethnic backgrounds, Schiemann acknowledges that the fact that ‘our youth is so very much separated from each other’ presents a great concern indeed, and asserts that minorities ‘always think about how to improve relations’. He is convinced, however, that these relations cannot be possibly improved by taking away rights to education in one’s mother tongue.

K. Dēķens (Social Democrats) questions the notion of cultural unity frequently used by A. Kēniņš. Is it the cultural unity of all Latvia, or the cultural unity of ethnic Latvians, he asks? If it is the former, he continues, than Minister Kēniņš has every right to pursue it, and to make sure that schools of all ethnic backgrounds follow programmes which relate to Latvia, Latvia’s interests, Latvia’s past, present and future. In case of the latter, Dēķens considers it utterly unreasonable to ask minorities to foster the development of the Latvian culture. [the Social Democrats have decisively distanced themselves from Kēniņš’s ‘nationalistic course’ during their party congress in 1933.]

In response to Dēķens, K. Skalbe (Democratic Centre) announces that the purported difference between the culture of Latvia and Latvian culture is ‘a thing of the past’. Our views on the matter, he says, have become clearer and more advanced, i.e. there is no difference whatsoever between the two because of the Latvian language, which covers all of the Latvian territory. Non-Latvians, the later arrivals, do not live anywhere in Latvia compactly, and therefore it should be only natural for them to be willing to learn the Latvian language, continues Skalbe. ‘We have a state of ethnic Latvians (*latviešu valsts*) here, which is the same as the Latvian state (*Latvijas valsts*), as our language covers the whole territory,’ says Skalbe.¹³⁵

Ķēniņš, responding to his critics, retorts: ‘I will tell you more: whatever education law we adopt, life goes its own way, and minorities will study at those schools that are more convenient. But in the Latvian Latvia it will be more convenient to study together with the Latvians.’¹³⁶

At the end of the debates, two proposals were submitted regarding the amendments to the Education Law: to vote in an open ballot (K. Kiršteins, K. Bachmanis and others), and to cast a secret ballot (P. Schiemann, M. Kallistratovs, S. Vitenbergs, V. Fircks and others). In accordance with Article 133 of the *Saeima* Rules of Procedure, a secret ballot took place, where out of 94 MPs present, 25 voted for the passing of the two draft laws to the commissions, 64 voted against, two abstained, and three ballots were not valid.

J. Breikšs (Democratic Centre) comments bitterly on the results of the vote: ‘This vote – over sixty ballots against the vital interests of the Latvian people – causes the biggest indignation among the Latvian nation; therefore from this high tribune and from the bottom of my heart I protest against it. Mr. Ulmanis, stop laughing! Your vile laughter deeply insults me today.’¹³⁷

The vote on the Minorities’ Schools Law was also a closed one, and also took place on the initiative of minority deputies. Results were similar to the previous vote: 24 votes for, 63 – against, one abstention, and one invalid ballot note.

¹³⁵ Latvijas Republikas IV Saeimas V sesijas 2. sēde 1933. gada 3. februārī, p. 70.

¹³⁶ Latvijas Republikas IV Saeimas V sesijas 2. sēde 1933. gada 3. februārī, p. 78.

¹³⁷ Latvijas Republikas IV Saeimas V sesijas 2. sēde 1933. gada 3. februārī, p. 82.

At the end of the session, M. Skujenieks informed the Parliament that after the amendments to the two laws had been voted down, he could see clearly that his national government did not have the necessary support, and therefore could not continue its work.

On 22nd March 1933 A. Bļodnieks presented his government's declaration to the *Saeima*, promising first and foremost to concentrate on the hard economic challenges facing the state. In order to deal with these problems more effectively, he promised that his government would be taking into account the opinions of society at large, of the press, and of the dissenters. Minorities were not mentioned explicitly; in terms of education policy, the government's course was promised to be strictly 'nationally democratic' and aimed at supplying the state with citizens possessing practical skills, especially in the agricultural sector. Educational policies would continue to be implemented by A. Ķēniņš, who was nominated as candidate for Education Minister again.

During the ensuing parliamentary debates, V. Fircks (Baltic Germans), expressing surprise and indignation at Ķēniņš's appointment, promises that the German faction will not support the government and will remain in 'fervent opposition' to A. Ķēniņš.

M. Nurock (*Mizrahi*), also dismayed at Ķēniņš's presence in the government, observes resentfully that if before Latvia, in comparison with the other countries, could be proud of its relationship with its ethnic minorities, these days are long gone. He will not vote for the government.

M. Dubins (*Agudat Israel*) promises to vote against; he adds sarcastically that Mr. Bļodnieks should not have wasted time on writing his own declaration, but could have just as well used the Skujenieks's declaration from a year-and-a-half ago, as the two are identical.

Having seemingly survived the demise of the Skujenieks government in his post as Education Minister, Ķēniņš would nevertheless meet his own trials and tribulations only shortly afterwards. On 28th June 1933, during the protracted 1933/34 budget debates, the budget of the Ministry of Education came under the close scrutiny yet again. But it was Minister Ķēniņš himself who sustained a vicious attack from the Agrarian Union delivered by J. Lejiņš-Leja. Mr. Lejiņš, a devoted member of the party steadily rising through the ranks, opens his speech with a surprising, considering all the preceding heated debates in

the *Saeima* on the issue, statement that ‘it seems that at the moment there is not the slightest need to amend the education law passed by the National Council’, and that in the years to come there will be plenty of opportunities to do so without a rush, especially after the economic situation has improved. Mr. Lejiņš then closely examines various ambiguous facts from the minister’s past: Ķēniņš applying, whilst being an education minister, for a Ls 2000 grant from the Cultural Fund for the publication of his complete works; him arranging for a ‘good position’ for his son; Ķēniņš’s attempts at real estate property speculation at the beginning of the Latvian statehood, and other alleged instances of nepotism and cronyism. Lejiņš also maintains, most interestingly, that the minister’s relationship with the ethnic minorities is not what it seems: ‘no matter how big a national hero he was, he always had something to discuss with the minority deputies’.¹³⁸

J. Lejiņš-Leja recalls in his memoir (1971: 82): ‘I did not want to deliver that speech. I was trying to avoid it by saying that although A. Ķēniņš is a demagogue, I do not know anything about him, and therefore cannot possibly speak. K.U. [Kārlis Ulmanis] said that all colleagues would help me with gathering the information. H. Celmiņš supplied most of the information. The attack on A. Ķēniņš was brutal...It was during the debates on the Education Ministry’s budget, as we could not find a better occasion...The attack was purely personal.’

J. Lejiņš also sheds some light on the real motives behind the A. Ķēniņš’s demise, which according to him was orchestrated solely by the Agrarian Union: ‘I have soon realised what was the matter. A. Ķēniņš was strongly disliked by our minorities; K.U. wanted to show them that we dislike him too, in this way retaining the minorities’ favour.’ (Lejiņš 1971: 83) Moreover, Lejiņš claims that in 1932, during the vote on the Language Law, Ulmanis encouraged his faction deputies’ absence during the open vote in the *Saeima*. Lejiņš refers to the ‘general’ (apparently, J. Balodis) telling him that ‘if the vote was a closed one, he [Ulmanis] would definitely vote against it’ as voting for the law would present an obstacle to a coalition with minorities in the future (1971:70). Lejiņš extrapolates that ‘obviously, K.U. had already had 15th May [15th May 1934 – the date of the authoritarian *coup* led by Ulmanis] in mind: it could only happen if he was the prime minister. He could only become one with the minorities’ support.’ (Lejiņš 1971: 70-71)

¹³⁸ Latvijas Republikas IV Saeimas VI sesijas 24. sēde 1933. gada 28. jūnijā, p. 983.

J. Lejiņš defends Ulmanis's stand on the Language Law and the Education Law, insisting that it had nothing to do with a lack of patriotism on his part, but was purely a matter of political tactics aimed at retaining the support of ethnic minorities for agricultural legislation, as well as at preventing M. Skujenieks from running as a candidate in the upcoming presidential elections. (Lejiņš 1971:81)¹³⁹

On 16th June 1933, Prime Minister Bļodnieks informs the *Saeima* that A. Kēniņš has submitted a resignation letter. K. Skalbe, an unyielding supporter of Kēniņš's reforms, observes that 'at the departure of the disagreeable minister, all faces on the right wing were glistening with pleasure'. Ardently defending Kēniņš against 'petty accusations' of those looking for 'a mote in his eye', Skalbe nevertheless acknowledges that perhaps Kēniņš's reforms would have stood a better chance if his tactics had been 'steadier, smoother and thus more consequent'.¹⁴⁰

A. Kēniņš became known as the 'minorities' oppressor' in modern Latvian history, labelled as such by the left, the right and the ethnic minorities alike. A rare exception was Ž. Unāms (1964: 81-82), who attempted to dole out some historical justice to the former education minister:

With regards to Kēniņš, he was not the one to define the Democratic Centre's politics. And the Democratic Centre was not a nationalistically chauvinistic party. At a time when ministers were changed more often than gloves, Kēniņš also once became a minister. It is true that Kēniņš as a politician was ardently nationalistic, with bigger personal sympathies towards the Slavic and Roman cultures rather than towards Germanic culture. But he could not, and simply was not able to destroy minorities' cultural autonomy, as it was defined by the law. Within a parliamentary system, a minister cannot cancel or amend a law. ...It was different political groupings that displayed dictatorial tendencies. The Democratic Centre and the Progressive Union were for the parliamentary system.¹⁴¹

It seems impossible now to establish precisely what Kēniņš's real goal was, i.e. whether he earnestly aimed at creating a unified Latvian nation by putting Latvian and

¹³⁹ E. Dunsdorfs (1978:268) believed that the fact that Lejiņš had always remained an ardent defender of the Agrarian Union despite never being a personal favourite of K. Ulmanis adds credibility to his account of events.

¹⁴⁰ Skalbe, K. 'Kēniņam aizejot', *Jaunākās Ziņas*, 20.06.1933.

¹⁴¹ In my opinion, the fact that Unāms himself was an apologist for the authoritarian regime of K. Ulmanis lends additional credibility to his evaluation of A. Kēniņš's activities as a Minister.

minority children in the same schools (something which has never been achieved since; moreover, the very idea remains highly polarising in Latvia until today), or whether he, as Schiemann suspected, had the ultimate goal of ethnic Latvians' 'cultural domination' in mind, or perhaps a bit of both. It cannot be contested that the reasons Kēniņš cited as justification of his suggested reforms were indeed the real ones: there was a deep segregation within Latvian society along ethnic lines (and it can be successfully argued that this was largely conditioned, from an early age on, by the segregated school system). It is also indisputable that the country was in dire straits economically in 1933, which made severe cuts to the education budget inevitable, and Kēniņš's position as a minister hardly an enviable one. He could scarcely take a step he could take without causing uproar from one part of the population or another (or, as actually happened, from both). And here I would like to give Minister Kēniņš the benefit of the doubt for a moment – is it conceivable that his intention to 'kill two birds with one stone', i.e. to solve a budgetary conundrum, and to bring Latvian and minorities' children together, was dictated by what he understood as 'everybody's best interests'? Was it not the intention itself, but rather his ruthless and callous approach to the task of implementing it (from the *Saeima's* debates over the law amendments one may surmise that no consultations had been held with the minorities when the action plan was conceived, and that their opinion on the matter was never taken into account) which caused such an extremely negative reaction on the minorities' part? Understandably, the minorities were furious – the education laws of 1919 formed the only existing legal base of cultural autonomy so overtly promised by the founders of the Latvian state; besides, the minorities had put an incredible effort into their education system in the intervening years, and their whole cultural life revolved around their educational institutions. To simply tell them to give them away at the moment of need was a serious miscalculation on Kēniņš's part. Would the outcome have been different if the matter had been handled with more caution? The answer to this hypothetical question is – probably not, as it is quite certain that if the discussions on the issue with the minority representatives were held prior to formulating the draft law, very few concessions would have been reached, as the whole idea of having a uniform school system by putting children of different ethnic backgrounds together was perceived as abominable by the wider population, ethnic Latvians and minorities alike. One can argue here that perhaps some concessions would have been reached nevertheless – after all, it was only proposed to merge schools in those regions where the attendance of minority children was waning, and the Latvian schools were overcrowded (although the minorities understandably feared

that this was just a start, and there was more to come). But more likely, Kēniņš's endeavour was doomed from the start, and he himself was made an unknowing pawn in a different political game. But looking back at the ill-fated education reform of 1933 and the upheaval it caused, and comparing it to the education reform of 2004 and current debates on education in Latvia, one can sometimes wonder whether in fact the baby got thrown out with the bathwater.

Whilst the assiduous and brusque A. Kēniņš was trying to reform the existing education system in the way he saw fit in the new circumstances, M. Valters was attempting a revision of the foundations of the Latvian economic sector. In 1933, this former socialist and liberal published a book on the planned economy, mainly inspired by Mussolini's achievements in the area.¹⁴² Lamenting the lingering economic crisis and growing unemployment, Valters claims that current difficulties could be much sooner overcome in 'a strong state', rather than under the currently ruling 'oversimplistic neoliberalism' (Valters1933: 22). 'Down with the private enterprise and with "economic liberalism"!' he calls unabashedly (Valters 1933: 23). Not unlike Kēniņš, Valters explains the allegedly desperate need for the change, which in his view validates state's intervention, by the new developments signifying the maturity of the Latvian nation: 'Social interests have now bound the nation together; the nation is not a sphere of individuals anymore.... Those interests define the life of the nation and therefore our position on economic freedom should not be limited to the individual, it should be extended to the nation. The new economy ...seeks to incorporate individual economic forces into the struggle for national goals.' (Valters 1933:24) Valters's ideological transformation seems to be complete – a former liberal and a democrat, he now firmly puts national interests above individual freedoms.

E. Blanks also advocated immediate reforms in his book published in 1932.¹⁴³ Accusing Latvian politicians of corruption, he claimed that after first having made capital out of the national idea, they had now moved on to exploitation of the 'second idea of our age', democracy. 'We have founded our state upon the firm belief in democracy; and the

¹⁴² Valters, M. 1933. *No sabrukuma uz planveidoto saimniecību. Latvijas atjaunošanas problēmas. Latvijas nākotne.* Rīga.

¹⁴³ Blanks, E. 1932. *Latvijas dēmonokrātija un viņas vadoni.* Rīgā.

future of our state was bound to democratic ideas, no matter how simplistically or vulgarly understood.’ But the Latvian people do not have trust democracy anymore, because the rift between the ideas that their state was founded upon and real life has simply become too big. Announcing that ‘the era of democracy is dying before coming of age’, Blanks insists upon ‘radical constitutional reforms’, warning that otherwise Latvia might be in serious danger. (Blanks 1932: 25-26)

E. Blanks, perhaps inadvertently, also pinpoints the fundamental reason behind the triumph of the nationalistic course amidst political and economic uncertainties: ‘If the national principle was taken out of the Latvian state ideology, it would be hard to find any other principle that would justify our national existence.’ (Blanks 1932:20)

On 9th February 1934, a group of deputies from the Democratic Centre (J. Breikšs, K. Kiršteins, B. Pīpiņa, K. Skalbe and G. Zemgals) submitted a draft Law on Commercial, Industrial, Insurance and Private Credit Companies’ language of business and organisation of workforce. The draft foresaw that starting from 1st September 1934, all business correspondence and accounting were to be conducted in the Latvian language. But more importantly, also from 1st September 1934, 50 per cent of the workforce of all commercial, industrial, insurance and private credit companies were to be ethnic Latvians, and then from 1st November 1934 – the proportion of ethnic Latvians was to rise to 80 per cent. Breikšs, Pīpiņa and Skalbe defended the draft law in the ensuing debates, stressing that ethnic Latvians were suffering most from the unemployment, whereas the minorities still enjoyed a relatively high standard of living. M. Dubins, responding to the draft, enquired sarcastically whether in return the minorities would get guaranteed 20 per cent employment in the State sector. He also expressed indignation that G. Zemgals, a former President who had sworn to represent all the people of Latvia without discrimination, would lend his signature to such a project. Altogether, the *Saeima*’s debates sounded tired. The draft law was voted down before it could be passed to the committees for revision.

On 2nd March 1934, the Bļodnieks government resigned after the failed vote of confidence in the *Saeima* initiated by the Agrarian Union. F. Cielēns (1963, II: 499) recalls that the Social Democratic faction reacted to the Bļodnieks government’s departure ‘with stormy applause and mocking cheers’, having no idea that they were in fact saying goodbye to last Latvian democratic government. Despite his initial success in getting the Bļodnieks cabinet out of the way, Ulmanis encountered unprecedented resistance from

bourgeois parties to his possible premiership. The rumours of an impending *coup d'état* had been around for several months, and Ulmanis's well-known authoritarian tendencies made him a particular threat. For once, the New Farmers of A. Bļodnieks, the Progressive Union of M. Skujenieks, and the Democratic Centre of J. Breikšs stood united – they would not support the government coalition if Ulmanis were nominated as Prime Minister. Ironically, it was the minorities' support that allowed K. Ulmanis to become prime minister on 17th March 1934. Perhaps blinded by his past declarations of opposition to the loathed Kēniņš's reforms, the minorities could not see that they were not lending their support in the usual trade-off between their own cultural interests and the Agrarian Union's protection of agriculture-related legislation. Instead, they had unknowingly sided with Kārlis Ulmanis against Latvian parliamentary democracy – a decision that would ultimately end their cultural autonomy permanently (and indeed something of which they had been forewarned that day by none other but the Social Democrat F. Menders, who, with a remarkable foresight, predicted that the minorities were playing a dangerous game by supporting the Agrarian Union, and that without the Social Democrats' backup in place, their the cultural autonomy would soon expire).¹⁴⁴ But why Menders and his faction resigned themselves to the role of passive spectators and did not attempt to avert Ulmanis's accession to power is a question that remains unanswered to this day. F. Cielēns (1963) argues that contrary to the commonly accepted view that the success of the *coup* was conditioned by the overall political situation in Europe and deepening economic crisis, the blame lay with Menders and the left wing of the Latvian Social Democratic Party. In the absence of a united Centrist democratic bloc, it was the Social Democrats' primary responsibility, as the main opponent to the Agrarian Union in the *Saeima*, to guard parliamentary democracy from the authoritarian threat, insists Cielēns.

The *coup d'état* on 15th March 1934 carried out by Prime Minister K. Ulmanis with the support of the general J. Balodis and the Latvian army, effectively ended the democratic period in the interwar history of independent Latvia. Another prominent politician who at the last moment joined the conspirators was M. Skujenieks, whose name and political reputation lent extra legitimacy to the ensuing authoritarian rule (on Skujenieks's possible reasons for joining the conspirators according to different sources – more at the end of this chapter).

¹⁴⁴ Latvijas Republikas IV Saeimas VIII sesijas 19. sēde 1934. gada 17. martā. p. 808.

The coup was carried out on the night of 15th May 1934, during which all members of the Social Democratic faction, as well as some representatives of the Democratic Centre and of minority factions were arrested. The conspirators did not meet any resistance, a couple of shots fired in the air by B. Kalniņš notwithstanding. A decree signed by Prime Minister K. Ulmanis and the War Minister, General J. Balodis, which cited ‘a threat of civil unrest endangering public safety’ imposed martial law in Riga from 23:00 PM on 15th May 15, and from 01:00 AM on 16th in the rest of Latvian territory.¹⁴⁵ The decree was published alongside the ‘Government’s Manifesto’, which assured the public that ‘Our actions are not directed against Latvian democracy, but directed at ensuring that the political parties’ infighting does not smother the people’s spirit and the people’s will. The government only wants to create, as soon as possible, such conditions that would allow that spirit and that will to flourish unencumbered.’ The goal was to return not just to a prosperous Latvia, but to a Latvia where ‘our original national Latvian culture will blossom, where all things Latvian will triumph and all things alien will disappear.’¹⁴⁶

Summary

The brief period of Latvian democracy described in this chapter is incredibly rich in terms of historical events, of complexity of both the internal politics of Latvia and of the larger European political scene, and of the sheer variety of ideas, beliefs, and viewpoints from all sides of the political spectrum.

The kaleidoscopic changes of government and the proliferation of political parties, further complicated by the lack of transparency (virtually all important political decisions seemed to be made offstage, with the parties trying to keep the exchanged promises secret) and by personal struggles for influence, obscure the main trends and tendencies in the country’s political development – at times, one cannot see the wood for the trees.

But three major developments, closely interrelated, can be clearly traced: the continuous deterioration of majority-minority relations, the radicalisation of both the left and the right wings of the political spectrum; and the gradual corrosion of liberal democratic values and parliamentary rule.

¹⁴⁵ ‘Rihkojums par kara stahwokļa izsludinaschanu’, *Jaunākās Ziņas*, 16.05.1934

¹⁴⁶ ‘Waldibas manifests’, *Jaunākās Ziņas*, 16.05.1934

To a large extent, these developments were influenced by external factors and closely mirrored developments elsewhere in Europe, where the core nations and their large and small ethnic minorities continued to regard each other with suspicion, while the mechanisms of the League of Nations proved too weak to offer any protection or guarantees of stability; where representative democracy proved to be extremely cumbersome to execute; where the small nations started feeling threatened by the expansionist ambitions of the bigger states portending border revision, and where by the late 1920s almost all successor states had turned into dictatorships. The Great Depression amplified the already existing discontent.

The parliamentary debates described in this chapter clearly indicate a growing frustration among ethnic Latvians with the insufficient – or even failed, in their opinion – integration of ethnic minorities into the life of the new state, which they tended to blame on their own ‘excessively liberal’ policies. The deteriorating security situation in Europe in general, the threat of fascism, and the triumphant march of authoritarianism made Latvians deeply suspicious of their national minorities (and in this latter instance, they were looking in the wrong direction). Communist Russia was always considered a threat, but now Germany also became an aggressive authoritarian state. As for Latvia’s relationship with Poland, which was still considered a guarantor of stability in the region, it was anything but simple. Latvia tended to view Poland, with whom, prior to World War Two, it had shared a border, with ‘considerable suspicion’, questioning its real intentions in the region and fearing possible designs on Latgale (Stranga 1994: 47). As a result of external threats, both real and imagined, the trend was set of viewing the Russian, German, and Polish communities of Latvia as a potential ‘fifth column’, pushing them to the margins of political life and increasing their sense of alienation.

Undeniably, there was also a certain growth of Latvian minorities’ own ethnic nationalism in response to the nationalist fever that overtook their kin states at the time (with the exception of Latvian Jews, who felt increasingly threatened by the spreading pan-European anti-Semitism and therefore had to tread very carefully). This minority ethnic nationalism was further fuelled by ethnic Latvians’ suspicions and often-unfair accusations. It seems impossible to disentangle all causes and consequences here, especially in retrospect, but what remains abundantly clear is that, by the early 1930s, majority-minority relations in Latvia were in a state of deadlock.

The question remains - how did things actually deteriorate so fast from the initial liberal declarations of building democratic Latvia together upon the principles of equality of 1918, to the impotence of parliamentary democracy and the xenophobia of 1934?

Hope (1996: 41) observed that there was ‘a touch of the unreal in the egalitarian colour of democracy which appeared overnight after centuries of feudal servitude’. The lack of political experience in general, and of practicing representative democracy in particular (the short experience of a handful of Latvians representing their provinces in the Russian State *Duma* and at the all-Russia Constituent Assembly notwithstanding) are often cited as reasons behind the quick demise of the Latvian democracy. The Latvian constitution, as Lieven (1993: 64) observed, was too democratic for its own good; to uphold these generously declared principles in the face of a complex reality proved to be impossible. And perhaps it was the absence of any previous experience of autonomous inclusive political institutions that, to some extent, prevented the multiethnic population of Latvia from forming an overarching national identity, unlike, for example, their northern neighbours the Finns and their Swedish minority, who got united around a common sense of territorially-based nationhood.

The fragmentation of political parties, with their often-irreconcilable views and goals, and constant fighting for the electorate made political stability an unachievable goal. Internal disagreements and continuous splintering into factions plagued the left, the centre, and the right alike.

Ethnic minorities suffered from the same affliction, often unable to find consensus within their own respective group and incapable of agreeing common policy with the others. In the Baltic German faction, the liberal Paul Schiemann constantly had to appease the conservative Fircks and others; in the Jewish faction, there was constant infighting between the Orthodox, the Zionists, the Socialist Zionists, and the *Bund*. In the Russian faction, there was often no agreement between the Russian Orthodox and the Old Believers, and between the National Orthodox and the liberals. On many occasions, as demonstrated earlier in this chapter, instead of setting common goals and presenting a united front, each minority tried to claim a special status with the Latvians and obtain special favours.

The Latvian Social Democratic Party, being the most popular party during the parliamentary era and having the largest representation in the *Saeima*, proved unable to capitalise on its own popularity. Caught up in its narrow ideology of promoting the interests of the working class, it failed to address the concerns of wider society. Having spent most of its time in opposition, the party did not offer many constructive solutions, being either unable or unwilling to accept wider political responsibility. Sturmthal (1944: 14), examining the crisis of European labour during the interwar crisis, distinguishes between pressure groups and political parties, where the former ‘feel responsible only for the welfare of the particular group or faction it represents’, and the latter further ‘the interests of the whole society into which particular interests are integrated’. In this sense, both the LSDSP and the Latvian minority parties largely acted as pressure groups.

Another puzzling phenomenon is the remarkable radicalisation of views among the Latvian intelligentsia, who, despite being a numerically small group, had a huge impact on public opinion and on the nation-building process. Almost everybody who was anybody in Latvian politics had been either a Social Democrat, a National Democrat or a liberal prior to independence. An astounding number of these people succumbed to chauvinistic ethnic nationalism, some also to reactionary anti-Semitism, within the course of just a few years. Later yet, some of them would betray democracy altogether by supporting the authoritarian regime.

J. Akuraters, a famous Latvian poet and essayist, had been a Social Democrat and a hero of the Revolution of 1905. During the 1920s, he was one of the main proponents of the so-called ‘Latvian orientation’, which presupposed the subjugation of the interests of Latvian minorities to the interests of the welfare of the core nation. H. Asars went from being a Social Democrat to the leading columnist of the chauvinistic newspaper *Latvis*, whose publisher, the politician A. Bergs, a famous anti-Semite, had been a dedicated liberal prior to Latvian independence. J. Jankavs, a talented essayist and a fervent Social Democrat, the protégé of P. Stučka himself, during the democratic years became one of Latvia’s first anti-Semitic theoreticians. The ideological metamorphosis of A. Kroders, another Social Democrat, has already been described earlier in this chapter. And of course, we must not forget the main Latvian theoreticians on the national question, M. Skujeniēks and M. Valters, whose ideological transformations are described elsewhere in this thesis.

Dribins (1997) distinguishes between those Latvian intellectuals who spent World War One in Latvia and those who spent it as refugees in Russia; this line of argument was further developed by Zaķe (2008). According to this view, those who had spent the war years in Russia developed radical anti-Russian and anti-imperial views; they actively promoted Latvian independence and constructed an ‘image of the ideal national state’ as a ‘perfect realisation of Latvianness’ (Zaķe 2008: 60). Upon their return home, they were not prepared to make any ‘ethnic compromises’ and their views grew more radical. Those intellectuals who had spent the war in Latvia reportedly did not share such radical views and ‘promoted the concept of a nation consisting of everyone who lived on Latvian territory at the time, including non-ethnic Latvians’ (Dribins 1997: 129).

I would like to challenge this ‘radical refugee’ theory, and offer an alternative explanation. First of all, the division into radical ‘refugees’ and tolerant ‘home’ intellectuals simply does not work when applied more broadly. For example, Skujenieks, Valters, Bergs, and Kroders had all spent the war years in Latvia. On the other hand, other Social Democrats, who had spent the war in Russia, like V. Bastjānis and K. Lorencs, and also, for a shorter time, F. Cielēns, did not get the ethnic nationalist bug –while the once-moderate Latvian Social Democrats P. Stučka and J. Daniševskis, after spending the war in Russia, turned communist.

It seems to me that a possible key to understanding this phenomenon of the intellectuals’ radicalisation is offered by J. Kārklīš (1990), a famous journalist of the interwar period and also a Social Democrat in the past, in his memoir. Kārklīš describes how many ex-socialists turned ‘dead against’ their former party members, and stresses that this was often not out of political conviction. For instance, Kārklīš mentions how H. Asars, upon his return to Latvia, ‘as befitted an old revolutionary’, first of all tried, unsuccessfully, to secure employment at the newspaper *Sociāldemokrāts*. Within a couple of years, writes Kārklīš (1990: 163), Asars was already employed by the bourgeois newspaper *Latvis*, being ‘the most fervent denier of socialism there’.

In other words, I would like to suggest that being absent from Latvia during a crucial period of the fight for independence when the political elite was formed, and finding out upon one’s return that all key positions in the new state had already been taken, is a more likely cause of discontent on the part of the refugees and a more plausible explanation of their later radicalisation.

The ‘old revolutionaries’, as it often happens, could not adjust so easily to the realities of peaceful times; the construction of the new state, and especially the convoluted political games which accompanied it, required an entirely different set of skills. For example, Akuraters, after serving as a member of the National Council, left politics altogether. Valters, one of the ‘fathers’ of Latvian independence, was forced out of active politics into diplomacy; after an internal conflict within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, he found himself stuck in the position of Latvian Consul General in the diplomatic backwater of Königsberg (now Kaliningrad) for several years, a situation which he understandably loathed – he would only be rescued from there in 1934 by the authoritarian government of K. Ulmanis, to which he lent his ideological support (Šilde 1985: 206). Kroders was ousted from *Latvijas Sargs* by the Agrarian Union. Skujenieks stayed in politics and occupied the post of prime minister twice; he was personally well respected in the Latvian political world, by friends and foes alike. However, after the split with the LSDSP in 1926, his faction in the Parliament did not fare particularly well, with the majority of the ‘renegades’ returning to the big party soon after. His next political venture, the Progressive Union, had only three seats in the Saeima and was often mocked by fellow parliamentarians for Skujenieks’s inability to control the votes of his peers.

A. Bergs had himself never been a revolutionary, but sympathised with the Revolution of 1905, was one of the leaders of the National Council, and, according to Cielēns (1963 (III): 143-144), was one of the most active contributors to *Satversme* during its elaboration. However, his political party, under different names, continued to lose popular support: it had six mandates in the Constitutional Assembly, four in the First Saeima, three in the Second, two in the Third, and none in the Fourth. At the same time, as an heir to the famous Latvian real estate magnate, Bergs had run into financial difficulties, and his fortune was now dwindling. It is only logical to suppose that Bergs’s own political and personal misfortunes contributed to his notorious statement that ‘*Satversme* is not faring well’ [*Satversme neiet*], as well as to his growing intolerance towards the national minorities, in particular the Jews.

Still, one ought not to get carried away with generalisations. There were plenty of Latvian leftist and liberally inclined politicians who stayed consistent in their views regardless of where they had spent World War One, or of how successful they were in their politics or business affairs. But the tendency of those dissatisfied with the reality of independent Latvia to fall back on ‘national patriotism’, which was more often than not

defined in negative terms – anti-foreign, anti-liberal, anti-Semitic, etc., brings to mind Schopenhauer’s famous definition of national pride (which he aptly calls ‘the cheapest sort of pride’) as a last resort of those who have failed elsewhere. (Schopenhauer 2006: 35)

Stranga (1997: 36) offers a very interesting insight into the expansion of Latvian ethnic nationalism during the interwar republic, claiming that it ‘started to blossom when the state had already been created, when nationalism as such had no goal any more; this belated nationalism attempted to compensate, with a re-doubled and unnecessary effort, for the omissions of the past’. The reasons behind it notwithstanding, the betrayal of the ideals of democracy, fairness, and justice by those members of the Latvian intelligentsia whom the general public revered as ‘independence fighters’ served as a powerful catalyst for the disintegration of democracy in Latvia.

Chapter Four: The Citizenship Law of 1919 and Minority Bargaining

‘Let the page of history be quoted where any nation, ancient or modern, civilized or savage, is mentioned, among whom no difference was made between the citizens on account of their extraction...’

(John Adams)

The Latvian National Council’s Platform had famously declared that power in the Latvian Republic belonged to Latvia’s people. But who exactly were those people? The Citizenship Law adopted by the National Council on 23rd August 1919 provided an answer to this question:

As a Latvian citizen shall be considered every subject of former Russia, irrespective of nationality and creed, who lives on Latvian territory, hails from districts forming the territory of Latvia, or who belonged already to such districts, in accordance with the Russian law, prior to August 1, 1914, and has up to the day of promulgation of the present law acquired no other citizenship.(Article 1)¹

The Latvian Citizenship Law of 1919 was, therefore, based both on *jus soli*, and on *jus sanguinis*. *Jus soli*, which grants citizenship on the basis of being born within a particular territory, has traditionally been regarded as more progressive (and more aligned with the principle of civic citizenship) than *jus sanguinis*, which bestows citizenship through descent. The distinction between civic and ethnic conceptions of nationhood loosely corresponds to the distinction between citizenship awarded on the basis of *jus soli* and on that of *jus sanguinis*, although many pieces of citizenship legislation in the world

¹ *Likums par pavalstniecību: (lik. rīk. krāj. 1919. g. 127. num. un 1927. g. 93. num.). Papildinājumi likumā par pavalstniecību [1930. g. 5. februārī].* Rīga: 1930. The English text quoted as per: Fournoy Jr., R.W. and Hudson, M.O. (eds.) 1929. *A Collection of Nationality Laws of Various Countries as Contained in Constitutions, Statutes and Treaties.* New York, London, Toronto, Melbourne, and Bombay: Oxford University Press, p. 405.

employ both principles in different combinations, and the demarcating lines are sometimes blurred; overall, *jus soli* and *jus sanguinis* are perhaps best regarded as ideal types.

Liebich (2007) asserts that in pre-modern Europe, both in the West and in the East, *jus soli*, rooted in the ‘communal citizenship’ of the estate system, was the prevalent principle. As it happened, World War One and subsequent international treaties radically changed the European concept of citizenship.

When in the aftermath of WWI the map of Europe was re-drawn, nine new sovereign nation-states came into being, namely Austria, Czechoslovakia, Finland, Hungary, Poland, Yugoslavia, and the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. When the Allied and Associated Powers negotiated peace treaties with the defeated, the main principle applied in the nationality clauses of the Treaty of Versailles (28.06.1919), the Treaty of St. Germain (10.09.1919), and the Treaty of Trianon (04.06.1920) was the territorial one. However, as the main driver behind these states’ creation was the recognition of the right of small nations to self-determination, certain ethnic concessions were made – whereas the Treaty of Versailles took place of birth as a criterion for citizenship in addition to ‘habitual’ or ‘ordinary’ residence, the Treaties of St. Germain and Trianon explicitly mentioned ‘race and language’ as a criterion for the right of option. As Liebich (2007: 23) observes, ‘henceforth, territoriality, like social status in an earlier period, became a criterion of the past and ethnicity took the lead in regards to citizenship.’

The citizenship laws adopted by the new European countries were initially based on both *jus sanguinis* and *jus soli*, like the Polish Citizenship Law of 31st January 1920, the first Estonian citizenship law (‘Resolution Concerning the Citizenship of the Democratic Republic of Estonia’, adopted by the Estonian National Council on 26th November 1918), the Lithuanian Provisional Citizenship Law of 9th January 1919, and the Act on Hungarian Nationality (originating from 1879, it remained in force until 1948; the Hungarian Act was also in force in Croatia and Slavonia until 1928 when a Yugoslavian Citizenship Law was adopted). Consequently, though, these laws were repeatedly amended or replaced in order to reinforce the *jus sanguinis* principle. In Estonia, for example, a new Citizenship Law was adopted in 1922. If the Resolution of 1918 had created the initial citizenry, the Law of 1922 defined the rules of succession – in accordance with *jus sanguinis*. The explanatory

note to the new law justified the application of the *jus sanguinis* principle as an attempt to ‘secure the state from an influx of suspicious persons’. (Rohmets 2006: 298)

According to Cobban (1945), Central Europe thus bade farewell to the theory of self-determination ‘as it found expression in the American Revolution and in the first period of the French Revolution’, where it had been a ‘simple corollary of democracy’:

In Central Europe the nation came to possess very different attributes. The idea of the culture nation, as we have seen, acquired priority over the political conception of the nation. Nationality was regarded as an objective rather than a subjective fact. National self-determination no longer implied an element of choice on the part of individuals: it was decided at birth. Strictly speaking, indeed, it ceased to be self-determination at all. The individual did not determine his nation; rather, the nation determined the individual.

(Cobban 1945: 53)

Cobban describes this widespread trend as ‘the substitution of national determinism for self-determination’; national determinism, according to him, may be regarded as ‘a perversion of true self-determination’— introduced into political practices at the time, it arguably led to numerous practical difficulties. He asserts that in a less blatant form this distortion of the original principle was already present in the Versailles Treaty (Cobban 1945: 54).

By the mid-twenties, the *jus soli* principle was being increasingly regarded as an outdated remnant of the European feudal past. *Jus sanguinis* was widely found to be much more fitting for the era of nation-states. Even in an ‘Old’ European country like Britain, where *jus soli* had remained at the base of nationality legislation for centuries, and in the United States, another bastion of the ‘uniform citizenship by birth’, there were sparkling debates on the necessity for change.²

The fate of the Latvian Citizenship Law of 1919 was no different from its other European counterparts – it would be repeatedly amended, in response to internal and

² See, for example, Henriques H.S.Q. and Schuster E.J., 1917. ‘“Jus Soli” or “Jus Sanguinis”’, in: *Problems of the War*, Vol. 3, Papers Read before the Society in the Year 1917, pp. 119-131. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press on behalf of the British Institute of International and Comparative Law; Scott, J.B. 1930 ‘Nationality: Jus Soli or Jus Sanguinis’, *The American Journal of International Law*, Vol. 24, No.1 (Jan. 1930), pp. 58-64.

external, real and imagined threats, and for various bureaucratic and administrative reasons. Each of the four Latvian interwar parliaments would review it several times; it would inevitably come up during budget hearings, and in conjunction with government declarations, becoming a subject of elaborate epithets and tropes: ‘a chronic issue of Latvian politics’, ‘the most controversial issue in Latvian parliamentary life’, ‘the Jewish Law’, and the *Van’ka-Vstan’ka*³ of Latvian legislation. This most troubled piece of legislation of the interwar period would be amended in 1921 (three times), in 1927, 1930, 1932, 1938, and in 1940 (three times; the last amendment of 30th July 1940 was signed by the Soviet appointee President A. Kirhenšteins).

It is important to keep in mind that in 1918, when the National Council started debating the issue of Latvian citizenship, there were still no international legal norms regulating the issue in place, apart from the general *de facto* recognition that succession states were expected to grant citizenship to those habitually residing in their territories in order to avoid mass statelessness.⁴ But during what has become known as ‘the great unmixing of people’, practically all of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe faced a particular predicament: as a result of the upheavals of the Great War, many of their original, *antebellum* residents were scattered abroad, while refugees from the neighbouring countries were still present in great numbers.

In 1914, there were 2.6 million residents in Latvia, whereas in 1918 there were no more than 1.6 million; approximately 730,000–760,000 of Latvia’s residents had been uprooted and had fled to Russia, Finland and the unoccupied Baltic territories (Aizsilnieks 1968: 20, 164; Šilde 1976: 42).⁵ Immediately after the war (more precisely – while Latvia was still occupied by the German forces), the refugees, accompanied by displaced people (including prisoners of war from both sides), started to arrive in Latvia from the East. The culmination of this was reached in 1921, when 95,000 refugees, *optants* (those exercising their right to option in nationality) and displaced persons entered Latvia.⁶ Until 1922, there

³ *Van’ka-vstan’ka* - a Russian tilting doll, which springs back upright immediately after being brought down.

⁴ There would be no such international norm in place until 1930, when Article 1 of the Hague Convention stipulated that ‘It is for each State to determine under its own law who are its nationals’. This principle has remained in place until now – Article 3 of the European Convention on Nationality of 1997 posits: ‘Each State shall determine under its own law who are its nationals’.

⁵ Skujenieks (1922: 294) estimates the number of wartime refugees from Latvia at 850,000, providing a footnote that the census of 1917 in Rīga was not carried out thoroughly.

⁶ This figure is provided by J. Ozols, the editor of the *Iekšlietu Ministrijas Vēstnesis*, who wrote a report on the Ministry of the Interior activities for the jubilee edition *Latvija desmit gadus* (1928). Skujenieks (1922:

were also people travelling in the opposite direction – Ozols (1928) mentions Russian emigrants returning to their homeland from Europe and the United States to personally witness the greatness of the Bolshevik revolution (in 1921 alone, 135,000 people travelled through Latvia to Russia). But as early as spring 1922, Latvia started witnessing a constant stream of people escaping from Soviet Russia into Western Europe and across the Atlantic. According to the data of the Ministry of the Interior, in the period from November 1918 until September 1928, a total of 236,229 refugees, displaced persons and *optants* arrived in Latvia. Another 248,743 (including 65,000 refugees from Soviet Russia) proceeded via Latvia to other destinations; many of them were stranded in Latvia for months and years awaiting the necessary travel documents and financial assistance from the Red Cross and other international organisations. (Ozols 1928).

In this mayhem, separating those who had historical ties with Latvia from those who ended up in Latvia by accident was a formidable task. The Citizenship Law of 1919, which established permanent residence in Latvian territories prior to August 1914 as a necessary criterion for eligibility for Latvian citizenship, and the accompanying directives of the Ministry of the Interior, were primarily centred upon this task.

The first draft of the Citizenship Law was reviewed by the National Council in August 1919. The draft envisaged granting Latvian citizenship to ‘all persons, irrespective of their ethnicity, belonging to the Latvian territories prior to August 1914’, which was a generous provision for its time, and arguably much more generous than the subsequent Latvian Citizenship Law of 1994. However, its insufficiently precise wording put one particular ethnic group in a disadvantaged position. After the assassination of Alexander II in 1881, the legal status of Jews had deteriorated, and those outside the Pale of Settlement (which included the Jews of Rīga, Jelgava and Liepāja) were not allowed to stay there unless they were employed in their registered profession (Dribins 2002). This regulation, which remained in force until February 1917, was not always enforced thoroughly by the Russian authorities, who often turned a blind eye, but it nevertheless kept many Jews off the official registers, thus making them unable to prove that they ‘belonged’ as required by the draft law.

210) mentions an even larger figure – according to him, 197,114 refugees returned to Latvia from Russia in 1921 and 1922.

The Jewish deputy F. Lackijs (United Jewish Socialist Party) proposed an amendment to the draft to read ‘who *resided in*’ the Latvian territories instead of ‘who *belonged to*’ the Latvian territories. This proposal gained only 18 votes in favour, among them Paul Schiemann’s (who also circulated a letter explaining the necessity of the amendment to the Council’s members) and A. Bočagovs (Russian National Democratic Party). The law was passed with its original wording.

The next day, *Jaunākās Ziņas* published an article ‘Withstanding the pressure’, which painted the previous day’s session in a very dramatic light:

During the National Council’s session on Saturday 23rd August, while debating the citizenship issue, Latvian statehood was put under considerable pressure from the minorities’ side. Their main objective was to remove all obstacles to free access to Latvian citizenship. The draft law was undergoing its third reading on Saturday. Citizenship is not envisaged for those who did not, according to Russian law, belong to the districts encompassing Latvia prior to 1st August 1914. The draft law envisages that such persons can submit a petition for citizenship to the Minister of the Interior, which is a pure formality. This formality is necessary just so that not all new arrivals will be able to obtain Latvian citizenship, but only those who truly want to become Latvian citizens. The minorities, however, consider this requirement to be a chauvinistic step towards driving out the foreign element from the community of Latvian citizens. For example, many Jews have not had rights to be legally registered here; therefore this limitation will also affect them, which is, in the minorities’ opinion, anti-democratic.⁷

The author concludes his article with speculation that all other considerations aside, the Baltic Germans, for one, ‘will be too proud to petition the Interior Minister’.

Interestingly, another article, by E. Blanks, which appeared in *Jaunākās Ziņas* a few days later, presented the motives of ethnic Latvians behind the Citizenship Law in a slightly different light. Blanks, referring to the precariousness of the Latvian situation, while it was still at war with Russia and not safe from Germany either, claimed that ‘what is being defined as chauvinism is that the state wants to sift out those Russian and Jewish elements who came to Latvia by chance during the war years and who have not made any

⁷ *Jaunākās Ziņas* Nr 76, 25.08.1919 ‘Izturēt spiedienu’.

sacrifices in the fight against the Bolsheviks'.⁸ At this point, Blanks apparently still believed, which was not the case with his later writings, that unity between Latvians and their minorities could be achieved after a successful 'sifting out':

...We however hope that after several conspiracies have fallen through, our ill-wishers will abandon their attempts to sell out Latvian freedom. When this happens, the wall that exists between the Latvian people and the minorities will fall down. In all aspects, this wall's collapse is totally dependent upon the minorities' attitude towards Latvian sovereignty.⁹

This early altercation between majority and minority deputies during the debates on the Citizenship Law at the National Council in 1919, when Article 1 was passed with its original wording despite active objections from the minority bloc, was just the start of a years-long saga in the history of Latvian lawmakers. The Citizenship Law would become a trump card in the political game which would be used by all players, majority and minority parties alike, when it suited their interests – which very often had little, or nothing at all, to do with the citizenship issue *per se*.

In May 1921, the Legal Affairs Committee of the Constitutional Assembly rejected a draft amendment to the Citizenship Law submitted by the Minorities Bloc. The original draft amendment stipulated that Latvian citizenship was to be automatically granted to those who had resided in Latvia until August 1914, as well as to those who were residing in Latvia at the moment of the independence declaration on 18th November 1918. While the amendment was being reviewed by the Committee, it was modified to grant citizenship only to those who had been residing in Latvia for a period of not less than five years prior to 1st August 1914 and who had not yet acquired citizenship of another country. When the final version of the amendment was presented to the Constitutional Assembly, it was voted down by 55 votes to 27, with 20 abstentions (the Social Democrats and minorities voting against, the Agrarian Union abstaining). On 20th May 1921, L. Fišmanis (Jewish National Democratic Party) submitted a proposal to return the draft amendment to the Legal Affairs Committee for a second, substantive review, taking into consideration the Regulations of

⁸ E. Blanks, 'Chauvinisms', *Jaunākās Ziņas*, Nr 81, 30.08.1919.

⁹ E. Blanks, 'Chauvinisms', *Jaunākās Ziņas*, Nr 81, 30.08.1919.

the Russian Ministry of the Interior of 1893 (one regulation forbidding Jews to settle outside the Pale of Settlement, the other extending their term of stay by another year, and recommending against forcible expulsions) and the so-called Stolypin Regulation from 1907 (allowing those Jews who settled outside the Pale of Settlement prior to 1906 and had acquired a family and household, to stay put). The proposal was rejected, with only the Social Democrats and minorities' representatives voting in favour. The draft amendment was returned to the Committee without any specific instructions. On the next occasion, it was reviewed by the Constitutional Assembly on 30th September 1921.

During the debates, F. Menders (LSDSP) proposes increasing the qualifying residency period from five years prior to 1914 to twenty, thus granting citizenship to the Jews who settled in Latvia in the 1880-1890s [known in Latvia as *vosmidesyatniki* – not to be confused with the identical term designating a 19th century intellectual movement in Russia] and their descendants. P. Schiemann (Baltic German Democrats) calls for the Assembly to follow the example of Poland and Bulgaria and to grant citizenship to every person residing in Latvia at the moment of the announcement of state independence. J. Pauļuks (Agrarian Union), responding to Schiemann, draws attention to the fact that the whole rationale behind the Latvian Law on Citizenship was 'to give those who do not feel organic ties with Latvia an opportunity to opt out of Latvian citizenship' [an argument that would be continuously recycled by the opponents of extended citizenship rights in the years to come]. Pauļuks, however, has no objections to granting citizenship to *vos'midesyatniki*. M. Skujenieks (Social Democrats Mensheviks) sides with Menders, supporting the twenty-year proviso. According to Skujenieks, granting citizenship to all those people who had been residing in Latvia for just five years prior to 1914 would be a mistake – those were precisely the years when the Latvian population was growing fast; later those people left Latvia, and if they are willing to come back, then it is only because of the improved life conditions here.

The Menders/Skujenieks proposal was put to the vote, and was accepted unanimously, with only the German faction abstaining. The amendment was passed on the second reading.

L. Fišmanis, in an interview to the newspaper *Segodnya*, summarised the existing state of affairs: 'This partial solution of the citizenship issue is not, and cannot be

satisfactory. Nevertheless, I welcome this decision as a first step by Latvian society towards the just demands of Latvian minorities.’¹⁰

The third reading in the Constitutional Assembly witnessed further attempts by the minorities to rectify the situation.

M. Dubins (*Agudat Israel*) and A. Bočagovs (Russian National Democratic Party) submit a proposal to decrease the residence requirement from twenty years to five, as was initially suggested by the Legal Affairs Committee. Ž. Trons (Jewish Zionists), M. Dubins, J. Hellmanis [Geļman in another transcription] (*Zeire Zion*) and I. Berss (*Bund*) propose granting the right to those who currently reside outside Latvia but satisfy all other requirements stipulated in the law, to acquire Latvian citizenship on condition that they will be returning to Latvia within a year of the promulgation of the law, thus ensuring that all war-time refugees can freely return to their homeland. F. Trasuns (Latgalian Christian Agrarian Union) suggests excluding descendants of *vos' midesyatniki* from the scope of the law on the grounds that many of them have since left Latvia. J. Pauļuks (Agrarian Union) and F. Menders (LSDSPS) argue against Trasuns' proposal as unjust.

Both the proposals from Dubins and Bočagovs, and from Trasuns, were rejected, with 76 and 69 votes against respectively. The proposal by Trons *et al.* got only 19 votes in favour, and was also rejected.

On 7th October 1921, the Constitutional Assembly passed the amendment to the Law on Citizenship, adding a proviso that in order to qualify for Latvian citizenship, a documental proof of twenty years' residence in Latvian territories prior to WWI should be submitted. Article 1.1 of the Citizenship Law now read as follows:

Likewise shall be considered as a citizen of Latvia every citizen of former Russia, irrespective of nationality and creed, who lives on Latvian territory, has up to the time of promulgation of this Article 1.1 not adopted another citizenship, and (a) prior to August 1, 1914, has been permanently residing on Latvian territory at least twenty years, (b) or who

¹⁰ 'Latvija i evrei. Intervyu s dep. Fishmanom'. *Segodnya*, 02.10.1921.

prior to the year 1881 has been permanently residing on Latvian territory, (c) or who is a descendant of persons mentioned in clauses (a) and (b).

The rights granted by this article shall not be extended to persons who have evaded service in the national Latvian army.¹¹

The amendment further diminished the possibilities for many members of the Latvian Jewish minority to acquire Latvian citizenship; it was difficult enough for some of them to provide *any* documental proof of ‘belonging’; to provide documental proof of permanent residence for twenty years was often beyond their reach.

The next time the Citizenship Law came onto the agenda was during the 2nd session of the First *Saeima*, on 16th June 1923.

M. Nurock (Jewish United National Bloc), speaking during the debates on the declaration of the second government of Z. Meierovics, draws attention to the fact that the future prime minister has included a new paragraph in the declaration, promising to make minority rights consistent with the requirements of the League of Nations. Nurock notes that other countries, like Czechoslovakia and Romania, have dealt with the citizenship issue ‘in accordance with the League of Nations’, granting citizenship to all residents at the time of either the start of the war, or the announcement of state independence. In Latvia, however, continues Nurock, many personal tragedies have occurred due to the Citizenship Law and re-evacuation [repatriation] provisions. Nurock offers his personal example for consideration: ‘Today, I have the honour of being a member of our country’s legislative body. But had I not returned [to Latvia] prior to 7th October 1921, I would have had to remain, for all time, outside my Fatherland despite the fact that my forebears starting with my great grandfather were rabbis of Tukums and are buried there.’¹² Speaking on behalf of the national minorities, Nurock claims that:

We are always ready to undertake full responsibilities, but we also demand full rights. Let small Latvia follow big England’s example! The citizens of the newly conquered colonies are

¹¹ ‘Satwersmes Sapulze’, *Jaunākās Ziņas*, 08.10.1921. The English text quoted as per: Flournoy Jr., R.W. and Hudson, M.O. (eds.) 1929. *A Collection of Nationality Laws of Various Countries as Contained in Constitutions, Statutes and Treaties*. New York, London, Toronto, Melbourne, and Bombay: Oxford University Press, pp. 406-407.

¹² Latvijas Republikas Saeimas II. sesijas 21. sēde 1923. gada 26. jūnijā, p. 585.

pliant and ready for sacrifices in the name of England. If we here enjoyed the same relations, then we would also have the certainty that in an hour of peril we would, shoulder to shoulder, sacrifice everything for the existence of the Latvian State.¹³

The citizenship issue was brought up again during the state budget debates of July 1923, when M. Dubins launched an attack on the Ministry of the Interior.

Dubins claims that ‘...such a Citizenship Law as the one which exists in our country cannot be found in any other country. We have been so democratic, and we have gone so far that on 7th October 1921 we passed a law that allowed citizenship to those who had been living here for forty years. What we did is we granted citizenship to those who had been living here in 1880. This is how far our democracy goes!’¹⁴ Responding to a caustic remark by F. Trasuns, Dubins bitterly retorts: ‘I think I have lived in Latvia just as long as you have, and have just as many rights to Latvia as you do, as I was born here.’¹⁵

In May 1924, the *Saeima* instructed the Cabinet of Ministers to revise and extend the Citizenship Law. On 28th October 1924, the draft amendments to Article 1.1 of the Law, which reduced the 20-year residence requirement to 10 years, were submitted to the *Saeima*’s Public Affairs Committee. Besides decreasing the required number of years of residence, the amendments also set a statute of limitations for citizenship applications. On 20th March 1925, the amendments were presented for discussion at the *Saeima*.

The *rapporteur* F. Cielēns (LSDSP) opens his speech with the statement that the Citizenship Law passed by the National Council on 23rd August 1921 was a ‘rather strict and harsh law’, which left one part of the people living in Latvian territories outside its scope, ‘regardless of the fact that those persons had been living in Latvia for decades and had economic and social ties to Latvia’.¹⁶ He continues that the *Saeima*’s Public Law Committee, after discussing the draft law, had acknowledged that it would be desirable, and necessary, to go even further [in relaxing restrictions] than foreseen by the draft. The Committee acknowledged that even a 10-year residence requirement was not necessary, and that being a permanent resident prior to 1st August 1914 would be sufficient for

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Latvijas Republikas Saeimas II. sesijas 27. sēde 1923. gada 5. jūlijā, p. 762.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Latvijas Republikas Saeimas VII. sesijas 18. sēde 1925. gada 20. martā, p. 798.

eligibility for automatic citizenship. According to Cielēns, the main motive behind the Committee's resolution was an unwillingness to create a rather large number of stateless people.

The Public Law Committee, announces Cielēns, has recognised that the *status quo* cannot be justified from a legal point of view, as the common practice within international law is, largely, to provide citizenship to all residents at the moment of the state's proclamation. Cielēns continues that holders of the so-called Nansen passports (he cites data from the Ministry of the Interior that the number of those former Russian citizens stands at 18,000; Cielēns notes, however, that as not all of them were residing in Latvia prior to the war, the actual number was even lower) have to apply for residence permits annually; they are put in a legally disadvantaged position which causes them suffering, and this cannot be justified in the long term. If at the beginning of its existence, the Latvian State, stresses Cielēns, perceived itself as insufficiently strong and insufficiently secure, and there were reasons to worry about possible lack of loyalty on the part of those who did not perhaps originate from Latvia, and therefore had no real ties with Latvia, then those times are long gone. Now, when so many years have passed since the foundation of the state, when Latvia has fortified its positions both externally and internally, there are no possible reasons to think that those persons may be 'noxious and dangerous' for Latvia. ...Therefore, summarises Cielēns, taking into consideration general, juridical, as well as political motives, the Public Law Committee has recognised that the Citizenship Law should be improved further than was done within the scope of the draft submitted by the Cabinet of Ministers on 28th October.

Stressing that it is a common mistake to think that the possible beneficiaries of the amendments were exclusively people of Jewish nationality, whereas there are also Poles, Lithuanians and a certain number of ethnic Latvian colonists from the Pskov and Novgorod regions of Russia who stand to benefit from the proposed amendments, Cielēns concludes:

I have to say that these amendments will eliminate the injustice created by the Citizenship Law of 1919. By eliminating the existing injustice we will only prove that the Latvian State has grown strong, that it is fair towards everybody who was living in Latvian territories prior to the war, who have ties with the Latvian territories. This law will give them an opportunity to adopt

Latvian citizenship and by doing this to take equal participation in the creation of Latvia's statehood, and to undertake all those rights and obligations that Latvia provides for its citizens.¹⁷

It is noteworthy that Cielēns, in fact, equates formal citizenship with 'equal participation in the creation of Latvia's statehood'. The next speaker, L Fišmanis (Jewish United National Bloc), reiterates the point, appealing to Parliament members with an affirmation that although the citizenship question has come to be viewed in Latvia as an essentially 'Jewish matter', it is, from a legislative point of view, not a minority matter, but a matter of the state: 'Citizenship is not a privilege; it is an inalienable right, regardless of ethnicity. But here it is being turned into a political matter, and as long as politics are concerned, then, of course, the Jew takes centre stage.'¹⁸ He adds bitterly that when the Russian reactionaries of the Tsarist government made scapegoats out of minorities, it was at least understandable, but when it happens in the free democratic Latvian republic, 'it is just too sad and too difficult to accept'.¹⁹

M. Dubins (*Agudat Israel*) expresses a similar sentiment and observes that at the time 'we felt weak' and it was forgivable to pass such a law, but within two years the mistake has become obvious. 'We are always intimidated by the threat of too many minorities present here, and that they can spoil everything. But look at Czechoslovakia... By giving rights to all residents, the state can only grow stronger. Then all residents feel like children, not like stepchildren. Everybody who becomes a citizen feels that he should stand by the state,' – he pleads with his audience.²⁰

Dubins then attacks M. Skujenieks, who as the Head of the State Department of Statistics, has warned in a previously published article that if the residence requirement were reduced to 10 years, Latvia would be flooded with 230,000 foreigners.²¹ According to the explanation provided by Skujenieks to the *Saeima*'s Committee of Public Affairs, says Dubins, that was the number of people presently outside Latvia who would be able to return if the amendments were passed. Dubins sarcastically invites Skujenieks to actually read the draft law, pointing out that it would only affect those already present in Latvia.

¹⁷ Latvijas Republikas Saeimas VII. sesijas 18. sēde 1925. gada 20. Martā, p. 801. *Translation mine.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 801.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 802.

²¹ *Darba Balss* 27.10.1922.

A month later, on 21st April 1925, when the *Saeima* resumed discussions of the draft amendments, M. Laserson (*Zeire Zion*) expresses optimism from the tribune that the day has come when the law will finally be passed [apparently, among minority deputies expectations were running high]. Recalling how during one of the previous sessions, the Chair of the Public Law Committee, J. Goldmanis (Agrarian Union) commented: ‘Here comes the Jewish Citizenship Law!’, Laserson states: ‘Although I am a Jew, I am going to speak about the Latvian Citizenship Law, not about a Jewish Citizenship Law, as Mr Goldmanis does.’²² Laserson, a law professor, then delivers an in-depth analysis of the legal background to the citizenship issue. The Latvian Citizenship Law, says Laserson, is based upon the principles of both *jus sanguinis* and *jus soli*. *Jus soli*, he continues, is being increasingly – and unjustly – recognised as outdated in the field of international law studies. Laserson refers to the work of the French jurist A.G. de Lapradelle, whose book *La Loi Polonaise de 1920 sur la Nationalité et les Traités de Versailles* (1924) criticised the treatment of minorities in Poland and defended the principle of domicile as a basis for awarding citizenship. Laserson draws everybody’s attention to the fact that permanent residence should in no way be confused with ‘registration’:

Our existing administrative practice is such that the registration requirement is only applied to minorities, not to ethnic Latvians. It needs to be said out loud that although our Citizenship Law is based upon both principles, *jus sanguinis* is applied exclusively to ethnic Latvians. But if it is a minority representative, than we start to question him about belonging, about registration, about how many years he has lived there, and whether he is a true inhabitant of Kurzeme or not. Then we also aim to distinguish between Kurzeme Jews, and foreign Jews. But let me tell you that this difference is not very pronounced, and that you would never be able to determine it legally.’²³

Laserson concludes that the amendments under review will not really change anything; nor do they contain any revolutionary principles. He also accuses the Social Democrats Mensheviks of changing their position on the citizenship issue in view of the upcoming elections: ‘The Mensheviks, who will stand as a separate party, need to prove that they are not worse chauvinists than the Latvian bourgeois parties, that they are not

²² Saeimas VIII. sesijas 1. sēde 1925. gada 21. aprīlī, p. 36.

²³ Saeimas VIII. sesijas 1. sēde 1925. gada 21. aprīlī, p. 36.

much different...Mr. Skujenieks is constantly trying to prove that our state is endangered, that citizenship will be handed out to thousands of Jews and Russians, etc.’²⁴

Skujenieks responds to Laserson, calling his accusations about the persecution of minorities in Latvia ‘incomprehensible’, as in Skujenieks’ own opinion, very few countries in Europe can be found where the minorities’ situation is as favourable as in Latvia; however, Latvia must be protected from the ‘millions of Russian emigrants who have flooded Europe’.²⁵

Dubins counters Skujenieks by arguing that since the amended Law will not apply to those who arrived in Latvia after 1914 and 1918, it can only increase the number of Latvian citizens by six, eight or a maximum of nine thousand people, not more. He once again asks why, in this case, Skujenieks, being the Head of the State Statistics Department, was speaking demagogically about 250,000 potential new citizens?

A summary of the debates is provided by the *rapporteur* F. Cielēns: ‘The draft law has been criticised from both sides. On the one side, it has been criticised for going too far, and on the other – for changing too little.’ Responding to those who thought that the law was going ‘too far’, Cielēns rebukes Skujenieks for ‘spending a lot of time criticising the law’ and expresses support for the view that out of 18,000 Nansen passport-holders only a part will become Latvian citizens, estimating the total figure at no more than 10,000.

The draft law was then put to a vote, and was defeated, with 40 votes for vs. 43 votes against.

When in December 1925, K. Ulmanis (Agrarian Union) delivered his second government’s declaration to the *Saeima*, he announced that ‘minorities should be provided with cultural autonomy within the same limits as up until now. Administrative practice in relation to schooling, ethnicity, citizenship, land and economic matters should be strictly in compliance with the law and democratic requirements.’²⁶ This part of the declaration did not spark debates on the citizenship issue at the time, but later it became apparent that

²⁴ Saeimas VIII. sesijas 1. sēde 1925. gada 21. aprīlī, p. 37.

²⁵ Saeimas VIII. sesijas 1. sēde 1925. gada 21. aprīlī, p. 39.

²⁶ II. Saeimas I. sesijas 9. sēde 1925. gada 22/23 decembrī, p. 193.

minorities had perceived the statement as a veiled promise to treat minority citizenship applicants fairly at least in practice.

As P. Schiemann puts it in his response to the government declaration, ‘to say just a few words about national needs, it is absolutely clear to us that what is said in the declaration may both mean a lot, or mean nothing at all. Nor do we believe that we will be able to satisfy our just national demands while the harsh legislative act [the Citizenship Law] is being strictly obeyed and implemented.’²⁷ However, continues Schiemann, the minorities’ national demands can be satisfied only in an atmosphere of mutual understanding, and the only way to this mutual understanding lies through mutual work for state welfare. [N. Maizels (*Bund*) exclaims from his seat: ‘Even with the nationalists?’. Yes, declares Schiemann firmly, ‘even with the nationalists, because it is the nationalists, above all, that we [the minorities] have to convince that our demands in no way contradict the national interest, which we deeply respect’.²⁸

The declaration of the next Prime Minister, A. Alberings (Agrarian Union), presented to the *Saeima* on 4th May 1926, made just a cursory nod to the minorities: ‘Minorities should be provided with cultural autonomy within the same limits as up until now.’²⁹ Just three weeks later, on 24th May 1926, a group of left-wing parliamentarians (N. Maizels from the *Bund*, and K. Būmeisters, J. Rudzis, F. Menders, E. Morics, B. Kalniņš and A. Petrevics – all LSDSP) submitted the following legislative initiative: ‘The Citizenship Law should be amended to include every person currently residing in Latvia who was a permanent resident within Latvian borders prior to 1st August, 1924.’ The initiative would not resurface again, presumably having been lost while being passed from one parliamentary committee to another.

M. Dubins brought up the citizenship issue again during the 1926-27 budget hearings in June 1926, referring to the promises made by the previous government of K. Ulmanis in its declaration of 1925. ‘The government indicated in the declaration that it wanted to solve the citizenship issue through administrative measures; that it would be possible to grant citizenship to those who were still in the position of foreigners through

²⁷ II. Saeimas I. sesijas 9. sēde 1925. gada 22/23 decembrī, p. 218.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ II. Saeimas III. sesijas 11. sēde 1926. gada 4. maijā, p. 396.

the Cabinet of Ministers. But has it happened?’³⁰ No, says Dubins, and sets out the figures to prove it: before Ulmanis’s government came to power, about 100 people had gained citizenship through applications to the Cabinet of Ministers. Since the procedure was supposedly simplified, that number has increased to 120, 130 or a maximum of 140 people. If it continues at this rate, it will go on like this for approximately another 25 years. Therefore, it is abundantly clear that the citizenship issue cannot be resolved through administrative measures, concludes Dubins. The moment is ripe to finally set things right, he says, and even Mr. Skujenieks, who used to be the greatest opponent of the amendments, is now inclined to admit that he, Dubins, was right from the start. Therefore, as even former opponents no longer object, Dubins expresses the hope that the amendments will not cause big discussions this time around, and that the *Saeima* will be able to vote positively ‘one of these days’.

However, it was not until November 1926 that the Citizenship Law was reviewed again in the *Saeima*; on that occasion, the debates were remarkably reminiscent of those that would be provoked, some seventy year later, by the Citizenship Law of 1994.

The *rappporteur* N. Maizels starts his speech by calling the Citizenship Law a ‘chronic issue’ of Latvian political life, which has attracted a lot of attention in both society and the press. Nevertheless, he continues, nobody can say that the issue has been clarified. The main misunderstanding, says Maizels, concerns the issue of naturalisation. Many find the Latvian Citizenship Law very liberal – and perhaps it is, concedes Maizels, for those who want to naturalise. But naturalisation means a new citizenship for immigrants who came to the country after it had already gained independence, stresses Maizels, and we are talking here about people who had been living in the Latvian territories prior to state independence, which is a totally different issue. To those people, claims Maizels, a principle of international law that clearly stipulates that citizens of a newly founded state are those citizens of the predecessor state who resided within the new state’s boundaries at the moment of independence, should be applied instead. Unfortunately, continues Maizels, ‘this democratic principle was not taken into account and introduced in Latvia. The basis of the Law of 1919 was the archaic principle of ‘registration’ borrowed from the old Tsarist jurisprudence; this principle does not

³⁰ Latvijas Republikas II. Saeimas III. sesijas 22. sēde 1926. gada 1. jūnijā, p. 811.

withstand any criticism from a modern democratic standpoint.’³¹ According to Maizels, the amendments of 1921, which substituted the principle of ‘registration’ for a ‘period of residence’, in practice have changed very little, because the introduced residence period requirement of 20 years defeated the purpose of the law. He calls everybody’s attention to the fact that the citizenship issue is being raised two or three times by each *Saeima*, and that there are few people left who believe amendments are not necessary. Maizels yet again emphasises the point that the citizenship issue is not a ‘minority issue’: ‘This is a painful question. And it is not a minority question, but a principal, constitutional state question. Every state should be able to define the body of its citizens. This question should be answered clearly. A situation where tens of thousands are not citizens of any state is not acceptable.’³² A true socialist, the *Bund* deputy Maizels also brings a social angle to the citizenship issue: in his interpretation, these are the poorest layers of society, workers who have the most at stake, as they are not in a position to either ‘negotiate’ their citizenship or ‘facilitate’ the process with the help of money.

Unexpectedly, a lethal blow was then dealt to the draft law by K. Dišlers (Radical Democrats), a prominent lawyer and later a law professor at the Latvian University specialising in state law.

Dišlers starts his speech along the same lines as Maizels, stating that it is difficult to speak about the citizenship issue as it is surrounded by so many preconceptions. Preconception number one, according to Dišlers, is the widespread opinion that the citizenship question is a minority rights issue; and that everybody who does not support the suggested amendments from which minorities would benefit, is immediately branded an opponent of minority rights. This is a false proposition, insists Dišlers:

I think that we should understand the terms ‘national minorities’, or our ‘ethnic minorities’ as meaning ‘our citizens’ regardless of which ethnic group they belong to. We are all equal citizens. This is guaranteed to us by our democratic constitution, and I think there is absolutely no reason to say that Latvian citizens belonging to a national majority have a propensity to limit in any way, or to oppress those Latvian citizens who belong to national minorities.’³³

³¹ Latvijas Republikas II. Saeimas IV. sesijas 16. sēde 1926. gada 30. novembrī, p. 778.

³² Latvijas Republikas II. Saeimas IV. sesijas 16. sēde 1926. gada 30. novembrī, p. 778.

³³ Latvijas Republikas II. Saeimas IV. sesijas 17. sēde 1926. gada 3. decembrī, p. 781.

That said, Dišlers moves over to the next ‘preconception’, namely ‘thinking that extending the grounds for citizenship acquisition is a somewhat democratic principle, which all democrats should defend; and that if one gets it into one’s head to disagree with it, one immediately comes into opposition with some democratic principle.’ Not at all, says Dišlers. Acquiring citizenship is, on the one hand, a legal act. On the other hand, in Latvia’s particular situation, i.e. after the state has been in existence for quite some time, and the citizenship issue has been satisfactorily solved, to grant citizenship to an entirely new group of people is not a legal issue any more, but a political issue. And it should not be mixed up with any democratic principle, admonishes Dišlers.

Preconceptions put aside, Dišlers summarises the *status quo* by claiming that the Citizenship Law of 1919 and the Amendments of 1921 ‘have already resolved the citizenship issue’: ‘I could say that Latvian citizenship, in accordance with those legislative acts, is being applied to all those persons who have any relevant ties with the Latvian territory’.³⁴

Dišlers then dismisses the specific reasoning in favour of amendments that has been previously articulated by minority representatives: the ‘archaic registration principle’. This is not vital, says Dišlers, as it is only one of the three applicable principles, along with birthright and belonging. Another objection he raises against the amendments is that they aim at granting citizenship to those who only resided in Latvia for six months prior to independence without so much as asking whether they are willing to become citizens:

Possibly, among those persons are emigrants who do not want to become Latvian citizens. I assume that among Russian emigrants living in Latvia there are also monarchists who do not want to become citizens of a democratic Latvia. But the draft law suggests granting citizenship to people who may not even accept it when given; or they may turn out to be very bad citizens, to be elements hostile to democratic Latvia.³⁵

Finally, he moves to the concluding part of his speech, stressing again that the citizenship question is not a legal, but a political matter, and blatantly contradicting his earlier assurances that ‘we are all equal citizens’:

³⁴ Latvijas Republikas II. Saeimas IV. sesijas 17. sēde 1926. gada 3. decembrī, p. 782.

³⁵ Latvijas Republikas II. Saeimas IV. sesijas 17. sēde 1926. gada 3. decembrī, p. 783.

If we amend the Law and expand the body of Latvian citizens in this way, quite possibly we will increase the number of ethnic minority members in Latvia. It is understandable that minorities are trying to increase their own numbers so that they can have a bigger influence in the life of the state; this is an understandable political aspiration. If the state accommodates this aspiration and increases the number of Latvian citizens through the proposed legislation ... then the state will have taken a political step towards increasing the number of citizens belonging to ethnic minorities. In no way do I want to adopt a hostile position towards ethnic minorities. I regard them as citizens just as I regard everyone else, but we need to be clear about whether we, with such a political step, want to fortify the minority element. If we do it consciously, then we can do it, but it is not a democracy question, and neither is it a question of necessity.³⁶

The last part of Dišlers's speech is dedicated to those ethnic Latvians 'scattered abroad', whose number he estimates at 300,000:

If we speak about expanding the Citizenship Law to a new group of potential citizens, which will result in an increase in those belonging to ethnic minorities and in an amplification of their influence; then using the occasion I would like to remind you that the Latvian state's task is first of all, in my opinion, to do something significant in order to bring those ethnic Latvians, who are still in exile, back to Latvia.³⁷

To bring those people home, posits Dišlers, is not just an obligation of the Latvian state, it is its *right* to first of all bring those belonging to the Latvian nation to Latvia, so that all flock together, just as Jews flock to Palestine. This, he insists, must be done 'before we grant citizenship to ethnic minority groups to whom Latvia, after all, is not a national abode'. Only then, concludes Dišlers, can the Latvian state afford to think of increasing the number of citizens belonging to ethnic minorities.³⁸

With his prolonged speech, Dišlers ingeniously dismantled the case that it had taken minority deputies years to build, with only the Social Democrats lending them occasional support. In just one intervention, he managed to cast doubt on the applicability of ideas of democracy and principles of minority rights to the citizenship issue; questioned

³⁶ Latvijas Republikas II. Saeimas IV. sesijas 17. sēde 1926. gada 3. decembrī, p. 784.

³⁷ Latvijas Republikas II. Saeimas IV. sesijas 17. sēde 1926. gada 3. decembrī, p. 785.

³⁸ Latvijas Republikas II. Saeimas IV. sesijas 17. sēde 1926. gada 3. decembrī, p. 785.

the sustainability of the legal aspect of the proposed amendments; intimidated the audience with an image of a horde of future citizens hostile to the state; raised the alarm about the possible amplification of minorities' influence in the life of the state; and finally, in a brilliant diversion, substituted the issue of citizenship with the entirely different (but sacred to every nationally-minded ethnic Latvian) issue of 'leavers' – those Latvians who had settled in various regions of Russia over a period of decades in the quest for better life conditions. (Incongruously, while the plight of those people received much sympathy from ethnic Latvians back at home, those Latvian Jews who had moved to Russia for exactly the same reasons [and who were actually fleeing from much fiercer oppression] were regarded as traitors who did not deserve a chance to return).

Strictly speaking, none of Dišlers's theses were new or original – all these 'anti-minorities' arguments had been continuously regurgitated by Latvian nationalists for the previous eight years in public discourse and in the press. Many of these arguments had made their way into the *Saeima* itself, where, albeit in a much more implicit fashion, they would be used against the Minorities Bloc in the heated debates. But having these arguments recited by Dišlers, the country's foremost expert on national legislation and a much-respected man of impeccable democratic credentials, in his clear and cohesive manner and from the tribune of the national parliament, was an entirely different matter. All pretences were dropped – majority-minority relations were transferred into a harsh new realm.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the next speaker, K. Būmeisters (LSDSP), speaks in a somewhat apologetic tone: observing that many people have come to believe that it is the minorities who are most interested in the Citizenship Law's amendments, he says:

I have got to say that, possibly, to a large extent the Cabinet of Ministers is now granting citizenship to those who do, for the most part, belong to ethnic minorities. But we should not forget that not only among minorities, but also among the members of our ruling nation, Latvians, there are still those for whom the citizenship question has not been solved.³⁹

³⁹ Latvijas Republikas II. Saeimas IV. sesijas 17. sēde 1926. gada 3. decembrī, p. 787.

Referring to a recent article in the newspaper *Latvis*, Būmeisters quotes the following numbers: out of 119 people who were granted citizenship at the latest session of the Cabinet of Ministers, 38 were Jewish, 30 Latvian, 19 German, 16 Russian, plus some Lithuanians and Poles. According to Būmeisters, those figures alone prove that a large – around one quarter – percentage of all citizenship applicants actually come from applicants of Latvian ethnic origin. Expressing regret that more precise statistics about new citizens and their ethnic composition are not available and that one has to rely on newspaper clippings, Bumeisters nevertheless expresses the certainty that the three biggest ethnic groups who would benefit from the amendments are Jews, Latvians, and Russians; then Germans, Poles, and, finally, Lithuanians. So it would not be right, he says, to treat the citizenship question as a minority question, when it should rather be treated as a question affecting all ethnic groups residing in Latvia. Bumeisters then nods to the class aspect, claiming that the citizenship question has become ‘a social evil’ in Latvia, affecting mostly the economically disadvantaged segments of the population who have no financial means to ‘facilitate’ the acquisition of citizenship.

Another interesting point raised by Būmeisters is his claim that under the current state of affairs, ‘the acquisition of citizenship is largely dependent upon the benevolence and mercifulness of the officials of the Ministry of Interior’. In conjunction with the numerous references made by other speakers to ‘citizenship being sold and bought’, and about easier ways of acquiring citizenship for people of means (Dubins in the 20th March 1925 session; Laserson on 21st April 1925), this suggests that not only was the whole existing mechanism of citizenship acquisition corrupted, but also that the fact of corruption was well-known to the public.

Būmeisters also provides an insight into the behind-the-scenes dealings surrounding the Citizenship Law. The Social Democrats, he re-affirms, have always been committed to the eradication of this ‘social evil’ (referring to the lack of citizenship among many Latvian residents). However, he continues, some political forces in Latvia use it as a bargaining tool:

If they are in need of minorities’ support, then our right-wing political groupings hand out promises to solve the citizenship question in a practical fashion. We do not even need to look into the distant past for the proof – just last summer, when we [the Social Democrats and the *Bund*

deputy Maizels] submitted a proposal about a solution to the citizenship question, it was rejected by the Saeima. But when Dubins, a member of Ulmanis's coalition, submitted a similar proposal, then the right wing looked at it differently and voted for it. [Interruptions from right-wing deputies]. Yes, you passed it to the committee...But even this, certainly, was only possible because certain promises had been given. When the Ulmanis Cabinet needed a couple of extra votes in order to raise customs duties, then he promised to expedite the resolution of the citizenship question and reach a favourable settlement by giving his support to reviewing the matter again. Our leading political groups treat the citizenship issue as a last resort: when nothing else helps, when they are going down, then they turn to the minorities and say: 'We will support a speedy solution to the citizenship issue, just please vote with us!'⁴⁰

P. Juraševskis (Democratic Centre) calls the citizenship question 'the most controversial issue in Latvian parliamentary life.' He expresses his unequivocal support for the point of view that the Citizenship law should not grant citizenship to those 'who could not be possibly be of use to the state, but who would only burden the state with yet new responsibilities towards them.'

M. Skujenieks (Union of Social Democrats-Mensheviks and Farm Workers) reminds the audience that on many previous occasions he already had the opportunity to point out that the suggested amendments 'are out of place', because apparently the question which has caused so many heated debates...is in its essence much less acute in Latvia than in other countries. Besides, he says, the draft law was prepared in haste, and is not worthy of the Saeima members' consideration for the following reasons: posed as a 'minority question', it does not pay attention to other former residents of Latvia...such as the 'sea folk' [fishermen] and Latvian colonists living abroad, who due to certain circumstances had difficulties in contacting a Latvian consul in their respective country in order to use their option of becoming Latvian citizens. Skujenieks continues that the proposed draft law wants instead to grant Latvian citizenship to those who in 1918, 1919 and 1920 had an opportunity to acquire Latvian citizenship but who did not want to do so, as they were hostile towards Latvia. This draft law also wants to open Latvia's doors to a horde of political emigrants hostile to Latvia. Skujenieks believes this is 'out of place'.

⁴⁰ Latvijas Republikas II. Saeimas IV. sesijas 17. sēde 1926. gada 3. decembrī, p. 789.

Latvia's situation is not exceptional, claims Skujenieks. According to the latest population census, he says, there are approximately 33,000 stateless persons in Latvia, who have arrived in the country over the last decade and, because the current state of order in Russia is not acceptable for them, decided to settle here. Everywhere in Europe, he says, these people live as *nansenists*. So they do now in Latvia...If we were to grant citizenship to them, says Skujenieks, they would only use it for extra comfort. He recalls how at the time of the first Riga city council elections in 1919, there were tens of thousands of people of 'other ethnicity' stating that they did not want to become Latvian citizens, but wanted to be Russian and German citizens. Now, when Latvia has strengthened her position, they have changed their minds, continues Skujenieks.

Skujenieks also cites some statistical data as evidence that the existing law is in fact 'very tolerant'. First of all, he says, the number of Latvian citizens has grown lately - from 94 per cent of all residents in 1920 to 96.5 per cent in 1925. The number of citizens of Latvian ethnicity has not changed, but the number of citizens of other ethnicities has grown: in 1920 only 79 per cent of Germans were citizens, but now – over 85 per cent; the percentage of citizen-Russians within the same time has grown from 86 to 96, and of Belarussians – from 91 to 97.

Skujenieks is categorically against the first article of the amendments which proposes to grant citizenship to all those residing in Latvia on 1st January 1914. January 1914, he argues, was a time when Latvia was experiencing an economic boom, and hundreds of thousands had arrived here from other regions – from Russia, from Lithuania and from Poland – in order to work in Latvian industrial enterprises. They have since left our country, says Skujenieks, but we would once again open our doors to them with these amendments. Skujenieks cautions: 'The first article of the amendments...opens Latvia's doors to an absolutely unpredictable number of people; and it is a big open question whether they are useful for our country economically, culturally or politically.'⁴¹

The next speaker, Pauļuks (Agrarian Union), resorts to the perennial nationalists' argument that 'we cannot be so inhumane as to push our citizenship upon those who live here and are possibly just waiting to get out of Latvia but cannot do so because the eastern

⁴¹ Latvijas Republikas II. Saeimas IV. sesijas 17. sēde 1926. gada 3. decembrī, p. 612.

borders are closed,' and puts forward a proposal to remove the status of urgency of the amendments.⁴²

J. Breikšs (Democratic Centre) is concerned about a 'big category of World War invalids' who could acquire Latvian citizenship if the amendments were passed, simultaneously obtaining rights to a state pension and thus putting an extra burden on the state resources. Breikšs, along with Skuenieks and Pauļuks, is against the status of urgency for the law.

The *rapporteur* N. Maizels, responding to all speakers, first of all tries to fend off the criticism of the draft law as being insufficiently well-prepared. While acknowledging that proponents of the amendments constituted a majority in the Saeima committee which developed the draft, he nevertheless asks where the opponents were all the time that the draft was in preparation, and why they never stopped by at the committee to voice their criticisms and objections. As for the disputed status of urgency in reviewing the draft law, Maizels acknowledges that the urgency came about because of 'a certain political and psychological reaction' to the systematic stalling of the amendments in the *Saeima* over the past five years. Responding to the objection made earlier by Breikšs, about the amended law allegedly granting citizenship to those who have evaded military service in the past, Maizels points out a discrepancy in his argument – on the one hand, he says, Breikšs is worried about those who eschewed military service becoming citizens; on the other, he is also concerned that the number of war invalids under the care of the state social services would grow.

Speaking of the 'they did not want to become Latvian citizens in the past' argument, Maizels notes that it was discussed thoroughly at the committee. It should be recognised, he says, that at the moment of the independence proclamation, a certain part of the Latvian nation was less 'ecstatic' about it than others. And there are a certain number of ethnic Latvians who did not take part in the fight for independence; does this mean, says Maizels, posing a rhetorical question, that we should now deprive those people of their citizenship? Furthermore, says Maizels, the fate of Latvian independence was not decided

⁴² Latvijas Republikas II. Saeimas IV. sesijas 17. sēde 1926. gada 3. decembrī, p. 796

in 1918 alone – it was also determined during the struggles of 1915, and those workers who made sacrifices back then are now denied Latvian citizenship based on the fact that they were not officially ‘registered’ as Latvian citizens. Where is the justice in this, exclaims Maizels? Concluding his speech, he expresses the hope that the Saeima will decide to satisfy the ‘rightful claim of thousands of people’.

The *Saeima* then voted down Pauļuks’s proposal to return the draft law to the committee, and proceeded to review it article by article.

F. Cielēns, on behalf of the LSDSP faction, expresses dissatisfaction with the proposed amendments, especially with the creation of a new Article 1.2 – in his opinion, this new article would unnecessarily complicate the law itself and its subsequent practical application. He proposes cancelling the submitted amendment and putting those additional conditions which it stipulates as addendums to Article 1 of the existing law instead. With regards to the content of the aforementioned amendment, says Cielēns, the Social Democrats fully support granting automatic citizenship to those who now reside in Latvia, who had been living here prior to the war, who possess ties to Latvia, and who have not adopted another state’s citizenship. However, the Social Democrats strongly oppose the idea of granting citizenship to those who used to live in Latvia, but who over the past seven years, when there was already peace in Latvia, have chosen to remain abroad. Here, he says, we should also consider social motives – unemployment is rife in Latvia, and there is absolutely no need to aggravate the existing situation by bringing more people from abroad. Therefore, in the name of the LSDSP faction, Cielēns submits the following proposal:

*To cross out both the first, and the second draft amendments, and to formulate the following addendum instead: To express Article 1 of the Citizenship Law from 1919 as: 1.1. Also every citizen of the former Russian state, regardless of ethnicity and creed, who at the moment of this article’s promulgation is residing in Latvia, and who has not adopted another country’s citizenship, and a) who prior to 1st August 1914 had been residing in Latvia for at least six months, b) or who had been a permanent resident within the Latvian borders before 1881, c) or who is a descendant of persons mentioned in clauses a) and b).*⁴³

⁴³ Latvijas Republikas II. Saeimas IV. sesijas 17. sēde 1926. gada 3. decembrī, p. 803.

Pauļuks (Agrarian Union) takes the floor next, claiming that the proposal just voiced by Cielēns is unacceptable both in its form and in content. He contends that the proposal absolutely changes the content of the draft law by removing an entire group of its potential beneficiaries. According to Pauļuks, if the Saeima were to accept the proposed changes, than some of the people would lose the citizenship that they acquired under the Law of 1919.

P. Schiemann proposes yet another version of an amended Article 1: *‘all former citizens of Russia, who have not adopted another state’s citizenship, and who had been permanent residents in Latvia for six months prior to or since 1st August 1914, if within one month since the Law’s promulgation they inform their city authorities or a regional police department accordingly.’*⁴⁴

Maizels, responding to the speakers, acknowledges that it would be better not to create a new sub-article 1.2, but just to correct the existing Article 1, as proposed by Cielēns. However, the Committee could not pursue that option because of the two existing categories of citizens, *divdesmitganieki* and *astoņdesmitgadnieki*, whose privileges over the others, the Committee believed, it did not feel right to remove. Maizels also draws Pauļuks’s attention to the fact that the amended law will not have backdated validity, so his concerns about existing citizens being suddenly deprived of their citizenship are unfounded. Maizels, on behalf of the Committee, objects to both Cielēns’s and Schiemann’s proposals on the grounds that they both contradict the draft law’s content.

The Chairman of the *Saeima* P. Kalniņš put three proposals to the vote: the above-mentioned proposals by Cielēns and Schiemann, and another one by Skujenieks, which simply reads ‘To cross out Article 1.1 and the footnote’. Cielēns was voted down, but both Skujenieks’s and Schiemann’s proposals went through. Voices from the audience: ‘Jews have earned some applause!’

The *Saeima* then proceeds to review Article 1.2 of the draft law. V. Firks (Baltic German Party) proposes to cross out Article 1.2 and to replace it with a following footnote to Article 2: *‘Citizens who due to violation of Article 2 have lost their rights to Latvian*

⁴⁴ Latvijas Republikas II. Saeimas IV. sesijas 17. sēde 1926. gada 3. decembrī, pp. 804-805.

citizenship, but who have not adopted another state's citizenship, can regain those rights if within three months since the promulgation of these amendments they return to Latvia, or register as Latvian citizens at one of the Latvian diplomatic offices abroad.' Notably, Firks asks for a secret ballot.

Cielēns categorically objects to Firks's proposal [*'Or is it Pauļuks's proposal – it is really hard to tell'*, he sarcastically remarks, causing laughter in the audience].

Maizels refuses to comment on Firks's proposal without having discussed it with the Committee. In the meantime, P. Kalniņš announces that several signatures have been collected in support of the secret ballot – those of K. Kellers (Baltic German party), V. Firks, R. Vittenbergs (*Agudat Israel*), J. Hāns (Baltic German Party), P. Schiemann, A. Alslebens (Baltic German Party), E. Tichoņickis and J. Pommers (Bloc of Russian Orthodox Voters, Russians and United Organisations), and I. Jupatovs (Old Believers). Firks's proposal is put to the vote, and is passed. Then the Speaker asks the members of the parliament to vote for the draft law in its entirety on the second reading. It is voted down, drawing a round of applause from the left wing.

During the next Parliamentary session on 7th December 1926, Maizels, Būmeisters and others submit a proposal to return the draft law to the Public Law Committee with the aim of developing, within a week, amendments to the Citizenship Law which would stipulate that *'everybody who had been residing in Latvia prior to 1st August 1914, and who is residing in Latvia now, is considered to be a Latvian citizen.'*⁴⁵ This proposal gains only 47 votes, and is therefore rejected.

On 17th December 1926, Skujenieks presented his government's declaration to the *Saeima*. What followed can probably be considered the liveliest session of the interwar *Saeima*, when many truths were uncovered and mysteries revealed. The government's declaration only mentioned minorities in passing: *'In its work, the government will be fair towards all Latvian citizens regardless of ethnicity and creed.'*⁴⁶ However, it was precisely the *'cooperation with minorities'* that became unexpectedly central to the ensuing debates.

⁴⁵ Latvijas Republikas II. Saeimas IV. sesijas 18. sēde 1926. gada 7. decembrī, p. 835.

⁴⁶ Latvijas Republikas II. Saeimas IV. sesijas 21. sēde 1926. gada 17. decembrī, p. 993.

It was A. Klīve (Agrarian Union) who first brought the issue up: ‘I have to point out that the minorities are very much involved in this cabinet. Not for nothing has it become known in society as Nurock’s cabinet.’ A remark from the audience ‘And yours – as Dubins’s cabinet!’, followed by laughter. Klīve dismisses this insult as ‘unfounded’ because, according to him:

...We [Agrarian Union] always, on all occasions, wanted to keep a certain line of understanding with the minorities. [Disturbances in the audience]. And Mr. Dišlers should also be aware that since the moment of Latvia’s independence we at the Agrarian Union have always followed that line of understanding with the minorities. Because of this determination, we have heard many admonitions from you and from your predecessors; you accused us of selling Latvia to the minorities... but now it seems that you agree with our policies...⁴⁷

Klīve then poses a direct question – why has the so-called ‘second part’ of the government’s declaration, a secret part allegedly containing promises to minorities which had been traded for Nurock’s help with the cabinet arrangements, not been made public? ‘I think it is because there are people in this House, including Mr. Dišlers, who would not vote for you then.’⁴⁸

The most piquant detail, continues Klīve, is that the new cabinet is based upon the support of the German faction. He recalls how the Social Democrats, Cielēns in particular, have continuously opposed the ‘barons’ and ‘Bermondians’. Look how you have been played by fate, he says, it often wreaks vengeance on your previous words and actions.

All in all, summarises Klīve, this will be a government which is based exclusively upon the left wing, and which on top of that excludes the whole region of Latgale [neither left nor right-wing parties from Latgale were involved in the cabinet discussions]. Worst of all, this government has come to power when the country is in the direst economic situation, and it would be an illusion to expect that a left-wing government will lend any help to producers; it will concentrate on consumers instead. He concluded ominously: ‘Therefore we at the Agrarian Union, who have always defended, and will always defend, the interests of the producers, cannot grant our trust to this government. We also undertake

⁴⁷ Latvijas Republikas II. Saeimas IV. sesijas 21. sēde 1926. gada 17. decembrī, p. 999.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

to do everything possible in the future to make the lifetime of this government as short as possible.’⁴⁹ There is a round of applause from the right wing.

G. Reinhardts (Christian National Union) declares that he wants to talk not about the content of the government’s declaration, but about its provenance. In his highly metaphorical speech, Reinhardts refers to the well-known – in the past – practice of landlords in Kurzeme and Zemgale (where Skujenieks’s family is originally from) using a middleman [somebody from the audience helpfully suggests ‘*A Jew!*’]. Skujenieks, claims Reinhardts, has also used a middleman while forming his coalition. This middleman, according to Reinhardts, was the ‘highly respected Chief Rabbi of Jelgava, Mr. Nurock [exclamations and laughter from the audience]. Reinhardts, continuing to speak in Aesopian language, questions whether the price Skujenieks had to pay for Nurock’s ‘services’ is not too high, especially considering that it would not just be Skujenieks paying it, out of his own pocket, but all Latvian people would have to pay it, under his government. Reinhardts addresses Nurock:

We know what has been promised for your good services. The pay-off is the Citizenship Law, which has already been voted down by this House three times... All this time the present prime minister [Skujenieks] has been its most vicious and determined opponent. But now he has handed out this promise [to amend the Law], but it is not included in his declaration!⁵⁰

The next speaker, A. Bļodnieks (New Farmers’ and Small Holdings Owners’ Party) reinforces the rumour:

We all remember the anger and indignation expressed by the prime minister [Skujenieks] towards the Citizenship Law amendments! ...It is true that many bourgeois [*pilsoni*]⁵¹, who have promised to vote for the amendments [sic], who wanted to find a solution to this painful problem, have trusted Mr. Skujenieks’s ‘holy anger’ and his statistics, and were too afraid to vote in favour of the amendments... We all know, it is not a secret, that the new head of the government, Mr. Skujenieks, has promised those left-wing minorities who are friendly towards him that he will pass the [amendments to] Citizenship Law. If it is true, as the previous speaker has said, that Rabbi Nurock already has a signed promise to pass the Citizenship Law in his pocket, then we have to

⁴⁹ Latvijas Republikas II. Saeimas IV. sesijas 21. sēde 1926. gada 17. decembrī, p. 1001.

⁵⁰ Latvijas Republikas II. Saeimas IV. sesijas 21. sēde 1926. gada 17. decembrī, p. 1006.

⁵¹ The Latvian word *pilsoni* during the interwar period was used to denominate bourgeoisie (for example, *pilsonu partijas* – bourgeois parties), and not citizens, as is the modern meaning of the word.

wonder that somebody who all this time has been protesting against the amendments, who swore that they would never happen, and who warned that hundreds of thousands of ‘unwanted elements’ would flood Latvia, has changed his views so suddenly.⁵²

Somewhat echoing Klīve’s speech, Bļodnieks stresses that farmers and small landholders have nothing good to expect from the Social Democrats, who with all their words and actions up to now have already proved to be in opposition to farmers. Therefore, his party will definitely not support the government, he says.

V. Holcmanis (LSDSP) responds to Klīve’s speech, questioning Klīve’s presentation of the new government’s association with minorities as of a ‘*mortal sin*’. A mortal sin it is [*sic*], agrees Holcmanis, but was our previous government innocent of it? And is it possible at all to form a government without minorities’ participation in this *Saeima*? As long as the Agrarian Union and the Social Democrats cannot reach a common understanding – and this is something they are not willing to do – minorities will inevitably play a part in any coalition, continues Holcmanis. And if the press is now talking about the ‘Nurock government’, then the government of Alberings, he says, was known as the ‘Dubins cabinet’. ‘And if we have to choose between Nurock and Dubins, then our sympathies belong to the democratically-inclined Nurock rather than to Dubins, who is Ulmanis’s right-hand man.’⁵³ And if it is true, continues Holcmanis, that other minorities, notably the Germans, are also benevolent and neutral in their attitude to the new government, than it seems that the government may be standing on the right path.

‘The government which stands today in front of us is not the one for which the German faction can take responsibility’, cautiously announces V. Firkss (Baltic German Party) ‘The German faction stands on a bourgeois [*pilsoniskā*] platform, and therefore we do not support any experiments in social and economic fields which are usually associated with a radically left government.’⁵⁴

But considering the current crisis in the country’s economy, the German faction considers it necessary to minimise the *interregnum* and portfolio-bargaining time, so that a

⁵² Latvijas Republikas II. Saeimas IV. sesijas 21. sēde 1926. gada 17. decembrī, p. 1011.

⁵³ Latvijas Republikas II. Saeimas IV. sesijas 21. sēde 1926. gada 17. decembrī, p. 1029.

⁵⁴ Latvijas Republikas II. Saeimas IV. sesijas 21. sēde 1926. gada 17. decembrī, p. 1029.

government can undertake full responsibility for further developments. The German faction has not participated in these coalition talks, stresses Firkss, it has not given or received any promises, and will therefore reserve the right to exercise its 'free will' in relation to this government, in strict accordance with its platform and convictions.

M. Dubins (*Agudat Israel*) speaks on behalf of the Jewish faction (Mr. Nurock excluded) and confronts the prime minister-to-be:

I remember the moment when we were discussing the Citizenship Law. And if he [Skujenieks] believed in what he was saying, then I should say that all the money we provide for his statistics is money thrown away. I do not say that he had evil intentions. But if he knows that 250,000 [new citizens] will not come, and still comes to us with the wrong data, then I cannot trust such a prime minister, and cannot vote for him. And if Mr. Nurock supports Mr. Skujenieks as a prime minister, then I am not sure whether the Jewish people will thank him for that.⁵⁵

Dubins then turns his attention to Dišlers and his attitude towards minorities, alleging that Dišlers, who does not speak often in the Saeima during the sessions, in private conversations with M. Laserson expresses totally different views on the matter than in his newspaper interviews [animation in the audience, exclamations]:

It is very sad that all this squabbling over the Citizenship Law happens every time. And I am very sorry that the Social Democrats decided this time to earn [political] capital by using it. You have only got Nurock's support because of it [the Citizenship Law]. This is very bad. If Mr. Nurock had joined you on ideological grounds, supporting your programme, it would have been different. But he only joined you because you allowed him a glimpse of the Citizenship Law. ... I know for a fact that when the Law comes up for review, the government will be ousted. That's what has been promised to me by Mr. Juraševskis behind the scenes. Let us remember the Zamuels government, which also promised to settle the matter of the Citizenship Law. But what happened when this question came under review? Zamuels could not rally the majority any more – one person stepped out into the lobby, another stayed at home, and the necessary majority was not there.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Latvijas Republikas II. Saeimas IV. sesijas 21. sēde 1926. gada 17. decembrī, p. 1036

⁵⁶ Latvijas Republikas II. Saeimas IV. sesijas 21. sēde 1926. gada 17. decembrī, pp. 1037-1038

Dubins concludes his speech with the assertion that the Jewish faction, with the exception of Mr. Nurock, does not believe that Mr. Skujenieks is the one who will defend minorities' interests, and will therefore abstain from voting for his government. Dubins was the last contributor to the debates, after which, with 52 votes for, 35 against, and 2 abstentions, Skujenieks's government was confirmed.

Just a month later, in January 1927, a group of MPs (Schiemann and Dubins among them) submitted the next draft amendments to the Law, which aimed to reconcile the *jus soli* and *jus sanguinis* principles. According to the MPs' proposal, Article 1 of the Law, '*Every subject of former Russia, regardless of ethnicity and creed, who resides within Latvia's borders, originates from the regions included within Latvia's borders, or, in accordance with the Russia's laws belonged to these regions prior to August 1, 1914 and has not acquired any other citizenship up to the date of this law's promulgation*', was to omit, in the future, the words '*who resides within Latvia's borders*' altogether, and was to gain a footnote which would allow those who still resided outside Latvia to claim their citizenship rights within six months of the amendments' promulgation by either returning to Latvia, or by registering as Latvian citizens in one of the Latvian representations abroad, or by informing the Minister of the Interior about their wish to retain their Latvian citizenship. The MPs proposed to introduce a new Article, which would stipulate that '*Likewise, every subject of the former Russian state, regardless of nationality and creed, who resides within Latvia's borders, and who has not, at the moment of these amendments' promulgation, acquired any other citizenship and who had been residing within what now counts as Latvian territories for at least six months prior to August 1, 1914, counts as a Latvian citizen.*'⁵⁷

By a unanimous vote, these amendments were passed for elaboration to the Public Affairs Committee, and re-surfaced in the *Saeima* on 29th April 1927.

The *rapporteur* N. Maizels (*Bund*), in his introductory speech, describes the Citizenship Law as a *van'ka-vstan'ka*. According to Maizels, this proposal is different from any of its predecessors, because it is not just based on the demands of a certain political group, but also takes into account both the previous experience of the *Saeima* in

⁵⁷ Latvijas Republikas II. Saeimas V. sesijas 1. sēde 1927. gada 17. janvarī, pp. 9-10.

debating amendments to this law, and the practical experience of the Ministry of the Interior with the existing law's implementation. Importantly, the *rapporteur* reminds the *Saeima* that it was him, Maizels, who suggested forwarding the proposed amendments to the Public Affairs Committee four months earlier, and discloses the fact that this was done with the knowledge [and, obviously, approval] of M. Skujenieks. Skujenieks, stresses Maizels, after long discussions came to the conclusion that amendments were necessary; this had happened before any rumours of a new coalition started.

Moving on to the substance of the proposed amendments, Maizels divides them into three parts. Part one, he says, protects the rights of those people who lived in Latvia before the war. Part two deals with Article 2 of the 1919 Law, the right to an option [*optācija*]. Part three is amendments and extensions of Article 7 of the 1919 Law, which concerns the rights of citizens' wives and family members to citizenship. According to Maizels, practically all citizenship applications, submitted in their thousands to the Ministry of the Interior, are being submitted by those who had lived in Latvia prior to 1914. The Ministry itself, says Maizels, is hoping for 'a desk cleanly swept' (*reinen tisch; reinen tisch machen mit*) in the resolution of the matter.⁵⁸

The proposed article, continues Maizels, is at the same time an extension (in numbers of the people it applies to), and a restriction (in time; as all citizenship applications should be received by 1st February 1928). As for the right to option, out of the three proposed amendments, two are 'restricting' and only one, aimed at seamen, is 'broadening'.

When it came to voting, there was no quorum in the Parliament, and the session was closed.

The next time the draft amendments came back, on 6th May 1927, the session started with Pauļuks (Agrarian Union), Dišlers (Radical Democrats), Petrevics (Social Democrats) and Skujenieks (Social Democrats Mensheviks), taking the floor several times each, and arguing about legal technicalities, about the potential number of new citizens the law could create, and about who said what during the previous parliamentary sessions

⁵⁸ Latvijas Republikas II. Saeimas VI. Sesijas 1. Sēde 1927. gada 29. aprīlī, pp. 54-55.

dedicated to the Law. Several interesting details surfaced during their heated polemical exchanges.

Pauļuks, who speaks for longest, objects to the proposed one-year time limit for exercising the right to option – in a country as small as Latvia, he says, this is excessive; if somebody needs a whole year to become a Latvian citizen, then they must have some hidden motives:

Gentlemen, we must make sure that what happened in 1919, when we were gladly willing to make everybody citizens of our state, does not happen again! Those times were hard times for our state, as there was still war on our territories, and we needed citizen-soldiers! ...At that time, very few people among the minorities became Latvian citizens. The majority of them accepted foreign citizenship, such as Lithuanian, Belarussian, etc. Now you want to do the same thing again...Is this really aimed at satisfying a real need? No, this is favouring one particular minority, a certain group who wants to ensure the possibility of Latvian citizenship for its members, who are obviously not willing to become Latvian citizens yet.⁵⁹

Pauļuks, at the same time, assures his audience that he is not trying to say that at present, the minorities do not want to be loyal Latvian citizens. On the contrary, he says, as over the past eight years there have been many positive changes in Latvia, now most of them are willing to be loyal citizens, and they probably are. But to reach a common understanding on the question of citizenship, according to Pauļuks, is impossible in such a heated atmosphere – heated because the Social Democrats have turned it into a ‘coalition issue’. Besides, he continues, ethnic minorities should first achieve understanding among themselves in their own midst (instead of one ethnic group gaining an unfair advantage over the others), and then seek understanding with the Latvian groups – both socialist and bourgeois.

As for the Agrarian Union, continues Pauļuks, unlike the Social Democrats, it is always looking for peace and common understanding. He then sheds light on the story behind the ‘national government’ of Z. Meierovics, and the role of the left wing in supporting the cabinet:

⁵⁹ Latvijas Republikas II. Saeimas VI. Sesijas 8. sēde 1927. gada 6.maijā, pp. 249-250.

There have been times when we sat together with the minorities. Those were the times after the hard trials – 16th April 1919, when the state interests demanded it. Then we did it – we sat together with the minorities, the Jewish and German representatives, in one office, and we worked together. You know what the results of this common work were – they were good and clear. And who upset this balanced situation? It was the Social Democrats, and the left wing of the Constitutional Assembly overall, who wanted, demanded, and insisted upon founding of a national government, and who also promoted this point of view in society and in the press.⁶⁰

Pauļuks then turns his attention to Nurock, and his insistence on the promises about the amendments to the Citizenship Law, handed out by the coalition partners to him earlier, being kept. Describing Nurock's 'inappropriate perseverance' in holding Latvian MPs to their promises, he compares him to the *Merchant of Venice* [he obviously means Shylock, not Antonio] – who, according to Pauļuks, was also a 'shopkeeper', who 'behaved similarly', and 'had one refrain – I demand this, you have promised!'. Just like Shylock, says Klīve, Nurock insists on fulfilling a promise that cannot be fulfilled.⁶¹

A. Petrevics blames the heated atmosphere surrounding the amendments to the Citizenship Law on the newspapers who are scaring the public with their forecasts that an amended law will 'open the gates of Latvia' to 250,000-300,000 people who have not been Latvian residents before: 'It would be understandable if somebody who knows nothing about the matter came to such conclusions... But this is being said by influential people, by journalists, and especially by the *Saeima* deputies, who I am sure do know the truth, who can easily find out that these figures are wrong... These people should be more responsible for their own words'. According to Petrevics, this kind of manipulation of public opinion with false statistical data is a remnant of Tsarist Russia's undignified propaganda against certain minorities, and especially against Jews, which led to bloodshed in the past.⁶²

Skujenieks responds to the previous speakers and attempts to deflect those accusations made against him personally. Many existing misunderstandings, both in the press, and in the *Saeima*, he says, arise from the confusion between two separate issues,

⁶⁰ Latvijas Republikas II. Saeimas VI. Sesijas 8. sēde 1927. gada 6.maijā, pp. 259.

⁶¹ Latvijas Republikas II. Saeimas VI. Sesijas 8. sēde 1927. gada 6.maijā, pp. 260.

⁶² Latvijas Republikas II. Saeimas VI. Sesijas 8. sēde 1927. gada 6.maijā, pp. 262-163.

two separate parts of the Citizenship Law amendments. The first part deals with awarding citizenship to those stateless people who live in Latvia, and who also prior to the war lived in Latvia, continues Skujenieks. The second part, he says, has always been an attempt to award citizenship to those who do not reside in Latvia now, have not been residing in Latvia since after the war, who live abroad, and who were given an option to Latvian citizenship while continuing to live abroad. Skujenieks stresses that it was the second, not the first part of the amendments that he has always been opposed to, and for a good reason – because nobody could with any certainty predict just how many people will be able to gain Latvian citizenship if this second part of amendments went through.

I have always thought, I still think, and I will always think in the future that these numbers can be very big. I do not want to vex this house with the cumbersome calculations, but I would like to point out one consideration, namely that prior to the World War there were at least 2.552,000 people residing in Latvia, whereas there are only 1.850,000 people living here now. This is a difference of 700,000 people, who used to live here before the war, and who do not live here now. I do not in the least want to assume that all of them will all be able to obtain citizenship on the basis of the right to option clause. But for a big part of them it will be possible, as there are hundreds of thousands stateless people in all corners of the world now; we cannot tell just how closely they were connected to Latvia, and whether they will be able to produce some proof of their connection which will give them a right to citizenship.⁶³

As for the other part of the amendments, argues Skujenieks, it can only be applied to those people who live in Latvia now, and all these articles that have been published lately in our press about Latvia's doors being opened to all foreigners, are simply untrue. The first part of the amendments to the Citizenship Law under discussion, insists Skujenieks, opens the doors to nobody who is not in Latvia already.

K. Dišlers, in his speech, mainly reviews legal technicalities, criticising some of the existing formulations in the proposed amendments for being imprecise and/or not concise enough, and proposing various additions, like making criminal convictions another basis of denying citizenship to otherwise eligible candidates. He also says: 'What is being carried out in relation to the Citizenship Law, can be called bargaining [*andele*]...Therefore I think that it would be good to solve this question once and for all, so that Mr. Dubins does

⁶³ Latvijas Republikas II. Saeimas VI. Sesijas 8. sēde 1927. gada 6.maijā, pp. 266.

not have to frequent the Ministry of Interior also for the next two or three years, and that all those who have rights to Latvian citizenship get it according to legislation.’

Pauļuks and Skujenieks speak again, insults are exchanged, there is uproar in the audience, exclamations from both the left and on the right wings: ‘Scoundrels, liars, cheats!’, ‘These are all lies!’. Finally, F. Cielēns (Social Democrats) takes the floor. He informs the audience that he wants to address the draft law from a general viewpoint, without going into legal technicalities. Cielēns’s speech, however, is a remarkably concise account of the past events and ideological differences surrounding the notorious law:

...When the Latvian state was founded, we did not find it possible, for known, historically understandable reasons, to completely clarify the legal status of all the people who at the time resided in Latvian territories. That time in 1919, we adopted a Citizenship Law that excluded a certain category of people from the body of citizens: people who had been living here for years, possibly for decades, and we did not grant them citizenship. Such an approach has not been used in international law at the creation of new states previously; and from the point of view of international principles it is totally absurd, as it creates a certain number of residents who do not belong to any state. And if such people are created in their thousands, then sooner or later this situation must be set right by internationally accepted means [*starptautiskā ceļā*].

If eight years ago we could find historical justifications for this rigorous rule, such as that our state was based upon national principles, and that we were in dire circumstances, then now, when we will soon celebrate the 10th anniversary of our state’s existence, it is totally out of place to talk about such dangers and fears for our Latvian republic because we might grant citizenship to a few thousand people who reside in Latvia and were connected to it through family and other ties.
....

Secondly, it seems to me that that with this act we will not weaken, but will rather strengthen our state. On founding our state, we incurred a certain amount of injustice from a legal point of view, we created a certain group of dissatisfied people, who have been living in Latvia for years and decades, who pay all their taxes and duties in Latvia, who fulfil the same obligations, apart from service in the army, as Latvian citizens, but who we have not allowed to take part in elections. Neither in municipal, nor in parliamentary elections. If we avert this injustice, we will grant people satisfaction, and this will only strengthen our state.⁶⁴

⁶⁴ Latvijas Republikas II. Saeimas VI. sesijas 8. sēde 1927. gada 6. maijā, pp. 276-277.

Cielēns concludes his speech by stressing that by passing these amendments the Latvian state will also obtain greater international prestige.

The result of the debates on 6th May 1927 was that the draft law was passed on the second reading, 50 votes for, 43 against, no abstentions.

The third reading of the draft law took place on 20th May 1927. This how *Latvijas Kareivis* described the galvanised atmosphere at the Parliament:

The Saeima's agenda promises this to be a big day. All seats and standing places are taken. Most of the visitors are those belonging to ethnic minorities [*cittautībnieki*]. Members of the Cabinet are present in their seats. The first item on the agenda, the Law on accommodation for agricultural labourers, does not attract general interest. ...Excitement is expected during the debates on the amendments to the Citizenship Law on the third reading.⁶⁵

M. Dubins accuses Latvian newspapers of spreading rumours that Jews from all over the world want to come to Latvia. 'I would like to assure you that the whole world will not come to Latvia. Certainly there will be some [Jews] left over in England, Germany, and France. Who will really come? Only those people will come who have some ties to Latvia.'⁶⁶ Dubins argues that those who have been living in Latvia since 1918 have earned their right to be citizens, and that nine years is a long time. K. Dišlers points out to Dubins that he, Dubins, could have raised the issue of granting citizenship to all residents on two previous occasions: in 1919 at the National Council, and in 1921 when the Constitutional assembly amended the Law, but chose not to. According to Dišlers, it is hard to take Dubins's *bravado* nine years after the fact seriously.

The Citizenship Law amendments were finally passed on the third reading – with 52 votes for, 43 against, and no abstentions. The Social Democrats, the minorities and the Latgalian faction voted for. The bourgeois parties and the Democratic centre voted against. The amended law now read:

⁶⁵ 'Pavalstniecības likums pieņemts', *Latvijas Kareivis*, 21.05.1927.

⁶⁶ Latvijas Republikas II. Saeimas VI. sesijas 16. sēde 1927. gada 20. maijā, p. 521.

Article 1. Every subject of the former Russian Empire, without distinction of nationality and religion, residing within the limits of Latvia, or who is a native of the regions included in the territory of Latvia, or who belonged to the aforesaid regions on the strength of the laws of Russia before August 1, 1914 – is considered a citizen of Latvia, provided he or she has not become a citizen of another state before the publication of this law.

Article 1.1. Likewise every subject of the former Russian Empire, without distinction of nationality and religion, who has resided within the limits of Latvia since January 1, 1925, has not become subject of any other state before the coming into force of these amendments and supplements, and –

- (a) Has lived within the limits of Latvia at least for six months before August 1, 1914, or*
- (b) Has had permanent residence within the limits of Latvia up to 1881, or*
- (c) Is a descendant of persons mentioned under (a) and (b).*

The privileges mentioned in this paragraph shall be enjoyed by persons who, satisfying the above-mentioned requirements, file a petition with the Minister of the Interior for a Latvian passport before February 1, 1928. The privileges mentioned in this paragraph shall be denied to persons who lived in Latvia during the years of 1918, 1919 and 1920, and, being of military age, did not report at the mobilization proclaimed by the temporary Latvian government.

Article 2. Persons temporarily resident outside the limits of Latvia but otherwise satisfying the requirements mentioned in paragraph 1 do not forfeit their claim to Latvian citizenship, if they return to Latvia within twelve months from the date of publication of this law, if they register themselves as Latvian citizens with one of the Latvian diplomatic representatives abroad, or communicate their desire to remain Latvian citizens to the Minister of the Interior.⁶⁷

P. Juraševskis (Democratic Centre) announces that the passed amendments are not in accordance with the ‘will of the majority of the people’ and promises that the Democratic Centre will initiate a popular referendum on the amendments.

⁶⁷ *Likums par pavalstniecību: (lik. rīk. krāj. 1919. g. 127. num. un 1927. g. 93. num.). Papildinājumi likumā par pavalstniecību [1930. g. 5. februārī].* Rīga: 1930. The English text quoted as per: Flournoy Jr., R.W. and Hudson, M.O. (eds.) 1929. *A Collection of Nationality Laws of Various Countries as Contained in Constitutions, Statutes and Treaties.* New York, London, Toronto, Melbourne, and Bombay: Oxford University Press, p. 407.

On 27th May 1927, the Democratic Centre submitted an initiative on a popular referendum to the state president. The initiative was signed by twenty-two Latvian MPs (including the Democratic Centre, the New Farmers and Smallholders, and others), which was twelve signatures short of the required thirty-four (not less than one-third of the Saeima, according to Article 72 of the *Satversme*). The Agrarian Union, contrary to the earlier speculations in the press, did not support the referendum. The referendum, however, was allowed to continue to its next stage – the collection of public signatures, with the aim of collecting the signatures of at least 10 per cent of the electorate.

In July 1927, Prime Minister M. Skujenieks gave a press interview in which he updated the public on the new citizenship acquisitions. According to Skujenieks, since the amendments were passed, the number of applications for citizenship submitted to the Ministry of the Interior had not reached ten [*sic*]:

The number of citizenship applications to the Ministry of the Interior has significantly decreased lately. This, without any doubt, can be explained by the fact that those people who have rights to citizenship have already exercised those rights earlier, and the overall number of *optants* is not at all big. I believe that based on the new law, the number of Latvian citizens could increase by 6-8,000 people, and in any case by no more than 10,000.⁶⁸

Two weeks later, *Latvijas Kareivis* informed its readers that the number of citizenship applications at the Ministry of the Interior had reached 70; an employee of the Ministry provided possible explanations for the still-low numbers, and of the precautions taken: ‘Evidently, the majority of people are still waiting for the results of the popular referendum. All these applications are filed separately, so that if, as a result of the referendum, the law is overturned, than the new passports can be annulled promptly. Besides, there will be a special footnote in all passports issued based on Article 1.1 of the Law’.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ ‘Cik jaunu pavalstnieku var dot jaunais pavalstniecības likums’, *Latvijas Kareivis*, 01.07.1927.

⁶⁹ ‘Galvas pilsēta’, *Latvijas Kareivis*, 17.07.1927.

Latvian newspapers avidly reported on the collection of signatures and the polemics surrounding the new law. A. Bergs in *Latvis* called for his readership to vote against the law:

Latvia, with all the rights that belonging to it provides, is a joyful accomplishment of our nation [*mūsu tautas*] through arduous fighting; a fulfilment of our centuries-long endeavours. We cannot light-heartedly share this accomplishment with any ‘chance’ people. The opposition to the Citizenship Law’s amendments is a healthy instinct on the part of our people who are defending their achievements and their rights. We do not doubt that this healthy instinct will be demonstrated strongly enough during the people’s voting, and will ensure a victory.⁷⁰

Segodnya described the referendum as an ‘irresponsible undertaking’, which could not possibly be explained by state interests, but rather by narrow partisan interests. According to *Segodnya*, the referendum had been organised in order to weaken the existing government coalition.⁷¹

MP K. Balodis, a man of many talents ranging from theology to economics and finances, criticised the new law on the pages of *Jaunākās Ziņas* for not taking into account the ‘interests’ of Latvian Jews:

Essentially, further awards of Latvian citizenship are also not in the best interests of the existing Latvian citizens-Jews...The problem of Russian Jews should be solved on a larger scale: it is clear that because of shrinking trade, the majority of Jews should switch from trading to industrial labour and agriculture...Poor Latvia should first endeavour to bring back up industrial and agricultural production so that it can support those middlemen-traders who already live here. This is why the new Citizenship Law should be rejected.⁷²

The *Rigasche Rundschau* reminded its readers that 2,000 Baltic Germans were still without Latvian citizenship, and warned its readers against contributing signatures for the referendum, as it would inadvertently hurt those people, some of whom could have qualified for citizenship under the new law.⁷³

⁷⁰ Quoted as per: ‘Citu domas. Pavalstniecības likumlietā “Latvī” raksta A. Bergs’, *Latvijas Kareivis*, 05.07.1927.

⁷¹ ‘Citu domas. Pret tautas nobalsošanas’, *Latvijas Kareivis*, 05.07.1927.

⁷² Quoted as per: ‘Citu domas. Par pavalstniecības likumu’, *Latvijas Kareivis*, 08.07.1927.

⁷³ ‘Citu domas’, *Latvijas Kareivis*, 20.07.1927.

As the collection of signatures continued, Prime Minister Skujenieks repeatedly assured the public that there was no reason to fear an invasion of foreigners: ‘All this recent hustle and bustle surrounding the Citizenship Law is absolutely unnecessary. The number of people who gain rights to Latvian citizenship based on the new law is negligible. The view that the new law will flood the country with foreigners is mistaken’.⁷⁴

The necessary 112,000 signatures were collected; and in December 1927 the referendum took place. However, less than one quarter of the electorate showed up at the polling stations, indicating that despite the hysterical anti-amendments campaign mounted by the press, the Latvian electorate was not as obsessed with the citizenship issue as its lawmakers. The referendum had to be annulled, and the amended Citizenship Law remained in force. This was not, however, the end of the Citizenship Law saga.

Just one year later, when H. Celmiņš (Agrarian Union) presented his second government’s declaration to the Third Saeima on 30th November 1928 (the section pertaining to minority affairs promised ‘to expedite adoption of the School Law while observing and not restricting existing norms applying to minority schools’⁷⁵), the Citizenship Law came on to the agenda again.

M. Nurock first criticises the declaration for containing ‘standard phrases’ on the *status quo* in the school education area, and raises – again – the question of national-cultural autonomy for minorities. He then informs the audience that the amended Citizenship Law is in reality being implemented at a very slow pace, and provides numerous example of discrimination against Jews, claiming that Jewish merchants are treated as ‘stepchildren’ by the Latvian Central Bank, and that the path to the civil service for the Jewish intelligentsia and Jewish workers is closed.

During the same session, an addendum to the Citizenship Law (of a purely technical substance), in accordance with Article 81 of the Constitution, was submitted. The first of the two proposed new articles, 8.2, regulated the deprivation of citizenship in the

⁷⁴ ‘Ministru prez. par pavalstniecības likumu’, *Latvijas Kareivis*, 19.07.1927.

⁷⁵ Latvijas Republikas III. Saeimas I. sesijas 7. sēde 1928. gada 30. novembrī, p. 183.

case when a person had left Latvia illegally, or had otherwise resided abroad, with an expired Latvian passport, for a period of over six months. The other article, 8.3, foresaw deprivation of citizenship for those who had acquired citizenship by supplying false information or forged documents, or who had otherwise called witnesses who supplied false information. The proposal was forwarded to the Legal Affairs Committee. On 8th October 1929, the amended Citizenship Law was published in accordance with the Article 81 of the Constitution.⁷⁶

These two clauses were amended again in February 1930, changing Article 8.2. to read ‘three years’ instead of ‘six months’, and limiting the possibility of the deprivation of citizenship awarded based on false information to a period of five years after the acquisition of citizenship.⁷⁷

However, just ten months later the Citizenship Law was reviewed in the *Saeima* again, this time in its substance, in what seems to have been a curious attempt by Skujenieks to redeem himself as a Latvian nationalist. On 19th December 1930, the MPs M. Skujenieks (Progressive Union), J. Šterns (Progressive Union), K. Balodis (Latvian Labour Union and People’s Association), J. Pabērzs (Progressive People’s Union) and K. Kiršteins (Faction of Democratic Centre and Non-Partisan Public Servants) submit the following draft amendments to the Citizenship Law:

1. *The first sentence of Article 4 to conclude with the words ‘and if they speak Latvian’.*
2. *To supplement Article 4 with a new (5.) footnote:
‘Footnote 5: Proficiency in the Latvian language is not tested in those older than 60 years.’⁷⁸*

According to Skujenieks, proficiency in the Latvian language is the ultimate criterion of a person’s connection to Latvia. Debates flare up. A. Petrevics (Social Democrats), while agreeing in principle that Latvia’s citizens should be proficient in Latvian, points out that it is not fair to say that Latvian minorities do not want to speak

⁷⁶ ‘Papildinājumi likumā par pavalstniecību’, *Valdības Vēstnesis*, 12.10.1929.

⁷⁷ ‘Papildinājumi likumā par pavalstniecību’, *Valdības Vēstnesis*, 05.02.1930.

⁷⁸ Latvijas Republikas III. Saeimas VII. sesijas 18. sēde 1930. gada 19. decembrī, p. 793.

Latvian, as, with the exception of old people, they want to and do study the Latvian language. A big obstacle, according to Petrevics, is the lack of places at Latvian-language schools. He gives an example of a secondary school in Rēzekne, which received about 100 applications from minority students, but was forced to reject them due to the lack of places. Also, until very recently Latgalian residents had very few opportunities to practise Latvian, he says. Besides, argues Petrevics, proficiency in the Latvian language *per se* does not define a loyal citizen. He concludes: the Social Democratic faction considers this requirement unfounded and will vote against it.

N. Maizels (*Bund*) also stresses that proficiency in the Latvian language is a very useful and a necessary thing. But he reminds Skujenieks that 30 per cent or more of Latgalian residents are illiterate, and as such cannot be required to demonstrate any language proficiency. Maizels advises Skujenieks to channel his energy towards the eradication of illiteracy, which is more important. Maizels also claims that demands for compulsory language proficiency are reminiscent of the methods used during Russification, and warns that such measures will ruin the atmosphere of solidarity among the Latvian peoples. According to Maizels, he himself speaks Latvian in the *Saeima* only because he is not forced to do so.

G. Mīlbergs (New Farmers and Smallholders) accuses Skujenieks of double-dealing, reminding deputies how it was Skujenieks's government that extended citizenship to minorities, and claiming that now Skujenieks, out of a guilty conscience, is 'trying to be a nationalist at any cost'.

The draft was voted down (29 for, 44 against). Mīlbergs adds ironically that if all the mistakes made by Skujenieks during his government were to be corrected now, the *Saeima* would be able to do nothing else, as Skujenieks's sins against nationalism are so numerous.

The next 'technical' amendment to the Citizenship Law was made, in accordance with Article 81 of the Constitution, on 13th April 1932 – it extended the one-year deadline for citizenship applications from seamen stipulated in Article 2.1 until 1st January 1937,

and introduced two other changes of purely administrative character. This was the last amendment to the Citizenship Law made by the democratic Latvian government.⁷⁹

There would be four more amendments made to the Citizenship Law in the remaining eight years of Latvia's independence; these were aimed at political, rather than ethnic, enemies. They make chilling reading, as they allow one to follow the country's tragic path towards its loss of statehood.

The amendments from 21st September 1938, signed by K. Ulmanis, State President and Prime Minister, aimed at attracting new army recruits, and at banishing communists from the body of citizens. They added a footnote 2 to Article 4 allowing Latvian citizenship to be awarded to those who, although not having resided in Latvia for the required period of five years, had served, or were still serving, in the Latvian army subject to the approval of the Minister of the Interior. The second amendment changed the wording of Article 8.1, giving the Cabinet of Ministers the right to deprive of Latvian citizenship those who 1) eschewed military service or 2) engaged in activities that were hostile to Latvia.⁸⁰

The next amendment, from 18th April 1940, aimed at slowing down the exodus of the population at uncertain times – it introduced a new Article 8.4, which gave the Cabinets of Ministers powers to deprive those who had illegally emigrated abroad, of Latvian citizenship.

Similarly, on 13th July 1940 the Citizenship Law was amended to add a second part to Article 9 – as an obviously desperate measure, it stipulated that those Latvian citizens who had acquired foreign citizenship without permission from the Latvian government could be punished with a prison term of up to one year, or with property confiscation, or both.⁸¹

The amendments from 30th July 1940, most likely aimed at the Latvian diplomatic *corps* stationed in foreign countries, stipulated that those who had resided abroad for more than three years without a travel passport, or with an expired travel passport, or who had

⁷⁹ 'Pārgrozījumi likumā par pavalstniecību', *Valdības Vēstnesis*, 20.04.1932.

⁸⁰ 'Pārgrozījumi likumā par pavalstniecību', *Valdības Vēstnesis*, 23.09.1938.

⁸¹ 'Papildinājums likumā par pavalstniecību', *Valdības Vēstnesis*, 13.07.1940.

not returned to Latvia, or refused to return within a period established by the government, could be deprived of Latvian citizenship.⁸² Those amendments were already signed by the head of the short-lived puppet government installed by the Soviet Union, State President A. Kirhešteins. Thus concluded the 21-year-long saga of Latvian interwar citizenship.

The history of the Citizenship Law of 1919 and its subsequent amendments is vital to understanding the dynamics of majority-minority relations in interwar Latvia. This generally liberal piece of legislation was in line with the citizenship legislation in other Central and Eastern European countries at the time; it was somewhat stricter than the Estonian law of 27th October 1922 (which granted citizenship to all Russian subjects residing in Estonia up until 24th February 1918), but arguably more relaxed than the Lithuanian provisional law of 9th January 1919 (which bestowed citizenship on the descendants of those whose ‘parents and ancestors had lived in Lithuania since ancient times’, or otherwise on those who had been residing in Lithuania for least ten years up until 1914 as long as they possessed real estate or were permanently employed).

The Law of 1919 granted citizenship to 1,504,308⁸³ people out of the total population of 1,596,131⁸⁴, or 94.25 per cent. By 1925, this number had grown to encompass 1,779,593⁸⁵ people, or 96.46 per cent of the total population. In 1925, there were 31,668 foreigners, or 1.72 per cent of the total population, residing in Latvia, and 33,544 stateless persons, or 1.82 per cent.⁸⁶ Moreover, ethnic Latvians constituted only 76 per cent of all citizens, while ethnic minorities made up the remaining 24 per cent. The biggest discrepancy between the number of residents and number of citizens can be observed among the Jews – they constituted 5.2 per cent of the whole population, but only 4.5 per cent of citizens. During the five years after the promulgation of the law, the number

⁸² ‘Papildinājums un pārgrozījums likumā par pavalstniecību’, *Valdības Vēstnesis*, 30.07.1940.

⁸³ Skujeneeks, M. 1927. *Latvija. Zeme un eedzīvotāji*. Trešais pārstrādātais un papildinātais izdevums. Rīgā: A. Gulbja apgadniecība, p. 329.

⁸⁴ Skujeneeks, M. 1927. *Latvija. Zeme un eedzīvotāji*. Trešais pārstrādātais un papildinātais izdevums. Rīgā: A. Gulbja apgadniecība, p. 214.

⁸⁵ Skujeneeks, M. 1927. *Latvija. Zeme un eedzīvotāji*. Trešais pārstrādātais un papildinātais izdevums. Rīgā: A. Gulbja apgadniecība, p. 328.

⁸⁶ Skujeneeks, M. 1927. *Latvija. Zeme un eedzīvotāji*. Trešais pārstrādātais un papildinātais izdevums. Rīgā: A. Gulbja apgadniecība, p. 328.

of citizens among ethnic minorities in Latvia continued to grow, with the Estonians and Lithuanians being the most active in the acquisition of citizenship:

Ethnic group	Percentage of citizens in 1920	Percentage of citizens in 1925	Increase in the percentage of citizens
Latvians	99.27	99.36	0.09
Germans	78.93	85.08	6.15
Russians	86.54	94.21	7.67
Belarussians	91.71	96.80	5.09
Jews	77.31	83.36	6.05
Poles	73.71	87.66	13.95
Estonians	54.98	85.92	30.94
Lithuanians	31.28	69.15	37.87

Table 1. Changes in the percentage of citizens among ethnic groups in Latvia, 1920-1925. *Source: Skujeneeks, M. (1927).*

In short, neither the content of the legal provisions, nor the actual situation with citizenship in the interwar republic can be used as plausible explanations for the notoriety of the Citizenship Law of 1919, for the upheavals it caused and the polemics it sparked.

Straume (1992: 73) correctly observes that although the amendments of 1927 affected less than one per cent of the population, ‘reading the newspapers and the *Saeima* transcripts of the time, one gets the impression that it was precisely the Citizenship Law upon which Latvia’s future depended’. Incredibly, after nine years of bitter battles in the Parliament and in the press (and not just between the majority and ethnic minorities, but among the ethnic Latvian parties as well), only about 4,000 Jews acquired Latvian citizenship post-1927 (Dribins 2002: 70), a far cry from Skujenieks’s predicted 250,000. What made the Citizenship Law into the crux of Latvian political life in between the wars? I would like to offer a two-fold explanation to this question. The first has to do with the huge symbolic importance that Latvian ethnic minorities, who had taken both President Wilson’s Fourteen Points and the promises of equality contained in the National Platform of 1918 at face value, assigned to the issue of citizenship. The second explanation is rooted in the theory of ethnic bargaining. I will address both explanations in turn.

It is hard to underestimate the significance of citizenship as one of the identities available to an individual. Marshall’s (1950: 18) definition of citizenship as ‘a status bestowed on those who are full members of a community’ says it all – there is no higher degree of recognition of a special bond between an individual and a community than the one awarded by citizenship. Moreover, ‘societies in which citizenship is a developing institution create an image of an ideal citizenship against which achievement can be measured and towards which aspirations can be directed’ (Marshall 1950: 18). Clarke (1994: 3) observes that out of all partial identities available to humans it is only citizenship that is ‘exclusively, solely and fully political’. Comparing citizenship to class identity, Clarke (1994: 24) observes that ‘citizenship contains within it the idea of equality, but class is inherently unequal’. Brubaker (1992: 23) identified another fundamental aspect of citizenship as being both an instrument and an object of social closure. ‘To be defined as a citizen is not to qualify as an insider for a particular instance or type of interaction; it is to be defined in a general, abstract, enduring, and context-independent way as a member of the state’ (Brubaker 1992: 29).

Citizenship studies are famously triadic: Marshall, whose ‘Citizenship and Social Class’ (1950) probably remains the most influential study in the field to this day, established three key elements of citizenship, namely civil, political, and social. These three parts closely overlap with Joppke’s (2010: vii) division between the *status*, *rights*,

and *identity* dimensions of citizenship. In one of the latest contemporary studies of citizenship, Joppke observes that although these three key elements are closely interlinked, and changes in one inevitably lead to changes in another, to regard this process of change as successive causation is ‘too endogenous’ and ‘captive to a naïve functionalism’, not least because citizenship is also subject to specific legal regimes and political dynamics; at the very minimum, the interdimensional influences should be combined and balanced with those of external variables (Joppke 2010: 151).

It seems that the founders of the Latvian state in 1918 guaranteed equal rights to ethnic minorities in earnest, at a moment when the sentiments of coming into nationhood, of becoming a part of the new Eastern Europe – liberated from its imperial past – or better still, a part of Old Europe, where Latvians believed their country rightfully belonged (and as a matter of fact, Baltic Germans fully shared this conviction), were running high. When the time came to define the country’s citizenry, an effort was made to observe the existing, *de facto*, international norms which aimed to avoid creating large numbers of stateless persons (and indeed no large numbers of such persons were created in Latvia). At the same time, the provisions of the law were ‘ethnicity-blind’. And one may speculate that although the unfortunate wording of Article 1, requiring proof of ‘belonging’ to Latvian territories, in practice excluded a part of the Jewish population from the citizenry, it should have been clear to all interested parties at the time that the potential numbers involved were inherently small. So how did it all escalate into a full-blown inter-ethnic conflict and prolonged struggle among political parties from such a seemingly benign beginning?

But if ethnic Latvians earnestly believed back in 1918 that a new era had dawned in Europe, and that in Woodrow Wilson’s words ‘all well-defined national aspirations should be accorded the utmost satisfaction’, so did Latvia’s ethnic minorities. Latvia freed from imperial Russia’s yoke was going to be a paragon of democracy, fairness, and equality – of which the institution of Latvian citizenship was going to be the embodiment. So when the draft citizenship law excluded a part, albeit a very small one, of the Jewish population from the body of citizens, the Jews were not prepared to swallow the pill. As the most discriminated-against ethnic group in Latvia under the previous Russian domination, they felt that in democratic Latvia, proper justice must be served, and were not willing to taint their participation in the life of the new state with an unfair compromise. As M. Laserson wrote in *Segodnya*, ‘There can be no harmony while one of the interested parties, which is

in a stronger position, is trying to convince the other party that it actually does not possess any rights, and can therefore only count on the moral uprightness of the stronger party'.⁸⁷

Besides, if the law itself was 'ethnically blind', its practical implementation certainly wasn't. There is abundant evidence of complaints in the press, and during the parliamentary sessions, about the preferential treatment of ethnically Latvian citizenship applicants. Moreover, not only were ethnic Latvians favoured for the acquisition of citizenship, but also entirely different norms and procedures were applied to existing citizen non-Latvians. In 1921, for example, a special inter-departmental commission (which included representatives of the Ministry of Justice, the Prosecutor General's Office, the Ministry of Defence, the Riga Prefect's Office, and the Passport Department) was created at the Ministry of the Interior with the goal of thoroughly inspecting the Latvian passports issued to ethnic non-Latvians, and the supporting identity documents. This initiative prompted *Segodnya* to draw a comparison with Tsarist Russia: 'As in the 'good old times', there will be a public announcement asking vigilant citizens to inform on suspicious persons, who will then be asked to prove on what grounds they are enjoying Latvian citizenship. The occupation of these suspicious persons will also be examined'.⁸⁸

Shortly before the cultural autonomy laws were to be reviewed by the *Saeima* in 1923, Laserson published an article about the basis of equal treatment, asserting that 'the balance between a legal right and its factual enforcement is of crucial importance'. '...The creators of modern minority rights were aware of this, continues Laserson, they understood that it is not only *rights* that are important, but also *facts*'. Laserson quotes Article 58 of the Treaty of Trianon: 'Hungarian nationals who belong to racial, religious or linguistic minorities shall enjoy *the same treatment and security in law and in fact* as the other Hungarian nationals' [Laserson's italics]. He insists: 'We need not just the legally protected status for minorities; we need the same civic treatment and security. I stress: not just rights, but also the same actual treatment...Because in the absence of the latter, the former becomes a legal mockery'.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ 'Liga nacji i menšinstva', *Segodnya*, 06.04.1922.

⁸⁸ 'Reviziya latviiskh pasportov' inorodtsev', *Segodnya*, 02.09.1921.

⁸⁹ Lazerson, M. 'Ravnoe obhozhdenie', *Segodnya*, 29.12.1923.

One can only ponder why the Jewish minority, supported by the Baltic Germans (above all, by P. Schiemann) and the Russians (on this issue, despite numerous disagreements on other matters, the minorities stood united) chose to make the debates on the Citizenship Law into the crucible of Latvian democracy. Why did they not, for example, do this with the laws on cultural autonomy, or the minority language laws – which they also attempted to pass, but with not even half the same fervour; these would arguably have benefitted a much greater number of people? There are two possible answers to this question, I think. One, as already mentioned above, is that the minorities – perfectly reasonably – perceived citizenship as a cornerstone of their admission to the life of the state on a par with everyone else, in right and in fact. With this cornerstone missing, no matter what else they attempted to build, it would be based on quicksand. The Law on Citizenship was for Latvian minorities, above all, a matter of principle.

The second answer lies in the fact that the ethnic Latvian side came to regard the Citizenship Law either as a ‘last bastion’ of Latvian national sovereignty, or as a test of Latvian ‘national character’ (which would be belittled by yielding to the pushy minorities), or both. Even the *crème de la crème* of the Latvian intelligentsia, like Skujenieks and Dišlers, fell prey to these preconceptions, and on many occasions uncharacteristically abandoned any common sense. Skujenieks’s obsessive preoccupation with the potential numbers of new immigrants that an amended Citizenship law would allegedly bring into Latvia, endangering its core population, is indeed, to use a definition given by Horowitz (2000: 194) of ‘census games’, a ‘splendid example of the blending of group anxiety with political domination’. In short, in no time the citizenship question became a matter of the utmost importance to both opposing parties. This made the Citizenship Law into a trump card of Latvian interwar politics, into a universal bargaining tool unabashedly used by both sides for their own ends.

This latter observation brings us to the issue of ethnic bargaining. There is a plethora of theories linking democratic politics with ethnic mobilisation (Dahl 1971; Rabushka and Shepsle 2008; Horowitz 1985; Lijphart 1980, 2007). Chandra (2001: 338-339) provided an excellent summary of the ‘five principal propositions’ that emerge from this body of work: ‘(1) Demands made by ethnic groups are indivisible; (2) Demands made by ethnic groups are zero-sum; (3) Demands made by ethnic groups are motivated by a

desire for relative rather than absolute gains; (4) Demands made by ethnic groups are about high stakes because they concern resources that affect future bargaining power; and (5) Demands made by ethnic groups are inseparable from a larger conception of selfhood and therefore cannot be treated as discrete issues.’ Each of the aforementioned propositions, which differentiate an ethnic group’s claim from the one made by an interest group, making it much harder for the opposing party (-ies) to satisfy, has been proven to result in a bargain failure. Chandra himself actually challenges the five assumptions on the grounds that contrary to the common ‘primordialist’ assumption, ethnic groups’ boundaries and preferences are not stable over a prolonged period of time, and he applies a constructivist approach based on social choice theory instead. Chandra’s own interesting contribution to the theory of ethnic bargaining notwithstanding, it seems strikingly obvious how the original five propositions resonate with the case of the Latvian Citizenship Law of 1919.

- (1) The indivisibility of minority demands, which are usually oriented more towards symbolic rather than material gains, means that they cannot be satisfied partially. In the Latvian case, no concessions to ‘vos’ midesyatniki’ – or promises of speeding up naturalisation ‘through administrative measures’ attempted by the majority as partial solutions – could appease the minorities and resolve the situation.
- (2) The zero-sum game proposition refers to a situation when one group’s gain results in the other group’s loss (or, in any case, is perceived by that group as a loss). In ethnic Latvians’ perception, extending citizenship to those who, in their understanding, had dubious historical ties to the country and had not helped along in winning its independence, meant both diminishing the prestige of this hard-fought-for citizenship, and depleting the already scarce material resources, thus way depriving the core nation of its due.
- (3) The relative *vs.* absolute gains proposition is closely related to the issue of equality. It stipulates that minorities usually seek not an absolute gain for themselves in terms of a certain status, but rather a relative gain of equal status with the majority, or, in Chandra’s (2001:342) words, ‘the primary objective of each group is to maximise not its absolute welfare but the distance between its own position and that of others’. In the eyes of minorities, the problem with the Citizenship Law itself, and with its practical implementation, was first of all in the fact that it disadvantaged mainly only ethnic minorities. One may argue here that if significant

numbers of ethnically Latvian non-citizens had been created through the law as well, the minorities would hardly have had a case.

- (4) The future-bargaining-power proposition holds that the stakes in ethnic groups' bargaining are always incredibly high, making parties' demands intractable. As Horowitz (2000: 147) put it, 'ethnic groups do not compete in merely one task or one game but in lifelong games'. The Citizenship Law happened to be the first issue on which majority and minority interests in Latvia collided; over the years that followed it proved to be an indispensable tool in the backstage negotiations; being perceived as vital by all interested parties, it amplified minorities' influence on other policy issues. To 'undersell' their demands on citizenship, in the minorities' perception, would make them appear weak and would relegate them to an inferior negotiating position in all future debates.
- (5) The larger-concept-of-selfhood proposition implies that the bargaining process is hampered by the fact that minorities treat their claims as an intrinsic part of their larger identity, whereas the opposing side looks at them as discrete issues. As Horowitz (2000: 147) observes, 'to lose out in competition and comparison to others who are differentiated on a birth basis is to be afflicted with an apparently permanent disability'. This statement can be unequivocally applied to the policies and strategies of Latvian ethnic minorities during the interwar period.

In one of the latest studies of the theory of ethnic bargaining, Jenne (2007) introduces the integrationist versus the segregationist dichotomy, i.e. 'the rights of groups to integrate into majority society versus their rights to self-rule (usually on a territorial basis). She then defines *integrationist rights* as 'the rights of minorities to equal standing in the majority-dominated society', which are used 'to justify demands ranging from non-discrimination to affirmative action to cultural or linguistic autonomy' (Jenne 2007: Notes 1 & 4 on p. 205). Jenne therefore firmly puts cultural autonomy within the sphere of integrationist rights. Now, not everybody takes such a benign view of the integrational potential of non-territorial cultural autonomy (see, for example, Nootens 2005; Barry 2001; Bauböck 2005). But the fact that Latvian ethnic minorities made the Citizenship Law, and not the laws on cultural autonomy, or the laws on minority languages' status, into a prime object of their aspirations and political struggle during the interwar period, proves that the main tendency displayed by minorities during that period was an integrationist one.

The successful passing of the amendments in 1927 under the left-wing government of M. Skujenieks, to which minorities lent their not-unconditional support, proved to be a Pyrrhic victory for them. Although one may say that justice was served, the practical results, expressed in the number of new citizens resulting from the amendments, were negligible. Skujenieks, who struck a bargain with Nurock and others in order to have his government confirmed, suffered political humiliation when repeatedly accused by fellow-Latvians of inconsistency in his views on citizenship and a lack of integrity. Arguably, that sped up his radicalisation, and prompted him to adopt a harsher stance towards minorities, which resulted in restrictive policies on language and education during his second, right-wing government just a few years later. The minorities themselves got caught up in coalition games and inadvertently aided the authoritarian *coup* of 1934 by giving their votes to the last democratic government under K. Ulmanis. In short, nobody was a winner.

Despite its notoriety during the interwar years, the Citizenship Law of 1919 is largely forgotten, and is by and large ignored by Latvian historians. To the best of my knowledge, apart from Straume (1992), and Goldmanis (2005), it has never been examined. Straume's paper challenges the 'golden age' myth prevalent in the historical accounts of the First Republic in the early 1990s:

Some of our essayists have created a myth about supposedly perfect interethnic relations during the interwar republic. This is totally wrong. For example, there were many more polemics in the Latvian and minority press in 1932 than in 1990, and they were much sharper, and more hateful. All this together lent a rather dramatic flare to the citizenship question as such, regardless of the fact that ethnic proportions among the population were incomparably more favourable than now.

(Straume 1992: 75)

The Citizenship Law of 1919, unlike the Latvian Constitution of 1922, was not deemed suitable for post-1991 use because of the dramatically changed demographic situation in Latvia over the Soviet years. (Indeed, Straume paper's concluding part, subtitled 'What can we learn from it', highlights only three articles of the 1919 Law which

would be ‘useful’ in the modern-day situation, namely Article 8 on the unacceptability of dual citizenship; Article 4 on a citizenship award for special services; and amendments of 1938 to Article 8 stipulating grounds for the deprivation of citizenship.) Instead, a new, much more restrictive citizenship law was passed in 1994, which resulted in over 700,000 thousand non-citizens, whose legally unique status was determined by a separate law. The only aspect of legal continuity employed was that the Law of 1994 limited automatic citizenship to the citizens of the interwar republic and their direct descendants.

Ironically, the question of citizenship has yet again become the most divisive issue in Latvian politics, and has been identified by many scholars as the primary source of interethnic tensions in post-Soviet Latvia (G. Smith *et al.*, 1994; Lieven, 1994; Pabriks and Purs, 2002). More on this in Chapter Seven.

Chapter Five: P. Schiemann, M. Laserson and Cultural Autonomy

As we have seen from the previous chapters, the theoretical legacy of Skujenieks and Valters on the national question came into deep contradiction with their later actions as political practitioners in the independent Latvian state. Blanks got increasingly radical, and then disappeared from public view altogether, while Stučka, after the failure of the Latvian Soviet, resigned himself to Soviet jurisprudence.

There were two other prominent Latvian thinkers of the beginning of the 20th century who remained faithful to their declared ideals, in theory as well as in practice, throughout their lives. Both Paul Schiemann and Max Laserson, who have frequently appeared in the previous chapters as representatives of Latvian ethnic minorities in the *Saeima*, were dedicated democrats and champions of minority rights; both were active on the Latvian political scene not just through their activities in the parliament but also through numerous publications in the press, and at international level. Although the two men shared a firm commitment to parliamentary democracy and to the advocacy of minority rights both domestically and internationally, they did not always see eye to eye. Their personal disagreements both on practical issues like the legal basis and the actual implementation of cultural autonomy for ethnic minorities in Latvia, and on more fundamental matters such as the impact of non-territorial cultural autonomy (NCA) on state sovereignty, which were further exacerbated by the pressure put on them by their respective ethnic communities, not only shed an interesting light on the dynamics of intergroup minority relations (*vis-à-vis* each other and *vis-à-vis* the state) in interwar Latvia, but also have deep resonance with the modern debates on minority rights.

The most pronounced difference between the works of Schiemann and Laserson, and their Latvian counterparts Skujenieks, and especially Valters, whose books on the national question were reviewed in Chapter Two, is their ability to develop their argument from the particular to the general, avoiding the temptations of the familiar and the parochial, and transcending national borders. Nowadays, Latvia is largely viewed as a case study for political theorists rather than as an active contributor to the debates. The highly original contributions made to international political theory by Schiemann and Laserson demonstrate that this was not always the case.

During the 1920s, both Schiemann and Laserson enthusiastically supported the cultural autonomy for minorities which was guaranteed by the Education Law and the Law on Minorities Schooling of 1919; both fought tirelessly in the *Saeima* for amendments to the Citizenship Law of 1919 and other pieces of legislation which they perceived as inimical to the principle of equality and as infringements on minority rights. Schiemann, as editor-in-chief of the biggest Baltic German daily *Rigasche Rundschau*, contributed numerous editorials on subjects related to democracy, equality, nationalism and minority rights; as well as promptly reacting to the views expressed by his ideological opponents in the newspapers *Latvijas Sargs* and *Latvijas Kareivis*. Laserson, a frequent contributor to the anti-Bolshevist Russian-language newspaper *Segodnya*, wrote on the same range of topics, and, as a professional lawyer, reviewed all relevant pieces of Latvian legislation, putting them in a wider context of international law and explaining their practical implications.

This chapter will examine the relational interplay between the Baltic German and the Jewish communities of the interwar republic (represented by Schiemann and Laserson respectively), their stance toward the majority nation (and, to some extent, their stance toward other Latvia's ethnic minorities), and will assess how this influenced the overall state of majority-minority relations in interwar Latvia. For this purpose, I will first apply the theoretical framework of the quadratic nexus, described in Chapter One, and will then proceed to explore the 'fifth element' itself, i.e. the aforementioned relational interplay between the Baltic Germans and the Jews, which, I believe, further enhances the nexus and makes an important contribution to our understanding of ethnic politics.

I will also provide a brief overview of the theoretical legacy of Schiemann and Laserson – when by 1925, the once-so-promising development of cultural autonomy for minorities in Latvia had stalled, these Latvian minority thinkers, frustrated by the futility of their efforts to implement cultural autonomy in 'one separate country', turned their attention to the pan-European minorities movement, and developed theoretical frameworks which nowadays would undoubtedly be categorised as post-nationalist. Schiemann was one of the founders of the European Nationalities Congress (est. in 1925), while Laserson was a delegate. As already mentioned before, their views on minorities vis-à-vis the state differed to some extent – it is even more interesting to compare their theoretical legacy when one takes into consideration that they were both influenced by their experience as minority leaders and parliamentarians in Latvia.

5.1 Setting the Scene: Interwar Latvia According to the Quadratic Nexus

The First Dimension of the Nexus: Nationalising State

Turning attention to the first side of the nexus, which Brubaker designated as the ‘nationalising state’, it needs to be said that at the beginning of Latvian statehood, the nationalising trend had not manifested itself explicitly. As already described in earlier chapters, the newly created democratic Latvian Republic guaranteed cultural rights to the ethnic minorities living on its territory; from the very start the founders of the state assured the minorities of their intention to build a united civic Latvian nation, where people of all ethnic backgrounds were welcome; these principles were enshrined in the document known as the National Council Platform. Notably, all these events took place two months before the Paris Peace Conference began on 18th January 1919, therefore seven months ahead of the Polish Minority Treaty, with the first in the series of treaties aimed at the protection of the newly created national minorities being signed on 28th June 1919, thus without any direct pressure from the outside world, and of ethnic Latvians’ own accord.

The Law on Latvian Educational Institutions and the Law on Minority Schools in Latvia from 1919 taken together secured minorities’ control over their own education and cultural affairs.

This somewhat idealistic, ‘multicultural’ vision of the new statehood elaborated by the novice Latvian lawmakers however, was soon tested by various practical challenges. Some of these challenges were specific to the particular Latvian situation, like the high level of fragmentation among the political parties that led to frequent changes of governments, while others arose due to changes on the international scene.

The Second Dimension: National Minorities

As observed by one of the contemporary critics of NCA, Walter Kemp (2005: 214), ‘one problem with the nationality principle is that it assumes that national groups are homogeneous’, while in reality members of a national group do not necessarily share the same interests or political views. The two ethnic communities in question, the Baltic

Germans and the Latvian Jews of the interwar period, serve as a perfect illustration of such internal diversity. It is customary to speak about the high level of fragmentation within the ethnically-Latvian political parties during the interwar period – in fact, minorities' political life was just as fragmented.

In 1920, Latvians comprised 72.8 per cent of the population, the rest being made up of the six largest ethnic minorities, i.e., Russians (12.6 per cent), Jews (5 per cent), Germans (3.6 per cent), Poles (3.4 per cent), Lithuanians (1.6 per cent), and Estonians (0.6 per cent).¹ In this respect, Latvia was not different from the rest of Eastern Europe during the interwar period - in fact, Latvia's percentage of ethnic minorities, far from being exceptional, at 27-28 per cent stood slightly lower than the average percentage of 29.2 for all Eastern European states (Pearson 1983: 148).

As already described in the previous chapters, the minorities' reactions to the founding of the new state ranged from a negative attitude on the part of conservative Baltic Germans to a sceptical one on the part of the Jews, and indifference on the part of Latvian Russians. Overall, this notable lack of enthusiasm on the part of the national minorities at the moment when the new state was born but its fate was still far from certain, bears witness to the fact that they did not share the national aspirations of ethnic Latvians, but assumed the passive role of onlookers. This wary cautiousness, however, had a number of plausible explanations. Conservative Germans were offended that their carefully nurtured idea of the Latvian and Estonian territories being united under Baltic German leadership had been cruelly snatched away; besides, considering the long history of animosity between them and the Latvians, they had suddenly been put in a precarious position. More liberally inclined Germans, the Jews and the Russians, although not opposed to the idea of an independent Latvian state, nevertheless felt threatened by the new order of things, despite Latvian assurances of protection of minority rights. Everybody was entering uncharted waters – especially taking into account the deep existing segregation among Latvian ethnic groups in all spheres of public life, and the inevitable resulting lack of communication. The Latvian national movement leading the path to independence had a strictly ethnic membership; minorities did not participate in the foundation of the new state, but were presented with the fact of its existence. Mutual trust could not arise out of nowhere; the promises of equality made by the Latvians were reassuring, but minorities questioned their underlying motives.

¹ Source: Skujeneeks, M. 1927. *Latvija. Zeme un iedzīvotāji*. Rīga: A. Gulbja apgādniecība.

The Third Dimension of the Nexus: External Homelands

Moving now to the ‘external homeland’ factor: it certainly did not help ethnic accord in Latvia that between the world wars, three of the Latvian ethnic minorities had powerful kin-states, namely Russia, Germany and Poland. Two of them, the Russians and the Germans, also happened to be the former historical ‘oppressors’ of the ethnic Latvian nation, while the Polish landlords in Latgale, the eastern part of Latvia, had formerly been in a privileged position. Communist Russia was always considered a threat, but over the course of a few years Germany also became an aggressive authoritarian state. As for Latvia’s relationship with Poland, which was at the time still considered a guarantor of stability in the region, it was anything but simple. Latvia tended to view Poland, with whom, prior to World War Two, it had shared a border, with ‘considerable suspicion’, questioning its real intentions in the region and fearing possible designs on Latgale (Stranga 1994: 47). As a result of external threats, both real and imagined, the trend was eventually set of viewing the Russian, German, and Polish communities of Latvia as a potential ‘fifth column’, pushing them to the margins of political life and increasing their sense of alienation. Undeniably, there was also a certain growth of Latvian minorities’ own ethnic nationalism in the 1930s, in response to the nationalist fever that overtook their kin states at the time. This minority ethnic nationalism was further fuelled by ethnic Latvians’ suspicions and often-unfair accusations.

Indeed, when it came to ‘external homelands’, minorities could hardly put a foot right – for example, the minorities’ faction, led by the Baltic German Schiemann and the Russian delegate Presņakovs, was initially opposed to the Armistice Treaty with a non-democratic government of Bolshevik Russia. This did not earn minorities any kudos with ethnic Latvians – instead, they were immediately accused by the nationalistic writer Jānis Akuraters of monarchical sympathies: he based this assumption on the fact that both these minorities had been in a privileged position under the Russian Empire. ‘They only want peace with a “democratic Russia”, because their democratic Russia is hiding under the masks of Kolchak and Denikin,’ claimed Akuraters.² This Jesuitical casuistry would become a favourite weapon used by ethnic nationalists against the minorities during the interwar period – whatever position minorities took on Soviet Russia, they were promptly accused either of being Bolsheviks, or monarchists. For example, the openly anti-

² ‘Par Tautas Padomes sēdi’, *Jaunākās Ziņas*, No. 114 08.10.1919.

Bolshevik editorial team of the biggest Russian-language daily *Segodnya* was often portrayed by their Latvian counterparts as a ‘clique of monarchists’.

The Fourth Dimension of the Nexus: International Society

I will now move on to the fourth aspect of the nexus, international organisations and international law. Max Laserson (1971: 128), recollecting Latvians’ benevolent attitude towards the minorities at the time when the law on minority education was being passed, writes: ‘This situation changed completely, however, when the question of national minority rights passed from the field of internal legislation to that of international security’. When Latvia joined the League of Nations in September 1921, it was, along with other new and enlarged European states, required to sign a minority treaty guaranteeing fair treatment of its ethnic minorities. This did not go down well with the Latvian government, which argued that minorities’ protection was already enshrined in the country’s liberal constitution, and that the imposition of minority treaties on selected European states was a violation of the principle of equality. Furthermore, Latvia argued that internationalisation of minority rights through the treaties opened the door to foreign interventions and endangered state sovereignty. (Robinson *et al.*, 1943: 166) Whereas twelve of these states, including Austria, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Poland and others, were fully bound by the minority treaties, Latvia - along with Albania, Estonia, and Lithuania - only acquiesced to signing declarations to the Council of the League of Nations (Dickinson 1928: 10). Latvia’s negotiations with the League of Nations were protracted and unhappy. The resulting Latvian declaration avoided the word ‘guarantee’ in relation to minorities, but stipulated the right of the League of Nations to re-open negotiations with Latvia if in future the situation of minorities in the country was found wanting in comparison to the standards set in the minority treaties (Macartney 1929: 20). The declaration was finally signed in July 1923, but not before Latvia’s chief negotiator, M. Valters, had tried to get the minorities to agree to waive their rights to any international guarantees, thus proving to the world that they were happy in Latvia. Laserson (1971: 130) attests that in February 1923 Valters had two unofficial meetings with the minorities’ MPs, but failed to convince them. The Baltic Germans were hoping to perhaps file complaints related to the Agrarian Reform, which they considered to be an anti-German measure, and ‘the Jews and Russians were likewise not in any great hurry to sell their international birthright for a series of local rights and laws’ (Laserson 1971: 131).

It is noteworthy that Latvian minorities were generally not happy with the position taken by the League of Nations' negotiator, M. da Gama, vis-à-vis the Latvian government. Laserson, for example, wrote at the time that da Gama had failed to take into consideration that the process of legalisation of minority rights in Latvia, clearly demonstrated by the Law on Minority Schooling, was already under way; instead of capitalising on these existing achievements, da Gama went after relatively minor rights, like the right to observe religious holidays and other similar issues, thus never proceeding to discuss questions of cultural autonomy. From the point of view of ethnic minorities, these demands were too unambitious. On the other hand, da Gama's version of the declaration foresaw the right of third parties to interfere with the provision of minority rights in Latvia, which was perceived by the ethnic Latvian majority as an infringement upon Latvia's state sovereignty. Therefore, both the minorities and the majority ended up being dissatisfied with the declaration, albeit for directly opposing reasons; while Valters opportunistically used this 'mutual' dissatisfaction against the declaration as such. Notably, Laserson also complained, in one of his articles, of the 'veil of secrecy' surrounding the whole affair, and the absence of public discussions and debates.³

The sharp-tongued Laserson (1971: 124) commented that 'the link between the outer world and the Minorities did not serve to make them more popular within the country. On the contrary, the old distrust of the Latvians towards their one-time masters the Germans and Russians was awakened afresh'. Both lost their former dominance, he writes, being overnight transformed 'from wolves to sheep and doing their best to appear down-trodden and oppressed'. This, concludes Laserson, made them even less popular. Siding with the Latvians' enemies backfired for the Jews: 'The common interests of the minorities compelled the Jewish Delegates to join with the others, and so we too were made to feel the sting of Latvian nationalism; even though historically speaking this had not previously been directed against the Jews and from time to time, in the course of negotiations for the setting up of a new Government, the Seim [*sic.*] deputies and Latvian statesmen used to proclaim that the Jews were the most faithful minority because they made no political demands and lacked any territorial romanticism of restoration'. (Laserson 1971: 124)

³ Laserson, M. 'Veleno podozhdāt', *Segodnya*, 11.07.1923.

Another international organisation that should be mentioned in this regard is the Nationalities Congress founded in 1925 in Vienna, of which Schiemann was one of the founders, and Laserson a delegate. Another Latvian Jew, the leader of the religious Zionists M. Nurock, was also a delegate to the Congress. By then, Latvian minorities were largely disillusioned with the League of Nations, whose mechanisms had proved too weak to offer any protection or guarantees of stability; they heartily welcomed the Nationalities Congress, which they perceived as a new beacon of hope in the field of minority rights. The mere fact that the Germans were in the vanguard of the Congress made it unpopular with the Latvian government by association. Other Latvian ethnic minorities, however, followed the developments at the Congress with avid interest, and a special correspondent of the biggest Russian-language daily *Segodnya* provided detailed accounts of the Congress's sessions.

5.2. The Fifth Element

The Baltic Germans

The Baltic German community was by far the best-organised ethnic group in Latvia at the time. In fact, other minorities both envied and admired the high level of their internal organisation and discipline. Indeed, stories were circulated about the Baltic Germans carrying their sick and disabled to the polling stations on stretchers, so that not a single vote would be lost.⁴ As a result, both at the Constitutional Assembly and at all four *Saeimas*, the Baltic Germans consistently held more seats than their respective share of the population would have warranted. (For comparison, the Russians were consistently under-represented, while the Jews and the Poles managed to secure proportional representation). One comes to admire the high level of discipline of the German community even more if all internal divisions are taken into account. Along social-economic lines, the Baltic Germans were divided into four major 'hermetically sealed' groups: the nobility; the middle class and the *Literaten*; the merchants; and the artisans and craftsmen (Hiden 2004: 10). Politically, they were divided into the right-wing conservatives, the moderate centre-right and the liberals.

⁴ During the elections to the Constitutional Assembly, *Segodnya* wistfully reported: 'Germans close ranks at the elections. At the polling stations in the German-populated areas more than half the electors have already voted by the end of the first day. Even ill and injured people are being carried to the polling stations.' ('Vybory', *Segodnya*, No. 88, 18.04.1920).

Political Orientation	Name of the Party	Represented by
Conservative centre-right	The German Balt People's Party	Wilhelm von Fircks (Vilhelms fon Firkss)
Moderate centre-right	The German Balt Reform Party	Edwin Magnus (Edvīns Magnuss)
The Liberals	The German Balt Democratic Party The Progressive Party	Paul Schiemann Eduard Rosenberg (Eduards Rozenbergs)

Table 2. *Baltic German Representation in the interwar Latvian Saeima.*

These groups took opposing stances on Latvia's independence: whereas German conservatives attempted to claim a special status as the second sovereign nationality, P. Schiemann recognised the Latvian nation-state without reservations (minority rights guarantees notwithstanding, obviously). There were no socialists among the Baltic Germans. In the *Saeima*, the German parties tended to vote with the Latvian Agrarian Union and the centre parties.

The centuries-long history of animosity between ethnic Latvians and their German 'oppressors' consistently marred Latvian-Baltic German relations during the interwar period. The Agrarian Reform of the 1920s, which expropriated the German landlords (until then some 40-50 per cent of the Latvian rural population was landless (Plakans 1995)) was an imperative economic measure in a country devastated by the war; however, there was also a motive of historical justice behind it (Aizsilnieks 1968: 234). The Agrarian Reform, and the subsequent expropriation of two churches belonging to the German congregation, the *Jakob Kirche* in 1923 and the Dome Cathedral in 1931, all of which the Baltic Germans perceived as ethnic discrimination, only deepened the rift. Despite that, there was a limited, largely 'off-the-record' support for the Baltic Germans among some cultured Latvians, for many of whom German had been, at least in the past, a mother tongue. That allowed the Baltic German conservatives to stubbornly maintain futile hopes for some kind of special treatment from the Latvians, in recognition of their outstanding role in the cultural and economic life of the country. It also allowed them to look down on other

Latvian ethnic minorities, whom they, just like ethnic Latvians, considered to be culturally inferior and politically immature.

Paul Schiemann (1876-1944)

P. Schiemann (1876-1944) is by far the most internationally acknowledged Latvian thinker of the interwar period. His erudition and unwavering commitment to liberal ideals, his loyalty towards the democratic Latvian state, his relentless energy as a Latvian parliamentarian, his ability to rise above tribal interests and political manipulations, and the daring originality of his theoretical work put him in a category of his own. Hiden (1999) compares Schiemann to another ‘distinguished son’ of Riga, Isaiah Berlin, and wonders whether Schiemann’s intellectual legacy would be more widely recognised if he had had a chance at fellowship at an Oxford college. But strictly speaking, apart from the line ‘Isaiah Berlin was born in Riga, capital of Latvia’, which unflinchingly appears at the beginning of every edition of Berlin’s books, there is very little connecting the famous philosopher to Latvia; his intellectual legacy was never based in Latvian soil, having other sources of inspiration. Such was not the case with Schiemann, who considered Latvia to be the only place of his true belonging. And Berlin notwithstanding, Schiemann remains the most internationally accredited Latvian thinker.

A number of articles, monographs, book chapters and doctoral theses have been dedicated to Schiemann in German (see Garleff 1969, 1976, 2980, 1994; Rimscha 1956, 1982, 1998); Kause 1976, 1980, 1982, 2001; Loeber 1973), and in Latvian (Apsītis 2000; Šimkuva 2000; Dribins 2005; Ījabs 2007). To the English reader, Schiemann remained largely unknown until the publication of the sweeping, scrupulously researched monograph by John Hiden (2004). Hiden follows Schiemann’s life path and intellectual development in general, but his main focus is on Schiemann’s legacy in the theory of minority rights, and its possible implications for today’s Europe. More recently, Ījabs (2009) has undertaken a critical examination of Schiemann’s intellectual legacy and his liberal position.

Elsewhere in this thesis, I concentrate mainly on Schiemann’s political activities in Latvia, most of all on his role as a recognised minorities faction leader in the Latvian parliament during the interwar years. This sub-chapter will examine, in brief, Schiemann’s intellectual legacy – his contribution to minority rights theory, his concept of the a-national state, and his liberal political convictions. For this purpose, I will draw heavily on the

works of John Hiden (1999, 2004, 2007, 2012), whose minute and subtle assessment of Schiemann's writings was indispensable for my analysis. I will then attempt to critically evaluate Schiemann's theory of the a-national state first by comparing it to the original NCA model developed by K. Renner and O. Bauer (here I owe an intellectual debt to E. Nimni, who initiated and moderated modern debates on the NCA, as well as writing countless commentaries and introductions to the theory, and to his co-authors), and then by placing it within contemporary debates on social justice, sovereignty, and minority rights. Finally, I will use Ījabs's (2009) thought-provoking article as a starting point in providing a summary of Schiemann's overall political beliefs and his place in the Latvian liberal politics of the time.

Hiden (2004:129) notes that Schiemann 'particularly disliked' two aspects of the legacy of the 19th century in Europe – 'the veneration of the state', and the merger between the idea of the nation, or *Volk*, and a particular territory; he was convinced that 'the World War was ignited by these two principles' (Hiden 2004:129). Schiemann's preoccupation with the causes of World War One and its calamitous long-lasting effects on European politics was echoed in many of his articles and essays, as well as in his speeches at the *Saeima*. One of his big hopes was that the newly created Baltic States would make it their task to uphold the spirit of national tolerance, much needed in all of Europe. He was also convinced that in the absence of an existing pan-European legislative framework for minority rights, the newly created Baltic States, which from the very start recognised the multi-ethnic nature of their populations and showed a general political will in accommodating diverse cultural interests through cultural autonomy, could serve as a kind of experimental laboratory for a future and better Europe (Hiden 2004).

In 1918, Schiemann gave his unequivocal support to the independent democratic Latvian state; for the next fifteen years he would put his formidable energies into the task of ensuring that the Baltic German community became an integral part of the newly founded state, always leading by example. Schiemann was a member of the National Council, the Constitutional Assembly, and all four interwar parliaments, hardly ever missing a session. He was active in the parliamentary committees' work, and was instrumental in drafting and debating key pieces of legislation (it is notable that although he was the recognised leader of the minority faction in the Parliament, his interests as an MP were never limited to the issues directly affecting ethnic minorities, as was the case with many of his peers) – Hiden (2004:66) mentions some 130 laws and 73 parliamentary amendments and submissions by the Baltic German parties that Schiemann had a 'major

personal input' into, *in addition* to his own political initiatives. He spoke on all the important pieces of legislation in the Parliament, without limiting himself to minorities' direct interests. He also became the recognised leader of the Minorities Bloc. At the same time, he continued as the editor-in-chief of the influential *Rigasche Rundschau*, the biggest German daily in Latvia. Hardly a day went by without Schiemann publishing a political pamphlet, or an analytical article on a current piece of legislation, or a polemical response to his Latvian counterparts from *Jaunākās Ziņas*, *Latvijas Sargs* or *Latvijas Kareivis*.

Nevertheless, Schiemann often found himself 'between a rock and a hard place' when he tried to navigate between the interests of the Baltic German community (especially the demands of its conservative part) and the tasks of the Minorities Bloc in the *Saeima*, while at the same time trying to keep good working relations with the Latvian majority. It was Schiemann's often-frustrating experience with the practical implementation of cultural autonomy in Latvia which made him turn to the wider pan-European minority politics and that inspired his theoretical work on minority rights and relations between cultural and state communities.

The Nationalities Congress, which Schiemann co-founded in Vienna in 1925, was created as a kind of pan-European 'minorities parliament' aiming at providing a platform for discussing minority issues and for bringing them to the attention of European governments – something that minorities felt the League of Nations failed to provide. The Nationalities Congress, willing to become a respectable partner for governments and international institutions, introduced strict criteria for membership, which was limited to Europe: no specific country cases could be discussed at the Congress; a declaration of loyalty towards the country of citizenship was required along with a promise to abstain from any separatist or irredentist claims; tolerance towards other minorities within the same state was required, as well as a certain level of members' representation and organisation at home (Hirschhausen 2010:91).

Two distinct groups competed for leadership at the Nationalities Congress: the liberal-democratic wing advocating the idea of cultural autonomy for minorities, which was influenced by the Baltic German tradition, the ideas of Austrian Social Democracy, and Zionist theory; and the right wing, consisting of conservative German representatives and the Ukrainian, Slovenian and Hungarian delegates, who saw the main goal of the minority movement as the strengthening of ties between minorities and their kin states. This latter stance would ultimately triumph and lead to the Congress's eventual demise,

but during the first decade of its existence it was the ideas of the liberal wing that formed and shaped the public perception of the Nationalities Congress. (Hirschhausen 2010; Hiden 2004). And none of those ideas created quite such a stir as Schiemann's theory of the a-national state.

Schiemann's thinking on minority rights and his theory of the a-national state would remain forgotten for decades, just like the NCA model of Renner and Bauer which had inspired it. However, after the collapse of the Socialist bloc in Central and Eastern Europe in the late 1980s, and the subsequent demise of the Soviet Empire in the early 1990s, after which a number of ethnically-mixed countries either reclaimed democracy or gained independence (or, as in the case of the Baltic countries, regained their lost statehood), bringing majority-minority relations to the fore again, these theories eventually resurfaced. Obviously, the problem remains as urgent and confounding as ever, demonstrating 'how little we have advanced in the interim period in accommodating the collective rights of national minorities within a single state' (Nimni 2005:2). Over the past decade, political scientists, philosophers and historians have been critically re-evaluating the interwar school of thought on minority rights and cultural autonomy, placing it within a contemporary theoretical framework and looking for possible modern applications.⁵

After the NCA model was brought back from the past, it was only logical that interest in the interwar Nationalities Congress should be revived as well (see Housden 2004; Hirschhausen 2010; Smith and Hiden 2012). Schiemann's theory of the a-national state intrinsically links the two.

Schiemann's theory of the a-national state is based on two major sources: the idea of non-territorial cultural autonomy (NCA) developed by Austrian Social Democrats and previously mentioned described in Chapter One and Chapter Two, and the juridical concept of plural sovereignty elaborated by Leon Duguit, Hugo Krabbe and Harold J. Laski at the beginning of the 20th century. Whereas the former was conceived in the late Austro-Hungarian Empire and aimed at resolving ethnocultural tensions among its multinational population without revising actual geographical borders, the latter questioned

⁵ See, for example, the English translation of the *Die Nationalitätenfrage und die Sozialdemokratie*, in Bauer, O. 2000 *The Question of Nationalities and Social Democracy*. Nimni, E. (ed.) Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press, with a substantial introduction by the editor; Nimni, E. (ed.) 2005 *National Cultural Autonomy and its Contemporary Critics*. New York: Routledge; Hiden, J. and Smith, D.J. 2012 *Ethnic Diversity and the Nation-State. National cultural autonomy revisited*. London and New York: Routledge.

the indivisible sovereignty of a liberal democratic state. Both theories effectively brought the territorially based sovereign nation-state - a type of political association that reigned supreme then, and continues to do so now - if not under direct attack, then under very scrupulous examination.

It was from the podium of the second Nationalities Congress in 1926 that Schiemann delivered his first public speech on the a-national state, astonishing those present by insisting on the necessity of the separation of the nation and the state, thus putting an end to the nation-state in its recognised form. Hiden (2004:134) describes the ‘storm of applause’ from the audience, and the enormous interest from the media that Schiemann’s original speech attracted, as well as the predictable negative reactions. A Dutch newspaper quoted lengthy passages from the speech, explaining to its readership that Schiemann’s ideas were more ‘evolutionary’ than revolutionary, and that the aim of his theory was a long-term reform movement rather than immediate changes.

In 1927, Schiemann further elaborated his views on the possible future of the nation-state in his programmatic article ‘*Volksgemeinschaft und Staatgemeinschaft*’.⁶

The two terms in the title designated the two different types of nation: whereas the *Volksgemeinschaft* is a ‘people’s community’ united by common culture, the *Staatgemeinschaft* is a ‘state community’ which unites communities of different people residing in the state. Schiemann’s theory is undeniably inspired by Renner and Bauer, whose line of thinking he closely follows, but it also contains original elements that warrant closer attention.

In order to separate legal spheres of influence between the *Volksgemeinschaft* and *Staatgemeinschaft*, Schiemann continues to use the analogy of the separation of the state and the church. ‘The state as such belongs to no nationality’, he claims (Schiemann 1927:39). He supports the ‘personality principle’: belonging to a specific nationality is determined by free choice, and is self-descriptive; it is also possible to choose to declare no nationality at all.

The legal status of the *Volksgemeinschaft* within the state, just as in Renner and Bauer’s theory, is one of a corporation in public law, which has the right to collect taxes.

⁶ Schiemann, P. 1927. ‘*Volksgemeinschaft und Staatgemeinschaft*’, *Nation und Staat*, Volume 1, Issue 1, pp. 21-41.

Schiemann introduces yet another term, the ‘total nation’ (*Gesamtnation*), which designates the entire ethnic group regardless of which state they belong to (e.g. Germans). Schiemann’s project of separating ethnicity from the territorial state foresees that the *Gesamtnation* will assume certain trans-border responsibilities for its own cultural matters (for example, Germans in the Reich have duties towards German cultural institutions worldwide). But the *Gesamtnation* is not to be equated with the kin state, which has no right to interfere at all. In ethnically mixed states, no contributions received from all taxpayers can be diverted to one particular *Volksgemeinschaft*.

According to Schiemann, it is not just ethnically mixed states that should be interested in building supranational *Gesamtnations*, but also those ethnically homogeneous states which have co-nationals living outside their borders. The same *quid pro quo* principle, which serves both as an excellent selling point and a built-in guarantee of the system’s stability, was advocated by Bauer (2000:270) as a principle which allows one ‘to maintain the population of one’s nation by according the minorities of other nations the possibility of preserving their nationality, and in return claiming this right for the minorities of one’s own nation’.

In comparison to its main sources of inspiration, works by Renner and Bauer, the ‘*Volksgemeinschaft und Staatgemeinschaft*’ comes across as sketchy – Schiemann concentrates almost entirely on philosophical and normative aspects of his theory of the a-national state, while remaining vague on its proposed legal structure and the practical aspects of the theory’s implementation. Nevertheless, he formulated his own concept of a dual overarching international structure (the *Gesamtnation*, and the international council of the *Volksgemeinschafts* of territorial states, akin to the already existing Nationalities Congress), and, significantly, a concept of a third type of nation, a ‘common political nation’ emerging alongside the *Volksgemeinschaft* and the *Staatgemeinschaft*. Both these concepts have no parallel in either Renner’s or Bauer’s thinking, but both may be compared to the organisational structures of Christian confessions (and are indeed compared by Schiemann himself to the Catholic Church).

It should be understood, though, that the publication of Schiemann’s article in 1927 was more a staking of a claim in the hope of inspiring further debates than a presentation of a fully developed theory. Hiden (2004) mentions that Schiemann, in response to his numerous critics, attempted to address various practical aspects of the a-national state. There can be no doubt that Schiemann would subsequently have brought his theory to its

full fruition, had it not been for historical developments in the 1930s, which worked not just against Schiemann's concept, but against any open democratic debate and indeed against democracy itself.

It should be also noted that, predictably, Schiemann's theory demonstrates ideological differences with its Austro-Marxist source of inspiration. Like Austro-Marxists, Schiemann regards nations as primarily cultural communities. Like them, he also sees those communities as organic growths with an irresistible pull – they are communities of feeling, not communities of reason (for Renner (2005:26), for example, the nation is 'a community of intellectual and emotional life...a purely inward community'). There is, however, a substantial difference between their respective approaches to the question. Renner and Bauer are primarily concerned with social justice and equality, and they see national culture as a uniting factor in overcoming social stratification. Their final goal is a guarantee of equal access to the national culture for all members of the nation. Bauer (2000:93), for example, is convinced that thanks to the increased productivity of a democratic socialist society, 'the entire population can be included in the national community of culture'; moreover in such a society it is not merely a possibility but a must. For Renner (2005:22), it is the proletariat that will transform the national question from a question of power into a question of culture. Schiemann, on the other hand, does not view culture as a universal bond for all the nation's members; he distinguishes between the educated classes, who fully utilise the national culture and have 'ideals', and the masses, for whom this culture is limited to the national language, customs and character. He does not perceive it as an injustice of any kind; the only conclusion he derives from this *status quo* is the importance of the middle class as the 'bearer of the national culture'. Schiemann, of course, is being consistent in his political views, as he was never a socialist; however, it seems to me that his indifference towards inequality of access to the national culture sits uncomfortably with his commitment both to the personality principle, and to pluralistic sovereignty.

The widespread assumption that Schiemann was a liberal democrat without any socialist leanings is vigorously challenged by Ījabs (2009), who, critically evaluating Schiemann's liberal position and particularly his concept of the a-national state, raises two principal objections. The first is that 'his defence of liberal ideas is inseparably linked to a particular hierarchy of national cultures', putting a premium on German culture as a safeguard of liberal values (Ījabs 2009: 496). Secondly, Ījabs claims that Schiemann's theory of the a-national state is not 'fully liberal' as it contains 'a significant Marxist

element', casts doubt on 'the integrative potential of the democratic state' and overloads 'ethnocultural communities with the positive values of participation and integration' (2009: 497) Ījabs calls this reported discrepancy in Schiemann's political views his 'strange Baltic liberalism'.

I will argue that Schiemann's liberalism, on both counts, was neither strange nor tainted by Marxism – on the contrary, in his convictions as much as in his failings, Schiemann was the epitome of a classical liberal. The hierarchical ranking of specific cultures was an intrinsic part of the classical liberalism of the 19th century (see, for example, Mill's (1958: 233-236) passage on the Bretons and the French, the Basques and the Spanish, Welshmen, Scots and Englishmen; as well as on Macedonia and Greece, and, finally, on Russia and Europe). This deep-rooted conviction of the superiority of a certain culture (usually one's own) inspired the idea of a civilising mission towards other people (perfectly compatible with the utilitarian idea of the greatest happiness for the greatest number), which allowed many political theorists to make a link between liberalism and colonialism (Young 2004:92; Doyle 1986:276). Many Latvian liberals and democrats, from Valters and Skujenieks to Blanks and Akuraters, repeatedly demonstrated their conviction of the superiority of Latvian culture in relation to other cultures (usually Russian and Jewish, but at times German too); even the Bolshevik Stučka repeatedly stressed the superiority of Latvian ways in comparison to Russian ones. But unlike his ethnic Latvian counterparts, who were ready to discard any 'foreign', especially Russian, cultural influences, Schiemann only strove to employ the Baltic Germans' undeniable cultural, administrative and economic achievements for the greater good of the Latvian nation in its entirety – in addition to, rather than in place of, other cultures.

Ījabs claims that Schiemann 'clearly deprives the state of any ethical and cultural value' (2009: 506), and that by doing this he displays the 'Marxist view of the state'. I would like to argue here that the classical Marxist position does not so much deprive the state of ethical and cultural values as completely rejects it as an instrument of bourgeois oppression. In fact, it is not a Marxist, but a liberal position that is very ambivalent towards the state. Did any classical liberal thinker, concerned with individual freedoms, view the state as anything more than a 'necessary evil'? In the second half of the 20th century, liberals attempted to revitalise the idea of Rousseau's social contract by expanding the scope of the government's powers in order to ensure the maximal well-being of its citizens, but the resulting 'welfare state' still remains a widely contested subject. At the same time, liberal nationalists and multiculturalists, such as Miller, Tamir, and Kymlicka, attempted to

imbue the concept of the national state with ethical and cultural meaning by maintaining that a set of overarching national values such as democracy, equality and tolerance could serve as a foundation for a united political nation, while also allowing for cultural diversity among its members.

Some liberal theorists, however, remain sceptical about the integrative potential of a nation-state as long as culture and ethnicity remain its constituent parts. In striking similarity to Schiemann's views, Walzer (1982:17) speaks of 'the sharp divorce between the state and ethnicity'. Although obviously favouring what he calls 'Liberalism 1' (which Walzer describes, abbreviating Taylor's (1982) account, as 'committed in the strongest possible way to individual rights and, almost a deduction from this, to a rigorously neutral state'), as opposed to 'Liberalism 2' ('committed to the survival and flourishing of a particular nation, culture, or religion, or of a (limited) set of nations, cultures, and religions') Walzer makes several caveats. What makes Liberalism 1 suitable for the United States, where it serves as an official doctrine, he says, is the absence of strong territorially-based minorities – 'there is no privileged majority and there are no exceptional minorities' (Walzer 1994: 99-101). Walzer chooses Liberalism 1 over Liberalism 2 ('for us, not for everyone'; 'here, not everywhere') in part because he believes that immigrants to the US, by departing from their native countries, have already made the choice to leave their old ways behind and to take cultural risks (1994:102-103). As for other nation-states, where it suits 'the needs of a long-established majority nation', Walzer claims that although 'tension and conflict are inherent in Liberalism 2, this is not a sufficient reason to reject it', as long as the 'basic rights' of minority cultures are respected (1994:101). Walzer also recognises that 'state neutrality is often hypocritical', and always incomplete (1994:102).

Schiemann's 'strange Baltic liberalism', to borrow Ijabs's term, expresses itself not so much in his 'patrician' attitudes towards other cultures or his allegedly 'Marxist' leanings, but rather in his insistence on pursuing liberal ideals through expressly communitarian means. And in this sense, he is part of a larger liberal community. Moreover, this phenomenon of 'strange Baltic liberalism' definitely deserves its title, as not only Schiemann, but also many of his ethnic Latvian, Latvian Jewish and Latvian Russian counterparts suffered from the same affliction. I will explore this issue further in the concluding chapter of this thesis.

Paul Schiemann did not have the chance to bring his theory of the a-national state to full fruition – as it happened, he was betrayed many times over: by developments in his

native Latvia, where an authoritarian coup of 1934 put an end to minorities' cultural autonomy; by the metamorphosis of the Nationalities Congress, which within a few years was transformed from an international organisation for minority rights into 'a tool of nationalistic and expansive German politics' (Hirschhausen 2010:98); and by the general rise of nationalistic sentiment in Europe, above all in the Reich, which inevitably led to the radicalisation of Baltic Germandom, particularly of its youth. In March 1933, Schiemann resigned from his position as editor of the *Rigasche Rundschau* on account of ill health, and departed for Vienna. In the autumn of the same year, he would relinquish his parliamentary mandate as well, thus ending his distinguished career as one of the most prominent politicians in interwar Latvia. He would return to his homeland in 1938, after the *Anschluss*. For the next few years he would live with his wife in a Riga suburb in modest conditions and relative isolation, before passing away in 1944 after witnessing the loss of Latvia's independence and two subsequent occupations, by the Soviets and the Nazis. (Hiden 2004)

The Jews

The internal divisions in Jewish political life in Latvia closely mirrored those in the rest of Central and Eastern Europe. The main dividing line, to paraphrase E. Mendelsohn (1983: 44), was the question of 'here' and 'there', or, in other words, whether the Jewish question could be resolved more successfully by staying in the diaspora, or by returning to the ancestral home in Palestine, or, alternatively, by seeking some other territory with a view to creating a sovereign state. Zionism was opposed both by the socialists (who believed that the Jewish people should fight for their political and social rights where they were) and by the Orthodox Jews (who did not oppose the idea of return in principle, but believed that it could not be done without divine intervention). Notably, the Orthodox Jews also opposed cultural autonomy in the diaspora as a secular institution, insisting instead on the traditional Jewish practice of *Shtadlanut*, or intercession – in other words, lobbying for the interests of the common Jewish people with the authorities.

Another dividing line separated religious and secular Jews: the former insisted on the primacy of religious identity, whereas the latter put forward an idea of a Jewish national identity.

The language question was also extremely divisive – proponents of staying in the diaspora (indefinitely, or until the coming of the Messiah) advocated Yiddish as the traditional daily language of Eastern European Jews, reserving a place for Hebrew as the language of religious ceremonies. The Zionists, on the other hand, saw Yiddish as a low dialect developed under oppression, and wanted to revive Hebrew as a language of daily communication, which would carry a huge symbolic meaning of both liberation and a reconnection with the historical past. There was also another group, the so-called assimilationists, who supported neither Yiddish nor Hebrew and believed that Jews should be acculturated into their respective host nations.

And finally, even the Jewish socialists were divided – there were Social Democrats and there were Zionists; there were Marxists and non-Marxists among them.

Name of the Party	Political Orientation	Represented by
The <i>Bund</i>	Closely aligned with the Social Democrats. Socialist, secular, pro-diaspora and pro-Yiddish. Voted with the Social Democrats.	Noah Maizels (Noahs Maizels)
The <i>Agudas Isroel</i>	Conservative Orthodox, pro-diaspora, Pro-Yiddish, <i>Shtadlanut</i> .	Mordechai Dubin (Mordehajs Dubins), an archetype of a <i>Shtadlan</i> .
The Jewish National Democrats (only until the 2 nd <i>Saeima</i>)	Wealthy middle class and professionals, inclined towards assimilation/acculturation with the Latvians, and therefore pro-diaspora but both anti-Yiddish and anti-Hebrew. Voted with the Agrarian Union and the centre parties.	Leopold Fišman (Leopolds Fišmanis) and Paul Mintz (Pauls Mincs)
The <i>Zeire Zion</i>	Socialist Zionist, secular, pro-Hebrew and anti-Shtadlanut. Voted with the Social Democrats.	Max Laserson
The <i>Mizrahi</i>	Religious Zionists, pro-Hebrew, with close contacts with the World Jewish Congress. Usually voted with the Socialists.	Marcus Nurock

Table 3. Jewish Representation in the interwar Latvian *Saeima*.

Max Matatyahu Laserson (1887-1951)

Max Laserson, the leader of the Latvian socialist Zionists, cuts an intriguing figure. Born in Mitau (now Jelgava), Latvia, and having studied law at the universities of St. Petersburg, Heidelberg and Berlin, in 1917 he became a Deputy Director of the Department of National Minorities of the Ministry of Interior in the Provisional Russian Government of A. Kerensky. Upon his return to Latvia in 1920, he represented *Zeire Zion* in the first three interwar Parliaments (*Zeire Zion* lost elections to the fourth one). Laserson was one of the most prominent and energetic members of the *Saeima*, where, along with Schiemann, he was active in the Constitutional and the Public Law Committees, as well as in the minorities' faction. Along with the leader of the orthodox *Mizrahi* M. Nurock, he represented Latvian Jews at the Minorities Committee of the League of Nations. Laserson was also active at the precursor of the World Jewish Congress, the *Comité des Délégations Juives*, which was founded in Paris in 1919. An ardent proponent of the League of Nations and the international regime of minority rights protection, Laserson assiduously argued against adversaries of these ideas in the pages of the biggest Russian-language daily *Segodnya* in the course of the 1920s.

Schiemann first presented his theory of the a-national state, discussed earlier in this chapter, at the 2nd Congress of Organised European National Groups in 1926. One year later, at the Third Congress, Laserson gave a paper on the state, minorities, and sovereignty. The main theses of this paper were later developed into a book.⁷

According to Laserson, the modern understanding of state sovereignty implies a system based upon the rule of a majority nation (he notes that Switzerland is an exception). This is the current interpretation of Rousseau's 'general will'.

This existing concept of sovereignty is being challenged on several fronts. It is being undermined by developing economic ties with the rest of the world, as no modern state is as self-sufficient as an ancient Greek *polis*, which enjoyed complete economic autarky. At the same time, the fixed structures of unitary sovereign states with their

⁷ Laserson, M. 1927. *Staat, Souveränität und Minorität*. Riga-Berlin: Bernhard Lamey.

homogeneous populations are being invaded by other 'national collectives', while the population of the state as a whole is being increasingly recognised as a collective of persons that are no longer necessarily bound to a specific territory. Most importantly, state sovereignty is being challenged by an increasing body of international law, as well as by domestic legislation aimed at the protection of ethnic minorities. According to Laserson (1927: 84), 'nationality has stopped being a plain characteristic of an atomised individual, and is now based on the new positive and elaborate public law which applies to whole groups of the population'.

National minority law is at the moment only at an emerging stage, continues Laserson. But in conjunction with international law, it takes a stand against the territorially bound sovereign state: 'while international law influences the state from above, domestic minority law affects it from below'. Minority law is nothing other than a 'domestic equivalent of international law'. (Laserson 1927: 4)

Laserson does not view either 'sovereignty' or the state' as fixed concepts, stressing that the understanding of both has changed constantly over the course of human history. The development of the concepts of the state and sovereignty is not necessarily a linear process, he stresses; moreover, different views on both statehood and sovereignty can exist within the same society at the same time among different social strata. He identifies various stages in the development of the concepts of statehood and sovereignty, like, for example, a 'religious stage' during the Middle Ages, when the Church represented the highest authority in the land; and the gradual development of the modern sovereign territorial nation-state during the 'metaphysical stage' resulting in what he describes as 'the state floating above society' (Laserson 1927: 24).

Laserson predicts that the next stage of transformation, which he calls a 'positivist stage', will be characterised by the following attributes: the concept of the nation will change and will no longer be identical to the territorial nation; state territory will stop being a necessary attribute of the state, and the very term 'sovereignty' will cease to exist.

Laserson's paper was hardly a success at the Nationalities Congress. Although the debates that ensued demonstrated a pronounced disagreement on political, terminological

and theoretical issues among the delegates themselves, practically all of them agreed that Laserson ‘was going too far’.⁸

The fact that the abrasive Laserson, unlike his more subtle and diplomatic peer Schiemann, refused to make concessions on the topics viewed as ‘sensitive’, certainly did not help him in winning over his audience. On the contrary, Laserson, who never minced words in general, made sure to hit each nail on the head, such as when he spoke of the ‘decline of sovereignty’ and the ‘abandonment of the territorial principle’ at a time when the Congress was distancing itself from any possible border disputes. While Schiemann’s theory of the a-national state, which had received a much kinder reception at the Congress just a year earlier, clearly implied devolution of state sovereignty, it did not use terms like ‘decline’ and ‘death’; Schiemann also never questioned the territorial integrity of existing states, asserting that the state would keep sovereignty over its territory. It seems that Laserson’s blunt vocabulary choices and insistence on questioning the territoriality principle were the causes of his undoing.

Although the delegates at the Nationalities Congress of 1927 by and large found Laserson’s theses on the state, state sovereignty and national communities untenable, several decades later his theory was vindicated. Nowadays so many scholars question sovereignty and the territorial nation-state, and speak about the decline of sovereignty and the rise of a post-sovereign and post-national world, that Suny (2011: 113) has been recently prompted to argue that the death of the nation state has been ‘greatly exaggerated’ and that the significant changes in state sovereignty and national identification notwithstanding, it is premature to speak, as Appadurai (1996: 21) did, of the ‘terminal crisis’ of the nation-state. Increasing globalisation, the plight of stateless nations, and, above all, the foundation of the European Union, with member states voluntarily transferring some powers to the overarching EU institutions, have stimulated a radically new way of thinking about the relationship between the state and the nation (Habermas 1992, 1996; Gottlieb 1993; Appadurai 1996; MacCormick 1996, 1999; Sassen 1996; Keating 1996; Harty and Murphy 2005).

Many contemporary writings on the topic bear a remarkable resemblance to Laserson’s theses of 1927. For example, Gottlieb (1993: 340), speaking of creating a ‘new

⁸ See ‘Der III. Kongress der Organisierten Nationalen Gruppen, *Nation und Staat*, 1927, Volume 1, Issue 1, pp. 58-60.

space for nations’, questions the ‘undeniable’ ties between sovereignty and territory, and supports his argument by recalling the distant times when secular and religious sovereignties were in different hands, in striking similarity to the ‘religious stage’ of sovereignty described by Laserson in 1927. Gottlieb (1993: 35) writes: ‘The coinage of independence has been devalued in the modern world. It is ironic that so many peoples clamour for it in an era in which the movement of capital, ideas, technologies, and persons has reduced the real significance of statehood, and when the sovereignty of states is steadily being eroded.’ MacCormick (1999: 191), describing the new order represented by the European Union and the opportunities it presents, writes that ‘it is possible to escape from the apparent conceptual necessity for some single repository [i.e., exclusive territory] of absolute institutional sovereignty (as distinct from underlying popular sovereignties)’ – which one can compare with Laserson’s ‘abandonment of the territorial principle’ and ‘sovereignty of nationalities’.

During the authoritarian *coup* of 1934, Laserson was imprisoned, along with the Latvian Social Democrats, at the internment camp in Liepāja. Upon his release, he emigrated first to Palestine, and then in 1938-39 (dates vary across different sources), via France, to the United States. Laserson settled in New York, where he taught at Columbia University, and was also involved with the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. In addition, he was an active contributor to the Institute of Jewish Affairs, founded in 1940 by a Lithuanian Jewish lawyer, Jacob Robinson, which quickly became what Sznajder (2011: 88) describes as ‘a clearinghouse of information on the Nazi attempt to destroy the Jews of Europe’. Laserson died of a heart ailment in 1951 in New York.

Overall, it may be said that this Latvian Jewish minority thinker, who demonstrated exemplary intellectual courage in swimming against the tide, shared the common fate of those who are ahead of their times – misunderstood by the majority of his contemporaries, he received no recognition for his theoretical work during his lifetime, and his legacy is largely forgotten. Certainly in Latvia, as in the Western world, Laserson earned recognition after World War Two for his works on the history and politics of the Soviet Russia and for his contribution to the volume ‘The Jews in Latvia’⁹. His book ‘Russia and the Western World’ was positively reviewed by Hans Kohn and ran to several editions.¹⁰

⁹ Bobe, M. (ed.) 1971. *The Jews in Latvia*. Tel Aviv: Association of Latvian and Estonian Jews in Israel.

¹⁰ See, for example, Laserson, M. 1945. *Russia and the Western World. The Place of the Soviet Union in the Comity of Nations*. New York: The Macmillan Company; Laserson, M. 1950. *The American Impact on Russia-diplomatic and ideological-1784-1917*. New York: Macmillan Co.; Laserson, M. 1943. *The development of Soviet foreign policy in Europe, 1917- 1942: a Selection of Documents*. New York: Carnegie

The Unlikely Allies, or Distanzliebe

The closest alliance formed in Latvia's minorities front was between the Baltic Germans and the Latvian Jews. There are several possible reasons behind this particular combination. Firstly, as observed by Laserson (1971: 98-99), the Baltic Germans regarded the presence of Jews in Latvia as a benefit – let us not forget that despite their influence, numerically the Baltic Germans were only the third largest minority in the country at 3.6 per cent; the five per cent represented by the Jewish minority meant a welcome further reduction in the 'overwhelming weight of the Latvian majority'. There was also cultural affinity, especially with the Jews from outside of the former Pale of Settlement, like, for example, the Jews of Kurland and a big part of the Jews of Riga, who were heavily influenced by German culture; this was further reinforced by the fact that in the Europe of the time, Germany still served as a 'spiritual centre of sorts for the Ashkenazi Jews' (Laserson 1971: 132). An additional consideration for the Baltic Germans was the fact that unlike themselves, the Russians and the Poles, the Latvian Jews had never been in a dominant position in the past, but had been even more oppressed than ethnic Latvians themselves. That fact alone made many Latvians regard the Jews as their 'most loyal minority'. Furthermore, the sizeable German and Jewish minorities lived side by side in most of the new and enlarged European states, which logically brought them into the vanguard of the European minorities movement (at the Nationalities Congress, the Jews (25) formed the second largest group of members, surpassed only by the Germans (74); Hirschhausen 2010: 93). Finally, since the Baltic German and Jewish communities were the most politically active among ethnic minorities in Latvia, and were represented in the *Saeima* by two such outstanding leaders as Schieman and Laserson, this cooperation was very natural.

However, we will see that this political symbiosis was not an easy one. Similar to the relationship between the German and Jewish communities in the Czech lands, the affiliation between the Baltic Germans and the Latvian Jews can be best described as *Distanzliebe*.¹¹

Endowment for International Peace. Inexplicably, a recent edition of *Russia and the Western World* (Kessinger Publishers 2007; reprinted in 2010) gives the name of author as Max Laskerson.

¹¹ A term coined by one of the leading Jewish intellectuals of Prague, Max Brod (1884-1968), as quoted in Mendelsohn (1983: 136).

In 1925, the Baltic Germans together with some Russian and Polish members of the Parliament complained about the Agrarian Reform to the League of Nations. Although their appeal was rejected as unfounded, it caused outrage in the Latvian press. Both the Russian and the Jewish blocs had initially abstained from any participation in the debates on the Agrarian Reform, but then in a seemingly unexplained twist of events, jointly signed a petition to the Agrarian Commission of the Assembly, which was rejected as 'reactionary'. Laserson (1971: 112-13) expressed indignation that 'by appending their signatures to it, the members of the Jewish bloc entered into moral and political association with the opponents of the agrarian reform' and thus had compromised their special standing with Latvians. He concludes that 'it is hard to understand why the Jewish delegates had to identify themselves in the eyes of the Latvian masses with the long-term oppressors of the latter.' Overall, Laserson observes: 'A measure of psychological animosity towards the minorities was inevitable in view of the fact that the Germans were among them, and more precisely at their head.' (1971: 124)

Despite the aforementioned fact that in the 1920s ethnic Latvians widely perceived Jews as their most loyal minority (or, at the minimum, as the least suspect), it did not mean that there was no animosity towards the Jews in the Latvian society. During World War One and its immediate aftermath, anti-Jewish sentiments were running high in Latvia as in the most of the countries in Eastern Europe, even in those, like the former Habsburg lands, which had no previous history of pogroms. The Jews were turned into scapegoats, charged with numerous sins, like helping the advance of the German troops, spying for the Habsburgs, and aiding the Bolsheviks. Intensified by the deprivations of the war, these accusations turned into public hysteria directed against the vulnerable ethnic minority. Latvia did not escape the wave of anti-Jewish sentiment that swept across Central and Eastern Europe during World War One and its immediate aftermath. Anti-Jewish disturbances, which continued in Ukraine, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Lithuania, and Poland during the period from 1918 until 1921 (Mendelson 1983; Pearson 1983), reached Latvia in the summer of 1920, when in the cities of Riga, Daugavpils and Rēzekne, Jewish properties were vandalised, and those who looked Jewish were stopped in the streets and cruelly mocked, while their money and valuables were unceremoniously confiscated by the hooligans. Luckily, though, nobody was seriously hurt.

Another constant source of animosity among ethnic Latvians towards the Latvian Jewish minority was the choice its many members made in favour of the Russian language as their daily language of communication, and their penchant for Russian culture in

general. Seeing it as a sign of betrayal, Latvian nationalists increasingly held it against the Jews (a recurrent theme in the writing of the nationalist writer E. Blanks, who famously claimed that ‘our Jews are unacceptable to us in the first place as the Russian Jews’, and many others). This peculiar ‘national jealousy’ was also reflected in the newspaper published by the Social Democrats-Mensheviks, *Darba Balss*:

Whether you walk along the street, or ride in a train, or in a tram, there are sounds of the Russian language everywhere...A stranger newly arriving in Latvia might get the impression that the majority of local residents are Russians. But if we take a closer look at these ‘Latvian Russian’ faces, it becomes obvious that these supporters of everything Russian are nobody else but our own Jews.¹²

The Latvian Social Democrats earnestly tried to fight the pervasive anti-Semitic stereotypes. However, this most popular party with the biggest faction in the *Saeima* was not just supported by the urban and rural proletariat, but also counted among their electors the petty bourgeoisie and the intellectuals (who supported SD because of their leading role in Latvians’ national emancipation in the past) and the poorest part of the Latvian peasants (the latter hoped that their support for SD would accelerate the Agrarian reform). According to Laserson (1971: 124), these Social Democratic ‘satellites’ ‘preserved their prejudices against the Jews’. The Social Democrats and the Bund used to participate in all elections with a common candidates’ list - the only example of interethnic political party cooperation in interwar Latvia, as all other parties’ membership was strictly ethnic. Laserson attests that during the *Saeima* and municipal elections, there was a widespread practice of crossing out the *Bund* candidates’ names; the ethnically Latvian SD candidates which were below them on the list would get elected instead. Laserson claims that it was largely due to this practice that the *Bund* eventually started its own election list.

In other words, neither the Baltic German nor the Jewish minority in Latvia felt fully secure in their own right; when attempting cooperation, among themselves, or with other ethnic minorities, they always entered treacherous waters, and the consequences were often unpredictable. In Latvian interwar politics, one plus one did not necessarily equal two; it could easily result in minus one or even minus two. Schiemann and Laserson did their best to rise above the factional struggle of their own communities and to act in pursuit

¹² Kolonels, ‘Mūsmāju ‘krievi’, *Darba Balss*, 23.01.1922.

of the overarching minority interests, and the principal interests of the Latvian democratic state, but they often ended up on opposing sides.

During the summer of 1922, when the Constitutional Committee of the Assembly was reviewing draft laws on minority languages, Schiemann and Laserson assumed conflicting positions. Laserson was convinced that the question of the use of minority languages, which he called ‘the most important question of self-determination’, required one principal law which would enshrine the rights of ethnic minorities to use their respective languages in the state administration and in the courts. He argued that if the draft laws on the rights of German, Russian and Jewish languages were discussed separately, then the committee and the plenary of the Assembly would be guided not so much by principles of justice, but by existing Germano- or Russophile currents; in other words, decisions would be dictated by affinities in the case of some ethnic groups and languages, and by repulsion in the case of others. The only way to avoid this, stressed Laserson, was by adopting a single uniform law that would have been ‘maximally favourable towards all’.¹³

Schiemann, on the other hand, was just as categorical that ‘such a generalisation would not give anything to each separate minority’, and that a uniform law as suggested by Laserson should be ‘most energetically resisted’. When dealing with bureaucracy, explained Schiemann, it is absolutely impossible to regulate the right to make oral statements or submit written petitions consistently for all minorities. ‘Such a generalisation would offer nothing to a single minority, and would place an unbearable burden on public bureaucracy,’ posited Schiemann. Besides, time is an issue, stressed Schiemann, the whole issue should be sped up before the Constitutional Assembly finished its work: ‘if we just passed one separate language law now, more would be achieved for the interests of all minorities in general than if we continued discussing general theory for another half a year’.¹⁴

In the end, nobody was a winner – neither the Law on the German minority language, nor the language laws for the other minorities were ever passed.

¹³ Laserson, M. ‘Zakon o yazykah men’shinstv’, *Segodnya*, 30.06.1922.

¹⁴ Schiemann, P. ‘Die Sprachengesetze’, *Rigasche Rundschau*, 30.06.1922.

In 1922, Schiemann also supported the idea of a separate law on cultural autonomy for each respective minority. His proposal to this effect gained the support of the Constitutional Assembly, and in March 1922 the Baltic German and the Jewish autonomy draft laws were accepted for review. The Russian draft law was submitted two months later. However, the Constitutional Assembly did not manage to review the laws, and the matter was postponed until the election of the First *Saeima*.

In 1923, the German faction finally deemed the time right, and submitted their separate draft law on cultural autonomy to the Public Law Committee of the *Saeima*. Schiemann still remained adamant that a separate law for each minority was preferable; the fact that he was elected chair of the subcommittee, where the Social Democrat A. Petrevics, who was sympathetic towards the idea of cultural autonomy, also sat, allowed hope for success, despite the Agrarian Union continuing to give the whole project the cold shoulder. (Hiden 2004: 99-100)

The draft law submitted foresaw the public incorporation of the Baltic German Autonomous Council, the right of the Council to collect taxes and to create a national register of its members. It specified the organisational structure of the Council and its regional bodies, the use of German language in administration and public life, and reiterated the principles of minority schooling.

All these proposals were initially met with fierce opposition from the Latvian majority. The right to self-taxation and the creation of a national register, which Schiemann believed to be the two pillars of cultural autonomy, were either deemed too far-reaching as an attempt ‘to create a state within a state’, or questioned on the technical side – there were many objections to the national register based upon the ethnicity record in the passport made according to the owner’s instructions. The Latvian opposition demanded ‘documental proof’ instead. Among the Baltic Germans themselves, there was no agreement whether inclusion on the register had to be compulsory.

The German draft subsequently made it through the deliberations of the Public Law Committee, but after it was passed to the Education Committee, things started to look glum again. The Chair of the Committee, K. Skalbe, whom Schiemann labelled as a ‘reactionary of the purest kind’ (Hiden 2004: 102) was fervently opposed to the project, his position fortified by the loud protests voiced by the Association of Secondary School Teachers, and

the Union of Latvian Schoolteachers. Skalbe appeased the opposition by making sure that the draft law ‘disappeared’ from the agenda (Adamovičš 1927: 22).

This experience made Paul Schiemann change his mind – or at least his tactics. He now put his faith in the general law on minorities’ cultural autonomy, so passionately advocated by Laserson. However, Schiemann failed to convince his conservative colleagues that such a law stood a better chance with the Latvian Parliament – Fircks described such a possibility as ‘detrimental to our historic position in the country and our influence among the population’ (Hiden 2004: 104). Laserson writes that the conservative Baltic Germans believed – naively – that the Latvians would agree more easily to their project of national autonomy in order ‘to atone for their agrarian ‘cruelty’ (1971: 133) As for cooperation with the Russians, Laserson claims that the Germans believed that because of the long common frontier with Bolshevik Russia, the ethnic Latvians would oppose the autonomy for Latvian Russians. (1971: 133). As for the Jewish autonomy, the Baltic Germans believed it stood little chance because of dormant anti-Semitism and because ‘the Jews in Latvia are in any case not mature enough to receive true cultural autonomy’ (Laserson 1971: 134).

In the meantime, the Latvian Poles submitted their autonomy project to the Parliament (similar to the Russian autonomy project, it was closely modelled on the German one), and finally, in January 1925 the Jewish project was submitted as well (notably, Schiemann appended his signature to the draft). It was the draft of the Jewish autonomy that drew most attention and was widely covered in the press.

Schiemann, Laserson and Maizels all sat on the sub-commission of the Public Law Committee that dealt with the Jewish project. At the sub-commission, they faced a staunch opponent in the person of Arveds Bergs, a representative of the National Centre, also known for his increasingly anti-Semitic views. During the deliberations it quickly became clear that the Latvian majority was not keen on a far-reaching and strictly defined autonomy, as most objections were raised in relation to the right to self-taxation (instead, a proposal was made to allow minorities to collect ‘voluntary contributions’), and to the idea of a national register for each minority, which in their opinion threatened to create parallel structures to the state. In fact, no agreement could have been reached on these two issues among the Jews themselves. The *Aguda* was opposed to the idea of a ‘secular’ list, insisting that whenever a person converted to another religion, he or she had to be struck off the register; they even proposed creating two registers for the Jews. The two parties

who advocated the widest autonomy possible were the *Mizrahi* and the *Zeire Zion*; the only difference between them was whether to include religious functions under the autonomy – while Nurock insisted that for the Jews culture and religion were inseparable, the *Zeire Zion* and the *Bund* argued that autonomy had to be secular, and that non-religious Jews should not have to pay for the ‘religious needs of the others’.¹⁵ Tensions were running so high, that during the discussion at the Committee about the possible inclusion of religious functions, Laserson left the room, delegating his role to L. Fišman from the National Democratic Party (it was eventually decided to keep religious functions separate).

Predictably, it was the language issue that caused the biggest upheaval.¹⁶ Both the *Aguda* and the *Bund* argued for Yiddish as the minority language, while the *Mizrahi* and the *Zeire Zion* insisted on Hebrew. Many prominent Social Democrats, including the national poet J. Rainis, his wife (also a poet) Aspazija, M. Skujenieks and F. Cielēns sympathised with the latter as a ‘progressive’ language (Laserson 1971: 148); however, the general prevailing opinion was that it was Yiddish that was the daily language of the working masses. The National Democratic Party was not keen on either Hebrew or Yiddish, and suggested a free choice of language instead (this did not go down well with the Social Democrats). A proposal was made by the Jewish consultative body *Beirat* not to fix the language question in the law until the Jewish autonomous institution was elected.¹⁷ For many of the draft law clauses, the Jewish factions submitted their own parallel versions, which made the elaboration of the law extremely difficult and time-consuming and caused Laserson to state later that the Jewish law would not have been approved even if the German one had gone ahead (Laserson 1971: 137).

Schiemann also took a stand on the question of the language of instruction for Jewish schools: he claimed that as a truly secular institution the Jewish autonomy should be based on just one language – in this way opposing Laserson, who, desperate to push the law ahead, started to concede the inevitability of both Hebrew and Yiddish. In an article rebuffing Schiemann, Laserson claimed that the Jewish autonomy could not be judged by normal standards because of the unique history of the Jewish people. Later, Schiemann changed his position and supported the Jewish National Democrats in their advocacy of a free choice of any language (including other minority languages) according to the choice of parents. In Latgale the Baltic Germans supported the National Democrats’ proposal

¹⁵ ‘Russkaya i evreiskaya avtonomii’, *Segodnya*, 26.03.1925.

¹⁶ As astutely observed by Mendelsohn (1983: 251), ‘nowhere else in the East European diaspora was the language situation in Jewish schools so complex as it was in Latvia’.

¹⁷ ‘Evreiskii Beirat o evreiskoi avtonomii’, *Segodnya*, 29.01.1925.

stipulating Russian as the language of instruction, to which Laserson commented that ‘the cultural imperialism of Germans led them to the absurdity of expecting the Latvian Government to acquiesce in supporting the Germanisation and Russification of Jewish children with its resources’ (Laserson 1971: 136).

All this disorderly confusion aggravated the already tense situation, much to the consternation of the Latvian majority. Mārgers Skujenieks, the Social Democrat-Menshevik, acidly commented on the Jewish autonomy at the Public Law Committee in March 1925: ‘The Germans at least have a common language, which cannot be said about the Jews, who speak at least five different languages. For all nations, language and religion are the main determinants of belonging to a nation. There is no solidarity among Latvian Jews on either of these’.¹⁸

One by one, the minorities’ autonomy draft laws were dismissed from the *Saeima*’s agenda. By the end of 1925, it was clear for both Schiemann and Laserson that minority autonomy in Latvia was, at least for the time being, out of reach. Hiden (2004: 105) explains Schiemann’s insistence on a general law on cultural autonomy by reference both to ‘wide European developments’ and to ‘his frustration with the *Saeima*’. Although Laserson was an early proponent of collective action on the part of Latvian minorities, by 1925 he was also increasingly frustrated both by the international situation with regard to minority rights and by its domestic status. It is no coincidence that the two most vociferous minority representatives in Latvia started searching for new solutions at the international level around the same time, becoming active at the newly founded European Congress of Nationalities in Geneva. And it is indicative both of Schiemann’s recent experience in Latvia, and of his tentative certain ideological reconciliation with Laserson, that speaking at the Nationalities Congress in Geneva in 1925, he stressed that ‘it is important that one minority helps another to achieve its goals. If they succeed, the question of loyalty will not arise anymore’.¹⁹

As already mentioned before, after 1925, both Schiemann and Laserson, although remaining highly optimistic about the chances of the Nationalities Congress changing the status quo in the field of minority rights in Europe, started developing theoretical frameworks that nowadays would undoubtedly be classified as post-nationalist.

¹⁸ ‘Russkaya i evreiskaya avtonomii’, *Segodnya*, 26.03.1925.

¹⁹ Nikolskii, B. ‘Poslednii den’ kongressa menshinstv’, *Segodnya*, 22.10.1925.

Conclusion

The unlikely alliance between the Baltic German and the Jewish communities of interwar Latvia, reviewed in the previous section of this chapter, illustrates how the complicated interplay between minority communities within the same state influences, shapes and alters their respective relations with the eponymous nation, other ethnic minorities present (in our case – with Latvian Russians and Poles), with the external homelands, and international organisations. Sometimes, minorities may provide support to other ethnic groups out of solidarity, perhaps with strategic foresight, but with no immediate gain in view for themselves; at other times, minorities form alliances when they think that their own cause will be best served by presenting a united front, and promptly disengage when they feel that this cause may be tarnished by association with others; a minority, or minorities, may also not seek direct contact or association with another minority, but simply ‘jump on the band-wagon’ and use this minority’s (as well as its respective kin-state’s, and the international community’s on its behalf) existing achievements (in negotiating with the majority nation, or in securing a special status) as precedents in their own bargaining strategy. In short, this fifth relational field unfailingly informs the other four.

Moreover, this impact often lingers long after a particular minority has ceased to exist in a given country, or has been significantly changed in composition.²⁰ The Baltic German community in Latvia virtually vanished in 1939, when on Hitler’s orders they were relocated to ‘German territories’ (read – to the newly occupied Poland) – a development enthusiastically greeted by many ethnic Latvians at the time.²¹ However, fifty years later, when Latvia regained independence in 1991, the perspective shifted, and the Baltic Germans were granted some belated recognition. For example, a Latvian history book published in 2005 explicitly states: ‘From the present-day perspective, it is absolutely clear that the departure of the Baltic Germans was an irreplaceable loss. ...With their

²⁰ This phenomenon is traditionally overlooked by political scientists. A notable exception that I came across is Esman’s (2009) nuanced study of the ‘Russian’ diaspora in Israel – for example, he explains the guarded attitude of the Sephardim towards the 1990s influx of ‘Russian’ Jews by their ‘bitter memories of their earlier days in Israel when they or their parents were patronised by the Ashkenazic establishment, their culture demeaned, and their economic prospects blunted’ (Esman 2009: 74).

²¹ Only 10,000 Baltic Germans chose to remain in Latvia. After Latvia’s annexation by the Soviet Union in 1940, majority of those left. In 1941, the final wave of Baltic German emigration depleted the number of those residing in Latvia to appx. 1,500. (Bleiere *et al.* 2005: 194).

departure, an intellectual vacuum started to form in Latvia, which was further reinforced by later Stalinist deportations, the Holocaust, and the residents' mass exodus after yet another occupation in 1945' (Bleiere *et al.* 2005). Notably, Latvian historian R. Cerūzis, in a study entitled 'The German Factor in Latvia (1918-1939). Political and Inter-Ethnic Aspects', tentatively draws a parallel between the 'German factor' in interwar Latvia and the 'Russian factor' in Latvia today (Cerūzis 2004:3).

As for the interwar Jewish community of Latvia, it largely perished during the Holocaust. According to the last census carried out in interwar Latvia in 1935, the Jews constituted 5 per cent of the population, or about 94,000. In the course of 1941, about 70,000 of them were exterminated in Nazi-occupied Latvia. Those who escaped death, i.e. those who fled eastwards to the Soviet Union, those who were serving in the Soviet Army and survived the war, those who were liberated from the Nazi concentration camps, and, finally, part of those Jews who were repressed and deported in 1940 by the Soviets – altogether about 14,000 – returned to Latvia after World War Two. (Dribins 2002). But from the summer of 1945 onwards, the Latvian Jewish community kept being replenished by settlers of Jewish ethnic background from other parts of the Soviet Union. After the Citizenship Law of 1994, which restricted automatic citizenship to the citizens of the interwar republic and their direct descendants, had been passed, only 45 per cent of the 14,000-strong Latvian Jewish community were eligible for automatic citizenship.²² This data bears witness to the fact that over the course of almost five decades, the *de facto* composition of the Jewish community was irrevocably changed.

This fact, however, was willingly overlooked by the nationalising (yet again) Latvian state, which readily recognised the Jewish community of 1988 as a successor to the interwar community, and has never since questioned its credentials (which was not the case with the other post-war ethnic minorities in Latvia). I believe that there are several possible explanations for this benevolent attitude. Firstly, the idea of the 'restoration' of the Jewish community resonated with Latvians' own pledge to restore the Latvian interwar state, lending it extra legitimacy. Secondly, similar to the interwar state, albeit for different reasons, the 'dissident' (opposed to the Soviet regime) Jews were regarded as Latvia's most loyal minority. Thirdly, during the national awakening of the 1980s, and in the early 90s, comparisons between the plight of the Jewish people and the fate of ethnic Latvians

²² There is no available ready statistical data on the size of the Jewish population in 1994. I arrive at this arbitrary number by subtracting the approximate number of Jewish emigrants through the period from 1989 until 1994 (appx. 8,840) from the total size of Jewish population in 1989 (22,900); i.e. the birth and death rates are not accounted for.

were rife, and allusions were often made to the similarity between the new Latvian state and Israel.²³ Fourthly, there was an acknowledgement of the contribution made by some Jewish intellectuals (in particular M. Vulfsons) to the Popular Front movement. The last, but not the least consideration, was the Holocaust itself – as to whether it was an act of repentance or political correctness, opinions differ. I personally tend to think that both played a role.

In any case, the Jewish community (under the initial guise of the Latvian Society for Jewish Culture) was the first to be re-established in Latvia in 1988, paving the way for other ethnic communities – by the end of the year, with the support of the Popular Front, the Association of the National Cultural Societies of Latvia (the LNKBA in its Latvian abbreviation) was established, uniting 18 newly created cultural societies and providing a platform for national minorities to discuss issues of cultural autonomy.

The most recent example of the relational interplay between different ethnic minorities, the Latvian state, and international society is perhaps the latest round of discussion on the issue of the restitution of Jewish properties in Latvia in 2012. Actively lobbied for by the United States, and explicitly supported by the Secretary of State H. Clinton during her visit to Latvia in June 2012, the restitutions provoked heated controversy in Latvia, causing the downfall of Justice Minister G. Bērziņš, a representative of the right-wing nationalistic bloc in the parliament. Significantly, in the heat of the moment, the Latvian media reported ‘that after the question of the restitution of Jewish properties came to the fore, the Latvian Russian community and the Latvian Roma Association have also started expressing an interest in property restitutions’.²⁴

I believe that the history of the Latvian minorities’ struggle for cultural autonomy during the interwar period, with the Baltic Germans and the Jews being in the forefront, and the relational interplay between these two ethnic minorities residing in the same state is essential for the analysis of interethnic relations in Latvia. It enhances our understanding of the forces at work in ethnic politics, both in the past and at present, by allowing us to

²³ Later on, this peculiar affinity also manifested itself as an attempt by many Latvian politicians to present the mass deportations of 1941 and 1949 as the ‘Holocaust of the Latvian people’.

²⁴ ‘Latvijas iedzīvotāji neatbalsta īpašuma atdošanu kopienām’, 13.08.2012, available at: http://www.tvnet.lv/zinas/viedokli/432220-iedzivotaji_neatbalsta_ipasuma_atdosanu_kopienam.

study these politics in a continuous historical perspective - this way addressing certain limitations of the more selective approach of post-Soviet studies, which has largely dominated the field.

Chapter Six. The ‘Latvian Latvia’, 1934-1940

On 15th May 1934 Prime Minister Kārlis Ulmanis, with the support of the Latvian army, carried out an authoritarian *coup d'état*, disbanding the parliament, banning all political parties (including his own Agrarian Union) and introducing a state of emergency. The conspirators did not meet any resistance (apart from the proverbial gunshot in the air by the Social Democrat Bruno Kalniņš), and no blood was shed. Two years later, in 1936, Ulmanis would also usurp the position of State President. For the remaining six years of its independence, like many other European countries during this period that became known as the ‘crisis of democracy’, Latvia would remain an authoritarian state.

The six-year dictatorial reign of Kārlis Ulmanis has been extensively studied, analysed and interpreted in Latvia. Early, largely uncritical (and also unreferenced) accounts of Ulmanis’s rule were given by E. Virza (1935), Ž. Unāms (1934, 1953), and A. Bērziņš (1963, 1973). Ulmanis also features prominently in the memoir of J. Lejiņš (1971), a member of the Agrarian Union, and a member of the Fourth Saeima; the image of the People’s Leader painted by Lejiņš is somewhat less flattering than that of his predecessors. Not surprisingly, the most unforgiving accounts of Ulmanis’s regime came from the Social Democrats and former parliamentarians V. Bastjānis (1964) and F. Cielēns (1964, Vol. 3). A proper critical biography of Ulmanis by E. Dunsdorfs was published in 1978; in 1994, I. Ronis published a collection of documents which included protocols of Ulmanis’s interrogation by the *NKVD*, Ulmanis’s diaries written in a Soviet prison, and other documents, prefaced by an extended essay by the author where he recounts and interprets the historical events leading up to Ulmanis’s arrest in 1940. An important contribution to the field was made by A. Stranga (1998), who compared the Ulmanis regime to other authoritarian regimes of the time, and analysed its impact on different sectors of the state, including transformations in the relationship between the state and ethnic minorities. Stranga is perhaps the harshest critic of the regime to date, believing that ‘it would be difficult to find a venue of public life where the regime proved its superiority to democracy’ (Stranga 1998: 221). Ulmanis’s attitude towards the Jews, and the deterioration of Latvian-Jewish relations were also examined by Stranga (1997), while his relations with the Baltic Germans were appraised by R. Cerūzis (2004). The Latvian historians Ā. Šilde, E. Andersons, and U. Ģērmanis have also critically evaluated the causes and consequences of the authoritarian *coup* of 1934.

Despite the largely critical treatment that the authoritarian regime has received at the hands of historians, the public perception of K. Ulmanis and his dictatorial rule remains highly ambiguous in present-day Latvia. A bronze monument was erected in the centre of Riga in July 2003; the inscription, describing Ulmanis as the first prime minister of Latvia, and president of Latvia (1936-1940), says: ‘Freedom, nation, country – ahead of me’. A memorial museum in Ulmanis’s birthplace Pikšas, Dobeles region, hosts a number of exhibitions, lectures and events throughout the year; its internet homepage puts a special emphasis on educating schoolchildren. In 2009, the musical *Vadonis* (The Leader) was staged at the National Theatre in Riga. It portrayed Ulmanis as a national hero, a saviour, and a martyr who was often tragically misunderstood, and the Latvian interwar parliament as either an absurd circus overtaken by ethnic minorities, or a gathering of corrupt politicians who were indifferent to the fates of ordinary people. The programme booklet of the show, apart from the cast, the synopsis, and the usual acknowledgements, contained some excerpts from Ulmanis’s diaries, as well as several blurbs contributed by its creators. For example, the author of the lyrics, the Latvian singer and poet K. Dimiters, compares Latvian ‘national consciousness’ under the Ulmanis regime with the situation at the moment, to the detriment of the latter:

The ideal of the first independent Latvian state is remembered not because of the parties’ skirmishes in the *Saeima*, but because of its early budding on 18th November 1918, and because of its coming into bloom during the Ulmanis times. It was Ulmanis who raised Latvians’ consciousness of their own independence to the highest level, and who liberated it from the slavery complex acquired over centuries. He was an ingenious master [*saimnieks*], as well as an idealist, who was able to transform his dream into our state’s reality. But here we are again, servants to yet another big power, or the *Euroempire* – humiliated, feeble, and dependent. With the idea of The Leader, which I nursed for seven years, I wanted to remind people that Latvians could also be masters in their own land - it was not secured, it was short-lived, but it was beautiful.

The director of the National Theatre, O. Rubenis, also draws a parallel between the past and the present, comparing Ulmanis to the Latvian state leaders of today:

Kārlis Ulmanis had, on many occasions, to make decisions that determined the fate of Latvia and its people. Rightly or wrongly, fairly or not, but he had enough strength to make a decision and to take responsibility for it, in contrast to our state leaders today. If only because of this, we must always treat Kārlis Ulmanis and his achievements with deep respect.

Ironically, the show, which was sold out every night and often ended with standing ovations from the public, took place on the very same stage where the Latvian democratic republic was proclaimed on 18th November 1918.

This, outside academic circles, largely ‘unanalysed nostalgia’ (to use the term coined by Liven (1993: 55)) for the person who almost single-handedly ended the brief period of Latvian parliamentary democracy, imprisoned Social Democrats, banned political parties, took away freedom of gatherings and association, censored mass media and all printed matter, replaced the free market with a planned economy and an overall nationalisation of industry and finance, cancelled the cultural autonomy of ethnic minorities, stifled any opposition or dissent, and smothered the country in a syrupy parochial nationalist rhetoric, seemingly defies logic. But under a more detailed examination, reasons for Ulmanis’s perennial popularity among many Latvians abound.

The first and foremost factor is the tragic chain of events that followed Ulmanis’s demise – the Soviet occupation of 1940, the Nazi occupation of 1941-1945, and the long forty-six years of Soviet rule. By contrast with the horrors of war, deportations and a new wave of Russification, the Ulmanis regime certainly looked mild and benign. The influx of Soviet-era immigrants, the supremacy of the Russian language and the Communist ideology, and rapidly falling living standards infused Ulmanis’s slogans of a ‘Latvian Latvia’, ‘national justice’, and ‘national fairness’ with a new meaning. The tragic death of Ulmanis himself at the hands of the *NKVD* made him into a hero and martyr; the subsequent consistently negative interpretation of the Ulmanis regime’s ideology by official Soviet historiography only added to this image, turning him into a legend. Anybody who grew up in Soviet Latvia, even if completely ignorant of its interwar history, was aware that the expression ‘the Ulmanis times’ [*ulmaņlaiki*], usually said wistfully (and quietly), stood for order, prosperity, and common sense – in short, for something completely different from the current reality.

Another factor contributing to Ulmanis’s popularity is the persistent belief that it was President Ulmanis who led the country out of the depths of the Great depression back to economic prosperity, despite the available evidence that the first signs of recovery had manifested themselves already in 1933 (see, for example, Aizsilnieks 1968: 582).

The fact that Ulmanis’s dictatorial rule was so short is yet another important factor contributing to this lack of critical evaluation in Latvia. Under Ulmanis, censorship was

rigid, and conformism and compliance were cultivated. Had Latvia not been absorbed immediately afterwards by two totalitarian states in succession, remaining part of the Soviet Union until 1991, but instead re-gained independence after World War Two, there can be no doubt that the regime, its ideology, its causes and its consequences would have been examined in the greatest detail by historians, economists, sociologists, psychologists and other specialists. As it happened, before 1991 all the existing critical accounts of the regime were published abroad by Latvian émigrés, being unavailable to Latvians at home. And although all these works have become available since, and new critical historical accounts have been published in Latvia, they have to compete with word-of-mouth legendary accounts which had been circulated and reproduced among the people for over fifty years – a competition where dry historical accounts often lose.

Fourthly, the prominent role that Ulmanis had played in Latvian politics prior to the *coup* (he was prime minister seven times), in securing Latvia's independence in 1918, at the National Council and at the Constitutional Assembly, and during the implementation of the Agrarian Reform, cannot be so easily separated, at least in the public perception, from his later incarnation as a dictator and destroyer of Latvian democracy. The fact that not a single drop of blood was shed during the *coup* that met no resistance lends the whole takeover an air of if not legitimacy, than at least a certain benignancy – Ulmanis is often portrayed not so much as a conspirator but as a strict-but-fair father figure who had to step in and admonish his misbehaving children before they could harm themselves.

Fifthly, in the hierarchy of values associated with the First Republic in collective memory, parliamentary democracy ranks curiously low. While 'independence', 'sovereignty', and 'self-respect' are treated as absolute and indivisible values, 'democracy', often used with the qualifiers like 'excessive', 'exaggerated' and 'misunderstood', is interpreted as optional, even potentially dangerous, and certainly as not-good-for-all.

Finally, while the Ulmanis regime's real and imaginary achievements in the fields of economy, state administration, foreign policy, culture and education may remain under scrutiny, many commentators contend that his main driving force was his selfless love for his country and his nation, and his ultimate goal – the unity of the nation. For example, Dunsdorfs (1978: 345) writes that '...there can be no doubt that by instigating the *coup*, Ulmanis wanted the best for Latvia – his love for Latvia cannot be doubted'. Lejiņš (1971: 151) also mentions Ulmanis's 'deep patriotism'. Of more recent examples, the homepage

of the President of the State of Latvia, which provides brief biographies of all former Latvian presidents, says about Ulmanis: ‘His ideal was a Latvian Latvia, agrarian in its essence, independent, economically secure, and neutral. Ulmanis was an ardent patriot who wanted to transform Latvia, where one quarter of all residents were non-Latvians, into a distinctively Latvian land’.¹

There is no agreement among Latvian historians on what precisely Ulmanis’s idea of a united nation was; however, it is generally acknowledged that he did not succeed in uniting his people. For example, Dunsdorfs (1978: 344) posits that Ulmanis was greatly mistaken in thinking ‘that the *Saeima* was the cause of national disunity, when in fact the opposite was the case: the *Saeima* was just a reflection of the existing cleavages in the society’. Dunsdorfs (1978: 345) observes that ‘the fact that Latvia was a multinational state had caused certain political and economic difficulties since the country gained independence’, and claims that the Latvian minorities, who comprised a quarter of the total population, were not as loyal towards the Latvian state as minorities in other multinational republic, like, for example, Switzerland. Therefore, describing Ulmanis’s policies towards ethnic minorities, he contends that ‘also in this sense Ulmanis wanted to achieve a ‘united nation’, but the means he had chosen were very similar to those he himself, according to his biographers, had sullenly suffered from, during his youth under the hardships of Russification’. Dunsdorfs (1978: 345) defines Ulmanis’s beliefs as ‘national positivism’, which he attributes to the influence of O. S. Marden, one of the founders of the New Thought movement, an indefatigable promoter of strong will and positive thinking, and a pioneer author of self-help books.² Dunsdorfs’s conclusion, however, is unequivocal: ‘The ideal of a united nation remained unattained – the 15th of May divided the nation more than any other event in its short independent history’. (Dunsdorfs 1978: 346)

Ronis (1994), referring to the diaries Ulmanis wrote in his Soviet prison, claims that Ulmanis categorically rejected the chauvinistic slogan ‘Latvia for Latvians’, and, rather implausibly, that he recognised the equal rights of ethnic minorities. According to Ronis (1994: 84), all Ulmanis asked from minorities in return was loyalty towards the Latvian state, ‘that they put Latvia’s interests in the first place, and not the interests of their ethnic homeland, as had often happened in practice.’ Ronis posits that the fact that

¹ http://www.president.lv/pk/content/?cat_id=910&lng=lv ; last time accessed 29.08.2012.

² If Ulmanis was indeed under the influence of Marden, then the titles of the latter’s books make for poignant reading: *Pushing to the Front or, Success under Difficulties* (1984), *Architects of Fate, or Steps to Success and Power* (1897), *An Iron Will* (1901), *The Hour of Opportunity* (1900), *How to get What You Want* (1917), and *Ambition* (1919).

Ulmanis asked all citizens, irrespective of their ethnic belonging, above all to respect the Latvian state was not liked either by the Nazi sympathisers among the Baltic Germans, or by the ‘empire’s supporters’ among the Russian minority, and that for the sake of the efficiency of their propaganda, they often accused Ulmanis of Perkonkrusts-style ethnic intolerance (Ronis 1994: 84). Overall, Ronis is convinced that ‘as many accusations can be made against K. Ulmanis himself and the authoritarian Latvia of 15th May, it must be recognised that the government of the 15th May Republic was definitely against chauvinism, in particular against anti-Semitism’. (Ronis 1994: 84)

The question of whether Ulmanis was an anti-Semite is yet another contentious issue. Ezergailis (1999: 87) observes that ‘it is easier to make an accusation than to prove it’. However, he contends that there were certain ambiguities during Ulmanis’s reign of power. ‘K. Ulmanis is uniquely different from all other European fascist leaders as anti-Semitic publications were banned under his rule’, writes Ezergailis, adding that ‘the Latvian anti-Semites actually called Ulmanis ‘a Jewish agent’. On the nationalisation of industry and trade, Ezergailis notes: ‘This policy is sometimes interpreted as anti-Semitic but in reality it was anti-capitalistic’, and Latvian and German entrepreneurs suffered from it as well’. However, Ezergailis (1999: 87) observes that although there was no open anti-Semitism during the Ulmanis times, ‘it nevertheless does not mean that K. Ulmanis did not create a situation which greatly upset and angered some Jews, and made them worry about their future’. But nonetheless, Ezergailis (1999: 90) is convinced that ‘if there was any open hatred towards a minority under the Ulmanis regime, it was hatred against Germans’.

An interesting take on this double-faceted process of nationalisation-Latvianisation is provided by Aizsilnieks (1968). He quotes one of Ulmanis’s speeches, where The Leader, after announcing the creation of two new state joint-stock companies, declared: ‘This opens the way to the industrial and production sectors for those groups of the population who prior to these measures remained the most alienated, namely, Latvian ploughmen and their sons and brothers in the cities.’³ Aizsilnieks claims that although state propaganda created an impression that the goal of the government’s economic policies was to help the biggest possible number of Latvian agricultural workers to become industrial entrepreneurs, in reality, though, the process of squeezing non-Latvians out of manufacturing, trade and other industries in order to create vacancies for Latvians was used by the regime to conceal, from the wider masses, the fact that the number of state

³ LKK Darbības pārskats par 1936/37. g., pp. 29-30 quoted in Aizsilnieks (1968: 609).

enterprises was constantly increasing (Aizsilnieks 1968: 609-610). In other words, the rhetoric of expropriating the minorities in favour of ethnic Latvians was consciously used by the regime as a distraction from its real goal of statism.

Stranga (1997: 63) also contends that the policy of Latvianisation was in fact a transfer of private property (any private property, not just under ethnic minorities' ownership) into state ownership, under the administration of ethnically Latvian bureaucrats. Stranga, describing how the Jews were gradually squeezed out of finance, industry and trade, how their rights to buy real estate were limited, and how higher tax rates were applied to Jewish-owned enterprises, observes that all these measures were taken without any official declarations, or without adopting any anti-Jewish legislation. However, he stresses, this does not change its discriminatory nature (Stranga 1997: 70). Overall, Stranga believes that Ulmanis's regime was not specifically anti-Semitic, although, as an authoritarian regime it was by definition not minority-friendly. Like Ezergailis, Stranga also contends that among the ethnic minorities, the main targets of the regime were Baltic Germans.

To summarise, there are no, as yet, definitive answers to the following questions: what was Ulmanis's concept of a united nation? What was his position towards ethnic minorities? Was Ulmanis an anti-Semite? What was the impact of his policies on nation-building in Latvia? As rightly observed by Stranga (1997: 80), it is not easy to answer any of these questions in the absence of democratic institutions like the parliament, the press, or political organisations which would normally reflect both the position of the government, and the people's reaction to its policies. As it is, one is limited to analysing trends and making conjectures. In the remaining part of this chapter, I will attempt to contribute to the existing knowledge by analysing the scarce information available.

An eerie silence descended upon Latvia in May 1934. There were no voices of dissent to be heard, with the Social Democrats being interned in Liepaja camp, the centre parties being wary, and the ethnic minorities assuming a 'wait and see' position. Of the two most vociferous parliamentarians representing ethnic minorities, M. Laserson was held in the Liepaja camp along with the Social Democrats, while P. Schiemann (who had also left the *Saeima* by then) was in Vienna. And if there was dissent, there was no public outlet for it left – the new government had declared a state of emergency in the country under

which public gatherings were prohibited, while Latvian newspapers had an astonishing overnight makeover. Whereas up to 16th May 1934 the front pages of newspapers displayed the latest local news and lively (at times also vitriolic) political banter, this was replaced by repetitive, *ad nauseam*, attestations of gratitude and support expressed to Prime Minister Ulmanis and his government by the Latvian people (individual persons or professional organisations, educational institutions, fishermen's cooperatives, churches, musical orchestras and others, but all painstakingly signed). 'Elated Nation Greet Its Liberator', 'People's Congratulations to the Government', 'The Whole Country Greet the Government', 'Congratulations to Prime Minister Ulmanis', 'People's Best Wishes to the Government in Its Work of Organising the State', etc., etc. Eventually, these evident proofs of the new government's legitimacy and popularity were replaced by follow-ups on government visits around the country, depicting the 'People's Leader' meeting farm workers, or greeting boy scouts, or accepting flowers from awed children.

J. Kārklīšs, a veteran journalist at *Jaunākās Ziņas*, recalls 'the morning after' the coup in his memoir:

When the publishers and senior colleagues had arrived, we started discussing what to do, what kind of a stance to adopt toward the destroyers of the Constitution. Everything was still unclear. Nobody knew how the new power would develop, and for how long it would survive. Akuraters was full of indignation about what had happened, did not spare strong words and expressions while talking about the betrayers of democracy. Skalbe looked sad, spoke of our 'culture of the herd' [*teļu kultūra*] ...A proposal came out to approach Ulmanis with a petition to allow *Jaunākās Ziņas* as a 'sensible, favourably-inclined critical newspaper', using the argument that this would confer a more democratic status on the new regime.⁴

(Kārklīšs 1990: 173)

Kārklīšs (1990:173) recollects that upon receiving the text of Ulmanis's speech 'For My People', and the accompanying letter, everybody felt uneasy. But 'the tone of it was such that any objections would not be tolerated', and in fear for the newspaper and for their own positions, the editorial team decided to print it on the front page. 'This step defined all that followed', concludes Kārklīšs.

⁴ Nothing evidently came out of the plan to strike a special deal with the government. After the first reassuring meeting with leading publishers and journalists that A. Bērziņš (then – a Deputy Minister of Interior, later – a Public Affairs Minister of Ulmanis's government) held at the *Hotel de Rome* on 20th May 1934, the censorship crackdown on the Latvian press which was to follow made many of them feel nostalgic even for the Russian Tsarist censors.

Eventually, Latvia's once so lively and diverse press became even bleaker, as the voices of all those who did not give the new regime unequivocal support were stifled. Even the writings of the most vociferous proponent of ethnic nationalism of the 1920s, E. Blanks (who, however, was not an ardent supporter of the dictatorship) disappeared from the daily press pages. The article by J. Līgotnis, a Latvian essayist and linguist, better known under the archaic version of his name, Līgotņu Jēkabs, published to mark the two-year anniversary of the coup provides an excellent summary of recent changes in the Latvian cultural life.

The author asserts that 15th May 1934 was a watershed not only in the country's political life, but also in the spiritual life of the nation. He pays tribute to both the Language Law of 1935, which finally assigned an appropriate place to the state language, and the Education Law of 1934, which he calls 'a cornerstone of the national cultural life'. Latvian writers, claims Līgotņu Jēkabs, have finally got rid of their 'stepchildren's status', and assumed the place in society they were destined for, thanks to the Law on the Cultural Fund (promulgated on 24th July 1934), which diverted the three per cent surcharge on all alcohol sales towards cultural needs. Līgotņu Jēkabs writes warmly about the Friendly Appeal campaign initiated by Ulmanis in 1935 – an invitation to the public to donate books and works of art to rural schools (a tradition indeed remembered fondly by generations of Latvians, which was renewed in 1991). Notably, the author also writes about a new direction in national history, headed by Fr. Balodis, A. Tentelis and A. Švābe, which reportedly aims to liberate Latvian historiography from German 'inventions'. At the same time, writes Līgotņu Jēkabs, nationalist ideology has been further developed by Ed. Virza, J. Lapiņš and E. Brastiņš (of them more later).⁵

Dribins (1997: 196) identifies R. Bērziņš-Valdēss (pen name *Nordicus*) as the most prominent media writer on minority issues in authoritarian Latvia. Bērziņš-Valdēss, a journalist and an enthusiastic traveller, also happened to be the first Director of the Latvian news agency LETA (a position he kept until 1940).

Nordicus's early writings on minority issues are largely limited to articles on (or more precisely, against) Baltic Germans. For example, at the beginning of 1935 he published an article 'Fatherland and Birth Place', with a subtitle 'An Open Question to the Citizens of German Ethnicity', in which he questions Baltic Germans' loyalty to Latvia (in

⁵ Līgotņu, J. 'Divi gadi latviskās kultūras celtniecībā'. *Jaunākās Ziņas*, 14.05.1936.

the introductory part *Nordicus* writes about Baltic Germans persistently calling Latvia their ‘birthplace’ (*dzimtene*), while referring to Germany as their ‘Fatherland’).⁶ Another article, ‘Our Response to the Germans’, mainly deals with the indignant reaction of the German and local Baltic German press to his previous article. ‘Can we possibly fully trust those of your brothers in Latvia, whose umbilical cord connecting them with you has not been severed?’ – rhetorically exclaims *Nordicus*.⁷ Both the aggressive tone of the two articles, and the somewhat muddled logic of the author are to some extent explained by J. Lejiņš (1971:119): ‘A certain *Nordicus* is writing at *Jaunākās Ziņas* (this is Leta’s *Bērziņš*), and the series of articles is meant to prepare the mood, as they are planning to appropriate both Guilds... the articles are inspired by K.U. [Kārlis Ulmanis].’

By 1938, however, *Nordicus* graduates from instigating mistrust toward Baltic Germans to more general theorising on minority issues. His article ‘There Are No More Minority Problems in Latvia’ is inspired by an interview given by the Romanian King Carol II to the *Daily Herald* reflecting his and the newly elected Romanian government’s opinion on minority rights, the rights of Romanian Jews in particular. Demonstrating his own full support for King Carol’s notion that minority rights are an internal affair of the state and should not be mixed up with international relations (the king only makes an exception for the new territories states have acquired as a result of World War One), *Nordicus* welcomes this new development in the history of minorities’ protection in Europe, and eagerly applies it to the Latvian case. He stresses once again that Latvians have voluntarily, out of pure goodwill, granted equal rights to ethnic minorities in the past. They demonstrated this remarkable generosity, he continues, regardless of the fact that ‘there is no minorities problem in Latvia in its modern understanding as outlined by King Carol’. Those thousands and tens of thousands of people of other ethnicities who are scattered across Latvian towns cannot be regarded as ethnic minorities, asserts *Nordicus*. The only exception *Nordicus* is prepared to make is towards the Russian peasants who live compactly in the Latvian countryside – they, according to him, fit the modern concept of minority. But then, he shrewdly concludes, their kin state Soviet Russia does not recognise the international concept of minority rights. Therefore, he concludes, as a result of the new situation in Western Europe combined with the successful solution of minority issues at home, the minority problem in Latvia has ceased to exist.⁸

⁶ *Nordicus*, ‘Tehviņa un dzimtene’, *Jaunākās Ziņas*, 19.01.1935.

⁷ *Nordicus*, ‘Muhsu atbilde wahceescheem’, *Jaunākās Ziņas*, 04.02.1935.

⁸ *Nordicus*, ‘Latvijā vairs nav minoritātu problēmas’, *Jaunākās Ziņas*, 15.01.1938.

The informational vacuum resulting from the strict censorship and exaggerated propaganda characteristic of any authoritarian or totalitarian regime makes assessment of the last period of Latvian interwar state independence extremely difficult, as previously observed by many researchers (see, for example, Aizsilnieks 1968: 603; Stranga (1997: 80; Cerūzis 2004: 159). It seems at times impossible to separate facts from interpretations, and one is forced to rely on a very limited number of sources, as well as trying to ‘read between the lines’. For example, Dunsdorfs (1978:371), analysing statistical data, noticed that despite the widely advertised Friendly Appeal campaign, the number of books in school libraries steadily declined in 1934 and 1935, and from 1935-1938 did not grow exactly corresponding to the Friendly Invitation campaign. By comparing various sources, he calculated the number of books taken out of use for ideological considerations, i.e. as ‘unsuitable for the Latvian people’, at 1,270.374 volumes.

M. Skujenieks, a newly appointed deputy prime minister, delivered a speech on Latvian Radio to explain the causes of recent ‘changes’ in Latvia’s political life. Skujenieks posited that the causes of the political crisis were rooted not just in Latvia’s present conditions, but also in the wider situation in the world. He lamented the domination of political parties, partisan fights, the impotence of the Saeima – all these phenomena put together made the life of the Latvian people impossible, he claimed. The most painful issue, according to Skujenieks, was the Saeima’s inability to address ‘our Latvian, national matters’. This inability, he continued, was conditioned by the composition of the Parliament, where Latvian bourgeois, nationalistically-minded parties were in fact in a minority. He then did the maths: 28 seats belonged to the Social Democrats and the communists, who for ideological reasons could not and did not want to defend Latvian interests, claiming that their goal was to foster cultural development of all ethnic groups living in Latvia. But this ‘ostensible fairness’, asserted Skujenieks, had led to the other ethnic groups’ supremacy, providing them with unfounded and undeserved advantages, and harming Latvian-ness. Another 17 seats in the Saeima belonged to minorities, who often sided with the Social Democrats; and due to political considerations, Latgalian deputies often voted in favour of the minorities’ ‘exaggerated demands’, said Skujenieks. He claimed that as all the aforementioned groups together had held 58 mandates, under those circumstances, Latvianness had not stood a chance. ‘I have to say that any nation which wants to exist and to strengthen its state, should become, in the national sense, as uniform as possible, so that at important historical moments all the state’s residents feel that it is their country – a country which they ought to defend.’ But the goal was not to oppress other ethnic groups, argued Skujenieks, or to make their life in

Latvia impossible. The goal was to strengthen Latvian-ness in the state, which in Skujenieks's interpretation would ensure 'that at the decisive moment, when our country could be endangered, our state's citizens, their ethnicity and religious creed notwithstanding, would present a united front in defending our country.' (Skujenieks seems to struggle in reconciling the two notions here – 'Latvian-ness', which he declared to be the ultimate goal, and the idea of a 'uniform nation'. An ardent promoter of 'scientific objectivity' in the past (see Skujenieks 1913), here he engages in a kind of verbal acrobatics, as the logical conclusion of what he said would be that the creation of a 'uniform', civic nation in pre-coup Latvia had been hampered purely by other ethnic groups' alleged 'supremacy').

The last part of the speech reflected his apparent uneasiness about recent events (according to multiple sources, Skujenieks joined the conspirators at the last moment after an invitation from General Balodis, and only on condition that he would be the one to develop the new Constitution):

Changes have happened. All big changes create difficulties and various unwanted phenomena. I am convinced that the government is able to prevent this. Thankfully, up until now all changes have happened without a drop of blood being spilled. Peace and order should prevail in our country also in the future. I am confident that resistance against the newly established conditions would be out of place; it would only lead to unnecessary casualties. It is not possible to re-establish the past. It has not happened in other countries, and it will not happen in ours.⁹

The new regime brought with it a major restructuring in all sectors of state life. The economy was increasingly monopolised by the state, and private entrepreneurship systematically eradicated (Aizsilnieks 1968; Balabkins and Aizsilnieks 1975). All political parties were banned, including the Agrarian Union. The Law on Legislation Order [*Likums par likumu izsludināšanas kārtību*] of 7th June 1934 empowered the Cabinet of ministers to pass, single-handedly, all legislation pertaining to the state, the Cabinet, the courts, the state administration system, the civil law, the penal code, procedural law, the state budget, state taxes and customs duties, state credits, military service and conscription, and foreign policy. The prime minister retained a veto.¹⁰ At the municipal level, all key officials were appointed by the Minister of the Interior. Non-Latvians were forced out of the state administration (not that they were ever present there in significant numbers), and out of

⁹ 'M. Skujenieka runa par notikušo pārgrozību cēloņiem', *Latvijas Kareivis*, 24.05.1934.

¹⁰ 'Likums par likumu izsludināšanas kārtību', *Valdības Vēstnesis*, 08.06.1934.

closely-related professions, like legal and notary services. As for civic organisations, Stranga (1998: 227) writes about the consistent attempt to unify all civic organisations, from those representing youth, and women to those representing ethnic minorities, with the aim of creating just one, overarching organisation in each sector. But as the ethnic minorities' cultural autonomy in Latvia was guaranteed only by the two education laws of 1919, the hardest blow was sustained by them – when the government started to introduce radical changes in the education sector.

Already during the first meeting of the new government on 17th May 1934, a decision was made to re-open the Education Law within the near future with the aim of 'significantly restricting the self-administration of minority schools.'¹¹ The new Education Minister, Professor Ludvigs Adamovičs, was well prepared for the task ahead. One of the most prominent figures in Latvian interwar pedagogical circles (from 1923 until 1934, he served as the head of the Latvian Secondary School Teachers' Association; for several years he had also been head of the Textbook Provision Foundation), Adamovičs was also a well-known opponent of the initial, liberal state educational policy towards ethnic minorities. For example, in his review 'School Matters in Latvia 1919-1927', Adamovičs sharply criticised the state's benevolent policy towards minorities' educational autonomy.¹² Adamovičs (1927:17) writes: 'The decisive role of ethnic minority representatives in the big politics of the Parliament awards those minorities a bigger significance than they deserve in proportion to the size of their minority, and than would be permissible by the Latvian state, which is *a national state of Latvians*, who are an ethnic majority, without losing self-respect'. The alleged excessive autonomy of the minority school departments within the ministry and the disproportionately high budget allocations to minority schools, an increase in the overall number of minority schools within the first eight years of independence, a higher school attendance rate among minority children as compared to ethnic Latvians – all these developments were interpreted by Adamovičs as alarming trends in national education requiring immediate state attention and intervention already in 1927. Now his new appointment gave him the power to act upon his beliefs.

Amendments to the Regulations on the Education Ministry's Structure from 12th July 1934, in conjunction with the Law on People's Education adopted on the same day, largely took away ethnic minorities' rights to cultural autonomy, which had been granted

¹¹ 'Jaunās valdības pirmā sehde', *Jaunākās Ziņas*, 18.05.1934

¹² Adamovičs, L. *Skolu lietas Latvijā*. Latvju Kultūras spiestuve, Rīga, (1927).

to them by the education laws of 1919. A. Bērziņš (1963: 196) makes a candid observation: ‘During the time of the Parliament, numerous attempts notwithstanding, we did not manage to adopt the important People’s Education Law due to the simple reason [sic! i.e., no other considerations] that there was no majority in the *Saeima*.’ While the Amendments effectively dissolved minority school boards, the new Law allowed minority children to study only in the schools belonging to their respective ethnic minority. In cases where parents belonged to two different ethnic minorities, it was the father who determined the ethnicity of the child. Children of mixed marriages where one parent was an ethnic Latvian were obliged to attend Latvian schools. Latvian schools were open to all children regardless of their ethnic background. In any given region, classes for ethnic minorities were to be opened if there were 30 or more children of that respective minority living there, and minority schools were to be opened if the number of children was 60 or more.

A. Bērziņš (1963: 196) defends the new law: ‘Latvian nationalism was not trying to suffocate ethnic minorities’ cultural nationalism: the state guaranteed each minority child a right to compulsory primary education at the expense of the state and the municipalities in his father’s tongue. Besides, the state also allocated allowances to minorities’ non-compulsory secondary schools.’

It is often argued that the state’s supposedly benevolent attitude towards minorities’ cultural needs was exemplified by the granting of the right to study in their ‘father’s’, or ‘native’, tongue – this claim requires careful examination. The ethnic diversity of the Latvian population, in combination with changing foreign rulers and the accompanying acculturation campaigns had produced a rather unusual linguistic situation, where ethnic and linguistic borders did not always coincide; moreover, there was no linguistic homogeneity *inside* the ethnic groups themselves. This obvious discrepancy between ethnic and linguistic criteria, however, was not taken into account, or was perhaps overlooked, by the founders of the state when they were drawing up the first education laws of the new republic. The Law on People’s Education Institutions from 08.12.1919 reads:

Article 39. All compulsory school studies should be conducted in the student’s family language.

Article 40. The language that the student's parents declare when they apply for a place at school, and in which they can fluently express their thoughts, is considered to be the Student's 'family language'.¹³

Practical implementation of these clauses immediately ran into difficulties, which kept accumulating over the years. The three biggest Latvian minorities – Russians, Germans and Jews – used at least four languages among them. Whereas it is safe to say that Russians by and large used the Russian language, and the vast majority of Russian children attended Russian-language schools (Apine 2007: 42) mentions that 80 per cent of Russian schoolchildren were enrolled in Russian schools in 1930s), some of the Baltic Germans, the former local administrators and army officers of the Russian Empire (there were a number of mixed marriages as well) had been Russified, and used the Russian language as their primary language, or used both Russian and German in their daily life and at home. In any case, they were certainly able to 'fluently express their thoughts', as required by law, in the Russian language, and therefore free to send their children to the Russian-language schools. But it all becomes really complicated when we look at the Jewish community of Latvia. Whereas Latgalian Jews mainly spoke Yiddish and Russian, Jews originating from Kurzeme were fluent in German, and counted it as their mother tongue (M. Nuroks, for example, delivered all his speeches to the Saeima in German). On top of that, there was increasing competition for Jewish minds between Orthodox Jews and Zionists, and therefore a competition between Yiddish and Hebrew to be the language of school education at Jewish schools. Z. Michaeli (Michelson) writes on the subject:

The pedagogic principle underlying the Law on Education [the law in question is that of 1919] was that the language spoken in the family should determine the language of tuition. This principle, however, was not congruent with the needs of the Jewish National resistance Movement, whose advocates found considerable difficulty at first because the languages of the Jewish masses in Latvia were Yiddish, Russian or German to begin with.

(Michaeli 1971: 188-189)

Because of the perceived superiority of educational standards at both German and Russian schools in comparison with Latvian schools (and objectively, at the beginning of independence, those standards were indeed superior as German and Russian schools were far better established), and with the (practically non-existent prior to independence) Jewish

¹³ The law does not stipulate that the child should be able to fluently express his thoughts in the 'family language', only that the parents should be able to do so.

schools, Jewish parents often tended to send their offspring to German, or Russian, but rarely Latvian, schools. Moreover, some practically-minded Latvian parents also gave preference to German or even, occasionally, Russian schools – after all, in full compliance with the law, all they needed in order to do that, was to demonstrate fluency in the language and claim that it was spoken at home.

This liberal approach towards the language of education as reflected in the Law on People's Educational Institutions caused many practical problems with its implementation and led to frequent squabbles between minority school boards over the number of pupils under their jurisdiction and the resulting funding, which reflected badly, in the eyes of the ethnic majority, on the reputation of minority cultural autonomy institutions.¹⁴ Perhaps even more importantly, it provided a constant source of dissatisfaction for nationalistically-minded Latvian politicians and publicists [A. Bergs, E. Blanks, M. Skujenieks, A. Ķēniņš and others quoted elsewhere – e.g. Blank's famous 'Jews are in the first place unacceptable to us as Russian-speaking Jews'], who perceived those unorthodox language practices as evidence of insufficient loyalty on the minorities' part, and as a sign of association not with just another culture but with a different state entity, and as an affront to the Latvian culture itself.

Under the Ulmanis regime, minorities' schools throughout Latvia were closed or merged with Latvian schools (Stranga (1998), for example, mentions that the number of Russian *gymnasiums* had decreased from nine to two). In a bizarre turn of events, the education reform envisioned by the former Minister A. Ķēniņš was now zealously implemented, and not a single voice of protest was to be heard. Poignantly, it was implemented by the same people who had previously brought about Ķēniņš's demise with the help of the ethnic minorities themselves.

The State Language Law of 5th January 1935, largely based upon the Regulation on State Language of 18th February 1932, for obvious reasons, dropped those clauses and footnotes which referred to language usage in the *Saeima* and during municipal elections, and thus officially excluded the German and Russian languages from the public sphere henceforth.

¹⁴ The Russian and Jewish minority school boards were constantly competing for those schools where the language of instruction was Russian, but the majority of pupils were of Jewish ethnicity. In 1925, for example, ten schools were transferred from under the jurisdiction of the Russian school board to the Jewish one. The main reason behind the change of 'ownership' was that out of the total number of 1606 pupils in those schools, only 214 were of Russian ethnicity, and the rest were Jewish ('Evereiskie deti – v evreiskii otdel', *Segodnya*, 06.08.1925). In this way, the principle of ethnicity prevailed.

Judging by just how promptly the education laws were amended under the new regime, and by the amount of speeches addressed to Latvian children and young people, K. Ulmanis – understandably - considered national education paramount to his nation-building programme.

In his numerous addresses to young people, he underlines the need for transformation, and the active part every ethnic Latvian should take in order for this to happen:

Let's make Latvia Latvian again, let's make it a Latvian land, where the Latvian spirit is expressed everywhere, and inspires everything, and is noticeable: in everyday life, at school, at church, in art, in writing, in politics, and in the economy. Let the Latvian first of all become a real Latvian in his soul, in his spirit, his conscience, and his strength – then Latvia will really belong to Latvians. But only then.¹⁵

In one of the rare instances of his referring to ethnic minorities directly, Ulmanis adds: 'According to this view, others, who have a right to it, can also live in Latvia alongside us, but the Latvian will go ahead everywhere, and everywhere everything Latvian will shine proudly'.¹⁶

Another example of Ulmanis not underestimating the importance of education in nation-building is his close attention to the 'suitability' of the teaching staff. For example, in one of his addresses he describes the spiritual liberation of teachers: 'Also schoolteachers have become different deep inside, in comparison to earlier. I want to say that schoolteachers feel safe, that now they can express whatever is in their hearts, tell it to the people, to the fatherland, to their parish, to the children and children's parents.'¹⁷

However, other available documentary sources suggest that while some of the Latvian teachers had been 'liberated' by the new regime, others experienced a different fate. For example, Z. Michaeli (Michelson) (1971:193), who had been the principal of The Hebrew Boys' School since 1923, recalls how he was forced to resign his post in 1934 as he was regarded as 'unfaithful to the spirit of the new regime'. Another document in support of both the fact of 'ideological cleansing' of schoolteachers' ranks and the close

¹⁵ 'Padarisīm Latviju latvisku', in: Ulmanis, K. Jaunātnēi: rakstu izlase un izvilcumi. J. Lapiņa sakopojumā. Rīga, Zemnieka Doms, (1937), p. 39 (1937)

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ 'Vienības augļi', *ibid.*, p. 46

personal attention K. Ulmanis paid to it, is a letter from the Director of the School Department to the State President's personal adjutant, M. Lukins, dated 3rd October 1939, which reads: 'In accordance with our phone conversation I am proud to send you the information about Polish and Russian schools' principals in the Rezekne region.' The enclosed document contains brief, but rather to the point, characteristics of a number of minority school principals provided by a local school inspector: 'Loyal attitude towards the Latvian state, a trustworthy person, fully fluent in the Latvian language'; 'Loyal, correct. Hostile towards the Left. Good command of the Latvian language'; 'A person absolutely loyal to the Latvian state.'¹⁸ Although several of the inspected principals did not make the final cut, the reasons cited are not lack of loyalty: 'Loyal but phlegmatic. Should be allowed to retire', or 'Loyal in her work, but mediocre abilities'. It is probably safe to presume that over the five years that had passed since the *coup*, teachers ideologically unsuitable for their task had already been identified and removed from their positions.

As for ethnic minorities in general, K. Ulmanis personally rarely mentioned their presence in Latvia at all. Apologists for his regime, and there were many among Latvian writers and essayists, however, actively contributed to the ideological foundation of ethnic Latvian supremacy, in numerous essays, books and media articles. The fact that their works were published under the strict government censorship conditions demonstrates that their views were condoned by the regime.

A collection of essays 'The New Nationalism', published in 1936, provides a valuable insight into the mainstream ideology.¹⁹ It was edited by writer, essayist and schoolteacher J. Lapiņš. In his earlier days, Lapiņš was one of the founders of the National Democratic Party, and a member of the Latvian Provisional Council in 1917. Later he became known as an early supporter and an ardent follower of K. Ulmanis. As early as in February 1934, speaking at the Teachers' Congress, he openly expressed dissatisfaction with the state of Latvian nation under the democratic regime: 'A fish rots from its head, and the nation rots from its intelligentsia.'²⁰

The collection is a manifestation of a racist nationalist ideology which was widespread in Europe in the 1930s, being upheld by far-right parties, and underpinning many authoritarian regimes. It had been undoubtedly present in Latvia long before 1934, but in democratic Latvia it was confined to far-right circles and their publications. Now it

¹⁸ LVVA, 5969. f. 1. apr., 439. l., 8. lapa

¹⁹ Jaunais nacionālisms. Rakstu krājums J. Lapiņa redakcijā. Valters un Rapa, Rīga, (1936)

²⁰ Lapiņš, J. *Atdzimšana*. Rīga, (1935)

found itself an official outlet. In the introduction to 'The New Nationalism', Lapiņš exhibits his primordialist views on nationhood, and unabashedly juxtaposes 'nature' and 'humanism' to the detriment of the latter:

For culturally refined mankind, the new nationalism undoubtedly represents a reaction against rational constructions. It is a return to nature. Over the past two hundred years, humanism has fanatically believed in man's omnipotence, his humanity, his spiritual and material achievements. Humanism wanted to change man's nature. But it only succeeded in small measure, as nature is conservative, and man's psyche today is the same as hundreds of years ago. Therefore, nationalism theory is looking for origins again and this is why the race question has arisen again with the unprecedented force.

(Lapiņš 1936: 9)

Lapiņš attempts to ground his racist postulates in reported 'scientific discoveries':

Racial science has acknowledged the great inequality among men in terms of talent and ability [*spraigums*]. Racial science...has proved that people are most balanced where the races are pure. Admixture of other blood leads to discord in human body and soul. Therefore, every race must protect its purity of blood. If in the old times nationalism tried to attract other peoples through acculturation, now nationalism aims at natural reproduction among a nation's members; it tries to increase national forces in a natural way.

(Lapiņš 1936: 9)

J. Grīns, a famous Latvian writer, editor, schoolteacher and author of textbooks, contributed an essay titled 'On National Eros' [*Par nacionālo Erotu*] to the volume. At the beginning of the essay, he defines the relationship between the nation and the individual: 'The qualities of each and every Latvian are summed up in the Latvian nation's qualities. And in this case, every Latvian, on the one hand, is a carrier of his own individuality, and on the other – a carrier of Latvian national individuality' (Grīns 1934:15).

Further on, Grīns expresses indignation at the phenomenon of mixed marriages, a common denominator of all racist ideologists:

It is hard to imagine a *homunculus* who does not belong to any nation. However...look around you! Children of mixed marriages, even if, in the best case scenario, they finally decide on either their father's or mother's ethnicity, are in a certain sense moral cripples: either abstinence from the above-mentioned spiritual functions or the mixed blood's insecurity, timidity and inability to access national values are dormant in their conscience or subconscious. Geniuses and great

talents who are often mentioned as products of mixed blood, are rare exceptions when set alongside the thousands and hundreds of thousands of inferior beings.

(Grīns 1934: 16)

He then evaluates the detrimental effects of ‘mixed blood’ among the nation members:

By looking at the present post-war world, one can find people whose national individuality is more or less damaged. In other respects they may be acceptable members of society, but they will never be the carriers of the national spiritual values that form the national essence. Readers will know how much blood purity is now being protected in Germany. A half-blood Latvian could be a teaching resource at one of the technical faculties of our University, but he could never be a national painter or a philologist.

(Grīns 1934: 16)

Mentioning partly or fully Germanised Jews who under political pressure from Hitler had ‘to return to their own nation’, Grīns (1934:17) gleefully observes: ‘There are those among them who in their old age are forced to learn how to speak and think in the Jewish language.’

Another contributor to the volume, I. Kochs, writes about ‘Races and Their Psyche’, generously quoting H. S. Chamberlain and Count Gobineau. J. Līgotnis and A. Kroders pay lip service to Ulmanis for ‘saving the nation and the country from rolling into the abyss.’ To summarise the contents of the volume, the essays make it very clear that between 1934 and 1936 the ideology supporting the regime slid from the initially declared necessity of ‘upholding the Latvian element’ and ‘putting Latvians first’ to ‘organic racism’ and the theory of racial inequality so popular at the time among supporters of authoritarian regimes around the world.

It is, however, vital to observe that despite condoning the spread of racial theory in the public sphere, the Ulmanis regime never acted upon these beliefs. Moreover, along with other political organisations, Latvian fascists and their front *Perkonkrusts* remained illegal. It certainly speaks to Ulmanis’s credit that he granted, upon M. Dubins’s insistence, refuge in Latvia to hundreds of Jewish refugees from Austria, Germany, Czechoslovakia and Poland.²¹ This benevolent attitude of the Latvian authorities ended in October 1938, when 77 Jews from Vienna were not allowed to enter Latvia despite all Dubins’s efforts. In

²¹ The precise numbers are not known; Dribins (2004: 52) estimates it at over a thousand.

the future, not only were Jewish refugees not allowed into Latvia, but Latvian consulates abroad were forbidden to issue them with transit visas.²² (Stranga 1997: 78-79; Dribins 2002: 74)

According to Stranga (1998: 221, 224), ‘there was not a single minority whose relationship with the state’s relationship improved after the *coup*’. Russians, Germans, Jews and Poles all sustained significant blows. Minority schools were either shut down, or merged with Latvian schools; school principals and teachers dismissed because of their reported ‘insufficient loyalty to the state’; newspapers were closed or heavily censored; non-ethnic Latvians were forced out of the state sector and prestigious professions; in addition, the nationalisation of industry and commerce forced them out of the private sector, too, inevitably contributing to a deterioration in their economic welfare – these last two measures by the government particularly affected Germans and Jews.²³

But although the situation of all ethnic minorities deteriorated after the coup, there were still perceptible differences in the ways that the new regime dealt with each one of them, conditioned largely by the perceived ‘importance’ of a specific minority in terms of the inner life of the Latvian state and, more vitally, by the political situation abroad. Stranga (1998: 221) writes that the Russian minority, being politically inactive, provincial and marginalised (especially in Latgale), and without any support from abroad, was not perceived as an immediate threat to the Latvian state. During the last years of independence, the Russian minority started demonstrating increasing support and sympathy towards the Soviets, largely thanks to their own deteriorating economic situation and the government’s largely unsuccessful ‘border enforcement programme’ (ethnic Latvians were brought to settle by the border, while ethnic Russians were forced to move further into the interior). The government considered implementing measures for reconciliation, but simply ran out of time (see Stranga 1999: 222).

²² A notable exception was made for a prominent Hasidic Rabbi M. M Schneerson, also known as the 6th *Lubavitcher Rebbe*, in 1939, when the Latvian Embassy in Warsaw helped him to leave the country occupied by German troops (Dribins 2002: 74).

²³ The establishment of the four Chambers (Trade and Industry, Agrarian, Crafts, and Labour; later on – also Writers and Artists, and Professions) effectively submitted numerous professional organisations to state control – every Chamber reported to a corresponding minister. For Baltic Germans, this also meant the loss of the two centuries-old, legendary professional Guilds, whose their functions were taken over by the Chambers.

Despite the fact that the Baltic Germans were undoubtedly the main target of all Ulmanis's reforms towards the minorities (from the new Education Law to the Law on Chambers), the government was forced to exercise a certain caution in dealing with them so as not to aggravate already unstable relations with Germany. The Baltic Germans were quick to assure the new government of their loyalty - Cerūzis (2004: 158-159) writes that immediately after the *coup*, both *Rigaer Tageszeitung* and *Rigasche Rundschau* demonstrated 'full loyalty' and support for the authoritarian regime, albeit 'without excessive emotions'. In the article 'The Radical Change', published on 19th May 1934, *Rigasche Rundschau* claimed that the 'exaggerated parliamentary democracy' of the recent past was not really suitable for the Baltic German mentality, and asserted that Baltic Germans fully understood that the authoritarian state was the only possible way out of 'Marxist decay'. 'We want to serve this country as its real sons, not stepsons, and Germans are just as devoted to the task as Latvians are', reads the concluding paragraph of the article.²⁴

At the same time, the Baltic Germans were the only minority who dared to express if not outright criticisms of the new state policies, then at least some dissatisfaction with the government's actions. For example, *Rigasche Rundschau* allowed itself to cautiously express concerns about the fate of school autonomy in Latvia, and reminded the new government about the importance of Baltic German support.²⁵

In any case, neither the assurances of their loyalty made by Baltic Germans, nor their careful reminders about their own importance seemed to have much effect on the continuing deterioration of this never-quite-happy relationship. Those Latvian newspapers that avoided closure under the new regime continued their steady anti-German course. Cerūzis (2004: 158) observes that 'although the Baltic Germans' sympathy towards national socialism, and the related decrease in loyalty towards the Latvian state could be already observed in 1931, it started to escalate in 1933, and reached its apotheosis during the authoritarian period'. Cerūzis asserts that the government's policies aimed at promoting the rights of the core nation further encouraged the local Germans in their sympathies towards Germany.

²⁴ 'Umbruch', *Rigasche Rundschau*, 19.05.1934.

²⁵ 'Staat und wir', *Rigasche Rundschau*, 18.05.1934. quoted in: Cerūzis, R. 2004. *Vācu factors Latvijā (1918-1939). Politiskie un starpnacionālie aspekti*. Rīga: LVU Akadēmiskais apgāds, p. 160.

This stalemate was finally broken in October 1939, when a resettlement agreement was signed between the German Ambassador and the Latvian Delegation, foreseeing that Baltic Germans would relocate to German territories (read: recently occupied Poland) until the end of the year. This agreement was enthusiastically greeted by Latvians. On 31st October.1939, *Latvijas Kareivis* wrote:

The resettlement campaign is a one-time event, during which the German minority will forever leave the Latvian land and the Latvian state community. We are living through a big historical moment, which should be understood and appreciated properly. If 700 years ago the doors opened from our side, now they are opening from the other side. We are parting without hate and wish all the best to our former compatriots in their new life and work circumstances.²⁶

As for the Jewish community, one thing is certain – some parts of it suffered more than others. The special relationship that M. Dubins had enjoyed with K. Ulmanis for years, both before and after the coup, served as a basis for many interpretations and, sometimes, speculations. M. Dubins remains an ambiguous figure in the history of Latvian politics, and in the history of the Latvian Jewish community.

As a parliamentarian, M. Dubins, beyond any doubt, provided the best possible representation for his electorate, which was largely based in Latgale. He tirelessly defended his voters' interests in all four interwar *Saeimas*. Moreover, he always went to great lengths to assist any Jew who asked him for help. The collection of his personal documents at the Latvian Historical Archive contains hundreds of letters, in Yiddish, Russian, German and Latvian, from all corners of Latvia, and also from Russia, Germany, Yugoslavia and other countries. All the letters are essentially desperate pleas for help – correspondents ask Dubins to help with tax relief, reduction of prison terms, a US visa, a residence permit in Latvia, or free medical assistance, etc. Remarkably, Dubins not only had the time and generosity of heart to attend to all these tasks, but he obviously possessed the necessary influence and connections to succeed, as many correspondents write to thank him profoundly for a favour already granted. One of the grateful correspondents writes: 'All of us Jews consider you to be the only MP who is of use [*prinosit pol'zu*] to his own Latgalian Jews.'²⁷

²⁶ 'Parakstīts līgums par vācu tautības Latvijas pilsoņu pārvietošanu uz Vāciju', *Latvijas Kareivis*, 31.10.1939.

²⁷ LVVA, 5758. f. 1. apr., 2. l., p. 192.

Dubins's insurmountable energy and utter dedication to his people's needs earned him the admiration and respect not just of Jews, but of ethnic Latvian politicians and bureaucrats as well. For example, A. Bērziņš (1963: 128-129) writes that among most prominent Latvian parliamentarians,

...It is hard to forget the representative of the Jewish Orthodox Party Agudas Israel, M. Dubins. In his time, he was perhaps someone to be insulted and made fun of, but in reality Dubins was a person who at least deserved sympathy. He was often seen on the streets of Riga together with his party's other deputy, Vitenbergs, moving in slow, halting steps. Vitenbergs usually stayed two steps behind Dubins. This way they travelled from one state institution to another during the Saeima period, and also during the national government's times, to negotiate some kind of help for their people. Dubins always had an inexhaustible number of two-Lats silver coins in his pockets. These he distributed among petitioners in the corridors of ministries; he also paid stamp duties on their behalf. He patiently put up with the bureaucrats' mockery, never complaining about their excesses. Dubins believed that complaints could only lead to bigger problems in the future.

J. Lejiņš (1971: 181) also attests to Dubins's influence in the government and with Ulmanis personally, which he used to save Jews from persecution:

I remember well how Jewish Rabbi Dubins, as a friend of Ulmanis, enjoyed great attention in government circles. The Latvian government issued documents for further travel to the USA to tens of thousands of Jewish refugees who had arrived in Latvia from Germany or countries occupied by the Germans. As anti-Semitism kept growing in other countries, Latvia accepted thousands more Jewish refugees.

In his later book, J. Lejiņš also writes (1975:8): 'Dubins was a member of all the Saeimas, very popular, among Latvians and Jews alike. He was therefore very successful in his work. Even after the changes in 1934 he was influential in government circles and Ulmanis considered him to be the leader of the Jewish community.'

A. Lasmanis (1963) provides yet more evidence about the remarkable influence Dubins possessed in governmental circles. In his memoir, he describes his encounters with Dubins in 1930s, when Lasmanis himself served the Head of Rīga Military District, responsible, among other things, for mobilisation and recruitment: 'The Saeima deputy Dubins was not a bad person. He took good care of his own Jews, assigning them to different garrisons, often even specifying to which regiment they were to be sent, before

passing the lists to the headquarters.’ (Lasmanis 1963: 121). At the same time, Lasmanis was irked by Dubins’s continuous interference:

After I got the lists [of recruits] from the headquarters, Dubin would often come to the office to change the assignments. Even on the day when the lists were supposed to be sent off, we were forced to make changes, and that caused reluctance on the part of my employees. I asked Mr. Dubins to establish a deadline, after which no petitions would be acceptable, but he was way too big and proud for that.

(Lasmanis 1963: 122)

According to Lasmanis, M. Nuroks ‘also had a list every year, but it was shorter and he was very considerate, and did not burden the administration’ (Lasmanis 1963: 122).

Lasmanis also inadvertently provides an insight into just how much influence Dubins exercised:

At the end of August 1930, Dubins came to me with the changes in the recruitment list. After we dealt with those, he said: ‘The 15th anniversary [of Latvia’s independence] is approaching. One or another person will get nothing. For example, that Mednis (the adjutant to the War Minister, about whom the newspapers had been writing that he refused to shake hands with Dubins, on the grounds that he imposed on the Ministry way too often). But I have already spoken with Ulmanis about you. He has no objections, so if you’d like, I will go to General Balodis straight away, and the matter will be settled!’ (p. 122).

(Lasmanis 1963: 122)

According to Lasmanis, he modestly declined the offer. He writes that not everybody was happy about Dubins’s extensive contacts: ‘They were saying about Dubins in Riga that he had way too much power in Latvia’ (Lasmanis 1963: 122).

Dubins’s close ties with the Agrarian Union, and his personal friendship with Ulmanis were also often frowned upon by secular, liberally-inclined Jews during the democratic period. After the coup, when Dubins did not just support Ulmanis but also unabashedly used his own privileged position to advance the *Habad* cause in Latvian Jewish life at the expense of secular Jews and Zionists, this disapproval turned into bitterness. Z. Michaeli (Michelson) recalls:

Jewish cultural autonomy came to an end with the coup d'état of Ulmanis in 1934. Although the Hebrew schools continued to exist until the advent of the Soviet regime, they were void of any Zionist or Jewish National content. Supervision was entrusted to the 'Agudas Israel' whose representatives, being faithful adherents of the new regime, set out to abolish the secular Hebrew schools or to amalgamate them with their own.

(Michaeli 1971:216)

A slight hint of disapproval can be also detected in the appraisal of M. Dubins provided by M. Bobe, who writes:

Any description of Jewish personalities in Latvia must give an account of them [M. Dubins and S. Wittenberg], for they were among the most outstanding figures of the community, and defended Latvian Jewry after their fashion. Although certain groups did not accept their political approach, this did not correspond to their own point of view, and in their opinion it offered the most certain method of helping the largest possible number of Jews.

(Bobe 1971: 301)

Bobe, however, is unequivocal in his belief in the purity of Dubin's intentions and in his altruism:

...Whether passport, permit or release from arrest, there was nothing that Dubin could not arrange. Such, at least, was the general belief, and as a rule people were right. Everything he did was done without considering whether the person asking for help was his supporter or an opponent. It was a Jew who was asking for help, and that was what mattered. His popularity among the Jewish public was unbounded.'

(Bobe 1971: 301)

Bobe points out that although all Jewish representatives in the Saeima helped and interceded on behalf of their voters as much as possible, for Dubins it was 'his main function'. About Dubins's unwavering support of the Agrarian Union and of the coalitions it formed, Bobe writes:

As a matter of principle he supported the Right-wing groups, claiming that the Left-wingers, the Social Democrats, etc., would support the Jews anyway in accordance with their party principles; and since it was often necessary to obtain the help of the Antisemitic groups, they had to be supported... True, he did his best to justify his approach. He often said it was impossible to rely

on either the Left-wing or the Right-wing, but the latter should be and could be bribed in the Jewish interest.

(Bobe 1971:301-302)

Bobe's interpretation of Dubins's political approach is supported by M. Laserson (1971:161), who also writes that Dubins believed that 'no part of the Latvian people were to be trusted; not the right wing, not the centre, and not the Social Democrats.'

It seems impossible to determine whether it was Dubins's personal influence and inexhaustible energy in pushing his agenda forward, or other considerations and personal convictions as well that conditioned Ulmanis's relatively lenient approach towards the Latvian Jews. A transcript of Ulmanis's conversation with A. Bērgs on 1st August 1934 (which cannot be considered a fully reliable source as it was transcribed by A. Bergs himself; one can be certain, however, that the meeting below did indeed take place, as it is mentioned in an entry in Munters's diary on the same date) perhaps helps to highlight other possible considerations that Ulmanis took into account in his approach towards the Latvian Jewish community. Ulmanis called for a meeting with Bērgs after his newspaper *Latvis* repeatedly broke the new rules of the game laid out by A. Bērziņš during his meeting with the media the previous week, publishing satirical articles about the new leadership and continuing with its customary anti-Semitic propaganda:

U: ...There are also 4-5 articles on Jews in every issue. Why are those necessary! You should understand, after all, that this could really damage us abroad. Thank God, we have been able to hush it up abroad. There is some anti-Semitic paper published by some National Socialist in Erfurt. It is sent to everybody, myself included. I read it – the next day it is reprinted in 'Latvis'! I am surprised the Jews were smart enough to hit each other on the head and then to start screaming about pogroms!

B: But do 'Latvis' articles actually incite this? Anti-Semitism is really big and well grounded among our people. It really could come out in pogroms, especially if there is no other outlet for it, like, for example, being able to discuss it.

U: But they are fully loyal. Look how they are now using all Latvian geographical names, and how they are painting over shop signs, although there is no law to this effect.

B: Allow me a small correction. Only little Jews afraid of the police are painting over their shop signs on Marijas Street. The big-city Jews have gone to see their lawyers, they do not paint over shop signs, but counter the police with questions about the relevant law.

U: Yet we used to do so much for ethnic minorities, and now the situation has completely changed. Thank God, we are now independent of them, unlike in other places. But you should understand that they could still put pressure on us.

B: Yes, this is exactly what people are talking about. One day I was brought a copy of 'Brīvā Zeme' with multiple small-format advertisements. Somebody has pencil-marked all Jewish advertisements, and you know, it turned out they all were Jewish, with the exception of two or three!

U: Well, what is there to do if we have got no Latvian entrepreneurs!

B: At least Jewish advertisements should not be printed in such a blatant way!

U: And why not? Which newspaper, after all, would decline advertisements? Would you refuse to print them?

B: We, thank God, are not exposed to such temptations. They do not bring their advertisements to us.

U: Well, they bring them to us.²⁸

The extent of the influence exercised by M. Dubins, who after the *coup* continued to enjoy Ulmanis's favourable attitude and personal friendship, on the government's policies towards Jewish refugees is not fully clear either. As pointed out by Stranga (1997: 79), the incident in October 1938 proves that this influence was not without its limits.

But regardless of the real considerations – whether economic or diplomatic – behind the Ulmanis regime's attitude towards the Jews, it cannot be disputed that at a time when the Jewish population all across Europe was being persecuted and uprooted, Jews in authoritarian Latvia, although robbed of their cherished cultural autonomy, had no reason to worry about their physical safety. That alone made Latvia, albeit for a short period of time, seem like heaven to European Jewish refugees. And for a short period of time the Latvian government, unlike the governments of many western European countries, did not

²⁸ LVVA, 100. f. 1. apr., 20. l.

turn them away. Notably, the government did not try to capitalise on its humanitarian efforts, steadily avoiding any publicity.

This very lack of publicity in a state that thrived on propaganda is puzzling, and makes one wonder about Ulmanis's real motives. I tend to agree with Stranga (1997: 53), that unlike J. Čakste, P. Kalniņš and P. Schiemann, who always acted out of deep personal ideological convictions, Ulmanis was guided by 'external', pragmatic considerations on how particular policies or measures would be perceived at home, or, more importantly abroad. Ulmanis always paid special attention to the Jewish question, demanding daily world press digests on the matter from his assistants. Was it because of his belief in the powers of the Jewish lobby in the US, where he spent his university years, and in international politics in general, amplified by the international activities of prominent Latvian Jews like M. Laserson, M. Nuroks and M. Dubins? One can only guess.

Overall, under the new order, minorities, with the exception of the Baltic Germans who were specifically targeted, were not so much persecuted as firmly removed to the margins of state life. They became literally invisible, and their voices were not heard in public, apart from occasional congratulatory greetings to the President or the government, or public expressions of gratitude for the current state of affairs. However, it would be a mistake to classify the regime's attitude towards minorities either as 'benign neglect', as such a policy requires the state to be 'ethnicity-blind' while ensuring equal rights and opportunities for all - or as assimilationist. The absence of specific minority-discriminating laws notwithstanding, the state openly declared that its ultimate goal was to ensure the prosperity and welfare of ethnic Latvians rather than of all its citizens, thus firmly relinquishing any responsibility for the well-being of its minority citizens. At the same time, the concept of the united nation itself in reality was neither integrationist nor assimilationist towards the minorities – on the contrary, a fixed ethnic and cultural identity was pushed upon them. The fact that assimilation was not encouraged under the Ulmanis regime is best reflected in the Law on the Change of Surnames from 22nd December 1939. Article 2 of the Law simply stated: '*Citizens of Latvian ethnicity must only choose Latvian [latviskus] surnames. Non-Latvians cannot choose Latvian surnames*'.²⁹

²⁹ 'Likums par uzvārdu maiņu', *Valdības Vēstnesis*, 22.12.1939.

This particular legislative provision drew a clear demarcating line – those who were ‘in’, were in, and those who were ‘out’, were supposed to stay there. The nation wanted to stay pure.

By the end of the 1930s, the remaining Latvian ethnic minorities, whose economic position had been steadily deteriorating, and who had been forced to become ‘second-class citizens’ in order to advance the interests of ethnic Latvians, were becoming increasingly sympathetic towards the Bolsheviks, falling prey to their propaganda of supposed ‘national equality’. Memories of the terror incurred by the population at the hands of Stučka’s Soviet government in 1919 proved to be extremely short-lived. When Soviet troops entered Latvia in June 1940, many members of ethnic minorities, especially among the unpropertied classes, unaware of the new horrors ahead, considered it a change for the better – hence the notorious flowers presented to the Soviet soldiers. Ezergailis (1999: 88), observing that with Stalin’s ascent to power, the popularity of communist ideas among the Latvian population started to wane, writes: ‘Nevertheless, K. Ulmanis with his anti-parliamentarian, anti-Socialist *putsch* turned out to be the most effective creator of Communist supporters in Latvia since the Russifiers Pobedonostsev and Plehve. He drove all left-leaning Latvians, Jews, and Russians into the Communist embrace’.³⁰

The prominent Latvian historian Ādolfs Šilde (1964: 29), analysing the first period of Latvian independence, juxtaposed ‘national’ and ‘state’ consciousness, and came to the conclusion that both on the part of ethnic Latvians, and on that of the ethnic minorities, an exaggerated ‘national’, that is, ethnic, consciousness, overshadowed the ‘state consciousness’ necessary for a unified nation. He concluded that this ‘did not strengthen our state’. In other words, having reached its lowest point in the creation of a ‘Latvia for Latvians’, the brave attempt at nation-building made during the interwar period resulted in the ultimate failure: the nation lost its independence.

³⁰ K. Pobedonostsev, an advisor to Tsar Alexander III, was famous for his reactionary views and persecution of Jews; he was also rumoured to be the mastermind behind the policy of relentless Russification implemented by the Tsar. V. Plehve was Minister for the Interior and Chief of Gendarmes in the administration of Alexander III, and an ardent oppressor of all revolutionary and liberal groups in the Russian Empire, including minority nationalist movements.

Chapter Seven. A Nation Once Again

The Third Latvian National Awakening, better known as the Singing Revolution, culminated in Latvia's regaining independence in 1991. After a half-a-century long slumber, the Latvian nation sprang back to life and the Latvian state re-appeared on the map of Europe. Among the fifteen states created as a result of the collapse of the Soviet Union, Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania take a special place – all three countries had had a history of previous independence, and all three claimed to be the legal successors of their respective interwar republics.

Much has changed, however, since that first period of independence in the three Baltic countries, and Latvia was the one to undergo the most profound demographic changes. After five decades of Soviet rule, with its planned economy, 'ethnic engineering' and continuous Russification, ethnic Latvians had narrowly escaped the fate of becoming a minority in Latvia, and Latvian language and culture were perceived to be in danger of extinction. In 1989, Latvians constituted just 52 per cent of the entire population, while the number of Russians, in comparison with the interwar republic, had tripled, reaching 34 per cent.¹ In some cities, like Riga, Daugavpils, and Liepaja, ethnic Latvians were in a minority.² Among other ethnic groups accounting for the remaining 14 per cent, Belarussians made up 5 per cent, Ukrainians - 4, Poles – 2, and Lithuanians and Jews – 1 per cent each. Many new ethnic groups from other Soviet republics had settled in Latvia, contributing to further ethnic fragmentation of the population. The majority of the ethnic minority groups living in Latvia were now Russian-speaking, whereas knowledge of the Latvian language among them was almost non-existent. All these factors together contributed to the feeling of the 'endangered state of Latvianness' on the part of the eponymous population, and would be repeatedly used as a justification of the restrictive Citizenship Law of 1994. At the same time, the precarious situation in which ethnic Latvians found themselves by the late eighties prompted many to idealise the period of

¹ In 1935, ethnic Latvians comprised 75.5 % of the whole population, while ethnic Russians – 10.6 % (Source: Skujenieks, 1937). In 1989, ethnic Russians represented 34 % of Latvia's total population (Source: Migrantī Latvijā 1944-1989. Dokumenti, 2004).

² In 1989, ethnic Latvians comprised 36.5% of the population in Riga, 38.8% of the population in Liepaja, and 13% of the population in Daugavpils. Source: Migrantī Latvijā 1944-1989. Dokumenti, 2004).

interwar independence, including the six-years long authoritarian period, when Latvian ethnic values reigned supreme, thus lending the option of legal continuity additional attraction.

In Latvia, the principle of legal continuity had not just a huge symbolic meaning, but also many legal and practical implications, both domestically and internationally. At home, it led to the restoration, with some modernising changes, of the Constitution of 1922 and of the Civil Code of 1937, as well as to the de-nationalisation of private property, and restitution of the property that used to belong to ethnic and religious communities. On the international scene, it enabled Latvia to claim its gold and currency reserves from foreign banks where it had been stored since 1940, and to receive back either the property of the Latvian Republic diplomatic missions abroad or compensation for such properties where they were no longer available.

Memories of the interwar republic were also reflected in many other, more symbolic ways. The newly elected parliament was designated as the 5th *Saeima*, to succeed the 4th *Saeima*, which was dismissed after the authoritarian *coup* in 1934. Many newly-formed political parties claimed descent from pre-war parties, but only the LSDSP (Latvian Social Democratic Workers' Party) and the Agrarian Union used this strategy successfully. Other parties used personalities who had the additional appeal of being related to the pre-war politicians or had a good standing within the émigré community (as, for example, G. Meierovics, a son of the first Latvian Minister for Foreign Affairs Z. A. Meierovics, and the chairman of the World Federation of Free Latvians, and G. Ulmanis, a grand-nephew of Kārlis Ulmanis, the first Prime Minister of Latvia). The Student Corporations were brought back to life; the re-established Riga Latvian Society moved back to its historical building reclaimed from the Soviet military; the publishing house *Valters un Rapa* started printing books again; everywhere, city streets and squares promptly resumed their old names; hotels and shops that existed prior to 1940 quickly put their old signs back, and those who could not claim an interwar past invented one. It has been repeatedly observed that the history of prior independence both fuelled the popular pro-independence movements in the late 1980s and accelerated the Baltic States' integration into Europe once the state sovereignty was achieved. Smith (1996: 132) observed that the fact 'that the popular fronts so quickly became separatist in their aims and in the process were able to convince their peoples so easily of the rightness of their cause were in one way or another linked both to the way in which powerful national

symbols were drawn upon and equated with a pre-Soviet past and of the material benefits which such sovereignty might again provide'. Pabriks and Purs (2002: 86) stressed that 'the memory of independence helped the Baltic peoples maximise their efforts for independence, and also helped them organise themselves once independence was achieved.'

But most importantly, this principle of legal continuity became the basis of the Citizenship Law of 1994, which granted automatic citizenship only to the citizens of the interwar Latvian Republic (17th June 1940 being the cut-off date) and to their direct descendants, thus excluding 700,000 Soviet-era settlers who were granted a special legal status of 'non-citizens of Latvia'. As we shall see later, the Citizenship Law would over the years be repeatedly identified as the primary source of ethnic tensions in Latvia.

The Law came as an anti-climax after the romantic period of the pro-independence movement, which Apine (1992) designated as an 'ethnic honeymoon' and a period when two parallel processes occurred: a consolidation of ethnic Latvians and a consolidation of all democratic forces around ethnic Latvians in the quest for independence. The movement was led by two major political forces: the radical Latvian National Independence Movement (LNNK in its Latvian abbreviation), founded in June 1988 under the leadership of the former 'national communist' E. Berklavs, and the more moderate Popular Front, created in October of the same year, which was chaired by the journalist D. Īvāns. Whereas the LNNK demanded Latvia's independence from the moment of its foundation, the Popular Front initially declared political and economical autonomy for Latvia within the Soviet Union as its goal. In 1989, however, the Popular Front joined the LNNK in its demand for full independence.

Although the LNNK board's memorandum, published in July 1988, formally invited 'all supporters of the self-determination aspirations of the Latvian [*latviešu*] people, regardless of their ethnicity, religious or partisan affiliation' to join the movement with the goal of restoring Latvia as a sovereign republic, it also stressed that its goal was to defend the national interests of ethnic Latvians. Asserting that the movement was not directed against other ethnic groups living in Latvia, and inviting them to cooperate in 'solving mutual problems', the memorandum listed, among its immediate goals, putting an immediate stop to the influx of

migrants into Latvia and fostering the return of some migrants to their own lands.³ This unabashedly ‘ethnic’ approach understandably made non-ethnic Latvians wary of the organisation. The position taken by the LNNK was reinforced by the Citizens’ Committees, a movement started in 1989, which, asserting the legal continuity of the Latvian state and the illegal nature of the Soviet annexation, regarded all Soviet-time settlers as illegal immigrants.

The Popular Front, among whose founders were several prominent ethnic minorities’ representatives, such as the journalist M. Vulfsons, the writer and journalist V. Dozorčevs, the writer M. Kostenecka and the journalist and editor V. Stešenko, pursued a different strategy of appealing to all democratically oriented Latvian residents. The Popular Front put the ‘overarching human values, pluralism and respect towards all ethnic groups’ as a cornerstone of its programme, and stressed that it considered cultural diversity a ‘value of civilisation’, promising practical help and support to ethnic minorities to ensure their cultural autonomy, access to education in their native language, and ethnic associations. The Popular Front’s programme of 1988 envisioned Latvians to be the ‘founding nation’ in the country, and the Latvian language the state language, but at the same time Russian was promised a status of the language of ‘federative communication’. Like the LNNK, the Popular Front demanded an immediate stop to immigration, but unlike the LNNK, it was against the ‘deportation of residents of any ethnicity’. The newspaper of the Popular Front, *Atmoda*, was published both in Latvian and in Russian.

Smith (1996: 35) contrasts these two approaches to nation-ness during the Singing Revolution as a form of primordialist *ethnic* nationalism, which, ‘grounded in abstract notions of ‘the people’ and in ‘blood notions’ of genealogical descent’, aimed at obtaining, as nearly as possible, a ‘coterminous nation-state, and a *civic* nationalism ‘keeping with a tradition of pluralist citizenship and tolerance towards ethnic difference as found in the Baltic States during the 1920s’, which placed as much importance on individual rights as on national ones. Rozenvalds (2010: 37-38) characterises these two alternative paths as the ‘socially realistic’ (the Popular Front) and ‘legalistic’ (the Citizens’ Committees) ways of obtaining independence. According to Rozenvalds, the Popular Front’s stance on citizenship issues

³ 1995 ‘Latvijas Nacionālās neatkarības kustības (LNNK) padomes ziņojums par organizācijas mērķiem’, in: *Tauta. Zeme. Valsts. Latvijas Nacionālās neatkarības kustība dokumentos*. Rīga: Latvijas Valsts arhīvs, pp. 11-13.

reflected the existing reality, while the other side ‘hoped for the mass emigration of minorities that would bring Latvia back to pre-war demographic proportions’.

As a result of its balanced programme and careful approach to the ‘nationalities issue’, the Popular Front quickly became a mass movement – within a year, its membership grew to over 250,000. It enjoyed significant support of the ethnic minorities, who, inspired by the Latvians’ national awakening, started energetically rebuilding their own community life that had all but disappeared under the Soviet rule. In 1988, with the support of the Popular Front, the Association of the National Cultural Societies of Latvia (the LNKBA in its Latvian abbreviation) was established, uniting 18 newly created cultural societies and providing a platform for national minorities to discuss issues of cultural autonomy. The Jewish community, which was re-established in 1988, at first under the name of the Latvian Society for Jewish Culture, was the most proactive, undoubtedly drawing on the vast experience of community life organisation during the interwar years. In 1989, the first Jewish school was opened, in 1990, the community building in the centre of Riga was returned, and in 1992, by a special law of the Parliament, two buildings of the interwar Jewish hospitals were returned to the community.

Not all of Latvia’s population were inspired by the idea of an independent Latvia; this sizeable opposition, which mainly consisted of representatives of ethnic minorities, was best represented by the pro-Soviet International Front of the Working People of Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic, or Interfront, led by A. Rubiks, a Latvian communist and a mayor of Riga, and A. Aleksejevs. The Interfront was created in 1989 in order to counter the growing popularity of the Popular Front; its pro-Kremlin rhetoric and its radical stand against the Latvian nation’s right to sovereignty, and against the Latvian language as the state language, deepened the already existing rift between the Latvians and the Russian-speakers. According to the recollections of R. Šac-Marjaša (2003: 315), a lawyer and a Jewish activist of the late eighties who later became an MP in the renewed *Saeima*, unlike the Jewish, Polish, Belarussian and other ethnic minorities, the Russian population did not express much interest in the possibilities of cultural autonomy at the time, presumably because it had no reason to consider itself an ethnic minority (indeed, within the Soviet system, ethnic Russians were the only group to enjoy *de facto* non-territorial cultural autonomy, as their language and cultural rights were guaranteed everywhere in the Union), and no willingness to become such. Besides

those ‘reluctant’ in their attitude towards the independence part of the Russian-speaking population, there were also ‘old communists’ and apparatchiks (scholars agree that ethnically Latvian communists largely sided with the Popular Front, whereas the majority of ethnically Russian communists remained loyal towards the Kremlin – see Karklins 1994 and Pabriks and Purs 2004), as well as military and ex-military personnel who were openly opposed to independence.

The eruption of violence in Riga and Vilnius in January 1991, when the Soviet military attempted to take control over the government buildings and the media outlets, in which several people were killed, prompted tens of thousands of people to build barricades in the streets, especially after an appeal was issued by D. Īvāns, in Latvian and in Russian, to defend the government. Pabriks and Purs (2004: 63) note that Russians constituted a sizeable minority at the barricades, and that it was a time when many Russians had to make a choice ‘between the communist reaction on one side and Latvian nationalism on the other’. As the January events aggravated the already strained relations between the republican government and Moscow, the Chairman of the Supreme Council of the Latvian SSR, A. Gorbunovs, aiming to resolve the tensions, came up with an initiative of a popular referendum on Latvia’s independence. The referendum took place on 3rd March 1991, when voters were asked to answer a single question: ‘Are you in favour of a democratic and independent Latvian republic?’. 87.6 per cent of all voters took part in the referendum; 73.7 per cent said ‘yes’, 24.7 per cent said ‘no’ (1.6 per cent of all ballots were recognised as invalid). In the more Latvian countryside, 85.9 per cent of the participants supported independence, while in multiethnic Riga the number only reached 60.7 per cent. Considering that ethnic Latvians at the time constituted only 52 per cent of the whole population, and only 36.5 per cent of the population of Riga, these figures indicate that a large part of ethnic minorities supported the idea of independence in 1991.⁴ Indeed, Karklins (1994: 147) interprets the data provided by the referendum of 1991 and by various surveys as indicating that ‘the split between loyal and unloyal groups among settlers is approximately fifty-fifty’. Rozenvalds (2010: 40) concedes that a ‘significant segment of the minority population – at least one fourth – voted for Latvian independence’, stressing that in terms of minorities’ support for independence, Latvia ‘outdid’

⁴ Statistical data as per Taurēns, J. 2012. ‘1991. gada 3. marta referendums un tā nozīme Latvijas neatkarības atjaunošanā’, available at http://web.cvk.lv/pub/upload_file/Konference_J_Taurens_1991_gada_3_marta_referendums.pdf, accessed 04.10.2012.; and *Migranti Latvijā 1944-1989. Dokumenti*. 2004. Rīga: Latvijas Valsts Arhīvs, p. 99.

Estonia and Lithuania, where the number of pro-independence ballots only slightly exceeded the share of the eponymous population.

However, the analysis of statistical data is a contentious issue – interpretations of the results of the 1991 referendum differ widely. Some commentators indeed saw it as an indicator of a trend among minorities either to oppose independence or to abstain from voting.⁵ Minorities' voting in the 1991 referendum on independence received its most negative evaluation at the hands of Šnore (2010), according to whose calculations, only 19.6 per cent of all 'colonists' voted in favour of independence. Šnore claims that the 'myth of the USSR colonists' support of independence' was consciously reproduced by the Popular Front in order to lend extra legitimacy to the independence movement – an action, in Šnore's view, 'fully understandable considering the critical, for the state, situation of 1991'.

The striking differences in interpretation of the 1991 referendum by different commentators, and the persistent debates surrounding it twenty years since it took place, reveal a certain 'pain trigger point', to borrow a medical term, in modern Latvian history, as they inevitably lead to the next question – were the Resolution 'On the Renewal of the Rights of the Citizens of the Republic of Latvia' passed by the Supreme Council on 11th October 1991, and the subsequent Citizenship Law of 1994, the necessary measures aimed at securing Latvian independent statehood, as is claimed by some commentators, or was it a betrayal of those parts of the minority population who had initially sided with ethnic Latvians, as is claimed by others? At the moment, there is no consensus, but, especially in view of the 'different interpretation of history' being increasingly cited as a major stumbling block on the road to social integration, it seems that this particular page of history is still worth revisiting.

This period of overall amicable ethnic relations in Latvia would come to a quick end in August 1991, when the Interfront, along with the Communist Party of Latvia, lent its unequivocal support to the communist putsch that aimed at restoring the Soviet regime. After the putsch was thwarted, both the Communist Party and the Interfront were outlawed in Latvia. But the damage had been done – part of the Russian-speaking population openly

⁵ Puriņš, G. and Šulcs, U. 2001. 'Vai 2001. Gada Rīgas Domes vēlēšanu rezultāti bija pārsteigums (etniskie balsojumi, atskatoties uz 1991. gada 3. Marta aptaujas pieredzi)' quoted in Rozenvalds (2010).

supported an attempt to overturn the existing regime. The other part was found guilty by association – for years to come, Russian-speakers would be viewed as a fifth column.

There may be little doubt that the events of August 1991 had a major influence on the question of citizenship, which had been actively discussed since 1989, polarising opinions, as the demonstrated disloyalty on the part of the Russian-speaking population reinforced the position of those who were against the ‘zero option’ of citizenship from the start.

7.1. Citizenship

The first legal act pertaining to citizenship was the Resolution ‘On the Renewal of the Rights of the Citizens of the Republic of Latvia and the Naturalisation Procedure’ passed by the Supreme Council on 11th October 1991, which granted automatic citizenship to the citizens of the interwar republic and their direct descendants. Setting the date for the start of the naturalisation process as ‘not earlier than on 1st July 1992’, the Resolution stipulated conversational proficiency in Latvian and a minimum of sixteen years of permanent residence as qualifying conditions for naturalisation.⁶ It was announced that the Law on Citizenship would be elaborated by the newly elected parliament. As noted by Barrington (1995), although Latvia had no citizenship law, it had a citizenship policy.

Pabriks and Purs (2004: 73) observe that, as a result, the Latvian population was split into two groups – citizens, 78 per cent of whom were ethnic Latvians, and non-citizens, mainly Russians (60 per cent of all Latvian Russians fell into this category), Ukrainians, and Belarussians. These people found themselves in a ‘legal limbo’, which would last for another four years, as naturalisation would not start until 1995. They felt betrayed by the Popular Front politicians whose early promises included ‘guarantees of full democratic rights to all Latvian residents, regardless of their ethnicity, who had tied their fates and their lives with Latvia, are loyal towards its laws, and are for independent Latvia’.⁷

⁶ Latvijas Republikas Augstākās Padomes Lēmums ‘Par Latvijas Republikas pilsoņu tiesību atjaunošanu un naturalizācijas pamatnoteikumiem’, available at <http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=69914>, accessed 05.10.2012.

⁷ Godmanis, I. 1989. ‘Par LTF stratēģiju un taktiku’, *Atmoda*, 10.07. p. 2.

The Citizenship Law of 1994 is widely regarded as the primary source of ethnic tensions in post-Soviet Latvia (Smith, Aasland and Mole 1996; Lieven 1994; Pabriks and Purs 2002). The Law and the status of Latvian non-citizens also remain, to this day, a matter of concern for international organisations.⁸

The citizenship question featured prominently during the parliamentary election campaign of 1993, proposals ranging from the zero option to repatriation of all migrants, and conservative views on citizenship becoming a mark of ‘true patriotism’ (Krūma 2007; Pabriks and Purs 2004). The first draft of the law approved by the *Saeima* foresaw the start of naturalisation in 2000, with the regulated annual rate of increase of 0.1 per cent to the total number of naturalised persons during the previous year, which, according to Krūma (2007), would have resulted in approximately a thousand naturalised persons per year. After the draft drew numerous criticisms from international organisations, including the Council of Europe, which Latvia at the time was aspiring to join, it was returned by the President of Latvia back to the *Saeima*. The Law on Citizenship was finally adopted on 22nd July 1994. Although in this final version the minimal qualifying residence period was decreased to five years, Article 14 of the Law introduced a complicated system of quotas, regulating which age groups and in what order could apply for naturalisation.

The quotas, which were finally lifted in 1998, were in the first place introduced in order to cope with the expected high numbers of naturalisation applications, but the ensuing naturalisation process turned out to be painstakingly slow. Despite the considerable effort on the part of the Naturalisation Board, by 1998, the total number of naturalisation applications received was just 11,858. A year after the quotas had been abandoned, further 15,183 applications had been received.⁹ The latest data of the Office for Citizenship and Migration Affairs shows that, as of 1st July 2012, the number of Latvian non-citizens stood at 304, 806, or 13.8 per cent of all residents of the country. Since the beginning of the naturalisation

⁸ In September 2012, the OSCE High Commissioner for Ethnic Minorities Knut Vollebaek sent a letter to the Speaker of the *Saeima* criticising the draft amendment to the Citizenship Law adopted by the parliament in August 2012 regarding registration of the children of non-citizens as citizens, in particular the additional requirements for parents, such as signing an oath to bring up the child loyal to Latvia, and teaching him the Latvian language.

⁹ *Naturalizācijas Pārvaldes Ziņas. Ikmēneša informatīvais izdevums*. 2008. gada 15.septembris – 2008. gada 15. oktobris.

process in 1995, and until the end of 2011, 137,673 people have acquired Latvian citizenship through naturalisation – an average of 8,098 per year.¹⁰

Non-citizens, nevertheless, are not being granted voting rights in municipal elections, despite persistent recommendations to the opposite provided by the OSCE High Commissioner for national Minorities K. Vollebaek – in April 2009, Saeima yet again voted against the draft law submitted by the opposition party For Human Rights in United Latvia (FHRUL). This issue remains highly polarised and divisive. Whereas supporters of non-citizens' right to vote see it as a first step in the process of social consolidation, their opponents argue that such a measure would further slow down the naturalisation process and would devalue the very concept of Latvian citizenship. At the same time, the nationalistically oriented party For Fatherland and Freedom has repeatedly called for amendments to the Citizenship Law which would restrict the number of potential naturalisation applicants, and for a necessity to slow down the naturalisation process overall.

By now it has been largely recognised that those who were willing to naturalise, have already done so, and that naturalisation will not pick up again. But the issue of citizenship, which over the past twenty years alienated and marginalised a sizeable part of Latvian population, remains caustic. Upon the initiative of the opposition party FHRUL, 12,686 signatures have been collected in support of the draft amendments to the Citizenship Law to award citizenship to all remaining non-citizens of Latvia (only 10,000 signatures are necessary to initiate the next, state-funded stage of the collection of signatures, which lasts thirty days and must collect the signatures of one-tenth of the electorate in order to initiate a referendum). The draft amendments therefore have been submitted to the Central Election Committee and are now under the evaluation of its conformity with the Constitution.

The ruling coalition, which appeared unconcerned about the collection of signatures organised by FHRUL until the necessary number enabled them to submit the draft amendments to the Central Election Committee, released a number of statements questioning the legitimacy of the proposed amendments. The party Unity, part of the governing coalition, declared that the proposed amendments threaten the principle of the continuity of the Latvian state and are in contradiction with the *Satversme*. Besides, argued Unity, the amendments

¹⁰ Available at <http://www.pmlp.gov.lv/en/statistics/citizen.html>, last time accessed on 16th October 2012.

propose to ‘force the Latvian citizenship upon people without their consent’.¹¹ I. Parādnieks, the MP from the National Union, warned that a referendum on citizenship will only cause a counterreaction from ethnic Latvians and will not improve relations in the society.¹²

The Mayor of Riga N. Ušakovs, an ethnic Russian and a member of the opposition party The Harmony Centre, who enjoys popularity among ethnic Russians and Latvians alike, and whose possible personal support for the initiative was deemed by many as crucial for the success of the referendum campaign, has also announced that he would not support the referendum as it would intensify ethnic polarisation of the society. At the same time, Ušakovs stressed that the still large number of Latvian non-citizens remains a problem in urgent need of a solution.

7.2. Cultural Autonomy

The Law ‘On the Unrestricted Development and Right to Cultural Autonomy of Latvia’s Nationalities and Ethnic Groups’, adopted on 19th March 1991 by the Supreme Council of Latvia, aimed ‘to guarantee to all nationalities and ethnic groups in the Republic of Latvia the rights to cultural autonomy and self-administration of their culture’.¹³ Article 5 guaranteed all permanent residents of the country ‘the right to establish their own national societies, associations, and organisations’. The government undertook the responsibility of promoting their activities and of providing material support. Article 10 specified that the ‘defined sums’ of the government’s budget would be contributed towards ‘the development of the education, language, and culture of the nationalities and ethnic groups residing within Latvia’s territory’, and stipulated that ‘issues regarding the education of nationalities and ethnic groups’ are governed by the Education Law.

Notably, the Latvian Law of 1991 extended the rights to cultural autonomy to all permanent residents of the country – in contrast to the Estonian National Minorities’ Cultural Autonomy Act adopted in October 1993, which limited rights to cultural autonomy to citizens of the republic. But considering that the body of citizens was not legally defined until October

¹¹ <http://www.delfi.lv/news/national/politics/vienotiba-pilsonibas-pieskirsana-visiem-nepilsoniem-apdraudetu-latvijas-valsti.d?id=42625142>, last time accessed on 16th October 2012.

¹² <http://www.delfi.lv/news/national/politics/paradnieks-bridina-pilsonibas-referendums-latviesos-izraisis-pretreakciju.d?id=42621122>, last time accessed on 16th October 2012.

¹³ Here and further on quoted as per the English translation provided by the Latvia Law Institute, available at: <http://www.humanrights.lv/doc/latlik/ethnic.htm>, last time accessed on 11th October 2012.

1991, i.e., seven months after the cultural autonomy law, one perhaps should not try to read too much into this. On the other hand, the Latvian law on cultural autonomy has never been amended in this regard. The corresponding divide between ‘national minorities’ and ‘migrants’ would be introduced in Latvia later, during the process of the ratification of the Council of Europe’s Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM), which took ten long years after its initial signing in 1995.

The Latvian government put forward two main objections – that the FCNM norms were not compatible with the existing state legislation on the Latvian language, and that the rights guaranteed by the Convention could not be applied to the Soviet-era settlers; the latter objection drew numerous criticisms from international organisations. However, the FCNM famously contains no definition of a ‘national minority’ - according to the Explanatory Notes, it ‘was decided to adopt a pragmatic approach, based on the recognition that at this stage, it is impossible to arrive at a definition capable of mustering general support of all Council of Europe member States’.¹⁴ After protracted negotiations, a compromise was reached. When Latvia finally ratified the Convention on 26th May 2005, it added a reservation that ‘the notion "national minorities", which has not been defined in the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, shall, in the meaning of the Framework Convention, apply to citizens of Latvia who differ from Latvians in terms of their culture, religion or language, who have traditionally lived in Latvia for generations and consider themselves to belong to the State and society of Latvia, who wish to preserve and develop their culture, religion, or language’. Having this way separated ‘apples from oranges’, Latvia, in a gesture of symbolic generosity, extended the same rights to non-citizens: ‘Persons who are not citizens of Latvia or another State but who permanently and legally reside in the Republic of Latvia, who do not belong to a national minority within the meaning of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities as defined in this declaration, but who identify themselves with a national minority that meets the definition contained in this declaration, shall enjoy the rights prescribed in the Framework Convention, unless specific exceptions are prescribed by law’.¹⁵

¹⁴ <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/en/Reports/Html/157.htm> .

¹⁵ <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/Commun/ListeDeclarations.asp?NT=157&CM=&DF=&CL=ENG&VL=1> .

Smith and Hiden (2012: 111), describing the celebrated revival of cultural autonomy in Estonia in 1993, conclude that ‘the reinstatement of the interwar cultural autonomy law was primarily a symbolic gesture’, aiming to counter international criticisms of citizenship legislation and to enhance Estonia’s reputation in the West. The Latvian law of 1991 granted cultural autonomy to Latvian ethnic minorities for the first time, as no legal act to this effect had been passed in the interwar republic. The Law, however, defined autonomy only in very general terms – the interwar laws on schooling in fact provided minorities with more effective means of cultural self-administration. The other significant factor was the newly introduced division of non-Latvian ethnic groups into ‘traditional minorities’ and ‘migrants’ – if, until then, the main existing cleavage in the Latvian society was the division along ethnic lines, now a new cleavage, dividing citizens from non-citizens, had appeared. As we shall see, the resulting level of minority cultural activities in post-1991 Latvia bears no comparison with the bustling minority cultural life during the interwar period.

It is difficult to evaluate the present state of ethnic minority cultural activities in Latvia due to the striking lack of information and statistics on minority NGOs. In those research studies that are dedicated to the NGO sector’s development in Latvia, ethnic minority NGOs are included in the ‘legislation, interest advocacy, and political sector’; a more detailed classification is not available. According to the latest study, out of 13,284 NGOs registered in Latvia at the beginning of February 2011, 1,478 NGOs, or 11 per cent of the total number, belonged to the aforementioned ‘legislation, interest advocacy, and political sector’ (for comparison, 39 per cent of all NGOs belonged to the ‘culture and recreation’ sector, and 21 per cent – to ‘development and management’). Out of the total of 1478 NGOs in this sector, 276, or 19 per cent, fell into the category ‘national associations’.¹⁶ From this it follows that only 2.08 per cent of all NGOs in Latvia were national associations. An earlier study indicates that, in 2003, only 0.7 per cent of respondents participated in ethnic minority organisations.¹⁷

¹⁶ Pārskats par NVO sektoru Latvijā. Pētījumu rezultātu atskaite. 2011. Rīga: Baltic Institute of Social Sciences. Available at http://lsif.lv/files/pics/Atbalstītie_projekti/EEZ_Norv_fin_instr/BISS-NVO_sektors_BISS_27_04_final.pdf, last time accessed 13.10.2012.

¹⁷ Pilsoniskās sabiedrības attīstība Latvijā: situācijas analīze. 2004. Rīga: Īpašu izdevumu ministra sabiedrības integrācijas lietās sekretariāts, p. 15. The same study informs that only 27 per cent of Latvian citizens and 15 per cent of Latvian non-citizens participated in the NGO sector (this figures include churches, religious organisations and political parties) and refers to the unpublished data of the Philosophy and Sociology Institute of the University of Latvia that only six per cent of all population is involved in the NGO sector (this figure does not include churches and political parties).

In the past, more detailed statistics were available on the website of the Secretariat for the Special Assignments Minister for Social Integration (ĪUMSILS, in its Latvian abbreviation), which also hosted an electronic database of minority NGOs. However, since the Secretariat was disbanded in January 2009 (its functions were initially reassigned to the Family and Children Affairs Ministry, which was just the first among the ‘hosts’ of integration matters), this data seem to have disappeared without a trace. It is known that in 2003, a total of 147 ethnic NGOs were registered with the Secretariat (Racko 2008: 145). According to Racko (2008: 139), ‘the highest annual registration of ethnic organisations was in 1993 and 2003’; he observes that many of those organisations which were formally registered in 1993 were in existence for several years prior, starting from the late 1980s. The second peak of ethnic minority NGOs’ registration, in 2003, is most likely related to the creation of the ĪUMSILS in 2002. Until then, the aforementioned LNKBA, established in 1988, served as the main umbrella organisation for ethnic NGOs. The LNKBA, however, admitted only one NGO as a representative of each ethnic minority as a member, and explicitly forbade its members, under the threat of expulsion, to undertake any separate applications for financial assistance to funding bodies. The emergence of the Secretariat both as an umbrella organisation and as an additional source of funding therefore stimulated the creation of new ethnic organisations. It appears that, since the Secretariat’s demise, the LNKBA reverted to its role of the main umbrella organisation for ethnic minorities. Its website currently lists 23 member organisations.

Organisations like the Association for Support of Russian-language Schools in Latvia, founded in 1996, and the Headquarters for the Protection of Russian Schools, created in 2003, cannot be, strictly speaking, classified as ethnic minority organisations, but rather as interest advocacy groups.

The Minorities Advisory Council was created in 1996 under the auspices of the President of Latvia, uniting representatives of various minority organisations. After three years of work, its activities were suspended when V. Viķe-Freiberga was elected President of Latvia. In August 2011, the current President A. Bērziņš reinstated the work of the Council.

7.3. Language

The State Language Law was adopted by the Supreme Council of the Latvian SSR in 1989, and subsequently amended by the Saeima in December 1999. Article 1 of the current version describes the goal of the Law as ensuring the following:

- 1) *The preservation, protection and development of the Latvian language;*
- 2) *the preservation of the historical cultural heritage of the Latvian nation;*
- 3) *the right to use the Latvian language in any sphere of life across the territory of Latvia;*
- 4) *the inclusion of ethnic minorities in Latvian society while observing their right to use their native tongues or other languages;*
- 5) *the increase of the influence of the Latvian language in Latvia's cultural space through accelerated social integration.*¹⁸

Article 3 of the Law names the Latvian language as the state language of the Latvian Republic, and guarantees the preservation, protection, and development of the Latgalian written language as a 'historical variety of the Latvian language'. Article 4 guarantees the preservation, protection and development of the Liv language as an autochthonous language. Article 5 defines any language other than Latvian and Liv as a foreign language.

The State Language Centre subordinated to the Ministry of Justice was founded in 1992 to oversee and safeguard the implementation of the Law.

Despite being legally branded as a foreign language, *de facto* the Russian language remains, along with the Latvian language, one of the dominant markers of ethnic identity in Latvia. As observed by Tabuns (2010: 260), 'the Latvian and Russian languages are of decisive importance in the process of establishing collective identities, as this is the main criterion in marking out the boundaries between ethnic and linguistic groups. Competition between languages increases the sense of endangerment in the two groups'. The Latvian-Russian linguistic divide is very pronounced in all spheres of public life, including education and media.

¹⁸ Valsts Valodas Likums. Available at <http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=14740>, last time accessed on 16th October 2012.

The position of the Latvian language in the country is considered to be continuously strengthened. The Latvian language skills are said to be gradually improving among non-Latvians. In 2008, for example, 57 per cent of non-Latvians demonstrated good Latvian language skills in comparison to only 47 per cent in 2004. On the other hand, the Russian language proficiency percentage among ethnic Latvians has been in decline: if, in 1993, 84 per cent of these claimed good Russian language skills, in 2008, this rate dropped to just 69 per cent. The poorest Russian language skills are found among the 15-34 age group: in 2008, 54 per cent of them knew the language well, 38 per cent - poorly, and 8 per cent did not know Russian at all.¹⁹

The existing status quo has been recently challenged by both the radical right and the radical left flanks of the political spectrum. The nationalist union with the challenging name 'All for Latvia – For fatherland and Freedom/Latvian National Independence Movement' (AFL-FFF/LNIM) initiated a collection of signatures with a view of organising a popular referendum on the transformation of all state-funded secondary schools to the Latvian language of instruction. The nationalists failed to collect the necessary number of signatures to initiate a referendum, but the radical left group 'The Native Tongue', under the leadership of V. Lindermans, responded to the challenge by beginning a collection signatures for the referendum on the status of the Russian language as a second state language. The necessary signatures were successfully collected, and the national referendum took place on 18th February 2012. In response to the question 'Are you in favour of the draft amendments to the Latvian *Satversme* which foresee granting the Russian language the status of the second state language', out of 71.2 per cent of all voters which took part in the referendum, 24.9 per cent said 'yes', and 74.8 per cent answered 'no'. In the capital city of Riga, 36 per cent voted 'yes' and 64 per cent voted 'no'. Most strikingly, in Latgale, 66 per cent of all participants voted 'yes', and 44 per cent voted 'no'. Although the overall reaction to the results of the referendum in the Latvian-language media was largely victoriously euphoric, some commentators were more cautious in the interpretation of the results. For example, A. Berdnikovs, a researcher with the Social and Political Research Institute of the University of Latvia, drew attention to the fact that 273,000 people voted for the amendments, and that this number does not include another

¹⁹ 'Language. March-April 2008'. A study commissioned by the State Language Centre and conducted by the Baltic Institute of Social Sciences. Available at http://www.valoda.lv/downloadDoc_169/mid_543, last time accessed on 16th October 2008.

big part of the society, the non-citizens. Berdnikovs also argued against the post-referendum political labelling of those who voted for the amendments as marginal - claiming that to perceive 40 per cent of the state's residents as 'marginal' is a dangerous practice.²⁰ The political scientist I. Ījabs, commenting on the results of the referendum, predicted that there would be no changes in the political decision-making process and no dialogue between Latvian and Russian political parties, as both sides are reluctant to make any concessions. Ījabs stressed that social integration has no political support, and as a result, the alienated Russian community is ready to vote for such extreme measures as two state languages, and that collecting 273,000 in support of it is no small feat. 'The least we can expect now is an open discussion about how we came to this, and what we can do to rectify the situation', concluded the political scientist.²¹

Paradoxically, neither the outcome of the 2012 language referendum, nor the reported overall strengthening of the Latvian language and the observed decline of the Russian-language proficiency among ethnic Latvians, have decreased the perceived threat to the Latvian language or minimised the sense of vulnerability among ethnic Latvians. On the contrary, new aspects of this ongoing 'language competition' continue to emerge. For example, after prolonged debates in the *Saeima* regarding the alleged discrimination of Latvian-speakers (who do not speak Russian) in the labour market, especially the services sector, amendments to the Labour Law were passed on 21st June 2012 forbidding employers to demand 'knowledge of a specific foreign language' [a euphemism for the Russian language] from the employees unless it is 'justifiably necessary in order to perform the employee's duties'. The Head of the State Language Centre A. Kursītis believes that the ambiguous term 'justifiably' prevents the amended Law from being effective in protection of the Latvian-speakers; moreover, in a recent interview he claimed that discrimination on the labour market on the ground of not knowing the Russian language is one of the reasons that Latvian-speakers emigrate *en masse* to other countries.²²

The language issue remains highly polarised, and the confrontations often border on ridiculous – the latest example being the upheaval surrounding the speech given, in the

²⁰ http://www.tvnet.lv/zinas/viedokli/412108-ja_mazakumtautibas_izies_ielas_var_iestaties_sociala_krize, last time accessed on 16th October 2012.

²¹ <http://www.delfi.lv/news/national/politics/ijabs-pec-referenduma-neredz-pamatu-konstruktivam-izmainam-politisko-lemumu-pienemsana.d?id=42143298>, last time accessed on 16th October 2012.

²² 'Ne govoryashuyu po-russki molodezh' unizhayut na rabote', *Telegraf*, 10.10.2012.

Russian language, by the ethnically Russian Mayor of Riga N. Ušakovs at a Russian-language school in Riga in September 2012. The fact prompted the Head of the parliamentary faction Unity O. Pulks to submit a complaint to the State Language Centre claiming that Ušakovs does not deserve his position of the mayor as he sets a bad example for school children by not speaking to them in the State language.

7.4. Education

During the Soviet years, a segregated school system was developed in Latvia, with secondary schools divided into three major clusters – those with the Latvian language of instruction, those with the Russian language of instruction, and those with both Latvian and Russian-language streams. This system still exists in present-day Latvia. The notorious Education Reform of 2004, which requested minority secondary schools to use a ratio of 60 per cent Latvian language and 40 per cent minority language in teaching, and that at the time led to an escalation of ethnic tensions²³, effectively left the segregated system in place. The main goal (or, at least, the most frequently cited reason) of the Education Reform was to increase competitiveness of minority students vis-à-vis their ethnic Latvian counterparts in higher education and on the labour market. However, as observed by Zepa (2010: 192), although ‘a significant amount of research has been conducted in Latvia on the introduction of bilingual education.. thus far no research has been done on the impact of bilingual education on school results which would permit the evaluation of this policy of attaining the goals set for it’.

It was also widely believed among the supporters of the Education Reform that, once the initial hurdles were overcome, there would be an overall positive effect on social integration. However, the findings of the study ‘Integration of Minority Youth in the Society of Latvia in the Context of the Education Reform’ conducted by the Baltic Institute of Social Sciences (BISS) in 2004 indicate the opposite. Significantly, the study concentrated on ‘all three dimensions of integration’, namely language, education and citizenship, rightly claiming

²³ A series of mass protests erupted, reaching culmination on the 1st of May, when allegedly over sixty thousand people participated in a demonstration against the reform. Reports on the number of participants in the protest actions widely differed: the Russian-language newspapers gave an estimate of 60,000 -65,000 (*Telegraf, Vesti Segodnya*), while the official police estimate was 20,000.

that ethno-political attitudes towards all three issues are closely linked and affect each other.²⁴ One of the conclusions of the study was that ‘the education reform process has led to changes in the attitudes of non-Latvian young people vis-à-vis all issues that have to do with the country’s ethnic policies and integration policies. The views have become more negative’.²⁵

Zepa (2010: 190), stressing that ‘it is well understood that a school system divided along linguistic lines promotes the reproduction of sociolinguistic communities ...and serves to maintain a certain level of tension between these communities’, observes that a bilingual education policy which was drafted in the late 1990s as part of the social integration strategy ‘cannot be found in education policy documents’ any more.

During the 2008/2009 academic year, there were 724 schools with Latvian as the main language of instruction; 135 schools with Russian as the main language of instruction, and 81 schools with the two streams (Latvian and Russian); plus five schools with Polish as the main language of instruction, one with Ukrainian, one with Belarussian, and one with English.²⁶ Respectively, 73.5 per cent of all pupils are enrolled in Latvian-language schools, while 25.8 per cent attend Russian-language schools, and 0.6 per cent attended schools with other languages of instruction.²⁷ In 2010/2011, 73.1 per cent of all pupils were enrolled in Latvian-language schools, 26.2 per cent – in Russian-language schools, and 0.7 % - in other minority schools.²⁸ For comparison, in 1933, there were 1502 Latvian, 236 Russian, 100 Jewish, 88 German, 35 Polish, 23 Belarussian, 13 Lithuanian, 4 Estonian, and 56 mixed elementary schools (Pabriks 2003).

It must be noted that although multicultural standards are incorporated into some subjects (like civil education), there are no overall multicultural educational standards in

²⁴ ‘Integration of Minority Youth in the Society of Latvia in the Context of the Education Reform’, BISS, 2004. Available at http://www.biss.soc.lv/downloads/resources/minoritates/Minority_Engl.pdf, last time accessed on 16th October 2012.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

²⁶ The S. Dubnov Jewish Secondary School in Riga uses the Russian language as the main language of instruction; the J. Kupala Belarussian Preparatory School in Riga uses ‘Belarussian, Latvian and Russian’, and Riga Ukraininan Secondary School uses ‘Ukrainian, Latvian and Russian’. The I. Kozakeviča Polish School, the Lithuanian Secondary School, and the Estonian Secondary School (all located in Riga) use their respective minority language and the Latvian language only. Information available at the website of the Education and Sports Department of the Riga City Council, <http://dati.e-skola.lv>, last time accessed on 16th October 2012.

²⁷ Data of the Ministry of Education of Latvia. <http://izm.izm.gov.lv/registri-statistika/statistika-vispareja/3334.html>. Accessed on 20.03.2009.

²⁸ Data of the Ministry of Education of Latvia. <http://izm.izm.gov.lv/registri-statistika/statistika-vispareja/6281.html>. Accessed on 05.10.2012.

Latvia. The available teaching materials do not reflect ethnic, cultural, linguistic, or religious diversity of the Latvian population. Effectively, school textbooks create a segregated information space for both Latvian and non-Latvian students, not unlike the ones that exist in the Latvian media.²⁹ On a positive note, the number of minority students in the Latvian-language schools is growing, albeit slowly, and in 2009 stood at about 17 per cent.³⁰

The findings of the comparative study ‘Divided Education, Divided Citizens’ (the study encompassed eight post-Soviet and post-socialist countries) conducted by the Network of Education Policy Centres (NEPC) and led by the Latvian researcher M. Golubeva, demonstrated, among other things, that an ethnically divided school system mirrors ethnic divisions in the society.³¹ The representation of minorities in textbooks and in the curricula was identified as one of the most divided issues – in Latvia, 59.5 per cent of teachers in minority schools (vs. only 16.9 per cent of the teachers in Latvian schools) expressed dissatisfaction ‘with the way major ethnic groups are represented in the textbooks and official curricula’ and confirmed the presence of stereotypes.³² At the same time, only 4.8 per cent of minority teachers (vs. 47 per cent of Latvian teachers) agreed with the statement that the representation of minority and majority in history books is balanced and fair.³³

The authors of the study have also identified significant support for the segregated school system among both Latvian and minority pupils in Latvia: only 42 per cent of Latvian students, and 55.9 per cent of their minority counterparts, agreed with the statement ‘I would not mind to study in one class with student from other group’.³⁴

²⁹ ‘Diversity in Latvian Textbooks’, 2004, Rīga: Latvian Centre for Human Rights and Ethnic Studies.

³⁰ Alternative report on the implementation of the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities in Latvia, 2008.

³¹ ‘Divided Education, Divided Citizens? A comparative study of civic enculturation in separate schools’, NEPC, 2009. Available at http://www.edupolicy.net/images/pubs/comparative_studies/dedcinternationalreport.pdf, last time accessed on 16th October 2012.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 21.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

7.5. Social Integration

What has become known as ‘social integration’ in Latvia is the most comprehensive programme yet to combat the existing ethnic polarisation in the country. The concept of social integration was born in 1998, when the Latvian government commissioned a group of experts to draft a Framework Document for the National Programme of Integration of Society in Latvia, as a response to the growing pressure from a newly emerged civil society, represented by various NGOs and academic institutions at home, and from international organisations such as the United Nations Development Programme and the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe abroad, to deal with the problem of the huge number of non-citizens. The Programme of Integration of Society in Latvia attempted not just to link together the previously disparate issues of language, education and citizenship, but also to promote closer cooperation between the government and the NGO sector.

The drafting of the Social Integration programme caused vivid public interest and was regularly reflected in the press. But when the Framework document was submitted to public discussion in March 1999, the sheer scope of residents’ involvement in the Draft’s discussions exceeded anybody’s expectations and was absolutely unprecedented in Latvia, where civil society was at the time still in its emerging stage. According to the data of the Naturalisation Board, over 25 thousand people across the country had actively participated in the discussions, around 80 events had been organised to facilitate debates, and 306 articles had been published in both central and regional newspapers.³⁵ The high level of general public involvement and considerable interest from the media indicated that there was a widely perceived need for measures against further fragmentation of the society, and that the idea of the Social Integration programme had immense popular support. In other words, the beginning seemed very promising.

After the National Programme for Social Integration was adopted in 2000, the Justice Ministry was made responsible for its implementation. The Programme, which would serve as a base for all the subsequent social integration political documents, defined the meaning, goals

³⁵ Data of The Naturalisation Board, <http://www.np.gov.lv/?id=511> . Last time accessed 17.03.2009.

and objectives of social integration. Although it stressed that integration as such must be based on ‘a willingness to accept Latvian as the state language’, the main accent was put on overarching civic values:

*‘The **goal** of integration is to form a democratic, consolidated civil society, founded on shared basic values. An independent and democratic Latvian state is one of these fundamental values.’*

*‘The **task** of integration is to facilitate an understanding of the future in all dependable and loyal Latvian residents, and simultaneously to promote an understanding among all residents that living together in one state is necessary, that only together we can improve prosperity and security, and that each person must contribute his/her knowledge, initiative, and good intentions to the development of Latvian society.’³⁶*

The Programme also recognised, albeit guardedly, that existing interethnic relations and residents’ attitude towards the state may be in need of a change: *‘Social integration and civic participation are part of the process which will shape the future of Latvia. Changes of the attitude in residents toward the state and one another are foreseen in the context of this process.’³⁷* It also addressed another sensitive issue, until then largely avoided in public discourse, namely that social integration is a two-way process and requires a certain effort on the part of the majority population.

Finally, the Programme was the first official document to outline a multicultural approach to interethnic relations in the state, introducing a positive concept of linguistic and cultural diversity: *‘Integration means broadening opportunities and mutual enrichment. It is better to know several languages than to know only one. Experiencing several cultural environments offers a better perspective than being confined to only one.’³⁸*

During the same year, the Social Integration Fund (SIF) was created, with the mission of implementing the Programme through the financial support of various integration projects and activities. The Fund is an independent institution reporting directly to the Cabinet of Ministers and administers funds from both the state budget and the EU structural funds.

³⁶ National Programme ‘The Integration of Society in Latvia’. 2001, 7-8.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

The next milestone on the road to social integration was the creation, upon the initiative of the First Party that used the ‘social integration’ rhetoric during the 8th Saeima election campaign, of the post of a Special Assignments Minister for Social Integration in 2002. The Minister’s Secretariat was entrusted with developing and implementing state policies in the field of social integration, including the fostering of further development of a civil society, fighting ethnic and racial discrimination, encouraging tolerance in the society, ensuring minority rights, and implementing international regulations binding Latvia, as well as the overall coordination of social integration activities and other tasks.

But despite the creation of a governmental body dedicated to social integration, the naturalisation rates, being one of the main indicators of integration policies, remained painfully low. Membership in the European Union, against all predictions, had a short-lived effect on the naturalisation rate – after reaching a peak of 21,297 citizenship applications in 2004, it began to slow down. The Naturalisation Board received 19,807 applications in 2005; 10,581 in 2006; 3,308 in 2007, and 2318 applications during the first nine months of 2008.³⁹ According to the data of the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs, on the 1st of July 2008, the number of non-citizens stood at 365,151 – roughly half of the initial number.

The year 2006 brought a kind of breaking point in the stale public discourse on social integration. There were a number of studies published calling the public’s attention to the fact that the integration process has indeed come to a halt, if not failed completely; that a big part of Latvian residents is alienated from the state, and that a set of new, revised policies is necessary in order to address these problems. The study ‘Resistance to social integration: causes and ways to overcome it’ identified ‘mistakes and imperfections’ and ‘features of ethnic democracy’ in the state ethnopolitics as the principal causes of delayed integration and pointed out that ‘two parallel society-uniting factors exist in Latvia – the political and the ethnic’.⁴⁰

³⁹ Naturalizācijas Pārvaldes Ziņas. Ikmēneša informatīvais izdevums. 2008. gada 15.septembris – 2008. gada 15. oktobris.

³⁹ Data of The Naturalisation Board, <http://www.np.gov.lv/?id=511> . Accessed 17.03.2009

⁴⁰ Apine (ed.), 2006.

The authors of the study 'Integration Practice and Perspectives' identified the current political discourse as one of the hindering factors in the society's consolidation: '...there are quite a few politicians in Latvia who pursue a different position – one that could be termed a 'nationalist political discourse'. These politicians oppose the official integration discourse of Latvia, as well as the position which the EU takes *vis-à-vis* minority issues.'⁴¹ The authors of another study, 'Ethnopolitical tension in Latvia: looking for a conflict solution', observed that 'Political parties continue to engage in political confrontation when it comes to issues of ethnic policy, and they hinder public integration instead of promoting it, thus enhancing ethnic tensions in society. In Latvia, representatives of the political elite continue to exploit ethnicity to mobilise their supporters in elections. Thus they become a chief catalyst in promoting ethnic tensions.'⁴² The study 'Integration Practice and Perspectives' also called attention to insufficient discussions within the society about the concept of national identity, and observed that the 'debates which began in the early 1990s about the kind of nation that was being shaped in Latvia and the kind of the model of nationalism which prevails in the country – an ethnic or a civic mode – have diminished'.⁴³

The National Programme of Social Integration was finally recognised to be outdated and in need of revision. The task of elaborating new Guidelines for Social Integration 2008-2018 was, logically, entrusted to the Secretariat of the Special Assignments Minister for Social Integration. The first draft, which appeared at the beginning of 2008, was bombarded by criticisms on the grounds of being 'too multicultural'. For example, the State Language Commission sent a letter to the Secretariat insisting that integration in Latvia should be based on the Latvian language, culture, and history. The Minister of Culture Helena Demakova offered similar comments, stating that multiculturalism as a foundation for integration and cultural policy cannot be applied in Latvia because the Latvian future depends on common ideas such as the Latvian language and Latvian national symbols.⁴⁴

The Guidelines were revised and submitted to public discussion again, but were ultimately abandoned later, not in the least because, in the advent of the economic crisis, by the decision of the Cabinet of Ministers, the Secretariat for the Special Assignments Minister

⁴¹ Zepa (ed.), 2006, p. 4.

⁴² Zepa, Šupule *et al.* 2005, p. 13.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

⁴⁴ 'Demakova par multikulturālisma ēnas pusēm', *Latvijas Avīze*, 26.02.2008

for Social Integration was liquidated as of 1st of January 2009.⁴⁵ Its functions were assigned to the Family and Children Affairs Ministry, which from there on was to be called the Family, Children, and Social Integration Ministry, which would be only the first of a string of governmental institutions reluctantly ‘hosting’ integration matters.

The new National Identity and Social Integration Programme started being developed by the Ministry of Culture, which is, at the time of writing, responsible for integration matters. In March 2011, the ministry published a draft preamble to the future Programme, outlining its main goals and introducing new definitions – most importantly, the definition of the ‘state nation’ (used by the authors to denominate the core *ethnie*), which, together with ethnic minorities, forms the ‘Latvian nation’ on the basis of a common ‘Latvian identity’ (i.e. Latvian language, Latvian culture and social memory). The preamble drew numerous criticisms from independent experts for being constructed upon outdated theoretical premises, and for placing ethno-cultural values above civic ones. After several months of controversy in Latvian printed and electronic media⁴⁶, and consultations with experts and minority representatives, on 20th October 2011 the Cabinet of Ministers adopted the final version of the document as the Guidelines for National Identity, Civil Society and Integration Policy.⁴⁷ Overall, and especially in comparison with the original Social Integration Programme, which posited that ‘the goal of integration is to form a democratic, consolidated civil society, founded on shared basic values’ and named an ‘independent and democratic Latvian state’ as one of these fundamental values, the Guidelines may be interpreted as a swing towards ethnoculturalism and away from the earlier declared civic principles.⁴⁸

In general, a staggering lack of political will and determination remains the main stumbling block on the path of social integration. In the introduction to the latest study on

⁴⁵ The Secretariat’s demise, it needs to be said, caused mixed reactions among the NGO representatives - while some ethnic minority NGOs expressed regret at its disbandment, others, who had been increasingly unhappy and critical about the Secretariat’s alleged incompetence in the field, excessive bureaucracy and unclear decision making mechanisms, said ‘good riddance’ (See, for example Arāja, D. ‘Kantoris izdzīvošanai’ and Zankovska-Odiņa, S. ‘Spēlējot integrācijas teātri’. Both published by www.politika.lv on 28.10.2008). At the same time, many NGOs and academic institutions’ representatives believe that there is a need for a state institution dedicated to the problems of social integration, and that this need will only grow in the years to come.

⁴⁶ See, for example, Ījabs, I. 2011. ‘Neirotiskā integrācija’ at <http://politika.lv/article/neirotiska-integracija>, and Mūrniece, I. 2011. ‘Pārāk daudz latviskuma! Vai būs pieņemami krieviem?’, *Latvijas Avīze*, 13th May.

⁴⁷ ‘Nacionālās identitātes, pilsoniskās sabiedrības un integrācijas politikas pamatnostādnes (2012– 2018)’, http://www.km.gov.lv/lv/nozares_info/integracija.html (accessed 06.09.2012).

⁴⁸ ‘National Programme The Integration of Society in Latvia’, 2001. Rīga: Naturalisation Board of the Republic of Latvia, pp. 7-8.

social integration, 'How Integrated is Latvian Society?' (2010), its editor, N. Muižnieks, offers an explanation of the authors' reluctance to enter 'the realm of the prescriptive' while generally letting the analysis speak for itself instead. These considerations cited by Muižnieks are, in fact, an excellent summary of everything that the integration policy in Latvia is short of. According to Muižnieks, to propose any recommendations, 'one must make a number of assumptions: that policy-makers want effective policy, that there is a consensus as to what constitutes effective policy, that policy-makers are willing and able to change policy if it is found in some ways wanting, and that there are resources available for implementing the policy. All of these assumptions are problematic in contemporary Latvia'.⁴⁹

As long as the policy-makers remain aloof, or, as in the case with the nationalist parties, opposed to the idea of an integrated society, social integration will remain the domain of well-wishing academics and NGO activists. Without proper political support, it will never make the necessary transformation from a theoretical construct into a programme of action.

⁴⁹ Muižnieks, N. (ed.) 2010. 'How Integrated is Latvian Society? An Audit of Achievements, Failures and Challenges'. Riga: University of Latvia Press, p. 7.

Conclusions: A Virtue out of Necessity?

After more than twenty years of independence and democracy, Latvian society is still polarised over the issues of citizenship, language and education, while common political values remain abstract and vague. Uncannily, this sentence can be equally applied to describe the late 30s of the past century or the second decade of the present one. This leads us to the question of the underlying cause of national disunity – how has it happened that for the second time in history, the Latvian civic nation has failed to materialise?

Latvia features prominently in political science articles and textbooks as a case study of an ethnically divided society. It has become customary to study this latent ethnic conflict through the prism of post-Soviet studies, looking for the causes of societal disaccord in Latvia's recent past as a Soviet Socialist Republic, when numerous traumas were induced on the eponymous nation, from the deportations of 1940 which robbed the nation of its intelligentsia, to Russification policies that threatened the very existence of the Latvian language and culture, and to mass labour immigration that radically changed the country's demography and ethnic composition. All these tragic historical events are viewed if not as a justification, than at least as an explanation for restrictive citizenship policies and society's polarisation along ethnic lines. While this approach has its own merits, its weakness, in my opinion, lies in the fact that it pays very little attention, if any, to another important factor contributing to this society's fragmentation, namely, to the historical development of the idea of the Latvian nation, especially *vis-à-vis* ethnic minorities, always present in significant numbers on Latvian territory through the course of modern history. More often than not, the interwar period of Latvian independence and nation-building is discarded by political scientists as bearing purely symbolic meaning and having no real impact on the present. I argue that, on the contrary, both the genesis of the idea of the Latvian nation and its interwar experience of statehood are vital to understanding the present-day dynamics.

There are no available statistics on the ethnic composition of the population of Latvia prior to 1897, when the first census encompassing all the Latvian territories within the

country's present borders was conducted. What is clear, however, is that already in the Middle Ages, due to the geographical location of the Eastern Baltic littoral, which made it strategically attractive for dominant foreign powers and for commercial entrepreneurs alike, it was not ethnically homogeneous, and less so in the cities than in the countryside, in many parts of which the Latvians remained a majority. In 1897, Latvians comprised 68.3 per cent of the population, and in 1920 – 74.9 per cent, the rest being made up of the six largest ethnic minorities, i.e., Russians, Germans, Jews, Poles, Lithuanians, and Estonians. In this respect, Latvia was not different from the rest of Eastern Europe, which has often been compared to a 'patchwork quilt' of dispersed ethnic groups. In fact, Latvia's percentage of ethnic minorities during the interwar period, far from being exceptional, at 28 per cent stood slightly lower than the average percentage of 29.2 for all Eastern European states (Pearson 1983: 148).

Brubaker's famous definition of nationalising states as 'states that are conceived by their dominant elites as nation-states, as the states of and for particular nations, yet as "incomplete" or "unrealised" nation-states, insufficiently "national" in a variety of senses', seems to fit Latvia like a glove; and again, it can be equally applied to the present and to the past. But as I have tried to demonstrate in the previous chapters, this nationalising trend aimed at maximally benefitting the eponymous ethnic group was not evident in the early conception of the Latvian nation dating from the 1850s until the aftermath of the Revolution of 1905, when, though it did admittedly become one of the strains of Latvian national thinking, it was still far from being a determinant. It was not present in the declarations of the founding fathers of the state, and was never voiced from the stage of the National Theatre on 18th November 1918. At the dawn of Latvia's first independence, ethnic minorities were promised an equal stake in this new – in the words of the first Latvian Prime Minister K. Ulmanis – 'state of democratic fairness'. Latvia's laws on education, passed in 1919, were the most liberal minority-related legislation in Europe of the time, rivalled only by the Estonian Law on Cultural Autonomy of 1925. In the course of the 1920s, however, the 'nationalising' trend continued to gain strength until it came into full bloom under the authoritarian regime.

A number of internal and external factors contributed to the reversal of the initially civic-oriented policies, such as: the lack of general political experience among the population, particularly in practising representative democracy; the high level of fragmentation of both majority and minority political parties, with their often irreconcilable differences that led to

political instability; the worldwide economic crisis; and the steadily deteriorating international climate. The ‘triadic relational nexus’ between the Latvian state, its minorities and their kin-states played a significant role – the fact that three of Latvia’s ethnic minorities, i.e., Germans, Russians and Poles, had ‘external homelands’ with increasingly expansionist ambitions fostered ethnic Latvians’ suspicions and distrust. As for the fourth dimension of the relational nexus, international organisations – the League of Nations and the Nationalities Congress – their interventions on behalf of ethnic minorities were often perceived as unwelcome meddling in Latvia’s internal affairs.

The experience of interwar Latvia, where civic values were ultimately trumped by ethnic allegiances, also offers interesting insights into the practice of cultural autonomy in a democratic nation-state that is ethnically diverse. As shown in the previous chapters, the theory of non-territorial cultural autonomy, developed by the Austrian Marxists K. Renner and O. Bauer, inspired Latvian nationalists and Latvian minority thinkers alike, significantly contributing to the concept of the Latvian civic nation. The recent revival of interest in the NCA model, and its potential application in contemporary multinational and multi-ethnic societies, has produced a variety of modern-day critiques of the theory, raising some issues that closely resonate with the Latvian interwar experience. Likewise, many of the contemporary multicultural debates are surprisingly relevant to the events that took place in Latvia ninety years ago (such as, for example, the ‘Sunday peace’ debates in the Riga City Council in 1919).

Minority rights are compensatory in nature, being an implicit recognition of the fact that the cultural rights of ethnic minorities cannot be fully satisfied by the nation-state, which is programmed to favour the dominant culture. By assigning certain group rights to minorities, a democratic state affirms its own legitimacy as a true representation of the interests of all of its citizens. There is an in-built tension in this relationship, as the rights of the citizens are by definition *individual* rights, whereas minority rights are *group* rights. This individual *vs.* group dilemma, which can be also expressed as liberal *vs.* communitarian, or as universalist *vs.* particularist, frequently resurfaces in contemporary debates on both multiculturalism and cultural autonomy. For example, one of multiculturalism’s most vociferous critics, Brian Barry (2001), juxtaposes justice and equality, arguing that multiculturalism hinders the pursuit of ‘broadly based egalitarian policies’ by diverting political effort from universalistic goals in

the first place, and by destroying the ‘conditions for putting together a coalition in favour of across-the board equalisation of opportunities and resources’. Walter A. Kemp (2005), in his critical evaluation of Renner’s theory, observes that national autonomy may foster national exclusivity and crystallise ethnic divisions unless a careful balance is sought between the national autonomy agenda and the overarching interests of society.

The first sixteen years of Latvia’s interwar independence can serve as an illustration of the ongoing tug-of-war between individual and collective values, with both the majority and the minorities, albeit for different reasons, increasingly falling back upon the latter. Whereas the Latvian majority increasingly employed the rhetoric of past historical injustices as justification for increasingly ‘nationalising’ policies aimed at strengthening the ‘Latvian element’, minorities became increasingly alienated from the nation-state, which they felt was treating them as ‘stepchildren’, and started to concentrate exclusively on their own ethnic agenda. While group allegiances grew stronger, the vital link between individual citizens and the state was weakened, eliminating one of the preconditions for the creation of a civic nation, and ultimately undermining democracy.

The one notable exception to this tendency was the political campaign mounted by ethnic minorities for the amendments to the Citizenship Law of 1919, which aimed at the underlying equality principles amongst individuals rather than at auxiliary group rights, and which, as I argue in Chapter Four, assumed for Latvian minorities a status of symbolic importance. The ethnic minorities justly perceived citizenship as a guarantee of equality and justice and as a cornerstone upon which specific minority rights could rest. It is symptomatic that in post-1991 Latvia, the citizenship issue has again assumed such crucial importance. I believe that the main flaw of all social integration programmes and guidelines introduced so far lies in the fact that they have attempted to remedy the symptoms without addressing the underlying cause.

The injustices inflicted on ethnic Latvians during the decades of Soviet rule exacerbated the nationalising sentiment and created, to use Lieven’s term once again, ‘unanalysed nostalgia’ for the interwar period. It was this idealised and mythologised vision of the First Republic that prompted Latvian politicians ‘to go back to the future’ in an attempt to use the pre-Soviet golden age as the basis for polity reconstruction (Smith 1996), to a large

extent ignoring present-day realities. The persistent rhetoric of Latvia returning to Europe where it rightfully belonged took little account of the fact that the Europe that Latvia was so eager to join was very different from the Europe of fifty years ago – the pressures of what has become known as ‘European conditionality’, its flaws and limitations notwithstanding, made that abundantly clear.

In many ways, the reconstruction of the Latvian state as a perfect nation-state based on collectivist ethnic values has been an example of political ‘wishful thinking’ which has inevitably come into collision with reality, leading to a situation where a large part of the population feels alienated from the state. This undermines the state’s legitimacy and weakens its democratic foundations. For the Latvian state to be strong, it needs the political participation and support of all its permanent residents. In order to gain this support, the state should make a ‘virtue out of necessity’ and offer more to its ethnic minorities than a chance to be supportive of ethnic Latvians’ aspirations, proposing a common platform of clearly articulated civic values instead. As Ralph Waldo Emerson famously said, ‘the state must follow, and not lead, the character and progress of its citizens’.

Bibliography

Archives

Latvian State Historical Archives (*Latvijas Valsts vēstures arhīvs, LVVA*)

State Archive of Latvia (*Latvijas Valsts arhīvs, LVA*)

Books, Book Chapters and Articles

Abyzov, Y. 2001. *Gazeta 'Segodnya' 1919-1940. Rospis'. Chast 1&2*. Riga: Latviiskaya Nacional'naya Biblioteka.

Abyzov, Y. 1990-1991. *Russkoje pechatnoje slovo v Latvii 1917-1944: bio-bibliograficheckii spravocchnik*. Stanford: Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, Stanford University.

Adamovičs, L. 1927. *Skolu lietas Latvijā*. Rīga: Latvju Kultūras spiestuve.

Aizsilnieks, A. 1968. *Latvijas saimniecības vēsture. 1914-1945*. Syndbyberg: Daugava.

Akmens, J. 1938. 'Latvju Tautas Vadoņa Dr. Kārļa Ulmaņa 60 gadi', in: *Daugavas Gada Grāmata*. Rīga: Valters un Rapa.

Akmens, J. 1926. 'Latvijas politiskā un sabiedriskā dzīve pagājušā gadā [1925.]', in: *Daugavas Gada Grāmata*. Rīga: Valters un Rapa.

Aldcroft, D.H. 2006. *Europe's Third World. The European Periphery in the Interwar Years*. Aldershot, England and Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate Publishing.

Alderman, G. (ed.) 1993. *Governments, Ethnic Groups and Political Representation. Comparative Studies on Governments and non-Dominant Groups in Europe, 1850-1940. Volume IV*. Dartmouth: New York University Press.

Andersons, E. 1982-1984. *Latvijas vēsture, 1920-1940. Ārpolitika*. Stokholma: Daugava.

Anderson, H.F. 1942. *Borderline Russia*. London: The Cresset Press.

Annus, E. 2012. 'The Problem of Soviet Colonialism in the Baltics', *Journal of Baltic Studies*, Vol. 43 (1) March.

Apine, I. Volkovs, V. 2007. *Latvijas krievu identitāte: vēsturisks un socioloģisks apcerējums*. Rīga: Latvijas Universitātes Filozofijas un Socioloģijas institūts.

Apine, I. 1974. *Latvijas sociāldemokrāti un nacionālais jautājums*. Rīga: Izdevniecība Liesma.

- Apine, I. 2008. 'Latviešu zinātnieki un publicisti par Latvijas valsts un krievu minoritātes attiecībām 1918-1940.g.', in: Dribins, L. (red.) *Etnisko attiecību factors Latvijas vēsturē 20. gadsimtā*. Rīga: Zinātniskas konferences materiāli.
- Apine, I. 1992. 'Nacionālā pašapziņa ceļā uz demokrātiju', Latvijas Zinātņu Akadēmijas Vēstis, Nr. 10, 20-22 lpp. .
- Apine, I. (ed.) 2006. *Pretestība sabiedrības integrācijai: cēloņi un pārvarēšanas iespējas (etnicitātes, valsts un pilsoniskās sabiedrības mīedarbības analīze)*. Rīga: Latvijas Universitātes Filozofijas un socioloģijas institūts, LU aģentura.
- Apine, I. 2005. *1905-1907. gada revolūcija un latviešu sociāldemokrāti*. Rīga: Zelta Grauds.
- Appadurai, A. 1996. *Modernity at Large. Cultural Dimensions in Globalisation*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Arnīs, E. 1971. *Latvju tautas politiskā atmoda*. Linkolna: Vaidava.
- Ārons, M. (red.) 1928. *Latvija desmit gados. Latvijas valsts nodibināšanas un viņas pirmo 10 gadu darbības vēsture*. Rīga: Jubilejas komisijas izdevums.
- Auer, S. 2004. *Liberal Nationalism in Central Europe*. London - New York: Routledge Curzon.
- Auer, S. 1997. 'Two Types of Nationalism in Europe?', *Russian and Euro-Asian Bulletin*, Vol. 7, No. 12. Available at <http://www.cerc.unimelb.edu.au/bulletin/buldec97.pdf>; last time accessed 24.03.2008.
- Augškalns-Abergers, J. 1929. *Latvijas socialdemokratiskā strādnieku partija. Vēsturisks atskats*. Rīga: Nākotnes kultura.
- Avineri, S. and de-Shalit, A. (eds.) *Communitarianism and Individualism*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Balabkins, N. and Aizsilnieks, A. 1975. *Entrepreneur in a Small Country. A Case Study Against the Background of the Latvian Economy, 1919-1940*. New York: Exposition Press.
- Bankavs, J. 1935. *1919. Gads: lielo notikumu mazās epodes*. Rīga: Karma.
- Barker, E. 1948. *National Character and the Factors in Its Formation*. Fourth and revised edition. London: Methuen & Co.
- Barnard, F.M. 2003. *Herder on Nationality, Humanity and History*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Barrington, L. 1995. 'The Domestic and International Consequences of Citizenship in the Soviet Successor States', *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 47, No. 5 (July), pp. 731-763.

- Barry, B. 2001. *Culture and Equality. An Egalitarian Critique of Multiculturalism*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Bastjānis, V. 1966. *Demokrātiskā Latvija. Vērojumi un vērtējumi*. Stokholma: Emila Ogrīņa apgāds.
- Bastjānis, V. 1970. *Dzīves straume: Atmiņas*. Stokholma: Emila Ogrīņa apgāds.
- Bastjānis, V. 1964. *Gala sākums*. Lidingo: Memento.
- Bauböck, R., Perchinig, B., and Sievers, W. (eds.) 2007. *Citizenship Policies in the New Europe*. Imiscoe Research. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.
- Bauböck, R. 2005. 'Political autonomy or cultural minority rights? A conceptual critique of Renner's model', in: Nimni, E. (ed.) 2005. *National Cultural Autonomy and its Contemporary Critics*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Bauer, O. and Nimni, E. (ed.). 2000. *The Question of Nationalities and Social Democracy*. Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press, (2000)
- Baycroft, T. and Hewitson, M. (eds.) 2009. *What is a Nation? Europe 1789-1914*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Bāra, D. 1992. *Nacionālas neatkarības idejas ģenēze sociāli politiskajā domā Latvijā: metodiska izstrādne*. Rīga: Latvijas Universitāte.
- Beiner, R. (ed.) 1999. *Theorizing Nationalism*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Benton, P. 1984. *Baltic Countdown*. London: Centaur Press.
- Berger, S. and Smith, A. 1999. 'Between Scylla and Charybdis: Nationalism, Labour and Ethnicity Across Five Continents, 1870-1939', in: Berger, S. and Smith, A. (eds.) *Labour, Nationalism and Ethnicity, 1870-1939*, Manchester: Manchester University Press
- Berlin, I. 2005. *Liberty*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Berlin, I. 2002. *The Roots of Romanticism*. London: Pimlico.
- Berman, S. 2006. *The Primacy of Politics*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Bērziņš, A. 1963. *Labie gadi. Pirms un pēc 15. maija*. Bruklina: Grāmatu Draugs.
- Bilmanis, A. 1945. *Baltic Essays*. Washington: Latvian Legation.
- Bilmanis, A. 1951. *History of Latvia*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press.
- Bilmanis, A. 1947. *Latvia as an Independent State*. Washington, D.C.: Latvian Legation

Bilmanis, A. 1925. *Latvia in the Making – Historical Survey and Actual Conditions (A series of articles selected from 'the Latvian Economist')*. Rīga: B. Lamey & Co.

Bilmanis, A. (red.) 1928. *Latvijas Republika desmit pastāvēšanas gados*. Rīgā: Golts un Jurjans.

Bīlmanis, A. 1934. *Latviešu prese cīņā par Latvijas neatkarību*. Rīga: Latvijas Preses biedrība.

Bīlmanis, A. 1932. *Latviešu avižniecība*. Rīga: Valtera un Rapas akc. sab. Grāmatspiestuve.

Bilmanis, A. 1944. *The Baltic States in Post-War Europe*. Washington, D.C.: The Press Bureau of the Latvian Legation.

Blanks, E. 1923. *Latvju nacionālā doma sadzīves cīņu ugunīs*. Rīga: Latvju Nacionālais Klubs.

Blanks, E. 1994. *Latvju tautiskā kustība*. Rīga: Zvaigzne.

Blanks, E. 1927. *Latvju tautiskā kustība*. Trešais izdevums. Jelgavā: Brikmanis, Ēks un biedri.

Blanks, E. 1928. 'Latvijas valsts sagatavošanas laikmets', in: Ārons, M. (red.) 1928. *Latvija desmit gados. Latvijas valsts nodibināšanas un viņas pirmo 10 gadu darbības vēsture*. Rīga: Jubilejas komisijas izdevums.

Blanks, E. 1927. *Nācija un valsts*. Otrs izdevums. Jelgavā: Lācis, Šulcs un biedri.

Bleiere, D., Butulis, I., Feldmanis, I., Stranga, A., Zunda, A. 2005. *Latvijas vēsture. 20. gadsimts. Otrais papildinātais izdevums*. Rīga: Jumava.

Bobe, M. 1971. 'Four hundred years of the Jews in Latvia (Historical Survey)', in: Bobe, M. (ed.) *The Jews in Latvia*.

Bobe, M. (ed.) 1971. *The Jews in Latvia*. Tel Aviv: Association of Latvian and Estonian Jews in Israel.

Boemeke, M.F., Feldman, G.D., Glaser, E. (eds.) 1998. *The Treaty of Versailles: a Reassessment after 75 Years (Publications of the German Historical Institute)*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bourdieu, P. and Wacquant, L.J.D. 1992. *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Brastiņš, E. 1994. *Latviskās Latvijas labad: Mājieni un aicinājumi, 1925-1935*. Valmiera: Valmieras skolu valde.

Brastiņš, E. 1993. *Tautai, Dievam, Tēvzemei: rakstu izlase*. Rīga: Zvaigzne.

Brastiņš, E. 1936. *Tautības mācība*. Rīga: Zemnieka domas.

- Brastiņš, E. 1931. *Latvija, viņas dzīve un kultūra*. Rīga: Grāmatu draugs.
- Breuilly, J. 1993. *Nationalism and the State*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Brubaker, R. 2004. *Ethnicity without Groups*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Brubaker, R. 1992. *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Brubaker, R. (1995) 'National Minorities, Nationalizing States, and External National Homelands in the New Europe', *Daedalus*, 124 (2), pp. 107-132.
- Brubaker, R. 1996. *Nationalism Reframed. Nationhood and the national question in the New Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Brubaker, R. 1996. 'Nationalizing states in the old 'new Europe' – and the new', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Volume 19, Number 2.
- Brunn, G., Hroch, M. and Kappeler, A. 1992. 'Introduction', in: Kappeler, A. (ed.) 1992. *The Formation of National Elites. Comparative Studies on Governments and non-Dominant Groups in Europe, 1850-1940. Volume VI*. Dartmouth: New York University Press.
- Buceniece, E. (ed.) 2005. *Ideju vēsture Latvijā. Jaunā strava – 20. gs. Sākums/ Antoloģija. I. daļa*. Rīga: Raka.
- Carr, E.H. 1962. *The Twenty Years Crisis 1919-1939: an introduction to the study of international relations*. London: Macmillan.
- Cielēns, F. 1961. *Laikmetu maiņa. Atmiņas un atziņas. I. sējums: No bezvēstures tautas līdz pilntiesīgai nācijai*. Stockholma: Lidingö.
- Cielēns, F. 1963. *Laikmetu maiņa. Atmiņas un atziņas. II. sējums: Latvijas neatkarīgās demokratiskās republikas lielais laiks*. Stockholma: Lidingö.
- Cielēns, F. 1964. *Laikmetu maiņa. Atmiņas un atziņas. III. sējums: Latvija Eiropas tragēdijā*. Stockholma: Lidingö.
- Cera, I. (ed.) 2008. *Pēteris Zālīte: kantiskais ideālisms un laicīgie ideāli*. Rīga: LU FSI.
- Cerūzis, R. 2004. *Vācu factors Latvijā (1918-1939): politiskie un starpnacionālie aspekti*. Rīga: Latvijas Universitātes Akadēmiskais apgāds.
- Chandra, K. 2001. 'Ethnic Bargains, Group Instability and Social Choice Theory', *Politics and Society*, Volume 29 (3), pp. 337-362.
- Cimdiņa, A. and Hanovs, D. (eds.) 2010. *Latvia and Latvians. A People and a State in Ideas, Images and Symbols*. Rīga: Zinātne.

- Clarke, P.B. 1994. *Citizenship. A Reader*. London and Boulder, Colorado: Pluto Press.
- Cobban, A. 1945. *National Self-Determination*. Issued under the auspices of the Royal Institute of International Affairs. London, New York, Toronto: Oxford University Press.
- Cobban, A. 1934. *Rousseau and the Modern State*. Woking: Unwin Brothers Ltd.
- Cobban, A. 1969. *The National State and National Self-Determination*. London and Glasgow: Collins Clear-Type Press.
- Conway, M. and Patel, K.K. (eds.) 2010. *Europeanization in the Twentieth Century. Historical Approaches*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Dahl, R.A. 1971. *Polyarchy. Participation and Opposition*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
- Dalberg-Acton, J.E.E. 1985. *Selected Writings of Lord Acton, Volume I. Essays in the History of Liberty*. Indianapolis: Liberty Fund.
- Day, G. and Thompson, A. 2004. *Theorizing Nationalism*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Dickinson, W. 1928. *Minorities*. Pamphlet No. 247, July. London: League of Nations Union.
- Dimants, A. (sast.) 1999. *J.Čakste. Taisnība vienmēr uzvarēs*. Rīga: Jumava.
- Dišlers, K. 1921. *Demokratiskas Walsts eekhartas pamati*. Rīgā: A. Gulbja apgahdiba.
- Dobrovenskis, R. 2000. *Rainis i ego bratya: sem' zhiznei odnogo poeta*. Rīgā: Karogs.
- Doyle, M.W. 1986. *Empires*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.
- Dribins, L. 2002. *Ebreji Latvijā*. Rīga: Elpa.
- Dribins, L. (red.) 2008. *Etnisko attiecību faktors Latvijas vēsturē 20. Gadsimtā. Zinātniskas conferences materiāli*. Rīgā.
- Dribins, L. (red.) 2009. *Latvijas ebreji un padomju vara 1928-1953. Zinātnisks apcerējums*. Rīga: LUFISI.
- Dribins, L. 2009. 'Latvijas ebreji un padomju vara. Ievadraksts', in: Dribins, L. (red.) *Latvijas ebreji un padomju vara 1928-1953. Zinātnisks apcerējums*. Rīga: LUFISI.
- Dribins, L. 1998. *Mazākumtautību vēsture Latvijā*. Rīgā: Zvaigzne.
- Dribins, L. 1997. *Nacionālais jautājums Latvijā 1850-1940*. Rīga: Filozofijas un socioloģijas institūta Etnisko pētījumu centrs.

- Dribins, L. 2005. 'P. Stučka', in: Buceniece, E. (ed.) *Ideju vēsture Latvijā. Jaunā strava – 20. gs. Sākums/ Antoloģija. I. daļa*. Rīga: Raka.
- Dribins, L. (2011) 'Sarkainais Premjers', *Ilustrēta Pasaules Vēsture*, October, pp. 48-55.
- Dribins, L., Spārītis, O. 2000. *Vācieši Latvijā*. Rīga: LU Filozofijas un socioloģijas institūts, Etnisko pētījumu centrs.
- Dubnow, S. 1958. *Nationalism and History. Essays on Old and New Judaism*. Cleveland, New York and Philadelphia: Meridian Books.
- Dukhanov, M., Feldmanis, I., Stranga, A. 1994. *1939. Latvia and the Year of Fateful Decisions*. Rīga: University of Latvia.
- Dunsdorfs, E. 1975. *The Baltic dilemma: part 1*. New York: Speller.
- Dunsdorfs, E. 1982. *The Baltic dilemma: part 2*. Melbourne: Baltic Council Australia.
- Dunsdorfs, E. 1978. *Kārļa Ulmaņa dzīve: ceļinieks, politiķis, diktators, mocekļis*. Stockholm: Daugava.
- Dzērve, P. 1957. *Pēteris Stučka*. Rīgā: Latvijas Valsts izdevniecība.
- Dziļleja, K. (ed.) 1952. *Tautai un brīvībai: rakstu krājums Dr. Paula Kalniņa piemiņai*. Stockholm: Paula Kalniņa piemiņas fonds.
- Eglitis, D.S. 2002. *Imagining the Nation. History, Modernity and Revolution in Latvia*. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press.
- Ellis, S.G., Halfdanarson, G. and Isaacs, A.K. (eds.) 2006. *Citizenship in Historical Perspective*. Pisa: Edizioni Plus – Pisa University Press.
- Elster, J., Offe, C. and Preuss, U.K. 1998. *Institutional Design in Post-communist Societies. Rebuilding the Ship at Sea*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Esman, M. J. (2009) *Diasporas in the Contemporary World*. Cambridge and Malden: Polity Press.
- Ezergailis, A. 1999. *Holokausts vācu okupētajā Latvijā 1941-1944*. Rīga: Latvijas Vēstures Institūta apgāds.
- Ezergailis, A. 1983. *The Latvian Impact on the Bolshevik Revolution. The First Phase. September 1917 to April 1918*. New York: Boulders. Distributed by Columbia University Press.
- Ezergailis, A. 1974. *The 1917 Revolution in Latvia*. Boulder: East European Quarterly; New York and London: Columbia University Press.
- Faulks, K. 2000. *Citizenship*. London and New York: Routledge.

- Feigmane, T. 2000. *Russkie v dovoennoi Latvii: na puti k integratsii*. Rīga: Baltiiskii russkii institut.
- Feigmane, T. 2002. 'Russkie v politicheckoi zhizni Latvii (1918-1940). *Diaspory*, No. 3.
- Feldmanis, I. 2000. *20. gadsimta divdesmitie gadi - 'zelta laikmets'?* Rīga: Zvaigzne ABC.
- Feldmanis, I. et al. 1993. *Latvijas ārpolitika un starptautiskais stāvoklis : 30. gadu otrā puse*. Rīga: Latvijas Ārpolitikas institūts.
- Fink, C. 1998. The Minorities Question at the Paris Peace Conference: the Polish Minority Treaty, June 28, 1919, in: Boemeke, M.F., Feldman, G.D., Glaser, E. (eds.) *The Treaty of Versailles: a Reassessment after 75 Years (Publications of the German Historical Institute)*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Fleishman, L., Abyzov, I. and Ravdin, B. 1997. *Russkaya pechat' v Rige: iz istorii gazety Segodnya 1930-h godov. Kniga I. Na grani epoh*. Stanford, California: Department of Slavic Languages and Literature, Stanford University.
- Flournoy Jr., R.W. and Hudson, M.O. (eds.) 1929. *A Collection of Nationality Laws of Various Countries as Contained in Constitutions, Statutes and Treaties*. New York, London, Toronto, Melbourne, and Bombay: Oxford University Press.
- Friedmann, W. 1943. *The Crisis of the National State*. London: Macmillan & Co.
- Galbreath, D.J. (2005) *Nation-Building and Minority Politics in Post-Socialist States: Interests, Influences and Identities in Estonia and Latvia*. Stuttgart: *ibidem*-Verlag.
- Galbreath, D. and Muižnieks, N. 'Latvia: managing post-imperial minorities', in: Rechel, B. (ed.) 2009. *Minority Rights in Central and Eastern Europe*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Garleff, M. 1978. 'Ethnic Minorities in the Estonian and Latvian Parliaments: The Politics of Coalition', in: Vardys, V.S. and Misiunas, R.J. (eds.) 1978. *The Baltic States in Peace and War, 1917-1945*. University Park and London: The Pennsylvania State University Press.
- Garleff, M. 1993. 'Relations between the Political Representation of the Baltic Provinces and the Russian Government, 1850-1917', in: Alderman, G. (ed.) 1993. *Governments, Ethnic Groups and Political Representation. Comparative Studies on Governments and non-Dominant Groups in Europe, 1850-1940. Volume IV*. Dartmouth: New York University Press.
- Gellner, E. 1983. *Nations and Nationalism*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- Gellner, E. 1998. *Nationalism*. London: Phoenix.
- Ģērmanis, U. 1993. *Ceļā uz Latviju. Raksti par mūsu vēsturi*. Rīga: Memento Latvija.
- Ģērmanis, U. 1992. 'Latviešu politiskā nacionālisma izcelšanās', *Latvijas Vēsture* 3(6), pp. 10-12.

Çērmanis, U. 1968. 'The idea of independent Latvia and its development in 1917', in: Sprudz, A. and Rūsis, A. (eds.). *Res Baltica. A Collection of Essays in Honour of the Memory of Dr Alfred Bilmanis (1887-1948)*. Leyden: A.W. Sijthoff.

Goldmanis, J. 1994. 'Minority deputies in the Saeima of the Republic of Latvia (1922-1934)', *Humanities and Social Sciences Latvia*, 2 (3).

Goldmanis, J. 2005. Zakon Latviiskoi Respubliki o poddanstve I evrei (20-e gg. XX v.), *Evrei v menyayushchemsya mire: Materialy 5-i Mezhdunarodnoi konferencii*, Riga, 16-17 sent. 2003 g. Pod red. Prof. G. Brannovera i prof. R. Ferbera. Riga: Latviiskii Universitet, s. 282-292.

Goldmanis, J. 2003. Ebreju kultūras autonomijas (nacionāli kulturālās pašvaldības) jautājums Latvijas parlamentā (1918–1925). *Latvijas Vēsture. Jaunie un jaunākie laiki*. Nr. 3, 24.–37. lpp.

Gordon, F. 1990. *Latvians and Jews between Germany and Russia*. Stockholm: Memento.

Gottlieb, G. 1993. *Nation Against State. A New Approach to Ethnic Conflicts and the Decline of Sovereignty*. New York: Council of Foreign Relations Press.

Götz, N. and Hackmann, J. (eds.) 2003. *Civil Society in the Baltic Sea Region*. Aldershot: Ashgate.

Greenfeld, L. 1992. *Nationalism. Five Roads to Modernity*. Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: Harvard University Press.

Grīns, J. 1968. *Redaktora atmiņas*. Stockholm: Daugava.

Guelke, A. 2012. *Politics in Deeply Divided Societies*. Cambridge, UK and Malden, MA: Polity Press.

Guibernau, M. and Hutchinson, J. (eds.) 2001. *Understanding Nationalism*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Habermas, J. 1996. 'The European Nation State. Its Achievements and Its Limitations. On the Past and Future of Sovereignty and Citizenship', *Ratio Juris*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (June), pp. 125-137.

Habermas, J. 1995 (1992) 'Citizenship and National Identity: Some Reflections on the Future of Europe', in: Beiner, R. (ed.) *Theorizing Citizenship*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Hackmann, J. 2003. 'Civil Society against the State? Historical Experiences of Eastern Europe', in: Götz, N. and Hackmann, J. (Eds.) 2003. *Civil Society in the Baltic Sea Region*. Aldershot: Ashgate.

Halikiopoulou, D. and Vasilopoulou, S. (eds.) 2011. *Nationalism and Globalisation. Conflicting or complimentary?* London and New York: Routledge.

- Harty, S. and Murphy, M. 2005. *In Defence of Multinational Citizenship*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press.
- Hay, J. (ed.) 2002. *The Treaty of Versailles*. At Issue in History series. San Diego, CA: Greenhaven Press, Inc.
- Heyking, A. 1922. *The Main Issues Confronting the Minorities of Latvia and Eesti*. London: P.S. King & Son Ltd.
- Hidden, J. 2004. *Defender of Minorities. Paul Schiemann 1876-1944*. London: C. Hurst & Co.
- Hidden, J. 2004. 'Paul Schiemann on Reconciling 'Nation' and 'State'', in: Metuzāle-Kangare, B. (ed.) *The Ethnic Dimension in Politics and Culture in the Baltic Countries 1920-1945*. Stockholm: Södertörns högskola.
- Hidden, J. 1994. *The Baltic nations and Europe: Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in the Twentieth Century*. London: Longman.
- Hidden, J. 1992. *The Baltic and the outbreak of the Second World War*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hidden, J. 1987. *The Baltic States and Weimar Ostpolitik*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hirschhausen, U. von. 'From Minority Protection to Border Revisionism: The European Nationality Congress, 1925-38', in: Conway, M. and Patel, K.K. (eds.) 2010. *Europeanization in the Twentieth Century. Historical Approaches*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Hobsbawm, E. 2011. *How to Change the World. Tales of Marx and Marxism*. London: Little, Brown.
- Hobsbawm, E.J. 1990. *Nations and Nationalism since 1780. Programme, Myth, Reality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hope, N. 1996. 'Interwar Statehood: Symbol and Reality', in: Smith, G. (ed.) 1996. *The Baltic States. The National Self-determination of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania*. London: Macmillan Press Ltd.
- Horowitz, D.L. 2000. *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*. Second edition (first edition in 1985). Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press.
- Hroch, M. 1992. 'Social and Territorial Characteristics in the Composition of the Leading Groups of National Movements', in: Kappeler, A. (ed.) *The Formation of National Elites. Comparative Studies on Governments and non-Dominant Groups in Europe, 1850-1940. Volume VI*. Dartmouth: New York University Press.
- Hughes, J., Sasse, G. and Gordon, C. 2004. *Europeanization and Regionalization in the EU's Enlargement to Central and Eastern Europe. The Myth of Conditionality*. Basingstoke, Hampshire and New York, N.Y.: Palgrave Macmillan.

- Hughes, J. and Sasse, G. 2003. 'Monitoring the Monitors: EU Enlargement and National Minorities in Central and Eastern Europe', *Journal of Ethnopolitics and Minority Issues in Europe*, 1, pp.1-38;
http://www.ecmi.de/fileadmin/downloads/publications/JEMIE/2003/nr1/Focus1-2003_Hughes_Sasse.pdf
- Hutchinson, J. and Smith, A.D. (eds.) 1994. *Nationalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hutchinson, J. 1999. 'Re-Interpreting Cultural Nationalism', *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, Vol. 45, Issue No. 3, pp. 392-407.
- Hutchinson, J. 2005. *Nations as Zones of Conflict*. London; Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Ignatieff, M. 1993. *Blood and Belonging: Journeys into the New Nationalisms*. London: BBC Books.
- Ījabs I., 2008. 'Pilsoniskā sabiedrība Latvijā: nākotnes perspektīvas', in: *Latvija 2020: Nākotnes izaicinājumi sabiedrībai un valstij*. Rīga: LU Akadēmiskais apgāds.
- Ījabs, I. 2009. 'Strange Baltic Liberalism: Paul Schiemann's Political Thought Revisited', *Journal of Baltic Studies*, Volume 40, Issue 4, pp. 495-515.
- Ilmjarv, M. 2004. *Silent Submission. Formation of foreign policy of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Period from mid-1920s to annexation in 1940*. Stockholm: Stockholm University department of History.
- Jackson Preece, J. 1998. *National Minorities and the European State System*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Jackson Preece, J. 2005. *Minority Rights. Between Diversity and Community*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Janīm Čakstem 140. Zinātniskās konferences materiāli*. 2000. Rīga: LU.
- Janowsky, O. I. 1945. *Nationalities and National Minorities (With Special Reference to East-Central Europe)*. New York: The Macmillan Company.
- Jansons, J. (Brauns) 1921-1928. 'Pirmie soļi', in: *Kopoti raksti, 7. sēj. Politiskie raksti*. Rīga: Daile un Darbs.
- Jēgers, B. 1968. *Latviešu trimdas izdevumu bibliogrāfija, 1940-1960*. Sundbyberg: Daugava.
- Jēkabsons, Ē. And Ščerbinskis, V. 2006. *Latgaliešu politiķi un politiskās partijas neatkarīgajā Latvijā*. Rīga: Jumava.
- Jenne, E.K. 2007. *Ethnic Bargaining. The Paradox of Minority Empowerment*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.

Joppke, C. 2010. *Citizenship and Immigration*. Cambridge, UK and Malden, MA: Polity Press.

Jubulis, M. 2008. 'Civic and Ethnic Nations as Exaggerated Ideal Types: Misunderstanding the Cultural Attributes of Nationhood'. Paper delivered at the 18th ASEN Annual Conference. <http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/ASEN/CONFERENCES/ASEN%202008%20Conference/Papers/Jubulis.pdf> ; last time accessed on 28.05.2008.

Jubulis, M. 2001. *Nationalism and Democratic Transition. The Politics of Citizenship and Language in Post-Soviet Latvia*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America.

Kalniņš, B. 1956. *Latvijas sociāldemokrātijas 50 gadi*. Stokholma: LSDSP Ārzemju Komitejas izdevums.

Kalniņš, B. 1972. The Social Democratic Movement in Latvia, in: Rabinowitch, A., Rabinowitch J. and Kristof, L.K.D. (eds.) *Revolution and Politics in Russia. Essays in memory of B.I. Nikolaevsky*. Russian and East European series, vol. 41. Bloomington, London: Indiana University Press.

Kalniņš, B. 1983. *Vēl cīņa nav galā...1899-1920*. Great Britain: Memento.

Kamenka, E. (ed.) 1976. *Nationalism: The Nature and Evolution of an Idea*. London: Edward Arnold.

Kaņepe, V., ed. 1998. *Nacionālas attiecības un nacionāla politika Latvijā: domas un vērtējumi Latvijas inteliģences apvienības XIX konferencē 1998. gada 4. aprīlī*. Rīga: Latvijas inteliģences apvienība.

Kappeler, A. (ed.) 1992. *The Formation of National Elites. Comparative Studies on Governments and non-Dominant Groups in Europe, 1850-1940. Volume VI*. Dartmouth: New York University Press.

Kārklīš, J. 1990. *Latvijas preses karalis. Atmiņas par Jaunāko Ziņu laikiem*. Rīga: Karogs.

Kārklins, R. 1994. *Ethnopolitics and Transition to Democracy. The Collapse of the USSR and Latvia*. Washington, DC: The Woodrow Wilson Center Press; Baltimore; London: John Hopkins University Press.

Kasekamp, A. 2010. *A History of the Baltic States*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Keating, M. 1996. *Nations against the State: The New Politics of Nationalism in Quebec, Catalonia and Scotland*. Basingstoke, Hampshire and New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Keating, M. 2001. *Plurinational Democracy. Stateless Nations in a Post-Sovereignty Era*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.

Kedourie, E. 2000. *Nationalism*. Fourth, expanded edition. Oxford, UK and Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers.

Kemp, W. (2006) 'The Triadic Nexus: lessons learned from the Status Law', in: Ieda, O. (ed.) *Beyond Sovereignty: From Status Law to Transnational Citizenship? 21st Century CoE Programme Slavic Eurasian Studies, Slavic Research Centre, 9*, pp. 109-126. Available at http://src-h.slav.hokudai.ac.jp/coe21/publish/no9_ses/contents.html .

Kitchen, M. 1998. *Europe Between the Wars: a Political History*. London: Longman.

Kļaviņš, A. (ed) 2004. *Nacionālas intereses: formulējuma meklējumos*. Rīga: Zinātne.

Kohn, H. 1944. *The Idea of Nationalism: a study in its origins and background*. New York: Macmillan.

Kolakowski, L. 2005. *Main Currents of Marxism. The Founders. The Golden Age. The Breakdown*. New York, London: W. W. Norton & Company.

Kosinski, L. (ed.) 1974. *Demographic Developments in Eastern Europe. Praeger Special Studies in International Politics and Government*. New York and London: Praeger Publishers.

Kosinski, L. 1970. *The Population of Europe. A geographical perspective*. London: Longman Group Limited.

Krabbe, H., Sabine, G.H. and Shepard, W.J. 1922. *The Modern Idea of the State*. New York and London: D. Appleton and Company.

Krēsliņš, U. 2005. *Aktīvais Nacionālisms Latvijā, 1922-1934*. Rīga: Latvijas vēstures institūta apgads.

Kroders, A. 1968. *Atmiņas*. Kopenhāgā: Imanta.

Kroders, A. 1940. *Cilvēks un tauta. Solidarisma ideja*. Rīga: Valters un Rapa.

Kroders, A. 1921. *Domas par latvju kulturu*. Rīgā: 'Letas' apgādībā.

Kroders, A. 1924. *Par minoritatu autonomiju*. Rīga: Latvju Kultura.

Krolls, O. 1931. *Latvijas prese un viņas darbinieki*. Rīga: Latvijas Kultūras veicināšanas biedrība.

Krūma, K. 2007. 'Checks and balances in Latvian nationality policies: National agendas and international frameworks', in: Bauböck, R., Perchinig, B., and Sievers, W. (eds.) *Citizenship Policies in the New Europe*. Imiscoe Research. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Krūma, K. 2007. 'Lithuanian nationality: Trump card to independence and its current challenges', in: Bauböck, R., Perchinig, B., and Sievers, W. (eds.) *Citizenship Policies in the New Europe*. Imiscoe Research. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Kurmis, A. 1973. *Austruma Vēsture. 1883-1940*. Stockholma: Austrums.

- Kuzio, T. 2001. 'Nationalising states' or nation building? A critical review of the theoretical literature and empirical evidence', *Nations and Nationalism*, Vol. 7(2), pp. 135-154.
- Kymlicka, W. 2002. *Contemporary Political Philosophy. An Introduction*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Kymlicka, W. 1999. 'Misunderstanding Nationalism', in : Beiner, R. (ed.) *Theorising Nationalism*. Albany : State University of New York Press.
- Kymlicka, W. 1996. *Multicultural Citizenship*. Oxford : Clarendon Press.
- Kymlicka, W. 2001. *Politics in the Vernacular. Nationalism, Multiculturalism and Citizenship*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kymlicka, W., ed. 1995. *The Rights of Minority Cultures*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Labsvīrs, J. 1997. *Kārlis Ulmanis*. Rīga: Latvijas Universitāte.
- Lācis, V. 2006. *Nacionālisms un brīvība*. Rīga: Jumava.
- Lapiņš, J. (red.) 1936. *Jaunais nacionālisms. Rakstu krājums*. Rīga: Valters un Rapa.
- Lapiņš, J. 1938. *Sapņi un īstenība*. Rīga: Valters un Rapa.
- Laserson, M. 1945. *Russia and the Western World. The Place of the Soviet Union in the Comity of Nations*. New York: The Macmillan Company.
- Laserson, M. 1927. *Staat, Souveränität und Minorität*. Riga-Berlin: Bernhard Lamey.
- Laserson, M. 1971. 'The Jews and the Latvian Parliament, 1918-1940', in: Bobe, M. (ed.) *The Jews in Latvia*. Tel Aviv: Association of Latvian and Estonian Jews in Israel.
- Lasmanis, A. 1963. *Cerības un Vilšanās*. Uppsala: Daugava.
- Latvijas Satversmes Sapulces stenogramu izvilums (1920-1922)*. 2006. Rīga: Tiesu Namu aģentūra.
- Latvijas Satversmes Sapulces stenogramu satura rādītājs. 213 sēdes (no 1920. gada 1. maija līdz 1922. gada 3. novembrim)*. Sast. H. Kārklīšs. 1925. Latvijas Republikas Saeimas izdevums. Krājuma Saeimas stenografiskā birojā, Rīgā, Saeimas laukumā.
- Latvijas Republikas Saeimas Stenogramas. 1922-1934*. Latvijas republikas Saeimas izdevums. Krājumā Saeimas stenografiskā birojā, Rīgā, Jēkaba ielā No. 11.
- Latvijas Satversmes Sapulces stenogramas. Sesijas 1-5, 1920-1922*. Rīga: Satversmes Sapulze.
- Lee, S. J. 2000. *European Dictatorships 1918-1945*. London and New York: Routledge.

- Lejiņš, J. 1971. *Mana dzimtene. Atmiņu un pārdomu atspulgā*. Sweden: Ziemeļblazma.
- Liebich, A. 2007 'Introduction: *Atneuländer* or the vicissitudes of citizenship in the new EU states', in: Bauböck, R., Perchinig, B., and Sievers, W. (eds.) *Citizenship Policies in the New Europe*. Imiscoe Research. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.
- Lieven, A. 1994. *The Baltic Revolution. Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and the Path to Independence*. Yale University Press.
- Lieven, D. 2003. *Empire. The Russian Empire and Its Rivals*. London: Pimlico.
- Lijphart, A. 1980. *Democracy in Plural Societies: a comparative exploration*. New Haven, London: Yale University Press.
- Locke, J. (Edited by Macpherson, C.B.) 1980. *Second Treatise of Government*. Indianapolis, Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc.
- Loeber, D.A. 1993. 'Language Rights in Independent Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, 1918-1940', in: Vilfan, S. (ed.) *Ethnic Groups and Language Rights. Comparative Studies on Governments and non-Dominant Ethnic Groups in Europe, 1850-1940. Volume III*. Dartmouth: New York University Press.
- Loeber, D.A. 2000. *Pauls Šīmanis toreiz un tagad*. Rīga.
- Lorencs, K. 2005. Ūdre, A. (zin. red.). *Kāda cilvēka dzīve. Klāva Lorenca atmiņas*. Rīga: Apgāds Zelta grauds.
- Luxemburg, R. 2012. *The Russian Revolution and Leninism or Marxism?* Ann Arbor paperback, university of Michigan Press.
- Macartney, C.A. 1929. *Minorities*. Pamphlet No. 268, January. London: League of Nations Union.
- Macartney, C. A. 1934. *National States and National Minorities*. Royal Institute of International Affairs. London: Oxford University Press.
- Macartney, C.A. and Palmer, A.W. 1972. *Independent Eastern Europe. A History*. London and Basingstoke: The Macmillan Press Ltd.
- MacCormick, N. 1996. 'Liberalism, Nationalism and the Post-sovereign State', *Political Studies*, XLIV, pp. 553-567.
- MacCormick, N. 1999. *Questioning Sovereignty. Law, State, and Nation in the European Commonwealth*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Malta, N. un Galenieks, P. (red.) 1937. *Latvijas zeme, daba un tauta. III sējums: Latvijas tauta*. Rīga: Vatera un Rapas akciju sabiedrības apgāds.
- Mazower, M. 1998. *Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century*. London: Penguin Books.

- Meinecke, F. 1970. *Cosmopolitanism and the National State*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Mendelsohn, E. 1983. *The Jews of East Central Europe Between the World Wars*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Metuzāle-Kangare, B. 2004. 'Political Identity and Nationalism, Literature under the Ulmanis Regime', in: Metuzāle-Kangare, B. (ed.) *The Ethnic Dimension in Politics and Culture in the Baltic Countries 1920-1945*. Stockholm: Södertörns högskola.
- Metuzāle-Kangare, B. (ed.) 2004. *The Ethnic Dimension in Politics and Culture in the Baltic Countries 1920-1945*. Stockholm: Södertörns högskola.
- Migranti Latvijā 1944-1989. Dokumenti*. 2004. Rīga: Latvijas Valsts Arhīvs.
- Mill, J.S. 1958. *Considerations on Representative Government*. New York: Liberal Arts Press.
- Mill, J.S. 2005. *On Liberty*. New York: Cosimo Classics.
- Miller, D. 2000. *Citizenship and National Identity*. Polity Press.
- Miller, D. 1995. *On Nationality*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Misiunas, R.J. and Taagepera, R. (1983) *The Baltic States. Years of Dependence 1940-1980*. Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California press.
- Muižnieks, N. 1993. *The Baltic Popular Movements and the Disintegration of the Soviet Union*. PhD Dissertation at the University of California, Berkeley.
- Niedra, A. 1984. *Buržuāziskā Latvija imperiālistisko lielvalstu ekonomiskajā atkarībā, 1919-1940*. Rīga: Avots.
- Nielsen, K. 1999 'Cultural Nationalism, Neither Ethnic Nor Civic', in Beiner, R. (ed.) *Theorizing Nationalism*. Albany: State University of New York.
- Nimni, E. 1995. 'Marx, Engels, and the National Question', in: Kymlicka, W. (ed.) *The Rights of Minority Cultures*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Nimni, E. 1991. *Marxism and Nationalism. Theoretical Origins of a Political Crisis*. London: Pluto Press.
- Nimni, E. (ed.) 2005. *National Cultural Autonomy and its Contemporary Critics*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Nootens, G. 2005. 'Nations, states and the sovereign territorial ideal', in: Nimni, E. (ed.) *National Cultural Autonomy and its Contemporary Critics*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Overy, R.J. 2007. *The Inter-War Crisis 1919-1939*. Harlow: Pearson Longman.

Özkirimli, U. 2005. *Contemporary Debates on Nationalism. A Critical Engagement*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Özkirimli, U. 2000. *Theories of Nationalism: a Critical Introduction*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Ozols, J. 1906. 'Ihsa Latweeschu sozialdemokratiskās strahdneeku partijas wehsture', in: W. Ahzis (red.) *Latweeschu strahdneeku kalendars 1907. g. Ar wehsturiskeem notikumeem, biografiskām ziņam uz katru dienu un ar lekcioneem un spehzigeem pantiņeem uz katru swehtdeenu. Otrais gada gahjums*. Rīgā: Ernsta Krusas apgahdibā; pp. 29-64.

Ozols, J. 1928. 'Pārskats par Iekšlietu ministrijas darbību', in: Ārons, M. (red.) *Latvija desmit gados. Latvijas valsts nodibināšanas un viņas pirmo 10 gadu darbības vēsture*. Rīga: Jubilejas komisijas izdevums.

Pabriks, A. 1994. 'Citizenship and Rights of Minorities in Latvia', *Humanities and Social Sciences Latvia*, 1(2).

Pabriks, A. 2003. 'Ethnic Limits of Civil Society', in: Götz, N. and Hackmann, J. (Eds.) 2003. *Civil Society in the Baltic Sea Region*. Aldershot: Ashgate.

Pabriks, A. 1999. *From Nationalism to Ethnic Policy: the Latvian Nation in the Present and the Past*. Berlin: Berliner Interuniversitäre Arbeitsgruppe "Baltische Staaten".

Pabriks, A. and Purs, A. 2001. *Latvia: The Challenges of Change*. London and New York: Routledge.

Pabriks, A. 1997. 'The Impact of Values of Communitarianism and Individualism upon the Formation of a Political Nation in Latvia', *Latvian Human Rights Quarterly*, No. 1.

Pabriks, A. (ed.). 2001. *Sabiedrības integrācija: atsvešinātības pārvarēšana*. Rīga: NIMS.

Page, S.W. 1948. 'Lenin, the National Question and the Baltic States', *American Slavic and East European Review*, Vol. 7, No. 1, pp. 15-31.

Page, S.W. 1949. 'Social and National Currents in Latvia, 1860-1917', *American Slavic and East European Review*, Vol. 8, No. 1, pp. 25-36.

Palmer, A. 2005. *Northern Shores. A History of the Baltic Sea and Its People*. London: John Murray.

Palmer, A. 2010. *The Lands Between. A History of Eastern Europe 1815-1968*. London: Faber and Faber Ltd.

Pearson, R. 1983. *National Minorities in Eastern Europe. 1848-1945*. London and Basingstoke: The Macmillan Press Ltd.

Pettai, V. 2007. 'Explaining ethnic politics in the Baltic States: Reviewing the triadic nexus model', *Journal of Baltic Studies*, 37 (1), pp. 124-136.

- Plakans, A. 2011. *A Concise History of the Baltic States*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Plakans, A. 2007. *Experiencing Totalitarianism: the Invasion and Occupation of Latvia by the USSR and Nazi Germany 1939-1991: a Documentary History*. Bloomington: AuthorHouse.
- Plakans, A. 1974. 'Peasants, Intellectuals, and Nationalism in the Russian Baltic Provinces, 1820-90.' *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 46, No.3, pp. 445-475.
- Plakans, A., Wetherell, C. 1996. *Riding the Tiger: the Latvian Agrarian Union and Agrarian Reform Between the Two World Wars*. Washington, D.C.: National Council for Soviet and East European Research.
- Plakans, A. 1995. *The Latvians. A Short History*. Stanford, California: Hoover Institution Press.
- Plamenatz, J. 1976. 'Two Types of Nationalism', in: Kamenka, E. (ed.) *Nationalism. The Nature and Evolution of an Idea*. Edward Arnold.
- Plensners, A. 1928. *Latvijas atbrīvošanās. Pirmā grāmata: Latvija pasaules kara priekšvakarā*. Rīgā: A.Gulbis.
- Plensners, A. 1928. 'Kaŗa ministrija', in: Ārons, M. (red.) 1928. *Latvija desmit gados. Latvijas valsts nodibināšanas un viņas pirmo 10 gadu darbības vēsture*. Rīga: Jubilejas komisijas izdevums.
- Polson Newman, E.W. 1930. *Britain and the Baltic*. London: Methuen.
- Popoff, G. 1932. *The City of the Red Plague. Soviet Rule in a Baltic Town*. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd.
- Priedīte-Kleinhofa, A. 2008. 'Pēteris Zālīte Latvijas ideju vēsturē', in: Cera, I. (ed.) *Pēteris Zālīte: kantiskais ideālisms un laicīgie ideāli*. Rīga: LU FSI.
- Przeworski, A. and Sprague, J. 1986. *Paper Stones. A History of Electoral Socialism*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.
- Rabushka, A. and Shepsle, K. A. 2008. *Politics in Plural Societies. A Theory of Democratic Instability*. New York: Pearson Longman.
- Racko, G. 2008. 'The Goals of the Foundation of Ethnic Minority Non-Governmental Organizations in Latvia', *Critical Sociology*, 34(1), pp. 139-155.
- Rauch, E. von. 1970. *Baltic States, the Years of Independence. Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, 1917-1940*. London: Hurst & Company.
- Rawls, J. 1971. *A Theory of Justice*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

- Rawls, J. 1993. *Political Liberalism*. Columbia University Press.
- Rechel, B. (ed.) 2009. *Minority Rights in Central and Eastern Europe*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Reinsh, A. 2004. 'Jews in Latvian Literature and Society in the 1920s and 1930s', in: Metuzāle-Kangare, B. (ed.) *The Ethnic Dimension in Politics and Culture in the Baltic Countries 1920-1945*. Stockholm: Södertörns högskola.
- Ringmar, E. 1998. 'The Idiocy of Intimacy', *The British Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 49, No. 4 (Dec.), pp. 534-549.
- Robinson J., Karbach O., Laserson M. M., Robinson N., Vichniak M. 1943. *Were the Minorities Treaties a Failure?* New York.
- Rohmets, H. 2006. 'Birth of a State: Formation of Estonian Citizenship (1918-1922)', in: Ellis, S.G., Halfdanarson, G. and Isaacs, A.K. (eds.) *Citizenship in Historical Perspective*. Pisa: Edizioni Plus – Pisa University Press.
- Ronis, I. 1994. 'Kārlis Ulmanis Latvijas brīvvalsts likteņa stundās un viņa Golgātas ceļš', in: *Kārlis Ulmanis trimdā un cietumā. Dokumenti un materiāli*. Rīga: Latvijas Vēstures institūta apgāds.
- Ronis, I. 1978. *Latviešu buržuāzijas politika 1907-1914. gadā*. Rīga: Zinātne.
- Ronis, I. and Žvinklis, A. (sast.) 1994. *Kārlis Ulmanis trimdā un cietumā. Dokumenti un materiāli*. Rīga: Latvijas Vēstures institūta apgāds.
- Roosevelt, T. 1913. *History as Literature and Other Essays*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.
- Roshwald, A. 2001. *Ethnic Nationalism and the Fall of Empires. Central Europe, Russia and the Middle East, 1914-1923*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Roshwald, A. *The Endurance of Nationalism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, (2006)
- Rothschild, J. 1974. *A History of East Central Europe. Volume IX: East Central Europe Between the Two World Wars*. Seattle and London: University of Washington Press.
- Rousseau, J-J. 1998. *The Social Contract*. Ware, Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions Limited.
- Rudevics, A. 1928. 'Otrās Saeimas darbs un politika'. *Jaunais Laiks*, Nr. 3, pp. 69-74.
- Rudevics, A. 1928. 'Politiskās partijas Latvijā'. *Jaunais Laiks*, Nr.2, pp. 37-41.
- Sandel, M. 1992. 'The Procedural Republic and the Unencumbered Self', in: Avineri, S. and de-Shalit, A. (eds.) *Communitarianism and Individualism*. New York: Oxford University Press.

- Sassen, S. 1996. *Losing Control? Sovereignty in An Age of Globalisation*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Schiemann, P. 1927. 'Volksgemeinschaft und Staatgemeinschaft', *Nation und Staat*, Volume 1, Issue 1, pp. 21-41.
- Schopenhauer, A. 2006. *The Wisdom of Life* (Translated by T. Bailey Saunders). Teddington, Middlesex: The Echo Library.
- Schumpeter, J.A. 2010. *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Schwarzmantel, J. 2005. 'Karl Renner and the problem of multiculturalism', in: Nimni, E. (ed.) 2005. *National Cultural Autonomy and its Contemporary Critics*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Šetlere, M. (red.) 2003. *Izcilas ebreju personības Latvijā*. Rīga: Nacionālais Apgāds.
- Shats-Mar'yash, R. 2003. *Kaleidoskop moei pamyati*. Rīga: Acis.
- Šilde, Ā. 1988. *Ardievas Rīgai. Tikai atmiņas*. Bruklina: Grāmatu Draugs.
- Šilde, Ā. 1964. *Latvijas valsts problēmas*. Stuttgart-Nice: Atlantas apgāds.
- Šilde, A. 1982. *Pirmā Republika: esejas par Latvijas valsti*. New York: Grāmatu Draugs.
- Šilde, Ā. 1976. *Latvijas vēsture 1914-1945*. Stokholma: Daugava.
- Šilde, A. 1985. *Valstvēri un demokrāti*. Nujorka: Grāmatu Draugs.
- Silova, I. 2001. *From symbols of occupation to symbols of multiculturalism: re-conceptualizing minority education in post-Soviet Latvia*. PhD dissertation, Columbia University.
- Silova, I. 2002. 'The Manipulated Consensus: globalization, local agency, and cultural legacies in post-Soviet education reform', *European Educational Research Journal*, Volume 1, Number 2, pp. 308-329.
- Šīmanis, P. 1999. *Eiropas problēma: Rakstu izlase*. Rīga: Vaga.
- Šīmanis, P. 2000. *Raksti 1933-1940. (Sastādītājs H. Šimkuva)*, Rīga.
- Skujenieks, M. 1937. 'Latvijas iedzīvotāji', in: Malta, N. un Galenieks, P. (red.) *Latvijas zeme, daba un tauta. III sējums: Latvijas tauta*. Rīga: Vatera un Rapas akciju sabiedrības apgāds.
- Skujenieks, M. 1928. 'Latvijas parlamenti', in Bilmanis, A. (red.) 1928. *Latvijas Republika desmit pastāvēšanas gados*. Rīgā: Golts un Jurjans.

- Skujenieks, M. 1929. *Latvija starp Eiropas valstīm*. Rīga: Valsts Statistiskās pārvaldes izdevums.
- Skujenieks, M. 1922. *Latvija. Zeme un eedzīvotaji*. Rīga: Valsts statistiskās pārvaldes izdevums.
- Skujenieks, M. 1927. *Latvija. Zeme un eedzīvotaji*. Trešais pārstrādātais un papildinātais izdevums. Rīgā: A. Gulbja apgādneecība.
- Skujenieks, M. 1938. *Latvijas statistikas atlases*. Rīga: Valsts statistikas pārvalde.
- Skujeneeks, M. 1913. *Nazionalais jautajums Latwijā*. Pēterburgā, A. Gulbja apgahdībā
- Smith, A.D. 1991. *National Identity*. Reno, Las Vegas: University of Nevada Press.
- Smith, A.D. 1998. *Nationalism and Modernism*. New York: Routledge.
- Smith, A.D. 2004. *The Antiquity of Nations*. Cambridge, UK and Malden, MA: Polity Press.
- Smith, A.D. 1988. *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*. Cambridge, UK and Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers.
- Smith, D.J. 2002. 'Framing the national question in Central and Eastern Europe: a quadratic nexus?', *The Global Review of Ethnopolitics*, Vol. 2, No. 1, September, pp. 3-16.
- Smith, D.J. 2005. 'Non-territorial cultural autonomy as a Baltic contribution to Europe between the wars', in: Smith, D.J. (ed.) *The Baltic States and Their Region. New Europe or Old?* Amsterdam-New York: Rodopi.
- Smith, D.J. and Hiden, J. 2012. *Ethnic Diversity and the Nation State. National cultural autonomy revisited*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Smith, D.J. 2002. 'Estonia. Independence and European Integration', in: Smith, D.J., Pabriks, A., Purs, A. and Lane, T. 2002. *The Baltic States. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. (Postcommunist States and Nations)*. London: Routledge.
- Smith, D.J., Pabriks, A., Purs, A. and Lane, T. 2002. *The Baltic States. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. (Postcommunist States and Nations)*. London: Routledge.
- Smith, G. (ed.) 1996. *The Baltic States. The National Self-determination of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania*. London: Macmillan Press Ltd.
- Smooha, S. and Jarve, P. (eds.) 2005. *The Fate of Ethnic Democracy in Post-Communist Europe*. Budapest: Open Society Foundation.
- Spekke, A. 1965. *Balts and Slavs: Their Early Relations*. Washington: Alpha Prints Co.
- Spekke, A. 1951. *History of Latvia. An Outline*. Stockholm: M. Goppers.

Spekke, A. 1995. *Latvia and the Baltic Problem* (English translation by Marjorie Miles). London: Latvian Information Bureau.

Spekke, A. 2003. *Latvijas vēsture: Latvijas tautas likteņcīņas Eiropas krustceļos*. Rīga: Jumava.

Sprudz, A. and Rūsis, A. (eds.). 1968. *Res Baltica. A Collection of Essays in Honour of the Memory of Dr Alfred Bilmanis (1887-1948)*. Leyden: A.W. Sijthoff-Leyden.

State Programme 'Sabiedrības Integrācija Latvijā', 1999, Rīga.

Stepan, A., Linz, J.J., Yadav, Y. 2011. *Crafting State-Nations. India and Other Multinational Democracies*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.

Stranga, A. 2008. *Ebreji Baltijā: no ienākšanas pirmsākumiem līdz holokaustam: 14. gadsimts - 1945. gads*. Rīga: LU žurnāla "Latvijas vēsture" fonds.

Stranga, A. 2002. *Ebreji un diktatūras Baltijā (1926-1940)*. Rīga: LU Jūdaikas Studiju Centrs.

Stranga, A. 2000. *Latvijas - padomju Krievijas miera līgums 1920. gada 11. augustā: Latvijas - padomju Krievijas attiecības 1919.-1925.gadā*. Rīga: Fonds 'Latvijas vēsture'.

Stranga, A. 2005. 'Latvijas valsts konstitucionālā noformēšana', in: Bleiere, D., Butulis, I., Feldmanis, I., Stranga, A., Zunda, A. *Latvijas vēsture. 20. gadsimts. Otrais papildinātais izdevums*. Rīga: Jumava.

Stranga, A. 2001. *Latvija v XX veke v kontekste evropejskoi istorii*. Rīga.

Stranga, A. 1998. *LSDSP un 1934. gada 15. maja valsts apvērsums. Demokrātijas likteņi Latvijā*. Rīga: Poligrāfists.

Stranga, A. 2007 'Padomju vara Latvijā 1919. gadā: komunistiskā terora nacionālais aspekts', *Latvijas Vēsture*, 2 (66).

Straume, A. 1992. 'Pavalstniecības jautājums Latvijā (1919.-1940.)' *Latvijas Vēsture*, 2(5).

Stučka, P. (1919) *Pyat mesyatsev sotsialisticheskoj Sovetskoj Latvii. Sbornik statei i zametok. Chast 1*. Izdanie Tsentral'nogo komiteta kommunisticheskoj partii Latvii.

Stučka, P. 1914 'Nacionālais jautājums un latviešu proletariāts', in: Stučka, P. 1972. *Nacionālais jautājums un latviešu proletariāts. Darbu izlase. 1906-1930*. Rīga: Liesma

Stučka, P. 1972. *Nacionālais jautājums un latviešu proletariāts. Darbu izlase. 1906-1930*. Rīga: Liesma.

Stučka, P. 1920? 'Nacionālisms un tautu pašnoteikšanās', in: Stučka, P. (1972) *Nacionālais jautājums un latviešu proletariāts. Darbu izlase. 1906-1930*. Rīga: Liesma.

- Stučka, P. (1907) Tautību vai šķīru cīņa. in: Stučka, P. (1972) *Nacionālais jautājums un latviešu proletaiāts. Darbu izlase. 1906-1930.* Rīga: Liesma.
- Sturmthal, A. 1944. *The Tragedy of European Labour 1918-1939.* London: Victor Gollancz Ltd.
- Šulmane, I., Kruks, S. 2000. *Etniskie un politiskie stereotipi.* Rīga: LU Sociālo zinātņu fakultāte.
- Suny, R. G. 2011. 'Globalisation and the nation-state: the future of failures', in: Halikiopoulou, D. and Vasilopoulou, S. (eds.) *Nationalism and Globalisation. Conflicting or complimentary?* London and New York: Routledge.
- Švābe, A. 1948. *Latvija 30. gados.* Vācija.
- Švābe, A. 1962. *Latvijas vēsture 1914-1940.* Stokholma: Daugava.
- Švābe, A., Būmanis, K., Dišlērs, K. (red.). 1927-1928-1938-1939. *Latviešu konversācijas vārdniņa.* Sēj. 1-18. . Rīga.
- Swain, G. 2010. 'Starting the World Revolution: Latvia's Soviet Republic of 1919'. Paper presented at the University of Victoria, British Columbia, Canada, 8 April.
- Swain, G. 1999. 'The Disillusioning of the Revolution's Praetorian Guard: The Latvian Riflemen, Summer - Autumn 1918', *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 51, No. 4, pp. 667-686
- Sznaider, N. 2011. *Jewish Memory and the Cosmopolitan Order.* Malden, MA: Polity Press.
- Taagepera, R. 'Civic Culture and Authoritarianism in the Baltic States, 1930-1940', *East European Quarterly*, Vol. VII, No. 4, 1973, pp. 407-12.
- Tallents, S. 1943. *Man and Boy.* London: Faber and Faber Limited.
- Tamir, Y. 1993. *Liberal Nationalism.* Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Taylor, C. 1989 'Cross-Purposes: The Liberal-Communitarian Debate', in Rosenblum, N. (ed.) *Liberalism and the Moral Life.* Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press.
- Taylor, C. 1994. 'The Politics of Recognition', in: Gutmann, A. (ed.) *Multiculturalism. Examining the Politics of Recognition.* Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Taylor, C., Gutmann, A. (ed.s) 1992. *Multiculturalism and 'The Politics of Recognition.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Tishkov, V. 1997. *Ethnicity, Nationalism and Conflict in and After the Soviet Union. The Mind Aflame.* London, Thousand Oaks, and New Delhi: Sage Publications.

The Baltic States. A survey of the political and economic structure and the foreign relations of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Prepared by the Information department of the Royal Institute of International Affairs. 1938. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Treijs, R. (ed.) 1996. *Latvijas Republikas Prese, 1918-1940.* Rīga: Zvaigzne ABC.

Treimanis, J. 1928. Latvijas proletariata skaits un sastāvs. *Jaunais Laiks*, Nr. 6, pp. 176-181.

Ulmanis, K. 1937. *Jaunātnēi: rakstu izlase un izvilcumi.* J. Lapiņa sakopojumā. Rīga: Zemnieka Domas.

Unāms, Ž. 1964. *Dzīva Latvija.* Lincoln, Nebraska: Pilskalns.

Valters, M. 1969. *Atmiņas un sapni.* Stockholma: Daugava.

Valters, M. 1952. *Latvijas demokrātija un kā to veidot.* Munich.

Valters, M. 1914. *Mūsu tautības jautājums. Domas par Latvijas tagadni un nakti.* Brisele : Jaunu Rakstu apgādeens, Generalkomisijā pee A. Waltera, J. Rapas u. Beedr.

Valters, M. 1933. *No sabrukuma uz planveidoto saimniecību. Latvijas atjaunošanas problēmas.* Rīga: Latvijas nākotne.

Vanags, P. 2004. 'Language Policy and Linguistics under Ulmanis', in: Metuzāle-Kangare, B. (ed.) *The Ethnic Dimension in Politics and Culture in the Baltic Countries 1920-1945.* Stockholm: Södertörns högskola.

Vardys, V.S. and Misiunas, R.J. (eds.) 1978. *The Baltic States in Peace and War, 1917-1945.* University Park and London: The Pennsylvania State University Press.

Vardys, V.S. 1978. 'The Rise of Authoritarian Rule in the Baltic States', in: Vardys, V.S. and Misiunas, R.J. (eds.) *The Baltic States in Peace and War, 1917-1945.* University Park and London: The Pennsylvania State University Press.

Vēbers, E. 1995. 'Etniskā identitāte un politiskā nācija', in : *Nacionāla politika Baltijas valstīs.* Rīga : Zinātne.

Vēbers, E. 1997. *Latvijas valsts un etniskās minoritātes.* Rīga: Latvijas Zinātņu akadēmijas Filozofijas un socioloģijas institūta Etnisko pētījumu centrs.

Veinbergs, F. 1924. *Politiskas domas iz Latvijas.* Rīga: Ita un Jurjana spiestuve.

Vētra, M. 1955. *Rīga toreiz...Atmiņas.* Bruklina: Grāmatu draugs.

Vičs, A. (ed.) 1923. *Tautas audzināšana: pedagogiski-sabiedrisku rakstu krājums.* Rīga: Latvijas Nacionālo Skolotāju centrs.

- Vilfan, S. (ed.) 1993. *Ethnic Groups and Language Rights. Comparative Studies on Governments and non-Dominant Groups in Europe, 1850-1940. Volume III*. Dartmouth: New York University Press.
- Virza, E. 1935. *Kārlis Ulmanis: Monogrāfija*. Copenhagen: Imanta.
- Volkovs, V. 2010. 'Culture Autonomy and Russians in Latvia (1918-1940), in : Cimdiņa, A. and Hanovs, D. (eds.) *Latvia and Latvians. A People and a State in Ideas, Images and Symbols*. Rīga: Zinātne.
- Volkovs, V. 1996. *Krievi Latvijā*. Rīga: Latvijas ZA Filozofijas un socioloģijas institūts, (1996)
- Volkovs, V. 1998. *Krievu nacionālās minoritātes pašapziņa Latvijā 19. un 20. gadsimtā : promocijas darba kopsavilkums*. Rīga: Latvijas Universitāte.
- Walzer, M. 1995 'Pluralism: A Political perspective', in: Kymlicka, W. (ed.) *The Rights of Minority Cultures*. Oxford University Press.
- Walzer, M. 1990. 'The Communitarian Critique of Liberalism', *Political Theory* 18 (1), 6-23.
- Walzer, M. and Miller, D. (ed.) 2007. *Thinking Politically. Essays in Political Theory*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
- Weber, M. 1949. *The methodology of the Social Sciences*. New York: Free Press.
- Williams, Ch. and Sfikas, T.D. (eds.) 1999. *Ethnicity and nationalism in Russia, the CIS and the Baltic states*. Aldershot, England; Brookfield, Vt., USA: Ashgate.
- White, J. D. 1994. 'National Communism and World Revolution: The Political Consequences of German Military Withdrawal from the Baltic Area in 1918-19'. *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 46, No. 8, Soviet and East European History, pp. 1349- 1369.
- Yack, B. 1999. 'The Myth of the Civic Nation', in: Beiner, R. (ed.) *Theorising Nationalism*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Young, R.J.C. 2004. *Postcolonialism. An Historical Introduction*. Malden, MA; Oxford, OX; Carlton, Victoria: Blackwell Publishing.
- Zaķe, I. 2005. 'Latvian Nationalist Intellectuals and the Crisis of Democracy in the Inter-war Period', *Nationalities Papers*, Vol. 33, No. 1, pp. 97-117.
- Zaķe, I. 2008. *Nineteenth-century nationalism and twentieth-century anti-democratic ideals: the Case of Latvia, 1840s to 1980s*. Lewiston, New York: Edwin Mellen Press.
- Zālīte, P. 1928. *Kā Latvija tapa, vai Kā piepildījās tautas pašnoteikšanās ideja?* Rīgā: Valtera un Rapas akc. sab. grāmatspiestuve.

- Zālīte, P. 1935. *Mani memuāri. II sējums. Latvijas nacionālas valsts idejas tapšana un viņas izpausmes veidi (1892.g-1919. gada 18.novembris)*. Rīga: Zālīte.
- Zālīte, P. 1905. 'Valsts ideāls', *Mahjas Weesis*, Nr. 46, 47, 49.
- Zeile, P. 1994. *Nacionālo Minoritāšu Kultūra Latvijas Republikā (20.-30. gadi)*. Rīga: LR Izglītības, kultūras un zinātnes ministrija.
- Zelče, V. (2010) 'Latvijas Satversmes Sapulces vēlēšanu kampaņa. Par informācijas plūsmu un īpatno', *Latvijas Arhīvi*, volume I.
- Zemīte, L. 1992. *Tautu Savienība un Latvija, 1930.-1939*. Rīga: Latvijas Universitāte.
- Zepa, B. (ed.) 1999. *Politiskās līdzdalības veicinošie apstākļi Latvijā*. Rīga: Latvijas Sociālo Pētījumu centrs.
- Zepa, B. (ed.) 2004. *Etniskā tolerance un Latvijas sabiedrības integrācija*. Rīga: Baltijas Sociālo Zinātņu institūts.
- Zepa, B. (ed.) 2006. *Integration Practice and Perspectives*. Rīga: Baltic Institute of Social Sciences.
- Zīle, Ļ. (ed.) 2001. *Latvija divos laikposmos: 1918-1928 un 1991-2001*. Rīga: Latvijas Universitātes žurn. "Latvijas Vēsture" fonds.
- Zīle, Ļ., and Ziemeļis, S. 1979. *Stages of the Great Course. 75 years of the Latvian Communist Party*. Riga: Liesma Publishers.
- Zunda, A.L. 1998. *Latvijas un Lielbritānijas attiecības 1930-1940: realitāte un ilūzijas*. Rīga: LU žurn. "Latvijas Vēsture" fonds.
- Žvinklis, A. 'Ebreji Latvijas parlamentāras iekārtas laikā, no 1928. Līdz 1934. Gadam. Attieksme prēt demokrātisko valsti un tās pretiniekiem', in: in: Dribins, L. (red.) *Latvijas ebreji un padomju vara 1928-1953. Zinātnisks apcerējums*. Rīga: LUFISI.

List of periodicals

Atmoda
Brīva Zeme
Darba Balss
Diena
Jaunā Deenas Lapa (also Jaunā Dienas Lapa)
Jaunākās Ziņas
Latvijas Avīze
Latvijas Sargs
Latvijas Kareivis

Latvijas Wehstnesis (also Latvijas Vēstnesis)
Mājas Viesis
Nation und Staat
Naturalizācijas Pārvaldes Ziņas
Proletārietis
Rigasche Rundschau
Segodnya
Telegraf
Vesti Segodnya
Waldibas Wehstnesis (also Valdības Vēstnesis)
Zihņa (also Cīņa)

Online resources

www.arhivi.gov.lv	The National Archives of Latvia
www.biss.soc.lv	Baltic Institute of Social Sciences
www.coe.int	Council of Europe
www.cvk.lv	The Central Election Commission of Latvia
www.delfi.lv	The News Portal <i>Delfi</i>
www.edupolicy.net	Network of Education Policy Centres (NEPC)
http://eudo-citizenship.eu	European Union Democracy Observatory on Citizenship (EUDO)
www.humanrights.lv	Human Rights in Latvia
www.humanrights.org.lv	Latvian Centre for Human Rights
www.imiscoe.int	International Migration, Integration and Social Cohesion (IMISCOE)
www.izm.gov.lv	Ministry of Education of the Republic of Latvia
www.km.lv	Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Latvia
www.likumi.lv	Collection of Latvian legal acts previously published in <i>Latvijas Vēstnesis</i>
www.lsif.lv	Society Integration Foundation
www.np.gov.lv	The Naturalisation Board of the Republic of Latvia
www.periodika.lv	National Digital Library of Latvia
www.pmlp.gov.lv	Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs
www.politika.lv	Public Portal <i>Politika</i>
www.riga.lv	Municipal Portal of Riga
www.tvnet.lv	The News Portal <i>TVNET</i>
www.valoda.lv	The Latvian Language Agency