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## **Herrnhutian Religious-Cultural, Socio-Political, and National Influence in the Baltic Area from the 18th to the 20th Century**

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The first contact between Herrnhut and the Baltic region was Christian David's (1691–1751) visit in 1729–1730. Count Nicolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf himself visited Riga and Tallinn in September 1736. The great Herrnhutian spiritual awakening in Livonia (Livland) and Estonia came at the turn of the 1730s and 1740s. One of the most important centres of this awakening was Valmiera (Wolmar) in central Livonia (Vidzeme). The growth of Baltic Herrnhutism was strongly connected with some Pietistic pastors in Riga and Tallinn as well as with some of the leading nobility (Magdalene von Hallart, J. B. von Campenhausen). Another very important factor was also the teachers' seminary in Valmiera in the manor of Magdalene von Hallart (ill. 1). The awakening movement experienced many forms of resistance, including that from the Russian government. Czarina Elizabeth I issued a proclamation (ukaz) in 1743 to suppress its activities. Public Herrnhutian activity suffered. We must also remember that Pietistic influence generally diminished because of the triumph of the theological rationalism connected with the Enlightenment movement that had a strong influence in the second half of the 18th century.<sup>1</sup>

The Moravians received new life after 1817, as Alexander I had a more favourable attitude towards religious awakening movements. In any case, Baltic Herrnhutism experienced its golden age in the 1830s and 1840s, the movement gradually increasing in strength during the first half of the century. Straube has published some interesting

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<sup>1</sup> Ludvigs ADAMOVIČS, *Vidzemes baznīca un latviešu zemnieks* [The Church of Livonia and the Latvian peasant] 1710–1740, Diss. Rīga 1933, 505–576; ID., *Dzimtenes baznīcas vēsture. Otrs, papildināts izdevums* [Church History of the Fatherland. Second Supplemented Edition], [Soest] Germany 1947, 72–82; Voldemar ILJA, *Vennastekoguduse (herrnhutluse) ajalugu Eestimaal (Põhja-Eesti)* [The History of the Moravian Church in Estonia (Northern Estonia)] 1730–1743, Diss. Helsinki 1995; Gvido STRAUBE, *Latvijas brāļu draudzes diārijs (jaunākais noraksts) jeb Hernhūtiešu brāļu draudzes vēsture Latvijā* [Diary of the Moravian Church in Latvia (Latest Copy) or the History of the Moravian Church in Latvia], Rīga 2000; ID./Mati LAUR, *Der Hallische Pietismus und die Herrnhuter Brüdergemeine in Liv- und Estland im 18. Jahrhundert*, in: *Forschungen zur Baltischen Geschichte* 4 (2009) 97–114, here 114.

statistics on Herrnhutism in Livonia. In 1841 72–74 % of the peasants in Apukalns were Herrnhutians (altogether 2520). There were 2415 Herrnhutians in Jaunpiepalga, 1392 in Rauna (Ronneburg), and 1046 in Vecpiepalga.<sup>2</sup> In Latvian Livonia there were in all 98 Herrnhutian chapels (saesanas nams) in 1839.<sup>3</sup>

In Estonia these activities were even more extensive. In 1839 there were 48,000 supporters. If we include people who attended prayer-house (palvemaja) services, the number of supporters of the movement was 70,000. It has been said that about 10 % of all Estonians above the age of 14 belonged to this movement. The biggest support for the movement was on Oesel Island (Saaremaa). Philipp has noted that in 1854 as much as 16 % of the population of Oesel Island was connected with the movement.<sup>4</sup> The movement was generally a popular movement. In 1841 there were 254 Herrnhutian prayer-houses (palvemaja) in Livonia and Estonia. More than 100,000 Herrnhutians were active in the Baltic region.<sup>5</sup> We can compare its social influence to Laestadianism's role in Northern Finland today. Of the 156 prayer-houses in Estonia in the middle of the 19th century 100 were still standing in the 1930s.<sup>6</sup>

In the 19th century, however, many representatives of the Evangelical Lutheran Church were against this awakening movement. The best-known exponents of classical Lutheran Orthodoxy, Theodosius Harnack and F. A. Philippi, not only rejected rationalist theology, but also opposed Herrnhutism, which was experiencing a new era of prosperity in the Baltic provinces in the middle of the 19th century. The supporters of Lutheran Orthodoxy had no sympathy for the “Christianity of the heart” that Pietist Herrnhutism represented in the Baltic countries. Professor Harnack's book “Die Lutherische Kirche Livlands und die herrnhutische Brüdergemeinde” was

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<sup>2</sup> STRAUBE, *Diary of the Moravian Church* (see Footnote 1) 195; Voldemar ILJA, *Vennastekoguduse (herrnhutluse) ajalugu Liivimaal (Lõuna–Eesti)* [The History of the Moravian Church in Livonia (South Estonia)], vol. 5: 1766–1817, Tallinn 2006, 229.

<sup>3</sup> Gvido STRAUBE, *Vidzemes brāļu draudzu kustības piekritēju skaits dinamika* [The Number of Moravian Church Members in Livonia], in: *Latvijas PSR zinātņu Akadēmijas vēstis* [Proceedings of the Academy of Sciences of the Latvian SSR] 6 (1988) 52–64, here 61.

<sup>4</sup> Guntram PHILIPP, *Die Wirksamkeit der Herrnhuter Brüdergemeinde unter den Esten und Letten zur Zeit der Bauernbefreiung (Vom Ausgang des 18. bis über die Mitte des 19. Jhs.)*, Köln/Wien 1974 [also Diss. Köln 1967], 365; Jouko TALONEN, *Herrnhut and the Baltic Countries from 1730 to the Present. Cultural Perspectives*, in: Riho ALTNURME (ed.), *Estonische Kirchengeschichte im vorigen Jahrtausend/Estonian Church History in the Past Millennium*, Kiel 2001, 98–108, here 100.

<sup>5</sup> STRAUBE, *Diary of the Moravian Church* (see Footnote 1) 196.

<sup>6</sup> PHILIPP (see Footnote 4) 365; TALONEN, *Herrnhut and the Baltic Countries* (see Footnote 4) 100. On Herrnhutian chapels in Estonia, see Voldemar ILJA, *Vennastekoguduse (herrnhutluse) ajalugu Eestimaa (Põhja–Eesti)* [The History of the Moravian Church in Estonia (North Estonia)], vol. 6: *Palvemajad* [Houses of Prayer], Tallinn 2010.

published in 1860. “Res herrnhutiana” was discussed more than once in the meetings of the clergy in Livonia, particularly in the 1840s and 1850s.<sup>7</sup>

The geographical and numerical expansion of Herrnhutians in the Baltic region proceeded from four centres: in Latvian Livonia (Vidzeme), the district around Valmiera; in Estonian Livonia, the district south of Dorpat; on Oesel, the district around Arensburg; and in Estonia proper, the Tallinn area.<sup>8</sup>

In the interwar period of the 20th century the Herrnhutian spirit was still alive in Estonia and Latvia with prayer-houses and societies. However, the influence of this movement as a people’s movement decreased, although it was seen as an important national movement. After WWII, many Herrnhutian traditions and activities survived, although the Communists did not regard the movement as a religious community. Even from 1945 to 1947 there was a new spiritual awakening of the Herrnhutian spirit in the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church. Even during the very difficult Communist period in the 1960s and 1970s, nearly half of the pastors and students of the Institute of Theology (Tallinn) had Pietist or Herrnhutian backgrounds, as did many active laymen in the Soviet Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church. The Herrnhutian Society is active today in Tallinn, and there are some Herrnhutian activities in other places as well; for example, in the Hageri Parish. In practice, Herrnhutism lost its influence in Latvia during the Communist period. Since the collapse of Communism, there have been some attempts to revitalize Herrnhutian traditions in Latvia as well.<sup>9</sup>

The influence of Herrnhutism in Baltic countries was significant from a general historical point of view. It was not only an important phase in the history of the Church, but it had economic, political, social and cultural significance as well. There has also been Herrnhutian influence in the Baltic region in the humanistic, social-scientific and theological research of Baltic academic circles since the middle of the 19th century.

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<sup>7</sup> Theodosius HARNACK, *Die lutherische Kirche Livlands und die Herrnhuter Brüdergemeinde. Ein Beitrag zur Kirchengeschichte neuerer und neuester Zeit*, Erlangen 1860; Jouko TALONEN, *Latvian kansallisen teologian synty. Kiista teologian suunnasta ja taistelu pappiskoulutuksesta Latvian evankelis-luterilaisessa kirkossa* [The Birth of Latvian National Theology. The Dispute about Its Teachings and the Issues of Training the Evangelical Lutheran Priests in Latvia] 1918–1934, Rovaniemi 2008, 21ff.; Roberts FELDMANIS, *Latvijas baznīcas vesture* [Latvian Church History], Rīga 2010, 246.

<sup>8</sup> PHILIPP (see Footnote 4) 365.

<sup>9</sup> ILJA, *Moravian Church in Livonia* (see Footnote 2) 235–247; Jouko TALONEN, *Zinzendorf-konferenssi Latviassa 2000* [The Conference on Zinzendorf in Latvia in 2000], in: *Suomen kirkkohistoriallisen seuran vuosikirja* [Yearbook of the Finnish Society of Church History] 89–91 (1999–2001) 321–325, here 321f.; Jouko TALONEN, *Professor Voldemar Ilja (1922–2010). Researcher of the Moravian Church in Estonia*, in: *Unitas Fratrum* 65/66 (2010) 216ff., here 216; Gundars CEIPE, *Latvijas brāļu draudzēs vesture* [The History of the Latvian Moravian Church] 1918–1940, Diss. Rīga 2010, 312–318. This information is also based on my personal observations in Estonia and Latvia as well as on discussions with Prof. Dr. theol. Voldemar Ilja.

## 2. SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES

Herrnhutism was, as noted above, generally a popular movement in the countryside. It was a peasant movement that gave rural people a sense of their own importance. According to Philipp, a key to understanding the emancipation of Herrnhutians in the Baltic area can be seen in the most important aspects of the solution of the peasants' problems and the agrarian legislation from the late 18th century up to the second half of the 19th century. A very important event in this regard was the liberation of the peasants from feudal servitude in Estonia (1816) and Livonia (1819). Even though the Herrnhutians had no direct influence on the agrarian legislation, Philipp believes that the influence of Herrnhutian noblemen can hardly be overlooked.<sup>10</sup>

An example that illustrates the impact the movement had on drawing the social classes closer together is the encounter on the road leading to the estate of Valmiera (Valmieramuiza) between Kišu Pēteris (Peter Kisch) (1699–1771), the blacksmith of Valmiera estate, and Count Zinzendorf, who was visiting the Baltic countries in 1736. Ludvigs Adamovičs described the encounter, citing the account of Kišu Pēteris after the event: “I was so elated when I saw him, that it was as if I had seen my beloved Saviour Himself. I met him [Zinzendorf] on the main road, and he greeted me in a friendly manner and extended his hand to me.”<sup>11</sup>

The increase in human dignity of the peasants and the rural national movement advanced the awareness of Latvian nationalism and Latvian social activity. The role of Herrnhutism in the peasant revolts of Livonia at the beginning of the 19th century is an issue on which the opinions of researchers are divided. Adamovičs left the matter open to some extent and did not go into detail.<sup>12</sup> Voldemar Ilja does not see the movement as having a role in the rebellions, and he stressed the role of the religious revival in promoting unity among the social classes. In contrast, Straube regards the movement as being involved in the rebellion of Kaugurmuiza in 1802. Some

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<sup>10</sup> PHILIPP (see Footnote 4) 364, 366.

<sup>11</sup> Ludvigs ADAMOVIČS, *Studijas latviešu brāļu draudzēs vesture* [Studies on the History of the Latvian Moravian Church], Rīgā 1928, 49f.; ID, *Church of Livonia* (see Footnote 1) 519. A biography (Lebenslauf) of Kišu Pēteris can be found in the Archives of Herrnhut (Archiv der Brüder-Unität, Herrnhut), ABU R. 22.4.23 (Lettische Brüder, Peter Kisch); according to Adamovičs in ABU R.19.G.a.a.Nr.2-d *Diarium 1771* (Kišu Pēteris); ID., *Latviešu brāļu draudzēs sākumi un pirmie ziedu laiki 1738–1743*, Rīgā 1934, 519, 578; ID., *Church of Livonia* (see Footnote 1) 519, 578.

<sup>12</sup> Ludvigs ADAMOVIČS, *Raksti par Latvijas baznīcas vesture* [Writings of Latvian Church History], Mineapole [Minneapolis, MN] 1978, 89.

Herrnhutian peasants were active in the Kaugurmuiza rebellion. One of the activists was Vīteļu Pēteris. In fact, this rebellion was spread around Livonia.

At least 3,000 peasants took part in the rebellion. Translations of French literature were well-known in Livonia at the end of the 18th century already.<sup>13</sup> Generally, I think, Herrnhutism was not a very rebellious movement, but future research must take into account Straube's conclusions. Of course the social activity of peasants was noteworthy, but the main conclusion about Herrnhutian influence was that there was equality between people in Christ, not necessarily in the society.

Even if the division between different levels of society remained after the Herrnhutian awakening, the spiritual mentality of Herrnhutism had many social consequences. The peasant culture in Livonia and in Estonia was elevated. The active “general priesthood” of laymen in Herrnhutian religious society was an example of a democratic way of thinking. Even women were expected to accept responsibilities. The social self-importance and personal activity of peasants was something new in the Baltic countryside. The co-operation among rural people united country folk. Building chapels with their own hands demonstrated their independence from the high German clergy and the official Church in a concrete way. The Herrnhutian chapels were the symbolic expression of their national independence. It has been said that these chapels were also “outstanding examples of vernacular architecture” (Pauls Campe). The building style of peasant houses resembles that of Herrnhutian chapels in Livonia; for example, in the use of pillars (*stabs*).<sup>14</sup> [ill 2]

The spiritual awakening also had moral consequences. Criminality and alcohol abuse decreased. Criminal cases decreased in courts. It has been stated, for example, that not a single criminal case from Oesel Island was brought before the court between 1740 and 1745.<sup>15</sup> Vööbus describes this moral and ethical renewal: “A stream of moral

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<sup>13</sup> Jouko TALONEN, Liivinmaan talonpoikaiskapina ja herrnhutilaisuus 1802 [The Rebellion of Peasants and Herrnhutians in Livonia in 1802], in: Suomen kirkkohistoriallisen seuran vuosikirja [Yearbook of the Finnish Society of Church History] 92 (2002) 191–194, here 192f. Prof. Ilja's opinion is based on the recollections of the present author.

<sup>14</sup> Paul KUNDZIŅŠ, Den lettiska brödräfsamlingens bönehus och deras egendomligt formade träpelare [The Prayer House of the Latvian Brethren and their Peculiarly Shaped Wooden Pillars], in: Ditt Land [Your Country], Stockholm 1946, 4, 61f.; PHILIPP (see Footnote 4) 367; TALONEN, Herrnhut and the Baltic Countries (see Footnote 4) 102; STRAUBE/LAUR (see Footnote 1) 109.

<sup>15</sup> P. v. S[ASS], Zur Geschichte der herrnhutischen Brüdergemeinde auf Oesel, in: Mitteilungen und Nachrichten für die die evangelische Kirche in Rußland 40 (1884) 145–228, here 156; Arthur VÖÖBUS, Contributions of the Herrhuters to the Spiritual, Educational and Cultural Life in Estonia, in: Yearbook of The Estonian Learned Society in America/Annales Societatis Litterarum Estonicae in America 4 (1964/67) 84–103, here 92f.; compare Toomas MÄGI, Karjane ja kari. Luterlik kirik Saaremaal 18. sajandil. Magistritöö. Tartu Ülikool. Filosoofiateaduskond [The Shepherd and His Flock. The Lutheran

renewal went through the land. Wherever the movement spread, drastic changes in people's lives took place: the peasants refrained from worldly lusts and enjoyments, from visiting taverns and drinking. Stealing also was abandoned and loads of stolen goods were returned to the estates. In every respect, the way of life changed under the impact of the religion of the heart."<sup>16</sup>

### 3. NATIONAL AND CULTURAL INFLUENCE

Straube argues that Livonian Herrnhutism laid the foundations for Latvians to recognize themselves as a people for the first time.<sup>17</sup> In any case, as the Herrnhutian movement was the first nationalist movement among Estonians and Latvians, it gave impetus to national awakening in both nations during the following decades. The fruit of this national awakening was the independence of both states after WWI. Of course there was no direct connection between Herrnhutism and political nationalism in the Baltic after 1850. The national awakening comprised many other elements, including left-wing political impulses. However, the spirit of Herrnhutism was a source of new ideas, such as a democratic way of thinking, personal independence, activism, self-knowledge, and the equality of human beings.<sup>18</sup>

Herrnhutism was a factor in the national awakening and in the development of national cultures in the Baltic region in the 19th century. As a result of Baltic Herrnhutism, the interest in reading books and in writing increased. In accordance with the Herrnhutian tradition, "brothers" wrote their own short biographies. Many progressive advances in the Baltic peasants' lifestyle and customs occurred because of Herrnhutism. Hope has documented the Herrnhutian influence in many social and cultural areas, even on the "cemetery culture" and its traditions. Literacy rose to a very high level after the "golden age" of Herrnhutism in Livonia in the 19th century. The first Latvian poet,

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Church in Saaremaa in the 18th Century. Master's Thesis, Tartu University, Faculty of Philosophy], Tartu 1999, 118–123, 138f.

<sup>16</sup> VÖÖBUS (see Footnote 15) 91.

<sup>17</sup> Gvido STRAUBE, Brāļu draudzes Vidzemē un latviešu identitāte [The Moravian Church in Livonia and Latvian Identity], in: ID./Ilvars MISĀNS/Erwin OBERLÄNDER (eds.), Kurzeme, Vidzeme, Latgale. Reģions un identitāte vēsturē. Konferenču materiāli [Courland, Livonia, Latgale. Region and Identity in History. Conference Protocol], Rīga 1999, 56–65, here 56f.; Sarma A. EGLITE, The Sacred Songs of the Followers of the Lamb. An Examination of Latvian Brudergemeine Hymns from 1739, Project Thesis Boston 2002, 4.

<sup>18</sup> TALONEN, Herrnhut and the Baltic Countries (see Footnote 4) 101, 103; PHILIPP (see Footnote 4) 366–370; STRAUBE, Moravian Church in Livonia (see Footnote 17) 56f., 62, 64f.; ID./LAUR (see Footnote 1) 113.

Ḳikuḷa Jēkabs (Jēkabs of Ḳikuḷis) (1740–1777?), came from a Herrnhutian background. J. C. Quandt was the author of the oldest novel in the Estonian language, published in 1736. Many Herrnhutian brethren were active in the production of translations. Many of these works were copied and recopied. We can infer that the Herrnhutian heritage was also an influential factor in the pedagogical development of Livonia.<sup>19</sup>

Vocal music sung by individuals, choirs, and congregations was at the heart of the Herrnhutian spiritual mentality. Count Zinzendorf himself wrote 2000 spiritual songs. In the very beginning, Herrnhutian songs were printed in Livonia. Hymnals were used by rural people. Singing festivals have had an important role in Baltic national culture. The first festival in Estonia took place in 1869, and in Latvia in 1873. In Estonia the organizers of the first festivals were J. V. Janssen and Jakob Hurt. Straube has shown the links between the Herrnhutian music (singing) tradition and the national singing festivals in Latvia.<sup>20</sup>

Eglite has even found some social elements in the Latvian Herrnhutian song tradition. The metaphoric power of these hymns was a profound source of inspiration in the midst of social and religious oppression in a feudal society. Herrnhutian hymns used images of liberation. The Latvian peasants saw their own Moses in Count Zinzendorf, the liberator of the Jews. These hymns also strengthened the value of human beings. The metaphors of God used in the Herrnhutian hymns were part of a life-giving insight into the image of God and the Latvian people. The people's eyes were opened to their own value and their relationship to God, who loves and cares for them.<sup>21</sup>

Herrnhutism also inspired Baltic literature and provided subject matter for many novelists. The most important “fathers” of Estonian national literature and the national awakening in the 19th century came from Herrnhutian homes: Friedrich Reinhold Kreutzwald (1803–1882), who created the “Kalevipoeg”, the national epos of Estonia;

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<sup>19</sup> TALONEN, Herrnhut and the Baltic Countries (see Footnote 4) 102f.; Nicholas HOPE, Die Herrnhuter in Livland und Estland im 19. Jahrhundert, in: Siret RUTIKU/Reinhart STAATS (eds.), Estland, Lettland und westliches Christentum. Estnisch-deutsche Beiträge zur baltischen Kirchengeschichte/Eestimaa, Liivimaa ja lääne kristlus. Eesti-saksa uurimusi baltimaade kirikuloost, Kiel 1998, 133–152, here 137ff.; STRAUBE, Moravian Church in Livonia (see Footnote 17) 58–62; ID., Diary of the Moravian Church (see Footnote 1) 232f.; ID./LAUR (see Footnote 1) 108.

<sup>20</sup> STRAUBE, Moravian Church in Livonia (see Footnote 17) 62; ID., Diary of the Moravian Church (see Footnote 1) 233; TALONEN, Herrnhut and the Baltic Countries (see Footnote 4) 104; Johannes TALL, Estonian Song Festivals and Nationalism in Music toward the End of the Nineteenth Century, in: Aleksander LOIT (ed.), National Movements in the Baltic Countries during the 19th Century. The 7th Conference on Baltic Studies in Scandinavia, Stockholm, June 10–13, 1983, Stockholm 1985, 449–454, here 453.

<sup>21</sup> EGLITE (see Footnote 17) esp. 157f., 160f.

Johann Voldemar Jannsen (whose daughter Lydia Koidula was a very famous author); and Jakob Hurt. In the history of Latvian literature the names of Jānis Poruks (1871–1911), Matiss Kaudzītis (the novel “Mērnieku laiki”, 1879), Reinis Kaudzītis, and Jūlijs Vecozols stand out in this regard. In the development of Latvian culture and national self-awareness we must also remember Kārlis Skalbe with his Herrnhutian background. The well-known author Jānis Poruks was born and grew up in Drūviena, in an environment strongly influenced by Herrnhutism, and in a town to whose spiritual climate a local prayer-house gave its own distinct flavour. His grandfather was a preacher (sacitājs) at the prayer-house meetings and often took his grandchildren with him to the house. Herrnhutian influences coloured Poruks’ literary work later in his life. After the WWII, the novelist Arturs Baumanis (who died in 1989) wrote a set of novels in exile about Herrnhutians (Herrnhūtieši). The fact is that the Herrnhutian movement is a part of Baltic literary history.<sup>22</sup> On the other hand, we can also find sceptical attitudes towards culture among many Herrnhutians in the Baltic region. The main periodical publication of the Estonian Herrnhutians, “Kristlik Perekonna Leht”, adopted a rather sceptical attitude concerning Jakob Hurt's activities in collecting national folk poetry, songs, etc., in 1906. The Pietist attitude was clear: Why should a Lutheran pastor devote time and energy to such “worldly things”? They were of no use in meeting spiritual needs.<sup>23</sup>

Vööbus writes about this Pietistic ascetism: “The fight against temptations was taken seriously; in order not to relapse, instruments like bagpipes, watchman’s horns, harps and violins were thrown into the fire. Women changed their ways of dressing, threw away adornments and decorations and adopted a simplicity of appearance. All these phenomena were symptoms of a radical change of life.”<sup>24</sup>

#### 4. GROWTH OF THE PEOPLE’S CHURCH

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<sup>22</sup> Aleksandrs VEINBERGS, Brāļu draudze latviešu dailliteratūra [The Moravian Church in Latvian Fiction] I–VI, in: Ceļš 1–5 (1936) 25–31, 84–90, 155–164, 210–289, here 25ff.; Voldemārs MALDONIS, Poruka reliģija [Poruks’ Theological Teachings], in: Latvijas Augstskolas Raksti/Acta Universitatis Latviensis 2 (1922) 103–190; TALONEN, Herrnhut and the Baltic Countries (see Footnote 4) 103f.; ID., Evangelical Lutheran Theology in Latvia from 1920 to 1940, Rovaniemi 2021, 93ff.; Alberts FREIJS, Kārļa Skalbes reliģija un ētika [Theology and Ethics of Kārlis Skalbe], in: ID./Māra GRĪNFELDE, Dievs cilvēku pasaulē. Latviešu reliģiski ētiskie meklējumi 20. gadsimta 1. pusē [God in the Secular World. The Religious-Ethical Quests of the Latvians in the First Half of the 20th Century], vol. 2, Rīga 2009, 81–131, here 92.

<sup>23</sup> [Gustav ALLO] Ajamārgid [Signs of the times], in: Kristlik perekonna leht [The Christian Family News] 12 (1906) 306f.; TALONEN, Herrnhut and the Baltic Countries (see Footnote 4) 103.

<sup>24</sup> VÖÖBUS (see Footnote 15) 91f.



We can appreciate the influence of Herrnhutism on the birth of the national Church. Herrnhutian missionaries and brethren began to learn and speak the national languages, which is why they were close to the rural people. We can well imagine how important this fact was in the Baltic countryside. The mentality of the German rectors of the local parishes was far from that of people in general. Pastors belonged to the “intelligentsia”, whereas the Moravian brethren spoke “the same language” as rural people.

During the transition from a German “upper-class Church” (Herrenkirche) to a national church in Estonia and Latvia, this popular movement was a very important factor. As noted, the Herrnhutian influence was also remarkable in the establishment and growth of the so-called People's Church. In the 19th century, more and more national clergy came from the Baltic region itself. One example of these pastors was the Latvian Juris Neikens (1826–1868), the son of a Herrnhutian lay preacher. Neikens was not only a pastor, but also active in the development of schools and education. The clergy played an important role in the national awakening and cultural awareness of Estonians and Latvians. The printing of the first Estonian Bible (the translator was Anton Thor Helle, a Pietist) in 1739 was supported by Count Zinzendorf himself.<sup>25</sup>

Sild emphasized the importance of Estonian Herrnhutism in the real Christianization of the Estonian people. Because of Herrnhutism, Christianity became a matter of the heart for Estonians.<sup>26</sup> Adamovičs found that it was specifically Pietism and the Herrnhutian brotherhood that had had an important role in the “spiritual rebuilding” in old Livonia. The religious life and “growing into Christianity” (ieagusāna kristietība) deepened because of the influence of these movements. In 1929, he made a distinction between an external ecclesiasticism (ārejais baznīciskums) and a “living Christian religiousness” (dzīva kristīga reliģiozitāte). The effect of a deeper and “living” Christianity, according to Adamovičs, was a result of Pietism.<sup>27</sup>

## 5. RESEARCH ACTIVITY FOCUSED ON HERRNHUTISM

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<sup>25</sup> STRAUBE, *Diary of the Moravian Church* (see Footnote 1) 232; TALONEN, *Herrnhut and the Baltic Countries* (see Footnote 4) 103.

<sup>26</sup> Olaf SILD, *Eesti kirikulugu vanimast ajast olevikuni* [Estonian Church History from Ancient Times to the Present], Tartu 1938, 185; ILJA, *Moravian Church in Livonia* (see Footnote 2) 254, 256, 258.

<sup>27</sup> Ludvīgs ADAMOVIČS, *Baznīcas un ticības dzīve Vidzemes latviešu draudzēs (1710–1740)*. Doc. L. Adamoviča tēzes [Church Life and Faith in Latvian Communities in Livonia (1710–1740). The Theses of Doc. L. Adamovičs], in: *Brīva Zeme* [Free Country] 203 (1929) 3; STRAUBE/LAUR (see Footnote 1) 107.

At the end of 1919, the University of Tartu was officially opened as a national university of the Republic of Estonia. The nationalistic stance was the basis for restructuring its Faculty of Theology as well. The Department of Theology, which was established in 1920 at the University of Latvia, devoted itself to national theological studies and research. The leading church historian at this Faculty was Ludvigs Adamovičs (1884–1942) (ill. 4), an influential figure in Latvian society in many respects. Adamovičs' research and teaching created a national interpretation of Latvian church history. Ludvigs Adamovičs' most notable study concerning Latvian church history was undoubtedly the massive 659-page monograph "Vidzemes baznīca un latviešu zemnieks" (The Church of Livonia and the Latvian peasant 1710–1740), which was published in 1933. This, the printed version of Adamovičs' dissertation, became a classic example of Latvian church history. In this large monograph he also wrote about the beginning of Livonian (Vidzeme) Herrnhutism.<sup>28</sup>

Adamovičs' began researching Livonian Herrnhutism during his student days in Tartu. He also did research work in the Herrnhut Archives (Archiv der Brüder-Unität) in 1928, 1929, and 1939. Altogether, he published eight scholarly studies on Herrnhutism in Livonia as well as some newspaper articles between 1927 and 1938. Adamovičs' studies on Herrnhutism also drew the attention of the international scientific community. In 1927, the international church historians' meeting was organized in Paris. On this occasion, Adamovičs gave a presentation on Livonian Herrnhutism in French (published in the same year). He also published a small study in German in 1938 (Die lettische Brüdergemeinde 1739–1860, 1938). His surveys that focused on Herrnhutism increased knowledge of the awakening movement itself. The surveys also showed the appreciation that the movement enjoyed in Latvia. At the same time, they strengthened an interpretation of the Latvian People's Church, and Latvian church history in general, which Adamovičs emphasized.<sup>29</sup>

Professor of Systematic Theology (Philosophy of Religion) Voldemārs Maldonis (Maldon) studied the religion of the novelist Jānis Poruks. At the beginning of the 1920s, when he had become a major figure in the national Faculty of Theology,

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<sup>28</sup> ADAMOVIČS, Church of Livonia (see Footnote 1) 505–576, 609–615; Aija FREIMANE/Jouko TALONEN, Bibliography of Ludvigs Adamovičs, Helsinki 2005, nos. 251, 343; TALONEN, Latvian National Theology (see Footnote 7) 205ff.

<sup>29</sup> Ludvigs ADAMOVIČS, Die lettische Brüdergemeinde 1739–1860, Rīga 1938; FREIMANE/TALONEN (see Footnote 28) nos. 211, 227, 243f., 265, 267, 284, 287, 313, 344, 405, 453, 684, 686; Jouko TALONEN, Ludvigs Adamovičs as a Researcher of Livonian Herrnhutism, in: Letonica 32 (2016) 73–86; ID, Evangelical Lutheran Theology (see Footnote 22) 138–143.

Maldonis proceeded to research the religious ethics of Jānis Poruks, an author with a Herrnhutian background. In 1922, Maldonis published a study called “Poruka reliģija” (The Religion of Poruks) in a series from the University of Latvia. In the study he analyzed the author’s religious world primarily from the viewpoint of the psychology and phenomenology of religion. Vital in Poruks’ religious world was a religion of silence and heart (klusuma, sirds reliģija). In contrast to the haughty Church institution, which had become distant from the people, was the prayer-house, which for Poruks was the church of the people (tautas baznīca). The democratic priesthood of all believers, Christianity of the heart, and religious depth were apparent in the mission of this church. Maldonis observed that the religious world of Poruks was a synthesis of Herrnhutism, influences from various philosophers, and the doctrine of the Lutheran Church.<sup>30</sup>

The Latvian exile theologian Dr. Valdis Mezezers also wrote on Herrnhutism in the Baltic region. Even at the end of the period of Communism in the late 1980s, Guido Straube was doing serious research on the Herrnhutian movement. Pastor Gundars Ceipe’s interest in Herrnhutism was awakened at the end of the 1980s. The first scientific conferences on Latvian Herrnhutism were held in Straupe (in August 1997) and in Rauna (in August 1998). A major conference was hosted on the occasion of Count Zinzendorf’s 300th birthday on 26 May 2000 in Riga by the Consistory of the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church, the Herrnhutian Foundation, the Luther Academy of Riga, and the Women’s Organization of the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church.<sup>31</sup>

The Herrnhutian heritage was stronger in Estonian ecclesiastical life during the interwar period. The founder of Estonian national church history, Professor Olaf Sild (1880–1944), was also interested in the history of Pietism and Herrnhutism in Estonia. [ill 3.] He considered Pietism and Herrnhutism to be the most significant religious movements in Estonia, as it developed the religious self-awareness of the Estonians. Besides Sild, Rudolf Pöldmae and Professor Gustav Suits did research in the Herrnhut

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<sup>30</sup> MALDONIS (see Footnote 22) passim; TALONEN, *Evangelical Lutheran Theology* (see Footnote 22) 94. On Poruks V. VECGRĀVIS, Art. “Poruks, Jānis”, in: *Latviešu rakstniecība biogrāfijās* [Biographies of Latvian Authors], Rīga 1992, 252f.

<sup>31</sup> Valdis MEZEZERS, *The Herrnhutian Pietism in the Baltic and its Outreach into America and Elsewhere in the World*, Diss. North Quincy, MA 1975; TALONEN, *Herrnhut and the Baltic Countries* (see Footnote 4) 105; ID., *Rebellion of Peasants* (see Footnote 13) 192f.; ID., *Conference on Zinzendorf* (see Footnote 9) 321–325; CEIPE (see Footnote 9) 314f.

archives in 1939 and 1935, respectively. We must also take note of Professor Hans Kruus' active research in Estonian national history.<sup>32</sup>

After WWII Rev. Prof. Voldemar Ilja (1922–2010) (ill. 5), a church historian, had a continuous interest in researching this movement. The fruit of this labour was a dissertation defended in 1995 in the Department of Theology of the University of Helsinki: “Vennastekoguduse (herrnhutluse) ajalugu Eestimaal (Põhja-Eesti), 1730–1743” [The History of the Moravian Church (Herrnhutism) in Estonia, 1730–1743].<sup>33</sup>

Over the years from 2000 to 2010 Ilja published five monographs on the history of Estonian Herrnhutism. Ilja's research and descriptions of the history of Estonian Herrnhutism are valuable sources for future researchers. There is a massive amount of knowledge and information collected in his books. Future critical research naturally has to approach the topic analytically and with a stronger methodical approach, but Ilja has nonetheless cleared the way for new lines of research.<sup>34</sup>

Today we can still find relics of the Herrnhutian People's movement in Estonia. The religious-cultural, socio-political, and national influence of this movement was many-sided, especially in the 18th to the 20th century. Furthermore, Herrnhutism has also been an essential part of the rise of national Lutheran Churches in Estonia and Latvia. It also had an influence on the birth and rise of national theology in these countries.

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<sup>32</sup> TALONEN, Herrnhut and the Baltic Countries (see Footnote 4) 105f.; ID./Priit ROHTMETS, The Birth and Development of National Evangelical Lutheran Theology in the Baltics from 1918 to 1940, in: *Journal of Baltic Studies* 45 (2014) no. 3, 345–373. For example, Rudolf PÖLDMAE, *Eesti vennastekoguduse kirjandusest XVIII sajandi keskel. Äratrükk Eesti Kirjandusest 1936, nr 6 ja 7* [Literature of the Estonian Moravian Church in the Mid-18th Century. Reprinted from *Estonian Literature* 1936, nos. 6 and 7], Tartu 1936.

<sup>33</sup> ILJA, *Moravian Church in Estonia* (see Footnote 1) 5–296. The research archives of Voldemar Ilja have been located in the Library of Tartu University since 2011. Interviews of Mrs Elli Ilja on March 23/27, 2021.

<sup>34</sup> TALONEN, Professor Voldemar Ilja (see Footnote 9) 217.

**Abbreviations:**

ABU Archiv der Brüder-Unität

LELBA Latvijas evaņģēliski luteriskas baznīca Amerikā (Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church in America)

LU Latvijas Universitāte (University of Latvia)

PSHY Pohjois-Suomen historiallinen yhdistys (The Historical Association of Northern Finland)

SKHS Suomen kirkkohistoriallinen seura (Finnish Society of Church History)

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This article is an updated version of my earlier text in TALONEN 2001 (Herrnhut and the Baltic Countries).

**Images:**



Ill. 1: Mrs. Magdalene von Hallart belonged to the leading nobility in Livland in the 18th century; image: Hermanis ENDZELIŅŠ, *Skati Valmieras pilsētas, draudzes un novadas pagātnē* [Perspectives on the past of Valmiera City, Parish and Region], Valmiera 1932, 141.

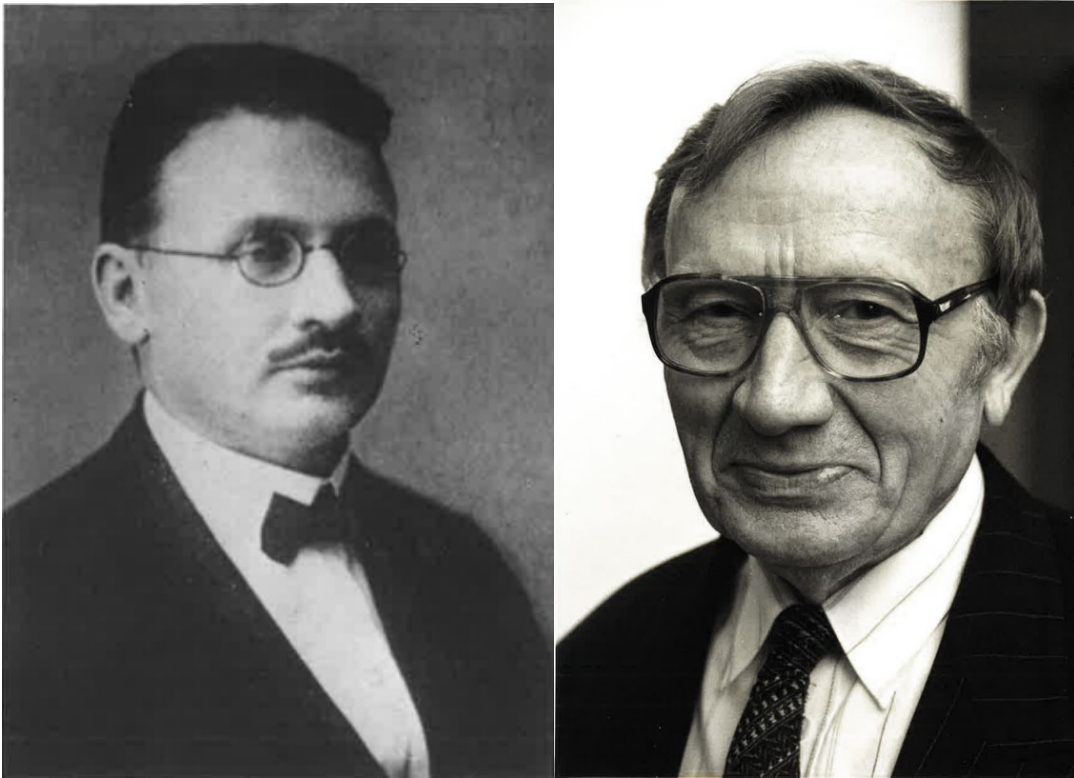


III. 2: Herrnhutian prayer house in Kauguri (Gaide); photo: 1928, Valmiera Museum Collections.



Ill. 3: The centenary of the Herrnhutian prayer house in Tallinn was celebrated in 1928. The image shows a song sheet of the festival which also contained information about the history of the prayer house. A song sheet from Research archives of Jouko Talonen (Vantaa).





Ill. 4/5: Two researchers of Baltic Herrnhutism. Professor Ludvigs Adamovičs (1884–1942) (on the right) and Professor Voldemar Ilja (1922–2010) (on the left). Photo of Adamovičs: Research archives of Jouko Talonen (Vantaa); Photo of Ilja: Eero Roine; private collection of Elli Ilja (Helsinki).